

# “PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES” OF JAPANESE WORKERS TODAY

—Towards the Extraction of Needs—

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This paper is the expanded and revised English version of “Extraction of Workers’ Needs in Japan Today: An Experiment—Young Male Workers”, *Annual Reports of Josai Graduate School of Economics*, No.3, March 1987, pp.53–82, which dealt only with male 18–20 years of age.

Much has been discussed on the characteristics, happiness and affluence of Japanese workers for many years. The characteristics of Japanese labor relations have been also a common topic in these days. These beautiful stories and theories, however, have based on a virtual image of Japanese workers. Japanese workers have many “problems and difficulties” like workers in all other countries. It is not only American readers but also Japanese government officials, labor union leaders and academicians who do not seem to know them. The latter is at an impasse or a loss as to what to do next and is doing matters off target or of no consequence.

Our examination of this paper will be directed towards the extractoin of worker’s true needs, presenting the list of whole “problems and difficulties” present Japanese workers have through the workers’ own voice. Five hundred interviewers interviewed five hundred interviewees. Stratified random sampling was not adopted intentionally. The research contains a basic methodological criticism against existing “needs researches”.

We will first address what needs are and how to measure them and next the research results.

## I NEEDS AND THEIR MEASUREMENT

### 1. What Is Need?

In the field of social work, the concept of "need" has been used for a long time, and particularly in the social administration and social policy fields it has often been used even as a key concept. For example, R.M. Titmuss defines social administration as "the study of a range of social needs and the functioning, in conditions of scarcity, of human organizations, traditionally called social services of social welfare systems, to meet these needs."<sup>1)</sup>

First of all, what is "need"? According to a dictionary,<sup>2)</sup> "need" carries the following meanings: "1: necessary duty: OBLIGATION 2: a lack of something requisite, desirable, or useful 3: a condition requiring supply or relief: EXIGENCY 4: want of the means of subsistence: POVERTY. According to K. Lewin, need is the situation of tension created when people make a move to obtain something necessary when it is not being given, or what is deemed to be the cause of the situation of tension.<sup>3)</sup> In the field of social welfare, "need" or "social need" is generally defined as "basic wants indispensable for people to live social lives."<sup>4)</sup> But other definitions are also frequently found such as "a problem to be solved or a problematic situation,"<sup>5)</sup> "a required condition to be satisfied for an individual to live a social life that a human being deserves,"<sup>6)</sup> and "the situation requiring social welfare assistance."<sup>7)</sup> According to Shigemi Jinushi, "need" in social welfare is a concept equivalent to effective demand in economics. The former deals with ministering to human wants outside the market mechanism, while the latter through the market mechanism.<sup>8)</sup>

"Need" is an ambiguous word with many meanings. It is even questionable whether it could stand scientific discussion or not. However, there are no appropriate alternative words. The terms "social problems" and "problems on life" [*seikatsu mondai*]<sup>9)</sup> are also sometimes used, but their multivocal, ambiguous nature is the same.

To avoid this ambiguity as much as possible, Fumio Miura developed a working definition in his argument on social policy, learning from R. Walton and T.H. Marshall:

Social need is "a certain kind of situation [which] is distant from a certain goal or standard, and [whose] recovery, amelioration, etc. is socially recognised as a necessity."<sup>10)</sup>

The point is that "need is composed of a situation 'objectively' recognized as a 'fact' and 'value' (=subjective) judgement that the situation must be solved or ameliorated."<sup>11)</sup>

R. Walton writes that the assertion, "an individual or a group X has a need," implies (1) an individual or a group X is in the situation Y, (2) the situation Y contradicts with the value which the society Z supports, and (3) consequently, the situation Y should be changed.<sup>12)</sup> That is, "that an individual or a group has a need is not a simple factual statement, but implies a certain value judgement."<sup>13)</sup> T.H. Marshall also writes that the concept of need in social policy is based on the collective value system.<sup>14)</sup> "Namely, a need is not a basic want necessary for human life or an indispensable necessity, but is supported by a social judgement

that it is necessary to solve or ameliorate a certain situation. Furthermore this judgement is of a norm in the sense that it is not based on an individual’s judgement but on a socially recognized one”<sup>15)</sup>.

Needs are classified in various ways. Individual need and collective needs, physiological (primary) need social (secondary) need; A.H. Maslow’s need-in-stage theory; classifications of basic or universal needs of human life by the American Association of Social Workers,<sup>16)</sup> L. B.Glanger, and S.Okamura; classifications by characteristics of subjects of needs; cash (economic, or physical) need and non-cash (goods or personal services) need; market need and non-market need; public (governmental) need and private (voluntary) need; potential (objective) need and actualized (subjective) need; etc.<sup>17)</sup> Jonathan Bradshaw classifies needs into four, that is, normative, felt, expressed and comparative,<sup>18)</sup> based on the derivation of the criteria adopted for recognizing need. (Table 1) Richard Thayer distinguishes “diagnostic need”, the identified problem, and “prescriptive need”, the help which is required to alleviate it, and relate them to the Bradshaw’s four-fold classification to discuss the measurement or assessment of need.<sup>19)</sup>

Table 1: Bradshaw’s Classification of Need

Normative Need	what the expert or professional perceives to be need in a given situation
Felt Need	need perceived by the subjects themselves
Expressed Need (or Demand)	felt need turned into action in the form of a request for service
Comparative Need	need, deduced by the outside observer, in circumstances where individuals not in receipt of a particular service have similar characteristics to others who do receive it

“Need theory” also has flaws.<sup>20)</sup> For example, it sees the direct corresponding relationship between needs and services.<sup>21)</sup> First “it is better than nothing.” “You should take whatever you can get.” Secondly it tends to lack historical perspective and the perspective to put problems in a broader social context or social change.<sup>22)</sup> However, discussing pros and cons of “need theory” itself is not our present topic. As far as seeing the corresponding relationship between needs and services or programs and policies, the “need” concept is still effective and works, and this much serves our present need.

1) R.M.Titmuss, *Commitment to Welfare* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), p.20.

2) *Webster’s Seventh New College Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1972)

3) *Handbook of Social Welfare Terms* (Tokyo: Nihon Bunka Kagaku-sha, 1978), p.30.

4) Ibid. pp.30–31. *Social Welfare Dictionary* (Tokyo: Seishin Shobō, 1974), pp.278 and 357. *Contemporary Social Welfare Cyclopaedia* (Tokyo: Japan Council of Social Welfare, 1982), p.317.

5) *Handbook of Social Welfare Terms*, p.31.

- 6) *Social Welfare Dictionary*, p.278.
- 7) *Contemporary Social Welfare Cyclopaedia*, p.317. A proviso, "regarding social policy and social administration," has been added. Some writers emphasise the difference in the meaning of need between the social work field and the social policy field. e.g. Fumio Miura & Masao Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3 [Social Policy]* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1982) p.32, and Fumio Miura, *Social Welfare Management (Introduction)* (Tokyo: Japan Council of Social Welfare, 1979) pp.24–26.
- 8) Shigemi Jinushi, "About Social Needs," *Public Health*, 1974. Also see Miura & Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3*, pp.31–32.
- 9) cf. Miura, *Social Welfare Management*, p. 29. It reads:  
 "They [Social problems and life problems] may suit to express the missions or objects of social welfare as a whole, but may be confused with the individual problems which compose these [social or life] problems. The approach to social problems and life problems which has been studied so far had the emphasis on the pursuit of causes and conditions of problems and the interpretation of social, economic implication of the problems, and it does not fit as a technique of the policy science."
- 10) Ibid. cf. Miura & Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3*, p.32.
- 11) Miura & Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3*, p.33.
- 12) "Need, a central concept," *Social Service Quarterly*, 1969.
- 13) Miura & Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3*, p.32.
- 14) *Social Policy* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1978)
- 15) Miura & Mitomo, ed., *Course: Social Welfare 3*, p.32.
- 16) AASW, *Social Policy for Today* (1949).
- 17) Miura, *Social Welfare Management*, pp.31–34.
- 18) J. Bradshaw, "The Concept of Social Need," *New Society*, 30/2/72. The citation is from Thayer, "Problem Analysis: Alternative Measures of Needs Assessment," p.297.
- 19) Richard Thayer, "Problem Analysis: Alternative Measures of Needs Assessment." p.297.
- 20) They are seldom discussed in literature at least in Japan.
- 21) Miura, *Social Welfare Management*, pp.24–29.
- 22) This flaw may be compensated in part by discussing factors and processes of occurrence, development and change of needs.  
 cf. T. Hoshino & M. Kodama, ed., *Social Welfare Research* (Tokyo: Minorva Shobō, 1974), pp.356–359.

## 2. How To Measure Needs

Another point to be discussed is how to assess the "needs". Table 2, which was developed by the author from Jonathan Bradshaw's and Richard Thayer's ideas, is a classification of need by 'if the need has been perceived or not by subjects of need and/or researchers,' who are usually experts and professionals, and the table relates the classification of needs to the need measurement or assessment. Bradshaw's classification (Table 1) is useful as a start but is confusing because it uses two different criteria which do not belong to the same dimension. These criteria are: One, if need is felt or expressed by subjects or not, and two, what is adopted as "a certain goal or a yardstick."<sup>1)</sup> (cf. Miura's working definition of need on p.3)

In the first column of Table 2, "felt" or "expressed" need is not distinguished. What kind of scale was used to perceive the need is not questioned, either. As long as the subjects have perceived needs (I & II), an opinion research is logically possible. If researchers have perceived the need (I), a survey using pre-coded questionnaires with choices is possible. If not (II), it is impossible for researchers to prepare choices in advance, and only skillful, thoughtful interviews can draw out the subjects' perception. The case review of consultation and

Table 2: Needs and Their Measurement

by subjects	by researcher	research method
I. Need Perceived	Need Perceived	opinion research (questionnaire)
II. Need Perceived	Need Not Perceived	opinion research (interview); case review of consultation & counselling programs
III. Need Not Perceived	Need Not Perceived	observation, data analysis, etc.
IV. Need Not Perceived	Need perceived	observation, data analysis, etc. (opinion research)

counselling programs for employees by employers and for citizens and workers by various government and voluntary agencies can also be effective and useful. Today most leading corporations have EAPs (employee assistance programs) and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, for example, has a variety of those programs, some of which are involved with the fields of labor, health & mental health, women, children, welfare, tax, traffic accidents, consumer affairs, legal affairs, loan sharks [*sarakin*], and real estate. When the subjects have not perceived needs (III and IV), soliciting their perception is nonsense. Other methodologies such as observation, statistical analysis, and literature review must be adopted, although it may be technically possible for researchers, who have perceived needs (IV), to prepare and use pre-coded questionnaires, and for subjects to perceive needs through the educational effect of research and to give answers.

If researchers or experts and professionals have recognized need, conducting research is not necessary. “Need perceived by researchers” (I and IV) in Table 2 thus means that researchers have recognized “candidates” of need or roughly, not exactly, perceived need. In other words, if researchers have perceived need or not in the table is a matter of degree. (Figure 1) Eliciting a confirmation and giving a priority order are to be the aim of this kind of research, and most research actually conducted to date under the name of the need assessment research belongs to this category, especially I in the above table. In that situation they use pre-coded questionnaires enumerating needs that researchers perceived.

This kind of research is relatively easy, although a risk always exists that the researchers’ perception as the premise of the effectiveness of the research is wrong and in that case the result have no meaning because people check one of choices given on a questionnaire anyway.<sup>2)</sup> What we will seek in this paper is not the “need” already perceived by researchers or administrators, but the need not yet perceived by them.(II and III) In other words, it is a goal to find out what should be included in choices in future research of the categories I and IV. There were two cases: One, in the case that subjects have themselves perceived needs (II) and two, in the case that they have not (III). Probably the latter case is

Figure 1: Perception of Needs by Subject and Researcher

		subject perception of need	
		low	high
researcher perception of need	high	II	I
	low	III	IV

more important, and the need assessment is more difficult in this category. In order to find out their latent needs, we could not help relying on an observation method as well as on some analytical work involving various statistics, surveys and literature.<sup>3)</sup> The rest of this paper pertains to the former case, that is, the needs which have been perceived by the subjects themselves but not by researchers because of the laxity or inability of the researchers or because of the underdeveloped research techniques. How were these kinds of needs to be measured? Intimate, openended interviews and the case reviews of consultation & counselling programs were suggested to be effective above. We adopted the interview method. An example of the case distribution of an EAP is shown on pp.108—9.

1) F. Miura classifies each of "normative" and "comparative" more in detail: The former is typified by "theoretical" standards (scales), standards set in relation with policy goals and judgement by experts, and for the latter, cross-comparative method, time series comparative method, statistical comparative method and national minimum. Miura, *Social Welfare Management*, pp.35—38.

2) There is much research of this kind. Many programs and services which are designed and implemented on the basis of "needs" measured by such research actually turn out to be impractical, having few users. (There are of course cases where needs are measured properly but programs fail because of flaws in their design. They are, however, not discussed here.) Research of this kind can only tell anyway the relative order, but not the absolute level of need.

3) Yoshiya Soeda writes, "Aren't there too many opinion researches under the name of so-called need assessment research. Opinion is important but the life structure which decides the opinion is more important." ["Social Welfare Research" in Fukutake & Matsubara, ed., *Social Research Method* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1970), p.275.] Basically speaking, subjects' perception is not the determinant of a need. "If a situation falls for short of a certain goal or standard or not, and if the recovery, amelioration, etc of the situation is socially recognised as a necessity or not" are determinants. (See Miura's definition on p.3.)

## II METHODOLOGY OF OUR RESEARCH

### 1. Research Method

Five hundred working people were interviewed by five hundred students who were from a private university near Tokyo. Eighty percent of the interviewers were from the department of economics and twenty percent were from the departments of science and pharmacy. No instructions regarding possible responses were given to interviewers beyond the following three items and some basic interview techniques. No uniform interview guides were prepared, either, except a face sheet (p.14) on which was recorded the interviewees' basic background characteristics.

1. Select a very ordinary<sup>1)</sup> working man or woman.
2. The objective of the research is to know the troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situation, etc.
3. Get open-minded, serious answers.

The interviews were held in the summer of 1984, and some (about 50) supplemental interviews were held in the summer of 1986.

There are at least three questions to be discussed regarding this methodology. They are on the adoption of open-ended interviews, the sampling of research subjects, and the level of need we are going to deal with.

#### (1) Unconstructed Interviews

In this research, no questionnaires nor uniform interview guides were used. It is similar to the approach taken in the classic Howthorne Experiment<sup>2)</sup> interview research which employed no fixed questions and let interviewers and interviewees talk freely on their own.

It was discussed in the proceeding section that surveys using questionnaires were generally not appropriate when searching for needs which researchers had not perceived. We assumed, at the very beginning of this paper, that Japanese labor administration, labor unions, and academicians, that is, researchers, do not know what workers, that is, research subjects, truly want or need and are doing matters off target or of no consequence. The logical conclusion of this is that the content of responses must be beyond the researchers' perception and predictions. Why were no instructions given to interviewers? It is to avoid biases, skews, and contamination. The researcher did not want interviewers to have any preoccupations. Hiring innocent students as interviewers partly comes from the same reason. Most students were freshmen or sophomores. They had little knowledge on the research topic.

#### (2) Sampling Through Interviewers

Sampling of the research subjects were not statistically "scientific" or representative.



To be representative, they should have been sampled and stratified by factors like sex, age group, size of enterprise, industry, and occupation. Otherwise needs of all working people in Japan cannot be accurately ascertained. Such a method, however, was not adopted for several reasons, not the least of which was expediency. First, the combination of stratified sampling and random sampling would not have necessarily produced a statistically scientific result, commonly referred to as the problem of non-statistical errors. To what extent could inexperienced interviewers "get the open-minded, serious answers," not superficial, official answers, from assigned research subjects whom they meet for the first time? Moreover, what percentage of interviewers could succeed in meeting assigned research subjects? With a low return rate and poorer quality data, a statistically well designed sampling might give a practically less representative result than the method we adopted. Then was it possible to solve this problem by employing experienced, well-trained interviewers? The limited resource, both financial and human, however, did not allow us to do so. However, even if we could have employed experienced, well-trained interviewers, a more fundamental question would remain: Does the data obtained by them from their first meetings with the interviewees necessarily assure us of higher quality in the sense of being "open-minded and serious" than those obtained by interviewers who are inexperienced but have rapport with the interviewees?

By our research of this method, we cannot extract needs of all groups of working people in Japan, but can of certain self-screened groups. The requirement to "get open-minded, serious answers" predictably leads interviewers to the people with whom they have already established rapport and thus to the concentration of research subjects on specific sex and age groups, as well as the social classes they belong to—in our research, for example, (1) male in their late 40s and early 50s, who were the interviewers' fathers in the new and old middle class, (2) male and female around 20 years old, who were the interviewers' former high school classmates now employed and who belonged to a relatively lower class, and (3) male in their late 20s or early 30s, who were seniors or coworkers in the interviewers' side jobs and ranged from the lower class workers to "elite" college graduates.(See for details pp.11–13.)

With the knowledge of what part of "all working people in Japan" the collected data are concerned with in terms of sex, age, social strata, and so on, the approach to reach target subjects through a self-selection process and obtain the wanted kind and level of data—sampling interviewers instead of directly sampling interviewees of subjects—could be valid and meaningful in this type of research. Particularly it would be permissible to use this method as an experiment for the first time—to see if this kind of research is effective or not.

### (3) Needs We Discuss

The "need" to be extracted is "diagnostic need" and "felt need" in Thayer's and Bradshaw's classification. (See p.4)

In our research, "troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situations, etc." have been so far and will be replaced approximately for "needs". However, both are of course not the same in their meanings. The general definition of needs was given in the

preceding section. Our “troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situations, etc.” have not been tested yet by “value”. Or the matter of standards or scales has not been discussed. We could learn what the research subjects have difficulty with or want but we cannot learn “if the situation falls for short of a certain goal or standard, and the recovery, amelioration, etc. of the situation is socially recognized as a necessity.” (See p.3) At best our results are “various negative aspects which have been recognized.” However, to learn more of the former would provide unlimited hints about the latter, and we could approach to the need infinitely. The former might be considered as seeds of the latter.

- 1) Actually any working men or women are acceptable. The adjective “ordinary” was inserted to answer the students’ questions as to what kinds of workers they should choose as their interviewees. The students tend to think that they must select some special workers.
- 2) F.J.Roethlisberger and W.J.Dickson, *Management and the Worker* (1939) and others.

## 2. Computing Method and Characteristics of Interviewees

Out of the collected 511 cases, 498 were usable and 13 were not because of missing information on characteristics and other reasons.<sup>1)</sup>

Table 3: After-coded Interview Record Items

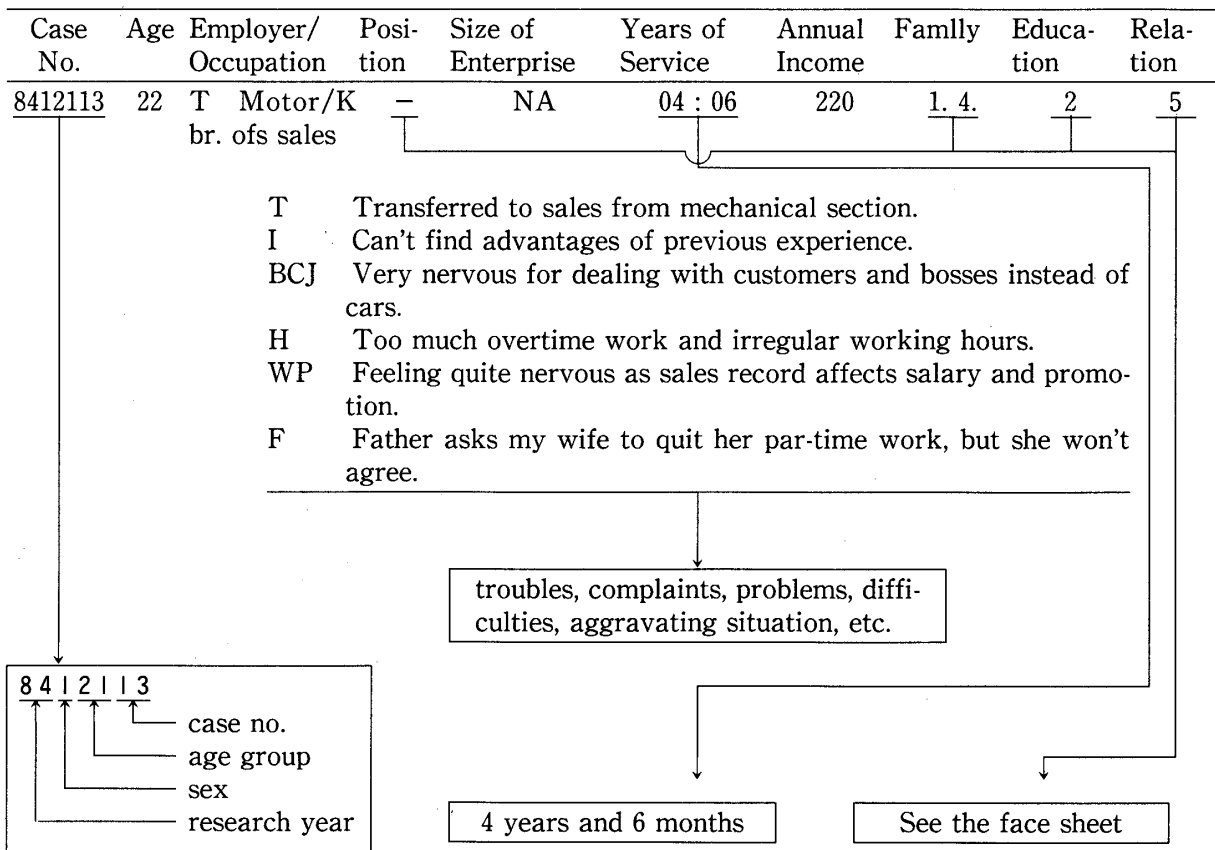
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A	Automobiles and other material wants
B	Bosses (including human relations), ranking
C	Customers
D	Discrimination, complex
E	Evaluation
F	Family, family life
G	Geography [Commuting]
H	(Working) Hours
I	Inexperience, incompetence
J	Job content
K	Kids [Children]
L	Living [Housing]
M	Management, future of company, layoffs, and bankruptcy
N	<i>Ningen-kankei</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere at work places
O	(Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions
P	Promotion, transfer
Q	Questions on life & work
R	Retirement
S	Safety & health, work environment
T	Turnover, independence & self-employment
U	(Labor) Unions, labor relations
V	Voice [Participation]
W	Wage & salary, expenditure and money
X	(Opposite) Sex [Men & Women, marriage and other personal concerns]
Y	Yes [Satisfaction]
Z	[Community, Society]

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These 498 cases were first classified according to sex, age group and type of employment, whether employed (including non-regular workers such as part-time workers, contract workers [*shokutaku*] and students) or self-employed (including family workers and people who work at home [*naishoku*]). Then each phrase and sentence in the 2,000-Japanese-character length interview records was itemized in accordance with the codes given in Table 3. The after-coded information was partly put into computer along with the data obtained from the face sheets. Figure 2 is an example of computer output.

Figure 2: Computed Items and Output Example



They were then tabulated and analyzed by characteristics of workers and kinds of "troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situations, etc." (hereafter referred to as "problems and difficulties") whether singly or in combination.

Table 4 shows distribution of sex and age groups of 498 usable cases.

With regard to age, 498 cases can be classified into five major groups. The first group consists of young workers of both sexes, "under 20 years of age." Most of those who are "under 20 years of age" are classmates of the interviewers from their junior and senior high school days. Considering that nearly 40 percent of high school graduates go on to college today in Japan, this group belongs to a middle or lower than middle social stratum. The second group is also male and female but in their twenties. They have common characteris-

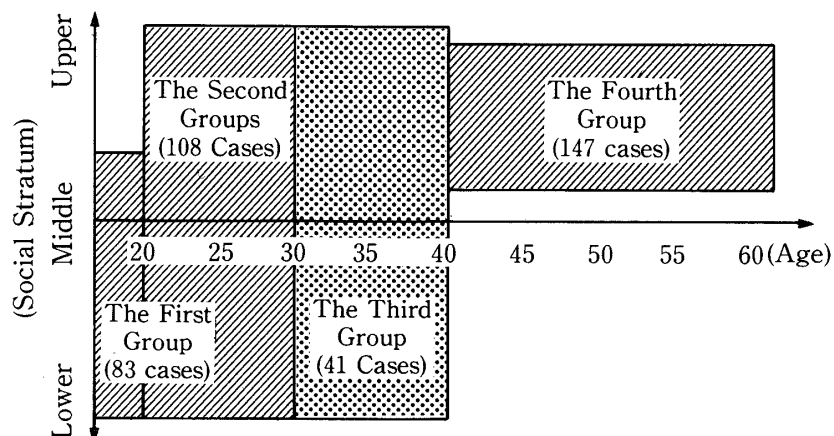
Table 4: Distribution of Research Subjects By Sex, Age and Status

	Male	Famale
Total	379(64)[1]	119<15>(12)[2]
-20	83( 2)[1]	46 ( 1)[1]
21-25	73( 4)	28 [1]
26-30	35( 2)	5< 1>
31-35	24( 3)	2< 1>
36-40	17( 4)	0
41-45	26( 7)	15< 4>( 6)
46-50	72(24)	18< 6>( 5)
51-55	32(11)	4< 3>
56-	17( 7)	1

Note: < > for part-time workers, ( ) for the self-employed and family employees, and [ ] for students. Numbers in brackets are included in the total figures given.

tics and needs to either the first group above or the third group<sup>3)</sup> which follows below and will be omitted hereafter in our analysis. The third group consists of male workers in their thirties. They are mainly fellow or senior workers or bosses at places where interviewers (students) work. Elder brothers, cousins and other relatives of interviewers are also<sup>4)</sup> included. This group covers a wide range of social strata, including "elite" workers employed by major large enterprises listed in the Tokyo No.1 Stock Exchange Market, and employees of medium and small firms in service and other industries. The fourth group is made up of male workers in their forties and above, which includes the interviewers' fathers. The group includes "uncles" and other relatives as well as friends of the interviewers' fathers.<sup>3)</sup> They belong to the middle social stratum or above in the sense that they can afford to send their children to a private college in the suburbs of Tokyo. Many of them hold positions of middle

Figure 3 : Characteristics of Male Research Subjects



Note: The figure does not necessarily show that collected cases scatter evenly in each of squares, but show that the range of squares has come into view of this research.

management in private enterprises and public offices or are self-employed.<sup>6)</sup> However, considering the social position of this university which the interviewers are coming from, it is assumed that those subjects who belong to the real upper or upper middle social stratum are in principle excluded in this research. The fifth group consists of all female workers except those in the first and the second groups. Most of them are in the age groups of "41-45" or "46-50"<sup>7)</sup> and many part-time workers are included.<sup>8)</sup>

Our research subjects fairly well represent most categories of Japanese workers today with the exception of the lower class workers in their forties and above. The younger generations are best represented both in quality and quantity. Each category of workers, however, certainly requires a greater number of cases in order to get more comprehensive information. Women, particularly in their late 20s and above, are vastly underrepresented. In terms of men, white collar workers in large corporations are few. Apart from female part-time workers, the numbers of non-regular workers were low.

In the next section, employees who are between 18 and 20 years old in the first group will have their situations analyzed. The self-employed and students will be excluded. Following sections will be devoted to the analysis of employees from other groups.

- 1) How many people the interviewers actually approached and how many of them refused to be interviewed are unknown.
- 2) Among men, 78 cases out of 83; among women, 30 cases out of 46.
- 3) Among men between 21 and 25, of the 73 cases, 23 classmates, 27 fellow and senior workers and bosses of interviewers, and 14 elder brothers, cousins and other relatives; 21 college graduates. Among women between 21 and 25, of the 28 cases, 6 classmates, 3 fellow and senior workers and bosses and 7 elder sisters, cousins and other relatives; 12 college or junior college graduates.
- 4) Of the 76 cases, 32 fellow and senior workers and bosses of interviewers, and 16 elder brothers, cousins and other relatives.
- 5) A total of 126 cases out of 147; 87 fathers, 26 uncles and other relatives, and 13 fathers' friends.
- 6) Of the 147 cases, 49 are self-employed.
- 7) 33 cases out of 45.
- 8) 15 cases out of 45.

## FACE SHEET

Case No. ( ) (Do not fill in.)

1. Sex: 1 Male 2 Female
2. Age: ( ) years old
  - 1 up to 20 2 21-25 3 26-30 4 31-35 5 36-40
  - 6 41-45 7 46-50 8 51-55 9 56-60 10 over 60
3. Type of employment:
  - 1 self-employed 2 Family employes 3 Employed 4 Others
4. Employer, type of work or occupation: ( )
 

Position: 1 (Ordinary) Worker, 2 Chief clerk 3 Section chief

4 Department chief 5 Others

Size: company as whole at your branch

regular employees only ( ) ( )

including non-regular workers ( ) ( )
5. Length of employment: ( ) years ( ) months
6. Record of past employment: ( )
 

(Give a brief record. Example: T Manufacturing (2) — Gasoline station (1 : 6))
7. Annual income (gross): ( ) yen
 

(State, if it is not annual income, monthly income, daily payment, hourly payment, etc.  
Example: 220,000/month)
8. Family: (Include only those who are living together. Circle those who are working.)
  - 1 Wife or husband 2 Son ( ) 3 Daughter ( ) 4 Father 5 Mother
  - 6 Elder brother ( ) 7 Elder sister ( ) 8 Younger brother ( )
  - 9 Younger sister ( ) 10 Grandfather 11 Grandmother 12 Others
9. Education:
  - 1 Junior high school graduate
  - 1' Junior high school + vocational or technical school
  - 1" Senior high school dropout
  - 2 Senior high school graduate
  - 2' Senior high school + vocational or technical school
  - 2" Dropout from college or junior college
  - 3 Junior college graduate
  - 3' Junior college + vocational or technical school
  - 4 College graduate
  - 4' College + vocational or technical school
10. Relationship to interviewer:
  - 1 Classmate from elementary, junior or senior high school
  - 1' Friend, senior classmate etc. from elementary, junior, or senior high school
  - 2 Senior workers, Bosses, etc.
  - 3 Brothers and Sisters
  - 4 Parents
  - 5 Relatives
  - 6 Friends of the parents
  - 7 Others
11. Date of interview: month ( ) day( ) (time: — )
 

Place of interview: ( )

Method: ( )
12. Interviewer's student number: ( )
 

Interviewer's name: ( )

### III YOUNG WORKERS (18–20 YEARS OF AGE; MALE AND FEMALE)

#### 1. Characteristics of Interviewees

The following data concern 122 cases of workers of 18–20 years of age. Of the 122 cases, 80 are men and 44, women.

Most interviewees (89%) are senior high school graduates. There are 8 junior high school graduates among the men. Also among them, dropouts are rather noticeable—3 from college and 5 from high school. These dropouts constitute ten percent of the male workers. Eleven have finished professional or vocational schools after their high school graduation.

All are unmarried, most of them are living with their parent(s) and other family

**Table 5: Education of Interviewees(18–20 years old)**

	Male	Female
Total	80	44
Junior high graduates	8	1
(+ Professional, technical and vocational schools)	(1) <sup>1)</sup>	(0)
(Senior high dropouts)	(5)	(0)
Senior high graduates	71 <sup>2)</sup>	42 <sup>3)</sup>
(+ Professional, technical and vocational schools)	(7)	(4)
(College dropouts)	(3)	(0)
Junior college graduates	0	1
Unknown	1	0

1) One high school dropout.

2) Two dropouts from professional & technical schools and one presumed are included.

3) One attending and one dropout from professional and technical schools are included.

**Table 6: Family Composition of Interviewees(18–20 years old)**

	Male	Female
Total	80	44
Living with parents, etc.	61 <sup>1)</sup>	33
mother, etc.(No Father) <sup>2)</sup>	3	1
father, etc.(No mother) <sup>2)</sup>	4	0
Living alone in a dormitory/apartment	8 <sup>3)</sup>	6 <sup>3)</sup>
Unknown	4	4

1) A father is not working.

2) Due to death or divorce.

3) Those who answered "living alone" with words. Some "living alone" cases may possibly be included in "living with parents, etc." cases.

members. Among them, 8 come from one-parent family due to death or separation by divorce. This is more so with men than with women. Fourteen workers or more than ten percent of the total live alone in apartments or dormitories regardless of whether their parents are still living or not.

Their occupations<sup>1)</sup> vary greatly with sex. For men, the largest group is production process workers (30 workers; 38%). Two other workers are construction craftsmen, and ten are other types of blue collar workers such as boilermen, truck drivers and office machinery repairmen. These add up to more than fifty percent of all male workers. Enterprises they are employed in range from those listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Market I (9 or more) to medium size industries and their small subsidiaries. As many as 11 are concentrated in automobile and related industries (parts and accessories). The next largest groups are service workers (13; 30%) and sales workers (12; 27%). The former includes cooks and waiters (9), guards, railway station workers and others, and the latter, salesmen working in retail stores and mainly outside offices. There are only two clerical and related workers in private enterprises. Five, including two policemen, are government employees.

In contrast, of the 44 female workers, at least 23 (21 in private companies and 2 in public or quasi-public organizations) are clerical and related workers. In addition, another five whose occupations are not identified also seem to work in similar jobs. Nearly two-thirds of women are engaged in general affairs, accounting and various other clerical work in financial facilities such as banks and credit unions (9), manufacturing industries, wholesale, transportation and computer firms and hospitals. The second largest group contains those who are engaged in typical “women’s jobs”, that is, professional & technical and service workers such as a nurse, kindergarten teacher, nutrition technician, cook in a dormitory, bus guide, waitress and beautician. The rest includes sales workers (2), a policewoman, a production worker and others, though only few in number. Refer to Table 7 for details.

Since the research subjects in this section are mainly made up of the interviewer’s classmates from junior and senior high schools, the length of employment is from 3 and a half years for the latter, as far as they have stayed on the same jobs. Not a few of them, particularly among men, however, have changed their jobs, and there is a man who has changed his job<sup>2)</sup> as many as three or four times after he dropped out of high school. Eleven out of thirteen<sup>2)</sup> who changed jobs are men. The kinds of jobs they held in the past were a painter, a production worker in a small factory, an assembler, a waiter and a waitress in a hotel and a restaurant, a cook at a lunch box kitchen, a trucking company worker, a sales worker of a paper manufacturing company, a worker in a cookie & cake shop and the like, which are no different from the kinds of jobs held presently listed in Table 7.

Income was answered either by year (65) or by month (43), with an exception of ‘by day.’ In cases answered in annual income, a considerable difference is noted between male and female workers. It may come from a difference in overtime pay and/or bonuses.

Annual income for men varies from a minimum of 940,000 yen (including tax) to a maximum of three million yen (take-home pay). The former is the case of a guard who dropped out of high school, while the latter is the case of a plasterer, also a high school dropout. The mode is the class of “1.75–2.25 million yen” or around two million yen, and



Table 7(A): Occupations<sup>1)</sup> of Interviewees (Male, 18-20 years old)

Total	80
Government & public corporation employees	5 [in social security office, hospital, public corporation, policeman (2)]
Private industry employees (All except for government & public corp. employees)	
Professional and technical workers	3 [X-ray technician assistant, programmer (2)]
Clerical & related workers	2 [in automobile dealer, unknown]
Sales workers	12 [in sports good store, supermarket (2), ladies garment co., dress shop, textile wholesale, pharmaceutical co. salesman (2), office machine sales, electronic products agency, stocks & securities co., gas station attendant/machinist]
Service workers <sup>2)</sup>	13 [cook (6), waiter (3), guard (2), railway station attendant (2)]
Craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers	
Construction craftsmen	2 [Steel-frame builder, plasterer]
Workers in manufacturing	30 [in office machine & equipment, auto & related parts/accessories (1), textile, printing (2), precision machinery (2), electrical machinery, food & kindred products (2), electronic machinery (2), machine parts (2), packing, railway cars, pharmaceutical co., unknown; packer (2), painter, assemblyman (3), inspector (2), repairman, welder, unknown (20)]
Others <sup>3)</sup>	10 [building maintenance, cleaning, boilerman, air-conditioning technician, golf practice center odd-jobber, office machine repairman/sales (2), photo developing, truck driver (2)]
Unknown	3 [employed]

1) See the footnote 1) on p.20.

2) Here are included private firms workers in police and security occupations and station attendants in transport and communication industries.

3) Includes truck drivers in transportation and communication industries.

1)  
Table 7(B): Occupations of Interviewees (Female, 18-20 years old)

Total	44	
Government & public corporation employees	3	[government employee, policewoman, notary's office]
Private industry employees (All except for government & public corp. employees)	6	[programmer, English teacher, nursery teacher, student caretaker in facility for physically & mentally handicapped children, nurse, nutrition technician]
Professional and technical workers	21	[in city and local banks, credit asso.(9), electrical machinery, manufacturing, computer firm, softwere co., transportation, shoe wholesale, hospital, art studio, unknown(4)]
Clerical & related workers	2	[in wholesale store, cotton house]
Sales workers	5	[hair dresser assistant(2), cook in a dormitory, bus guide, waitress]
Service workers	0	
Craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers	0	
Construction craftsmen	2	[sewing, A Manufacturing Co.]
Workers in manufacturing	0	
Others	5	[in survey co., precision machinery, K Electronics, I Newspapers, unknown]
Unknown		

1) See the footnote 1) on p.20.

Table 8: Income of Interviewees (18 - 20 years old)

	(Answered in) Annual Income (with tax)		(Answered in) Monthly Income (after tax)		(Answered in) Daily Payment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	44	21	27	16	1	0
up to ¥1.25	2	6	5	3	1	0
1.25 - 1.75	11	9	13	7	1	0
1.75 - 2.25	21	6	6	5		
2.25 - 2.75	5	0	3	1		
2.75 - 3.25	5	0				
Minimum	¥1	¥0.5	¥70	¥72		
Maximum	¥3	¥2	¥190	¥160		
			(with tax)(after tax)	(after tax)		
			(after tax)	(after tax)		
			Minimum			
			Maximum			
			Total			
			¥70,80,90			
			100,110,120			
			130,140,150			
			160 and over			
			Total			
			¥6,000			

1) In many cases, it was not clear whether the data included tax or not or whether the data with tax or after tax was given. In the latter, the necessary data was estimated wherever possible. As for monthly income, some seem to include overtime pay and/or bonus and some do not.

2) In addition, there are 15 cases of "unknown". (8 males, 7 females; one answers that "he/she received the same level as government employees."

about half of the men are concentrated in this class. Eleven, or one out of four, fall into the class of "1.25–1.75 million yen" or around 1.5 million yen.

As for women, the minimum is ¥500,000 (take-home pay) and the maximum is 2 million yen. The former is the case of a student caretaker working in a facility for physically and mentally disabled children. The mode for women's earnings is the class of "1.25–1.75 million yen," one class lower than that for men. The remainder are distributed evenly in classes of "1.25 million yen or less" and "1.75–2.25 million yen." No female workers are paid more than 2.25 million yen annually.

In cases answered in monthly income (take-home pay), there are no significant differences between men and women, except that a few men earn "more than ¥160,000." It may be because people are not likely to include overtime and bonus payments when talking about monthly wages. Slightly less than half of them are paid "¥100,000–120,000." Simply multiply this by 12 (months), and you will get the annual income of 1.20–1.44 million yen without counting bonus payments. For your reference, the minimum wage per day in Tokyo at the time of the research in 1986 was 3,691 yen. Multiplied by 25 (days), it can be converted into a monthly earning of 92,275 yen.

1) The classification is one combining industry and occupation and designed by the author exclusively for this research. Refer to Table 7. Roughly speaking, "construction craftsmen" and "production process and related workers" are identical to blue collar workers in the secondary industry, and "service workers" and "sales workers" non-clerical workers in the tertiary industry. Management & Coordination Agency, *Japan Standard Industry Classification* and *Japan Standard Occupation Classification* were applied as much as possible.

2) The number concerns only cases which gave concrete job histories in face sheets. Unfilled blanks in the sheets mean not only "none" but also mean "unknown".

## 2. Distribution of Itemized "Problems and Difficulties"

In this research, "quantity" does not necessarily have absolute significance. There are two reasons. Firstly, the object of this research is to extract "candidates" for "needs". In this sense, "problems and difficulties" which the greatest number of interviewees raised are not necessarily more important than others. Some "problems and difficulties" which only a few interviewees mentioned, or sometimes for that very reason, may have more important meanings. Secondly, the data written in letters and computed does not always reflect the degree of seriousness. Take the expression that "the wage is too low" for instance. He or she may simply be saying, "I wish I were paid more," or it could be as serious as he or she "can't pay [his or her] way without borrowing some money." When someone says, "I'm doing too much overtime work, he may be really thinking of changing a job being worried about his health, or he may actually be pleased with the extra earnings, contrary to his words. Either case is counted as one when computed.

In this section, a two step analysis will be made in the following. First, we will see the numerical distribution of the cases by "problems and difficulties" after-coded into 25 items as shown earlier. ("Yes [Satisfaction]" excluded.) The total number amounts to 561 cases

because each of the 124 interviewees usually refers to several items of "problems and difficulties." If an interviewee, however, refers to more than one different "problem and difficulty" within an item, it is counted as one.

In the next section, the concrete content of the "problems and difficulties" will be closely examined in detail, item by item.

The top three "problems and difficulties" which young workers (18–20 years old) have are "working hours" (75 cases), "*ningen-kankei* [human relations] (excluding those with bosses)" (60 cases), and "job content" (59 cases). "Problems and difficulties" on "wage & salary, expenditure and money" (51 cases) and "bosses (including human relations)" (47 cases) follow next.

The item "working hours" represents problems of long or irregular working hours, no or little rest time, too much overtime work, midnight labor, shift systems and holidays and vacations. "We want time more than money," workers say. "Human relations" includes not only problems of how to get along with senior and fellow workers but also complaints of the workers' composition at work places, or not having young workers or the opposite sex to work together, and complaints of the general atmosphere of workplaces. "Job content" refers to "problems and difficulties" deriving directly from their work itself rather than other labor conditions. The most typical are those about monotonous work, assembly line work and meaningless work. The results brought by being "too busy", rationalization and others are discussed here for convenience' sake. There are some cases where the "job content" is against the labor contract. The issue of "wage" is mainly about its low level, but also includes allowances not properly paid, differentiation by sex and education, and so on. "Bosses" means complaints and criticism workers have against them as well as difficulties workers experience getting along with them. Together with "problems and difficulties" mentioned in the item "*ningen-kankei* [human relations]" above, there are so many workers who are worried and troubled with problems of human relations.

It should be noted that there is a considerable difference in the distribution of "troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situation, etc." by sex. For men, the biggest "problems and difficulties" are those of "working hours." Fifty-three cases out of 88, that is, two thirds of cases, mention this item. The second is "wage" which 40 cases or half of workers raise, being followed by "problems and difficulties" of "human relations" (37 cases), "job content" (34 cases) and "bosses" (28 cases). The percentage of these ranges from 35 to 43.

One out of every four or five men has some "problems and difficulties" on "turnover, independence & self-support" (23 cases), "safety & health, working environment" (21 cases), or "family, family life" (19 cases). There are strong desires to change jobs or start businesses of their own among workers in this social stratum. Present working environments are far from being safe and healthy. And workers are under great stress. Problems of supporting one's parents or living in a dormitory are treated as "family & family life" problems. However, such serious problems as divorce, domestic violence, refusal to attend school, alcoholism and the elderly confined to bed have not been extracted in this research except for a few cases. Different research methods must be applied to investigate them.

Table 9: Distribution of Itemized “Problems and Difficulties”

	Male		Female		Total	
Total	80	100.0%	44	100.0%	124	100.0%
A Automobiles	3	3.8	0	0.0	3	2.4
B Bosses (including human relations)	28	35.0	19	43.2	47	37.9
C Customers	13	16.3	9	20.5	22	17.7
D Discrimination, complex	15	18.8	15	34.1	30	24.2
E Evaluation	1	1.3	1	2.3	2	1.6
F Family, family life	19	23.8	9	20.5	28	22.6
G Geography [Commuting]	4	5.0	7	15.9	11	8.9
H (Working) Hours	53	66.3	22	50.0	75	60.5
I Inexperience, incompetence	9	11.3	19	43.2	28	22.6
J Job content	34	42.5	25	56.8	59	47.6
K Kids [Children]	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
L Living [Housing]	4	5.0	4	9.1	8	6.5
M Management, future of company, layoffs and bankruptcy	4	5.0	0	0.0	4	3.2
N <i>Ningen-kankei</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere	37	46.3	23	52.3	60	48.4
O (Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions	5	6.3	7	15.9	12	9.7
P Promotion, transfer	9	11.3	3	6.8	12	9.7
Q Questions on life & work	4	5.0	5	11.4	9	7.3
R Retirement	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
S Safety & health, work environments	21	26.3	8	18.2	29	23.4
T Turnover, independence & self-employment	23	28.8	8	18.2	31	25.0
U (Labor) Unions, labor relations	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.8
V Voice [Participation]	6	7.5	0	0.0	6	4.8
W Wage & salary, expenditure	40	50.0	11	25.0	51	41.1
X (Opposite) Sex [Men & women, marriage and other personal concerns]	13	16.3	12	27.3	25	20.2
(Y Yes [Satisfaction]	—	—	—	—	—	—)
Z [Community, Society]	4	5.0	3	6.8	7	5.6

Note: The total numbers 341 cases for male and 210 for female. The same “problem and difficulty” may be counted for more than one item, and different “problems and difficulties” are counted as one case as far as they belong to the same item.

Others include “discrimination, complex” (15 cases), “customers” (13 cases), “sex, marriage” (13 cases), “promotion, transfer” (9 cases), “inexperience, inability” (9 cases) and other items. Ten to fifteen percent of workers in this age category refer to each item. The major source of “discrimination” is school years completed. Workers “can never argue with customers,” which brings tremendous stress to workers. What is meant by “sex, marriage” are problems like “I have no boy (or girl) friends,” and so forth. “Promotion, transfer” is associated with discrimination by education as mentioned above. What is itemized as

"inexperience, incompetence" are the feelings of anxiety and worry anyone would go through when they first start working, as well as regrets he or she may have for "not having studied more, or mastered something."

Only a few cases of "problems and difficulties" are reported on "voice (participation)" (e.g. "A boss has no ears to listen to us."), "fringe benefits and other labor conditions" (e.g. "There are no cafeterias for employees."), "geography [commuting]" (e.g. long commuting hours), "management, future of company, bankruptcy" (e.g. "Is my company O.K.?"), "living [housing]" (e.g. "My apartment has no bath."), "questions on life and work" (which are also the problems of alienation as well), "community, society" (e.g. The deducted ten percent national medical insurance should be eliminated.), "automobiles" (e.g. "I'd like to have a car of my own.") or "evaluation" (e.g. "I'm not duly evaluated."). Only one case is reported on the item "labor union, labor relations," and none at all on "kids [children]" and "retirement."

The biggest "problems and difficulties" for women, on the other hand, are those of "job content" (25 cases), followed by "*ningen-kankei* [human relations]" (23 cases) and "working hours" (22 cases). Each of these three items is the concern of more than half the women in this age group. The fourth biggest items are "bosses" and "inexperience, incompetence," 19 cases and 43 percent respectively. It is interesting to note that very many (nearly half of) women raise "inexperience, incompetence" as "problems and difficulties" while only ten percent of men do, and relatively few (one out of four) women raise "wages" while very many men do.

"Discrimination" (15 cases) and "sex, marriage and other personal concerns" (12 cases) are the two other items which are rated high among women in comparison to men. Women have a strong feeling of being discriminated against not only because of education but also sex (one out of every three). Problems of "sex, marriage and other personal concerns" are shared by one out of every four woman. "Other personal concerns" here involve such problems as personal appearance, not found among men.

"Customers", "family, family life", "turnover, independence", and "safety & health, working environments" are "problems and difficulties" of one out of every five, and "geography [commuting]" and "fringe benefits and other labor conditions" one out of every six or seven, which is a higher proportion than that among men.

Less than five cases are reported on other items; five on "questions on life and work," four on "living [housing]," three on both "promotion, transfer," and "community, society" and one on "evaluation". There are no cases on "kids [children]" and "retirement", which is also the case with men, nor "automobiles", "management, future of company, bankruptcy," "labor union, labor relations," and "voice [participation]," either.

It should be emphasized again that the number itself has no absolute meaning in this research. At the same time, however, it may well be noted for example that there is only one case which refers to "problems and difficulties" on "labor unions", that women's complaints against "discrimination" are so conspicuously high, and that women are far less concerned than men about "wages", "promotion, transfer", "management, future of company, bankruptcy" and "voice [participation]."

### 3. The Content of "Problems & Difficulties" by Item

#### (1) Working Hours (53+22)<sup>1)</sup> cf. Commuting

"Working Hours" attracts the largest number of responses. This category includes "Overtime Work/Long Working Hours" (26+16), "Work 'Breaks'" (3+4), "Holidays/Vacations" (23+10), and "Shift/Night Work" (17+0). There are no differences between sexes in the former three items, but in the latter, "Shift/Night Work", all responses are from male workers and none from female.

#### (i) Overtime Work/Long Working Hours(26+16)+Commuting

Work finishing time varies from day to day due to overtime work. "Too much overtime work," "even on Saturdays," "I always work until past 7:00 p.m.," "until past 8:00 p.m. every day," "until 10:00 p.m.," and "I take the last train home," are comments made by the respondents. There are no sexual differences on this point. An 18-year-old girl, who works in a large precision machinery corporation says, "We have a lot of overtime work, and I have to take the last train home quite often." "During the spring, we work an average of 40 extra hours a month. It's enough to make me cry." (Female, 19 years old, shoe wholesale dealer, clerical;8421614) "A monthly average of 50 extra hours." (Male, 20 years old, small printing company; 8611612) "Sometimes I take my work home." Even without overtime work, an intern beautician's working hours are "from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m." and those of a live-in cook are "from 6:30 a.m." "Working hours are too long." "Overtime work is sometimes unavoidable to meet clients' demands," but in most cases the business itself is operated expecting overtime work from the beginning. Furthermore, overtime work is forced on a worker "against [his/her] will" and "without any regard to [his/her] plans." "My boss asks me to do some extra unscheduled work. He makes sarcastic remarks if I am going home at the usual closing time. Or, in contrast: "I do want overtime work, but they won't give me any," "If I am doing overtime, the boss throws sarcastic remarks," and the like.

Sometimes another condition makes the situation of long working hours even worse. "Commuting to and from the workplace takes too much time." In Tokyo and its vicinity a commuting time of "one hour" or "one hour and ten minutes" is just about average, but for some it takes as much as "two hours to commute one way," which makes it necessary for them to "get up as early as 5:30 in the morning." When the work begins early due to the nature of the job, they have to "leave home at 6:30 a.m." or at "5:00," or even "take the first train in the morning." In addition an early start does not necessarily mean an early return home.

This situation naturally affects workers' social and family lives as well as their health. Since "the closing hour for the day is not fixed," "I cannot even make an appointment with a friend." "I can't find time for pleasure." "There is little time left for myself." "I cannot enjoy my private life." "Coming home after eight o'clock, eating dinner and taking a bath. No time left." "I have to work from early morning till late at night and I cannot study for my promotion exam." "My sleeping hours are too few." And "I spend my Sundays and holidays



just to recover from my fatigue." (See the section of Wages for overtime allowances.)

The following list is an example of problems and difficulties, which were raised by male workers on "Overtime Work/Long Working Hours." The analysis on other items in the following sections on has been made on the equivalent data, but for want of space they will all be omitted in this paper. The data in the parenthesis following each response is, in order; age, employment, job, education background, other information, if any, and case number. Educational background is not stated for senior high school graduates. CD and JH + TS stand for a college dropout and a junior high school and technical/vocational school graduate, respectively. A number before employment/job is the number of employees of the enterprise and \* on a shoulder of a case number indicates that the case has been quoted more than once in the same item.

(1) Overtime Work/Long Working Hours (Male) (26)

- "Busy, a great deal of overtime work." (19, cash register repairman; 8411606)
- "Have overtime work almost every day." (19, D Packing Co., manual laborer; 8611602)
- "The usual closing hour is 5:30 p.m. but I usually have to work until past 7:00 p.m. Saturday is the same." (19, N Automobile Dealer, mainly clerical work; 8411613)
- "Have overtime work on Saturdays." (20, precision machinery co., production; 8411640)
- "Have overtime work until after 10:00 p.m. every day—want time more than money." (18, M Manufacturing Industry, packing; 8411602) "Overtime work everyday." "Have to take the last train home to finish the work before the deadline." (20, programmer; 8611622)
- "I get though my work at midnight, worrying that I might miss the last train." (19, coffee shop; 8411611)
- "I leave my home at 6:30 a.m., and I'm through my job around 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Then I spend some time with my fellow workers, drinking and chatting. It's already past 11:00 p.m. when I finally get home." (20, cleaning co., sanitation worker, CD; 8411625)
- "When I take home a big job, sometimes I don't feel like coming to the office next day, because I know it's going to be a very busy day." (20, office machine sales, CD; 8411624)
- "Long—from 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 a.m." (20, live-in cook; 8611620)
- "My working hours are not fixed as I repair cash registers. I have to repair them even after regular working hours." (19, cash register repairman; 8411606) "Have to work overtime due to customers' demands of quick delivery." (20, parts assembly, subcontractor; 8411658)
- "They ask me to work overtime while I don't want to." (20, 300 battery manufacturing, welder; 8611616) "They force me to work overtime without considering my schedules." (19, office machine sales and repair, outside duty; 8611607) "I hate overtime work." (20, office machine sales, CD; 8411624 \* )
- "Start delivering books every morning at five o'clock." (20, trucking co.; 8411647)

- "Take the first train to work and the last train back home——can't even attend night school." (19, chief cook of college cafeteria, JH + TS; 8411608)
- "I can't finish at a regular closing hour." "Working hours are too long." (20, H Pharmaceutical Co., salesman to doctors; 8411646)
- "There is no certain closing time because of overtime work." (20, photograph processing lab, printing machine operator; 8411654) "The finishing time is irregular." (18, medical supplies co., salesman; 8611601) "The closing hour is irregular——can't even make an appointment with my friends." (19, K Home Center; 8411661)
- "Coming home after 8:00 p.m., eating dinner and taking a bath. No time left." (20, office worker; 8411627)
- "In addition to the shift system, we have overtime work before and after regular hours." (19, subcontractor of N Automobile Co.; 8611605)
- "Feel exhausted with frequent early shift and overtime work." (20, social insurance-related work; 8611619)
- "My sleeping hours are too few." (20, SK Railway Co., ticket examiner; 8411638)
- "I work about 50 overtime hours a month, and even with them my take-home-pay is only ¥150,000 or so." (20, small printing co.; 8611612)
- "They don't pay all overtime allowances." (19, office machine sales and repair, outside duty; 8611607 \* )
- "Temporary employees are better paid and have better working conditions than regular workers. They are not assigned overtime work and enjoy a 5 day work week." (20, trucking firm; 8611609)

(ii) Recess (3+4)

Four workers complain that the recess or lunch time is too short, and one that there are no breaks besides lunch time. Another four say, "I can't take a break" nor "a lunch time," or "often miss lunches," since "my work is irregular," "work distribution among our team members is not equal," or "the boss brings unexpected jobs." A guard who works at night says, "Work sometimes eats up my temporary sleeping time."

Other complaints are about the use of lunch time: "I have to be in the company with my bosses and seniors even during lunch time. At least I want to use my lunch time freely."

(iii) Holidays/Vacations (23+10)

If workers are employed in such conditions as shown in "(i) Overtime Work/Long Working Hours" above, or as will be shown in "(iv) Shift/Night Work" below, all days-off (including weekly and national holidays, etc. means the same in this section) may be only for the "recovery from your fatigue." Six workers express their longing for "a five day work week."

There are, however, not a few people who claim that off-days are "so few" or "non-existent," not to mention "a five day work week." A worker who works in one of the major railway companies says, "Sundays or national holidays have nothing to do with me, nor have New Year's Eves or New Year's Days." A cook "can't go to a driving school to get a license" since there are no off-days.

Three problems have been pointed out as for off-days, in addition to its scarcity. Work on off-days(5), off-days not falling on Sundays(2) and no fixed off-days(2). Workers "get tired" if asked to work on off-days, and personal "plans would be upset" if asked with a short notice. People cannot "meet friends," nor "have dates with girl friends," if Sundays are not off. Two reasons are given why their "holidays are not fixed": One derives from the very nature of their occupations, for example, plastering, and the other is "because the firms [they] work in [are] subcontractors."

In terms of personal paid holidays and vacation days, "the number of days given are so few"(2) or even non-existent for some because [they are] just employed." So "you cannot be absent even when sick." There is a case where a worker with two and a half years of service has "only three personal paid holidays a year," which is apparently an infringement of the Labour Standards Act.

Furthermore, the real problem is that they "cannot actually take" even these small number of personal paid holidays. Or even if they are entitled to many vacation days, they "cannot actually take them," either. Such complaints are explicitly mentioned in twelve cases, mainly by male workers. Adding similar complaints of "not being able to take a long vacation," the number reaches 14. Why cannot they take personal paid holidays/vacations? It is because "the manpower is short," "my taking a vacation would impose a burden on fellow workers," or "we know the management doesn't like our taking them, and also we may need them in case of sickness in the future." As far as this point is concerned, it makes no difference whether they are employees in large leading corporations, workers in small firms or service workers.

Four interviewees want "vacations in a block," "long vacations," or "summer vacations."

Besides these cases there are some other cases which are not clear if they are referring to days-off (weekly and national holidays, etc.) or personal paid holidays/vacations, but the conclusion of which is anyway "[we] want more days off."

Combining the situation described in this section with that in the above section (i) Overtime Work/Long Working Hours would lead to the voice that "I have no time for myself," "I want more free time," "I want to have my own time," and so on.(10) There is a unique case of dissatisfaction that "We have too many company-sponsored events like group trips, recreational activities.... They take up too much of my free time."

#### (iv) Shift System/Night Shift (17+0)

All comments below in this subsection were given by males.

"Midnight labor," "night duty," "night shift," and the "shift system" themselves are questioned. There are fifteen cases in this category, or nearly 20 percent of all cases.

The central issue here is the rotating "shift system"—the rotation of "the day and night shifts," "three shifts," or "day shift, night shift and day off in a five (or six) day cycle." "The shift system" is prevalent not only among manufacturing industries, for example, automobile and related parts, precision machinery and printing industries but also in railways, hotels, building maintenance and guard work.

"Night duty molds you into a night-type person," and "makes difficult to meet ordinary people." "Shift work imposes an inconvenience on your family due to your irregular coming-home time," "deprives you of the opportunity to talk with Father," and "makes it impossible to look after your small sister." A worker loses the trust of his family. "They feel suspicious because I often come home in the early morning." Family life must bear a great strain. More important, however, is the bad influence on workers' health. Interviewees say, "It's hard to adjust to the time lag between night and day shifts," "I am constantly lacking sleep," "It's not easy to get up in the morning," "I'm tired," "Fatigue and stress pile up," and "It disturbs my sensibility."

Some cases are even worse—"I have (rotated) day and night shifts plus early morning work and overtime work," or "I sometimes do night shift right after day shift when it's busy." Workers are unhappy with "increased night duties because of unreasonable personnel reshuffles." The dissatisfaction with inadequate night shift allowances is also heard.

Irregular working hours are another source of workers' complaints. The problems of irregular closing hours due to overtime work, irregular recesses during working hours and unfixed days-off were discussed above, but here are two more kinds, one is of a policeman and the other is of a waiter. The former complains of the disturbance of the rhythm of his daily life and its affect on his health due to frequent emergency duties. The latter refers to the absence of the concept of certain working hours, and thus to his irregular coming home time. The waiter concludes, "I'm telling you you should never take a waiter's job."

## (2) Wage(40+11) + Automobile(3+0)

The overall conclusion is "low wages." Sixteen cases gave direct comments such as "low salary" or "low wages." Seven others said, "Low" or "Cheap" for "this tight and busy work," "my contribution," "sweaty job," "hard labor," and "mental strain." An additional 28 (9 duplicate) refer to "low pay," using various other expressions. In all they total 42, which is one third of all collected cases and nearly 40 percent of male cases.

It may be argued that if asked any workers would complain about "low wages" regardless of the amount they earn. But as we saw earlier (pp.16 & 19), among subjects of our research the lowest was ¥940,000 per year including taxes and ¥70,000 per month after tax with an exception of a nursery school intern teacher who earned only ¥500,000 per year. The modes were around ¥2,000,000 per year for male and ¥1,500,000 for female, and around ¥110,000 for workers who supplied monthly wage figures. At least some workers are objectively and absolutely "poorly paid" or "short of money."

Seeing the above mentioned 28 cases which implied "low wages" using "various other expressions," we could measure the degree of seriousness in pay of present day young workers.

They could be grouped into four. The first group is in poverty because of cars. Two main topics of interest among young male people are cars and girls. “It would be the greatest thing if I could buy a new car and drive with a girl friend.” The expenses for cars consume a large segment of young people’s budgets. A young worker who earns ¥110,000 per month says:

I pay ¥30,000 to parents [with whom I live], ¥15,000 for a monthly installment payment for a car, ¥30,000 for gas, ¥8,000 for monthly premium of driver’s insurance and ¥4,000 for parking. Only ¥20,000—30,000 are left. There is barely enough to even buy lunches.(19, K Home Center, 8411661)

More than 50 percent of his monthly income disappears for car-related expenses. Other workers are worried, “Very little free money is left at hand—no way to save,” and “I don’t know what to do if something emergency happened.” Not a small number of young people say, “I’m busy paying an auto loan,”(3) or “Most of my salary goes to the installment payment.” As a result, they have no choice but to live at “survival level” and there is “no money left to pay [their] parents.” “I was thinking of quitting this job, but I have to stick at it for a while because of the [auto] loan.”

The second group faces financial difficulty, which has nothing to do with cars. In a sense they are under more “genuine” hardship and live on marginal means. Many fall into this category. “Wages are too low to enjoy leisure.” “It’s hard to save.” “I pay my parents ¥40,000 per month and don’t have sufficient money left.” He earns ¥1,800,000 after tax. “Little is left after paying parents for living expenses and college tuition.” “I want to leave my parents and live alone, but can’t. The wage is too low because I only graduated from junior high.” “I don’t eat till I go home after midnight. No meals are provided by the company and nearby restaurants are too expensive.” He is through his work by midnight and takes the last train home. “Although I live in company housing, life is still not easy.” “I’m in financial difficulty since I’m supporting parents and a sister.” And a 20-year-old intern beautician who graduated from a beautician school after her senior high and now earns ¥1,000,000 per annum working from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., sometimes till 10 p.m., says:

It’s not seldom that I skip dinner. I am too exhausted to cook for myself when I come home, and food doesn’t taste good if you eat alone. I can’t afford eating out everyday with my small pay. (8421629)

The third group is somewhat different in nuance—the excessive expenditure due to the nature of the work and the financial hardship as its consequence. “As I work at different places every day and have to eat out, I pay a lot for food,” complains a worker at a building cleaning firm. A pharmaceutical company salesman who makes visits to medical practitioners complains about the large amount of entertainment expense account.

Doctors ask me to play golf together. It costs some ¥30,000 a time. You may end up paying half of your salary for playing golf. I used to borrow money from my parents when I first started working. (20, ¥2,000,000; 8411646)

The fourth group is uncertain and worried about their lives after marriage, judging from their present wage level. "I wonder if I could support my family with this pay." There are six similar cases. It is interesting to note that these responses were all from male workers. One expresses a concern over the uncertainty of his wage payment, which is daily rather than monthly.

When "wages" and "salaries are low," workers' choice is either to "demand higher wages and bonuses" (3) or "change of [their] jobs." Some say, "I want to quit this job by the end of this year," and some others have actually experienced job changes because of low wages.

In addition to the above mentioned 42 cases which concern low gross wage levels, there are the following four types of dissatisfaction. The first type concerns insufficiency or lack of various allowances; "night shift allowance is too low," "overtime pay is low," "overtime pay is not sufficient," "sometimes no overtime allowance is paid," and "overtime work of less than two hours is not eligible for overtime pay." Violation of the Labour Standard Act ought to be questioned.

The second type concerns such cases as "Students' wages are higher than ours," and therefore "I feel hatred against them," and "while I started working at 18 and have worked for three years, newly hired 23-year-old boys (college graduates) earn more than me. They can't do anything on work." These could be expressions of somewhat twisted feelings of dissatisfaction against low wages, but could at the same time be expressions of uncomfortable feelings against discrimination by education.

The third type is dissatisfaction and anger by female workers because of sex discrimination over wages. One says, "I get less than my male colleagues while we do the same work." Even worse, a female worker in a small company gets angry, "Only women are expected to serve tea, clean up the dining room and even clean toilets. And yet we are paid less than men." Another complains, "Women's wages don't go up like men's no matter how many years we work for the company."

The fourth type refers to wage cuts as a penalty measure. There are two cases: A case of "a car accident within the plant premises as a result of driving without a license," and "a case of damaging merchandise (furniture) by mishandling." In terms of the former, it is not clear if the worker was driving on duty or not. The worker in the latter case says, "The pay was practically zero for that month." Again the legal legitimacy may be a problem.

### (3) Fringe Benefits and Other Labor Conditions (6+8)

An interviewee says, "Working conditions are bad." What it means is not clear. It may be referring to working hours and wages.

Five cases of complaints are reported on meals, company lunches and messrooms, and two others on resting rooms, social rooms, parking lots and other related facilities. Many medium- or small-scale companies "have no messrooms for employees," which workers want. Even if they do have one, sometimes "It's so small in space and we can't all eat together at a time." Workers "want more seats." Many complain that "food served there is awful" and that "they don't care about menus." In this there are no differences between small firms and

large corporations. Others complain: "No meals are provided even when we have to work till late at night." "There are no resting rooms nor social rooms. We have no place to be after eating lunch. We sit on the grass. I don't want to sit around at my work desk during lunch time, too, do I?" And "We can't drive to work because there are no parking lots."

Three workers express strong dissatisfaction with working clothes or uniforms. "The color of our working clothes is bad," says a male worker. "We just don't like them at all," says a female worker.

One worker complains about "no circle activities," while another complains about "too many (company) events and recreational activities—volleyball tournament, grape-picking picnic, summer festival, company trip, and many others." Too many events and activities "take up too much of my free time."

There are four cases on "other labor conditions" which are not related to fringe benefits. All of them are seriously important. Two cases pertain to the difference of contracted work and actually assigned work and may involve a violation of the labor contract. "I was hired mainly for office work, but actually have been assigned to factory work." (Male) This happened in a company listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Market No.1. Likewise, a worker has "to work in the plant since there is little clerical work to be done." She also "had to work during the training period and even before officially employed. (Female, computer firm)

Other two cases involve serious problems of basic human rights and political freedom. One is a "body check" at a wholesale store, which is given as they "go through the gates." The other is as follows:

They give us stupid speeches at Monday morning meetings. We have to listen to them. Especially when (national and local) elections are close, they speak ill of the Communist Party and talk much in favor of the party they are supporting. (18; 8621605)

This is a complaint from a female employee working in one of the fastest growing companies which has attracted much of the mass media's attention. Here we see an example of how Japanese industries try to hold control over their employees.

(4) Occupational Safety & Health and Working Environment (21+8)

cf. Working Hours, Job Content, Customers, Ningengkankei [Human Relations] and Bosses

Dust, no or little sunlight, high humidity, uncomfortable temperature and noise are reported as problems of physical working environments. "The shop is very dusty." "We work in the basement with no sunlight coming in." "The temperature gets over 108 degrees Fahrenheit." "It's hot! Just like working in a sauna." "Air conditioning does not help much." "It's so hot in summer and so cold in winter at (railway station) ticket gates." "The temperature fluctuates." And "Noise in the plant is horrible." Such complaints number ten, and more than one out of every ten male workers have been facing these environmental problems, which naturally have "unfavorable effects on workers' health"—make them "feel in bad

shape,” “cause hearing problems,” and others.

There is a rather unique complaint that “the workplace has cockroaches, leeches, and rats.” It surprisingly comes from a waitress working in the Nihonbasi area, a highly-rated business and commercial area in the central Tokyo.

“Problems of safety and health arise not only from physical working environments but also from the content of engaged work, the posture while working, overtime work or long working hours, shift work, human relations with fellow and senior workers as well as with their bosses, relations with customers and various other factors. The result of these problems could take the form of death, injury, disease, both mental as well as physical fatigue and so on. We will limit our discussion below to the problems of occupational accidents and diseases in a strict sense of the term, leaving problems of stress, fatigue, their accumulation and others for following sections simply to avoid repetition.

Some workers worry themselves about possible occupational accidents and diseases in the future, saying, “I have to carry very heavy stuff and there is also a lot of dangerous work,” or “I’m afraid I may get hurt. I work with an industrial sewing machine.” Some “symptoms” have already been observed in many of these cases. For instance, “hearing problems,” as mentioned earlier, “chapping hands,” “cold knees,” “eye strain,”<sup>(5)</sup> “itchy hands,” “broken skin,” “my finger joints ache and my back hurts,” and “I have a stomach disorder (as a result of irregular and long working hours, sometimes with no lunch hour).” A worker says, “I writhed about on the floor in pain during a night from neutro-gastritis.” Besides these eleven cases, which could be categorized under occupational diseases in a broader sense, there are three cases of injury in the construction and manufacturing industries, and a life-endangering case of a night guard, who came across a thief armed with a metal baseball bat and saved himself by *karate*. An employee of a trucking firm, who drove all day long and was paid by day, quit his job, fearing that “staying with the job would ruin my health.” An employee in a pastry shop seriously injured his heel and was incapacitated for two months because he fell off a chair when he tried to take boxes down from a shelf. Peculiar though the next case is, a worker was “hit by a boss” when he “damaged some merchandise (furniture) by mistake,” and it took him “two weeks to recover.” These all add up to twenty cases in total. At least one out of every six who were interviewed has experienced or is confronted with occupational injuries or diseases of this degree, not including problems of physical and mental fatigue.

Two cases involve some problems of managers’ dealing with occupational accidents. Both are legally problematic. One is the case of the employee in a pastry shop mentioned above. He, who is now working as chief cook in a university cafeteria, says, “I had to leave the job because of the injury,” but still “miss the previous job.” The Labour Standards Act prohibits the dismissal of “a worker injured, or taken ill while on duty during the period of medical treatment and 30 days thereafter.”(Article 19) The other is the case of a production worker at a subsidiary company of N Motor Co., a leading automobile corporation. He still feels angry with the way he was treated by the company when he was injured. He recalls:

The accident happened in the second spring after I started working. I was carrying a steel sheet



with a fellow worker, and he let go his hold of the sheet all of a sudden. I injured my left hand and it took six stitches to close the wound. I was of course entitled to workers' compensation. But my boss begged me not to apply for workers' comp but instead to treat the injury with the regular health insurance, saying he would pay all medical fees including deductibles under the health insurance. Do you know why? He was afraid his supervisory responsibility as a manager might possibly be questioned. I could not refuse it. (19, high school graduate; 8611605)

(5) Inexperience/Incompetence(9+19)

Both men and women, but more women than men, refer to “problems and difficulties” falling into this category of Inexperience/Incompetence.

When people “start working” or “change jobs,” they usually have a hard time until they become accustomed to and learn about their new jobs. They are not familiar with the jobs themselves, nor do they know “how to talk to bosses,” or “how to serve customers.” They don't understand “why they have to pay special respect to senior workers.” They naturally make many mistakes, too.

Some workers described how they felt during that period as follows: “All people around me seem to know what to do. They are working briskly. Why am I the only slow one?” “I'm generally able to do my work, but still sometimes have to bother my senior to ask for help.” “I often wondered if this job didn't suit me at all.”

While the strain before workers can be on their own can reach a considerable level, most of them experience it and manage to go through this process without much damage. Since interviewees in this research are all those who have successfully stayed on in their present jobs, those who dropped out because of stress at this stage are not included here.

Seven others are worried about their “incapability,” regret their past studies (i.e. “I should have studied such and such.”), and want to develop their ability (i.e. “I want to study such and such.”). They say: “I can't compete with commercial high school graduates.” “I'm not good at English,” or “abacus.” “I wish I had learned about computers.” “I would like to improve my English.” And “I want to learn every detail work in all sections.” A nineteen-year-old caretaker intern in a physically and mentally handicapped agency for children is seriously troubled:

I feel very miserable as I can do nothing but watch children hurt themselves. Children listen well to regular staff—but sometimes ignore me because I'm an intern. I feel vexed with myself for my incapability in those cases. . . . I think we are no match for their own parents, however hard and whole-heartedly we may try. (8421616)

Similar worries and regrets related to school levels completed are not included here but appear in the section below Discrimination.

(6) Job Content(33+24)      c.f. Safety & Health/Work Environments, and Questions on Life and Work

“Problems and difficulties” deriving directly from the job itself rather than from working conditions are included in this section. Their four subcategories are “problems and diffi-

culties" deriving from (i) the inherent nature of the job, (ii) job responsibility, (iii) the organizational management and (iv) alienated work and busy work. Complaints of the difference between contracted work and actually assigned work were discussed in the subsection Fringe Benefits and Other Labor Conditions.

(i) The Inherent Nature of the Job

For example: A welder would feel "too hot to work during the summer time." A plasterer "get[s] muddy all over from [his] head to face, hands, shirts, pants and shoes." Many machinery and auto plant workers "are tired as [they] must keep standing all day long." A female worker in a wholesale store also "must stand for twelve hours after [she] leaves home in the morning." A salesman has to struggle with a traffic jam during work. A female worker in a manufacturing plant must "carry heavy stuff and do dangerous work," which she claims "is not women's work."

Although these problems derive from "jobs themselves," they are more or less physical problems. There are, however, other kinds of problems that have much to do with the mental aspect of workers. For instance: "Computer programing makes your nervers exhausted." A policeman's "work doesn't allow you to be relaxed." Even part assembling "work requires concentration on your job, otherwise you make mistakes." Working "in the presence of clients, owners of buildings, makes you constantly strained." "Telling lies for business sake is hard and annoying" for a young worker. Hospital workers' difficulties are slightly different in kind. A hospital receptionist says:

It's very hard to face the issue of life or death. I've gotten more and more sensitive about the problem of death. . . . Sometimes a patient doesn't know how seriously ill he or she is, but I know it through patient charts or something else. I must pretend as if I don't know anything. This I find very hard to take, giving me much mental strain. (19; 8421609)

A nurse raises four difficulties:

One, the toilet care for the seriously ill or old patients. To be honest, I wish I could be excused from it. Yes, I know it well that it is my duty but. . . . Two, bathing of old bedridden patients. I'm very embarrassed, regardless of their sex. But I have to. Three, treatment of those badly injured in traffic accidents, sometimes with so much bleeding. I almost can't help turning my face away. And four, to clean the dead body with alcohol. I couldn't stop shaking when I did for the first time. (21 years old)

(ii) Job Responsibility

Those who are in a position to supervise others have their own problems. Young as he is, a 20-year-old male worker with two years' service must "give instructions to veteran part-time workers," who "are often as old as [his] mother." A young female worker says, too, "Supervision of part-time workers. . . . I only have responsibility but no benefit. I would like to quit the job." Those who use part-time workers and students also "must always pay attention to their health."

Each job requires responsibility of its own, regardless of whether it is supervisory or not.

Workers in food service industries such as restaurants are expected to pay close attention to sanitation, and those in auto plants to safety. A foreign language school teacher may lose students unless “classes are interesting and attractive.” A wholesale store employee, who transacts large sums of money, sometimes as large as hundreds of million yen, “may lead the company into bankruptcy.” Given a difficult job, a worker might feel his or her “responsibility is too heavy.” “I can’t sell well,” says a salesman. It is also a big “problem or difficulty” when his or her work does not go well.

All of these “problems and difficulties” which have been mentioned in this subsection can be a source of stress, and depending on the situation, workers can overstrain their nerves and can become mentally exhausted. (See the subsection Occupational Safety & Health.)

### (iii) Organizational Management

The cases of dissatisfaction with the organizational management are classified under “Job Content” although they may deviate a little from the definition that “‘problems and difficulties’ deriving directly from the job itself”(p.33). Most of these are related to either the conflict among different sections or job classifications or disagreement with management’s policies. Examples of the former complaints are “Communication is not good when we are working mostly outside (the office),” “We have to work in between sections,” and “The way of treating children is different between nurses and caretakers.” Particularly among female workers, there is much discontent with the unequal amount of work assigned to each worker, section or department.(4) Complaints of the latter, disagreement with management’s policies, vary from such general comments as “I just don’t like the company policy. They try to squeeze us into the pattern they want,” to such a specific comment that “We have a meeting for reviewing every event. We feel as if we were back in high school.” The following case in a Buddhist nursery school is a typical example of these objections against management policies.

They(Management) should have a policy to let children play more freely. The present policy is too strict about rules. I don’t think it necessary, or good, to train children to line up or teach them to march with the band when they are so young. Children should be allowed to express themselves more openly and to play more freely. It is more natural for them to learn personal relations and rules through games and plays. Let them even fight sometimes. (20, Senior High+ Occupational School; 8421630)

### (iv) Alienated Work and Busy Work

The most important “problems and difficulties” on Job Content may well be those of assembly line work, monotonous jobs and so-called meaningless work. “Too busy” due to understaffing may be another. They may all lead to the problem of alienation. (Refer to “Questions on Life and Work.”)

Assembly line work is not popular at all among workers. It “is hard,” “creates much strain,” “causes nervous strain,” “is monotonous,” “is dull” and “is boring.” “If I can’t keep up with the speed, the boss nags at me.” “We do exactly the same day after day.” A worker “hold[s] a soldering iron all day long.” Another “feel[s] as if [he] is part of the machine.

It's not work for a human being." "If I get over Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, then there are only two more days to go!" Assembly line work has widely prevailed in the automobile and auto parts and accessory industries, the machine part manufacturing industry, canning and packing factories, and others.(11)

The biggest affliction for female workers in the clothing industry is that they "are only engaged in part of dress making."

Working for unimportant jobs gives workers an empty feeling. "Odd jobs" (a clerical worker), "supplementary work" (a gas station attendant), and "cleaning, collecting balls, weeding, etc." (an employee at a golf practice center)... are not all enjoyable. It is the same as doing work that you "don't have any interest in." Even white collar workers, who are not working on assembly lines, also "get tired of monotonous work." They are "discontented with what [they are] doing and want to find new jobs." "I don't have any interest in my present job. I'm discouraged." (5)

Women get angry when they are "asked to do what [they consider] are not [their] jobs,"—"serving tea, cleaning up the office, running private errands for bosses, and so on." "I was not hired for serving tea!"

Ten interviewees complain of "being busy." "It's too busy." "I have no breathing space." "Understaffing" is the main cause for such complaints. An office cleaning firm employee consoles himself, saying, "As long as we are working under a consignment contract having a fixed commission, it cannot be helped." Other areas of dissatisfaction are with "the big gap between busy and slack time," "the difficulty to achieve a norm," "lending the caretaker a helping hand" and "the increase of burden due to a personnel reshuffle."

The following is a typical case of the problem of assembly line work which is exacerbated by the problem of "being busy."

There is no assistance by seniors... They don't have time to think about others. Each person is busy doing his own job... The number of cars to be produced for the day is set before we start working, but the [assembly] line won't stop in this company even if the goal is achieved. I keep asking myself, "Why doesn't the line stop?" But no one, including myself, appeals to foremen nor other supervisors. In practice, no one would say it. Management knows well people will work hard to reach a goal once it is given. The line is also speeded up when the production is behind schedule. I feel as if I were controlled by someone. So when someone makes an error and the line stops, we all feel relieved and wish the trouble would last longer. The person who stops the line would certainly feel terrible, though. (20, H Motor; an assembler; 8611617)

The problem of office automation is discussed here for convenience' sake. Office automation may bring a reduction of manpower. Some are fired while others are forced to work harder. A female worker insists on "the need for improvement of individuals' skills and abilities since the work has become difficult." She "often studies at home" to keep up with the development of new technology.

#### (7) Participation (6+0)

"I can't express well what I am thinking of."—it's not clear whether this sort of

comment derives from the problem of the said worker's personality or from an organizational factor of the workplace. However, the five other cases categorized in this subsection are all ones that "input" by workers was rejected by management purposely or unpurposely—the dissatisfaction that their voices are not listened to: "If you say something, they frown on you." In auto plants, raising a voice itself is not allowed from the very beginning.<sup>(2)</sup> Under these conditions, two workers are anxious, "I don't want to only flatter and become a small docile person." (2)

A worker refers to the difficulty of "assert[ing] himself" not only at his workplace but also in society at large.

All the cases above are with male workers.

(8) Evaluation (1+1)

"I worked very hard and very well... Yet" not only customers but also "the company (boss) doesn't appreciate it." "No one recognizes my work and effort." The want to be recognized is not satisfied.

(9) Human Relations (excluding ones with bosses) (32+23)

c.f. Men & Women/Marriage, and Boss

Human relations at the workplace present workers considerable "problems and difficulties." In terms of seriousness they sometimes overwhelm labor conditions such as working hours and wages. "Problems and difficulties" with human relations are categorized into four: (i) Personal relationships at the workplace (12), (ii) socialization (6), (iii) manpower structure (10) and (iv) other cases (4). The first category includes factionalism, "disgusting colleagues," and "hazing [*ijime*] by senior employees." This sort of problem is found among male workers but more often among female workers. Some interviewees say, "I'm tired with complicated personal relations," "Girls are in two groups and fighting each other," and "At offices where many women are working, there are several groups competing." Many point out the existence of specific "disgusting" co-workers and seniors. Why are they "disgusting"? Because "he is too easy-going," "he does much overtime work while idling away his day time," "part-time workers are not willing to follow my instructions," "she forces her own work on me," "a senior forces irksome work on me," "in the absence of the boss, a senior passes his work on to me," "she pretends to forget when I take her night duty," "he instructs me to do lots of work while he does nothing himself," "she crabs strongly over any little hesitation or small mistake," "a senior calls me an incompetent when he doesn't give me proper instructions," and "he puts the responsibility on me no matter who makes the mistakes." All of these have something to do with work directly.

Others, however, are related to more personal "likes or dislikes" or desires. For examples: "She speaks ill of others." "She finds fault with me." "She's too proud of herself." "She is impertinent." "She tells the director that I was chatting or is sometimes very ironical." "How in the world could she be such a disagreeable person?" "An old man boasts of his experiences in his life and begins, 'These days young people are such and such.'" Except for the last case all were given by women. Some complicated problems are often glimpsed

behind. For example, two girls are rivals over beauty, or one says her "boyfriend was stolen by the other."

"Hazing junior workers by senior workers" seems to be widely spread. "A senior forces an irksome job on me," and "a senior calls me an incompetent while he doesn't give me proper instructions," which were mentioned above, may be taken as examples. Quite a number of female office workers react against this kind of torment in some more direct form of expression. Some women changed their jobs because of being abused by their senior workers.

At many workplaces, the relationship between junior and senior workers closely resembles that in high school sports clubs. "I have to be in the office earlier than seniors to clean it and wipe desks, and start working before they do." "Junior workers are supposed to work more willingly and produce a greater quantity than seniors." "As I'm a newly hired worker, they wear me out." "When they ask me to take night duty for them, I can hardly refuse their request." "I can't complain to seniors... can't express an opinion which is different from theirs... I have to overlook made mistakes by seniors." "I couldn't understand why seniors had to be treated with so much respect, when I started working."

Socialization can sometimes get quite burdensome. The following are some remarks: "I even have to spend my lunch with seniors (or bosses). I want to be on my own during lunch time at least." "Senior and fellow workers force me to go out for drinks." (Male) "I have to go out for social drinks and dinners." (Female) Especially socialization with senior workers seems to be difficult. "If I use too much time for it, there would be little time left to myself. If I use too little time for it, it would create a needless offense." Younger workers, rather than older workers, care about filling social obligation. "I have to attend parties which I don't want to." "We have to wait on others serving them drinks, which I hate doing."

The "manpower structure at the workplace" as the third category means the following "problems and difficulties": "There's nobody else of my age," "No women(or men) work in my office," "Fellow workers of my age are all juvenile delinquents," and "A relative of mine works in my office."

Why is it a problem that "there's nobody else of my age"? First of all, "to older people you have to use honorific words," which "you bother your brain about." "Their thinking and views are different from us," and "You can't find common subjects with them." "Why do we have to be submissive to older people?" The fact that there are no others around your age leads to such "problems and difficulties" as "it's hard to make friends or to find some one to talk to in shops," "I have no people I can open my mind to," and "I feel insecure because I can't talk of my worries to anyone."

Complaints about the scarcity of men or women, particularly young ones, are many. In small firms, it is very probable that "there are no" or "not many (young) women (or men) in the company." Or if any, it is not rare that "there are no women (or men) in my shop(or office)." No or few girls are found at typical workplaces where junior and senior high school male graduates work, for example, at certain kinds of manufacturing production shops. On the other hand, no or few men are found at many workplaces where female workers work. In Japan, even today, men's work and women's work are still segregated. "Working with no or few girls is boring" for boys and "working with no or few boys is boring" for girls.

Moreover, the situation is more serious for girls who "are thinking of marriage seriously." For they have lost a very crucial place to find their future husbands. (See Men & Women/Marriage.)

If a worker works together with a relative, the worker is "strained and tired. He interferes with my privacy both in and out of the office."

"Other cases" as the fourth category include dissatisfaction with the atmosphere of workplaces and troubles with seniors in the dormitory life. Some examples of the former are: "They speak of me behind back if I'm reading books during lunch time. . . . They talk about nothing but men." "No intimate human relations between bosses and subordinates and among co-workers." "Workers are not motivated, not vigorous at all." "No solidarity among employees. They don't even greet each other." "I'm bewildered with the collusive work among kinsmen." In terms of the latter, the same kinds of complaints are repeated as mentioned above regarding "personal relations." Namely: "A senior sends me on errand." (Male) "An old-maid in the next room pokes her nose into my private life, and tells it to my boss blending truth with fiction. Now people have come to see me in a different way." "One of my seniors keeps her eyes on me all the time. She gets angry when I make a mistake. She even gives advice and interferes when I'm doing my laundry." (Female) On the contrary, there is an affliction that "a close senior has gone out of the dormitory, and I miss him very much."

#### (10) Bosses/Boss-Subordinate Relations

A considerable number of "problems and difficulties" on bosses are heard from workers, regardless of their sex. The tone of criticism is very harsh. Workers have really "blown their cool."

"I am not able to get along with my boss." "There are disgusting bosses" as well as disgusting fellow and senior workers. "I don't know why but just I can't like him. Unpleasant impression." "My supervisor talks about improper things. How mean he is!" (Female) "My boss grumbles and speaks ill of others." "The boss boasts of his experiences in his life and begins, 'These days young people are such and such.'" "The plant manager is fond of preaching on and on at drinking parties." "While the president (of our company) got his position because of his father and is completely incompetent, he enjoys bossing us around." A boss even makes a young female worker say, "I even question his human nature itself." In addition, some bosses are "sloppy" and "irresponsible" with their work. A young policewoman complains, "He is only thinking about his promotion. . . . and doesn't even know his way around the precinct."

There are many "problems and difficulties" which are also about bosses but more directly related to work. "A nagging boss" is, needless to say, disliked. "Our boss pokes his nose into everything." Especially "when he is in a bad temper," "he gets over-critical," or "wreaks his anger on subordinates." In one case, the president's wife comes in and even puts in a word on our way of working." "The boss comes in and out of the shop as he pleases, doing nothing but disturbing us." "Instructions are not clear," which is "a cause of our bad relationship." And "My boss is a stickler for old-time ideas and won't listen to us." These are all given by male workers. Female workers give others: "My boss gives me strict orders. I

blow my cool." "My boss talks and acts ignoring my personality. I am thinking of quitting (the present job)." "The boss teats girls unequally, depending upon whether they're pretty or not." "My supervisor says, 'I can't do this stupid work!' and passes it onto me." "A boss takes my work only to throw it aside half done. I have to bear the consequences of his failure." And "My boss requests me to serve him tea, clean the office and even do his personal shopping."

As mentioned before, some employees lodge objections against management's or boss' policies. Remember the nursery school teacher's case. (p.35)

Many subordinates are very unhappy because their bosses bring in unscheduled work, outside their responsibility and beyond their capacity. These make workers "Unable to take a break and have to work overtime." "Saying, 'I used to do this much,' the boss demands more of us than we can manage." "The boss required me to do the same as my experienced predecessor did. I couldn't make do, and appealed with tears about it. But he ignored and left." "Bosses don't think of workers at all!"

Regarding overtime work, workers' dissatisfaction pours out. "The boss throws sarcastic remarks if I am doing overtime," and another does the same "if I try to go home at the usual closing time." The latter boss "goes home quickly on time himself, leaving overtime work to us."

It's always unpleasant for workers to "be scolded" by superiors. Workers say: "Bosses blow me up if I fall behind the line speed." "We get it hot from bosses or are tormented unless we make good sales." "If there is a mistake, he always blames me while it's not only my fault." We saw a case in the subsection Safety & Health/Working Environment that a boss beat up a junior worker and caused a two week injury when he damaged merchandise (furniture) by mistake." "The boss is frightenig."

Many bosses won't take responsibility. "They don't apologize for their mistakes," and "shift the responsibility on to subordinates." Even worse, some run about to avoid their responsibility. Remember the N Motor's subsidiary case in which a boss begged an on-the-job-injured worker to be treated with Health Insurance, not with Workers' Compensation Insurance. (pp.32-33)

"Ranking [at an office] is very severe." Quite often it happens that an older person has to serve and cringe to a younger person." In such a case, "the situation gets complicated and delicate and the inconvenience becomes ours," say young female employees. The relationship with bosses, as with customers, is very stressful not only because workers "don't like" or "are uncomfortable with them," but also because "workers cannot criticize nor disobey them and still "must get along well with them" even "flattering" sometimes. "If you don't like to flatter," and "if you assert yourself, they certainly frown on you." "Subordinates are enduring, trying not to complain while being attentive."

At this rather young age, some people already experience "mid-executive's worries." A female worker says, "I'm left on the horns of a dilemma, unable to do full justice to both sides, superiors and subordinates. You have to think before saying."

Last of all, "problems and difficulties" of socialization, manpower structure and others are again found here as in the previous subsection Human Relations. Socialization with bosses is more difficult than that with senior and fellow workers. An auto part worker



confesses, "My boss takes me out for a drink. I don't want it but can't say 'no.'" "You have to be attentive to them." The smaller the firm is, the more family relatives there possibly are and the more troubles they bring in. A female worker, who works in a clothing subcontracting factory with 14 employees, says, "As my superiors are relatives of the company president, I'm bewildered with the collusive work among them."

One of "others" is so-called "office love" in Japanese English, which means an extramarital liaison among employees in an office, most typically between a married male boss and an unmarried female subordinate. "Office love" seems to be widely spread in both small and large companies. In this research the cases in large 'first class' banks, insurance companies and stockbrokers are especially notable.

It happened when we went on an employee trip.... Everybody knew that the director had an affair with one of the girls in our section. She was 29 years old, single and fond of a show. The director came into our room,.... and began making love with the girl. We couldn't be there and went out of the room. (19, S Electric Co., Senior High+Voc. School; 8621608)

Some workers have changed their jobs because of "office love."

(11) Customers(13+9)

It may not be widely recognized that customers themselves are the source of "problems and difficulties" and the cause of stress for workers who attend them. Customers can turn into someone quite upsetting. Workers say, "Attending to customers exhausts you," and "It gets on my nerves."

Customers vary from young to old, both men and women, and "it's not easy even to keep up the conversation with them." "You have to know and consider the customer's personality when you provide service." Although it can't be helped, bank tellers have to accept customer's complaints when a cashing machine is out of order, and "some customers may even speak ill of our service compared with other banks'." "You can't stand them!" There are a lot of customers with whom workers "really get angry": "A customer who is fresh," "who is selfish," "who is fussy over orders," "who always complains," and "who instructs this or that while knowing nothing about running a workshop." "A patient who is sexually harassing," "who flirts with pretty nurses," and "who neglects the prescription." "A passenger who steals a ride on a train," and "who is drunk." "A client who asks for repair service before or after store hours," and "who complains if you can't arrive on time."

Important is, however, the point that workers cannot neglect nor complain but "must serve them with cordiality," rather than the simple fact that there are such customers. "Suppose a client doesn't keep his word, you can't gain on him strongly nor can you expect an apology for the possible inconvenience, either." How stressful they are! "A newly hired employee might quit the job." A supermarket shopboy says, "you can get dog-tired, physically and mentally, after working five days in a row with a constant smile."

Two more points should be mentioned about customers. One of the most vexing or disappointing for working men and women comes when their work is not appreciated or they

are not trusted by customers or recipients of service. A cook is “most distressed when [he] hears a complaint about [his] dishes.” A policeman grieves that “citizens don’t have good feeling toward police and aren’t cooperative.” The other point is the entertainment of customers. Employees in managerial positions have access to company expenses accounts but young non-managerial employees do not, and often have to pay those expenses out of their own pockets. The case of a salesman working for a pharmaceutical company was mentioned earlier in the subsection (2) Wage. He said, “Doctors ask me to golf. . . . you end up spending half your salary playing golf.”

(12) Promotion and Transfer (9+3)

cf. Discrimination

Promotion and transfer here mean ones within a corporation. Male workers are especially interested in them. Most “problems and difficulties” of this generation are related to the education level they finished. “Since I haven’t finished high school (or college), I can’t expect a promotion.” is the most typical comment given. For details see the Discrimination section.

In this section five cases are taken up in which educational background is not openly referred to. A man expresses his concern for his gloomy future, wondering “how many years do I have to wait to become a supervisor?” The other four men talk of their aspirations. A young policeman “wish[es] to be the chief” of a police station. A cook “hope[s] to be the manager” of a restaurant. A worker “pray[s] for [his] earliest possible promotion.” Another policeman “want[s] to become a motor cop.” These aspirations could be readily transformed into serious problems and difficulties, depending upon their strength, urgency and possibility, or obstacles for realization.

Many enterprises impose examinations on employees for higher or select positions. These promotion/selection examinations can be a source of “problems and difficulties” for a number of workers, who struggle to pass them. “I must take a qualifying exam in my company, but I leave home early in the morning and get home late in the evening. I don’t have time to study.” Women’s “problems and difficulties” may sometimes show themselves in the opposite direction. A twenty-year-old clerical employee who works in the main office of a saving and loan bank says:

I am working merely as a stopgap for a moment till my marriage. So I’m not interested in promotion at all. . . . Yet the company forces me to attend seminars and take exams. It’s the company’s policy. . . . It’s hard for me to study outside working hours. (8621615)

Freedom not to seek promotions, or not to take exams, is usually not allowed within corporations, for it would lead to the denial of the core value of corporate society.

Transfers within an organization are not always accompanied by promotion, but it is certainly one of the worker’s biggest concerns. A female worker in a large manufacturing company is in difficulty because she “can’t apply for a transfer while being anxious to.” For her “working partner insists that [she is] not suited to the present job.” She has “tearful eyes and is longing for a transfer so much that [she] is neurotic over it.”

(13) Management, Future of Company and Bankruptcy(4+0)

Workers are anxious about the future prospect of their companies. A cook wonders if "the business climate for the restaurant industry is declining." An auto dealer clerical worker is "worried since the company business is not going well." An Employee of a public corporation questions himself, "How will the recent privatization effect the corporation and us?" Various problems and worries discussed so far in previous subsections may fade away depending upon the situation—the working place itself may disappear or be upset.

One day, totally unexpectedly, one's own company may go bankrupt because a company with which one's company has a deal goes bankrupt. Before the worst comes, a company may raise "voluntary resignation" [*kibō taishoku*] and one may find oneself applying unwillingly to it.

All "problems and difficulties" in this subsection are also of male workers.

(14) Turnover/Changing Jobs/Self-employed(23+8) cf. Questions on Life and Work

In the social group our interviewees belong to, the orientation towards changing jobs and starting one's own business is remarkably strong regardless of sex. Many examples have already been presented in previous subsections. Workers "want" or "plan to quit present jobs or companies" because "the pay is low," "labor conditions are poor," "the content of the job is boring," "there is no chance for promotion," "you can manage to do this kind of job while you are young, but can't do so physically when you get older," (all from male workers) "I feel insecure about my future, seeing co-workers over 30 (years old) with families," and "only responsibility is expected out of me" (a female worker). Some female workers have changed their jobs because of "abuse by senior workers" [*ijime*] and "office love."

Without mentioning such clear reasons, more workers imply their willingness for changing jobs by saying: "I have no idea how long I'll stick to my present job," "I don't think I can continue my current job for many years," "I don't intend to stay in this work for the rest of my life." Two female interviewees witness that "It's 'I want to quit the job' that my working friends unanimously say," and "Whenever I see my friends who are working, their conversation always ends up with 'I want to quit,' 'I'll quit at such and such time,' and so on." In the case of females, some regard their working as temporary till marriage from the very beginning.

There are some workers who attempt to change their jobs more positively. "I'd like to see what I can achieve." They wish they could take a step forward no matter how small it may be, and if they could get the jobs they want—for example, a clerical worker, a travel agency worker, a hotel employee, a boiler attendant, an engineer, and a car mechanic. Some wish to get certificates for them. Others aspire to become independent and start their own businesses. An intern beautician harbors a grand ambition. She says, "I'd like to open a beauty parlor in the Ginza," one of the most expensive commercial districts. This girl also says, "I'd like to work as a barmaid to learn about men." "To become independent and start their own businesses" might be only "a pie in the sky" for them, judging from the comparison of the past and present kinds of jobs(cf. pp.16–18) and labor conditions (cf. other items in this section) of workers who have actually changed jobs and from the experience of a worker,

who concluded, “For a junior high graduate, maybe this kind of job is the only one available whichever field I may try.”(p.45)

In any event, some workers have a vague wish to change jobs while others actually have taken some measures to do so—for example, taking exams for occupational schools.

However, once they try to put it in action, various difficulties may arise. If they take those exams, they have to pass them. If they pass them, they have to worry about the financial arrangement for tuition. “If I quit the job to leave my family behind, my mother will have to live all by herself.” Although it sounds very Japanese, workers may feel they owe much to the companies they work for, high school teachers who introduced them to the present jobs, or the occupational schools they graduated from.

Workers may seriously think: “How can I manage with the auto loan, the living expenses and . . . , if I quit the job now.” “Will the next job be financially good enough for my living expenses?” “Should I take over my father’s business, or not?” while it seems to bystanders to be a rather luxurious affliction. A worker dares to say, “The current job is merely a stopgap job till I succeed to my father’s business.”

(15) Retirement(0+0)

No cases.

(16) Labor Unions(1+0)

To the group of workers interviewed in this research, labor unions don’t have a significant existence. They draw little attention to them. There is only a case: “Since there is no labor union in my company, the burden comes down to lower ranks of the shop level, where I work. We have a strong antipathy but can’t push it back.”(Male)

(17) Discrimination/Complex(15+15)

Five kinds of discrimination are presented; they are i) level of education achieved, ii) job classification, iii) sex, iv) size of corporation or parent company vs. subsidiary, and v) local background. Education and sex are the two central factors among the above.

(i) By Education

Out of 30 cases, 16 cases refer to education. “I envy college kids. They play around all the time.” “I become sick of working so hard while guys in the same generation are having fun,” “Because we’re junior high graduates” or “senior high graduates,” “it’s impossible” or “not expected to be promoted.” Not only the chance of promotion but also the level of wages is different. “We got into the company at 18 (years old) and have worked for three years to be paid less than 23 year old new chums! They can do nothing!” “Students get paid better than me. It’s disgusting.” (All comments so far are from males.)

Further, “college graduates look down on us,” “while they can’t even handle the simplest calculation.”(Female) The envy, futility and vexation develop into hatred.

“There is a considerable difference between college graduates and senior high graduates.” “High school graduates have obvious disadvantages. Being a college graduate or not

makes a real big difference." "Female high school graduates have a limited choice for jobs without special certificates or licenses." This would be the same between senior and junior high graduates.

Workers now regret: "I wish I had studied harder and entered college." "I should have at least finished senior high." Some others now, even a few years after graduation, still drag on with their "yearning for a college education." A female worker from a single parent family with three little sisters and brothers sadly laments how badly she wanted to go to college.

How do they solve these afflictions? There seem to be three courses to be followed. i) For the reason of the lack of confidence, impending need to make a living and others, a group of people do not or cannot take any new steps. ii) The second group of people attend evening classes or take correspondence courses. They want to receive a college education so much. iii) Others seek another job or independence (e.g. a truck driver). (See pp.43-44)

Putting together all "problems and difficulties" of a golf practice center employee (male, 20), who has frequently been referred to in previous subsections, could provide a summary so far, Subsection (1) through (17).

I can't get any jobs I want because I only graduated from junior high. It's been four years since I dropped out of senior high and I have tried various kinds of jobs including temporary, part-time work. But there were no jobs I wanted to keep.

I do want to find a job that fits me and is worth keeping for the rest of my life, but I have my present life to worry about and must keep working for what job is available for me right at this moment. Once I worked on an assembly line in a plant but I don't believe it's a job for human beings. The time assignment for each task is set in seconds. You must work on the calculation that can put on a screw within a certain number of seconds, and thus can make a certain number of T. V. sets per day. I feel as if I were forced to work as a part of a machine. It was unbearable.

Then I entered J-Delivery. My responsibility was to deliver auto parts to small, privately owned repair shops. I had to drive around all day long. Wages were paid by day, and it was hard to take a day off. I thought if I kept this job all my life, I would find myself worn out and couldn't maintain a family life if married.

My present job is cleaning, pulling out weeds from the ground, picking up balls, and ushering customers to seats and so on. It's not easy to serve them comfortably all the time, controlling my own emotion. There are many selfish and saucy customers. I'm most uncomfortable when I take care of them.

I don't think I can continue this job for a long time, either, but for a junior high graduate, maybe this kind of job is the only one available whichever field I may try. I do regret I wasn't patient enough to finish senior high school. (Net income: approximately ¥110,000 per month)

The pressure and frustration deriving from not completing senior high school or college come to workers not only in their work life but also in their family and community lives. "I feel terrible when I can't answer my younger sister and brother's questions on homework." For a college dropout, it's unbearable when people compare him with his "younger brother attending a prestigious senior high school." "The eyes of people around are not warm." "It's embarrassing to say that I'm a junior high or occupational school graduate when asked about the school level completed."

## (ii) By Job Classification

The discrimination by job classification and by blue- and white-collar workers largely overlaps due to years of education completed. A female clerical worker in a computer software firm expresses her vexed feelings against System Engineers(SEs).

I've keenly realized clerical staff are treated lightly, . . . counted as general servants. . . . I'm very uncomfortable when people request us to make a Xerox or distribute papers and when female SEs ask us to make tea, while they have nothing special to do. I don't express the feeling outwardly, though. . . . It happened when I was making Xeroxes. A female SE was waiting behind me for her turn to make copies. Then, another SE, a friend of hers, came up and asked her to go and buy something for lunch with her. It was still work time. The SE behind me was wondering if she should go or not. But the SE who came snatched documents out of the hands of the SE behind me and gave them to me, saying "you can get the clerical staff to copy them." And they went out shopping. I don't know how to describe the anger that welled up inside of me.

Some male workers experience similar discrimination in job classification. "Ties are not allowed for production workers but allowed for engineers."

## (iii) By Sex

Complaints and anger expressed by female workers are grave. Discrimination includes various areas from serving tea to contents of work, training, wages and salaries and compulsory retirement on marriage or at a young age, some of which are not necessarily institutional but unwritten practice.

"Only women serve tea." "Women must make tea no matter how busy we may be." "Men also should sometimes make tea." . . . Serving tea is not the only matter. "Cleaning offices and desks is a woman's chore." "Only women have to come early in the morning for cleaning." A policewoman who has no desk to herself "still [has] to wipe desks for others." "Clearing tables at the messroom after lunch" is also a woman's job. A woman working for a bank raises an angry voice, "Men are lazy and untidy even at the workplace. They should be able to put away the dishes they have just eaten from!" In a small company, women "must clean the toilet," too.

"Many women's jobs are odd jobs" including those above. "All important jobs are men's." "They say, 'Because you are women, you can't or shouldn't do this or that.'" "We can't say 'No' even to junky work—of course not." "We only have to say 'Yes', swallowing what we want to say." "They hold us cheap just because we are women." "Training programs are only for men."

Wages for women are lower than those for men while we are doing the same." The problem is not just that one. A manufacturing firm employee says, "It might be tolerable if we receive less while we are doing the same. We receive less while we are doing more—cleaning toilets, clearing tables after lunch, and so on." A clerical employee at a computer firm adds, "Moreover, women's wages don't go up no matter how long we work for the company."

"I sometimes regret I was born female."

"Women can't be regular employees once we get married. The company doesn't say so verbally, but everyone knows they want us to quit," complains a clerical worker in a computer firm. "I am afraid we can't be here in this company after we reach 25 or 26 years old. This never happens to men." This is a testimony by an employee of a major local newspaper company.

The most exemplary of all is the following statement obtained from a worker of an electric corporation:

A male employee and a female employee of the same department went into a hotel, both wearing the company uniform. Their boss happened to see it. The woman was demoted but the man wasn't. You may insist that the job is his life work for the man, but a woman also has to work. I really got angry at this sexual inequality.

Inequality based on sex has another phase. It is not actually between men and women. It is discrimination among women based on men's appreciation of women's physical beauty. "Some male employees mix their personal feelings with business when they face women." "The boss treats women partially," too. "Not being pretty is a disadvantage." "Some patients and doctors pay attention to pretty, beautiful nurses."

(iv) By Others

Difficulties deriving from being subcontracting or small firm employees and from being workers from rural areas were reported by two and one respectively. Workers in subcontracting companies have no choice but to persevere with unreasonable, haughty, one-sided demands of parent companies. For some workers in minor enterprises, the question "Who do you work for?" may be as hard to take as the question "What school did you graduate from?" forwarded to junior high graduates. A worker who works for a small company whose name is similar to a well-known supermarket gets mad.

Whenever I tell people our company name, they almost always take it for the supermarket's. I can't help but yell that I'm not a salesclerk in a supermarket.

For those with rural backgrounds, local dialects or accents can be a source of serious annoyance.

A worker, at any rate, concludes that he "want[s] a more equal and fair society."

(18) Questions on Life & Work(4+5)

It may not be due to the nature of work, but "frankly speaking, work (in general) is not interesting." "Why did I ever choose this job?"

"I feel sad to think I'll end my life with only working for this company," is the honest comment by a male blue-collar worker working for one of the most popular and leading corporations today. A female civil servant says, "I don't have any motivation in my work." "I have no goals and purposes." "I've been absent-minded."

Some workers are more serious than others in seeking meaning in their work and life. An automobile manufacturing worker asks himself, "For what" and "for whom have I been working." In order to ease such an affliction, he writes poems and makes music about it. A salesclerk in a home center wonders about himself who has "been hard pressed and drifted along with [his] work" "when [he] become[s] alone after the day's work is done,"—"Is it O.K. for me to live this kind of life?"

(19) Men & Women/Marriage and Other Personal Life(13+12)

cf. Human Relations, Automobile, Wage and Family

Two major interests in life for young male workers are "cars" and "girls," and they want nothing more than to "buy a new car and drive with a girl friend." This was already mentioned in (2) Wages + Automobiles. For girls also, "boys" are their major interest in life. "The topics during lunch time are always about boys."

If there are no or few "gals" and "guys" in the workplace, work is not so interesting. For young female workers who are seriously thinking of marriage, the absence of young men is the most detrimental. (cf. Human Relations)

Even if there are women in the same workplace, however, some workers "don't like to have a girl friend in the company because rumors get around too quickly if dating," or "especially if rebuffed." While some men and women are disturbed because they do not have "girl friends" or "boy friends", some others who have girl friends or boy friends are disturbed because they have problems in their relationships. For example, "With (such) long working hours (as mentioned above) I can date only once or twice a week," "My boy friend has other girl friends," and "I wonder if I should keep company with him or not." Girls who "have decided to get married" worry about "living with his parents" and "reconciling work and housekeeping."

Some workers' problems are slightly different in nature. They say, "I don't know how to deal with girls. I can't help thinking about marriage, shortly after meeting a new girl-friend." Regarding the problem of marriage, see the subsections of Wage and Family as well.

Other personal life problems besides men & women and marriage include "wanting to have true friends," and "wanting to go back to my home town." (Females) In contrast to "cars" for boys, "looks" and "fashion" are the most interesting for girls. "I'm a little heavy, and people compare me with my fellow nurses." A nursery teacher who is fat "got shocked when a kid said [she] looked pregnant." Dress and makeup are also important to girls.

Two cases of problems related to health were brought up: One, the lack of physical exercise and the other, the re-operation of a knee.

(20) Automobile(3+0)

See the section on Wage.

(21) Family & Family Life(19+9)

Our research subjects in this subsection are all unmarried between 18 and 20 years of age. To them, therefore, a family and a home mean ones centering around their parents and



including their siblings. Sometimes grandparents are also included.

"Problems and difficulties" in this subsection are grouped into four categories: i) Ones which are caused because workers are still living with parents' families, ii) ones caused because they live geographically independent of parents' families, iii) ones caused in the transit process from living with parents' families to living independently, and iv) others.

The first category is "problems and difficulties" caused because workers are still living with parents' families. Limited housing space certainly causes many "problems and difficulties", but for this point refer to the next subsection, Housing.

Some complain that they cannot relax because they must help out with housekeeping—for example, "taking care of a little sister in nursery school," "playing with the brother's children" and "farming labor." "Father used to be a *yakuza* (Japanese mafia) and is now sitting around the house. He has been a leg wound." "Father has just taken up a new job, and the family hasn't gotten used to it yet."

As long as workers are living with parents, the interference from them is a big problem. Such a complaint is more serious with girls. "Parents watch what I'm doing too closely," "they are constantly keeping an eye on me," "they are very nervous about phone calls from boys," "the time they set for me to be home by is too early," "they fuss too much if I come home a little late," "I can't stand the many restrictions they put on me," "Father is on leave of absence because of a disease and turns on me for the slightest thing," and so on. A male worker, too, is uncomfortable with parents' interference in his outings.

On the other hand, many workers feel sorry to bother their families because of overtime, shift and early morning work. Refer to the subsections dealing with Working Hours and Commuting.

Although workers may be living with their parents, "it is seldom for all family members to meet together" as in the old days. Now that the children have all grown up, it "makes me lonely." "Each member is thinking of different things. There is no chance to travel together as a whole family," which "makes me sad."

The second category is "problems and difficulties" caused because workers live alone. "Living alone" in an apartment or a dormitory is "not interesting because there is no one waiting for me when I return to my room," or it is "lonesome." Daily chores such as cleaning, laundry, and cooking are troublesome. If "there are no bath and washing machine in the apartment," "you have to go to a public bathhouse and a laundry." (cf. the subsection of Husing) "You have to eat out often."

"If you live in a dormitory, it's not easy to go out." "The night closing time is too early." "Contact with my family is restricted." "You seldom have a chance to see friends from high school days." And if a worker has a bad senior in the same dorm, "he makes me go on errands for him" and if a worker has a good senior, "I miss him badly now that he has left the dorm."

At any rate, "You can seldom go home to see your family," and "I go home only once a month." When young workers are living away from home, "their parents," not the workers, "worry about [them]." "My mother especially wants me to come home."

The third category is "problems and difficulties" caused in the transition from living together to being independent. While parents "want me to come home," "I want to live in

Tokyo to own a shop someday.” He is in a dilemma. Similar afflictions may take place even when they are living with their parents now. “If I quit my present job and leave home, my mother will be left all by herself.” He is forced to choose either job or family. “Marriage” can give them an opportunity to gain independence, but they may hesitate to do so “because I’m an only child, . . . .”

The fourth category includes “problems and difficulties” of health and support of parents. “I’m worried because my mother is getting weaker.” A worker is getting married to live with parents-in-law, and “worried about [her] own parents after they become old and dependent since [she is] the eldest daughter.”

#### (22) Housing(4+4)

“A small house”, when living with a family, and “a poorly equipped apartment”, when living independently, are the two main problems on housing.

“The house is small” and “I can’t have my own room.” As “I have to share a room with my sister” or “brothers”, “I can’t have any privacy.” “I don’t have time to be alone,” and “always feel fettered by someone.” “If I’m at home on holidays, my family say I bother them. It’s hard.” He has five brothers and sisters. “I can’t make any noise at home because my younger sister is studying for the entrance exam.” “My elder brother and his wife live with us, and I can’t relax.” These are all different expressions of living in “a small house.” A worker’s family is moving from a quasi-public corporation apartment (*Kōdan*) to a privately owned high-rise condo probably because of the space, but the new place “will cost a lot of money.”

A worker living by himself in an apartment has “to go out to a public bathhouse and a coin laundry” because “the apartment has no bath and washing machine.” He, therefore, “want[s] to move into an apartment with a bath.”

#### (23) Commuting(4+7) cf. Working Hours

Besides the complaint that “I’m not able to commute to work from home,” there are complaints such as “it’s too far and takes lots of time” and he has to use “overcrowded transportation.”

As to the point of “taking too long to commute,” refer to the section of Working Hours(p.24). Commuting long distance is not only strenuous to workers themselves but also annoying to their families. For example, an 18-year-old female worker says, “I have to get up at 5:30 in the morning and Mom cooks breakfast for me. I feel sorry for her. It’s tough on Mom.” Some workers complain of “too many changes of trains” instead of commuting long distances. On the contrary, there is a luxurious complaint, too, that “the workplace is too near to my home.”

Female workers raise many problems and troubles on “rush hours” and “jammed commuting trains”, for example, being “too crowded” and “almost crushed” as well as “mashers.”

#### (24) Children(0+0)

No cases.

(25) Satisfaction

Omitted.

(26) Community/Society(4+3)

There are four and two complaints respectively on "taxes" and "medical expenses". "They are too high." "The 10 percent should not be deducted. All should be paid by the National Health Insurance." Other complaints, concerns and anger include one case on "the government's economic policies," one case on public morality such as "drunks on streets and at train stations," and two cases on "youngsters' suiciding following T.V. stars' similar actions," "struggles among politicians," "rescue activities for African refugees," "World War III," and other social and political news.

1) Numbers of cases which referred to the item. (Male cases + Female cases)

## IV MALE THIRTIES (31–40 YEARS OF AGE)

### 1. Characteristics of Interviewees

Thirty four interviewees fall into this category.

In terms of educational levels they completed, three are junior high school graduates, 19 who graduated from senior high schools, 10 college graduates and two unknown. Included with them are two senior high school dropouts and one college dropout. (Table 10)

**Table 10: Education of Interviewees**  
(Male, 31 – 40 years of age)

Total	34
Junior high graduates	3
(Senior high dropouts)	(2)
Senior high graduates	19
(College dropouts)	(1)
College graduates	10
Unknown	2

Most of interviewees, or, more than 80 percent, are married. In the remainder, there are four unmarrid, one divorced, and one with unknown marital status. The married have one or two children in most cases.

The two largest occupation<sup>1)</sup> groups are production and other blue collar workers and managers. In production and other blue collar workers, 3 metal workers (a cutter and press workers), an electrician, an auto worker, a printing firm worker, a packing industry worker, a rubber stamp engraver, and a shoe maker are included. The reason for the large numbers of managers is two fold. One, many workers reach the lower managerial level in this age

**Table 11: Family Composition of Interviewees**  
(Male, 31 – 40 years of age)

Total	34
Married	28
no children	3
a child	13
two children	11 <sup>1)</sup>
three children	1
Unmarried	4
living with parents' family	2
by himself	1
unknown	1
Divorced	1
Unknown	1

1) One apparently lives with his grandmother.

Table 12: Occupations<sup>1)</sup> of Interviewees (Male, 31 - 40 years of age)

	Total
Government & public corporation employees	34 0
Private industry employees (All except for government & public corp. employees)	
Professional and technical workers	
Managers	4 [high school teacher (2), computer engineer, dental technician] 8 [private hospital head officer, managers of restaurant (4 including McDonald's and <i>sushi</i> shop), coffee shop and convenience store, department chief of a large supermarket]
Clerical & related workers	1 [bank clerk]
Sales workers	4 [medicine salesman (2), cosmetics salesman, precision machinery firm salesman]
Service workers	6 [building cleaning workers (2), gas station repairman, laundryman, truck driver ( <i>takekyūbin</i> ), water analyst]
Craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers	
Construction craftsmen	1 [electrician(section chief)]
Workers in manufacturing	8 [metal worker (3), auto worker, printing worker(section chief), packing, rubber stamp engraver, shoemaker]
Others	1 [extra hand]
Unknown	1 [in a construction company]

1) See the footnote 1) on p.20.

group, usually directors of divisions in organizations, on the promotion ladder under a lifetime employment system. Two, recently many small or chain stores including *sushi* shops, coffee shops, fast food restaurants and convenience stores have very young managers, even in their 20s. They are often the sole regular workers, and all others are part-time and/or student workers.

There are many service workers and sales workers, too. Besides the above managers, the following are included: Two building maintenance workers, a gas station repairman, a laundryman, a truck driver and a water analyst for an anti-pollution firm as service workers, and two medicine salesmen, a cosmetics salesman, and a precision machinery company employee as sales workers.

Clerical workers are characteristically few in our research subjects in this age group. Other occupations included are two high school teachers, a computer engineer, a dental technician, a movie extra, and an unknown in a construction firm. Public and quasi-public corporation employees are not found.

The longest term of service is 21 years while the shortest is 6 months. Workers with 10 years of service and over account for 60 percent. At least eleven workers have had the experience of changing jobs and at least one worker has been leased to another company. (Table omitted)

In terms of income, 19 interviewees answered in annual earnings, 8 in monthly earnings,

**Table 13: Income of Interviewees (Male, 31 – 40 years of age)**

(Answered in) Annual Income (with tax)		(Answered in) Monthly Income (after tax)	
Total	19	Total	7
	million		thousand
up to ¥1.75	0	¥120,130	2
1.75 - 2.25	1	130 - 175	1
2.25 - 2.75	1	175 - 225	1
2.75 - 3.25	4	225 - 275	3
3.25 - 3.75	5	275 - 325	1
3.75 - 4.25	2	325 -	0
4.25 - 4.75	1		
4.75 - 5.25	2		
5.25 - 5.75	0		
5.75 - 6.25	1		
6.25 - 6.75	1		
6.75 - 7.25	1		
7.25 -	0		
Minimum	¥2	Minimum	¥120,130
Maximum	¥7	Maximum	¥300

- 1) In many cases, it was not clear whether the data included tax or not or whether the data with tax or after tax was given. In the latter, necessary data was estimated wherever possible. As for monthly income, some seem to include overtime pay and/or bonus and some do not.
- 2) In addition, there are 7 cases of “unknown”.

and 7 gave no answers. As far as cases given in annual income are concerned, the minimum is ¥2,000,000 and the maximum is ¥7,000,000. The former is for a high school graduate sheet steel cutter and the latter a college graduate construction firm employee. The mode is the class ¥3,250,000–3,750,000 (5 cases), followed by the class ¥2,750,000–3,250,000 (4 cases). As far as cases given in monthly income are concerned, the minimum is ¥120,000–130,000 and the maximum is ¥300,000. The former for is a laundryman and a movie extra and the latter for a rubber stamp engraver. The mode is ¥250,000. (3 cases)

## 2. Distribution of Itemized "Problems and Difficulties"

Refer to the preceding section (pp.20–23), regarding the significance and limitation of reviewing the distribution of itemized "problems and difficulties" and the meanings of those items.

Thirty-four workers mentioned 146 "problems and difficulties" in all, which makes 4.3 items per worker.

The item which the largest number of workers raise is "Working Hours," followed by "Wages & Salaries/Expenditures." Sixty percent of interviewees mention the former and forty percent the latter. These two items were also among tops as for the younger generation in Section III (p.21).

About 30 percent of workers complain of or get angry at something on "Bosses," "Job Content" and "Children." "Children" are becoming a focus of interest in this age group. One out of 4 or 5 has a "problem or difficulty" with the "Future of Company," "Human Relations," or "Turnover/Independence."

Table 14: Distribution of Itemized "Problems and Difficulties" (Male, 31 – 40 years of age)

	Total	34	100.0%
A	Automobiles	0	0.0
B	Bosses(including human relations)	10	29.4
C	Customers	6	17.6
D	Discrimination, complex	2	5.9
E	Evaluation	2	5.9
F	Family, family life	6	17.6
G	Geography [Commuting]	2	5.9
H	(Working) Hours	20	58.8
I	Inexperience, incompetence	1	2.9
J	Job content	10	29.4
K	Kids [Children]	10	29.4
L	Living [Housing]	3	8.8
M	Management, future of company, layoffs, and bankruptcy	8	23.5
N	<i>Ningen-kankei</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere	8	23.5
O	(Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions	3	8.8
P	Promotion, transfer	4	11.8
Q	Questions on life & work	4	11.8
R	Retirement	3	8.8
S	Safety & health, work environment	5	14.7
T	Turnover, independence & self-employment	7	20.6
U	(Labor) Unions, labor relations	1	2.9
V	Voice [Participation]	2	5.9
W	Wages & salaries, expenditure	13	38.2
X	Sex [Men+women, marriage and other personal concerns]	4	11.8
(Y	Yes [Satisfaction]	—	—)
Z	[Community, Society]	2	5.9

Note: The total numbers 146 cases. The same "problem and difficulty" may be counted for more than one item, and different "problems and difficulties" are counted as one case as far as they belong to the same item.

dence," while one out of 6 or 7 has in "Customers," "Family/Family Life," "Men & Women/Marriage and Other Personal Concerns," or "Safety & Health/Work Environment." One out of ten has in "Promotion," "Housing," "Fringe Benefits and Other Labor Conditions," and "Retirement," which was not found in the 18–20 year age group.

There are only one or two people who refer to "Discrimination/Complex," "Evaluation," "Commuting," "Questions on Life and Work," "Participation," "Community/Society," and "Labor Unions/Labor Relations." There is no reference to "Automobiles" in this age group.

### 3. The Content of "Problems and Difficulties"

#### (1) Working Hours (20) + Commuting (2)

There are complaints of and much dissatisfaction with overtime work and long working hours.<sup>(9)</sup> A worker who works for a cleaning shop says, "Everyday I have overtime work. It's around eleven when I get home, and I go to bed immediately." A deliveryman who works for a parcel express firm says, "From 7:30 in the morning to 9, or sometimes after 10 in the evening, without any breaks. Sometimes we miss lunch." They work till exhausted and only have time for sleep at home, having no leisure time at all.

There are four cases which refer to holidays and vacations. "I can't have any pleasure with my family because Sundays are not off." (A restaurant manager) In this age group, "problems and difficulties" on working hours are frequently told in relevance to families and children. (See subsections, Family and Children.) "I decided to take one day off per week, but often can't. I have to replace part-time workers or students who are absent." (A manager of a convenience store) These workers have exchanged their time for the title of managers.

There are four cases of "problems and difficulties" on shift work and irregular work. A hamburger shop manager says, "I have many night shifts. Day and night have reversed themselves." A coffee shop manager says, "I wish I could avoid the early shift from six o'clock." The numbers of round-the-clock stores in the food and other retail industries have recently increased, and shift work has, too, not only in manufacturing plants. The above manager of a hamburger shop comes back home at 2:30 a.m. and goes to the store at 12 noon, which widely deviates from a typical schedule, and makes "the rhythm of daily life disturbed."

Two workers complain that they have to travel away from home too often on business and two others say that "it takes two and a half hours one way to go to the plant." Jammed trains are troublesome not only for commuting but also for delivery of products.

#### (2) Wages (13) + Automobiles and Other Material Wants (0)

"My monthly pay is only about ¥120,000. I have a mortgage to pay off. My wife's started working but gets only a little money, too." (A laundryman) Many workers refer to this item with relation to families and children as in "Working Hours" above. (See subsections, Family and Children.)

Interviewees' wages are never envious. A 35-year-old auto worker's "wage after tax isn't much different from that of a student worker." A building maintenance worker (window



cleaning) isn't “paid if injured or absent, because [he] work[s] under a day-rate plan.” Wages of the store manager group are in similar a situation. “The manager allowance (of a *sushi* shop) doesn't make his pay any different from his aid's.” “The bonus (of the super-market manager) is reduced if the norm set by the company isn't reached, while it isn't increased if it is reached.”

(3) Fringe Benefits and Other Labor Conditions (2)

Two interviewees refer to “fringe benefits and other labor conditions.” A coffee shop manager insists that “during breaks employees should be able to have drinks at the shop for free.” An assistant manager of a *sushi* shop questions “why can the employer deduct the unemployment insurance premium during the training period while we are not fully paid.”

(4) Occupational Safety & Health/Working Environment (6)

Three interviewees complain of or are worried about physical working conditions. “My eyes get very tired since I'm engaged in microscopic work.” (A team chief in a printing firm) “The noise from machines is outrageous. The work is also highly dangerous, surrounded by machines.” (A press worker) “I'm worried I may be injured. My work is always very close to danger.” (A building window cleaner)

Some interviewees feel something wrong with their bodies because of mental fatigue. “I've lost 8 kg of my weight over four or five months due to mental and physical anxieties as a manager.” (A restaurant manager)

(5) Inexperience/Incompetence (1)

There is a case which grieves over technology development: “It's not easy to become accustomed to the newly introduced machine.” (A rubber stamp engraver)

(6) Job Content (10)

Being too busy or too hard is the first category of “problems and difficulties” under the item of job content. Particularly this is the case with managers' work at convenience stores, hamburger shops and chain restaurants, where most workers besides managers are non-regular workers such as part-time or student workers. All burdens fall on these regular workers, or managers. A similar situation is found in manufacturing industries, too. A team chief in a printing plant says:

Mostly the work load is carried by part-time and student workers, but they stop working and go home as soon as the regular working hours are over. Then regular workers—there are very few in number—have to work overtime to finish up the work. It's always nine o'clock before we are through.

Work in the parcel express industry, which has recently developed rapidly, is also very hard. Sorting, loading, delivering, and re-delivering of parcels, which are brought back because of absence. . . . There is no break at all. “Workers force packages onto their fellows

in the morning." The more they deliver, the more they earn under their piece rate system, but workers choose less work than more income. This kind of work is hard.

Working in vain is very unpleasant. Workers get angry when they have to do the work over again because of the other party's convenience, for example, the delayed delivery or meeting time (a precision machinery sales section chief) and wrong drafts (a rubber stamp engraver).

"Simple, repetitive and monotonous work" (a laundryman), "working with an incapable partner" (an auto worker), "the quota is unachievable" (a supermarket department manager), and others are all sources of workers' dissatisfaction. The supermarket department manager says, "I have a quota of customer's credit cards, but I have no potential customers in mind any more. Such cards are of no use."

(7) Participation (2)

Workers are demoralized or get mad when their proposals are refused by superiors or management. A cosmetic salesman says, "When I propose some new ideas, the boss doesn't adopt them when he is in a bad mood. I'm very discouraged." A computer engineer also says, "When my opinions are not accepted or not understood, I flare up."

(8) Evaluation (2)

"While I'm working hard doing overtime for the company, the boss thinks I'm doing it because I love it or else I would have finished the work within regular working hours. I really get angry."

Here is a unique anxiety about self-evaluation. A head administrator of a voluntary hospital knows that his "present salary has been made possible because of [his] father", and "wonder[s] if the work he's doing isn't commensurate with his income."

(9) Human Relations (8) + Bosses/Ranking (10)

Criticism against and dissatisfaction with bosses smolder even among managerial workers who have worked for many years. "The boss calls me trash if I don't fulfill the sales quota." (A restaurant manager) "My boss is a slave driver and even asks me to do his private errands and business. I really get mad at him." (A laundryman) There are seven additional cases. One of the worst cases is that "the president and other bosses go around the branch shops at midnight to check our time card." (A vice-manager of *sushi* shop)

On the contrary, criticism against staff of other ages below appears in this age group. The following are typical comments: "These days young people are not like in my youth." "Subordinates' working behavior and attitude aren't good. Their morale is low and they easily quit jobs." And "Young new comers are arrogant while they can't do any work."

Colleagues are not necessarily all "good people." Sometimes workers have to work with difficult people. A bank employee "feel[s] disgusted with a flatterer in [his] division" and a high school teacher patiently restrains himself, "having people whose opinions are different" from his own."

Problems derived from the manpower composition at workplaces are also posed. A

worker who “work[s] alone in a workshop” “feel[s] lonesome because [he doesn’t] have anyone to talk with.” He envies people who “drink with colleagues at bars after work.” (A rubber stamp engraver) A manager who “use[s] many young women” “bothers his brain very much thinking about them.” (A coffee shop)

(10) Customers (6)

As with younger workers, customers represent one of the most important sources of “problems and difficulties” for workers in this age group who deal with customers. The most typical cases occur in service industries.

In addition, business clients are also a cause of affliction for sales workers. “I get angry with clients who nag over small details while we really did deliver the products before the appointed date.” (A sales section chief of a precision machinery firm) “It’s hard to visit retail stores. They throw their weight about, take mean advantage of our weaker position, and.... We can only humble ourselves.” (A sales section chief of a cosmetics firm) Managers of restaurants “must sometimes have social drink with *yakuza* [gangsters] on business.”

(11) Promotion/Transfer (4)

On one hand there are workers who grieve the delay or lack of promotion. A computer engineer is “anxious about his future” because “both promotion and pay increases have become difficult to obtain compared with the high economic growth era” of the 60’s and early 70’s. Two other factors have strengthened this grief and dissatisfaction: (1) the baby boom generation is included in this age group, and (2) workers have received a higher education. A high school graduate, however, feels sorry over a traditional problem, discrimination by education. “A younger colleague has just been promoted to manager. We are not different in ability, but education makes the difference.” (A cosmetic firm sales section chief) A worker, who is the only employee in a shop, is “not encouraged because there are no possibility of promotion” from the very beginning. (A rubber stamp engraver)

On the other hand, there are workers who don’t want to be promoted. An assistant manager of a *sushi* chain shop refrains from becoming the manager “because there’s no big difference in pay.”

(12) Future of Company/Layoff/Bankruptcy (8)

The longer people’s years of service are, the more their responsibility is and the higher the positions are, the stronger their interest in the management and the future of the company is. Many of our subjects, too, first refer to ways of increasing sales, how to increase profit, how to eliminate waste, and so on. The following expresses those interest in the form of “problems and difficulties”: (1) The manpower shortage (2)——“We can’t get enough student workers” (a hamburger shop manager), and “Few people respond to ads for recruits and I have to do the work of two or three people” (a restaurant manager). (2) The competition with firms in the same industries (2)——“A store of the same kind has just opened nearby. I am worried about the competition” (a convenience store manager), and “We now have many

similar companies, and less work comes in and our business is tapering off" (a building cleaning worker). And (3) others——"How would the company be in the future if we have another oil shock" (a gas station attendant), "Some student workers are not good" (a coffee shop manager), "The company only thinks of increasing sales, saving labor cost" (an assistant manager of a *sushi* shop), and "How to deal with business has usurped my mind" (a precision machinery sales section chief).

(13) Turnover/Independence (7)

Independence- or self-employment-orientation is strong in this age group, too. "I want to run an auto mechanic shop for myself in the future." (A gas station mechanic) "I would like to start my own restaurant some day." (A restaurant manager) "Getting a qualification, I want to have my own company." (A construction firm employee)

However, some have already given up the dream of independence. "I wonder if I have the ability to be independent. The present pay is not good but life is secure. (A sheet steel cutter) "I cannot help continuing the present job. It's tough for me to start something new from zero in my thirties, and my child is getting into elementary school next year." (A supermarket department manager)

If not independence-seekers, many workers want to change their jobs. "Since it takes two and a half hours one way, I want to find some job near my home." (An auto worker) "I want to change to a better paid job. My present wage is only about ¥120,000 per month." (A laundryman) Both are seroious.

(14) Retirement (2)

Although retirement is not a pressing question yet, the situation is serious in cases of blue collar workers and non-regular marginal workers. Two express their anxiety about their retirement life. "It's OK while I'm young, but when I become old, it would be physically impossible to continue this job. The retirement allowance would be not much, . . . and I'm worried about life after retirement." (A building window cleaner) "We have no compulsory retirement age, but no guarantee of security when I'm old." (A movie extra)

(15) Labor Unions (1)

"The company hasn't shared profit with workers and won't. Workers have been patient, but. . . I'm determined to be active in union activities to fight against the company." (A shoemaker) This is the only case which refers to labor unions.

(16) Discrimination/Complex (2)

There are two complaints which relate to discrimination by education. One, a cosmetic firm sales section chief, who is a high school graduate, is "very uncomfortable because a younger fellow worker, who is a college graduate, was promoted to office manager while he is not necessarily more capable than me." Two, an auto worker says, "College graduate white collar people are in an air conditioned office, and high school production workers are in a shop like a steam bath——hot and humid!"

(17) Questions on Life and Work (4)

As younger generations, workers reaching this age still ask similar questions to themselves, "Simple repetition of the same motions. . . . Being tied to working hours. . . . Is it OK for myself to be as I am?" "I feel as if I were a slave. My job only requires a simple physical effort and I am forced to do it everyday for long hours." The former is the comment by a sheet steel cutter and the latter by a parcel express deliveryman. However, they do not necessarily intend to quit their jobs. The latter worker gives the reason: "Because the pay is so so and there are no good jobs are available."

Two interviewees have "a feeling of vague unrest." They say, "I feel that only I am left behind while everyone around is living a full life." (A sheet steel cutter) and "I always feel unsettled and haven't formed a clear view of the situation yet." (A computer engineer)

(18) Men & Women/Marriage/Other Private Concerns (4)

Of all research subjects in this age group, only five workers are unmarried, including one divorced, but their anxiety for marriage is very strong. "Marriage. That's my first priority now." "I go home very tired from my work to find nobody there. I feel very lonely." "Getting married, I want to ease my parent's mind. *Soap land* and *pink saloon* money for sex treatment can't be withheld. . . ."

However, their busy everyday work does not even allow them to have the time to be acquainted with women. It may be OK if there are unmarried women in the workplace, but in reality, many workers work in places where "there are few unmarried women." A building cleaner ridicules, "My job is to clean floors in empty rooms. You don't have any chances to see women. This is a kind of occupational illnesses, isn't it?"

(19) Family (6) + Children (10) + Housing (3)

"I can't go home at a regular time, and have little time to even talk with my family." (A gas station attendant) Many grieve the lack of communication with their families.(4) A worker in a two-income family has another difficulty. He confesses, "It gives me pain to have my wife work. I lose my temper when my wife says that I can have some pocket money because of her work." A worker, who is "the first son" and thus "must live with parents in the future," has been worried about the timing of when to start living together.

The above mentioned lack of sharing time with families is particularly important in relation to children. "I have no conversation with my children at all. It's absolutely impossible to play catch, visit the school to see classes at work, and attend the sports day." (A hamburger shop manager) "There is little time and conversation shared between the children and me, since I go home very late at night." And so on.(6)

Four interviewees are anxious about the future of their children, particularly about their education. The most typical is a question like "Can I give them a college education with my present wage?" (An auto worker) A unique example is the anxiety of a deaf-and-dumb worker. The dental technician says, "As I can't hear at all, I am worried about the children's education."

There are three kinds of “problems and difficulties” presented on housing. The first is its space and distance. A press worker says, “It’s small and far from the station.” The second is the desire to own a house. A gas station attendant says, “As I live in an apartment, I want to have a house as soon as possible.” The third is the burden of the repayment of a housing loan. It is particularly hard for a worker, if an unexpected incident happens, as with our laundryman. “After I bought a house, the job pressed me to move to another area. Now I live in a rented house and have to pay both the housing loan and the rent.”

(20) Community/Society (2)

One is regarding neighbors and the other a deaf-mute’s demand to society. “We have few contacts in our neighborhood because we’ve just moved to this area and my wife is working out, too.” “I wish we could have more information through, for example, deaf-and-dumb sign broadcasting and social education programs by local governments.”

## V MIDDLE-AGED & OLDER WORKERS (Over 40 Years of Age; MALE)

### 1. Characteristics of Interviewees

The total number of subjects in this category is 96.

By school level they completed, seven are junior high graduates, 46 senior high graduates, 34 collage graduates and another 34 unknown. Among the senior high graduates included is a college dropout. That is, approximately half (48%) the subjects graduated from senior high schools and more than a third (35%) from universities in this age group, which is higher than the younger age groups in Section III and IV and higher than the average Japanese for this age group.

Table 15: Education of Interviewees  
(Male, Over 40 years of age)

Total	96
Junior high graduates	7
(Senior high dropouts)	(0)
Senior high graduates	46
(College dropouts)	(1)
College graduates	34
Unknown	9

Almost interviewees are married. There are no cases which answered “unmarried” positively. Out of 90 having wives, 52 live with two children, who are already not necessarily young in age, 22 with three, 15 with one, and one with four. Fourteen interviewees live with

Table 16: Family Composition of Interviewees  
(Male, Over 40 years of age)

Total	96
Married	90
no children	0
one child	15
+ mother	3
two children	52
+ father, mother and/or both	6
+ others <sup>1)</sup>	1
three children	22
+ mother	5
four children	1
unmarried	0
Unknown <sup>2)</sup>	6

1) The first son's wife and a grandson.

2) One of them lives two.

Table 17: Occupations<sup>1)</sup> of Interviewees (Male, Over 40 years of age)

Total	96
Government & public corporation employees	
Professional and Technical Workers	8 [medical doctor, medical doctor & professor, elementary school teacher, elementary school head teacher, junior high school teacher, junior high school principal, senior high school teachers' union district vice-president, and unknown]
Managers	5 [division directors in local forestry office, public health center and city government, head fire officer, and office manager of district tax office]
Clerical & related workers	1 [local clerical union]
Protective service workers	1 [policeman]
Private industry employees (All except for government & public corp. employees)	
Professional and technical workers	5 [school teacher, senior high school principal, apparel technical instructor, R & D in heavy industry co., and technical expert]
Managers	34 [division directors, department directors, branch office managers and other lower, middle and upper managers in various private corporations both small and large, in various industries, e.g. mining, construction, manufacturing, bank, transportation, and service <sup>⑧</sup> , managers of convenience stores, ice cream shop, beauty shop, and inn]
Clerical & related workers	9 [bank (2), auto (2), railway & related (2), trading, medicine, and paper]
Sales workers	7 [construction firm (2), auto, machine, camera, electrical machinery, and insurance]
Service workers/Workers in transport & communication occupations	5 [real estate management, taxi driver, truck driver, electrical products deliveryman, and seaman]
Craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers	
Construction craftsmen	1 [construction field supervisor]
Workers in manufacturing	7 [machinery workers (4), packing (2), and press worker]
Others	0
Unknown	13

1) See the footnote 1) on p.20.



one or both parents in addition to those children. A 55-year-old interviewee lives with his married first son, a grandson and also his unmarried second son.

Our research subjects in this category skew towards the middle class. At least more than half(52) are either professional & technical workers or managers. Probably more are included in other occupation groups in Table 17, who did not mention their jobs and ranks in detail. This skewing comes from the fact that majority of our subjects in this age group are fathers and relatives of interviewees who are studying at an expensive private university near Tokyo.

There are many managers, in the private sector. Thirty-four are division or department directors in various corporations, either small or large, branch office managers, plant managers, store managers and others in various industries such as manufacturing (12), transport/distribution/service (7), bank, insurance and other finance (5), construction (3), fishery and agricultural cooperatives (2), mining, newspaper, hospital and unknown (1 respectively).

Five are various division directors and other administrators in the public sector and some professional & technical workers are also in managerial positions, for example, school principals.

Including those in managerial positions, there are 13 professional and technical workers, both in private and public sectors, who are school teachers, employed medical doctors and private corporation engineers. The third majority fall into the category of clerical workers. They work for banks (2), auto companies (2), a railway company, a trade firm, a medicine manufacturing company, a paper mill, and a supplier of Japan National Railways (JR today) as well as a local government clerical union.

These are followed by craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers (8; 4 machine workers, 2 packing workers and a press worker, a construction field supervisor), sales workers (7; in construction (2), auto, machine, camera, electric product and insurance firms), and service/transportation workers (5; a real estate management agency employee, taxi and truck drivers (3), and a seaman). Some of managers mentioned above may have closer in salaries to either sales workers or service workers and are better to be classified as such. The typical examples are managers of convenience stores. Remember the description of them in the preceding section.

It may be worth noting that there are five "post-retirement" workers included, one of whom is an ex-bureaucrat who now has a job in the private sector [*amakudari*], and two of whom are ex-big corporation employees who were leased to related-companies.

Concerning earnings, 67 answered in annual income, 11 in monthly income, and 18 in neither. The highest annual income is ¥15,000,000 and the minimum ¥1,800,000. The former is of an employed upper management officer of a small machine parts manufacturing company, and the latter is of a 58-year-old auto dealer salesman who was re-employed after his retirement from Japan National Railways. The highest monthly income is ¥500,000 and the minimum is ¥150,000 after tax. The former is of a division director of an electrical machinery manufacturer, and the latter is of a 48-year-old blue collar worker in a precision machinery company who graduated from high school and has worked for the company for 28

1)  
**Table 18: Income of Interviewees (Male, Over 40 years of age)**

(Answered in) Annual Income (with tax)		(Answered in) Monthly Income (after tax)	
Total	million 67	Total	thousand 11
up to ¥3.75	8	up to ¥225	3
3.75 - 4.75	7 2)	225 - 275	2
4.75 - 5.75	8	275 - 325	2
5.75 - 6.75	17	325 - 375	3
6.75 - 7.75	8	375 - 425	0
7.75 - 9.75	5	425 -	1
9.75 - 11.75	9		
11.75 -	5		
Minimum	¥1.8	Minimum	¥150
Maximum	¥15.0	Maximum	¥500

1) In many cases, it was not clear whether the data include tax or not or if the data with tax or after tax was given. In the latter, necessary data was estimated wherever possible (e.g. using the equation, Income after tax = Income before tax x 82%).

As for monthly income, some seem to include overtime pay and/or bonus and some do not.

2) A taxi driver earns an additional ¥4,500,000 from his farming.

3) In addition, there are 18 “unknown” cases.

years. The annual income mode falls into the class ¥5,750,000—6,750,000 while fourteen interviewees earn ¥9,750,000 or more. Nine out of the eleven which were given in monthly income, range from ¥210,000 to ¥370,000, spread evenly over all classes.

1) People older than 50 years old studied under the old school system, which is different from today's. Old higher elementary schools, junior high schools, and technical colleges are regarded respectively as being equivalent to present junior high schools, senior high schools, and colleges.

## 2. Distribution of Itemized “Problems and Difficulties”

Ninety-six interviewees raised 267 “problems and difficulties” in total. Each provided 2.8 on average.

The “problems and difficulties” which most workers in this category have are those on wages/expenditures, job content and bosses/ranking relations. A third of people raise each of these items.

One out of four complains of working hours, and one out of five of human relations and promotion/transfer. There were many complaints on working hours in other age groups, too. Including complaints of human relations with bosses, more than half the interviewees have some “problems and difficulties” regarding human relations in a broad sense.

One out of six, or 16–18 percent of all subjects in this age group, mentions family and retirement respectively as sources of their “problems and difficulties”.

**Table 19: Distribution of Itemized “Problems and Difficulties”  
(Male, Over 40 years of age)**

	Total	96	100.0%
A	Automobiles	.0	0.0
B	Bosses(including human relations)	30	31.3
C	Customers	5	5.2
D	Discrimination, complex	6	6.3
E	Evaluation	4	4.2
F	Family, family life	16	16.7
G	Geography [Commuting]	6	6.3
H	(Working) Hours	24	25.0
I	Inexperience, incompetence	8	8.3
J	Job content	30	31.3
K	Kids [Children]	9	9.4
L	Living [Housing]	3	3.1
M	Management [Future of company, layoffs, and bankruptcy]	10	10.4
N	<i>Ningen-kankei</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere	22	22.9
O	(Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions	2	2.1
P	Promotion, transfer	18	18.8
Q	Questions on life & work	1	1.0
R	Retirement	16	16.7
S	Safety & health, work environment	12	12.5
T	Turnover, independence & self-employment	1	1.0
U	(Labor) Unions, labor relations	2	2.1
V	Voice [Participation]	3	3.1
W	Wages & salaries, expenditures	33	34.4
X	Sex [Men & women, marriage and other personal concerns]	1	1.0
(Y	Yes [Satisfaction]	—	—)
Z	[Community, Society]	5	5.2

Note: The total numbers 268 items. The same “problem and difficulty” may be counted for more than one item, and different “problems and difficulties” are counted as one case as far as they belong to the same item.

A little more than ten percent show interest in the future of company/layoffs & bankruptcy, while a little fewer than ten percent have some “problems and difficulties” on children and inexperience/incompetence.

All other items were raised by a few or several workers: Customers, discrimination, commuting, and community/society were raised by 5 or 6, evaluation, housing, and participation by 3 or 4 and fringe benefits and other labor conditions, questions on life & work, turnover/independence, men & women/marriage and other personal concerns, and labor unions by 1 or 2.

### 3. The Content of "Problems and Difficulties"

#### (1) Working Hours (24) + Commuting (6)

A taxi driver and farmer "work[s] from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 o'clock in the morning, and can't see the faces of [his] family." Although this is an extreme case, "problems and difficulties" on long working hours apply to eleven cases, many of which are described in relation to their families and children as for those in their thirties. A bank employee says, "because I have overtime work, I can't have dinner with my family, nor find the time to talk with my children."

"Problems and difficulties" on holidays and other days-off were raised by eleven cases. Particularly retail store employees and subcontracting company employees have very unfavorable working schedules. A retail chain store department manager says, "I often can't take holidays. I work the whole Christmas and new year season, except for New Year's Day." A convenience store manager says, "I don't have any regular shop-holidays nor days off for my own." The numbers of stores which are open for 365 days with long business hours have been increasing in the distribution industry, where many workers can't even take a day off weekly. A division director of a subcontracting construction firm says, "Since we are a subcontracting company, we often have to work on Sundays," depending on the convenience and demand of a parent company. An employee of a civil engineering and building contractor sighs over "no days off a week." Another worker says, "We are so busy that we can't go to doctors even when sick."

Besides the problems of long working hours, overtime work and few holidays and vacations raised are "problems and difficulties" on night and shift work and on the short work "breaks". A blue collar worker "worri[es] [his] family when [he is] on night shift." and an employee of a major city bank says that he "cannot often have lunch without haste because [he] only [has] a short lunch time."

Quite a few workers in this age group might have purchased their own houses, which are possibly far from their working places in the case of big cities, like Tokyo. Then their commuting hours become astronomically long. "It takes at least two hours each way." There are three other similar cases. In addition, there are complaints of crowded commuter thrains and the long distance between the nearby station and home which has to be walked.

#### (2) Wages (33) + Automobiles and Other Material Wants (0)

Although a press worker and others say, "I don't have financial difficulties living such a modest life. . .," a number of workers<sup>(19)</sup> refer to "problems and difficulties" on wages and salaries even in this above average social strata group. Many comments are subjective ones like "The salary is low considering the position and responsibility" (a division director of general affairs) and "I wish my salary could be high enough to travel in Europe with my family" (a heavy industry company employee). Generally speaking, there are few serious cases on wages in comparison with working hours. Some are, however, absolutely low in level. A 48-year-old blue collar worker who is in a precision machinery manufacturing company says,

"I have worked for this company for more than 20 years, but my monthly pay is about the same as my wife's," which is ¥150,000.

People tend to use the expression that "costs are too high," rather than "the wage is too low," when they become older and richer. Eleven interviewees deplore their high expenditure. The expense of children's education seems to be the biggest problem.<sup>(8)</sup> Considering that many of our research subjects in this age group have sent their sons and daughters to a private university near Tokyo(p.12), it can be generalized that the educational expense is a real burden for many workers above 40. Other expenses mentioned are ones on housing loans (2), parent support, and reading and cultural activities.

It may be a characteristic that many workers in this age group have complaints about taxes.<sup>(6)</sup> "Taxes reduce my net income a lot," is one of the typical complaints.

There are some workers who have become re-employed after their first retirement included in this group.<sup>(6)</sup> Their salaries may be extremely low. A 55-year-old insurance company employee who used to be a self-defense official grieves, "While the work is harder and tougher in the present job than in the previous one, the pay is much lower.... Yes, this is after retirement work.... I've resigned myself, but.... still...." His salary amount is unknown, but a clerical worker who works for an auto dealer after retirement from Japan National Railways receives only ¥1,800,000. On the other hand, some, while they are also re-employed after retirement, are receiving high salaries, up to ¥12,000,000. One of these cases is an ex-bureaucrat of the Department of Finance who has an executive job in an insurance corporation.

Allowances are complained of—a dependency allowance and an overtime allowance. A 45-year-old worker who has two children in school grumbles, "The dependency allowance from the company cuts off at 18 years of age. It will fall heavily on to my shoulders." Two workers in managerial positions complain of the exchange of the overtime allowance for the position, while a non-managerial worker is worried about the decrease of overtime work and thus income, because of the recession due to the high yen and thus the slow business. The share of overtime pay is significant in the Japanese wage system, and in a worker's life.

### (3) Fringe Benefits and Other Labor Conditions (2)

"There is no messroom for employees," which is the only complaint concerning fringe benefits.

Mobilization by a company outside working hours is a problem. "We are forced to work in voluntary community activities and political activities." This is the management's encroachment on workers' private free time and disturbance of their civil and political rights. The worker belongs to a large leading heavy industry company.

### (4) Occupational Safety & Health/Working Environment (12)

"We do microscopic work, get a lot of eye strain, and so become weak-sighted." (A photoengraver) "Standing all day long has caused back pain, the irregular lunch time the stomach and bowel disorder, and air-conditioning cold legs and loins." (A beauty shop manager) "I work till late at night sitting all day long. This physical condition is not good."

(A taxi driver and farmer) "You frequently have night work. It's physically tough." (A division manager of an electrical manufacturing company) "The frustration at work damages my stomach." (A division director of a construction firm) "As I work sitting at a desk, I'm mentally exhausted." (A white collar worker) More of the same is repeated as for younger generations.

In terms of working environments there are two complaints, which are also the same as those mentioned in the preceding sections. "It's extraordinarily hot in summer in the plant," (a press worker) and "Air-conditioning [gives us] cold legs and loins," (the beauty shop manager above).

#### (5) Inexperience/Incompetence (8)

Many workers in this age group are worried about the rapid change of technology. (7) "I feel insecure of following the technology development." "It's not easy to learn how to use new machines which are continuously introduced." The former is the case of an employee at a heavy industry company and the latter is from a bank employee. Even without any new introduced technology, "It's tough to gain control of a totally new job" for the re-employed after their first retirement, who are in their 50s or 60s.

#### (6) Job Content (30)

So many jobs and occupations, so many "problems and difficulties". "We have trouble with shoplifting. . . . Yes, too many." (A convenience store manager) "The absenteeism of student workers eats a hole in the production." (A plant manager of an electrical manufacturer) "Even 0.01m/m deviation is not allowed. We have to do it over again." (An employee of a precision machinery manufacturing company) "I know that it's part of the job, but I'm really disgusted when people fight over money." (An insurance company employee in charge of traffic accident negotiation) "I blow my top because the person who distributes freight among delivery drivers is partial to certain people." (A truck driver) "I want to get instructions in writing, not in word." (A packing firm worker) "An old man over 50 has to sell icecream to young girls in a shop. I feel ashamed." (An icecream shop manager) "The government inspection is very rigid." (A construction firm employee) "Citizens recently assert their rights, and this bothers us." (A division director of a public health center) And "We have too much to teach." (A teacher) These are only some examples showing the variety of "problems and difficulties" on work content.

The following is raised by more than one interviewee respectively. The reduction of manpower or rationalization (4), the irregular amount of work (3), the conflict between departments (2), the monotonous work (2), and the assumption of responsibility (2). Particularly the influence of rationalization seems to be significant. "Personnel reshuffling makes work hard. . . . We also have to work in fields out of our speciality. It's the result of rationalization." (A telephone company) "They claim the principle of fewer people of superior ability, and requires us to do the job of four or five with two. It's too much." (An electrical manufacturing company) "The introduction of a computer has reduced the number of workers a lot and increased the amount of work so we have become exhausted." (A city

bank) Workers do not enjoy the benevolent influence of rationalization. Workers who execute management's policies are also in difficulty:

I have to make a certain number of people quit. It's an order from the head office because of the "high yen recession." I feel I'm doing a bad thing but I have to harden my heart against pity. (A section chief of a general affairs in an auto company)

Concerning the other form points: "The work volume fluctuates a lot. Sometimes we cannot finish orders, and sometimes we don't enough orders." "Sales people should take orders thinking of the people in production." "I am tired of the increasing lack of variety in my work." "We have to take responsibility for mistakes made by subordinates."

(7) Participation (3)

"The company doesn't allow me to do the job as I want to." "I can't do the work I want to." Workers want to contribute to the decision making. However, the input forced from the top becomes painful. "We are expected to make proposals every month. It's a headache." (An electrical manufacturing company)

(8) Evaluation (4)

Workers wish their work could be fairly evaluated. "They [The company] see only the result, not the process." "We are often not recognized even if we put a lot of effort into the work."

(9) Human Relations (22)

"Problems and difficulties" on human relations probably won't disappear as long as people live in groups.

Most of them are common to younger workers' as were described in the previous sections: "There are people who work only in the presence of bosses—flatterers." "Some colleagues aren't conscious that we are working in a team." "There are people I have difficulty getting along with," "I can't get on well with," or "I can't share opinions with." So "I'm mentally tired with caring about how to treat others." "You are shunned unless you play golf, mahjong, and the like with fellows." And "You have to drink social *sake* even if you can't drink."

The lack of human relations can be another problem for some workers. A worker in an electrical manufacturing company is worried about "the more distant human relations at work due to the introduction of computers and commuting by car," and a policeman wishes he "could have the atmosphere in the office," in which he "could speak openly." Sometimes the management's personnel or labor policy makes the workplace inhuman. "Their control over us intensifies day by day. The humane atmosphere has gone and the workplace has become dry, like a desert."

A 43-year-old worker still misses young ladies at work. "I find our office dreary. Only men. Recently no young women have joined us at all."

## (10) Bosses/Ranking (30)

Workers in this age group, who are often managers with subordinates, also have dissatisfaction with and criticism against their bosses.<sup>(15)</sup> The first are these complaints which question their bosses' ability or qualification as managers<sup>(6)</sup>: "He advises and suggests while he can't do his own job properly." The second are those which relate to their bosses' character and behavior<sup>(2)</sup>: "I don't want to see his face. He worries about trifles." To have younger superiors may be the third source of "problems and difficulties" for older subordinates.<sup>(3)</sup> It is understandably uncomfortable to be given orders by younger people even at work. "I really get angry when I was badly abused by a boss who is twenty years younger than me." The fourth is the simple fact that "subordinates can't say 'no' even to unreasonable instructions."<sup>(4)</sup> The following is a grievance by a middle level manager who serves a one-man president of a painting firm:

A meeting is not a meeting. It's a place where the president makes one complaint after another unilaterally. The conclusion is always "Do this because I say so." One must put up with all sorts of humiliations as long as one is in the service of another. I often strongly feel sorrow and think one shouldn't be employed by the others attending these meetings. But I am already well over 50.

In contrast, bosses complaints of and criticism against followers and young people also come up in this age group.<sup>(13)</sup> A chief worker of an electrical manufacturing company, who is 47 years old, is puzzled by the "new human species", gets angry at them and reconciles himself:

In recent years young employees have become self-centered. They do what they judge is OK, and can't do satisfactory jobs. They don't respect senior workers nor understand how junior workers should behave. They are seemingly independent, or don't want to care about others nor want to be bothered by others.

Now I think it can't be helped. The world has become such a selfish world. The world has changed.

Today's young people do not know how to speak, do not reflect on what they did, do not have any common sense, are self-centered, are not serious enough, want to quit easily, are not understandable (what are they thinking?). . . . Older people's complaints don't end.

Having these superiors and subordinates, or even better ones, the middle management's responsibility is tough.<sup>(3)</sup> "It's difficult to have them communicate with each other."

## (11) Customers (5)

"I often get mad at customers. They say whatever they want to say." (A bank employee) "We have to receive and humble ourselves before people from big corporations. It cannot be helped in order to get jobs." Similar cases to other age groups are found here.

## (12) Promotion/Transfer (17)

In contrast, the desire for promotion and the affliction of transfer become serious. Many



references to promotion are related to education.(4) "I've had a hard time getting a promotion because I only graduated from a high school. It's unpleasant." "People who joined the company together and were once my subordinates have been promoted faster than me." "We, blue collar workers, can't expect a promotion."

To get a promotion "you have to fawn upon superiors regardless of their education level."(A department director of an advertisement firm) "I want to [be promoted more], but I don't want to [flatter]...."

There are no examples of demotion but there are examples of punitive transfer and its fear. "Unless the sales goal is achieved, you may get a transfer."

It's natural that workers have "a difficult time when [they are] transferred to a new position or area," and "my stress increased since the work was new and the people were new." These are common to all age groups.

There are, however, two "problems and difficulties" which are rather unique in this age group. One is the transfer resulting in a move without one's family [*tanshin funin*].(4) Having children in school and/or owning newly-bought houses, many workers move to other areas by themselves leaving their families. Or they give up the chance of promotion, which tends to be accompanied by transfers. "I refused a promotion once because the place of my new appointment was far from home (when I was younger)... Yes, now I'm here alone with my family living in my home town. (He accepted the new offer later). Maybe I can't go back to a branch office in my home prefecture until my retirement." He is now 49. "To accept the promotion or not, that's the question. If yes, I have to go to the post by myself and leave the family here." Many workers in private corporations don't even have this choice.

The other is employee leasing [*shukkō*].(2) Managerial bank clerks may be leased out to subsidiaries and related firms at certain ages. A division director is worried, "I know we'll be leased out before retirement, but I'm anxious about what kind of organizations I'll be leased to. If I can't adjust there and have to come back, it would be hard to stay with this bank." An icecream shop manager, who has been leased from the parent company, feels sad, "The company transfers us to unpopular posts when we've become old and worn after working long and hard for many years. It feels like exile."

### (13) Future of Company/Layoffs/Bankruptcy (1)

Workers in this age group, who are the core personnel in each company, have a strong interest in the management and future of their own companies.

Some workers are worried about the security of manpower and orders.(2 respectively) "The numbers of part-time jobs for housewives have increased and it's not easy to secure a certain number of saleswomen."(A cosmetic agency manager) "Because of the recent recession, not many orders have come in."(A construction firm employee)

For other workers, the security of their own employment is a serious concern, that is, bankruptcy and unemployment.(5) "You don't know when the company will go bankrupt." "The bankruptcy of a related firm worries me." Even public employees are anxious about the reduction of national forestry and the move towards privatization."

## (14) Turnover/Independence (1)

Although there is a difference in social strata between interviewees in this age group and those in other groups, most workers reaching this age group seem to have given up becoming independent or self-employed. Only one person still hung on the dream, but also recognized it's not easy, "I want to have my own shop, but there are difficulties with capital, staff and management ability lying ahead." (A beauty shop manager)

## (15) Retirement (16)

For some research subjects in this age group, retirement is so close that it cannot escape their consciousness.

Three workers say that the retirement age is too low and should be increased. "Our compulsory retirement age is 56. It's too early, isn't it? Education of children costs too much." "I want the company to raise the retirement age. I want to have a relaxed retirement life."

The retirement allowance and pension are also problems.<sup>(4)</sup> "We don't have a corporate pension and our retirement allowance is only a trickle." "We'll have a more aged society. I'm worried whether we'll receive the pension (Social Security) whose premiums we have paid."

For most workers some second employment is necessary after the first retirement before they eventually retire from the labor market.<sup>(5)</sup> Workers near the first retirement age are worried if they "can enter the companies [they] want," and "how the lower earnings will effect [their] families." (Both are bank employees) Workers who have already experienced retirement and re-employment relate, "It took a long time to find a second job after retirement" (An auto dealer employee), and "the gap (in labor conditions) is significant between the previous job and the new one after retirement." (An insurance company employee)

Company's measures facilitating voluntary retirement before the retirement age are to be noted. In some kinds of jobs, workers may "not be able to comfortably stay with their firms in [their] mid-forties." In others, "the company doesn't give us any work in the last few years before retirement."

On the contrary, some workers "lose the will to work because of the approaching retirement."

## (16) Labor Unions (2)

"The union has stifled young people's willingness to open up their opinions and feelings," criticizes a telephone company field supervisor, who used to be active in union activities and now is blamed for his inactivity by the union.

"We talk about the distributor's favoritism and about protesting to the company, but at the last moment workers don't unite." A truck driver grieves the lack of worker's unity.

## (17) Discrimination/Complex (6)

There are five cases on discrimination about education and one case on sex discrimination.

"It's not tolerable to see a college graduate who entered later be promoted earlier." "One college graduate and another have outstripped me, a high school graduate. My efforts over the years were of no avail." The former is a chief worker of an electrical manufacturing company and the latter is a division manager of a pharmaceutical company. "My wife had to quit when I got the present position. There was no written rule but a feeling she had to comply. We knew it was not comfortable to stay with." This is the comment by an assistant-manager of a tax office.

(18) Questions on Life and Work (1)

"I had to do whatever necessary since we are in a small company. Do I have any subjectivity?" questions a managerial worker of a painting firm.

(19) Men & Women/Marriage/Other Private Concerns (1)

"I don't have any interests outside work."

(20) Family (16)

Many "problems and difficulties" on this item are simply a repetition of those mentioned above in other items. First are cases that workers cannot spend time with their families or are worried about them, because of long working hours or night shift work.<sup>(4)</sup> On the contrary, a complaint is included that a worker cannot use his leisure time for himself because of the time donation to his family. Second are cases that workers have to live separately from their families because of the nature of their jobs or transfer to remote areas.<sup>(3)</sup> A seaman on an ocean liner is the former example and workers with children at school who move to new remote posts by themselves are the latter example.

Besides these, there are two comments unique in this subsection. One is regarding double income families: "I don't like my wife working. Household duties are neglected, and harmony among family members is impaired." The other regards the comparison with brothers and relatives (2): "I'm ashamed of myself because all my brothers have succeeded and are in high positions."

(21) Children (9)

Some "problems and difficulties" here are those which replace the word "family" above for "children". For example, a telephone company field supervisor says, "Because of socialization with company people I can't often spend time with my children even on Sundays." There are, however, complaints about their children, too. "I ask my children to go somewhere together, but they don't want to go." "Since the children are seldom at home, we can't often have a conversation as a family." These may not be so serious or even may be a matter of a course when children reach a certain age.

Workers are worried about children, whatever age they may be—children's college entrance exams, marriage partners, housing and future.<sup>(4)</sup> These may be deemed as "the ways of fond parents." One of them, however, is a little serious: "The first son is physically handicapped. The second son plays alone. I'm anxious about their future."

## (2) Housing (3)

Reaching 51 years old, still a worker "cannot buy a house."

The two cases are a little different. One is "I want to sell my house because it's inconvenient for commuting. But nobody wants it." The other is "We have to move our house because of street replanning."

## (23) Community/Society (5)

An interviewee is dissatisfied, "I now live in a bed-town. There are few contacts in our neighborhood unlike the old days." Another has trouble because he is involved in a community activity. "I always have different opinions to other leaders in the Association for the Bereaved Families of the War Dead."

Some have direct and concrete demands to local governments. "The government should maintain a bicycle parking lot at the train station." Or "The prefectural and city governments should let us use their playing grounds. We can't find any place to play softball."

A worker has "a vague anxiety about an earthquake and a nuclear war."

## VI FEMALE WORKERS (OVER 30 YEARS OF AGE)

### 1. Characteristics of Interviewees

The total number of interviewees in this category are 32, 15 of whom are part-time workers.

More than 17 are senior high school graduates. Among full-time workers a third have received higher education (junior college or college), and among part-time workers all but senior high graduates have received only a minimum compulsory education (up to junior high school). (Table 20)

**Table 20: Education of Interviewees  
(Female, Over 30 years of age)<sup>1)</sup>**

Total	32	[15]
Junior high graduates (Senior high dropouts)	4 (1)	[3]
Senior high graduates (+ Technical & vocational schools)	17 (3)	[9]
Junior college graduates	2	
College graduates	5	
Unknown	4	[3]

1) Includes three married cases of 26–30 years of age.

Note: [ ] for part-time workers.

Family composition of interviewees is summarized in Table 21 below.

All are married or used to be married. A third (11) have two children, another third (11) a

**Table 21: Family Composition of Interviewees  
(Female, Over 30 years of age)<sup>1)</sup>**

Total	32	[15]
Married	26	[14]
no children		2
one child		8 <sup>3)</sup> [4]
two children		10 [6]
three children		6 <sup>4)</sup> [4]
Divorced, separated and others	4	
one child		3
two children		1
Unknown	2	[1]

1) Includes three married cases of 26–30 years of age.

2) One lives with a parent.

3) Two live with parents.

4) One lives with parents.

Note: [ ] for part-time workers.

child and a fifth (6) three children. It is only two who do not have any. Four interviewees, who don't have husbands at present, have a child or two.

Four out of all 32 live with either or both parents, who are their own or their husband's.

Table 22 describes occupations. Occupations of female interviewees are classified into three groups: (i) Professional & technical workers, (ii) non-professional & technical full-time workers, and (iii) part-time workers.

Eight out of 17, or about half the full-time workers, are professional & technical workers. All of them except a nurse are teachers at various levels—at nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, and junior and senior high schools. They teach at both public and private schools.

The majority (5) of non-professional & technical full-time workers (9) are clerical. Two of them are non-regular workers [*shokutaku*]. Those five are working for small private firms and a private university, being engaged in accounting and the like. Besides the clerical workers included here are a cook at a public school lunch center, two saleswomen at a station stall and a pharmacy with 50 employees, and an “unknown”.

In Japan today, many female jobs are part-time or other forms of non-regular employee jobs, and our samples represent this situation. Fifteen out of 32, nearly half of the interviewees, are part-time, and an additional three non-regular workers were included with the above full-time workers. An overwhelming majority of part-time workers are engaged in production and sales work. Six are production workers—in food processing, precision machinery, electrical appliances, toys and paper products. Another six are sales workers—cashiers and salesladies at supermarkets, a hamburger shop and others. Some of these sales workers are also engaged in clerical or service work. There are only three non-production and sales workers. Two are public employees in bicycle and horse racing unions organized by local governments and one is a large chain supermarket employee who does lettering and poster drawing, a kind of professional & technical worker.

The years of service of professional & technical workers are long—many have worked for over 20 years, some for nearly 30 years. Exceptions are a substitute teacher for maternity leave (51 years old and 8 years of service) and a nurse who worked 6 years at another hospital (32 years old and 1 year of service). The non-professional & technical full-time workers are divided into two in terms of years of service. One group has worked for much fewer years and is not different from the part-time workers below. The other group has worked for 10- 20 years and is in their 40s or 50s. The part-time worker's years of service are generally short, that is, five years or shorter. However, a third of part-time workers have worked for an organization as part-time workers for more than 10 years. (The table omitted.)

Table 23 gives us the low income level of female workers. Taking cases answered in annual income, the minimum is ¥700,000 (after tax) for part-time workers and ¥1,600,000 for full-time workers, and the mode of all is the class ¥2,250,000-2,750,000. All wages but two are ¥3,000,000 or less. The two exceptions are ¥4,400,000 and ¥4,500,000, which are of professional & technical workers'.

It is natural that full-time worker's earnings are higher than part-time worker's. All

Table 22: Occupations<sup>1)</sup> of Interviewees (Female, Over 30 years of age)<sup>2)</sup>

	Full-time Workers	Part-time workers
Total	17	15
Government & public corporation employees		
Professional and Technical Workers	5	0
	[nursery school teacher, kindergarten teacher, elementary school teacher, junior high school teacher, and substitute teacher]	
Clerical & related workers	0	2
Service workers	1	0
	[cook at school lunch center]	
Private industry employees (All except for government & public corp. employees)		
Professional and technical workers	3	1
	[kindergarten teacher, senior high school teacher and nurse]	[lettering & poster drawing worker]
Clerical & related workers	5	0
	[building material sales, counting-house, small firm, auto mechanic shop** and university**]	
Sales workers	2	6
	[station stall and pharmacy]	[supermarket (3), school cafeteria cashier & clerk, shopgirl, and hamburger shop sales and cooking]
Service workers/Workers in transport & communication occupations	0	0
Craftsmen, production process & related workers and laborers		
Workers in manufacturing	0	6
		[food processing (2), precision machine, paper products, electrical machinery & appliances, and toys]
Others	0	0
Unknown	1	0
	[employee]	

\*\* Non-regular workers [*shokutaku*].

1) See the footnote 1) on p.20.

2) Includes three married cases of 26-30 years of age.

Table 23 : Income of Interviewees (Female, Over 30 years of age)<sup>1)</sup>

(Answered in) Annual Income (with tax)		(Answered in) Monthly Income (after tax)		(Answered in) Daily Income	
Total <sup>2)</sup>	19 [ 8 ]	Total	6 [ 4 ]	Total	6 [ 6 ]
up to ¥1.25	6 [ 6 ]	¥100,120	4 [ 3 ]	up to ¥475	1 [ 1 ]
1.25–1.75	1	125–175	1 [ 1 ]	475–525	0
1.75–2.25	2	175–225	0	525–575	1 [ 1 ]
2.25–2.75	6 [ 2 ]	225–275	1	575–625	1 [ 1 ]
2.75–3.25	2	275–	0	625–675	0
3.75–4.25	0			675–725	3 [ 3 ]
4.25–4.75	2			725–	0
4.75–	0				
Minimum		Minimum		Minimum	
Part-time	¥0.7(after tax)	Part-time	¥100	Part-time	¥430
Full-time	¥1.6	Full-time	¥120	Maximum	
Maximum		Maximum		Part-time	¥700
Part-time	¥2.5	Part-time	¥150		
Full-time	¥4.5	Full-time	¥230		

[ ]: Part-time workers.

1) Includes three married cases of 26–30 years of age.

2) The total of Totals of Annual Income, Monthly Income and Daily Income exceeds 32 interviewees, because some gave their income in more than two forms.

Note: In many cases, it was not clear whether the data included tax or not or whether the data with tax or after tax was given. In the latter, the necessary data was estimated wherever possible.

As for monthly and daily income, some seem to include overtime pay, travel allowances and/or bonuses and some do not.

wages which fall into the lowest class “up to ¥1.25 million” are part-time workers’. This means that all part-time worker’s wages are ¥1,200,000/year, ¥120,000/month and ¥600/hour or less with some exceptions. These exceptions are, for example, two part-time workers in Table 23 who earn ¥2,500,000 and public employees. The maximum wages of part-time workers are ¥2,500,000/year, ¥150,000/month and ¥700/hour.

## 2. Distribution of Itemized “Problems and Difficulties”

Most full-time worker’s complaints concern Working Hours, followed by Job Content and Human Relations. About 70 percent, 65 percent and 50 percent respectively of all female full-time workers mention these. Three or four people out of 17 express their dissatisfaction and anger with Bosses, Discrimination, Family, Safety & Health, Wages/Expenditures, Children, and Future of Company/Layoffs & Bankruptcy. No female full-time workers refer to Automobiles & Others, Evaluation, Commuting, Inexperience/Incompetence, Housing, Turnover/Independence, and Men & Women/Marriage and others. The remaining items were referred to by one or two interviewees respectively.

As far as part-time workers are concerned, complaints about Wages/Expenditures are



Table 24: Distribution of Itemized “Problems and Difficulties”  
(Female, Over 30 years of age)<sup>1)</sup>

	Full-time		Part-time	
Total	17	100.0%	15	100.0%
A Automobiles & Others	0	0.0	2	13.3
B Bosses(including human relations)	4	23.5	2	13.3
C Customers	2	11.8	0	0.0
D Discrimination, complex	4	23.5	2	13.3
E Evaluation	0	0.0	0	0.0
F Family, family life	4	23.5	6	40.0
G Geography [Commuting]	0	0.0	1	6.7
H (Working) Hours	12	70.6	5	33.3
I Inexperience, incompetence	0	0.0	0	0.0
J Job content	11	64.7	2	13.3
K Kids [Children]	3	17.6	0	0.0
L Living [Housing]	0	0.0	0	0.0
M Management [Future of company/layoffs & bankruptcy]	3	17.6	4	26.7
N <i>Ningen-kankei</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere	8	47.1	5	33.3
O (Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions	2	11.8	5	33.3
P Promotion, transfer	1	5.9	1	6.7
Q Questions on life & work	1	5.9	1	6.7
R Retirement	1	5.9	1	6.7
S Safety & health, work environment	4	23.5	5	33.3
T Turnover, independence & self-employment	0	0.0	0	0.0
U (Labor) Unions, labor relations	1	5.9	3	20.0
V Voice [Participation]	1	5.9	0	0.0
W Wages/expenditures	4	23.5	9	60.0
X Sex [Men & women/marriage and other personal concerns]	0	0.0	0	0.0
(Y Yes [Satisfaction]	—	—	—	—)
Z [Community, Society]	1	5.9	1	6.7

1) Includes three married cases in the 26-30-year-old group.

Note: The total numbers 67 cases for full-time workers and 55 for part-time workers. The same “problem and difficulty” may be counted for more than one item, and different “problems and difficulties” are counted as one case as far as they belong to the same item.

the most common, or made by 60 percent, and those about Family are the second (40 percent). A third of part-time workers say that they have “problems and difficulties” on Working Hours, Human Relations, Fringe Benefits and Others, and Safety & Health. A fourth or fifth mention Future of Company/Layoffs & Bankruptcy, and Labor Unions. All others are referred to by one or two interviewees or none. (See Table 24)

### 3. The Content of “Problems and Difficulties”

Females’ “problems and difficulties” include both (i) those in common with males, which we discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, and (ii) those unique to females. The latter includes both those (i) common with 18-20-year-females, which we discussed in Section III, and (ii) unique to 26-year-old and older females.

Most “problems and difficulties” are shared with male workers in the items of working hours, wages, fringe benefits, occupational safety and health, job content, customers, human relations, bosses and others. On the other hand, many “problems and difficulties” are unique to female workers in the items of discrimination, family, children and others. “Problems and difficulties” on wages, fringe benefits, job content and others are unique to females if they are linked with sex discrimination.

It is best to discuss “problems and difficulties” in three subgroups, that is, professional and technical workers, other regular workers in private corporations and non-regular workers such as part-time workers and post-retirement workers. Because of the small sample number of women over 30, however, we are going to group them into two instead, that is, full time workers and part time workers.

#### A. Full-time Workers

##### (1) Working Hours

The greatest number of “problems and difficulties” regard working hours as in all male groups. “Too much overtime work,” “You can’t refuse it,” and “no overtime pay.” Workers “often have to take [their] work home.” School teachers, clerical workers in private corporations and others do this.

Live-in workers work from early morning till late at night, and a saleswoman at a station stall of a major private railway company does the same. “I must get up at four and work till nine in the evening,” although she works every other day.

Some workers do not get breaks at all, or if they are permitted to take them, they cannot find time to do so. “Breaks are too short. A twenty minute lunch time+coffee time only.” “You can’t get a regular spell.” “I’m bound all day long. I can’t leave my desk even at lunch time,”

“We can’t take holidays nor vacations.” “If I take days off, fellow workers get weighed down . . . . So, I hesitate to take days off.” “We have fewer and fewer people . . . . I’m afraid I can’t be absent even when I’m sick.” Already today some workers “can’t be absent even when you feel sick.” Nurses have night shifts and Sunday work.

##### (2) Wages and Fringe Benefits

As male workers of all age groups do, female workers also complain that their wages and salaries are “low”. Objectively speaking, their wages are even lower than those of man as seen on pp.78 & 80. “The allowance amount is small.” Sometimes penalties are imposed on

their wages depending on their work achievement. A worker is enraged, "The lower your rank is, the cheaper your wage is and the longer your working hours are. Your pay after tax is less than those of part-time or student workers."

Women also have complaints of fringe benefits. There are no messrooms and "you have to take lunch with you every day." "There are no welfare facilities at all." "As the company only has us participate in General National Health Insurance [*kokumin kenkō hoken*]<sup>1)</sup>, we have no income guarantee when absent. We feel insecure and can't be absent even when we are sick."

### (3) Safety & Health

Health conditions for women workers and the companies' measures for them are not necessarily good, either. "You are standing all day long," and "become very tired in legs and loins." In contrast, "as you are sitting all day long, you have stiff shoulders and are underexercised." A cook at a school lunch cooking center already has "back pain and tendovaginitis." The complaint described above that "you can't be absent even when you feel sick" is bad enough, but here is an additional complaint that "you aren't allowed to go home even when you feel sick."

### (4) Job Content

"Problems and difficulties" on the content of work here are classified into two. One comes from the nature of the job. For example, Work may be "a physically heavy labor," "24 hour binding," "complex," or "study-demanding" because of "frequent regulation changes" or from new technology introduction. The other is the anxiety of the teacher's group for better performance as professionals. For example: "I can't understand recent pupils' life attitude." "Children are particular about food." "I don't know how to deal with children who don't attend." "You have too many pupils to supervise and some kids drop out." "We have little communication with parents." "The city regards a nursery school only as a baby sitter. While the principal is the superintendent of education in the city government, he refuses to accept and pass on our demands to the city." "I'm against revision of the 6-3 school system proposed by a Special Educational Council, revision of the Constitution, unequal educational opportunities for children and sending children into battlefields." A clerical employee working for a university is interested in "student employment, and temperament."

### (5) Human Relations, Bosses and Customers

Human relations at work are "not necessarily smooth." There are "uncooperative colleagues," and "people who always complain." "A few teachers do what we are teaching our pupils not to do," which corrupts the school discipline. "I get mad at my colleagues. They are not conscious of their duties, are egoistic but only excuse themselves. This is one cause of the present junior high desolation." "Some workers take days off without concern with we are busy." "Some people make a fool of themselves who are present even when sick." "When asked to do night shift replacement by seniors, I try not to refuse it. . . . since I'm a newcomer."

"Problems and difficulties" of human relations are basically the same as those of male workers, but seem to be more trouble-some here with female workers. At the offices and shops where "only women" or "mainly women" work, "People speak against each other," "You always have small troubles," "Fights and quarrels are constant," and "Some factions are opposed to each other." These were also described with young female workers in Section III.

"My boss' nature and mine are different. We can't get along with each other." "The president is so selfish that he forces work on us." "The boss loses his temper depending on his mood." "I really get angry if the boss berates me while I know I made the mistake."

"I have to care about customers"—to care about customers itself is a tough job. Some customers are "too self-centered," or "too unpleasant."

#### (6) Promotion/Transfer and Future of Company/Layoffs/Bankruptcy

"Not only male but also female workers are transferred every other year." "It's not easy to get accustomed to the new area," and "The family has to move together and children have to change their schools,"

The anxiety of employment insecurity is widespread. A maternity leave substitute teacher naturally "changes her school every year," and also has "to worry about job opportunities for next year." Regular workers also may experience layoffs if the organizations they belong to go into a slump. Seeing her colleagues leave one by one, a private high school teacher expresses her real feelings as follows:

It makes me very sad to see colleagues leave who have worked together for many years. Although I successfully survived the layoffs, the fact is that I did so at the expense of my colleagues. I can't put into words the pain of that time and the hollowness lasting till today. (50 years old; 8424608)

This has something to do with the problem of how to live life as a human being. Public employees are not necessarily on safe ground. The wave of administrative reform and privatization rolls in upon a teacher of a city nursery school. She has been forced to choose one of two: "Giving up the profession of a nursery teacher to keep the position of a civil servant," or "giving up the position of a civil servant to stay in the profession by continuing with the private nursery school to be privatized and receive much lower pay."

#### (7) Labor Unions and Discrimination

These "problems and difficulties" in subsections (1) through (6) are all nearly the same as those written in detail about male workers, except some human relations complaints.

There are two additional "problems and difficulties" which are common with men and women. They have, however, not appeared in the description so far. One is a case of apparent unfair labor practice, and the other is a case showing the emptiness of a non-regular worker. A 48-year-old female salesworker at a drug store with 50 employees laments:

If you are a union member, you can never be hired, and if you join a labor union, you must quit

the company, because it's inconvenient for managers (to have them).

A 50-year-old substitute teacher, a non-regular worker, confesses her "feeling of something missing," which comes from the fact that she "[has] not passed the regular teacher's license exam. She cannot wipe out the inferiority in her mind.

Sex discrimination is of course unique to female workers. The discrimination is reflected in the items of "job content," and "participation" as well as wages and other labor conditions. Because of being a woman, "You are forced to do something extra," such as "washing towels for the rest room." If women say something, "You are not listened to, and are later backbitten, when they say 'While only a woman,' or 'only a non-regular employee.'" These largely overlap with "problems and difficulties" of young females which were described in Section III.

#### (8) Family and Children

"Problems and difficulties" of the conflict between work and housekeeping and those of children are only found with females and in this age group. This comes from the fact that the domestic role structure has not changed much yet in Japan although Japanese women have recently started working outside the home. A fourth of female interviewees except for the part-time workers below refer to and are worried about "problems and difficulties" of the compatibility between the job and housework. "Women can't take a rest and relax unlike men after returning home." A nurse who has "night and Sunday shifts" says, "The family can't eat meals together. I prepare meals for the family before going to the hospital." And she gives her family a signal for help, "Lend a hand. Be more cooperative." A high school teacher also says, "I couldn't continue my work without my family's assistance." A 43-year-old kindergarten head teacher and farmer says, "The work comes first and the family suffers," and "It's impossible to reconcile (work) duty and housework completely." "We are badly off," and "Sometimes we have family arguments over trifles and human relations become bad."

Worries about children are many. Female workers, who are going to have children in the near future, poses serious problems. "The company doesn't have the program of nursing leave." "If you have a baby and take leave for a year, you can't return to the previous job and are transferred to the production department. Women can't have a lifetime career." This is also a problem of sex discrimination. Workers who have children are worried about their discipline, health and future: A woman who is working while leaving her child with his grandmother says, "Children perceive the differences between mother's teaching and grandmother's teaching." Another whose first son is overweight worries, "I wonder if he'll develop an adult disease." One says, "We have to cut down our living expenses for the education of our children." Another says, "I'm working for the daughter who goes to college. My husband's income is not sufficient to send her to college."

#### B. Part-time Workers

Not much is different from full-time workers in many items, but at the same time, there are

some "problems and difficulties" which are unique to part-time workers. (i) The threat of layoffs and (ii) the discrimination against and the difference from full-time workers are typical of this case.

### (1) Working Hours

"The work 'breaks' is too short." "I can't take days off." "I can seldom be absent, because we work on an assembly line and if a worker takes holiday, others have to make up for her work." And "You are forced to work on off -day, too. No alternative holidays are given." These are the exact copies of full-time workers' complaints. The last comment by part-time workers, however, bears a different meaning from full-time workers. Most part-time workers have chosen to be part-time because they can't and don't want to work full-time because of housekeeping and childcare. Nevertheless, many part-time workers are forced to work "nearly as long as full-time workers," on off-days, and even overtime although no interviewees of our research referred to the later. Commuting hours of part-time workers are generally very short, but for some they "are one hour each way." "I'm exhausted when I go home."

Management tries to control part-time workers' attendance utilizing their insecure position in employment (see below), which makes workplaces wild in combination with human relations with colleagues, or makes human relations rough inciting competition among workers.

They put up a bar graph on the wall and if you are absent, they draw it on it, and discharge workers who take most days off . . . . Some people say unpleasant things to you on purpose and speak ill of you . . . . We work on an ssembly line and have to do extra work if someone is absent . . . While they take days off saying they are just tired, they attack you if you do the same because of a parents meeting at school and for a child's sickness. I had to take days off when my husband was in hospital. It was counted in the same way. It's different from others, isn't it? The plant manager pays no regard to it. He is inhumane. (46 years old production worker in sound appliance parts; 8424610)

### (2) Wages and Fringe Benefits

Part-time workers are expected to have little dissatisfaction with wages. For wages are the core information in wants-ads, and workers know the exact amount when they sign the contract. Nevertheless, it is on wages that part-time workers raise most "problems and difficulties". Two thirds of interviewees do.

"Compared with commodity prices," or "compared with the amount of work," wages are "cheap." These complaints are the same as full-time workers. Many are, however, "problems and difficulties" about the unfairness and difference compared with regular workers. "The name of part-time workers makes wages cheap," while "we are doing exactly the same work," and "working hours aren't different." "The difference between regular workers and us is enormous. In their early 20s they earn four times as much as us. Our wages are lower than young girls'."

"We don't have any bonuses." If any, they are some "¥50,000" at most. "While I've been

working for nearly ten years. . . . Female employees just above 20 get more than ¥200,000."

Other part-time workers get angry comparing their wages not with regular workers, but with student workers. "Compared with young students," "the (hourly) rate is low."

It is not only wages and bonuses that are different from regular workers. "Part-time workers are not insured by the National Employee's Pension," or "by social insurances." "Compared with regular workers the gap of various guarantees are large." Therefore, "I want to become a regular employee," says a part-time worker. She "was only re-hired as a part-time employee after she quit for some reason."

Two additional complaints are heard of wages and fringe benefits and other labor conditions. One is the complaint that "you have to pay for the laundry of working uniforms yourself." The other involves a legal issue. Wages actually paid "are different from the contract which stipulates a wage increase once a year, and ¥100,000 or more for a bonus." Neither problems are unique in nature to part-time workers, but particularly the latter is often heard in reference to part-time workers.

### (3) Safety & Health

Part-time workers are not necessarily engaged in physically light jobs. A third of them complain of some kinds of occupational diseases or their prodromes, for instance, eyestrain, chapped hands, and cold and painful legs and loins. A part-time worker working on a conveyor belt says, "It's very tough on shoulders and the waist repeating exactly the same motion." Part-time workers at hamburger shops and supermarkets say, "As I stand all day long," "I feel pain at in legs and waist. . . . I'm worried about my health," or "The air conditioning makes me cold and my hands are getting rough. . . . They tell hard on me. I'm already old."

### (4) Human Relations and Bosses

In terms of human relations and bosses, the story is basically the same as regular workers. "I don't take easily to my colleagues." "A few people won't lend a hand when the others are sweeping." "People assert themselves and slander each other." Remember the case cited above of an electrical parts manufacturing company.(p.86) Co-workers try to frustrate each other. It's not pleasant "to have a younger boss," and "I feel offended when a head office staff member of the same age gives me a warning." "You have to care about senior people because the company is very seniority-oriented." Here, however, the discrimination due to being part-time surfaces again. "I feel like I'm being slighted since I'm only part-time" "by young clerical girls who are regular employees." It's extremely uncomfortable.

There are constant "struggles between the shop manager and part-time and student workers." According to a part-time worker, "the owner's love of money and the manager's effort to take advantage of it" are the causes. "More than 30 people quit" within two years.

### (5) Future of Company/Layoffs/Bankruptcy

Uncertainty of employment itself may be the biggest problem which is perceived throughout part-time worker's case records. "I always feel uncertainty over whether the two

month contract will be renewed or not. I can't complain about anything." (A toy manufacturing company) "Since we don't have a (labor) union, . . . [i]t can't be helped if we are laid off." (An agricultural cooperative association store worker) "I feel insecure because of no job guarantee." (A cheese plant) "How long can I stay with this job? It's impossible to move to another job." (A supermarket employee) "The company will go bankrupt unless we have more customers, . . . It's hard to find a new job." (A saleswomen)

A 53-year-old part-time worker who works for the Tokyo Special Ward Horse Recing Association talks about the recent situation in her office. She has been working there as a part-time worker for more than ten years.

The economy is slow and people's interests are diverse. Young people especially are indifferent to gambling. Old time customers have been leaving. Fewer customers have caused our low wages, . . . Now the (compulsory) retirement age has been lowered. We have no financial guarantee after retirement nor the National Employee's Pension, . . . Now you can find our people all over the country, . . . You know older people who have been tapped on their shoulder [*katataki*]<sup>3)</sup> in the order of age. And you may be transferred to another office regardless of your aptitude. I hope I can work more, . . . because I'm anxious about my life after retirement. (8425102)

#### (6) Discrimination, Questions on Life & Work, and Labor Unions

Wages, fringe benefits, employment guarantee and others, . . . (pp.86-88) "In all aspects there is a difference from regular employees. The weakest people are working most." "I'm not sure if (the present job) is the place where I can make the most of my ability, . . . I can't find any worth in the job."

These conditions may lead part-time to become interested in a labor union or collective action.<sup>(3)</sup> Only a few unions consist of or accept part-time workers in their organizations in Japan. The above part-time worker of the Tokyo Special Ward Horse Racing Association says, "The union is weak. It's a woman's office and they don't unite. The union leaders have become old." A cashier of an Agricultural Cooperative Association store feels insecure, "Because of no unions, you can't expect a wage increase nor be helped whenever laid off." A part-time worker of a leading supermarket complains, "I appealed to other part-time workers to collectively tell our complaints to a boss, but they didn't respond. He doesn't listen to us if only a few raise a voice." It is interesting to note that all of these three workers are working in shops where full-time regular workers have labor unions.

#### (7) Family and Children

Half the interviewed part-time workers refer to "problems and difficulties" of the conflict between the job and housework and childcare, which is common to full-time workers mentioned in the preceding subsection. "It's difficult to reconcile the job and housekeeping." "Little time is left for housework." "It's hard to do household duties after returning home exhausted." "My children are all boys. So they don't help me with keeping house." "I wish my family would help me more." "Women can't be absent so easily either, even if a child gets sick." "I feel guilty of not being able to take care of my children as a mother. I wish I could say hello to them when they come home." Thinking of "the conflict between the job and



housework," a part-time worker gives up the idea of becoming a regular employee. "It's impossible."

Why then are they working under such unfavorable conditions and disadvantages? "To help family finances," "For leisure activities" and others are always major reasons mentioned in many surveys and researches. Here in our research, however, two other reasons are posed, that is, "As I'm worried about my retirement" and "As my husband's (carpenter) earnings are not stable."

As far as "problems and difficulties" regarding community are concerned, only one interviewee refers to "the lack of a sewer system."

- 1) It is illegal. The employed are supposed to be part of Employee Health Insurance, whose benefits tend to be better than the General National Health Insurance.
- 2) The national government appointed a Special Educational Council to review today's educational system after World War II. The 6-3 school system means a 6-year-elementary school and a 3-year-junior high school, which constitute the present Japanese compulsory education.
- 3) *Kata* means a shoulder and *tataki* means tapping. Companies informally urge and press older employees to quit before their retirement age usually with some incentives. It is not a compulsory layoff or discharge but workers know of the result when they refuse it—the transfer to an undesirable location or position. Workers usually know how to behave.

## VII SUMMARY

Too much has been discussed on "Japanese workers," "Japanese employment systems," and even "Japanese culture," but what would abstract discussions mean if not based on such workers as portrayed here, who are never exceptional but constitute the great majority of today's Japanese workers? At any rate, workers in contemporary Japan live daily with these many "troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situation, etc."<sup>1)</sup>

Table 25 is the list of "problems and difficulties" which were raised in preceding sections.

These all will be further summarized here in two ways: (i) To combine those descriptions by sex and age group into one, and (ii) to examine the mutual relationships of the 25 items.

### 1. Problems and Difficulties

Table 26 is the distribution of "problems and difficulties" by sex and age group, and Figure 4 is its graph. Because of the research method we adopted, the numbers and percentage figures do not have statistical meaning<sup>2)</sup> as we discussed at the beginning of this paper but will be used as a guide stick to review these "problems and difficulties here".

"Problems and difficulties" raised by interviewees total 1,086, which is approximately 4 per capita. The number is, however, below 3 for male workers above 41 years of age and nearly 5 for workers between 18 and 20 years of age. This difference should be noted when reading Table 26 and Figure 4.

#### (1) Working Hours (+ Commuting)

The largest dissatisfaction is with working hours. It is largely irrespective of sex and age. Half of all interviewees refer to this item, as do two thirds of male workers in their teens (18–20 years of age, which will hereafter be referred to as teens) through 30s (31–40 years of age, which will hereafter be referred to as 30s) and female full-time workers above their 30s. The dissatisfaction ranges from chronic overtime work, long working hours, irregular or few breaks, holidays and vacations, and the shift work widely spread not only in manufacturing industries but also in various service industries, to their influence upon health and family and social lives. Quite a few cases violate the Labour Standard Act. Workers in and around Tokyo have an additional problem of commuting, that is, long commuting hours and crowded trains.

Characteristically noticeable among our research subjects are the bad working hours of young managers in the food industry and in convenience stores. They bear a great strain under the recent companies' policy to minimize regular workers. The same is observed in large manufacturing plants.

#### (2) Wages (+ Automobiles) and Job Content

The second largest dissatisfaction is with wages/salaries and job content.

	Young Workers (18-29 Years of Age; Male and Female)	Male Thirties (31-40 Years of Age)	Middle Aged & Older Workers (Over 40 Years of Age; Male)	Full-time Workers Female (Over 30 Years of Age)	Part-time Workers
P Promotion/ P Transfer	Discrimination by education in promotion Aspiration for promotion in future Aspiration for promotion to prepare, competition to take them. (etc.)	Delay or lack of promotion (including in single-employer shops) Anxiety about the future Anxiety about promotion in promotion Don't want to be promoted (because of no wage differential)	Discrimination by education in promotion Frustration upon supervisors for consideration of salary goals Stress because of transfers Transfers to remote areas (leaving family behind) [health- care] Transfers to remote areas (leaving family behind) [health- care] Adjustment to a new firm Transfers to unpopular posts before retirement	Transfers to new areas—Influence on families	Uncertainty of employment Short contract period Cannot say anything Daily feeling within colleagues are laid off Choice between being a civil servant and being a professional (a maverick school teacher)
M/Pure of Company (Unemployment/ Bankruptcy)	Decline of business/Poor business Bankruptcy because of clients' bankruptcy	How to increase sales/profit or eliminate waste Few responses to ads for recruits Competition with other firms Not good employees Management's consideration only of profits How to deal with business	Security of unpopared and orders Fearful of bankruptcy/unemployment Influence of privatization Transfers to unpopular posts before retirement	Employment insecurity (esp. non-regular workers) Layoffs in a business slump Daily feeling within colleagues are laid off Choice between being a civil servant and being a professional (a maverick school teacher)	Short contract period Cannot say anything Daily feeling within colleagues are laid off Choice between being a civil servant and being a professional (a maverick school teacher)
T Turnover/ Self-employment	Good orientation towards changing jobs Working conditions, boring work, poor labor conditions, low pay, no promotion opportunity, (etc.) Want to change for better job/desirable job To take over father's business or not	Want to run own shop/partnership/companies Difficulties to start independent Want to change job	Low retirement age—Children's education No corporate pension Little retirement allowance Worry about the future of Social Security Gap between before and after retirement Effect of low income on family life Forced "voluntary" retirement in early ages Loss of social life (retirement)	Employment insecurity (esp. non-regular workers) Layoffs in a business slump Daily feeling within colleagues are laid off Choice between being a civil servant and being a professional (a maverick school teacher)	Short contract period Cannot say anything Daily feeling within colleagues are laid off Choice between being a civil servant and being a professional (a maverick school teacher)
R Retirement	Business comes down to lower ranks/shop levels because of no unions	Little distribution of profits to workers—determination to be a union activist	Low retirement age—Children's education No corporate pension Little retirement allowance Worry about the future of Social Security Gap between before and after retirement Effect of low income on family life Forced "voluntary" retirement in early ages Loss of social life (retirement)	Unfair labor practice (yellow dog contract)	Work hour unions Old leaders No unions Insecurity of employment
L Labor	[Discrimination by education] Report not to have graduated from higher schools Agency against college graduates High graduates vs. St. high graduates/St. high graduates vs. college graduates [Discrimination by sex] Content of work/old job, unimportant work, no decision making Discrimination in wages/training Retirement at young ages Partial treatment by men depending on being beautiful/prety or not Central workers vs. system engineers Discrimination by local background (language/accents)	Yearn for higher education Contempt by college graduates Discrimination in promotion/wages/job Attendance at night schools Presence/Promotion in family/community lives Serving tea/Cleaning offices and desks/Cleaning messrooms and toilets Must go to office early for cleaning etc. Lack of respect from men Restriction because of women Cannot say "no"/Must say "yes"	Discrimination by education in promotion The wife had to quit a worker get director	Discrimination by sex in job content/participation/wages and other labor conditions Boring work/ washing towels for rest room Poor pay/low wages Lack of respect from men Restriction because of women Cannot say "no"/Must say "yes"	Work hour unions Old leaders No unions Insecurity of employment
Q Questions Work & Life	Work is not interesting No hope in the future No goal/purpose in life and work Feeling of indifference/life after work	Is it OK for myself to be as I am (Simple, repetitive work, dead to working hours) Feeling as if "only I am left behind" Feeling unwell, without a clear view of the situation yet	Do I have any subjectivity?	Discrimination against non-regular workers Feeling of something missing/intensity (nonregular workers)	Difference from regular workers in wages/fringe benefits/ employment guarantees In the present job suitable to me? Cannot find any worth in the job.
X Men & Women/ Marriage/Other Personal Concerns	[Men & Women/Interests] No girls/boys at workplaces No girls/boys friends No little time for dating [Other personal concerns] Want from friends Troubles with looks/weight/fashion Lack of physical exercises	Strong anxiety for marriage Expenses on sex treatment No time to see/segment with women Few unmarried women in a workplace	No interest outside work	Conflict/Competibility between work and housekeeping No time for dating No time to see/segment with women Few unmarried women in a workplace	Conflict between job and housework and childcare No time for dating No time to see/segment with women Few unmarried women in a workplace
K Family/ Family Life	[Living with parents] Living with parents Hiring/Sharehouse/Unemployment of family members Troubling families because of overtime/salt/very morning work [Living alone] Boring/desolate No sex on No sex on in dormitories/e.g. night dining time Little chance to see families Parents want to live together vs. workers want to live in Parents' officially weakening health	[Family] No time to talk with family Lack of communication Degrade of man's status because of wife's working Living together with parents [Children] No conversation with children Financial anxiety about children's college education Anxiety of children's educational debt-and-dumb works	No time with families/forry about families Living separately from families because of the nature of work/ Wife's work—neglected household duties/impaired harmony Competed with brothers/nephews in career success [Children] Little time with children Financial anxiety about children's college education A physically handicapped son/daughters and his brother's future	No nursing leaves Transfer to production work from clerical work after one year No lifetime career possible Worry about children's discipline/health/future Financial anxiety about children's college education Effect of education expenses on other living expenses	Guilt feeling of not being able to take care of children as a mother Cannot say hello to children when they come home
L Housing	Small houses/No rooms for own/No privacy/Interference by family Brother's family lives together Much cost to live in a new house Desire to commute from home Bored on families	Small in space Far from a station Desire to own a house Burden of housing loan repayment A transfer just after purchasing a house (payment of rent and tax)	Cannot buy a house Cannot sell a house Moving because of street replanning	Long commuting hours Far from a station Moving because of street replanning	Long commuting hours Far from a station
C Commuting	Desire to commute from home Bored on families	Long commuting hours Far from a station Moving because of street replanning	Long commuting hours Far from a station Moving because of street replanning	Long commuting hours Far from a station	
Z Community	High taxes/medical expenses Government's economic policies Youngsters' suicides African refugees	10% deductible of National Health Insurance Public morality/e.g. drinks on street World War II/Social, political news	Neighbors Day-and-night sign broadcasting and social education programs (dumb works)	Neighbors Day-and-night sign broadcasting and social education programs (dumb works)	Lack of a sewer system

Note: A: Antagonism; O: Other material wants; Q: Fringe benefits; Other: labor conditions; E: Evaluation; U: Labor unions; Labor relations

Table 25: The List of 'Problems and Difficulties' of Japanese Workers

	Young Workers (18-20 Years of Age, Male and Female)	Male Thirties (31-40 Years of Age)	Middle-Aged & Older Workers (Over 40 Years of Age, Male)	Full-time Workers	Female (Over 30 Years of Age)	Part-time Workers	
<b>H Working Hours</b>	<p>[Work breaks] No Little/regular "breaks"/lunch time</p> <p>[Holiday/Weekends] Only for recovery from fatigue No fixed off-days/contracting firms Cannot take holiday/vacations Yearly vacations in a busy/summer weather. No fixed off-days/contracting firms Night shift labor/Night duty Irregular working hours Influence on personal, family, social life and health</p>	<p>No free use of lunch time</p> <p>Year 5 day work week Sunday/Holiday workers, with a short notice No/Few personal paid holiday/vacation days Cannot be absent when sick Company-sponsored activities out working hours Shift system, esp. rotating one Absence of the concept of certain working hours</p>	<p>Long working hours/overtime Late night work/Early morning work</p> <p>No breaks Missing lunch Sundays are not off. Cannot take a day off.</p> <p>Shift work/Night work/Early shift Irregular work</p> <p>Too many business trips Influence on personal and family life/Incl. on children</p>	<p>Short work "breaks" Cannot eat lunch without haste because of a short lunch time No regular holiday/weekly days off Work on Sundays depending on the convenience of a parent Company sponsored activities when sick Cannot go to doctors even when sick Night work/Shift work Influence on family life and children</p>	<p>No/Little breaks No/Short lunch time Cannot take holiday/vacations. Cannot be absent even when sick. Night shift/Sunday work</p>	<p>Too much overtime work Take work home. Cannot refuse overtime work. Work from early morning to late at night/In-house workers (all-day workers)</p>	<p>Little work "breaks" Off-day work/No alternative holidays Cannot take days off. Management's attendance control utilizing insecure positions</p>
<b>W Wages &amp; Salary</b>	<p>Low wages/salaries Cannot afford to eat out and shop meals. Experiences for car/collage Support of parents/brothers and sisters No/insufficient allowances &amp; for night shift Sexual discrimination in amount and increase</p>	<p>Cannot be independent of parents. Low/Low wages Credibility because of a higher high graduate University of wage (paymentally worked) Insecurity of wages among workers' groups &amp; regular workers vs. student workers</p>	<p>Low wages/salaries compared with the work Able to buy vegetables (late-retirement workers) High living cost/expense Expenses for children's education/holiday/leaves/parents support/reading &amp; cultural activities High taxes</p>	<p>No wage raises No welfare facilities No income guarantees when absent</p>	<p>Low wages/salaries Cannot afford to eat out and shop meals. Experiences for car/collage Support of parents/brothers and sisters No/insufficient allowances &amp; for night shift Sexual discrimination in amount and increase</p>	<p>Low wages compared with commodity prices/work Experiences for car/collage Experiences for uniform laundry Wage increase/bonus different from contracts</p>	<p>No Social Security and other social insurances Reemployed only as a part-timer Wage increase/bonus different from contracts</p>
<b>O-Practices /Others</b>	<p>No/Few company meals No/insufficient company housing Too many company events/recreational activities Work during training period before employment Body check/volunteer (score)</p>	<p>No/Few reading rooms/social rooms/parking lots No/insufficient company housing Differences between contracted work and actual work Attest/Support of certain political parties by management in morning meetings</p>	<p>Very few drinks in shop during breaks Check-off management insurance premiums during training period with partial pay</p>	<p>No wage raises No welfare facilities No income guarantees when absent</p>	<p>No Social Security and other social insurances Reemployed only as a part-timer Wage increase/bonus different from contracts</p>	<p>Five meals Cold and painful leg and joints Assembly line work—rough on shoulders/waist Assembly line work—Cold, rough hands At work—</p>	<p>Five meals Cold and painful leg and joints Assembly line work—rough on shoulders/waist Assembly line work—Cold, rough hands At work—</p>
<b>W Safety &amp; Health</b>	<p>Work environment &amp; dust, no/little sunlight, humidity, less ventilation, concrete, leeches, rats No/insufficient company housing Death/fatigue/Depression &amp; physical/fatigue Worry about possible occupational accidents/diseases Assault by boss Quit due to occupational injury</p>	<p>Effect of the content of work, overtime/long/irregular work hours, shift work, human relations, customers, etc. Slight pain, back pain, neck pain, eye strain, itchy hands, broken skin, joint pain, back pain, stomach disorder Medical treatment of occupational injury not by workers' compensation but health insurance</p>	<p>Strain/Weak sight Soreness and bowel disorder Cold feet and joints Stomach/Strain all day long Pain at work Mental &amp; physical exhaustion Hot temperature</p>	<p>Straining/Sitting all day long Slight shoulder pains Slight back pain Underwear and trousers/shorts Cannot be allowed to go home when sick.</p>	<p>Straining/Sitting all day long Slight shoulder pains Slight back pain Underwear and trousers/shorts Cannot be allowed to go home when sick.</p>	<p>Straining/Sitting all day long Slight shoulder pains Slight back pain Underwear and trousers/shorts Cannot be allowed to go home when sick.</p>	<p>Straining/Sitting all day long Slight shoulder pains Slight back pain Underwear and trousers/shorts Cannot be allowed to go home when sick.</p>
<b>J Job Content</b>	<p>[Laborer status of the job] Too hot/Cold/standing/standing all day long No time for relaxation No time for clients Feeling the heat of life or death/Injury Constant career and job [Job responsibility] Supervision of veteran part-time/graduate/older workers Cannot refuse responsibility well Conflicts among sections/job classifications Poor communication Unequal volume of assigned work Assembly line work Too busy job/Understaffing Unimportant/odd/one-off jobs Burdens due to personal retraining No assistance by seniors Layoff or harder work Shiny at home</p>	<p>Traffic jam during work hours Works requiring concentration Telling lies for business sake Knowing secrets on work Treatment of the seriously injured Attention to sanitation/safety Heavy responsibility Disagreement with management's policies Different treatment of clients among workers/job classifications Mentorship/Mentee/Parity work Alertness Not interesting job Holding others Office automation/Reduction of manpower Necessary of training Keeping up with technology development Management doesn't listen to</p>	<p>Working in vehicle: Re-doing because of the party's course Simple, repetitive and monotonous work Burden on regular workers/lower managers because of no or few other regular workers Unfairable quota Too busy/Too hard Burdens because of fellow workers' absence Attention Office automation/Reduction of manpower Necessary of training Keeping up with technology development Management doesn't listen to</p>	<p>Physically heavy labor 24-hour standing work Complex work Semi-demanding work</p>	<p>Physically heavy labor 24-hour standing work Complex work Semi-demanding work</p>	<p>Physically heavy labor 24-hour standing work Complex work Semi-demanding work</p>	<p>Physically heavy labor 24-hour standing work Complex work Semi-demanding work</p>
<b>A V-P</b>	<p>No say allowed/No voice raised No freedom of speech</p>	<p>No recognition of work and effort by anyone Dismissing colleagues Job segregation Troubles with seniors at dormitories</p>	<p>Management's lack of understanding or refusal of proposals/ideas (including those depending on needs) No recognition of efforts by management Too much salary because of father</p>	<p>Not enough work assignment No say in decision making Fixed input/proposal quota</p>	<p>Not enough work assignment No say in decision making Fixed input/proposal quota</p>	<p>Not enough work assignment No say in decision making Fixed input/proposal quota</p>	<p>Not enough work assignment No say in decision making Fixed input/proposal quota</p>
<b>N Human Relations</b>	<p>Frictionation Hating by seniors No/Few gifts/born/same generation Uncomfortable/Unpleasant, workplace atmosphere (thin human relations, speaking ill of others, low morale, no solidarity, relatives of the president, etc.)</p>	<p>Booses who poke their noses into everything, wreak their anger on subordinates, don't listen to others, are over-critical, or require 100% jobs. Nudging personally Influence of personality President's wife's appearance/interference Burdens due to personal retraining No appreciation of workers' overtime work Booses who go home while workers work overtime Vandalism for speed up/shut status Irresponsible bosses/Booses who take to the words Cannot criticize/disobey bosses and must get along well with them. Office love/sexual harassment</p>	<p>Booses who condemn for fulfilled quota Booses who have differentiating personal errands and bias. Managers who check time cards at midnight [Management's composition] Working late Mentoring young woman workers</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>
<b>B Bosses/Ranking</b>	<p>Dismissing bosses who talk improper things, speak ill of others, boast of experience, greets at parties, are incoherent but honest, are sloppy/responsible/impulsive, or do things that are not necessary Unclear instruction/Orders/Items/Items/Strict orders Unequal treatment Disagreement with boss's policies Bosses who do not listen to workers' opinions Bosses who do not keep up speed Blaming for mistakes which are not his fault By above due to boss' ranking Frustration/Obedience, otherwise revenge "Mid-career's" worries Family relations of bosses</p>	<p>Booses who poke their noses into everything, wreak their anger on subordinates, don't listen to others, are over-critical, or require 100% jobs. Nudging personally Influence of personality President's wife's appearance/interference Burdens due to personal retraining No appreciation of workers' overtime work Booses who go home while workers work overtime Vandalism for speed up/shut status Irresponsible bosses/Booses who take to the words Cannot criticize/disobey bosses and must get along well with them. Office love/sexual harassment</p>	<p>Booses who condemn for fulfilled quota Booses who have differentiating personal errands and bias. Managers who check time cards at midnight [Management's composition] Working late Mentoring young woman workers</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>	<p>Incompatible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Irresponsible/unqualified bosses Cannot say "No" to unreasonable instructions.</p>
<b>C Customers</b>	<p>Assuming customers Customers' complaints No appreciation by customers</p>	<p>Press/Incomprehensible/sexually harassing customers Entertainment/Socialization with customers</p>	<p>Customers who bring "problems and difficulties" esp. services Business clients who lag small details and take mean advantage Social drinks with sales</p>	<p>Customers who say whatever they want Must humble oneself before people from big companies</p>	<p>Customers who say whatever they want Must humble oneself before people from big companies</p>	<p>Customers who say whatever they want Must humble oneself before people from big companies</p>	<p>Customers who say whatever they want Must humble oneself before people from big companies</p>

Table 26: Distribution of Itemized "Problems and Difficulties" by Sex and Age Group

	18-20 years of age		31-40		41-		31-		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time	
Total	80 100.0% [341]	44 100.0% [210]	34 100.0% [146]	95 100.0% [268]	17 100.0% [67]	15 100.0% [55]	283 100.0% [1086]		
A Automobiles	3 3.8	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	2 13.3	5 1.8		
B Bosses (including human relations)	28 35.0	19 43.2	10 29.4	30 32.2	4 23.5	2 13.3	93 32.9		
C Customers	13 16.3	9 20.5	6 17.6	5 5.4	2 11.8	0 0.0	35 12.4		
D Discrimination, complex	15 18.8	15 34.1	2 5.9	6 6.5	4 23.5	2 13.3	44 15.5		
E Evaluation	1 1.3	1 2.3	2 5.9	4 4.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	8 2.8		
F Family, family life	19 23.8	9 20.5	6 17.6	16 17.2	4 23.5	6 40.0	60 21.2		
G Geography [Commuting]	4 5.0	7 15.9	2 5.9	6 6.5	0 0.0	1 6.7	20 7.1		
H (Working)Hours	53 66.3	22 50.0	20 58.8	24 25.8	12 70.6	5 33.3	136 48.0		
I Inexperience, incompetence	9 11.3	19 43.2	1 2.9	8 8.6	0 0.0	0 0.0	37 13.1		
J Job content	34 42.5	25 56.8	10 29.4	30 32.3	11 64.7	2 13.3	112 39.6		
K Kids [Children]	0 0.0	0 0.0	10 29.4	9 9.7	3 17.6	0 0.0	22 7.8		
L Living [Housing]	4 5.0	4 9.1	3 8.8	3 3.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	14 4.9		
M Management [Future of company, layoffs, bankruptcy]	4 5.0	0 0.0	8 23.5	10 10.8	3 17.6	4 26.7	29 10.2		
N <i>Ningen-kankai</i> [Human Relations] (excluding those with bosses), atmosphere	37 46.3	23 52.3	8 23.5	22 23.7	8 47.1	5 33.3	103 36.4		
O (Fringe benefits and) Other labor conditions	5 6.3	7 15.9	3 8.8	2 2.2	2 11.8	5 33.3	24 8.5		
P Promotion, transfer	9 11.3	3 6.8	4 11.8	18 19.4	1 5.9	1 6.7	36 12.7		
Q Questions on life & work	4 5.0	5 11.4	4 11.8	1 1.1	1 5.9	1 6.7	16 5.6		
R Retirement	0 0.0	0 0.0	3 8.8	16 17.2	1 5.9	1 6.7	21 7.4		
S Safety & health, work environment	21 26.3	8 18.2	5 14.7	12 12.9	4 23.5	5 33.3	55 19.4		
T Turnover, independence & self-employment	23 28.8	8 18.2	7 20.6	1 1.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	39 13.8		
U (Labor) Unions, labor relations	1 1.3	0 0.0	1 2.9	2 2.1	1 5.9	3 20.0	8 2.8		
V Voice [Participation]	6 7.5	0 0.0	2 5.9	3 3.3	1 5.9	0 0.0	12 4.2		
W Wages & salaries, expenditures	40 50.0	11 25.0	13 38.2	33 35.5	4 23.5	9 60.0	110 38.9		
X (Opposite) Sex [Men & women, marriage and other personal concerns]	13 16.3	12 27.3	4 11.8	1 1.1	0 0.0	0 0.0	30 10.6		
(Y Yes [Satisfaction]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Z [Community, Society]	4 5.0	3 6.8	2 5.9	5 5.4	1 5.9	1 6.7	16 5.7		
Per capita	[4.3]	[4.8]	[4.3]	[2.9]	[3.9]	[3.7]	[3.8]		

1) Includes 3 married cases between 26 and 30 years of age (1 part-time and 2 full-time workers).

Note: Numbers with [ ] are the total number of cases referred. The same "problem and difficulty", however, may be counted for more than one item, and different "problems and difficulties" are counted as one case as far as they belong to the same item.

Figure 4: "Problems and Difficulties" by Sex and Age Group  
(Male)

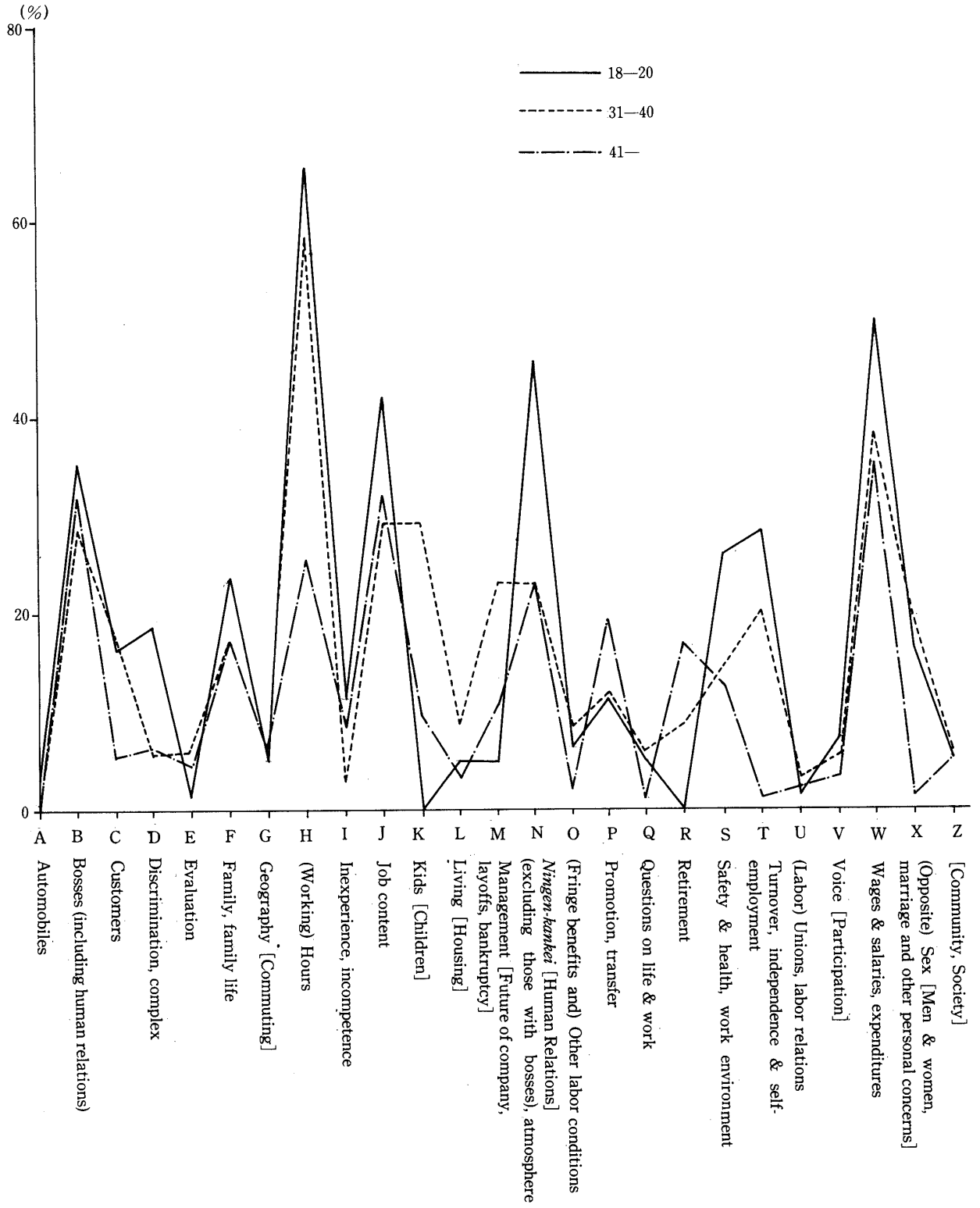
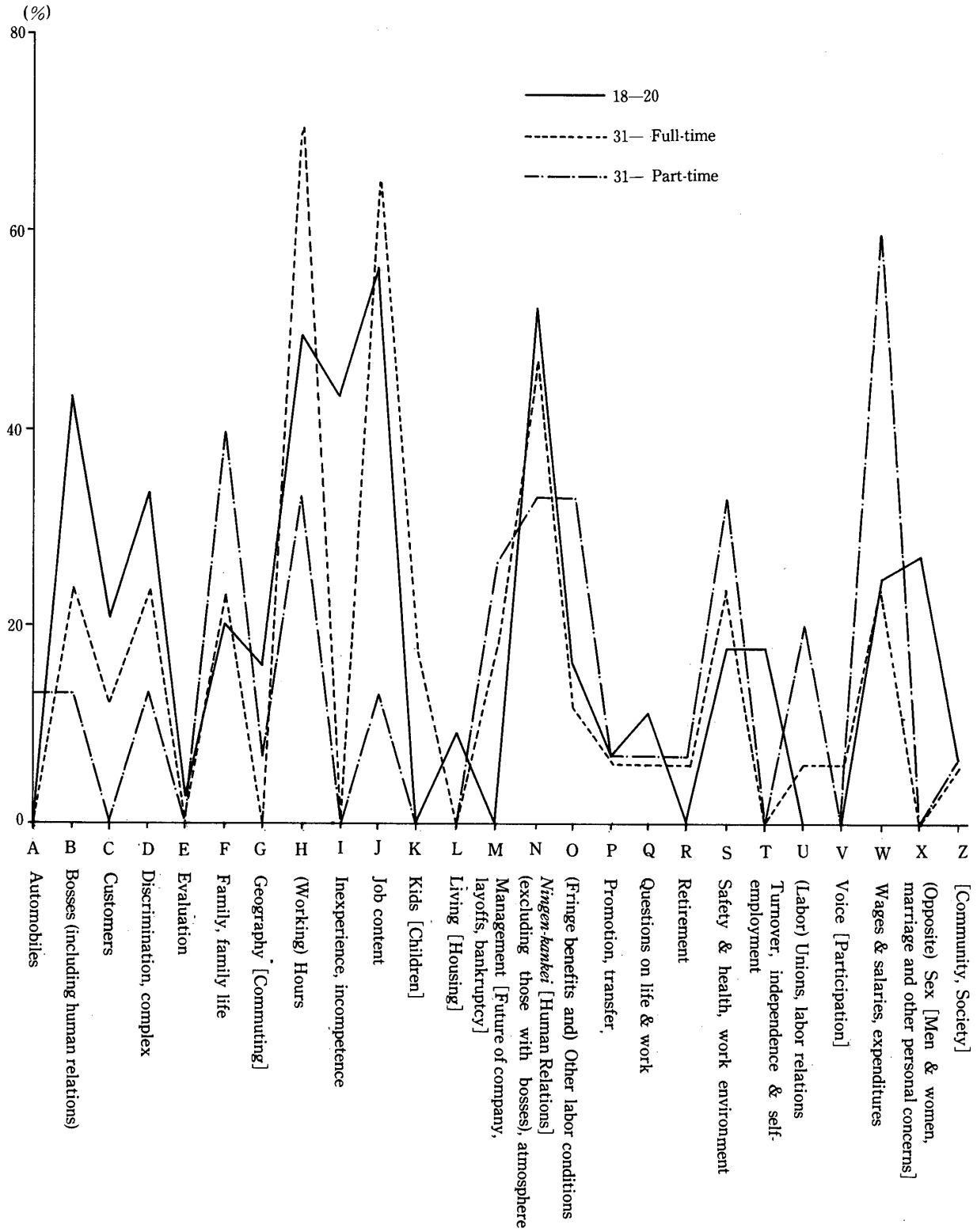


Figure 4: "Problems and Difficulties" by Sex and Age Group  
(Female)



Approximately forty percent of all interviewees refer to them respectively.

More men than women complain about wages. Female part-time workers are, however, exceptional. The complaints are about the low level, the discrimination by sex, education and employment status (regular vs. irregular employees), the insecure daily pay, the penalty for not reaching a quota or making a mistake, and little or no pay for overtime and night work. Some workers, especially many older and high income workers, describe their low salaries in terms of high expenses, for example, on business entertainment, housing loans and education.

Some complaints about wages might be less serious than those of working hours. Most workers would say that wages are low regardless of their absolute wage level. There are, however, also many workers whose wages are actually very low, like ¥70,000 per month (20, male), ¥120-130,000 (36, male) and ¥150,000 (48, male), and even below the minimum wage level.

“Job content” means “problems and difficulties” which directly derive from the work itself, rather than labor conditions, and cannot be classified into other items. Some of them are unavoidable to some degree because of the inherent nature of the work, while some others can be improved by management’s efforts.

They are those relating to (i) physical conditions (e.g. welder’s feeling too hot), (ii) the job content (e.g. simple, repetitive, meaningless work, too much responsibility, and uncomfortable duties), (iii) the organizational management (e.g. the poor communication between sections and job classification, the unbalanced job distribution among individuals and departments, the favoritism shown by people in charge, and the disagreement against management policy), and (iv) working forms and postures (e.g. assembly-line operation, work under a quota, and standing work). Included are also reduction of manpower, increase of work volume and expansion of responsibility due to rationalization and computerization, and “being too busy” due to chronic understaffing.

There is a legal problem that some workers, both in small and large corporations, are assigned to jobs which are different from those in their contracts.

A little unique are professionals’ wants for and worries about better achievement in their work.

### (3) Human Relations and Bosses

“Human Relations (excluding those with bosses)” and “Bosses (including human relations with bosses)” are important sources of “problems and difficulties” for workers. A third of all research subjects refer to them respectively, and combining both, even excluding non-human relation matters in the latter, makes this section have the greatest number of comments in the whole 25 surveyed.

“Problems and difficulties” of human relations (excluding those with bosses), which especially many young workers and female workers have, are categorised into six: (i) Personal dislikes or conflicts (including hazing), (ii) fights among women’s factions, (iii) senior-junior relations like that at school sports clubs, (iv) social drinking, eating, playing golf and mah-jongg, etc, (v) manpower composition at workplace (e.g. no girls or boys, no youth,



the presence of kin), and (vi) the poor atmosphere at shops and offices.

It seems to be almost impossible for bosses to be respected or liked by subordinates. Dissatisfaction with and criticism against bosses have an extremely strong and severe tone. Even workers older than 40 years of age including many in managerial positions are not excepted. Workers hate and criticize bosses for their attitude and personality, and for their inability and irresponsibility on the job.

To be interesting enough, bosses get really angry at their subordinates' attitude, personality and on-the-job irresponsibility.

Ranking relationship is very stressful. Subordinates cannot resist and must follow bosses, even if they are younger than them or however unreasonable they are. Middle management workers are in a fix between bosses and followers.

Cases of extramarital love affairs between bosses and young female subordinates have been reported as a nuisance and a reason for changing jobs in many leading corporations, most typically in banks and other financial firms.

#### (4) Safety & Health, Discrimination and Family (+Children+Housing)

One out of five or six interviewees respectively has "problems and difficulties" with at least one of these three items, Safety and Health, Discrimination and Family. "Problems and difficulties" on Children and Housing are dealt with here for convenience' sake.

The item "Safety and Health" includes both on- and off-the-job injuries, illnesses and destruction of health. The most typical are so called occupational safety and health issues. Some mention deaths, injuries, diseases and symptoms (e.g. bradyacusia, tendovaginitis, back pain, a gastroenteric disorder and fatigue), and some others mention their cases such as working environment, working patterns, hours and postures. Stress is mentioned both as a result and a cause. Management's poor health care policies, programs and practices are also problems. These are not limited to any specific industries, sizes of companies, occupations, positions, sex or age groups.

Legal issues are involved when after occupational injuries a worker was forced to leave his company and another to be treated not by worker's comp but by the regular health insurance due to management's insistence.

In terms of off-the-job health problems, examples raised are the want of exercise, the re-surgery of a knee problem, the declining strength in old age, diabetes and hospitalization.

Five kinds of discrimination are reported: By education, sex, job classification, company relationship (parent company vs. subsidiary employees), and employment status (regular vs. non-regular employees). The majority regard the former two. In addition the discrimination against foreign workers is reported by a worker in her 20s, who is outside the subjects analysed in this paper. A worker from the countryside has the problem of accents.

Complaints and anger in the item Discrimination, which are very strong, center around promotion, job content, job guarantee, wages and other labor conditions, and superiors' pride and arrogance bearings. Workers express their empty, vexing, hateful or inferior feeling.

These "problems and difficulties" go beyond the boundary of plants and offices and get into family and social lives. A junior high graduate, for example, confesses his pains at being

unable to help his younger brother and sister with their homework, being compared with his brother studying in a famous senior high school, and being asked the school level he completed.

Although “family” means that composed of the parents, and brothers and sisters for younger single workers and that composed of the spouse and children for older married workers, many “problems and difficulties” are shared by both of them. The effect of long working hours and shift work on family life is one of these cases.

Working life influences family life in other ways. Transfer to remote areas forces middle and older workers to live separately from their families, while “the reconciliation of work and housekeeping” is the common problem among working women.

In terms of non-work-related family “problems and difficulties,” the care and support of parents and the limited space of housing are common to all age groups. Younger generations are, in addition, worried about domestic help, the baby-sitting of younger brothers and sisters, and the watch and interference by parents, if living with parents, and about loneliness, housekeeping and poor facilities of apartments, if living by themselves. Some workers are in a dilemma between parents’ desire to live together and their own desire to be independent. If living in dormitories, they have to be worried about various restrictions of freedom. Middle and older generations are particularly interested in housing and children: The efforts to obtain houses, the trials to repay housing loans, and never-ending worries about children’s discipline, education, entrance exams, marriage and future. These worries are doubled if there are handicapped children.

##### (5) Customers, Inexperienced, Turnover, Promotion and Men & Women

Roughly one in eight interviewees mentions “problems and difficulties” on customers, inexperience/incompetence, turnover/self-employed, promotion/transfer, and men & women /marriage and other personal concerns.

Nothing makes workers who deal with customers mad and uncomfortable more than customers themselves. However unreasonable they are, workers cannot neglect them nor complain, which is the same as with bosses and people of parent companies. They are a great source of stress.

Customers are also important as evaluators of what workers did. Their compliments encourage workers and criticism distresses them.

The other four items are skewed by sex and age. Many workers, but particularly many young female workers, refer to the item of inexperience—the tense and various “problems and difficulties” in the learning process which everybody experiences in the first job. Middle and older workers experience the same when they are transferred to a new position or re-employed by a new employer after their first compulsory retirement. Incompetence means the grief over their lack of such ability as in computers and English. Workers over 30 years of age speak of the anxiety and difficulty of keeping up with technology innovation and the introduction of new machines.

The inclination of junior and senior high young graduates to quit or change jobs and/or become self-employed is extremely strong. A third of teenage male workers and a quarter

of teenage female workers mention its desire, intention, reasons, plans, and obstacles to actualize the idea. From the beginning, for many young female workers, working is a stepping stone to marriage. To be self-employed might be the sole way to get out of the present condition, but it is not easy without inheriting shops or plants from parents. Workers in their 30s may retain this dream of changing jobs and/or becoming independent, but those in their 40s seem to have already given up the idea.

On the contrary, those in their 40s (male) show a strong interest in promotion within their organizations. One out of five of them refers to "problems and difficulties" around this topic. Many were concerned with the discrimination by education as described above, but others with the bleak outlook or the general aspiration for promotion. Flattering for promotion is disgusting and intolerable for some workers. Many men in their teens and 30s also refer to this item, but very few women do.

However, not only men but also women suffer from the pain of promotion exams, or the compulsion to take them and the study to pass them. The choice not to be promoted is not given in corporate society.

Transfer or personnel shuffling is one of the biggest interests for the employed including young female workers, and at the same time is a cause of many "problems and difficulties." The assignment to a remote area, particularly with promotion involved, to live by themselves leaving their families is an especially serious "problem or difficulty" for middle and older workers.

Men & woman/marriage and other personal concerns are mainly heard from young workers. Boys are highly interested in girls and vice versa. But the problem is that many workplaces are sexually segregated, where working is dull and unattractive. The situation is perceived as disadvantageous by those looking for marriage partners and even deprives them of the only opportunity to meet girls or boys with such a long working time that do not even have time to date. To find partners is also a great difficulty for unmarried men in their 30s.

The pressure to get married from parents (young females) and such low wages that cannot allow marriage (young males) are other "problems and difficulties" raised on this item.

Other personal concerns include young women's worries about makeup and appearance.

#### (6) Fringe Benefits & Others, Future of Company and Retirement

"Problems and difficulties" of fringe benefits and other labor conditions, the future of companies/layoffs and bankruptcy, compulsory retirement, children and housing are mentioned by ten or nearly ten percent of interviewed workers. The latter two have already been described.

The biggest dissatisfaction with fringe benefits by smaller corporation employees is with eating, that is, no or poor eating facilities and programs. Complaints about the taste of served foods are common to large corporation employees. Smaller firm workers also demand the provision and improvement of resting rooms, recreation rooms and parking spaces—remember the youth's interest in automobiles. Other than facilities, there are complaints of the design of uniforms, demands for free or discounted supply of merchandise, denunciation

of non-participation in National Welfare Pension Insurance [*Kōsei-nenkin*] and National Health Insurance [*Kenkō-hoken*] (not only raised by part-time workers but also full-time workers) and complaints of no or too many company-sponsored circle and recreational activities.

Among other labor conditions, important are the infringement of a worker's political, civil and human rights and the violation of labor contracts by the management. The abuse of the Communist Party and the campaign for the company-supported party at morning meetings and compulsory participation in “volunteer” and political activities on off-days are examples in large leading corporations. Body checks are one example in department stores and the assignment to different jobs and payment of different wages from the contract are ones in middle and small corporations.

Workers are worried about the future of their own companies: The increase of sales and profits, the competition with other companies in the same industry, the influence of privatization, and the possibility of bankruptcy. Especially middle and older male workers often refer to these subjects. Some are worried about their own possible lay-off and unemployment. Particularly for part-time workers the job insecurity is the crucial problem and because of this they can sometimes say nothing to the management. The anxiety of unemployment exists among full-time workers, too, and it sometimes becomes a reality. The experience of being “voluntarily” laid off and the guilty feeling towards laid-off co-workers have been told together with other experiences.

No workers in their teens mention “problems and difficulties” on compulsory retirement, but already those in their 30s do. The content of “problems and difficulties” ranges from weak physical strength to the low retirement age (including substantial compulsory retirement at a young age for women and some men in some service industries), the transfer to subsidiaries, suppliers and related companies, the assignment to sidetracked positions [*madogiwa-zoku*], no or little retirement allowances, the reemployment after the retirement and life after retirement. Among workers in their 40s and older, one out of six refers to one or more of these problems.

#### (7) Evaluation, Participation, Labor Unions, Questions on Life & Work and Community/Society

Remaining are the items of Evaluation, Participation, Labor Unions, Questions on Life & Work, and Community/Society. Automobiles and Other Material Wants and Housing were discussed above.

Not only evaluation by customers but also that by management is very important for workers. Workers have a desire for and dissatisfaction with fair evaluation by bosses.

Participation basically means participation in decision making. Opinions and proposals are not understood, listened to or adopted by bosses or companies. To be worse, if a worker raises a voice, it might cause management to have a prejudiced view of him. In auto plants and others, raising a voice itself is not allowed from the start.

On the other hand there are complaints of coercion into participation, for example, the compulsory quota of proposals which must be submitted by workers every week or month.

The presence of labor unions is minimal in this social group like our research subjects. "Problems and difficulties" raised are the dissatisfaction with present labor unions or union activities, the lamentation over having no unions, and the anxiety of no response to the call for unionization. The fact draws our attention that the interest in unions by part-time workers at unionized shops is characteristically high.

There are apparent unfair labor practices such as no hiring of and discharge of union members.

"Problems and difficulties" questioning the way of living and the meaning of work are serious in content. "I don't feel worth working," "For what and for whom am I working?" "It's sad to end up with this kind of job," "I don't have any goals in my life," . . . . These worries and problems are mainly of young workers. "Is it O.K. to be as I am?"—uneasiness, however, flashes across the mind of workers in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

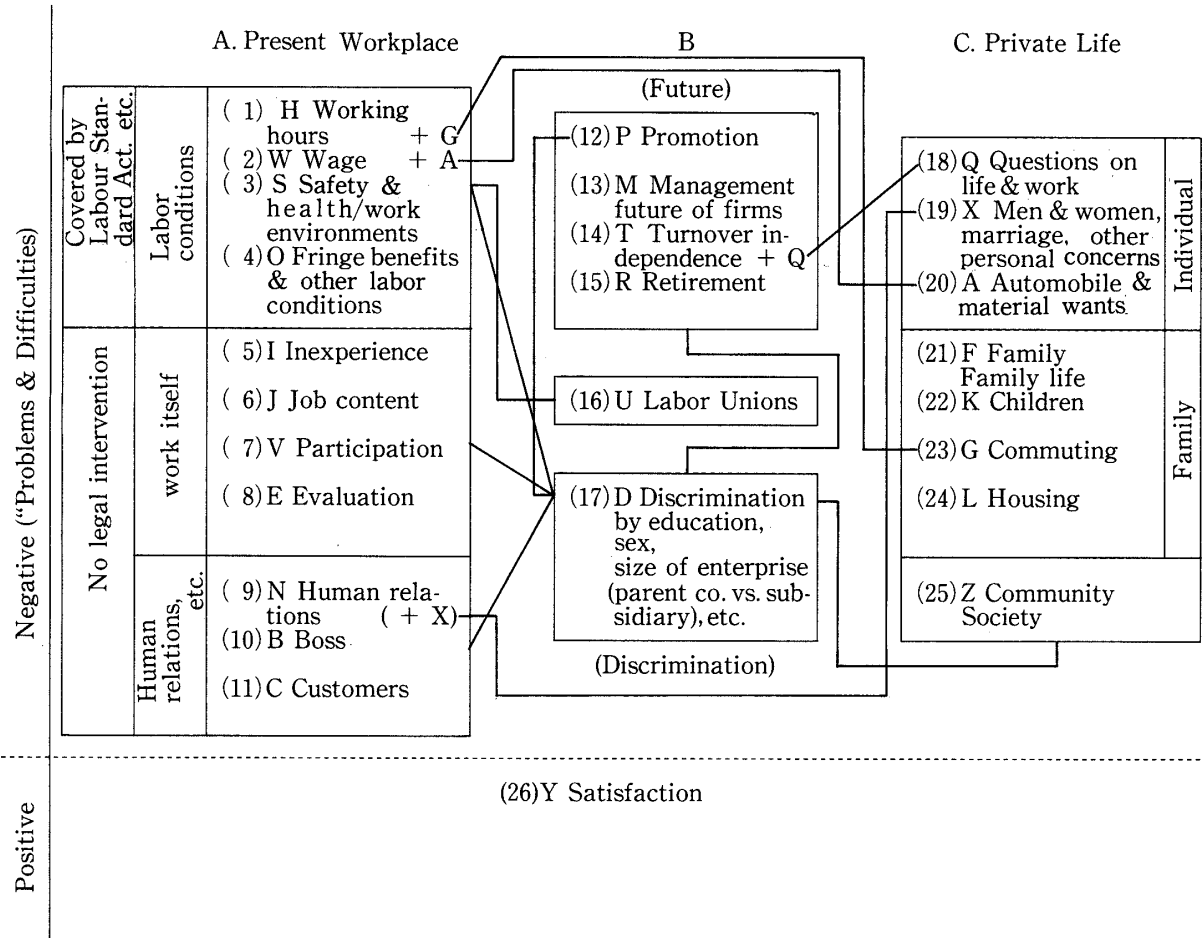
The last are "problems and difficulties" of communities and societies. No socialization with neighbors, the lack of public morality (e.g. drunks at station and on streets), the demands for social services by local governments (e.g. sewerage, bike-parking lots at stations, and baseball grounds), the dissatisfaction with politics and programs at the national level (e.g. tax and medical expenses) and the grief of African sufferers, the possible World War III and other trends in the world today.

## 2. Relations Among Items

The total 1,086 "problems and difficulties" were categorized into 25 items and analyzed in Sections III–VI. Then what if we further group some of these items together? We would like to know the interrelations among the 25 items.<sup>3)</sup> Indices used are "on-the-job or off-the-job," "the existence of laws and regulations,"<sup>4)</sup> and others.<sup>5)</sup>

In Figure 5, Column A on the left deals with "problems and difficulties workers have in their present workplaces." There are two major categories. One includes "problems and difficulties" deriving from labor conditions in a narrow sense such as "working hours", "wages", "safety & health", and "fringe benefits & others". These are the areas where the Labour Standards Act and other legal regulations have covered fairly well. "The Labour Standards Act and other legal regulations" can be at two levels: (i) The Labour Standards Act, Minimum Wages Act, Industrial Safety and Health Act, and other protective laws, which provide the minimum standard; Workermen's Accident Compensation Insurance Act, Employment Insurance Act, National Health Insurance Act, National Welfare Pension Insurance Act and other social insurance laws, which require compulsory participation; and other laws and regulations which prohibit employers from infringing on employees' political, civil and other rights. (ii) The nation's and prefectural and local governments' lead beyond the scope of minimum standards toward a direction which is considered desirable from some ideas or from their value judgement based upon a social norm, with or without preferential taxing, subsidies and other forms of incentives. It sometimes takes the form of legislation and sometimes the form of guidance or campaign by administrations. The campaigns for shorter working hours, higher retirement ages, the Smaller Firm Retirement Allowance Program and

Figure 5: Relationship among Items



Smaller Firm Group (for better labor conditions and fringe benefits) Program based on respective laws are some recent examples.

The other “problems and difficulties workers have in their present workplaces” include those deriving from areas where the legal intervention hardly takes place or does not fit. There are two subcategories, that is, “problems and difficulties” related to “work itself” and “human relations at work.” The former contains the items “Inexperience,” “Job content”, “Participation” and “Evaluation”, while the latter the items “Human relations”, “Bosses” and “Customers”. To be free from legal intervention means to leave matters up to mutual agreement between labor and management, if there is a union, and to the management’s arbitrary measure,<sup>6)</sup> if there is not. But it does not mean at all that there will not be any legal intervention, especially one at the second level in the preceding paragraph, in the future. For example some intervention may be seen in the areas of participation, evaluation and bosses from the idea of the industrial democracy, and shift work, in-service training and job content (e.g. assembly line work) from the idea of the protective legislation.

Column C on the far right deals with “problems and difficulties deriving from life other than work.” “Personal” (“Questions of Life & Work”, “Men & Women/Marriage” and “Automobile & Others.”), “Family” (“Family”, “Housing”, “Commuting” and “Children”), and “Community/Society” are its three subcategories. The ability to extract “problems and

difficulties" outside work was not effective enough in our research, and therefore some different research methods would be better to cover this area.<sup>7)</sup>

Column B in the middle of Figure 5 comprises of what belong to neither A nor C. There are three groups. One is "problems and difficulties" not at the present time but in the future, beyond the limits of their present workplaces, or in the transition from A to C. Included are "Promotion/Transfer", "Future of Company", "Turnover", and "Retirement". The other two in column B are "problems and difficulties" which relate to both A and B (and other items in B). They are "Discrimination" and "Labor Unions."

"Discrimination" derives from educational background, sex, physical handicaps, birth, country of origin, job classification, employment status (regular vs. non-regular employee), size of company (larger vs. smaller company), and relation between employers (parent company vs. subsidiary). "Discrimination" is involved in almost all other items. For it can be considered the source of numerous "problems and difficulties".

"Why do I have to endure these long working hours?" "Why is the wage so low?" "Why do I have such a dangerous job?" "Why do I have to be on the assembly line?" "Why am I being looked down upon?" "Why can't I get a promotion?" "Why do I want to quit my present job?" "Why can't I have future dreams?".... Is it because "I am not a senior high but a junior high graduate?" or "not a college but high school graduate?"

The discussion can be pushed another step forward. Then, "Why did I only graduate from junior high school?" or "Why only from senior high school?" Is it because I was born in a family which belongs to a certain social class? It reminds us of the classic Middletown survey. However, our research does not aim at finding common causes among various "problems and difficulties".

The location of "labor unions" in Figure 5 is arguable. Seeing today's Japanese labor unions, they should not have been placed in the middle of the chart but much closer to the upper left, or "Labor conditions", especially "Wages" in Column A. Theoretically speaking, however, they can be placed where they now stand in the figure, because labor unions can be modeled as being concerned with all "problems and difficulties" regarding the present workplace, future courses for workers, discrimination, and personal life. Where we put "labor unions" in the table is largely a matter of choice.

The items in Column B are partly under the control of legal regulations. The Labour Standards Act, social security legislations and others intervene in the first group, especially "layoffs" and "retirement". The Sexual Equal Opportunity in Employment Act and others intervene in "discrimination" of the second group. As does the Labour Unions Act and others in "labor unions" of the third group.

Some remarks must be added.

Categorization or distinction between each item or group is not simple or clear-cut. For example, "Customers" in Column A categorised under "Human Relations and Others" could have been grouped in "Work Itself." "Promotion/Transfer" and "Retirement" in Column B could have been grouped in "Labor Conditions" in Column A, at least partly. Moreover, these items and groups are not mutually independent. For example, "long commuting hours" can also be a problem of "housing". It also has a serious impact on "working hours." The ardent

love of “automobiles” among young workers may lead to their complaints of low “wages.” The problem of “men & women/marriage” may own its origin to the manpower structure at a workplace where “there are no girls [or boys].” A “question of life” (e.g. “Is this job really worth continuing?”) may come from the monotonous and meaningless “job content,” and directly influence the problem of “turnover”. “Turnover” is also a reflection of all problems that exist in present workplaces—labor conditions, job content, and human relations. The problem of stress, a “safety & health and work environment” issue, can also be caused by “working hours” and “job content” as well as by “human relations,” “bosses” and “customers”.

One of the criticisms of this research is that it deals with each of the “problems and difficulties” separately as unrelated matters and does not consider them as those of *a whole man [or woman]*. The above description on discrimination (p.105) even seems as if it declares that we do not intentionally pursue this course, while the validity to comprehend “problems and difficulties” as those of *a whole man [or woman]* was demonstrated in a long case record on p.45.)

Further, from the results of this research, workers in contemporary Japan might seem to be most miserable beings. However, since this research was intended to elucidate only the negative phases such as “troubles, complaints, problems, difficulties, aggravating situations, etc.,” it cannot avoid giving such an impression. In order to obtain the balanced total portrait of workers, positive aspects must be questioned simultaneously. Without being asked in this research, too, such various affirmative comments were given as “No work on weekends,” “A worth-doing job,” “Job content agrees with my interests,” “Fellow workers are all nice people,” “I have everything necessary—a car, a private room, . . . I wish my car was a Soarer, though. (Laughter) No complaint about family, either. I want my parents to enjoy longevity,” “I’m enjoying myself,” and “No complaints whatsoever.” In addition, even when a “problem or difficulty” seems to an outside observer to be a very “social need” requiring some form of improving measures, it is sometimes compensated for and solved by the presence of greater sources of “joy,” “pleasure,” and “satisfaction” within *the whole man [or woman]*. Take for example the case of a worker in a trucking firm (male, senior high graduate) in the Section III.

A fellow worker [who] broke some merchandise by mistake was beaten by a boss and remained injured for two weeks. . . . In my case, the penalty was a pay cut. I had practically no pay for the month. . . . I am scared of the boss.

And working conditions surrounding the worker are by no means favorable to him.

It’s hot in summer and cold in winter. I just can’t stand it (no air-conditioning). . . . Exhaust fumes. My mouth and nose are all coated in soot. . . . My throat often hurts and dries up. . . . Driving a forklift in winter badly chills my back and legs. . . . A part-time worker blows my cool. . . . Understaffed.

However, he concludes as follows:



Actually education is not questioned in my job. They say education counts most in our society, but seeing white-collar workers in the street, I feel happy with this job. They are tied down by rules, humble themselves before their bosses and think only of promotion. A job like ours is not considered a good job, but it's really deep and much more freer and enjoyable than a white-collar one.

However, the object of this research was to extract worker's needs which should be taken care of by the labor administration, labor unions, etc. (cf. p.2). If so, it may not be necessary to seek for a comprehensive understanding of the many needs of *a man* [*or woman*] *as a whole* in this research. Some needs can be sufficiently tackled by “symptomatic treatment” programs, and sometimes these programs suit best. More fundamentally, aren't programs commonly designed corresponding to individual needs?<sup>8)</sup> It may be even because needs are fragmented that a program can be designed for. Programs targeting *the whole man* [*or woman*] are exceptional and the assessment of effectiveness of such programs is quite difficult.

The programs and activities designed by the labor administration, labor unions, etc. in present-day Japan are only directed to part of the “problems and difficulties” related to “labor conditions” given in Column A and to a very limited number of other items in Figure 5. Almost all major problems such as overtime work, shift system, stressful conditions, simple and/or assembly line work, and democracy at workplaces have been neglected. Even where there are legal regulations, they are not being applied in many cases. There are practically no anti-discrimination programs and activities,<sup>9)</sup> compared with the United States. The importance of “problems and difficulties” outside the workplace has been increasingly emphasized in Japan today, but in spite of this there exist few social service programs and activities directed toward the workers' groups we focused on. Many needs have remained unanswered.

- 1) Precisely speaking, “interest” is also included.
- 2) If they are to have a statistical meaning, they do not necessarily present the degree of the seriousness of “problems and difficulties” and the importance as “needs”.
- 3) Plus another item of Y. Satisfaction.
- 4) The ultimate goal of this research is to grasp workers' needs. From the definition of social needs, the situation that violates provisions setting the minimum standard, for example, could be immediately deemed a social need.
- 5) The order of presenting the items in preceding sections was based on this categorization.
- 6) In reality, management's decisions and practices are necessarily restricted in various ways by non-union employee groups and by other factors.
- 7) We could find many “problems and difficulties” in this field, for example, in various consultation-counselling programs including EAPs. The following are the numbers and kinds of cases in the consultation & counselling program of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which covers approximately 50 thousand of its 200 thousand employees. Eighty percent of the cases concern “off-the-job problems”:

**Consultation And Counselling  
Employee Personal Service Room  
Tokyo Metropolitan Government (f.y. 1984)**

Items	cases	%	Content & Examples
[On-the-Job Problems]			
Personnel	285	13.5	Transfer, Turnover, Promotion, Pay Raise, Retirement, etc.; e.g. "I want to be transferred because of the long commuting distance." "How can I change jobs?"
Wages & Salaries	41	1.9	Salaries and various allowances; e.g. "Wasn't the calculation of my starting salary wrong?" "The salary of a person who entered the government after me is higher than mine."
Fringe Benefits	19	0.9	Mutual Aid Society benefits, employee dormitories, etc.; e.g. "How large a housing loan can I get from the Mutual Aid Society?" "How can I apply for dormitory accommodation?"
Human Relations	59	2.8	Human relations with bosses, coworkers and subordinates; e.g. "My boss treats me coldly." "I am not getting along well with my colleagues."
Others	38	1.8	On-the-job accidents, etc.; e.g. "How can I apply for workers' comp?"
Total	442	20.9	
-----			
[Off-the-Job Problems]			
Human Relations	128	6.1	Human relations between a husband & a wife, parents and children, a wife and a mother-in-law, a man and a woman, and among brothers and sisters, neighbors, etc.; e.g. "Trouble with my husband because of his relation with a woman." "My wife and my mother don't get along well."
Mental Health	273	12.9	Mental anxieties such as loss of confidence, anthropophobia, and neurosis; e.g. "I get nervous if I have to talk in front of others." "A friend of mine behaves strangely. I'm afraid he may be mentally ill."
Health & Medical	138	6.5	Problems of illnesses and medical care; e.g. "I feel sick and am worried that it might be something serious." "Are there any proper hospitals or facilities?"
Housing	41	1.9	How to purchase real estate, obtain finance, overcome housing troubles, rent a house, etc.; e.g. "What kinds of loans are available?" "I have left a binder but want to cancel the contract."
Financial	137	6.5	Re: Family budgets, loans, debts, etc.; e.g. "I can't repay my debt to loan sharks [ <i>sarakin</i> ] and credit companies."

Legal	694	32.8	Land, houses, inheritance, donation, obligatory right, obligation, marriage, etc.; e.g. "The landlord has raised the ground rent." "The procedures to inherit property and to refuse succession." "Concerning divorce compensation."
Traffic Accidents	140	6.6	Solution after traffic accidents, the demand for compensation, the out-of-court settlement, etc.; "I want to claim damage for an accident." "The other party has asked for an out-of-court settlement. Should I agree to it?"
Others	122	5.8	Day care, education, etc.; e.g. "My 9th grade daughter has refused to go to school."
Total	1673	79.1	
Grand Total	2,115	100.0	

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government Employee Personal Services Room, *Let's Make a Workplace Worth Working: What is happening at your workplace —now?*, 1986, p.60 and p.62.

8) When we design a program, it may be effective or even indispensable to know where a specific need we are focusing on is placed with respect to the various needs of *the whole man* [or *woman*]. It goes without saying that some intermediary research or typical "needs surveys" (cf. p.6) are necessary between the research we are now engaged in and the actual program design.

9) It is questionable how far the recently enacted Sexually Equal Opportunity in Employment Act will go in the future.