Japanese Nonmaternal Child Care: Past, Present, and Future

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The chief natural resource of Japan, a small island nation of 121 million, is its well-educated and motivated citizenry. Researchers have studied the Japanese family (Shand & Kosawa, 1985), system of compulsory schooling (Stevenson, Azuma, & Hakuta, 1986; White, 1987), and its business organizations (England & Misumi, 1986) in search of an understanding of the Japanese "economic miracle." As some Westerners marvel at the high achievement levels of the Japanese, a recent trend has been to investigate the roots of this success in children's early experiences "before compulsory schooling takes over" (Beau-champ & Rubinger, 1989, p. 258). The dynamics of preschool socialization and learning have been analyzed elsewhere (Hendry, 1986; Rohlen, 1989; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989), and are not the focus of this chapter. Indeed we attempt no explanations of Japanese behavior or developmental patterns. Rather, this chapter centers on the changes the child-care and preschool systems have undergone in Japan's modern era, mainly as a review of the Japanese-language popular and scholarly literature. Specifically, the goals of this chapter are to view (a) the historical evolution of child-care facilities since 1868, Japan's "modern era," (b) post-World War II changes in the family and status of women that have influenced child-care needs and options, (c) present-day alternatives to maternal care, (d) criticisms and problem areas of the present system, and (e) future trends in nonmaternal care.

The Meiji Era was the historical period that began with the replacement of a feudal society by a modern state. During this period various Western cultural systems and technology were imported to Japan from Europe and the United States. But even as Western ideas took hold, traditional Japanese values such as loyalty to one's master and duty to one's parents remained strong. The country was nominally headed by the Emperor Meiji, and his 1890 "Imperial Rescript on Education" (Hirayama et al, 1988) reflected conservative values.

Baby-Sitter Schools. As Japan entered its modern era, its economy was based on agricultural production and many of its citizens were poor. The children of many low socioeconomic status (SES) families (especially from farms) worked as baby-sitters to supplement family income. Such children provided care for the infants or toddlers of more wealthy families, and received cash or meals as compensation (Uno,
From 1875, the Meiji government established komori gakko (baby-sitter schools) for these girls, in support of the new system of compulsory primary school education. In these schools facilities were made available for the younger children, so that their baby-sitters could attend classes. This institution may be seen as the first Japanese modern child-care facility.

Kindergartens. The first Japanese kindergarten was established in 1876, attached to the Tokyo Women's Normal School. An example of Meiji Japan's importation of Western ideals and institutions, the Japanese yochicn (kindergarten) was inspired by Froebel's theories of early childhood education, and was targeted by the government as a means of introducing Western ideas to high SES children (Shoji, 1983). The kindergarten was from its origins more concerned with cognitive development than were other types of child-care facilities, but has always included a child-care function, as at least a part-time alternative to maternal care. The first kindergarten served 75 upper SES children, but from 1882 the Education Ministry (Monbusho) became involved in the opening of kindergarten education to the masses.

Day Nurseries. With the modern urbanization of Japan, social ills such as slums began to appear. Takujisho (day nurseries) were established for lower SES families, the first such nursery being founded in 1875 in Kyoto. The Meiji period was also marked by rapid industrialization (Allen, 1981), and the need for nonmaternal child care increased as factories were built nationwide. Kojo takujisho (factory day nurseries) were introduced from 1889 (Shirai, 1985), serving the weaving, dyeing, silk, and other industries. Factory day nurseries provided only minimal and custodial care so that women could work, reflecting a different purpose from the education-oriented kindergartens.

Church Child Care for the Poor. Christian church-based kindergartens also served the poor (Christian Federation of Early Childhood Education, 1966), and were a significant contribution to the early development of the Japanese child-care system. For example, Futaba Kindergarten (Uno, 1984) was established in Tokyo in 1900 by Christian educators, to bring innovative educational ideas to the lower class. The opening of Protestant and Catholic-run kindergartens was notable in the 1880s and 1890s, and these institutions emphasized a Western humanistic and individualistic philosophy (Early Childhood Education Association of Japan, ECEAJ, 1979). Christian churches also built the first nursery schools (the first in Shizuoka in 1907), to care specifically for babies under the age of 2 (Shirai, 1985). After the turn of the century, Buddhist-oriented kindergartens also became very common.

Increased Government Involvement. In 1899 the Education Ministry established national control over kindergartens, with publication of the Act of Content and Facilities of Kindergarten Education (Boocock, 1989). This law formalized preschool education from the age of 3 and set the first national standards (e.g., limiting each facility to 100 children) for the existing 200 kindergartens. The educational themes contained in this law (e.g., morality and filial piety) had recently been expressed in the "Imperial Rescript on Education" (ECEAJ, 1979).

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry (Naimusho) became active in the construction of day nurseries for low SES children. The system of day nurseries expanded from 1904, using the new name hoikusho (also translated as day nurseries), at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. For instance, in Kobe a "child protection center" was founded for bereaved families and orphaned children. Day nurseries and factory day nurseries were especially numerous at this time, in support of females employed in the war effort.

The Taisho Era (1912-1926)
The Taisho Era (named for the succeeding emperor) is considered a period of relative liberalism and democracy in Japanese history. During this period, the Western humanistic ideal of child-centered jiyu kyoiku (reform education) was emphasized by many in early childhood education. This philosophy stressed respect for the autonomy of children, and influenced children's art, literature, and culture, as well as child-care practices. This movement was associated with such scholars as Sozo Kurahashi (Hirayama et al., 1988).

Government spending on day nursery facilities increased in support of working and impoverished urban women during and after World War I. In 1919 the first public day nursery was founded in Osaka, and in the
years following, public nurseries were built in the slums of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Kobe (Shirai, 1985). Construction of additional facilities was required by the devastation of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, which leveled Tokyo. And severe rural economic hardship resulted in the establishment of seasonal day nurseries in the agricultural regions of Japan. By the end of the Taisho Era (1926) there were 65 public day nurseries (Hirayama, 1988).

The Showa Era (1926-1989)
The reign of Emperor Hirohito spanned more than half of Japan's modern period, and as such witnessed social, economic, political, and historical change far beyond the reach of this chapter. These changes had important ramifications for nonmaternal care policy and practices, from the first year of this era. Prewar Japan. From the 1890s kindergartens had become a downward extension of primary schools, but in 1926 they were legally recognized as independent facilities. According to Shirai (1985), the laws passed in 1926 had three other important influences on early childhood education: (a) the content of kindergarten became less cognitive-oriented, (b) licensing and qualifications for child-care workers was standardized, and (c) child care for those under the age of 3 became regulated.

The Relief Law of 1930 resulted from a worldwide economic depression, and provided for the building of public facilities (shlminkan) to serve the growing numbers of impoverished Japanese. In depressed farm areas the shlminkan contained day nursery facilities. Another development reflecting the poor economic conditions was the 1930 introduction of free lunches at public day nurseries (Shirai, 1985).

Wartime Japan. Japan invaded central China in 1937, and with the conscription of adult males great numbers of women worked in the industrial labor force. The Welfare Ministry (Koseisho) was established in 1938 to meet the social needs resulting from this stress on child care, and within its social division a children's bureau took over the child-care domain of the Interior Ministry (Shirai, 1985). Government rapidly came to exert greater control over women and children. Nationalism, which had characterized Meiji Era ideology, and temporarily been replaced by the humanistic and democratic philosophy of the Taisho Era, returned in the Showa Era of militarization. The phrase "children are children of the nation" (ECEAJ, 1979) well expresses this change in philosophy.

The military-dominated government issued a General National Plan for Kindergartens in 1941, including a child protection law (Shirai, 1985), which opened preschool education to all 4- and 5-year-olds. The government determined to use kindergartens and the family to foster nationalism, and reorganized schools, associations of mothers, and home education to further its goals. An attempt was also made during wartime to unify the kindergarten and day nursery systems, but this reform ultimately failed. During World War II, as Japanese life became increasingly regimented, kindergartens and day nurseries were converted into "wartime day nurseries," and the state eventually monopolized all child-care facilities. Day nursery policies were altered to admit infants as young as 2 months of age, and facilities stayed open 364 days annually (Shirai, 1985), to maximize the industrial production of women.

The Allied Occupation. With the defeat of Japan in 1945, an occupation force dominated by the United States set out to transform Japan into a Western democracy (Kawai, 1960). Every facet of Japanese society was affected by occupation reforms, including the child-care system. The 1947 School Education Law placed kindergartens again under the Education Ministry, and the 1948 Child Welfare Law established the day nursery under the Welfare Ministry., (Tobin et al.; 1989). The Welfare Ministry designated the day nursery (hoikusho) as the primary facility for care of children under the age of 3, distinguishing it from kindergartens that served ages 3 and over. At this time, the infusion of unprecedented amounts of public money into the child-care system marked a turning point for government funding and regulation.

Postoccupation Reforms. Kindergartens in the postwar period were influenced by the shifting priorities of the national government. In 1948, under the influence of the Occupation, the Education Ministry issued child-care guidelines and an education manual reflecting U.S. rather than Japanese values and philosophy (e.g., to foster individuality through free play). After the end of the Occupation, however, the same Education Ministry issued its first Outline for the Kindergarten Course of Study in 1956 (Japan Education Ministry, 1979), which relegated preschool education to the goals of the national system of compulsory
education. Kindergarten became a distinctly educational facility, although the more recent version of this Outline (Japan Education Ministry, 1989) reflects a broader view of child developmental goals.

Meanwhile the Welfare Ministry took three steps to complete the transformation of the day nursery system, prior to its period of unprecedented expansion in the 1960s. First, in 1958 it introduced a national system of funding and fees for day nurseries, which included a sliding scale of monthly tuition based on parental income (Tobin et al, 1989). It also established the proportions of government subsidies to be contributed by national, prefectural ("state level" in the United States) and municipal levels, with the greatest contribution made by the national government. Second, in 1961 it made specific the procedures and conditions for a child's admission to a day nursery (National Council of Day Nurseries, NCDN, 1988), which had been left vague by the Child Welfare Law. Thirdly, in its Guidelines for Day Nursery Childcare (Japan Welfare Ministry, 1965) the Welfare Ministry stated that the goals of care for 4- and 5-year-olds would henceforth parallel those of the kindergarten. This policy that day nurseries would provide education to prepare children for compulsory education made the day nursery an educational vehicle. From 1965 the number of day nurseries in Japan expanded at an astronomic rate (800,000 in 1965, 1.9 million in 1978), making that year a watershed in the history of Japanese nonmaternal child care.

Summary
Several types of nonmaternal child-care facilities evolved in the first century of Japan's modern era (1868-1965). In the Meiji era, (a) baby-sitter schools and kindergartens resulted from the introduction of national compulsory schooling, (b) day nurseries served the needs of working and low SES families, particularly in periods of war and industrialization, and (c) development of such facilities was facilitated by the government and private or religious organizations. The Taisho Era was characterized by a liberal and humanistic view of children, and government involvement in child care continued to increase as a response to socioeconomic conditions. The nationalistic philosophy and economic strains of the World War II era dramatically influenced child-care options, which came under the complete control of the government. Following the war, the U.S. occupation made the welfare and education ministries responsible for the day nursery and kindergarten systems. In the 1950s and early 1960s these two types of facilities were formalized into roughly their present form, the day nursery to serve employed women and the poor, and the kindergarten to serve as preparation for primary school.

RECENT CHANGES IN JAPANESE SOCIETY
In 1965, the systems of kindergartens and day nurseries, which are the two main institutional alternatives to maternal child care in Japan today, assumed their current form. Before providing further details of these and other forms of care, it is useful to outline the societal conditions that shape present child-care needs and options. The most important social trends concern post-World War II changes in the Japanese family and in the status of women.

Changes in the Family
Nuclear and Extended Families. Since 1945, Japanese society has become more aged, urban, and densely populated (Japan Statistics Bureau, JSB, 1984). During this period, Japanese families have evolved continuously toward a typically nuclear form. Shinohara (1981) described the present age as the "nuclearization era" and about 70% of families in 1985 described themselves as nuclear (JSB, 1984). It was in the 1960s that the nuclear family became predominant, but in the 1980s the rate of increase of nuclear families declined, from a growth rate of 16.3% in 1970-75 to only 5.6% in 1980-1985.

The general decline of the traditional extended family has given greater responsibility for child care to mothers and child-care facilities such as day nurseries (Miyake, 1989). At the same time, there has been a slow increase in the numbers of three-generation families since the 1960s, which had declined in the 1950s from their prwar modal status. Many Japanese families retain the traditional stem family system, as parents live with their eldest sons in retirement (the involvement of grandparents in child care is detailed later). At least one grandparent lives in the home of 27.6% of Japanese families, compared with under 3% in England and the United States (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982).

Population Trends. The Japanese family has become typically small. Japanese 1988 census figures set the
average family at 3.14 members, compared to 5.0 in 1920-55, 4.5 in 1960, and 4.0 in 1965. Experts attribute this trend to increases in childlessness, divorce, and people living alone, and to declining birthrates. The average Japanese family of 1982 (3.3 members) was slightly larger than those in the United States (2.7) or Western Europe, but smaller than those in South Korea (4.5) or the Philippines (5.9) (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982).

The Japanese birthrate has declined steadily for several years, and in 1984, for only the second time since 1905, under 1.5 million babies were born (Asahi Shinbun, January 1, 1985). Known as the "baby bust," the birthrate dipped to 11.4 per 1,000 population in 1986, compared with a 19.4 rate in 1955 (NCDN, 1988). According to the Welfare Ministry, there are now fewer children than ever in Japanese homes (Japan Sogo Aiiku Research Center, JSARC, 1988). The percentage of families with three or more children declined from 40% in 1955, to 17% in 1965, in an era of tremendous nationwide economic growth (United Nations International Children's Educational Fund, UNICEF, 1965), and remains at about 18% today. As a result, Japanese children have fewer playmates at home today than ever before, and combined with the decline of the neighborhood/community as the center of social life (Miura, 1986), child-care facilities have gained importance as the locale of peer interaction. Smaller numbers of children at home have in one sense strengthened mother-child bonds (Vogel, 1971), and at the same time have dramatically shortened the segment of the lifespan Japanese women devote to the maternal role (Lebra, 1984).

Living Standards. Japan has become a very affluent and materialistic society following a steady increase in Japanese material possessions since the mid 1960s (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1983). In addition, the overwhelming majority of men and women in Japan classify themselves as middle class (94%, as compared to 90% in the United States and 76% in S. Korea). The percentages of breakdowns of this middle class into upper-, middle-, and lower-middle subclasses are similar for the United States and Japan, but twice as many Americans as Japanese classified themselves as either high or low SES (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1983). This affluence has supported the growing numbers of private child-care facilities that have appeared in Japan since the 1960s. In addition, middle-class consciousness has fed into the heightened educational aspirations and commitment of many families.

Educational Emphasis. Education has gained a place of centrality in the goals of Japanese family life.

Changes in Women's Status
The Japanese, in both the past and present, see maternal care as preferable to nonmaternal care, and the mother-child bond has long been viewed as the most important of human relationships (Hara & Wagatsuma, 1974). Although the Japanese have traditionally valued mothering, women in most social strata have also traditionally been productive workers, usually in the home setting (Robins-Mowry, 1983). In the modern era, and especially since World War II, women have flooded the workforce outside the home. Changes in Japan's economic situation, and attitude changes regarding women's roles, have shaped demands on the child-care system throughout Japan's modern history. We focus next on trends in the post-World War II era.

Occupational Trends. The location of women's employment has changed. In 1955 61.2% of employed
women worked for family businesses, but in 1985 this percentage had fallen to 19.5%. In contrast, 33.1% of women worked for employers outside their homes in 1955, but this had become the norm (70.2%) by 1985 (JSARC, 1988), the year of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act. The percentages of self-employed women held constant at about 10%-12% during this period. Obviously the need for alternative child care increased during this generation, because maternal employment was removed from the child's home. In addition, the contemporary Japanese employed woman has changed in age, marital status, and in length of service to the employer (Robins-Mowry, 1983). For instance, the average age of female workers in Japan increased from 23.8 years in 1949 to 34.9 years in 1980. During this period, women extended their educational careers, so that workers under 20 have become somewhat of a rarity. And whereas the typical worker in previous generations was unmarried and younger, the majority of workers now are over the age of 30 and married (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982). Employment of women in the past was usually temporary (Lebra, 1984), but the average length of service for women doubled from 3.2 to 6.2 years between 1950 and 1980. Additional trends in female employment are toward longer working hours and increasingly professional and specialized work (Asahi Shimbun, July 11, 1990). Demand for child care has increased along with the above trends because more women now continue to work after having children. Overall, the rate of maternal employment in Japan (48.3% and growing) is lower than that in the United States (59%), but is slightly higher than that found in Western European societies (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982). The gap in the employment rate between Japanese and U.S. women is entirely accounted for by the difference in employment among women with children under the age of 5 (55.9% in the United States and 27.2% in Japan).

Attitudes pertaining to female/maternal employment are interesting when compared to those in other societies. As of 1982 (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982), the modal Japanese attitude toward female employment purported that "women should wait until children are grown to work," whereas the most frequent responses were "women should not work after marrying" in South Korea, "women should work whenever they wish" in the United States, and "women should not work after having children" in W. Germany. Japanese attitudes might be viewed as moderately male-chauvinistic, as somewhat of a middle position between U.S. and Korean attitudes. According to the same survey, Japanese women's attitudes toward their work are more negative than elsewhere. A slim majority of women in Japan and South Korea expressed significant dissatisfaction with their work situation, compared with only 28.8% in the United States and 18.2% in England. An even more recent survey of Japanese women indicated that although 58% of Japanese women in 1989 (Japan Times Weekly International, April 2, 1990) now find working conditions favorable, almost half still are critical of conditions, especially due to "lack of job opportunities," "absence of childcare," and "traditional attitudes that women belong at home" (p. 13).

Looking at the types of child care used by employed women, Japan's use of group facilities outside the home (mainly kindergartens and day nurseries) has been significantly higher than that in the United States and Western Europe. Comparing the location of child care for employed women's children under the age of 5, 65% of Japanese use day nurseries or kindergartens, compared to only 31% in the United States, 14% in England, 43% in West Germany, and 40% in France (Japan Prime Minister's Office, 1982).

Education. The education of Japanese women is viewed as important because educational attainment is seen as a key to power in what remains a male-dominated society. In the post-World War II era Japanese women have become more educated (Fujii, 1982), but still lack power in the public domains of industry and government (Pharr, 1981; Steinhoff & Tanaka, 1987).

Fujii (1982) noted that in both the Meiji, Taisho; and Showa periods., there have been periods of reform that have temporarily increased females' access to education., but such trends have always been reversed. For instance, in the post-World War II era, a new constitution devised by the U.S. Occupation forces gave females equal educational rights. But according to Fujii, later government policies reinstated traditional sex role socialization in the schools. Another postwar example is the proliferation of junior colleges in the 1950s and 1960s. Originally, these colleges were to be a temporary institution to meet the skyrocketing demand for higher education., to be replaced eventually by 4-year colleges. But ultimately the junior colleges have become the typical form of higher education for the Japanese female., and 4-year colleges the typical experience for males. Japanese society bases status on the prestige of one's educational degrees,
and therefore this system perpetuates the superior employment position of males and makes leaving the home an unattractive proposition for the Japanese housewife.

The Housewife Role. It is inaccurate to say that historically Japanese women have predominantly been housewives. In fact, the system of *ie* (traditional patriarchal family) was common only to the *samurai* (warrior) upper class, prior to the Meiji period of modernization (Ueno, 1987). According to Ueno, the nuclearization of the family, which occurred as a response to industrialization and urbanization, created the housewife role for middle and lower SES women. Prior to that historical development, women had typically been productive workers in agriculture or home business.

Millions of women entered the labor force during the economic growth years of the 1960s to fill a labor shortage of unskilled workers (Ueno, 1987). Only from this period was the phrase *full-time housewife* (*sengyo shufu*) coined. Many women also went into the labor force in the 1970s because two incomes were necessary to support a family in that decade of growing expectations, rising educational costs, and slowing economic growth. Many Japanese housewives also work inside the home, employment termed *inside employment* (*naishoku*) (Inamura, 1987).

An international survey (Japan Prime Minister’s Office, 1982) shows that a greater percentage of Japanese housewives (68%) reported significant dissatisfaction with their roles than housewives in Korea (55%), the United States (40%), or four other cultures. Their main sources of dissatisfaction included social isolation, lack of financial freedom, and problems of family budgeting. This dissatisfaction was strongest among the youngest Japanese housewives, but was found in a majority of housewives of all age levels.

The Maternal Role. According to Inamura (1987), "child raising is weighted highly" (p. 69) in the role of the urban housewife. As noted earlier, the education mom is responsible for children's education, and in the era of schoolism child-rearing is a highly valued activity. But while motherhood is extolled as a morally virtuous and socially significant profession, "the role of the Japanese father is ill-defined, devalued and in a state of flux" (Shwalb et al., 1985). Furthermore, in the age of the nuclear family, grandparents are less available than in the past to assist in child care. This results in what Vogel (1971) described as a very close mother-child "alliance" especially in families of white-collar workers (Tobin et al., 1989). Despite the fact that employed mothers have become as common as housewives, the ideal Japanese woman is still a full-time mother (Inamura, 1987).

The importance of the maternal identity in Japan is seen in attitudes of child-care personnel toward home versus group care. For instance, Ben-Ari (in press) noted that day nursery personnel disapprove of mothers who seek alternative child care for children under the age of 3, and Fujita (1989) found in her study of day nurseries the Japanese cultural image that "no other job is better or more suitable for women than mothering" (p. 72). Day nursery teachers surveyed by Fujita also reported the view that mothers of nursery children "sacrifice their children for their own comfort" (p. 78). Similarly, parents who work longer hours simply because longer child-care hours are available are seen as "selfish" (Shira41985). These findings reinforce the 1970s survey data of Schooler and Smith (1978), which showed that Japanese women see their primary role as that of mother.

Summary
Changes in the Japanese family, in the post-World War II era, include trends toward nuclear, smaller, more affluent, and education-oriented families. Employed women in the postwar era work more outside the home and are more likely to be older, married, and better educated than in previous generations. Women retain an inferior public, social, educational, and occupational status to that of men. Japanese women, compared to their counterparts in the United States and elsewhere, are more critical of their career and house-wife roles. These tendencies have contributed to an increased and more complex demand for nonmaternal childcare, although the maternal role remains highly revered in Japanese society.

AN OUTLINE OF PRESENT-DAY FACILITIES
The following summarizes the main types of nonmaternal child-care alternatives currently available to
Japanese families. The day nursery and kindergarten have come to be predominant facilities in the post-World War II era, as we have seen, but other forms of care are mentioned, in part because they reflect the weaknesses in the overall child-care system.

Grandparenting
As noted earlier, Japanese grandparents are less involved in child care, compared with their role in previous generations. Almost 30% of Japanese families are currently three-generation in structure, and 80% of these cases are paternal grandparents. In addition, 31.8% of working women in Japan (Prime Minister's Office, 1982) report using grandparents for child care. This makes grandparents the second most utilized child-care resource for employed women, after day nurseries (utilized by 49.2% of employed women). Unfortunately, very little has been written or known about grandparents as child-care providers, and almost no research has been done on this population (Morishita, 1988). It is reported that when grandparents live close to (or with) the child's family, many are involved as caretakers. For instance, families in large cities who have applied for admission to a day nursery often utilize the grandparent until the baby can enter the nursery, or reaches 6 months of age, the minimum age at most public facilities (Miyake, 1989).

Homecare Workers
Japanese society has developed very little in the way of "home daycare," and parents generally do not feel secure leaving their children in private homes (Miyake, 1989). This preference for out-of-home care is also related to the attitude of families and government authorities that children should be cared for by professionals rather than informally, and to fear accidents or sudden illness in private homes. However, one type of homecare provider which began to appear around 1960 was the homecare worker (katei fukushi-in), commonly known as a childcare mom (hoiku mama). They are defined by the government as women who take three or fewer children under the age of 3 into their homes and provide a familylike setting, and currently serve several thousands of families (Bingham, 1979). Homecare workers most often serve infants, because the Japanese government and public generally believe that home care is desirable for children under the age of 3 (Hirayama et al., 1988). The homecare worker system receives no government financing, but local governments set basic standards for care, license caretakers, and arrange individual contracts between families and caretakers (Hirayama et al., 1988).

Unlicensed Child Care
In general, day nurseries and kindergartens are licensed and regulated by the government, but some large-scale group care facilities are not licensed. Unlicensed child care includes facilities that cannot meet some minimum licensing standard, (e.g., restrictions on children's ages or hours of operation); some facilities run by companies, and some cooperatively run centers (Miyake, 1989). Officially the government has not controlled such institutions, but due to public pressure, even nonlicensed child care is now supported and regulated to some extent by the government. Many such facilities have smaller child-caretaker ratios than day nurseries, and there or some estimates that unlicensed facilities may account for a surprisingly high proportion of infant nonmaternal care (Suzuki, 1984). Unlicensed child care is often flexible in the cases of families of infants whose mothers want to work but cannot gain admission for a baby in a day nursery, or mothers who require more time to find employment.

The baby hotel is one form of unlicensed child care that has gained an inordinate amount of public attention, because of the deaths and accidents that occurred at these facilities in the 1970s (Hirayama, 1988). The first baby hotels (a Japanese-language term taken directly from English) were facilities inside large city hotels in the 1960s, originally as a short-term baby-sitting for children of hotel guests. The Welfare Ministry defines a baby hotel as (a) open on a 24-hour basis, (b) providing overnight care, and (c) charging hourly fees. Baby hotels are often used for infant care, and because of the generally inferior quality of these facilities, have become an issue of public concern. A 1986 study by the Welfare Ministry of baby hotels revealed that (a) baby hotels exist in all but one Japanese prefecture, (b) half of the children in baby hotels are under the age of 3 (only 17.3% of children in licensed child-care facilities are under 3), and (c) about two-thirds of baby hotels are operating at substandard levels of quality (Hirayama, 1988). But although they receive much criticism, baby hotels clearly satisfy needs not met by the licensed child-care establishment, by providing flexible hours, overnight care, care for babies under the age of 6 months, and easy access (Shirai, 1985).
Licensed Child Care
The day nursery (hoikusho) is the most utilized alternative to maternal child care for employed women, and serves almost 2 million children currently, a figure that has leveled off in the past decade. This compares with the 135,000 who attended day nurseries in 1948. The most comparable U.S. institution to the day nursery is the day-care center, at least for younger children (Tobin et al. 1989). As noted earlier, the curriculum for older day nursery children was made similar to kindergarten educational curriculum in 1965, such that the final year of the day nursery experience is more comparable to a U.S. kindergarten. Since the 1950s, about 60% of day nursery children have attended public facilities, although most pre-World War II nurseries had been privately funded.

Although the large majority of day nursery children are over the age of 3, there has been a small trend in recent years for day nurseries to serve younger babies (37,000 babies under age 1 in 1987 compared with 11,000 in 1972; NCDN, 1988). Day nursery (and kindergarten) teachers are generally young female junior college graduates, and the child-teacher ratios set by the welfare ministry (Japan Welfare Ministry, 1990) are high compared to U.S. standards, for example, 6:1 for ages 0-2, and 30:1 for ages 4 and over (Shirai, 1985). More than 90% of day nurseries operate between 8 and 11 hours daily, and a trend toward longer hours of operation is discouraged by the government but demanded by parents. The daily activities of the day nursery have been described elsewhere in English-language publications (Boocock, 1989; Lewis, 1989; Tobin et al.)

Kindergartens
Kindergartens (yochien) are actually considered to be educational rather than child-care facilities (Murayama, 1983), and some preschool academic preparation has become essential in Japan. By 1987 98,960 of Japanese children entering elementary school could already read the language syllabury of hiragana (JSARC, 1988). In 1987 230,000 3-year-olds, 821,000 4-year-olds, and 963,000 5-year-olds attended kindergartens (JSARC, 1988), a slightly larger nationwide enrollment than day nurseries. The number of kindergartens in 1987 was over 15,000, 10 times the number existing in 1948, and double the number in 1962. A majority of kindergarten children since the Taisho Era (1912-26) have attended private facilities, although the numbers in public kindergartens increased to 40% by 1980. The daily operations of kindergartens are described elsewhere (Hendry, 1986; Peak, 1989), and these researchers claim that the main function of Japanese

FIG. 10.1 Infants playing in a day nursery.
kindergartens is motivational and social rather than cognitive preparation for primary school. The most
common hours of operation of Japanese kindergartens are 5 hours daily with about 25% of facilities open
6 hours and 5% open more than that (JSARC 1988), although officially 4 hours is the education ministry’s
"officially designated hours of operation."

FIG. 10.2 Three-year-olds prepare for Parents’ Day.

FIG. 10.3 Four-year-olds preparing an origami mobile with their teacher.
Other Alternatives
A small number of high SES families seek individual home care for their young children (usually infants), on a private contractual basis. Informal child care is also sometimes provided by neighborhood acquaintances, but in Japan this is rarely the case. The traditions of baby-sitting (the most frequently reported child-care measure in the United States; Prime Minister’s Office, 1982) and neighborhood care have little foundation in Japan. Most parents are uneasy entrusting their children to a nonprofessional “outsider” (Miyake, 1989), although baby-sitting has recently become more common as short-duration care (Asahi Shinbun, July 11, 1990). A final alternative to maternal care is paternal care, which until recently was uncommon. There has been some shifting of societal values in support of greater paternal involvement, and significant recent increases in actual involvement (Asahi Shinbun, July 13, 1990). Approximately 170,000 single-parent fathers are now reported in Japan (Asahi Shinbun, June 17, 1990), although present-day Japanese parental care is still predominantly maternal (Hirayama, 1988).

Summary
The most frequently utilized form of Japanese nonmaternal child care is the education-oriented kindergarten. It enrolls 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds, usually serving full-time housewives on a half-day basis. Second in frequency of use, and actually the most utilized among employed women, are day nurseries, which serve children from 6 months through 6 years of age. Grandparents are the third most utilized resource, but are seldom discussed in the scholarly or popular literature. Home care is provided for only a small number of babies, by homecare workers and for high SES families by professionals. Finally, unlicensed day care, including baby hotels, serves a small but growing clientele whose needs are not met by the formal child-care system.

CURRENT CRITICISMS AND PROBLEM AREAS CONCERNING NONMATERNAL CHILD CARE
There has been a great deal of discussion in Japan about alternatives to maternal child care in the mass media, and recently among researchers. For instance, a 12-volume series of books detailing child-care facilities in 12 nations was published in Japan, including one volume on the Japanese (Shirai, 1985). The following is a sampling of criticisms expressed in recent years, by commentators, scholars, and child-care practitioners.

Hirayama (1988) reported that demands are being made on child-care facilities to be more flexible and to serve a more diversified clientele. For instance, children are commonly admitted to day nurseries or kindergartens each April, at the beginning of the public school year. In addition, enrollments are regulated by the government, as are the hours kept by facilities. Popular demand has resulted in some reform of entrance procedures to facilitate midyear entrance, and the government now permits facilities to exceed registration limits and keep longer hours.
In addition, women now work in a greater variety of work settings and for different hours than in the past, which requires a much more complex support system of child care. One obstacle to those seeking care is the requirement by many day nurseries that women be employed, which has resulted in many Japanese women taking unwanted jobs simply to qualify for child care. The system of afterschool or vacation-time care for early primary school children (grades one through three) is underdeveloped in Japan (Hirayama., 1988), and only in recent years have children's halls (jidokan) begun to serve older children of working mothers, including latchkey children (kagikko) (Hirayama, 1988).

A second general area of concern is the training of day nursery and other child-care staff. As mentioned earlier, most staff now have 2 years of junior college training (Shirai, 1985), but the quality and training of these staff are often criticized (ECEAJ, 1979). Some private kindergartens and other facilities, which are more profit- rather than child-centered in their philosophy, tend to hire young inexperienced workers, and even to encourage staff turnover in order to minimize salary expenses. Child-care workers lack prestige and are poorly paid, and the professionalization of the child-care worker is one goal of reformers (Shiomi, 1990).

The inequality of status between kindergartens and day nurseries has long been an area of controversy. Many day nursery workers feel a sense of inferiority toward kindergartens, which is somewhat justified because kindergartens are slightly better equipped (Tobin et al., 1989). Traditionally, the day nursery was intended to serve the working class while kindergartens served the middle class. This distinction gives kindergartens slightly greater status, although all levels of quality are represented in the diversity of each type of facility. But despite the recent fading of this distinction the continued competition between the education and welfare ministries perpetuates the undesirable status difference between day nurseries and kindergartens (Shirai, 1985).

Japanese day nurseries accept children from 6 months of age (ECEAJ, 1979), but increasing demand for infant care is a fourth current source of criticism. Baby hotels, homecare workers, and other alternatives compensate for what is seen as a vacuum of infant care. The numbers of companies providing paid maternal leave has increased in recent years (JSARC, 1988), but remains under 20% of companies nationally. School teachers received one-year unpaid maternal leave (Robins-Mowry, 1983), and in some companies innovative systems have recently encouraged maternal leave. Paternal leave is as yet extremely rare in Japanese society, and although the government is on record as endorsing and encouraging maternal leave (Japan Labor Ministry, 1990), such policy is optional for each company. Concern for better infant care has thus resulted in simultaneous demand for new maternal leave policies and better nonmaternal care options.

A fifth set of criticisms concerns the curriculum of kindergartens and day nurseries. The guidelines for these two facilities were revised in publications in 1989 by the Education Ministry (Japan Education Ministry, 1989), and in 1990 by the Welfare Ministry (Hobokai Dayori, April 2, 1990). In their previous forms both documents (published in the 1960s) were criticized because both kindergarten and day nursery curriculums were too oriented toward preparing children for the highly structured and competitive curriculum of primary schools (Okada, 1990). At the same time, demands of parents on the system include a call to "organize kindergarten education as part of compulsory education" (ECEAJ, 1979, p. 65). Parents thus stand on both sides of this controversy. In both the new kindergarten and day nursery guidelines, the six previous "domains" of curriculum (e.g., language, music, etc.; Ohba, 1990) were replaced by domains related to the developmental themes outlined by psychological theories (interpersonal relations, expression, interest in one's surroundings, etc.). It has long been the stated policy of the government that the central goals of early childhood education include self-expression, spontaneity, and individuality, but the curriculum of group-centered day nurseries and kindergartens have been criticized as contradictory to the ideal of child-centered care (Hirai, 1990). In the case of day nurseries, the new guidelines are seen in two recent critiques as too vague and too precise, respectively (Komba, 1990; Maeda, 1990), and it appears that in the immediate diversity of reactions that the directives may be interpreted and utilized differently by each facility (Yoshimura, 1990). However, it is safe to assume that the guidelines will remain controversial (Hoiku no tomo, June 1, 1990).
Summary
Five contemporary problem areas gaining increased attention in the Japanese child-care community include (a) the need for a more flexible and diversified system, (b) concern with the quality of child-care providers, (c) the relative status of day nurseries versus kindergartens, (d) the need for better infant care, and (e) debate over the philosophy and curriculum of kindergartens and day nurseries.

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR NONMATERNAL CHILD CARE
Since historical, economic, social, demographic, and other trends all interact in their impact on child-care options, it is impossible to predict the future of Japanese child care. What follows is a summary of some likely trends and problems currently being discussed by the Japanese.

From the standpoint of maternal employment, it is projected that there will be a labor shortage in the future, requiring a greater diversification of caregivers among females (Asahi Shinbun, June 18, 1990). This might suggest that alternatives to maternal care will become increasingly complicated and diverse, a continuation of the present trend. A recent survey of employed mothers (Asahi Shinbun, July 13, 1990), indicated a growing usage of multiple caretaking (mu-hoiku), in which parents utilize several forms of child care each day (e.g., grandparents, baby-sitters, and a baby hotel).

At the same time, the trend toward more flexible maternal work leave policies is likely to continue, as Japanese females gain in political influence. A summary of the current platforms of the seven major political parties (Asahi Shinbun, January 15, 1990 pp. 14-15) includes a plank of sometimes favoring reforms in women's rights, maternal leave, improved conditions for part-time workers, and "female reemployment system" legislation. This suggests that there is broad public support for future policy changes. Young Japanese workers report a growing desire for shorter working hours and longer vacations, to which the national government also appears to be responsive (Asahi Shinbun, June 17, 1990).

The use of such alternatives as homecare workers, unlicensed child care such as baby hotels, company-run day nurseries, and so forth, are likely to increase as long as the larger system of child care remains bureaucratic and unresponsive to complex needs for early infant care (Asahi Shinbun, July 11, 1990). With no likelihood of a resurgence in the birthrate, the overall population served by the system will continue to decline at the same time as the needs of the population will become more diversified. This is likely to result in continued competition between facilities (e.g., day nurseries vs. kindergartens, Itoh, Shiomi, & Mori, 1990) for the shrinking pool of clients. Possible outcomes of this competition include the individualization of child care, if facilities must make themselves more attractive to parents by emphasizing concern for individual needs and improvement of standards at unlicensed child-care facilities.

A greater diversity of child-care workers will also be likely in the future, in accordance with the changing needs of parents. For instance, the need for noncontinuous or emergency day care should increase as the numbers of temporarily employed women, is forecast to grow in the next decade. More part-time child-care workers will also be necessary as the demand for longer hours of care is expected to increase in coming years (Itoh et al, 1990).

Future trends in the child-care system will also reflect changes in the scholarly knowledge base concerning early child development. It has been previously mentioned that the new day nursery and kindergarten guidelines reflect new knowledge from the scholarly community (Nakano, 1990). However, the research to date on Japanese child-care facilities (reviewed by Fujisaki, 1988, and Morishita, 1988), while increasing in quantity every year (Sukemune & Tatsu-moto, 1990), has lacked an applied emphasis. Such areas as paternal care, grandparental care, and long-term effects of nonmaternal child care have received inadequate treatment to date (Fujisaki, 1988). Early childhood research has been concentrated on kindergartens, because of popular concern with cognitive and educational outcomes.

Current Japanese scholarly organizations, facilities, and professionals are capable to provide a wealth of useful information to the child-care field in the next generation. As Isao Tochio noted in a special edition of
the journal *Childcare Companion* (Tochio, 1990), "Early childhood is the period in which the basis for human personality is established, and since many children spend more than half their time in day nurseries, it is essential that we . . . clarify the means by which we can foster the health and upbringing of infants and young children" (p. 12). This statement typifies the present atmosphere of serious concern for the welfare of children in Japanese nonmaternal child-care facilities. Whatever the future of child care in Japan, it certainly lies in the hands of a very concerned population of parents, practitioners, and scholars.

CONCLUSIONS
A system of nonmaternal child-care alternatives evolved late historically in Japan, compared with many Western societies, and began in the Meiji Era of industrialization and modernization. During this period institutions such as kindergartens, factory day nurseries, and other day nurseries were created, and evolved in response to the economic and historical climate (war, depression, urbanization, and other events or social trends). The Taisho Era was a period of social liberalism and reform, and was followed in the Showa Era by World War II, the Allied Occupation, and an era of unprecedented economic growth. In each historical period, nonmaternal child-care options changed as governmental policies and family needs changed.

For the past century, Japanese have viewed maternal care as preferable to any alternative. But in the post-World War II era, changes in the Japanese family, the increase and diversification of maternal employment, and public demands for early childhood education, resulted in a tremendous increase in demand for nonmaternal child care. Day nurseries and kindergartens, followed in frequency of use by grandparental care, became the main options for parents. The demand has recently increased in complexity, although the numbers served by facilities has leveled off in the past decade. In response to inadequate infant care, a sometimes inflexible system and the desire for more familial and smaller-scale facilities, alternatives such as homecare workers, unlicensed child care, baby hotels, and so forth have become increasingly popular.

In Japan, both traditional and modern values have stressed children, families and education, and many aspects of the present system of nonmaternal child care do not satisfy the Japanese in their concern for the care of their young. Many Japanese are not satisfied with the quantity or quality of group care and staff available. Parents and professionals alike continue to seek more flexible and child-centered child-care options as Japan itself enters its newest historical period (the Heisei Era, 1989-), a society itself in rapid evolution.

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