

Course No. 3507/3508

**Contemporary
Japanese Culture
and Society**

Lecture No. 13

Gender

jendaa

ジェンダー

15年ぶりに流血の大暴れ! ダンブ松本 極悪同盟復活宣言!! オーンこわッ!

オラ、オラ、なにヒビビてたか。あ、ん、血まみれて顔がよく見えないうってワナメんなよ。女子プロレス史上、最凶のヒール、ダンブ松本サマを見おれうってのかッ。ハンター(竹刀)シバく言、とでも言いたげな「オーンこわッ」

11日、古巣、全日本女子プロレス60周年記念のリングに登場したダンブ松本(仮)は、鼻と左腕に書かれた「久し振りの交遊」の文字通り、横かしの口角から5年ぶり、現役引退からは15年ぶりの復活した。それもあるってか、本人は背中や頭の極悪メイトで

3時間おけるなら、公開前から乳首とか、リングでは現役時代からの極悪メイト、たぬの巨体をフル稼働させ、18番の竹刀攻撃や「オーン」突き、鼻をトラム缶まで振り回し、アドレナリン出まくり、流血しまくりの、大暴走を繰り返した。

試合後には、オルドファンにはおまら、ない、極悪同盟復活まで宣言したダンブ。21日から彰かるとに新メンハとを加えた4人で本格参戦する大ヒールは、最近、いまいち元気がない女子プロ界にとって強力なカナル剤となりそうだ。

PHOTO 鬼怒川 修



Dump Matsumoto Top female pro wrestler...

A Japanese lady...

... who poses a formidable challenge to stereotyped views of femininity.

Women pro wrestlers are the subject of an ongoing research project by Keiko Aiba, right here in the Meiji Gakuin Dept of International studies.

明学国際学部の合場敬子先生は女子プロレスの研究プロジェクト、進行中。

The “Otohime” or “Sound Princess” by Toto



I wonder if Dump uses one...

A Female Majority

Women make up 52% of the population of Japan.

But they are a **minority in some walks of life:**

In government, for instance...

In 2009, women accounted for just 2.0% of executive positions in the national bureaucracy (up 0.1% points from 2008) and 3.6% of executive positions in the private sector (up 0.6% points)

Cabinet Office (Naikakufu) report, Dec 11, 2009. (Executive: Subsection chief [kacho] and above)

課長以上の女性管理職の割合： 2.0% (中央省庁)、3.6% (民間企業)

内閣府、09年12月11日

**Let's take a look at the
gender make-up of recent
cabinets...**



Hashimoto cabinet 1997



Obuchi cabinet 1998



Mori cabinet 2000



**Koizumi
cabinet 2001**



2nd Koizumi cabinet 2003



**Fukuda
cabinet
2008**

Kan cabinet 2010



2011 Noda cabinet





2013 Abe cabinet

These photos tell us how rare it is for a woman to get to the top in Japanese politics.

A portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark blue patterned top and a pearl necklace. The background is a solid light blue color.

**Tomomi
Inada**

**稲田
朋美**

TOMOMI INADA DUTIES

***Administrative Reform**

*** Civil Service Reform**

*** "Cool Japan" Strategy**

"Challenge Again" Initiative

*** Regulatory Reform**

.... Reform policy, 'cool' stuff.

A portrait of Masako Mori, a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing other people in a social setting.

森雅子

Masako Mori

MASAKO MORI DUTIES

- * Support for Women's Empowerment and Child-Rearing**
- * Consumer Affairs and Food Safety**
- * Measures for Declining Birthrate**
- * Gender Equality**

**... her duties all cover traditional
“women’s issues”**

Of course these duties are important, but they are not really big cabinet jobs like foreign minister, finance minister, etc. They are both fring cabinet positions.

Makiko Tanaka, education minister in 2012 Noda cabinet



**Too outspoken? Forced to resign as foreign
minister in 2002 over minor financial scandal**

The Tanaka Dynasty 田中一家

Makiko Tanaka inherited her seat in the diet in Niigata prefecture from her father, the late Kakuei Tanaka 田中角栄, prime minister in the early 1980s, forced to resign over a major financial scandal (taking a huge bribe from Lockheed Corp.)

Many female politicians follow the dynastic pattern.



**Tanaka's
successor as
foreign
minister,
Yoriko
Kawaguchi,
with PM
Jun'ichiro
Koizumi**

Not so many in parliament...

(Several recent women in cabinet posts were not elected politicians but 'Madonna' types chosen to enhance the image of the cabinet.)

Percentage of women in national parliaments (lower house), as of October 31, 2012. Left-hand column shows rank out of 150 countries surveyed.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union

1	Rwanda 56
3	Cuba 45
4	Sweden
8	South Africa 42
14	Netherlands 39
19	Mexico 37
20	Spain 36
24	Germany 33
38	France 27

(<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>)

47	Australia 25
60	UK 22
66	China 21
82	USA 17
88	South Korea 16
111	India 11
113	JAPAN 10.6% (18.6% in upper house)
123	Brazil 9
142	Egypt 2
166	Saudi Arabia 0

Little better in local politics

In 2003, out of the 10,246 seats up for grabs in 387 local assemblies, 1,236 women won seats – a record 12%.

Since then, women have steadily won 10-15% of seats in local elections.

Similar in the business world

- **Japan had 240,000 female company presidents in September 2011 10.3% of a total of 2.5 million registered companies, ... mostly in smaller companies.**
- **女子社長は全体の10.3% (主に中小企業) (Tokyo Shoko Research)**

**And even more so in BIG
business.**

**None of the top 100 companies
in Japan has a female president.**

2011 Fortune magazine global top 50 powerful women

*Only two Japanese
women, and they are
well down the list.*

Junko Nakagawa #34



Executive managing director and Chief Financial Officer, Nomura Holdings. New entry in 2011.

#36 in 2011: Yoshiko Shinohara President of Tempstaff

“I think Japanese society is still dominated by men, but these days, this is changing very rapidly...”

In the top 50 for many years



Yoshiko Shinohara... outspoken

Some women only complain, but complaining gets you nowhere. If women work hard and try hard, they will find the glass is not so thick. They need to break through the Glass Ceiling!



Shinohara started her temp agency in a small rented apartment in 1973.

- In 2011 her company had sales of \$2.9 billion, and employs 5,000 people with six offices overseas and 91 in Japan. At 77, Shinohara was taking her company into new markets, providing professional staff in the medical, nursing, and child-care fields.**

Temping人材派遣業: gendered work

- **Shinohara's company, Tempstaff, is itself controversial. Its workers are nearly all women, and the firm gets a large commission out of their wages .**
 - **Helping women to get flexible employment?**
 - **Or exploiting women for low-paid work with no job security?**
- ... the debate continues.**

2012 setback

- **In October 2012, Fortune magazine published its latest annual list of the 50 most powerful women in the world. Nakagawa and Shinohara had both fallen off the list.**



**Monica Merz, president of
Toys R Us Japan, top gaijin
woman in Japan**

In many other ways things have got steadily better for women in Japan

- In 1940, the average Japanese woman was 42 when her youngest child started school, and died at the age of 50... just 8 years later.**

- **By 1977, her youngest started school when she was only 34, and she could expect to live to the age of 78... another 44 years.**
- **The rise from 1940 was no less than 36 years...**
- **Nearly an extra year every year for 37 years!**

- **Female life expectancy was just 53.96 years in 1947 but, by 2010, had risen to 86.3 years, the highest in the world.**
- **(For men it's a mere 79.5...)**

A study reported in the U.S. magazine *Science* (Oeppen and Vaupel 2002) claims the *average* Japanese woman born in 2060 could have a life expectancy of **100.**

So depending on your point of view...

Women may appear to be a brutally marginalized group – more marginalized than any ethnic minority

(there are plenty of big Japanese companies with foreign bosses these days, like Carlos Ghosn, the Lebanese-Brazilian boss of Nissan Motor...)

Or they may appear...

... to be living long and healthy lives of leisure and relaxation, taking it easy at home while their husbands are worked to death at the office.

The role of women in society is hotly disputed these days.

A trip down memory lane...

1980年代の思い出

***... to the 1980s, when I first
arrived in Japan.***

Still 3 steps behind?

- **Polly Toynbee in the *Guardian*, c. 1980:**
- **“The Hell of Being a Japanese Woman.”**
- **Photo: Woman walking 3 paces behind husband. Ever seen it?**

Some rather old-fashioned views...

"A man is not a man if he cannot rape a woman."

--- Shimon Miura, famous novelist, Chief of Japan's Cultural Agency, 1985

Things have improved since then, but there are still plenty of pressing gender issues.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- **In 2011, there were 2.6 million students attending 780 universities in Japan. 1.5 million were male and 1.1 million female, meaning that women made up 43% of all university students.**

Women steadily narrowing the gap

	Students	Men	Women
1995	2,331,000	67%	33%
2011	2,569,000	57%	43%

What about the teachers?

- In 2011 out of 365,000 university teachers, 275,000 were men and only 89,000 were women – 25% of the total. Until Nara Women's University appointed a female principal a few years ago, even women's universities invariably had male principals.

Japanese government statistics

[<http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/>]

Even at the faculty level, more slowly

	Univs	Faculty	Men	Women
1995	565	250,132	86%	14%
2011	780	364,904	75%	25%

Note: These MEXT figures do not distinguish full-time and part-time teachers. It is much harder for a woman to get a full-time, tenured position.

“2 years is plenty for girls”

Junior college (tanki daigaku 短期大学; tandai 短大) – a lower level of education for women

Junior colleges: 150,000 students enrolled in 2011, of whom 133,000 (89%) were women.

2-year junior colleges (tandai), 1995 and 2011

	Students	Male	Female	Faculty	Male	Female
1995	499,000	9%	91%	59,000	63%	37%
2011	150,000	11%	89%	30,000	50%	50%

Clearly an institution in decline. But again, men teaching girls is a common pattern.

Careers

- **40% of the Japanese Labor force are women - 24 million of them.**
- **But it's still extremely hard for them to get to the very top.**

Percentage of women in Japanese industries

	1980	1990	2000
ALL INDUSTRIES	34%	38%	40%
Finance / Real estate	46%	50%	48%
Manufacturing	34%	36%	33%
Construction	14%	16%	15%

The higher, the harder

RANK	English	% women
社長 Shachô	President	5.6%
部長 Buchô	Department head	1.6%
課長 Kachô	Section head	2.4%
係長 Kakarichô	Subsection head	7.7%

Easier to be president...

Year	1996	1998	2000
No. of female presidents	55,194	58,634	62,370
% female presidents	5.30%	5.49%	5.53%

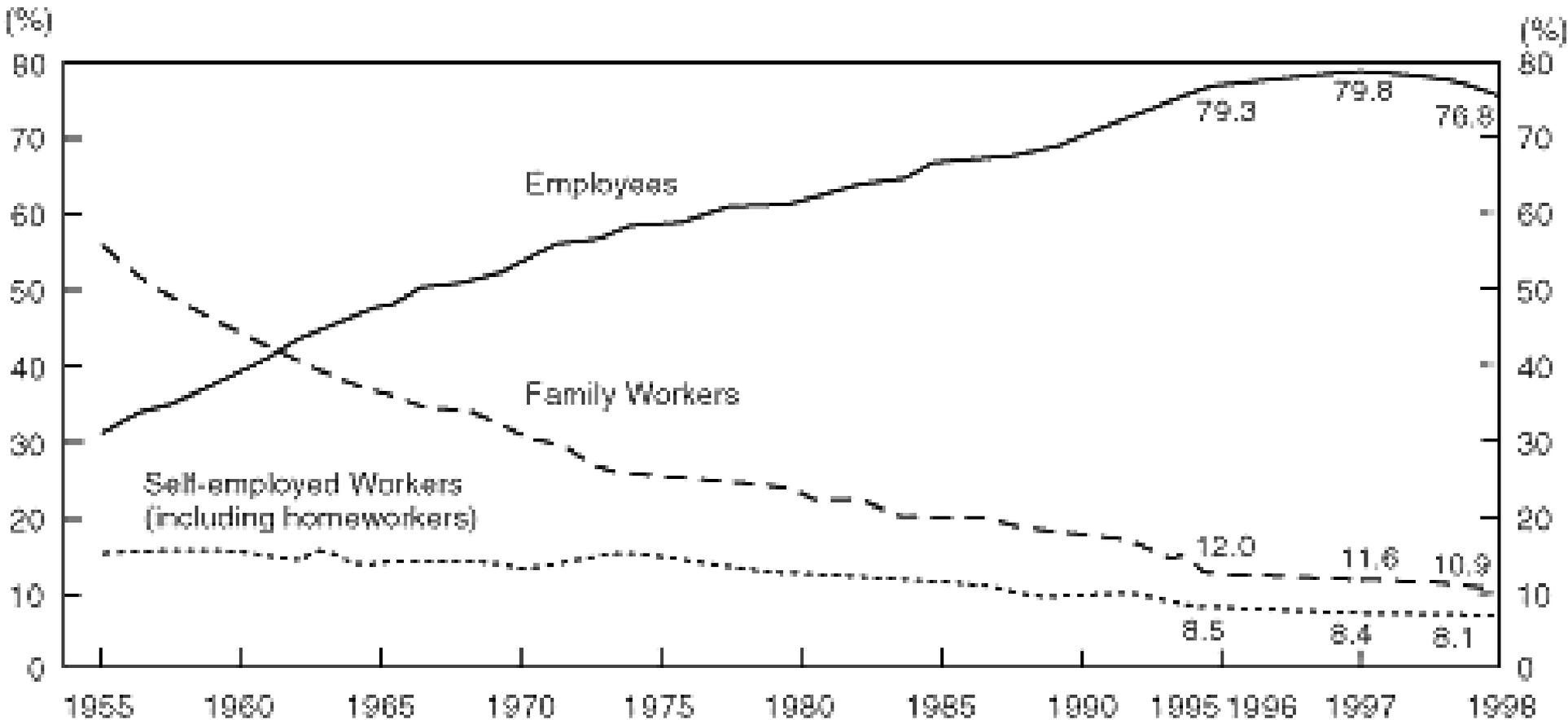
<http://www.tdb.co.jp/watching/press/p000702.html>

Female employment in Japan

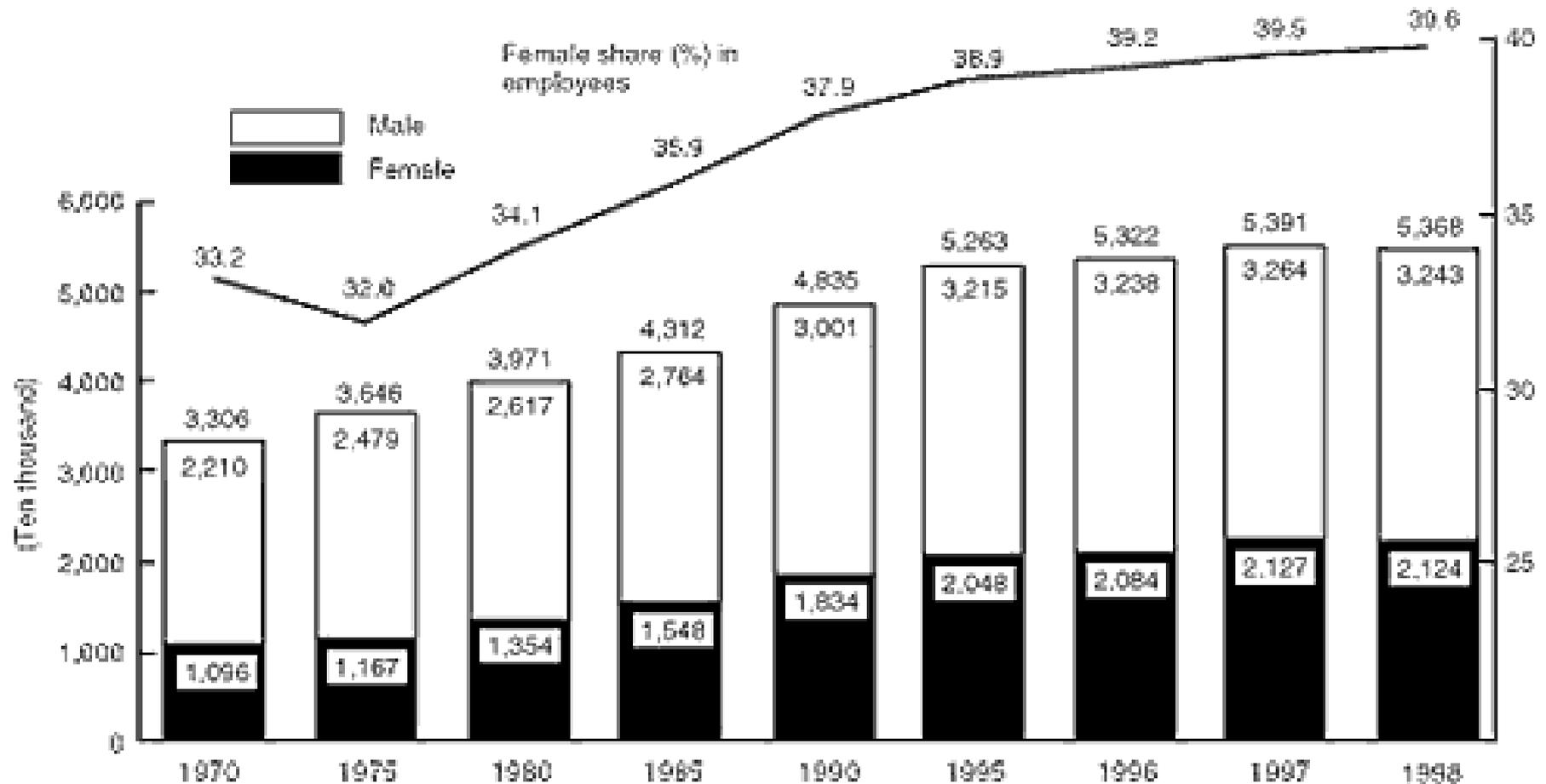
We've started by looking at the elite end of Japanese business... what about the more general employment pattern?

エリートだけではなく、一般的な女性雇用のパターンを検証しよう。

Post-war female employment



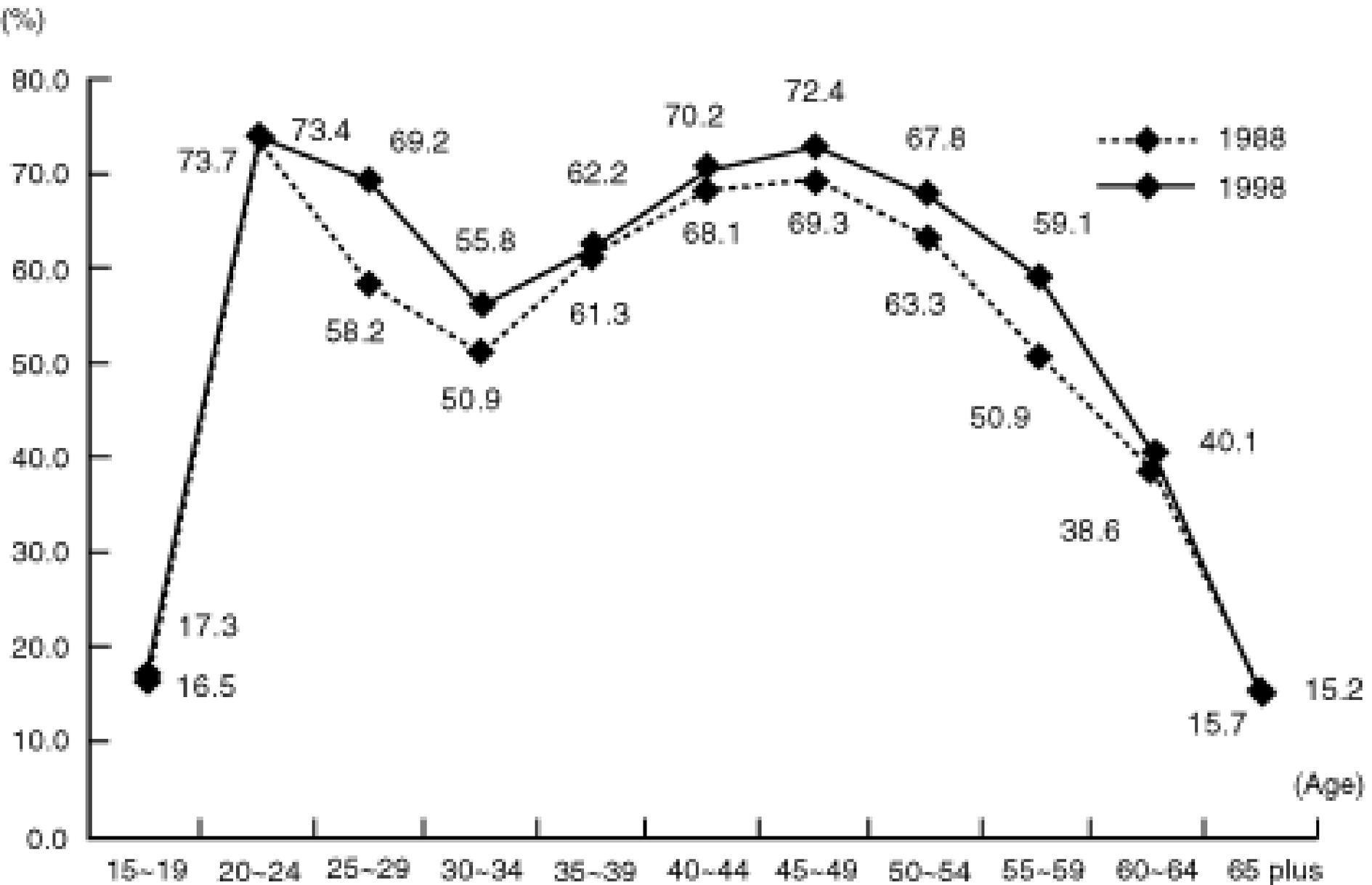
A growing female workforce



The “M” Pattern of Employment

Typically, a woman will work for 4 or 5 years, then leave to marry and have children, returning to work in her 40's from economic necessity rather than ambition.

The M Curve



Smaller pay packets...

Full-time female workers receive about 60% of their male counterparts' pay, part-time females about 40% and those working at home 20% - the largest gap in the developed world.

**Women's wages and men's wages
(Companies with 30+ employees)...
25 years with no improvement.**

Year	MEN	WOMEN	W/M %
1975	304,000	114,000	37.5%
1980	309,000	166,000	53.7%
1985	378,000	196,000	51.9%
1990	450,000	223,000	49.6%
1995	496,000	253,000	51.0%
1998	504,000	257,000	51.0%
2000	494,000	242,000	49.0%

**Management & Coordination Agency (Sômuchô)
Statistics Bureau**

Male/female wage gap

Age range	Av male wage (¥000)	Av female wage (¥000)	Differential (Men = 100)
20-24	197	178	90
25-29	239	203	85
30-34	289	233	81
35-39	344	267	78
40-44	405	311	77
45-49	460	335	73
50-54	536	385	72

High school graduates 1997, Min of Labor stats

Dubious statistics

統計は必ずしも頼りにならない

This is an area where the stats can be very treacherous. Just look at the difference between those two sets of figures, from two different branches of government.

There are mountains of stats on economy and labor issues in Japan ... but they must be handled with care!

Lengthy lobbying by women's groups has won concessions on maternity leave:

Overview of Maternity, Childcare and Family Leave in Japan, since 2001

Type of leave/benefit	Duration of leave	Level of payment
Maternity Leave (<i>Shussan kyûka</i>)	14 weeks (6 weeks for prenatal & 8 weeks postnatal leave). Multiple births: extra 8 weeks.	60% of the basic wage
Childcare Leave (<i>Ikuji Kyûka</i>) for both parents	Until child reaches one year of age	40% of the basic wage (30% during the leave and 10% upon return to work)

Overview of Maternity, Childcare and Family Leave in Japan, 2001

Type of leave/benefit	Duration of leave	Level of payment/benefit
Family Leave <i>(Kazoku Kaigo Kyûka)</i> ; both parents	3 months	unpaid
Childbirth and Childcare Lump Sum Grant <i>(Shussan ikuji ichijikin)</i>	after childbirth to assist with medical costs	300,000 yen for each child

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

“Full-time part-timers”

Women often have to spend more time at home (children, housework etc.) and they cannot afford the all-day commitment of full-time work... others are employed on part-time contracts though they actually work full-time hours. They are called **‘full-time part-timers’**.

**But does it
matter what
they're called...?**

Yes it does.

- 1. Full-timers get bonuses of up to 6 months salary... part-timers usually get no bonus, or a very small one.**
- 2. Full-timers get pensions, health insurance, housing allowances, etc., etc. ... part-times usually do not.**
- 3. It is much easier for the company to fire part-timers than full-timers.**

Even if the 'part-timers' are actually doing just as much work as the 'full-timers'...

... and the part-timers are mostly women and the full-timers are mostly men...

... the companies will stoutly insist that sexism has **nothing to do with it.**

One outcome of all these sexist practices is a gendered division of labor in companies:

“Salarymen” vs. “OL”

The “OL”: A Case Study in Sexism

“OL” – stands for “office lady”.
In the folklore of modern corporate Japan, she stands alongside her more celebrated male counterpart:

Metal frame square-rimmed glasses.

Short hair parted at the side in the "seven-three" style.

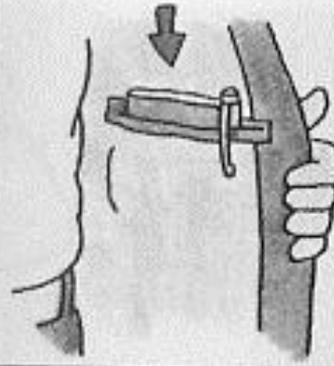
Dark red necktie with diagonal stripes.

White or light blue cutter shirt.

In the coat pocket:
Address/schedule book, wallet, name card case, commuter train pass, etc.

Dark blue or gray suit.

Black leather shoes.



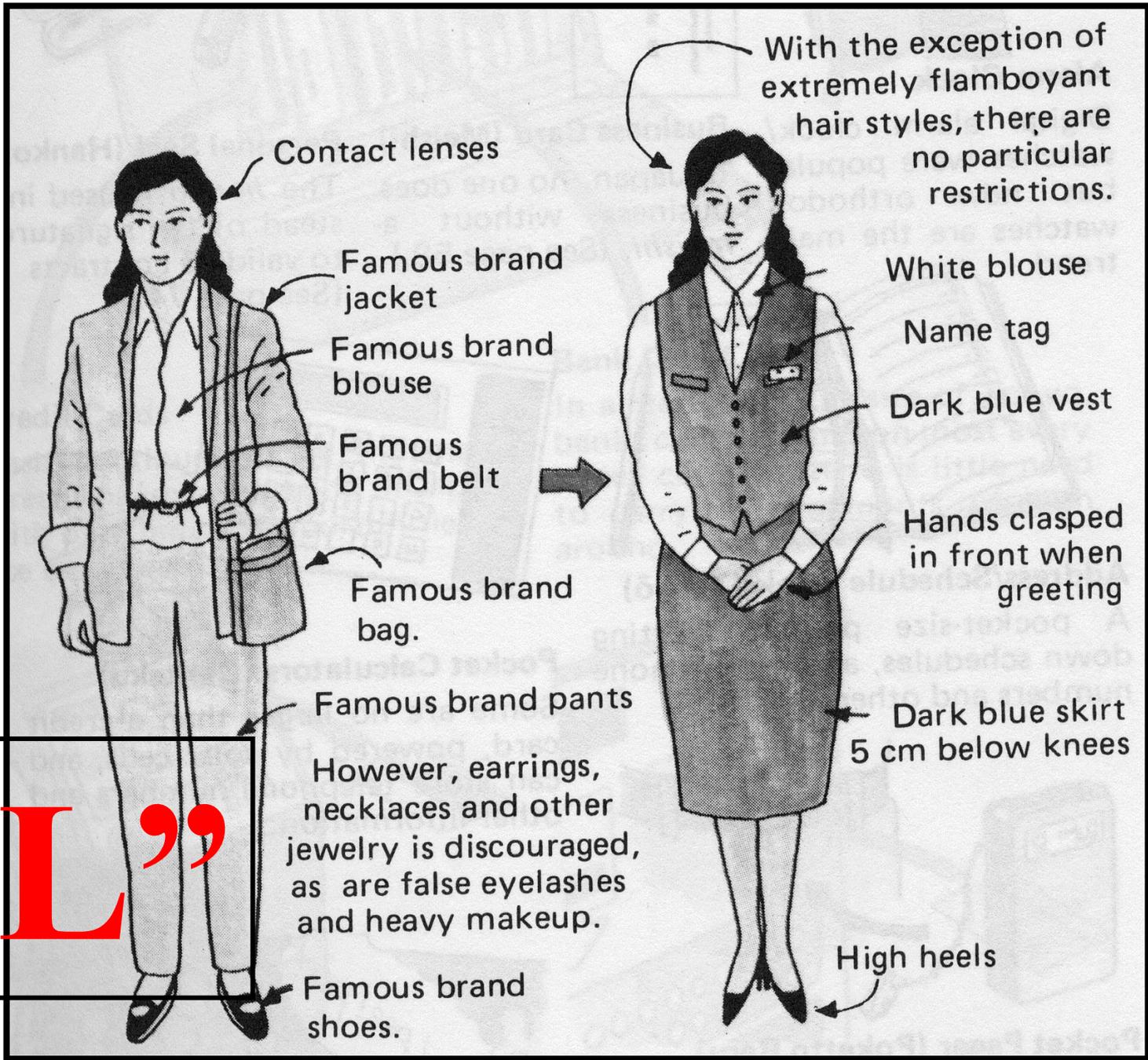
“SALARYMAN”

A Salaryman's Uniform

“Salaryman” is a word coined in Japan, used to refer to all white-collar workers (who receive a salary). In a very real sense, salarymen are the driving force behind Japan’s phenomenal postwar economic growth.

From *Salaryman in Japan*, published by Japan Travel Bureau in 1986 (near the peak of the Bubble Economy). Page 10.

“OL”



- OL (Office Lady)

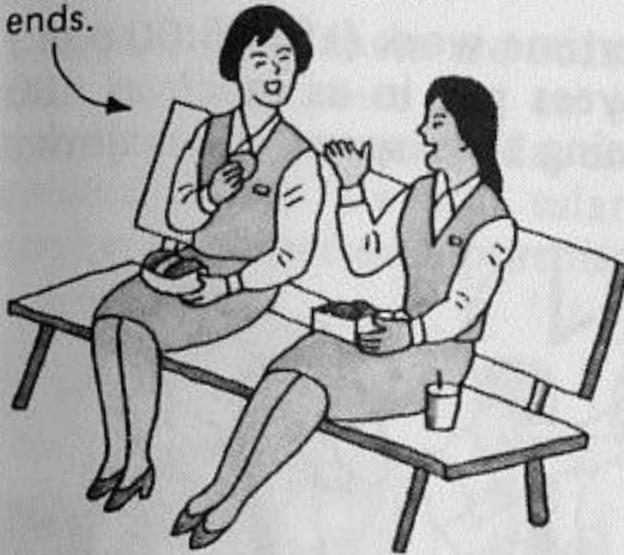
“OL” is a term coined in Japan referring to all ladies employed in office situations. OL are generally hired between the age of 18 and 22, and leave the company five to six years later to marry. Veteran female employees who go on to management positions are distinguished from OL as “career women.”

From *Salaryman in Japan*. Page 13.

They are expected to behave differently...

● Lunchtime Entertainment

OL compare boyfriends or how they spent their weekends.



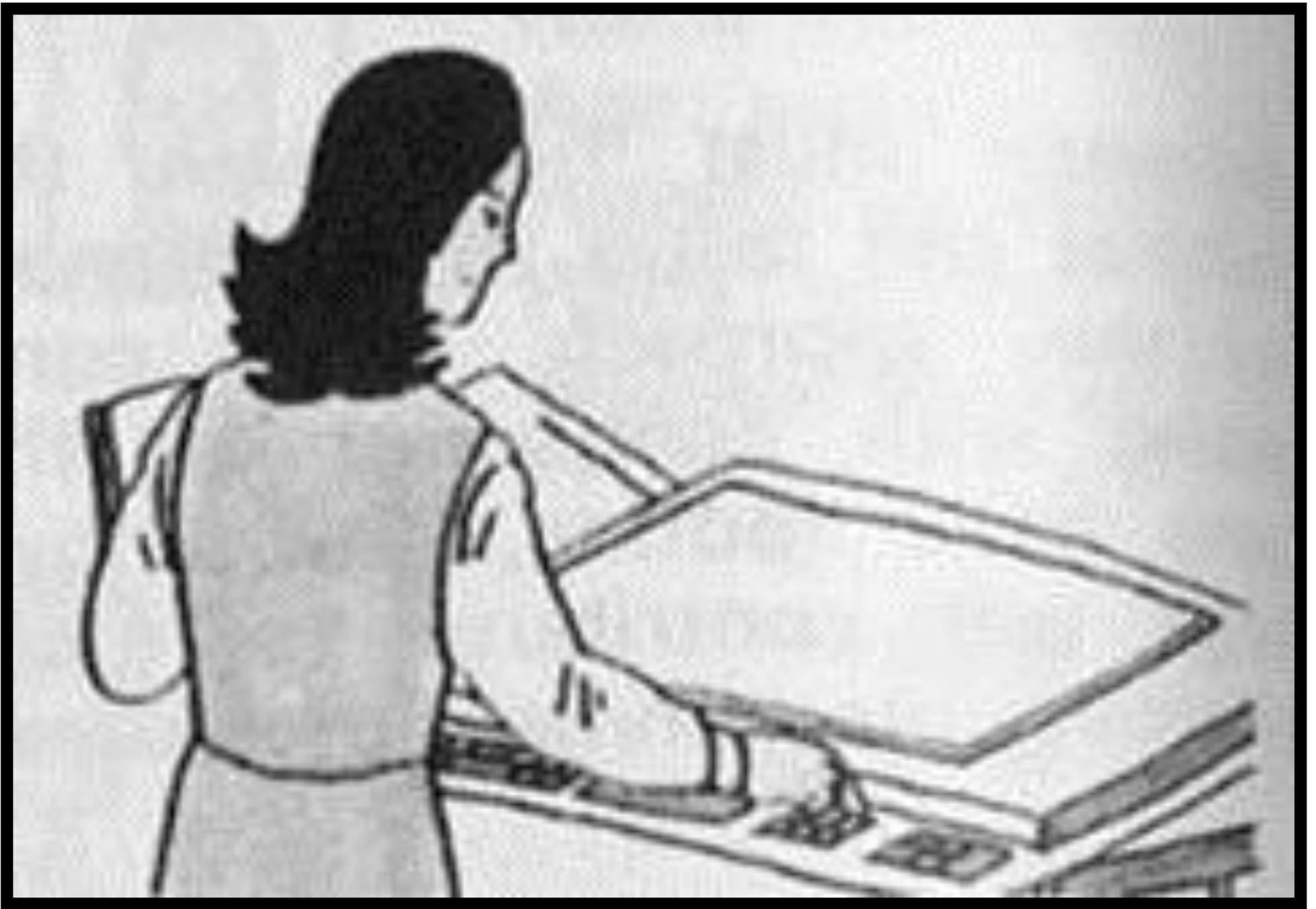
OLs eat their *bentō* (box lunches) in parks or on the company roof, and chat with their co-workers. Some also enjoy volleyball or other noontime recreation.

Salarymen talk about work, naturally.

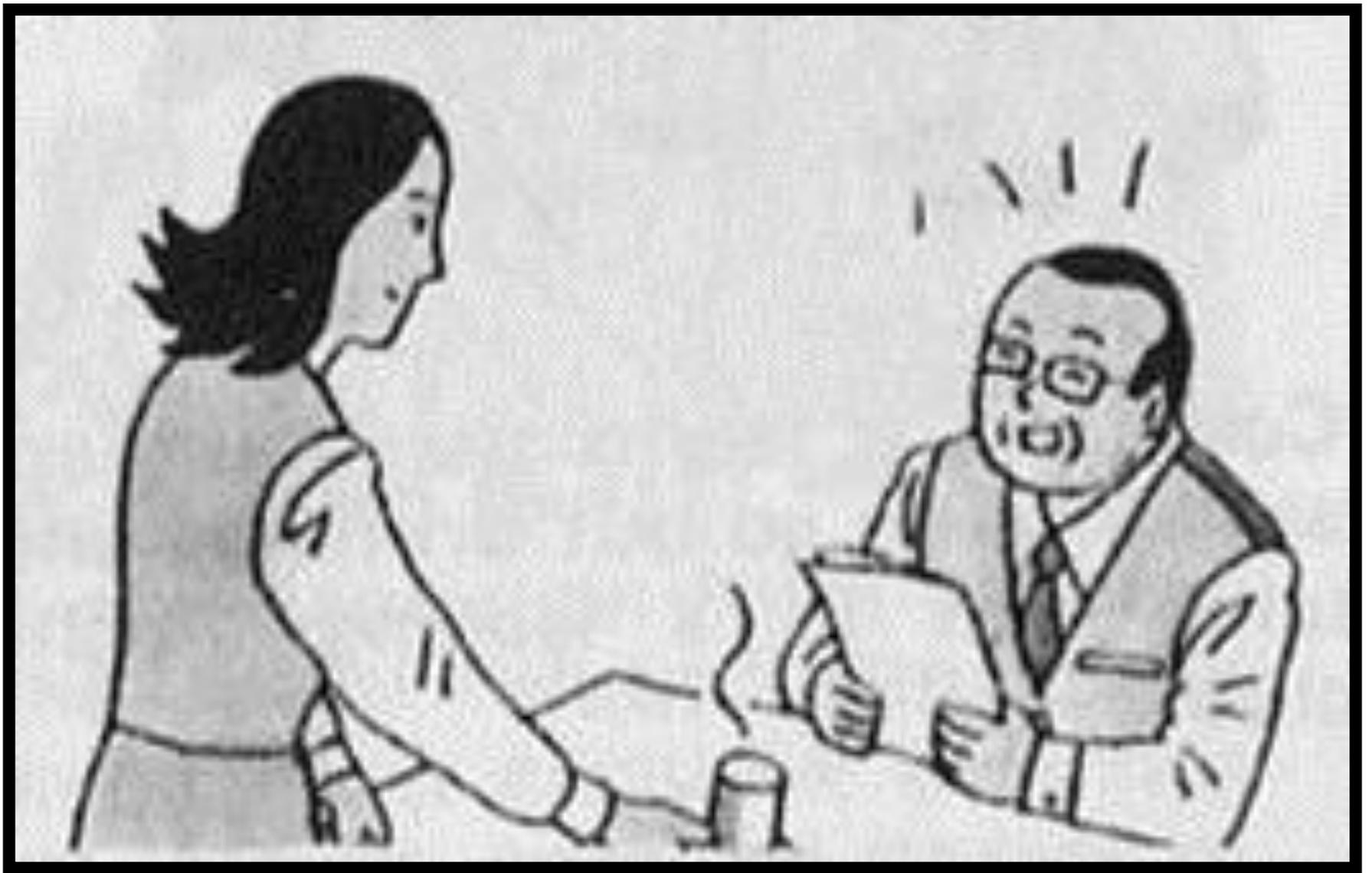


Salarymen sit and talk in coffee shops, or go for a short jog.

The Duties of an OL



Photocopying...



Serving tea... with a smile...

- **Answering the telephone...**
- **Sitting at the reception desk...**
- **Typing up letters...**

And, err, that's about it...

**... but OLs are also supposed /
imagined / encouraged / expected /
assumed...**

**to play various other roles not in
their official duties...**



**Frequently
characterized
as obsessive
gossips...**

Keenly aware of status distinctions



**Always
working
strictly in
that
secondary,
support
role...**

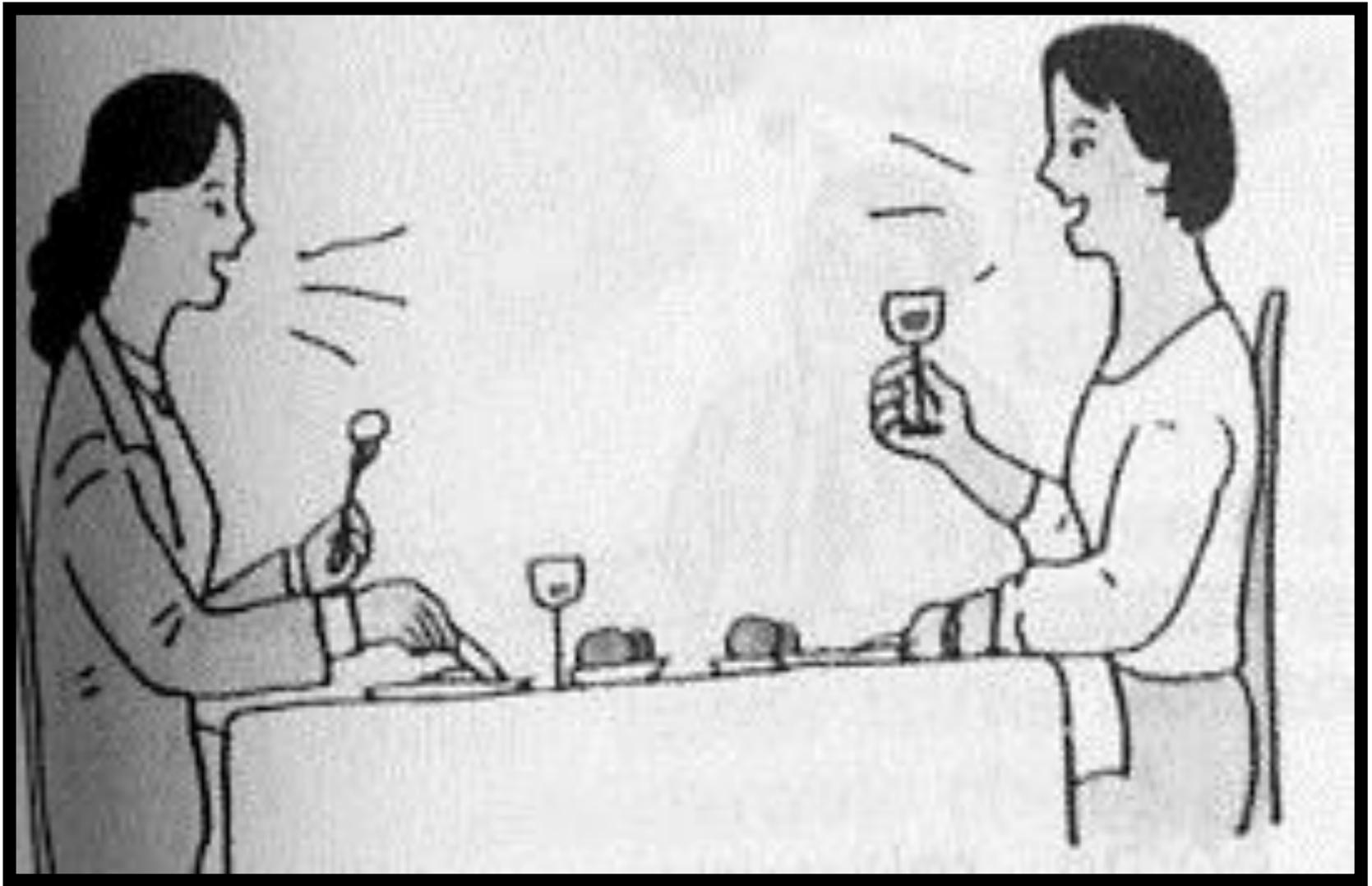




Doing the cheerleading at the company sports day for instance...

Another side to OL life...

The same sexist workplace attitudes that put them in subordinate roles also has some economic advantages in a wealthy country like Japan...



They wear leading fashion brands, and dine on high quality French cuisine...



“They enjoy golf, tennis and other sports which cost big money to play in Japan.”



“They are more than willing to use every day of paid vacation time to take off on trips.”



“Male employees always pay for meals, further swelling OL bank accounts”

A highly gendered workplace, which has its pluses and minuses for both genders?

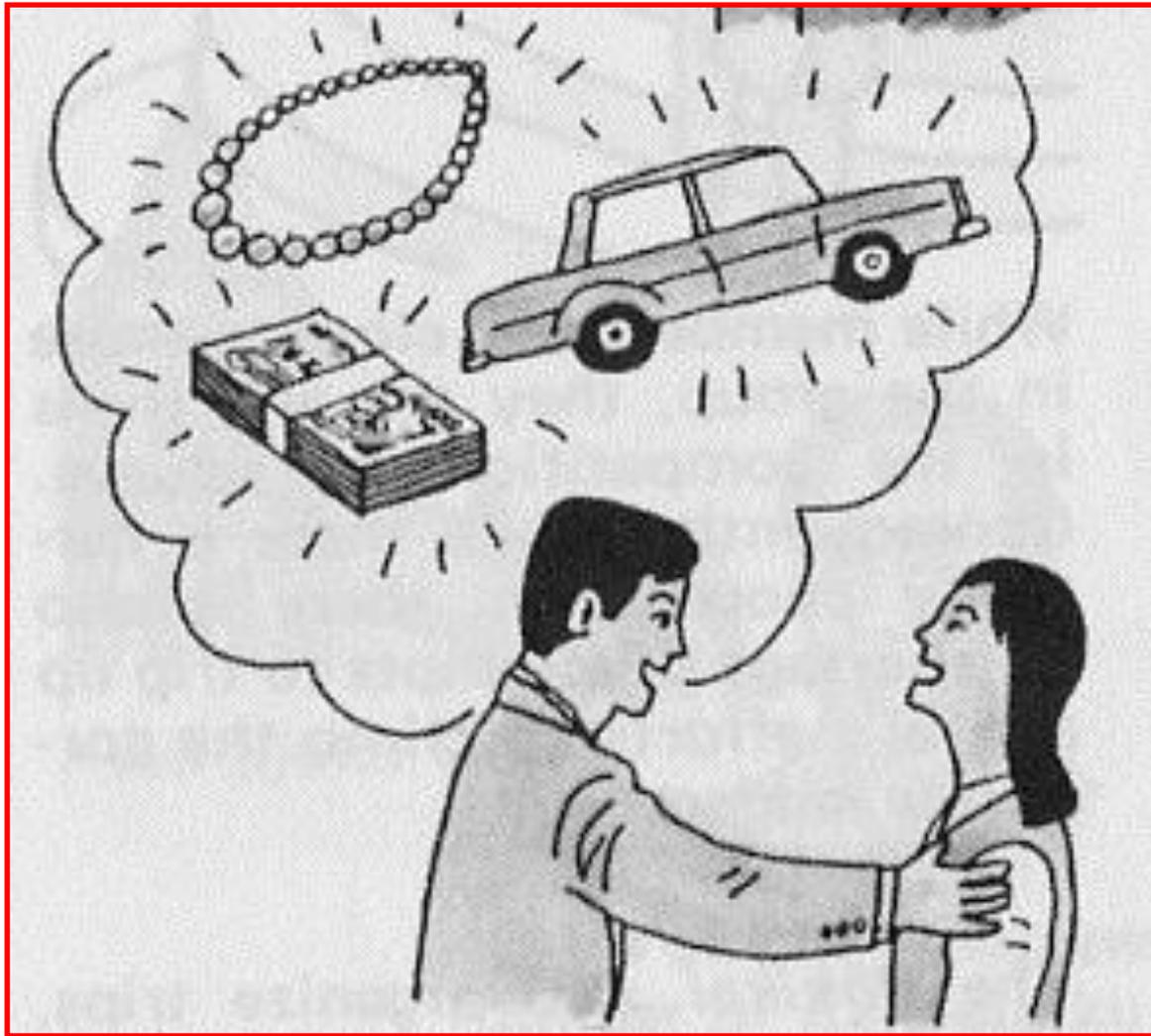


**OL can
sometimes be
useful for
explaining to
new recruits
how to
maintain
smooth
relations
within the
company...**

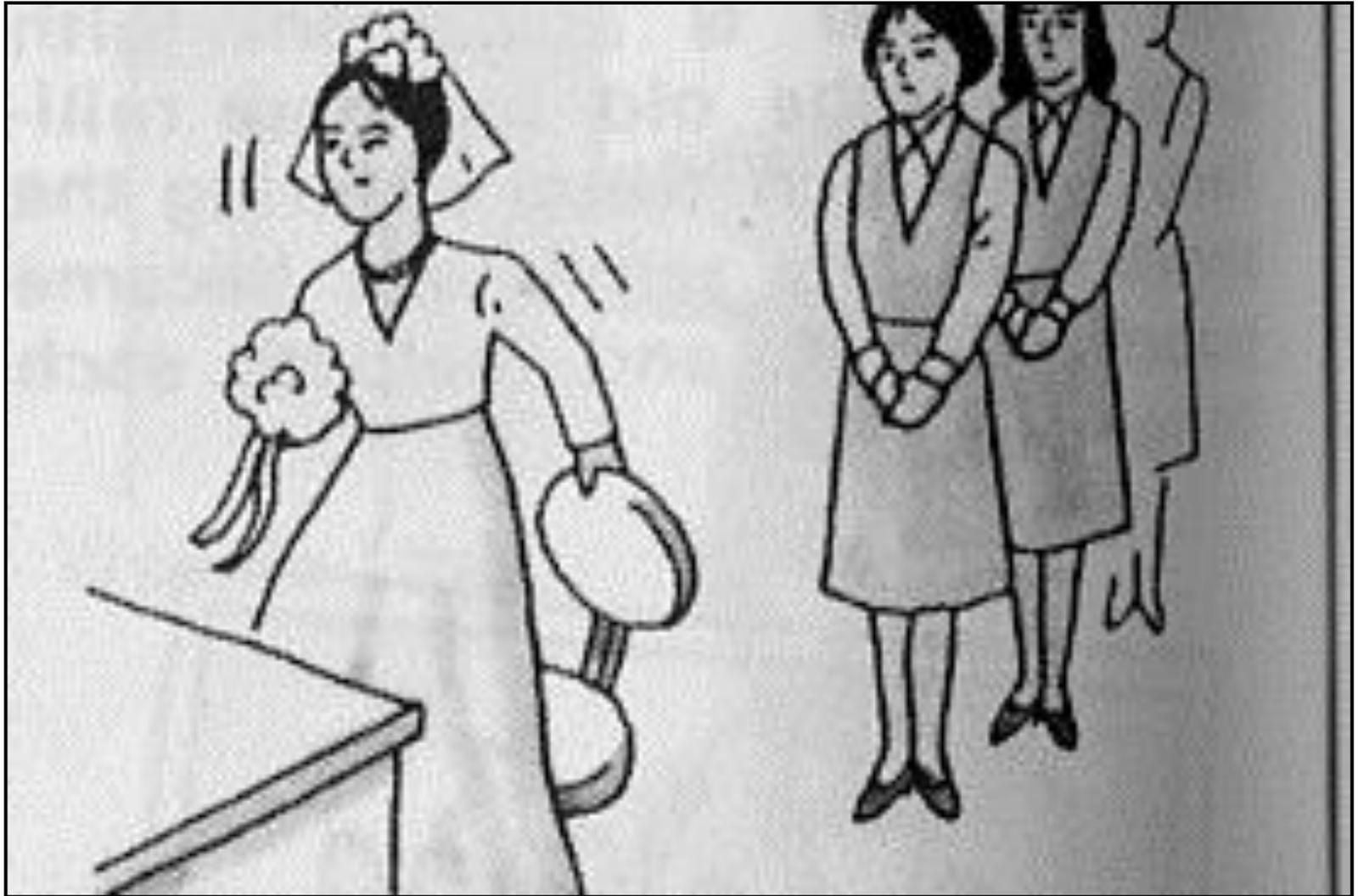
**... and sometimes relations go
so smoothly that one thing
leads to another...
culminating in what is
supposed to be every OL's
dream:**



Shanai kekkon – “company marriage”



***“Tamanokoshi”*... lit., “getting on the palanquin”
-- marrying the son of a top executive**



***Koshikake*... lit. “a place to sit down for a moment” – a job as a step toward marriage**

The rules of marriage...

Once a man is married, it is traditional for him to hand over his pay-packet to his wife (or nowadays, she will hold the bank card giving access to the account where the wages are paid in).

She will then give him pocket money (e.g. ¥1,000 a day) for his basic living expenses.

奥さんは家庭経済管理の決定権を握る。

So one counter-argument

...to Japan's image of a highly sexist society says that the gender balance of power is very different inside the household to what you see outside it. A wife is called *okusan* 「奥さん」, 'the one inside', which hints at quasi-Islamic notions of women being hidden away from public eye, but she is also called *okamisan* 女将さん, meaning 'god', 'the one above' or 'woman general.'

Questioning western assumptions

She has economic power over him, a very real aspect of gender relations that you may not notice at first glance.

(the same argument is made about Indian and Pakistani wives in the U.K.)

Kyosaika 恐妻家

If the husband's personality is weak, the household balance of power may tilt so far against him that he becomes a 'kyosaika' or hen-pecked husband, literally a man who is afraid of his wife.

Aisai Bento 愛妻弁当

When things are going better, she will express her love of her husband by making him a very tasty and prettily-designed lunch, that his co-workers can envy when they see him open it. It's called an aisai bento, lit. "loving wife lunchbox."

Sengyo Shufu 專業主婦

Women who follow the traditional pattern, giving up work to concentrate on raising a family, are called 'sengyo shufu' meaning 'specialist housewives' or 'homemakers.' What is life like for them?

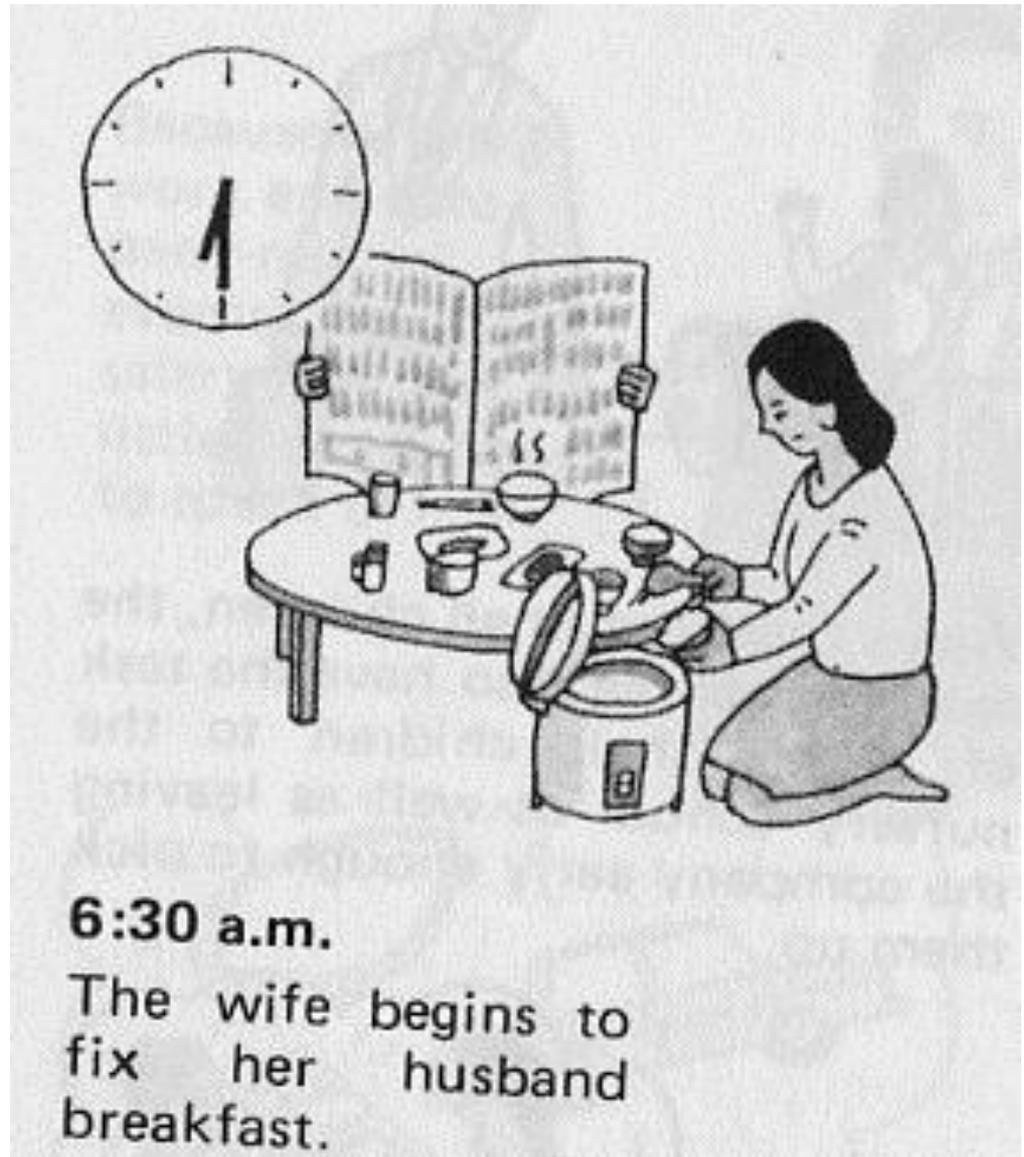
**Once
married
she can
still give
him advice,
just like in
the days
when they
were
workers
together...**

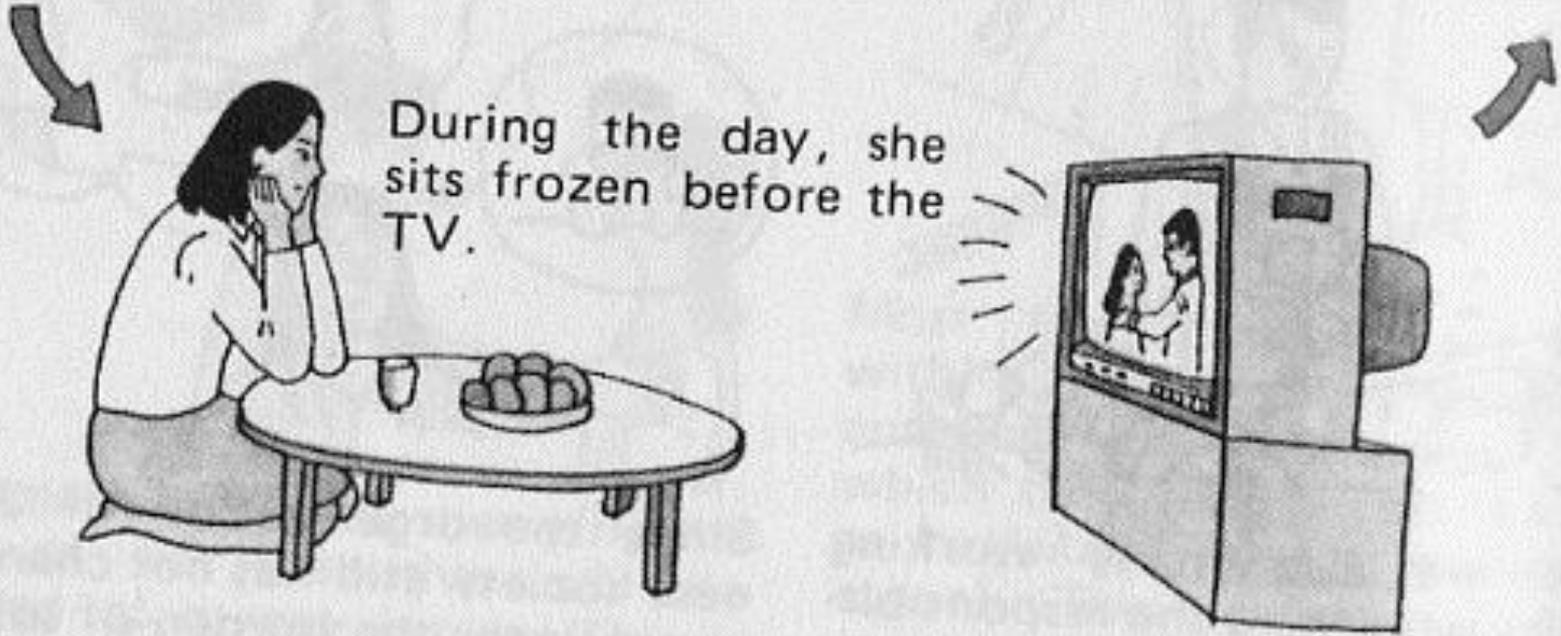




**Still goes
to sports
day, but
now as a
spectator
and
child
minder**

The life of a salaryman's wife





During the day, she sits frozen before the TV.

When there are no children in the home, the wife's work consists of these two basic chores. During these jobs she has little to do, and spends much of the time alone, inside the home.

Bored all day with nothing to do...



One of the most common solutions is to join housewives with the same dilemma for shopping or for gab sessions over tea.



Outgoing wives play tennis, golf or other active sports. Such behavior was rarely seen up to just a few years ago.

“She will work at many approaches to break the monotony.”



One of the wife's duties is to shuttle the kids back and forth to school by car or on foot.



When the husband is rarely at home, the wife and children take off to amusement parks or movies together.

Devoting herself to childcare...

Getting bored?

**... or getting the best out of
life?**

What is the alternative?



**“House husbands” (ハウスハズバンド)
are not as rare as they used to be...**



Since the organization of Japanese society still has not changed, increasingly the burden of solving children's problems and maintaining neighborhood relations has fallen on the working wife.

... but even today, it's usually the wife who gets stuck with the chores, child-rearing, representing the family in the community etc... even if she has got a full-time job as well.

**Yuko Ogasawara,
U of California
Press, 1998**

**.. Borrows James
C. Scott's
Concept of
'weapons of the
weak' to show
how OLs subvert
gender power
structures.**

OFFICE LADIES AND SALARIED MEN



*Power,
Gender,
and Work
in
Japanese
Companies*

YUKO OGASAWARA

“Women can laugh at men making desperate attempts to please their superiors because OLs do not usually have to do the same to support themselves and their families. Only they can afford to observe calmly and coolheadedly men’s funny, pathetic, and sometimes ugly struggle for promotion.”

Ogasawara p. 96

Problems with the 'OL' image

- 1. Ignores women in blue-collar occupations – cf Glenda Roberts, *Staying on the Line: Blue-Collar Women in Contemporary Japan*.

(Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1994)

Many women are working full-time on the production line, even after they marry and have children.

- **“The increasing numbers of women like those at Azumi, determined to “stay on the line” for as long as possible, may gradually redraw the M-curve and make the Japanese business environment more amenable to women workers.”**

Roberts, p. 176

Problems with the 'OL' Image

2. ***Demears*** women – not able enough to do responsible work – but also ***envies*** them for their supposedly affluent lifestyle.

Recently, that tone of envy and spite has got stronger, as men condemn 'Parasite singles'

“Parasite Singles”

These, typically, are women who don't fancy the prospect of giving up independence and a career to marry a salaryman and elect to stay with their parents where they pay cheap board, if any, have few household chores and get to spend all their money.

Strong value judgments...

Consumer spending is supposed to be good for Japan's deflating economy, yet ironically, 'spendthrift' women are still blamed for irresponsibility.

"Parasite singles are a phenomenon peculiar to Japan. In the US people think it is shameful to depend on their parents and to be unable to attract the opposite sex."

Tokyo Gakugei University professor Yamada Masahiro.

A publishing industry...

- ***Parasaito Shinguru*** (Parasite Singles), by Sarada Tamako(1998)
- ***Parasaito Shinguru no Jidai*** (The Era of Parasite Singles), by Yamada Masahiro (1999)
- ***Chichi to Musume no Parasaito Shinguru*** (Father-Daughter Parasite Singles), by **Miura Shimon** and Sarada Tamako (2001)
- ***Nonpara: Parasaito Shinai Onnatachi no 'Hontō'*** (*Nonpara: The 'Truth' of Women Who Do Not Parasitize*), by Yamamoto Kiyō (2001)

3. Soaked in sexist assumptions

E.g. Men ‘talk business’, women merely ‘chat.’

Cf Karen Shire, “Gendered Organization and Workplace Organization in Japanese Customer Services” (*Social Science Japan Journal*, 2000)

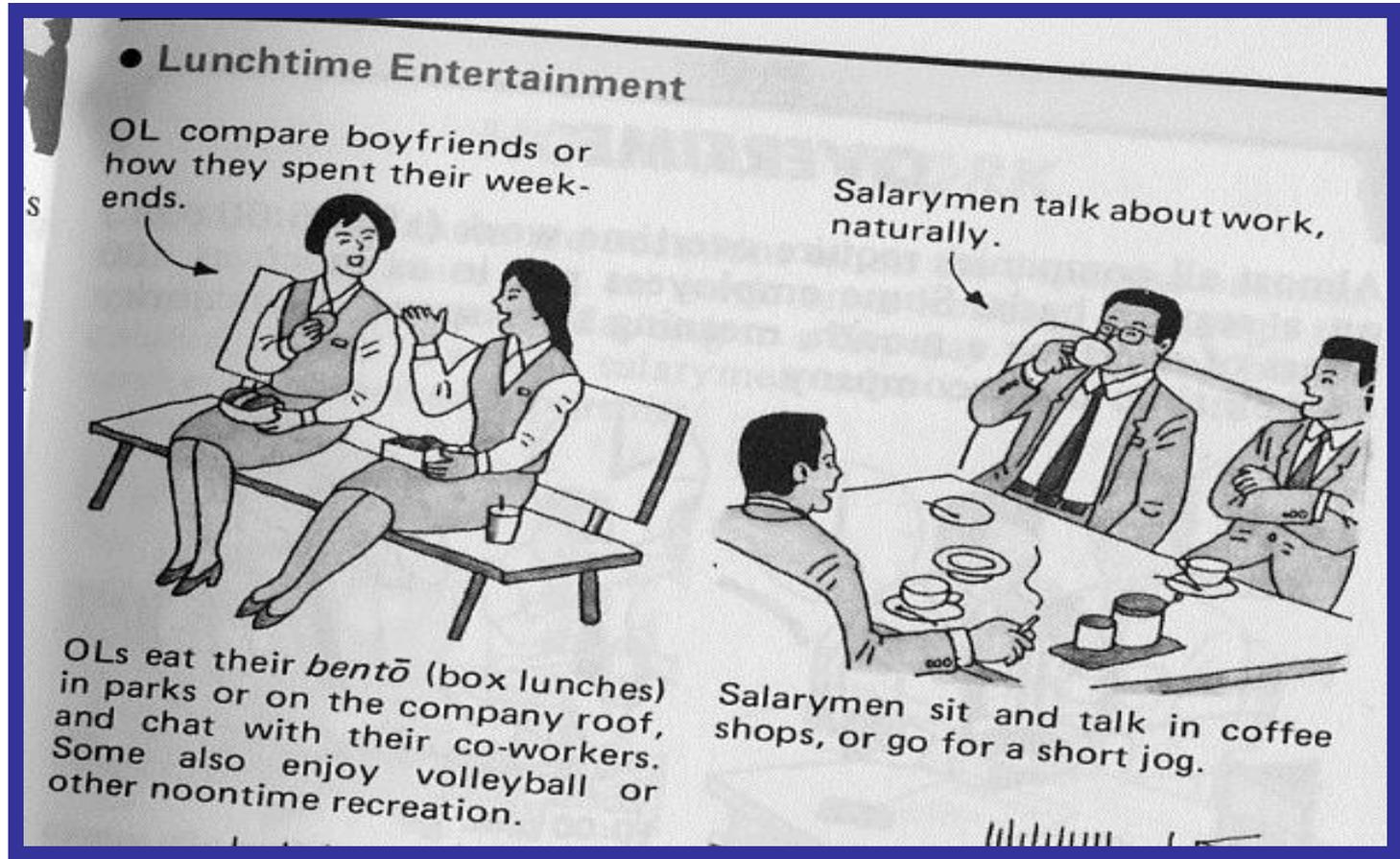
Shire in SSJJ 2000

In worker evaluation forms, Shire found that male workers would be positively evaluated for ‘good self-expression’ while women would be marked down for “being too chatty.”

Men: eloquent *yuben* 雄弁

Women: chatty *oshaberu* おしゃべり

Is the conversation *really* so different?



A vicious circle?

Women at work are treated as irresponsible children...

... they know they have very little chance of promotion to a serious job...

... so they feel alienated from the company.

A vicious circle?

They respond in various ways:

- (1) Mock the seriousness of the salarymen with their slogans, corporate rituals etc... Don't take their own work seriously.**
- (2) Get very frustrated if they do have ambitions to succeed.**

A vicious circle?

They quit the firm to get married, go traveling, transfer to a foreign owned (*gaishi*) company, etc.

Alas, most of these strategies CONFIRM the prejudices of male managers that women are not suited to responsible positions... and the circle continues.

Anti-sexist legislation

- **The Employment Equal Opportunity Law (EEOL) of 1985.**
- **No penalties established for those who break it...**
- **Corporate response – *ippan-shoku* and *sogo-shoku* system**

***... just another excuse for
sexism?***

Women want out...

A growing number of women reject the role of low-grade supplementary labor followed by marriage.

Average age at first marriage is rising fast – used to be about 21, now about 28... (related to ‘parasite single’ phenomenon)

No longer afraid...

... of becoming 'Christmas Cakes.'

(unwanted after the 25th... year of one's life.)

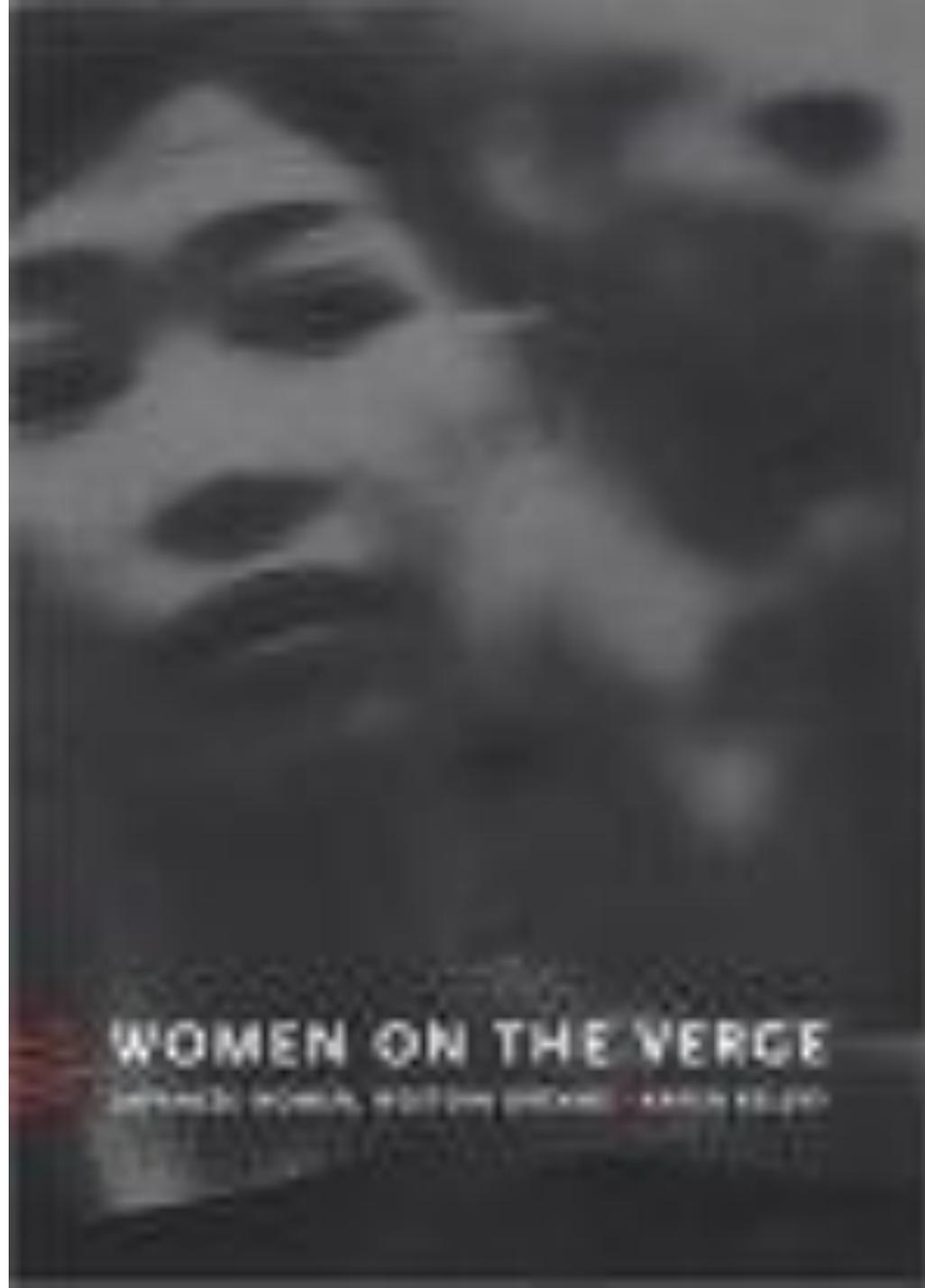
- ***More women going abroad or marrying foreigners...***

**Cf “Yellow Cab”
phenomenon...
Japanese girls
who travel to
foreign
countries in
search of love,
adventure, and
sex.**

**家田莊子(著)
『イエローキャブ』
1991年**

***Yellow Cab*
By Shoko Ieda
(1991)
Reportage on
Japanese women
living in New York**

**Karen Kelsky:
*Women on the
Verge:
Japanese
Women,
Western
Dreams*
(Duke UP,
2001)**



The women I knew insisted that they pursued brief encounters with gaijin men, black or white, because they were frustrated with Japanese men and experimenting with possible alternatives...., gaijin men were desired not primarily for their amatory prowess (or penis size), but for their yasashisa... kindness, gentleness or chivalrousness.

Kelsky (138) on Yellow Cabs in Waikiki

**Some Japanese women have a
“Western chivalry fantasy” ...
applied “indiscriminately to
every gaijin man they meet”
(1996: 92).**

*Karen Ma: The Modern Madame
Butterfly: Fantasy and Reality in
Japanese Cross-Cultural
Relationships. Tuttle, 1996*

***Farewell to Nippon:
Japanese Lifestyle Migrants in
Australia***

By Machiko Sato (2001) depicts the lives of Japanese women who have migrated to Australia to escape from Japanese society... and in some cases, from Japanese men.

Men without Women

As women increasingly delay marriage, avoid marriage, or seek non-Japanese marriage partners, we naturally see a growing number of men who cannot find a woman to get married to.

The problem is especially acute in the country. Even if they don't go abroad, many women abandon the country to seek better work opportunities and more fun in the big cities.

Not always an option for men

Men, especially first sons, are expected to maintain the family bloodline and business. In the country that may mean inheriting the farmhouse or fishing boat and staying behind when sisters and younger brothers depart from the city.

The oldest son is supposed to be the 'daikoku bashira' – the central pillar supporting the family.

The bullied bride 嫁いじめ

- Traditionally, a woman who marries a first son moves into his parental household and can expect to be bossed about by her mother-in-law 義理母. (Mothers-in-law are negatively viewed all over the world.)
- She will also be expected to look after his parents when they become old and infirm...

Another good reason to stay well away.

Import brides 輸入新婦

Hence desperate attempts in the last decade by rural communities to import brides from neighboring countries, especially the Philippines and Thailand.

Mass omiai お見合い in Manila and Bangkok...

... successes and failures.

“Men are the problem”

Recently, gender studies is giving more attention to men.

E.g. James Roberson and Nobue Suzuki eds. *Japanese Men and Masculinities: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa* (2003)

Danseiron 男性論 西川祐子 & 荻野美穂
(編)

人文書院1999年

WHEN PILLARS EVAPORATE

STRUCTURING MASCULINITY ON THE JAPANESE MARGINS

- **One of the enduring symbols of masculinity in Japan is the *daikoku-bashira*: the central pillar supporting the roof of a traditional Japanese farmhouse. The word is also used to describe the supporter of the household, typically the father; and the eldest son once the father is too old to maintain the illusion of permanence.**

It is an image of strength and stasis: but also implies a heavy burden on the shoulders of a man.

The men I study are day labourers, who look for casual work in urban labour markets called *yoseba*. Most of them have rural backgrounds, and are old enough to have been brought up in an environment where the ideology of the *daikoku-bashira* was still very strong. Yet they tend to be estranged from their families, even the substantial minority who are eldest sons and would therefore be expected to inherit the household.

- **Many of these men lead transient lives, alternating spells at various *yoseba* around the country with periods working at *hanba*, work camps at construction sites away from the big cities. Many are drinkers and gamblers. If they get into trouble, or simply tire of their present situation, they may suddenly leave town – a process described as ‘evaporating’ (*jôhatsu suru*).**
- **From the stasis of the *daikoku-bashira* to the transience of the evaporating day labourer, Japanese men experience a wide range of responses to issues of mobility, freedom and responsibility.**

Also check out Masako Ishii-Kuntz' study of Japanese fatherhood in the same collection.

**... and the divorce rate rises
steadily.**

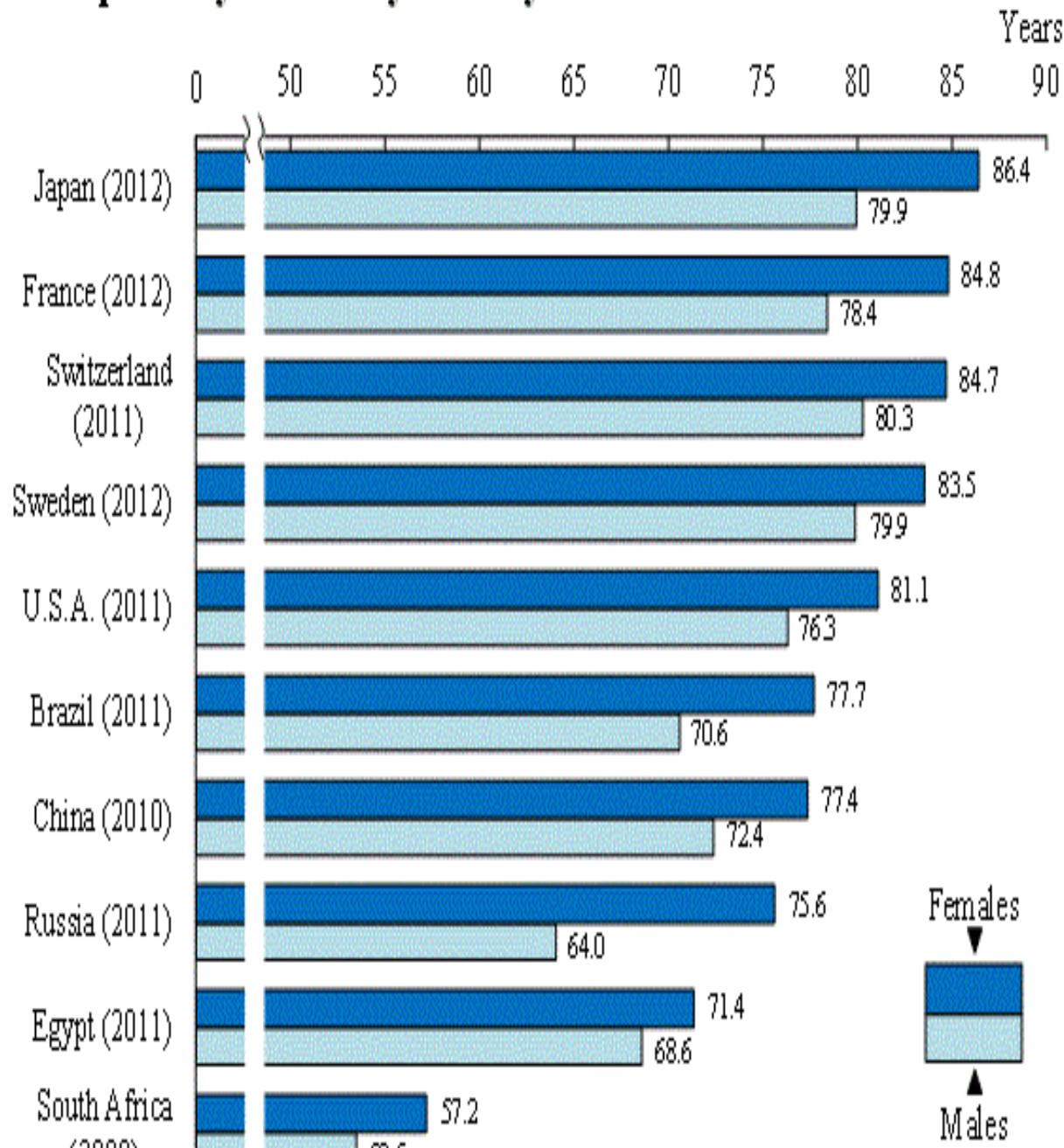
**(Especially among older couples and
long-married couples.)**

Japan's slowly rising divorce rate

Year	No. of divorces	Per 1,000 pop	Length of marriage	With child(ren)	Child(ren) with wife
1950	83,689	1.01			
1960	69,410	0.74			
1970	95,937	0.93	6.8 years	59.1%	51.0%
1980	141,689	1.22	8.6 years	67.6%	67.2%
1990	157,608	1.28	9.6 years	62.7%	71.4%
1994	195,106	1.57	10.0 years	61.3%	76.2%
1998	243,183	1.94			
2000	264,246	2.10			

Source: Asahi Shinbun Japan Almanac; Sômuchô Statistics Bureau

Life Expectancy at Birth by Country



Source:
Ministry of
Health,
Labor and
Welfare

(Japanese are still less likely to get divorced than Americans. Nearly half of all marriages in the United States end in divorce, compared to about a third in Japan.)

- **Between 1973 and 1997, the number of divorces per year among couples married for more than 30 years jumped more than eightfold - from 820 to 6,709, the Health Ministry says. The overall number of divorces for the same period doubled from 111,877 to 225,635.**

Divorce rate for Japan's elderly couples is growing

By JOJI SAKURAI (Associated Press)

- **“Elderly couples are reaching retirement age without ever once having had a real conversation,” says Nobuo Kurokawa, a doctor who specializes in marriage-related stress. “Spending time together becomes a huge burden.”**

- **Retirement forces many of Japan's elderly couples into the unknown territory of filling the hours of a day in one another's company. Kurokawa has even coined a term for it: Husband-at-home-stress syndrome. "The wives start developing nervous disorders and exhibiting all sorts of psychosomatic physical symptoms," he said. "Many even think of suicide."**

Key words 1: Sodai Gomi

- **“Sodai gomi”** (large, cumbersome garbage, like that old sofa with the broken springs) -- a nickname given to retired salarymen who are no use anymore.

Key words 2: Nureochiba

“Nureochiba” Dead wet leaves that stick to the leg - as the retired husband, deprived of work and work functions, hangs about sticking to the wife.

Keyword 3:
Make-inu
負け犬
Lit 'Losing
Dog'

Junko Sakai's best-seller of 2003, *The Distant Howling of Losing Dogs*

負け犬の遠吠え
酒井順子



Politically incorrect Junko Sakai



**“No matter how beautiful and good at her job she may be, a woman past thirty who’s still unmarried and has no children is a ‘losing dog.’
「どんなに美人で仕事ができても、30代以上・未婚・子ナシは「女の負け犬」なのです。」**

'Losing Dog' publishing boom

**Eight more 'make-inu'
books since the
original best seller.**

Ryosai Kenbo 良妻賢母

“A good wife and a wise mother.”

Traditional definition of a socially approved woman.

Sakai’s argument is that women have taken a wrong path in turning away from that model.

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