

THE FAMILY AND JAPANESE SOCIETY AFTER WORLD WAR II

HARUO MATSUBARA

I. PREFACE: JAPANESE SOCIETY AFTER WORLD WAR II AND THE CHANGES IN THE FAMILY LIFE

Since the Meiji Restoration, the economic development under capitalism has been gradually breaking down the imperviousness of the *ie* (family) and village communities of Japan, and as a result, the patriarchal family system was being loosened. However, it was the political and economic fluctuations in the postwar Japanese society, the revolutionary changes in the people's value system, and the "democratization" policy carried out by the occupation forces that gave definite meaning to this process. In the first place, the greatest influence on this process was the fact that the old family system was denied legality. In the revised Civil Code of 1947, the preindustrial system of patriarchal rights and the exclusive inheritance by the eldest son (*katoku*) was abolished, and the basis for inheritance of family property was changed from primogeniture to that of equal inheritance for all children. In accordance with the new principles, the duty of supporting parents in their old age, which up to the war had fallen on the eldest son, became the duty of all the sons and daughters. Further, the principle was laid down that marriage should be based on the mutual agreement of the two people involved. Thus, viewed from the legal perspective, the postwar family system was established on the model of modern democracy.

Second, the *ie* (family) system, besides losing its legal backing, was also denied legitimacy as an ideology through the postwar educational reforms and the democratic ideology. Therefore, with this combination, the *ie* (family) system was on its way to collapse in terms of family norms and customs.

Third, the bases of life also changed. These changes were especially great in the field of agricultural management. Changes in the traditional way of management (manual labor undertaken by family members) directly influenced the patriarchal structure which had, up to that point, supported

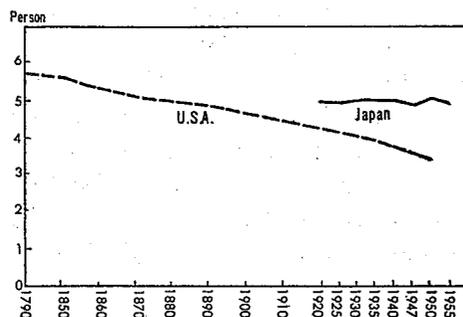
the stagnant mode of production. It is noteworthy that great changes occurred even in the farming and commercial households. These types of production had preserved the character of the *ie* (family) system and had contributed to its traditional meaning. Furthermore, owing to the introduction of new and convenient consumer commodities, the mode of life also underwent a great change. This change, which is called the Consumption Revolution, strongly affected the ethics of life as well as the life style. The traditional ethics, which stressed the importance of labor and work, gave way to a new ethic which encourages the joys of consumption.

II. CHANGES IN THE FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ITS PRESENT SITUATION

1. Family Size

Since the end of the 18th century, the family in industrial countries has decreased in size and the family composed of one generation has become the basic pattern. In the United States, since the late 19th century the average number of persons per household has rapidly decreased to below 4.0 people (See Figure 1). In the United States today, families with two or three people are predominant.

Figure 1. Average Number of Persons per Household in the United States of America and Japan

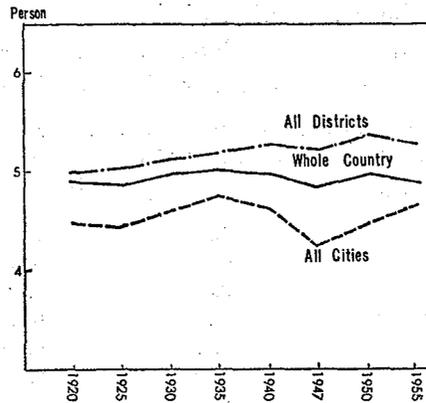


Sources: For the U. S. A. from E. W. Burgess and H. J. Locke, *The Family: From Institution to Companionship*, New York, American Book Co., 2nd ed., 1953, p. 456; for Japan, Sōrifu tōkeikyoku, *Kokusei chōsa hōkoku* (Population Census of Japan), 1950 & 1955.

However, in industrialized Japan, since the first national census in 1920, the average number of persons per household has remained fairly steady between 4.9 and 5.0 (See Figure 2). The temporary decrease in numbers of family members immediately after the war ended with a "reac-

tionary" increase later. A marked increase in the number of persons per household was found in both urban and rural areas. The percentage of households of a given size are shown in Table 1. During the period from 1920 to 1930, the number of households consisting of one to five people decreased, but the number of households consisting of six or more people increased. However, some differences were found between urban and rural areas. During the period from 1930 to 1950, the percentage of households of medium size (four to nine per household) increased, while the percent-

Figure 2. Average Number of Persons per Household in Cities and Districts of Japan



Source: Sōrifu tōkeikyoku, *Kokusei chōsa hōkoku* (Population Census of Japan), 1950 & 1955.

Table 1. Percentage of Japanese Household by Size (For 1920, 1930, and 1950)

Number of Persons in Household	Total Japan			Urban Area			Rural Area		
	1950	1930	1920	1950	1930	1920	1950	1930	1920
1	(-) 5.4	(-) 5.5	5.7	(+) 7.1	(-) 6.0	6.6	(-) 4.3	(-) 5.3	5.5
2	(-) 10.2	(-) 11.7	12.5	(-) 13.0	(-) 14.8	16.0	(-) 8.3	(-) 10.7	11.5
3	() 14.8	(-) 14.8	15.2	(-) 17.7	(-) 18.2	19.0	(-) 12.7	(-) 13.7	14.3
4	(+) 15.9	(-) 15.1	15.3	(+) 17.6	(+) 16.7	16.6	(+) 14.7	(-) 14.6	15.0
5	(+) 15.3	(-) 14.5	14.6	(+) 15.4	(+) 14.1	13.5	(+) 15.2	(-) 14.6	14.8
6	(+) 13.1	(+) 12.7	12.6	(+) 11.8	(+) 10.8	10.0	(+) 14.1	(+) 13.3	13.2
7	(+) 10.1	(+) 9.9	9.5	(+) 8.0	(+) 7.5	6.8	(+) 11.5	(+) 10.7	10.2
8	(+) 6.9	(+) 6.8	6.3	(+) 4.8	(+) 4.7	4.2	(+) 8.3	(+) 7.5	6.8
9	(+) 4.2	(+) 4.1	3.8	(-) 2.5	(+) 2.8	2.5	(+) 5.3	(+) 4.5	4.1
10	(-) 2.2	(+) 2.4	2.2	(-) 1.2	(+) 1.8	1.6	(+) 3.0	(+) 2.6	2.3
11 and over	(-) 1.9	(+) 2.5	2.3	(-) 1.0	() 2.6	2.6	(+) 2.6	(+) 2.5	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Sōrifu tōkeikyoku, *Kokusei chōsa hōkoku* (Population Census of Japan).

age of larger and smaller households decreased. Those of four to six people became predominant and the extremely large families disappeared. Nevertheless, the number of people per household did not go down below this line. Thus, during this time, although the average number of persons per household showed an increase, the family size moved toward a model of four to six persons per household. This tendency was especially marked in the cities. Restated, the medium-sized family became the standard Japanese household.

2. Household Composition

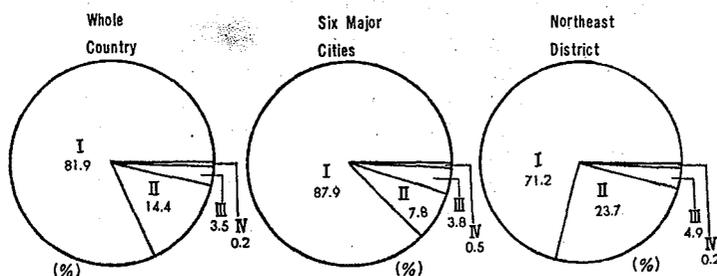
In this section, the composition of the standard household in Japan will be considered. We shall first look at the number of lineal relatives within the household, and the nature of their relationships to the head of

Table 2. Number of Persons per Household and Their Various Family Positions Relative to Head of Household (1950)

Family Position of Members	Total Japan	Urban Area	Rural Area
Head of Household	1.00	1.00	1.00
Wife	0.82	0.81	0.83
Lineal Descendant	2.69	2.33	2.93
Lineal Descendant's Spouse	0.13	0.07	0.17
Lineal Ascendant	0.27	0.20	0.32
Collateral Relative	0.20	0.18	0.21
Servant, Lodger et al.	0.09	0.13	0.07
Total	5.20	4.72	5.53

Source: Sōrifu tōkeikyoku, *Shōwa 25-nen: Kokusei chōsa hōkoku* (1950 Population Census of Japan).

Figure 3. Percentage of Persons per Household in Various Family Positions Relative to Head of Household (1920)



Note: I. Head of household, his wife and children.
 II. Other lineal relatives than the persons included in I, and their spouses.
 III. Collateral relatives and their spouses.
 IV. Others.

the household. The data in Table 2, obtained from the 1950 national census, shows the number of persons per household and their various family positions relative to the head of the household. For example, there are 0.20 collateral kinsmen per household, or one collateral kinsman per five families. This kind of analysis was first undertaken by Teizō Toda. He analyzed the data from the 1920 national census. However, because the same approach has not been undertaken since then, we cannot follow in detail the changes which might have occurred over this period. Nevertheless, after rearranging Toda's data to make it comparable to the data of 1950 (see Table 3, Figure 3), it can be seen in Table 4 that there is almost no difference.

At this point, there will be an explanation of the terms used in Tables 3 and 4. A through I indicate categories in Table 4; 1 through 22 are from Table 3.

- A) Head of household1) head of household
- B) Wife.....2) wife
- C) Lineal descendant.....4) sons and daughters
 - 6) grandsons and granddaughters
 - 8) great-grandchildren
- D) Lineal descendant's spouse....5) son's wife and daughter's husband
 - 7) grandson's wife and granddaughter's husband
- E) Lineal ascendant9) father
 - 10) mother
 - 15) grandparents
- F) First collateral relatives.....11) brother
 - 12) sister
 - 13) brother's wife and sister's husband
 - 14) nephew and niece
 - 19) nephew's wife and niece's husband
 - 20) nephew's or niece's sons and daughters
- G) Second collateral relatives....16) uncle and aunt
 - 17) uncle's wife and aunt's husband
 - 18) cousins
- H) Third collateral relatives21) sons and daughters of grandparents' brothers and sisters
- I) Wife's kin3) wife's kin
 - 22) kin of brother's wife and sister's husband

The widespread use of terms such as "lineal" (*chokkei*), "collateral" (*bōkei*), "lineal ascendant" (*sonzoku*), "lineal descendant" (*hizoku*) etc. is indicative of the importance of lineal relationships and the patriarchal system in the

Table 3. Number of Persons per Household in Various Family Positions Relative to Head of Household—A (1920)

Family Position of Members	Total Japan	Rural Area	Northeast District	Urban Area	Eight Large Cities
1. Head of Household	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0
2. Wife	799.0	801.8	825.4	787.3	816.2
3. Wife's Kin	10.7	10.2	11.8	12.7	12.7
4. Sons and Daughters	1,892.0	1,979.2	2,230.8	1,523.9	1,347.9
5. Son's Wife and Daughter's Husband	122.3	141.3	334.3	42.3	31.6
6. Grandsons and Granddaughters	240.0	277.2	633.1	83.1	70.1
7. Grandson's Wife and Granddaughter's Husband	2.7	3.3	14.8	—	—
8. Great-grandsons and Great-granddaughters	3.1	3.8	11.8	0.5	0.9
9. Father	69.9	79.1	85.8	31.0	34.2
10. Mother	194.5	208.0	239.6	136.6	137.6
11. Brother	59.5	62.1	93.2	48.4	53.8
12. Sister	52.8	55.1	75.4	43.2	48.7
13. Brother's Wife and Sister's Husband	6.7	7.2	11.8	4.7	5.1
14. Nephew and Niece	27.1	26.7	60.7	28.6	23.1
15. Grandparents	14.8	16.6	29.6	7.5	6.8
16. Uncle and Aunt	5.9	6.3	22.2	4.2	5.1
17. Uncle's Wife and Aunt's Husband	0.3	0.3	1.5	—	—
18. Cousins	2.2	2.6	10.4	0.9	0.9
19. Nephew's Wife and Niece's Husband	0.4	0.6	1.5	—	—
20. Sons and Daughters of Nephew and Niece	0.5	0.7	1.5	—	—
21. Sons and Daughters of Grandparents' Brothers and Sisters	0.1	0.1	1.5	—	—
22. Kin of Brother's Wife and Sister's Husband	0.1	0.1	—	—	—

Source: Teizō Toda, *Kazoku kōsei* (Family Structure), Tokyo, Kōbundō, 1937, pp. 347-348.

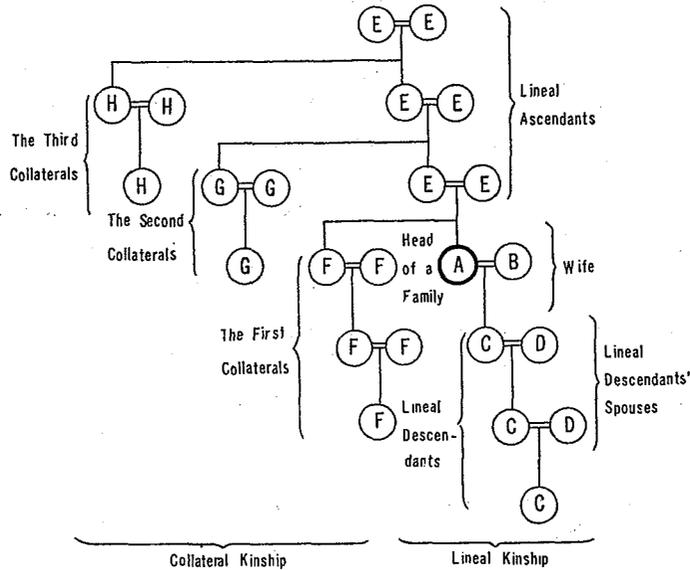
Japanese family. The composition of the family described above is represented in schematic form in Figure 4. As may be observed in this diagram, the Japanese family, taking lineally accumulating generations as the main axis (E-A-C), includes collateral kinsmen as far back as three generations. However, the main part of the family consists of kinsmen having lineal relationships, i. e., in the categories A to E as shown in Table 4. The first collateral, F, is only a minor part of the family. The second and third collaterals, G and H, are negligible in number. Approximately 80% of

Table 4. Number of Persons per Household in Various Family Positions Relative to Head of Household—B (1920)

Family Position of Members	Total Japan	Rural Area	Northeast District	Urban Area	Eight Large Cities
A. Head of Household	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0	1,000.0
B. Wife	799.0	801.8	825.4	787.8	816.2
C. Lineal Descendant	2,135.1	2,260.2	2,875.7	1,607.5	1,418.9
D. Lineal Descendant's Spouse	125.0	144.6	349.1	42.3	31.6
E. Lineal Ascendant	279.2	303.7	355.0	175.1	178.6
F. First Collateral Relative	147.0	152.4	244.1	124.9	130.7
G. Second Collateral Relative	8.4	9.2	34.1	5.1	6.0
H. Third Collateral Relative	0.1	0.1	1.5	—	—
Total of Collateral Relatives	155.5	161.7	279.7	130.0	136.7
I. Spouse's Kin	10.8	10.3	11.8	12.7	12.7

Source: See Table 3.

Figure 4. Family Structure of Japan



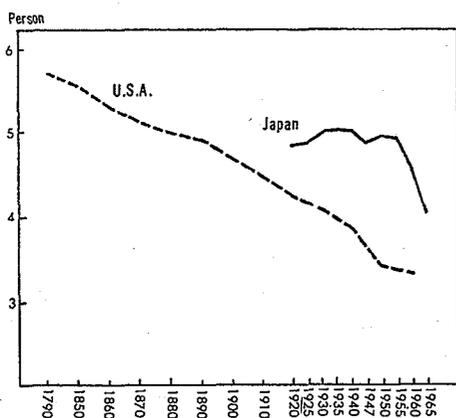
the total members of Japanese households is formed by the head of the household, his wife and children, while only a marginal percentage (3.5%) is occupied by collateral kin and their spouses. Most cases of households containing collateral kin occur in this way: the second or third sons or daughters, who are lineal to the father, become collateral when the position of the head of the household is passed on to the eldest son by

the death or retirement of the father before the second and third sons or daughters go out from the family by establishing independent families or by getting married. Therefore, most of the collateral kin are first collateral to the new head of the household and they are often unmarried. In summary, the analysis of the family size and household composition indicates that the standard Japanese family is made up of five to six lineally related persons. Furthermore, there has been no significant change since 1920.

3. Changes during the Years 1955-1965

Along with the rapid economic recovery which started in 1955, there were also basic changes in the family structure. In contrast to the general tendency of decreased family size and simplification of household composition in modern industrial countries, the number of persons per household in Japan has remained steady at about 5.0 persons since 1920. However, from 1955 to 1965, the Japanese family changed radically. For example, the national census of 1960 provided Japanese sociologists with the data to show that the average number of persons per household fell to 4.56. In urban areas, it was 4.36. Even in rural areas, where the average number had been far above 5.0 persons up to that time, went down to 4.95. This trend is probably not temporary due to the fact that the average number of persons per household fell down to 4.08 with a decrease of 0.48 in the national census of 1965 (See Table 5 and Figure 5). It is now the trend for households to become separate and independent upon marriage, and for the number of children supported in a household not to exceed 2.0.

Figure 5, Table 5. Average Number of Persons per Household in the United States of America and Japan (1790-1965)



Year	U. S. A.	Japan
1790	5.7	
1850	5.6	
1860	5.3	
1870	5.1	
1880	5.0	
1890	4.9	
1900	4.7	
1910	4.5	
1920	4.3	4.89
1925		4.88
1930	4.1	4.98
1935		5.03
1940	3.8	5.00
1947		4.85
1950	3.4	4.97
1955		4.97
1960	3.3	4.56
1965		4.08

Considering these data in terms of the changes in family structure, the family has decreased in size. This is due not only to the fact that the number of children has decreased, but also because the ration of lineal ascendants and lineal descendants to the head of the household rapidly decreased during 1955–1965. It was found in the analysis of the data in “Research on Welfare Administration” published by the Ministry of Health and Welfare that the percentage of nuclear families increased by more than 10% in this decade. Furthermore, the percentage of “single families” (households in which either the husband or wife is missing, and households consisting of a single person or single persons) also exhibited a rapid increase. The total percentage of nuclear and single households exceeds 70% (See Figure 6). This tendency has been described as “family nuclearization.”

Figure 6. Percentage of Household by Type of Family Composition

	Nuclear Family	Single Family	Others	(%)
1954	46.4	9.0	44.6	
1960	44.7	17.3	37.9	
1964	54.9	17.3	27.9	
1967	65.4	19.6	15.0	

Source: Kōseishō tōkei-chōsabū, *Kōsei gyōsei kiso chōsa* (Research on Welfare Administration).

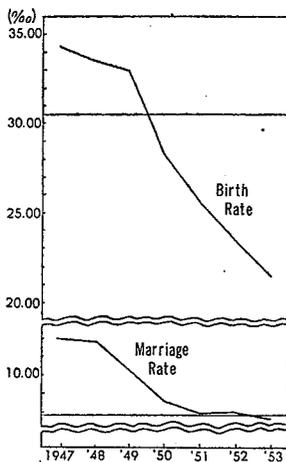
III. JAPANESE SOCIETY AFTER WORLD WAR II AND THE FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY

1. Family Life during the First Stage of the Postwar Period

Japan was in complete disorder after the surrender. Not only was re-organization of the capitalism necessary, but also re-organization was needed in the political power structure to replace the Emperor system. Considering this situation in terms of the whole social structure of Japan, apart from the economic problems of postwar capitalism, the functional changes in the power structure had to be accompanied by abrogation of “hierarchical order” and “careerism.” These two concepts had supported the social structure of prewar Japan. The “paternalism” and “authoritarianism” which, on the social level, correspond to “hierarchical order”

and "careerism" were also destined to disappear. The experience of surrendering resulted in a collapse of the value standards for many people and thus there was social instability among those who lost their patriotic identity with the state. The family life was regarded as the only hope by many who returned from the battlefields and military factories. This was shown in the extremely high marriage rate directly after the war (especially in 1947 and 1948) in comparison with prewar days. As a result

Figure 7. Postwar Rate of Birth and Marriage



Note: 1934-35 average.

of the high marriage rate, there was a "baby boom" (See Figure 7). We can imagine how people dreamed of building homes upon burned ruins left by air-raids and made efforts to make the dream come true. Extreme poverty, inflation and food shortages were among the factors which stimulated people to return to their families. The family was about the only structure left that could protect them from these conditions. Often, those who were not able to build a family were drawn into the world of criminals in which they entered into fictional parent-child relationships (the boss and follower relationship characteristic of underworld societies), or they returned to the traditional world of religion or philosophy in which they hoped to find a *raison d'être*.

Despite efforts to establish the family structure, it proved to be dysfunctional in postwar society due to economic hardships and severe housing shortages. Revision of the Family Code and the collapse of the traditional value system added more tension to the already unstable family. However, these reforms were forced upon the Japanese from the outside and it was not a spontaneous act of the people themselves. The principles of the new Family Code caused confusion due to poor economic conditions and the retention of the traditional mode of living based on prewar domestic production.

In a report by the Japan Sociological Society,¹ it was shown that, in rural areas, there were three major obstacles to the new Family Code: 1) the transfer of ownership of the family trade, 2) inheritance of property

¹ Nihon shakai-gakkai kazoku kenkyūbukai, "Sengo ni okeru kazoku no jittai" (The Structure and Functions of the Family in Postwar Japan), *Shakai-gaku hyōron*, Nos. 27-28, 1957.

by a single person, 3) the maintenance of the labor power in the family. The problems were especially serious in agricultural areas. In order for the family to continue to live by agriculture, fragmentation of farm lands through divided inheritance had to be avoided. However, some new trends were also observed. One was the willing abandonment of family inheritance in return for higher education.

The old customs continued to exist because the ways of thinking had not changed. In a survey of Okayama and Akita Prefectures in 1953,² 30% of the farmers answered "yes" to the question "Do you think the eldest son should take over the farm?" (Figure 8). In a survey of a modern Tokyo suburb (Toyama housing complex) and of a mountain village (*Ōtaba-buraku*), considerable differences in responses were noted. Those who supported the traditional value system in the suburbs was only 18%, while the percentage rose to nearly 70% in the village. (These percentages were those who answered "no" to the question "Should the child who will inherit the house and land sell it if he wishes to live in the city?"). These attitudes of the parents were reflected in the thinking of their sons. The majority of the young people in the village felt that the eldest son should remain in the family, while only 10% of young city

Figure 8. Response to the Question, "Do you think the eldest son should take over the farm?" (Of Farm Householders in Okayama and Akita Prefectures)

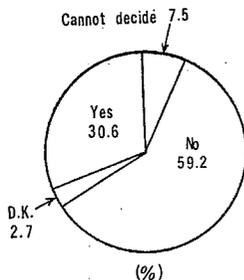
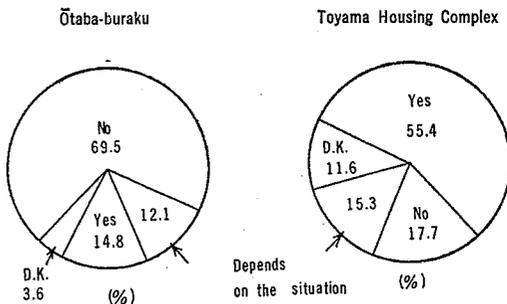


Figure 9. Response to the Question "Should the child who will inherit the house and land sell it if he wishes to live in the city?"



Source: Tadashi Fukutake & Tetsundo Tsukamoto, *Nihon nōmin no shakaiteki seikaku* (Social Character of the Japanese Village People), Tokyo, Yūhikaku, 1954, p.107. (The survey was undertaken from July to August, 1953.)

Source: Report of a survey undertaken by the Kazoku mondai kenkyūkai (Committee for the Study of Family Problems) from October to December, 1956.

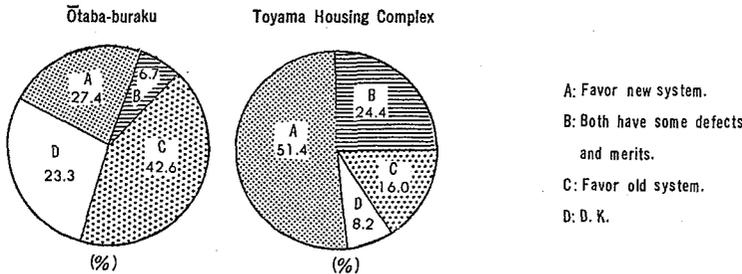
² Tadashi Fukutake and Tetsundo Tsukamoto, *Nihon nōmin no shakaiteki seikaku* (The Social Character of Japanese Village People), Tokyo, Yūhikaku, 1954, p.107.

factory workers thought so.⁸

This type of thinking was supported by the unfavorable housing conditions. In both the villages and the cities, sons and their wives continued to live with one set of parents. The practice is present even today. More than 50% of the families in rural areas were lineal households. This percentage drops to 20% in urban areas with minor factories and stores, and to 18% in the industrial areas with major factories. This is according to a report issued by the Ministry of Labor.

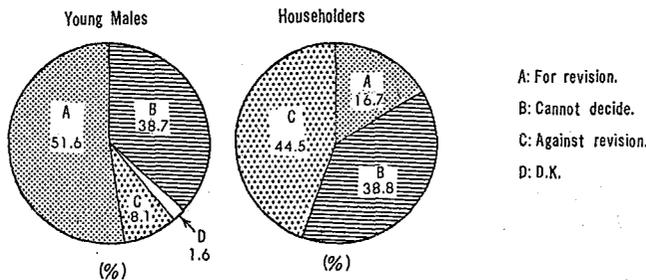
To a large extent, the traditional systems and ideologies remain. However, a more serious problem is the confusion and tension resulting from the conflicts of the traditional and modern ways. There exist tremendous discrepancies of social concepts according to regions and generations. As shown in Figure 10, the response of people to the new ideology

Figure 10. Attitude toward New and Old Family System



Source: See Figure 9.

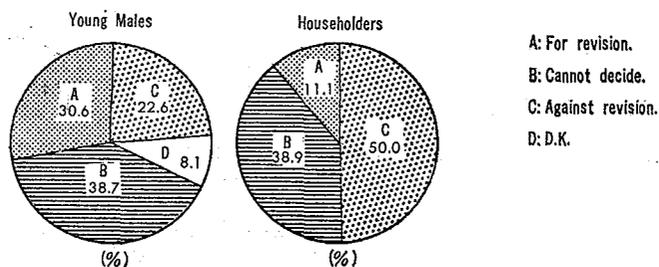
Figure 11. Attitude toward the Abolition of the System of Household Head (*koshu*)



Source: "Sanson ni okeru seinen no seikatsu" (The Life of Youth in Mountain Villages), *Kyōto-daigaku jimmon-kagaku kenkyūsho hōkoku*, No. 12, 1954.

⁸ Nippon UNESCO kokunai iinkai, *Seishōnen ishiki chōsa hōkoku* (Report of a Survey on the Consciousness of Adolescents and Youth), 1956.

Figure 12. Attitude toward the Abolition of Primogeniture System

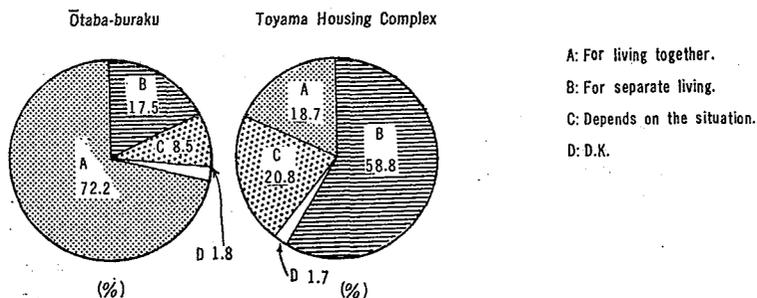


Source: See Figure 11.

varied. There was a difference of over 20% between the residents of a urban housing complex and a mountain village in regard to old and new family ideology. Yet, even within the mountain village, a difference was recorded between the generations (See Figures 11 and 12).

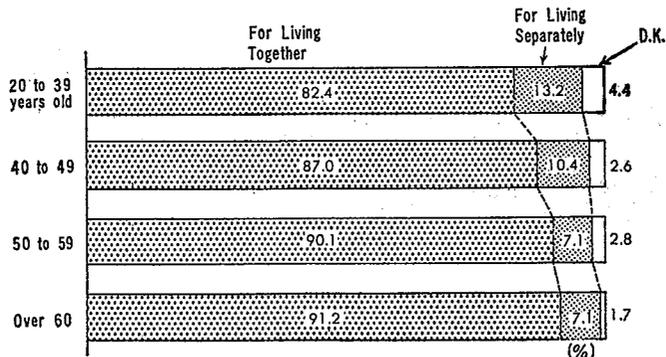
The differences in thinking between the old and the young have made it difficult to maintain close relationships. This problem is more pronounced in situations where young married couples live with the parents. Since this lineal situation is no longer taken for granted, there exist various complaints and dissatisfactions among the family. Again, there is an urban-rural difference of opinion, with the rural being more traditional. Even in the village, the younger the respondent, the more it was thought that there should be separate homes (See Figures 13 and 14). The methods of agricultural production demand that two generations manage the farm and household. However, it is the opinion of most of the village people that the ideal life for a young couple is a home for themselves. The traditional role of the bride is one of complete subservience to the mother-in-law. With the new orientations, this often causes psychological tension

Figure 13. Attitude toward Young Married Couples Live with the Parents



Source: See Figure 9.

Figure 14. Attitude toward the Eldest Son's Living Separately after Marriage (Of Farm Householders in Okayama Prefecture)



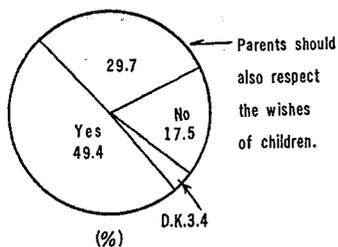
Source: See Figure 8.

in a family consisting of the two generations.

Thus, the parents tend to respect the wishes of their children concerning higher education, choice of occupation and selection of spouse (See Figures 15 and 16). Due to postwar advancement in agricultural technology, there has occurred a great change in the productive function of the farmhouse. It is the advanced production system that has changed the roles and relationships with the family. With more part-time work available to farmers, with the increase in the amount of free time, and with each family member spending more time outside of the family, the strong ties of the family are loosened. As children earn money outside of the family, they gain a sense of economic independence. These changes have resulted in great complexity and instability in family relationships.

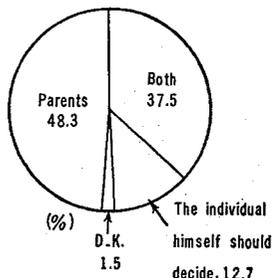
The relationship between the bride and the mother-in-law is now in

Figure 15. Response to the Question, "Should children follow the words of their parents?" (Of Farm Householders in Okayama and Akita Prefectures)



Source: See Figure 8.

Figure 16. Response to the Question, "Is it the parents or the individual involved who chooses the latter's wife?" (Of Farm Householders in Okayama and Akita Prefectures)



Source: See Figure 8.

flux. Most farmers, in response to a question concerning this relationship, felt that the bride should make concessions to the mother-in-law (See Table 6). Nevertheless, mothers-in-law cannot treat their daughters-in-law with the same authority as in the past, and the bride is no longer in complete submission. However, the concepts of democracy do not affect actual behavior in daily life as much as is desired by the younger generation. The gap between the democratic-style education received by the young people and actual practices by their parents has produced much psychological strain. This strain is greatest in rural two generation farmhouses. There has been an increase over prewar days in the number of farm bride suicides.

Table 6. Attitude toward Bride and Mother-in-Law Relationship (Of Farm Householders in Okayama and Akita Prefectures)

Response to the Question, "What would you suggest when the bride and mother-in-law don't get along with each other?"

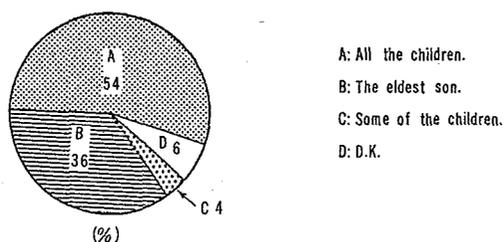
	The Bride Should Be Divorced	The Bride Should Make Concessions	The Father and Son Should Mediate	The Mother Should Make Concessions	The Young Couple and Parents Should Live Separately	Don't Know	Total
Okayama	0.7	46.2	1.5	18.3	—	33.3	100.0
Akita	1.4	48.2	5.7	7.6	1.0	36.0	100.0
Total	1.1	47.4	3.9	12.2	0.6	34.8	100.0

Source: Tadashi Fukutake and Tetsundo Tsukamoto, *Nihon nōmin no shakaiteki seikaku* (Social Character of the Japanese Village People), Tokyo, Yūhikaku, 1954, p. 125. (The survey was carried out from July to August, 1953.)

There is yet another central issue involved in the changing roles and nature of the family. That is the support of aged parents. Under the old family system, the eldest son would inherit all property rights. In return, he had certain obligations, one of which was to support his parents upon their retirement. If the old system had been consistent, these two relationships might have continued on a smooth basis. However, the dominance of the parents has declined and the old system of inheritance has been declared illegal. The duties have become ambiguous, and there have been bitter misunderstandings accompanying this situation. According to the Japan Sociological Society, the reasons for disputes may be summarized as following. 1) The eldest son no longer receives all the property and may demand that support of aged parents be divided also. 2) Since the eldest son is living with the parents, he has the sole burden of supporting the parents, even though the property has been equally

divided among all the siblings. 3) The younger sons who have given up their claims on family property also wish to give up their claims on supporting the parents. In this way, the problem of supporting the parents has become a major point of conflict among children. Figure 17 shows that opinions are divided over the two basic alternatives: all children should support the parents, only the eldest son should support the parents. An unusual finding is that both in the village and in the Tokyo suburb, 10% felt that the parents should care for themselves under the new democratic system.

Figure 17. Response to the Question, "Who should look after the parents?"

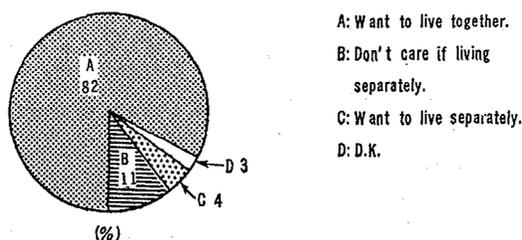


Sources: Jiji tsūshin-sha, *Jiji tsūshin*, March, 1952, and Jiji tsūshin-sha, *Jiji nenkan: Shōwa 28-nen-ban* (Jiji Almanac of 1953), p. 289.

Parents, for the most part, still wish to live with their children and grandchildren (See Figure 18). Some parents showed anxiety that they might not be adequately cared for (See Figure 19). Thus, the fear of the parents that they might be disregarded in later years by their children has cast a dark shadow across the parent-child relationship.

Another shadow lurks within the family. This one is between the husband-wife relationship. The predominance of the husband over his wife was most often the case, although it is said that the status of the

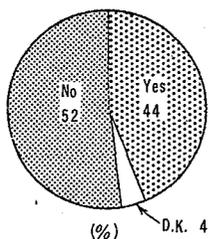
Figure 18. Response to the Question, "Do you wish to live with your children and grandchildren when you become old?"



Source: See Figure 17.

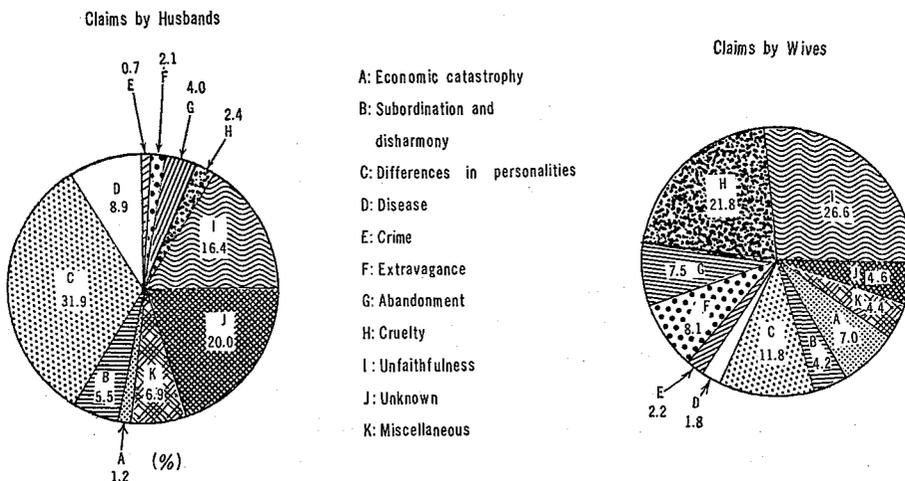
wife has risen since the war. Figure 20 shows the data from a 1952 statistical survey of reasons given for disputes between couples. The two greatest reasons given by husbands for divorce were differences in personalities and unknown. Differences in personalities is an ambiguous term which is used when there is difficulty in clearly determining the reasons. Ambiguous situations involve cases of over self-indulgence on the part of the husband. Under the old civil code, when the wife was driven out of the house, or when the wife ran away due to ill treatment, it was termed "divorce by agreement." Personality differences is the postwar equivalent. On the other hand, despite the persistence of such old customs, a great increase is seen in the actual number of divorces filed by wives. In 1952, 77% (9,348 out of 12,118) of the petitions were filed by women. It is characteristic that women give unambiguous, direct reasons for such court action.

greatest reasons given by husbands for divorce were differences in personalities and unknown. Differences in personalities is an ambiguous term which is used when there is difficulty in clearly determining the reasons. Ambiguous situations involve cases of over self-indulgence on the part of the husband. Under the old civil code, when the wife was driven out of the house, or when the wife ran away due to ill treatment, it was termed "divorce by agreement." Personality differences is the postwar equivalent. On the other hand, despite the persistence of such old customs, a great increase is seen in the actual number of divorces filed by wives. In 1952, 77% (9,348 out of 12,118) of the petitions were filed by women. It is characteristic that women give unambiguous, direct reasons for such court action.



Source: Jiji tsūshin-sha, *Jiji tsūshin*, March, 1952.

Figure 20. Reasons for Disputes between Husband and Wife (1952)



Source: Katei saibansho, *Shōwa 27-nendo zenriikon chōtei zenkoku tōkei* (The Statistical Yearbook of Divorce Mediation: 1952).

economic difficulties, family functions have not been carried out smoothly. Also, housing problems have added to the difficulties of modernizing the family.

2. *Family Life during the Second Stage of the Postwar Period*

By 1953 the living conditions in Japan had recovered to the prewar level. After this time, the economy made fairly steady progress, with the exception of several post-boom recessions (1956-57 and 1960). These favorable conditions gave rise to the so-called "Consumption Boom." In other words, around 1955, Japan entered into a stage of high economic development. In 1952, when Japan became theoretically independent economically, the total national amount spent of articles of personal consumption was ¥3,837,000,000,000. In 1957 this had gone up to ¥6,461,000,000,000 showing an increase of 62.5%. There was a high rate of economic development during the years 1959-62, with a yearly increase of 12-16% (i.e. a 49.2% increase in three years). The conclusion that can be drawn is that the consumption life in Japan was substantially improving. This is supported by the fact that actual personal consumption expenditure increased 38% during 1952-57 and 45% during 1957-62 (See Table 7).

The life of consumption began first with increased food purchases, which was followed by expenditures on clothing and improvements in housing. To elaborate, the recovery of consumption at the first stage of the postwar period was characterized by the large portion of income which went for necessities required to maintain a minimum standard of living; food, light, fuel etc. However, after the economy reached the prewar level, the direction of expenditures shifted in favor of secondary living necessities such as clothing, provisions other than staple foods, and housing expenses. An especially remarkable feature at this time was the high rate of consumption of durable goods, particularly of electric household appliances. This meant to the Japanese that modern, civilized life, which was the last thing they could have imagined out of the ruins of the war, was being realized.

The goal of family life was stabilization. This was thought to be attainable through improvement of material life, both in its quality and quantity. Thus, people came to strive for material abundance. At this time, the family was surrounded by convenient and fascinating goods which were put on the market. Under these conditions, a family's desire to purchase was stimulated by other families. This is to say, it did not come from primary demand or necessity. People were buying items because they could see other people enjoying them. Their way of thinking was com-

Table 7. National Income

(In billion yen)

Year	National Income Distributed			Gross National Expenditure		Expenditure of Households					
	Total	Compensation of Employees	Income from Unincorporated Enterprises	Total	Private Consumption Expenditure	Total	Foods, Beverages, etc.	Clothing	Fuel and Light	Housing	Miscellaneous
1952	4,994	2,308	2,089	6,051	3,837	3,768	2,083	605	189	312	580
1953	5,724	2,843	2,150	6,965	4,604	4,523	2,439	696	220	419	749
1954	6,440	3,154	2,371	7,792	5,087	5,001	2,692	715	234	468	892
1955	6,998	3,424	2,660	8,525	5,445	5,351	2,809	747	235	533	1,027
1956	7,691	3,892	2,692	9,508	5,903	5,795	2,961	828	247	623	1,135
1957	8,999	4,406	2,917	11,071	6,461	6,340	3,173	911	270	700	1,286
1958	9,348	4,810	2,830	11,342	6,891	6,768	3,333	923	275	813	1,423
1959	10,339	5,392	2,976	12,780	7,542	7,399	3,501	975	286	1,040	1,597
1960	12,525	6,232	3,390	15,214	8,520	8,345	3,779	1,145	329	1,246	1,846
1961	14,876	7,511	3,860	18,487	9,676	9,467	4,157	1,324	375	1,550	2,061
1962	16,806	8,763	4,256	20,830	11,421	11,189	4,665	1,546	433	1,786	2,760
1963	19,055	10,230	4,636	23,424	13,036	12,769	5,260	1,699	485	2,037	3,288
1964	21,627	11,618	5,226	27,716	14,839	14,488	5,826	1,891	528	2,338	3,907

Source: Keizai-kikakuchō, *Kokumin shotoku tōkei nempō* (Annual Report on National Income Statistics).

pletely other directed in this sense.

However, the desire to consume was not always fulfilled. Each new acquisition was followed by a new wish. In this way, people were constantly frustrated and could not help feeling their poverty in the face of the large quantity of goods available. The situation was often one of "relative" poverty.

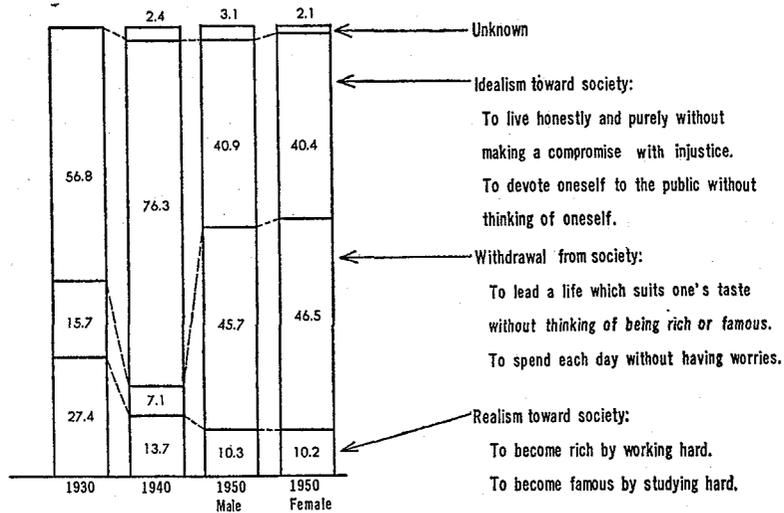
Needless to say, what brought about the situation mentioned above was not only the rising standard of living in Japan, but also the business community's campaigns to increase consumption. Every type of mass-communication was used. The phrase "Mass Four" has widely spread since this period (mass production, mass communication, mass sale and mass consumption). Encouraged by these large scale campaigns, people discovered new social values in consumption and enjoyment. Furthermore, the coupon or monthly installment purchase plan facilitated this process.

The uniform "culture of consumption" became widespread through mass production and mass communication. This phenomenon was encouraged by the general tendency of institutionalization and standardization. "Me and my honey" type of family became the ideal for the middle class salaried man. In the Japanese economy directly after the war the farming families were the center of attention due to the food shortages. Then the working class family became the center in the era of democratization and the labor movement. At this second stage of the postwar period the center was the white collar families.

The "Mass Four," which succeeded in increasing people's desire, also succeeded in justifying that desire, for it encouraged the idea that the purchase of durable consumer goods was a necessary step to be taken to modernize the family. In such a progressive mood, the "electrification" of housekeeping, which was regarded as a means of liberating women from the hard work of housekeeping, was advertized as the very way to rationalize and modernize family life.

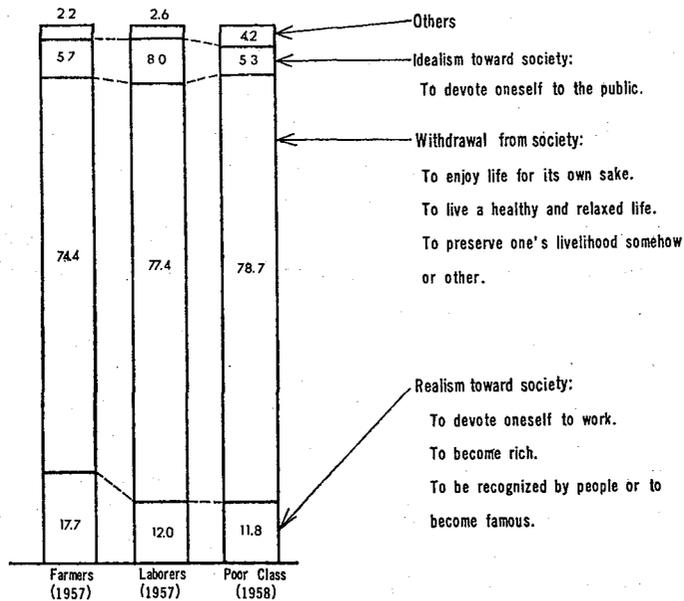
Such a transformation of social values, together with the development of mass society, has encouraged people to look for ideas and dreams in the realm of family pleasures rather than in the realm of morality and idealism for society as a whole. For example, with regard to the aspirations of youth, it is observed that the "idealism toward society" observed in the prewar days has changed into "withdrawal from society" (See Figure 21). The decrease in the former attitude has occurred on a large scale. The thing to notice, however, is the attitudes of adults, especially those of working class people, such as farmers and laborers (See Figure 22). It is surprising that even these people manifest a high proportion of with-

Figure 21. Aspirations of Youth



Sources: Yoshitake Oka ed., *Gendai Nihon no seiji katei* (The Political Process of Contemporary Japan), Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1958, p. 490. See, also, *Mainichi shimbun*, Jan. 15th, 1952.

Figure 22. Aim of Life of Working Class People



Sources: Nihon shakai chōsa-kai, "Saikin ni okeru nōmin ishiki" (The Farmers' Consciousness of Contemporary Society), 1957; "Rōdōsha ishiki no seiji-teki jōkyō" (The Political Situation of Laborers' Consciousness), 1957; "Hinkon-sō no seiji ishiki" (The Political Consciousness of the Poor Class), 1958.

drawal types when asked about their positive aim in life. This withdrawal is not to be understood in a literal sense, but rather in the sense that the family pleasures and privately centered concerns have become a positive value, and present day Japanese even feel some obligation to hold such attitudes. In a word, they have come to seek "a little happiness in the home" as their ideal.

The "era of consumption" has increased the importance of the family's secondary functions. This is especially noted in the recreational function and the status-symbolizing function. The basic relationship between husband and wife (i. e. the function of sexual reproduction, rearing of children and support of parents) and the economic activities are not necessarily adequately fulfilled. A White Paper on national life showed these changes in people's attitudes toward life: 1) emphasis on a more pleasant life, 2) interest on improvement of life (convenience, comfort), 3) influences of the freer, material oriented youth.

The popularization of television sets has focused family attention on the living room, and has provided a common basis of interest for all age groups. The electrification and simplification of housekeeping has released mothers and wives from the hard labor of traditional housekeeping. This has heightened the status of the women in the family, while at the same time strengthening the interest of men in family life. Moreover, an increase in the number of families in which both spouses are working and the greater use of the monthly installment purchase plan permits higher expenditure levels and greater financial independence among young people. Thus a drastic change has been taking place in social relationships inside the family. However, since the consumption boom has continued, there have resulted unsolved and serious social problems. For example, excessive consumption has often resulted in economic difficulties or even bankruptcy. Intra-family tensions have developed due to unsolved housing shortage problems. As a result of the growing practice of married sons to live apart from their parents, the housing problem is multiplied. There is also the crucial problem of support of elderly parents. Considerable economic strains appear when parents try to provide their children with higher education. Thus, even during the period of prosperity described above, "anxieties" continue to cast a shadow over many parts of family life.

The anxieties in family life which have continued despite stabilization have been accompanied by an increasingly wide gap in people's living standards. A 1959 White Paper on public welfare strongly emphasized the following: 1.8% of the total population belonged to a "class" which permitted them to receive public funds. However, there is another group,

which is poor but does not receive public aid. This group accounts for the low wage earners. Also there exists a large number of households which could fall into the lower stratum with any downward economic fluctuation. In every field there exists large discrepancies between the small and large businesses. This difference is also urban and rural. Meanwhile prices were rising. Despite these problems, monthly installment and deferred payment plans were encouraging economic activities. These problems occasionally became tragedies with family suicides or murder within the family. According to data from a recent survey, suicides reached a peak in 1956, declined and stabilized.⁴ However, family catastrophies increased in number. (murders, arson, etc.)

Especially in urban areas, the tendency for newlyweds to start their own home has contributed to the housing shortage. There is an annual increase of 300,000 groups seeking homes, and the housing industry cannot keep up with this. In 1955, for example, the government built only 50,000 new units. Under such conditions, married children are often "forced" to live with their parents. With all the changes in life styles and attitudes, there results a considerable amount of tension.

The problem of supporting aged parents has become acute. The younger generation prefers to spend its money instead of supporting their parents. The government has finally considered granting old age pensions.

The core of the postwar value standards is the wish for a stabilized and secure way of life. People still remember wartime and postwar poverty. Most people wish to insure a better life for their children through higher education. There is pressure on children to study for entrance examinations from kindergarten on up. There is particular emphasis on the "escalator schools." This is a system whereby a certain elementary school guarantees entrance to those who graduate from a certain kindergarten. This chain goes all the way up colleges. In rural areas, the emphasis is mainly on high schools, and there is a lot of competition. This situation has been labeled "entrance examination hell." There is thus intense participation of the family in the education of the children. This educational function of the family at one time appeared to be lost, but it has recovered in a distorted way. Family help does not supplement school learning. Instead, through tutors, children spend most of their after school hours cramming for the next entrance exam. Thus, it appears that once again a dark shadow has been cast across the relationships within the family. This all ties up with the desire for children to get better jobs. Often

⁴ See, "Kōseishō Watanabe-hakushi no chōsa" (Survey by Dr. Watanabe in the Ministry of Health and Welfare), *Asahi shimbun*, March 6th, 1960, evening edition.

parents try to exert "pull" in getting jobs for their children. In this case, it is the family name that is very important, as well as relationships. Children without a father are at a disadvantage. This ascribed versus achieved job placement is left over from prewar days.

It is felt that, with all these distortions and contradictions, it is impossible for husband-wife or parent-child relationships to develop normally as desired for modernization. Among those Japanese intellectuals who recognize this situation, there has been widespread pessimism in regard to the future of the Japanese family.

Furthermore, the family started to decrease in size. This process was accelerated by the differentiation of households and resulted in the phenomenon of nuclearization. The nuclear family, consisting of husband, wife and children, begins with marriage and ends with death. It is only a one generation family. The husband-wife relationship is regarded as the core, and emphasis is placed on the principles of individual freedom and equal rights for men and women. Family consolidation is not through traditional restrictions, but through the establishment of a spiritual relationship (love).

On the other hand, however, these characteristics can turn into weaknesses. The first problem is that the change in family functions weakens the solidarity of the family members. In the pre-modern family, the plural functions of the family and the complex relationships between members drew them together and strengthened the solidarity. The functions of production, education and religion have been replaced or lapsed in the modern family. Family members seek outside the family to replace these gaps. People spend less and less time in the home.

Secondly, this situation basically emerges from the separation between place of work and residence. As a result, the difference in social interest toward life between family members becomes greater.

Thirdly, owing to the advancement of individualistic attitudes and behavior, the solidarity of the family has become weakened. Attitudes toward life, values, standards, social interests, sense of consumption and ways of amusement are all different between the various family members. Further, they do not all expect the same things from family life and this causes conflict.

Such instability stems from the fact that marriages are now based on love, and are not arranged. The function of marriage has changed. Husband and wife are "responsible" for their marriage. In pre-modern society, the family was protected, supervised and given aid by relatives and neighbors (kinship society and neighborhood community). However, isolated from these structures, the family must solve all its own problems. The

only other recourse is public systems and institutions.

Released from the web of traditional systems and customs, family members must face up to the reality of themselves and of each other.

3. Family Life during the Third Stage of the Postwar Period

Soon after the climax of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, people began to realize that there was a limit to the pursuit of material wealth. In the economic world, there were the numerous failures known as "Income Double Dealing." This was a result of the emphasis of the Ikeda administration on "production first." During the years 1963-64, the government had to propose a policy of "straightening out the distortions." Warnings were heard about rising prices, economic depression, deflation, discrepancy in income and the backwardness of agriculture and small enterprises. In November, 1964, Satō began a program of "social development." Up to that time, materialism ruled over spiritualism. However, it was recognized that many serious problems had been concealed by the economic prosperity. Public welfare had been ignored and many urban dwellers were suffering psychological exhaustion due to spatial over-enlargement of the cities.

At the same time, the rapid rise in commodity prices began to prevent real income from increasing. If the consumer's price in 1960 is counted as 100, the consumer's price index rose to 105.3 in 1961, 112.5 in 1962, 121.0 in 1963, 125.6 in 1964 and 135.2 in 1965. This means it increased almost 10% every year (See Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8. Rate of Increase of Worker's Households Income over the Previous Year in %

(Worker's households in the cities with population of 50,000 or more)

Fiscal Year	Nominal	Net
1953	19.4	10.7
1954	9.1	4.8
1955	5.8	6.8
1956	7.0	5.7
1957	6.7	4.4
1958	5.6	6.1
1959	13.2	5.3
1960	12.6	8.5
1961	12.8	6.1
1962	12.0	5.0
1963	12.5	5.6
1964	11.2	6.2
1965	9.0	1.4

Source: Sōrifu tōkeikyoku, *Kakei chōsa nempō* (Annual Report on the Family Income and Expenditure Survey).

Table 9. Yearly Average of Monthly Income per Household
(Worker's households in the cities with population of
50,000 or more)

Fiscal Year	Total Income	Total Wages & Salaries	Wages & Salaries				Business & Homework	Others
			Household Head	Regular	Temporary	Wife & Other Household Members		
1961	46,177	43,104	38,483	31,038	7,374	4,623	1,092	1,979
1962	51,788	48,330	42,962	34,229	8,684	5,368	1,056	2,402
1963	58,100	54,089	48,325	38,295	9,971	5,764	1,374	2,637
1964	64,533	60,058	53,684	42,584	11,071	6,374	1,458	3,017
1965	70,074	65,066	58,282	46,114	12,074	6,784	1,649	3,359
1961	10.4	10.5	10.3	10.2	11.1	11.6	15.6	7.0
1962	12.2	12.1	11.6	10.3	17.8	11.6	Δ 3.3	21.4
1963	12.2	11.9	12.5	11.9	14.8	10.7	30.1	9.8
1964	11.1	11.0	11.1	11.2	11.0	11.1	6.1	14.4
1965	8.6	8.3	8.6	8.3	9.1	6.4	13.1	11.3
1965/1961	152	151	152	149	164	147	151	170

Source: Sōritsu tōkeikyoku, *Kakei chōsa nempō* (Annual Report on the Family Income and Expenditure Survey).

It can be seen from the interest in the Tokyo Olympics and the International Exposition that Japan has entered a new phase which emphasizes spiritual and cultural richness beyond material wealth. The predominant ethics of life is not simply the stabilization of life, but in raising the standard of living; not just in enjoyment of amusement but in the creation of pleasure. Also, in the area of family life, the main concern is not how to possess the material goods to fill up life with, but how to make life more pleasant and substantial by the utilization of those goods. In this sense, family pleasures and privately centered concerns should not be considered as withdrawal or escape from society, but as a positive value in family life. Under such circumstances, all the family members are more or less obliged to cooperate with one another for this purpose.

Since the war, Japanese economy has experienced both quantitative and qualitative increase in material products. However, this rapid development has resulted in serious problems in every phase of society. This is because the Japanese economy has not been established on a stable or solid foundation and could be easily shaken. An example is seen in the parent-child relationship. Modernization and massification of society have been occurring simultaneously. With the beginning of the era of consumption, parents no longer expect their child to strive towards careerism or idealism toward society. Instead, they wish for stabilization and enrichment of life. However, in the present situation in Japan, even this modest goal shows that people are still concerned with poverty. One of the distortions in the pursuit of wealth is the great effort made by parents to provide their children with higher education and encourage them to enter schools with high reputations.

It is characteristic of today's Japanese family that the core of the value system lies in the stabilization and enrichment of life. On the other hand, however, people fear that they are threatened by the possibility of poverty. This antagonism over hope and anxiety pushes parents into forcing their children's education. This, in turn, has produced the entrance examination hell and the "educational mothers," and is one of the main causes of the distortions in the Japanese family.

In the manner described above, the Japanese family has experienced the fluctuation and development of the postwar society. The central value standards were shifted from the democratization of the family in the era of absolute poverty to the stabilization and modernization of family life in the era of relative poverty to the enrichment of life and the improvement of living standards in the era of cultural richness. According to these shifts in value standards, changes have occurred also in human rela-

tionships. The central value standards were first focused on the liberation from feudality, then on the modernization of the family, and further on the individualization. This process, however, has left many distortions and contradictions. There is no anticipating in which direction the Japanese family will develop in the future. However, it is hoped that the family should be a place stabilized by human relationships and especially by affection. Further, it should be based on the principle of substantial enrichment of the life itself and of free development of individuality.