

The New Life Movement and its Relationship
with Local Governments' Social Education
Administration of Early Postwar Japan:
Focus on Developments in Ehime Prefecture
during the 1950s

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1. Focus of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the reasons why and process of how the social education administration at the local government level in early postwar Japan, and the organizations related to this administration, shifted focus to the “new life movement (*shin-seikatsu undō*).” To this end, I present a case study of Ehime Prefecture.

The new life movement lasted from the early postwar period to the period of high economic growth. The movement’s purpose was to reform everyday life, and both government actors and private organizations were involved. Since a diverse range of administrative bodies and private organizations played a role in the movement, it is difficult to precisely characterize it. Furthermore, it is difficult to strictly distinguish the term new life movement from “life reform movement (*seikatsu kaizen undō*),” which came into use in the 1920s.

Schematically, the new life movement can be distinguished from the pre-war life reform movement in that rather than only seeking to raise the standard of everyday life, it operated under the principle of citizen-led action and aimed to identify problems and set goals through democratic talks among local residents and democratize the family and local community. However, in reality, many postwar activities fell under the “life reform” movement banner, but shared the characteristics of the “new life” movement outlined above.

Soon after the war, Japan’s social education administration underwent a major turning point, ideologically and institutionally, in line with the democratization policies of Allied Occupation. Nurturing learners’ autonomy, not regarded as important before 1945, became the most important dimension in social education administration in the postwar period. Another change concerned the *kōminkans* (public citizen halls), which began emerging in local communities across Japan after the war. *Kōminkans* were envisaged as

social education facilities that would promote local resident-led educational activities, collective learning and learning by dialogue among residents, and democratize the family and local community.

Thus, during the early postwar period, both the new life movement and social education administration treated local resident-led action, the free exchange of ideas, and the democratization of the family and local community as important principles. In addition, local government actors involved in social education promoted the existing local new life movements. In 1955, the New Life Movement Council (*Shin-Seikatsu Undō Kyōkai*) was established in Tokyo as a state-level organization for the new life movement, but many of its local chapters were supported by the social education administration of the local government concerned.

These conditions blurred the boundary of new life movement and social education administration projects. For example, educational activities such as programs to improve dietary habits in rural communities or elevate the status of women in the family conformed with the ideas of the new life movement, but also with the ideas of postwar social education administration. Therefore, it is difficult to describe the specific role of the new life movement in the social education administration's projects. While this problem should be acknowledged, it is equally true that the local governments of Japan in the 1950s regarded the new life movement as important, and centralized it in their social education administrative plans.

By the 1950s, the Ministry of Education had already outlined new principles for the social education administration of postwar Japan, and progress had been made in establishing the education administration's organizational and physical infrastructure in municipalities. Thus, during this decade, how did local governments regard the role of the new life movement, and how did they incorporate it into their social education administrative plans? As mentioned, there was considerable overlap between the principles of the new life movement and those of postwar social education administration.

Among the historical research on early postwar social education administration, the new life movement is a frequent topic; however, the relationship between the movement and social education administration has not been adequately addressed. Herein, I present a case study of a prefecture to illustrate how and why early postwar social education administration applied this abstract, vague notion of the new life movement. I believe that analyzing how the administration treated this notion, which was highly valued for a certain period although never clearly defined, will provide hints not only for social education research but for policy research of various fields.

Numerous studies have explored the new life movement at the local government or community levels. For example, a compilation edited by Sen'ichi Tanaka features many case studies that illustrate the process in which the new life movement was adopted at the community level.¹⁾ Furthermore, many studies explore the developments in the New Life Movement Council and their relationship with the activities of each community.²⁾ However, the focus of these studies differs from that of this paper. Here, I am concerned with the involvement of local governments' social education administrations in the new life movement.

In a previous paper, I briefly outlined the background and factors leading to the adoption of the new life movement by the social education administrations of local governments.³⁾ However, that discussion was based on documentary material from the central government (the Ministry of Education) and national organizations (National Kōminkans Liaison Council (*Zenkoku Kōminkan Renraku Kyōgikai*), New Life Movement Council). To elaborate the above, relevant materials from a specific local government must be analyzed.

The case I present here is the social education administration of Ehime Prefecture during the 1950s. According to material from the Ministry of Education, in 1955, the number of prefectures that cited the new life movement as a priority goal of social education for women began to outnumber those

citing “life reform” as such. In other words, in 1955, it became a national trend to prioritize the new life movement in social education administration (see Table 1). Ehime Prefecture had prioritized “life reform” (or “life scientification,” “life rationalization,” etc.) as a goal before then, but set the new life movement as the priority goal of its social education administration in 1955 (other prefectures that did so included Nara, Gifu, and Osaka). Regarding the timing of when focus shifted to the new life movement, Ehime Prefecture was average relative to the national trend (neither too much of a frontrunner, nor too far behind the trend). As such, the prefecture is an the most suitable case for the purposes of this paper. The main data used in the case study analysis is documentary material produced by Ehime Prefecture’s Social Education Section during the 1950s. To augment this documentary analysis, I also refer to documents prepared by the Ehime Prefectural

Table 1: “Life”-related Items Cited by the Prefecture as a Key Priority in the Administration of Social Education for Women

Year	“Life reform” “Life scientification” “life rationalization”	“The new life movement”
1949	Miyagi, Kanagawa, Tottori	Ibaraki
1950	Hokkaido, Miyagi, Kanagawa, Niigata, Aichi, Okayama	
1951	Aomori, Miyagi, Yamagata, Kanagawa, Niigata, Nagano, Gifu, Mie, Osaka, Okayama, Yamaguchi, Kagawa	Toyama
1952	Aomori, Miyagi, Akita, Saitama, Niigata, Mie, Shiga, Osaka, Yamaguchi, Kagawa, Ehime	Shizuoka, Hyogo, Tokushima
1953	Miyagi, Saitama, Kanagawa, Niigata, Osaka, Nara, Yamaguchi, Kagawa, Ehime	Hokkaido, Yamagata, Chiba, Fukui, Shizuoka, Shimane, Kagawa, Oita
1955	Iwate, Shizuoka, Hyogo	Ibaraki, Tochigi, Toyama, Gifu, Osaka, Nara, Ehime, Kochi, Saga, Kumamoto, Kagoshima
1956	Ehime, Fukuoka, Nagasaki	Hokkaido, Tochigi, Gunma, Chiba, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Nara, Ehime, Fukuoka, Saga, Kumamoto, Kagoshima

Note: The material I gathered did not include the data for 1954.

Source: The Social Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, *Shōwa 29 nendo Zenkoku Fujin Kyōiku Shidōsha Kaigi* [1954 National Conference on Leaders in Social Education for Women], 1954, pp.105-106; The Social Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, *Shōwa 31 nendo Zenkoku Fujin Kyōiku Shidōsha Kaigi* [1956 National Conference on Leaders in Social Education for Women], 1957, pp.55-61; The Social Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education, *Shōwa 33 nen Zenkoku Fujin Kyōiku Kenkyū Kyōgikai* [1958 National Research Council on Social Education for Women], 1958, pp.25-32.

Kōminkans Liaison Council (*Ehime-ken Kōminkan Renraku Kyōgikai*) and Ehime Prefecture Federation of Women's Groups (*Ehime-ken Rengō Fujinkai*), newspaper articles from the time, and commemorative publications compiled by kōminkans across the prefecture.

In section 2, I outline early postwar developments in the new life movement and social education administration. In section 3, I clarify the relationship between the new life movement and social education administration (and related organizations) of Ehime Prefecture during the 1950s. In section 4, I analyze the factors that influenced the relationship between the new life movement and social education administrations of local governments based on the case study.

2. Developments in the New Life Movement at the State Level during the Early Postwar Period

(1) The State's Advocacy of the New Life Movement during the Early Postwar Period

After the end of the Second World War, a movement calling for “the rebuilding of (everyday) life” developed in various ways.

In June 1947, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Tetsu Katayama determined the gist of the new life movement (also referred to as the citizen's movement for building a new Japan) as follows: “elevating work motivation”; “demonstrating amicable cooperation”; “cultivating an independent spirit”; “achieving social justice”; “establishing rational and democratic lifestyles”; “prioritizing the arts, religion, and sport”; and “promoting peace movements.” The movement was to be led by the Cabinet and managed by the Home Ministry, and the Education Ministry was involved to some extent. The Cabinet called on prefectures to establish councils, and municipalities to hold discussion panels. However, Katayama resigned as Prime Minister in February the following year, and the policies of central government were withdrawn soon thereafter.⁴⁾

In the immediate aftermath of Katayama's resignation, the government launched the life reform extension project, which was to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In 1948, under the supervision of the Allied occupation authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's agriculture reform bureau established the Life Reform Section. The life reform extension project, now under this section, was intended to improve domestic life in rural communities and secure agricultural production, reform agricultural management, improve the status of women in farming households, and democratize rural communities. To assist in these efforts, in 1949, the Life Reform Section started deploying life reform extension workers to directly interact with and guide women farmers. Generally, those who qualified as life reform extension workers were graduates from higher girls' schools or vocational schools who had specialized in subjects like home economics and nutrition. At the time, these workers were all women.⁵⁾ In each of the targeted communities, an existing local women's group (*fujinkai*) or in some cases, a newly established life reform group took instructions from these workers, engaging in the life reform movement at the community level.⁶⁾ The life reform extension project aimed to disseminate everyday life skills and cultivate "thinking farmers" in the process of such dissemination.⁷⁾

As mentioned, the Katayama Cabinet's new life movement had ceased to exist as a central government project, but perpetuated and spread in various communities throughout Japan. This development was partly because of the life reform extension workers (*seikatsu kairyō fukyūin*), who from the late 1940s continued leading efforts to improve the dietary and domestic culinary lives of women farmers.⁸⁾

Around this time, agricultural associations and public health centers established in local communities countrywide were conducting activities closely linked to the life reform extension project. Agricultural associations were implementing parallel life reform projects that resembled those of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In addition, public health centers,

which were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, were initiating activities that competed with or complemented the life reform extension project. Public health centers had been established before the war, but individual public health centers only became active after the Health Center Act was revised in January 1948. Based on this legislative change, they started engaging in life reform projects focusing on preventing infectious diseases, protecting the health of mothers and children, improving diet, and managing public sanitation.⁹⁾

Thus, while the new life movement may have temporarily ceased as a central government-level project, it was kept alive in local communities countrywide by life reform extension workers, agricultural associations, public health centers, and (as discussed later) the social education administration and *kōminkans*. After the turn of the decade, the movement re-emerged as a national concern after the government started championing local projects. These local practices were again classified as part of the new life movement. In 1951, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper commenced a project to select and award organizations or communities that exemplified “new life.” In February the following year, the *Yomiuri* began publishing a series called “*Gekkan Shin-Seikatsu [New Life Monthly]*” (later retitled *Yomiuri Shin-Seikatsu*).¹⁰⁾

At the time, advocacy and promotions related to the new life movement emerged. These differed significantly from the parallel movements outlined above in terms of approach and ideology. In December 1953, multiple business associations established the “New Life Movement Association (*Shin-Seikatsu Undō no Kai*),” which encouraged companies to implement schemes to improve corporate management practice, provide lifestyle guidance to employees. The New Life Movement Association worked with the Institute of Demographic Problems and Ministry of Health and Labor, and engaged in efforts to promote family planning (birth control).¹¹⁾

(2) The New Life Movement and Ministry of Education's Social Education Bureau

During its relationship with the new life movement, how did the social education administration of the early postwar years, and the Ministry of Education's Social Education Bureau in particular, engage with these parallel new life/life reform movements? I now outline the developments in the relationship between the Ministry of Education and the new life movement, and the circumstances that led to the establishment of a national organization for the movement, namely the New Life Reform Council.

The social education administration adopted the dissemination of democratic values as a priority goal in response to the 1946 General Election and establishment of the new Constitution. From the late 1940s, the social education administration started setting life reform and life scientification/rationalization as goals. The Social Education Act (June 1949) stipulated that one of the administrative duties of municipal education boards should be to "organize or promote life scientification guidance conferences." In addition, among the 15 objectives in the education strategy outlined by the Social Education Bureau in 1952, one was to "promote life rationalization: life reform." These stipulations prioritized "redesigning everyday life practices along scientific lines," and emphasized "scientific" educational approaches to everyday life problems.¹²⁾

Subsequently, the Social Education Bureau began advocating the new life movement, linking it to the democratization of the family and local community. In a previous paper, I referenced Ministry of Education material from the early 1950s indicating that an increasing number of prefectures were citing life reform and life scientification/rationalization as priority goals for women's education from 1951. However, from 1953, an increasing number of prefectures were citing the new life movement instead (see Table 1). These local projects primarily targeted women in farming families, and were closely linked to women's groups in local communities. The

women's groups were one type of organization that played a key role in social education. Thus, the social education administrations of local governments now upheld life reform and the new life movement as priority goals.

By 1955, the new life movement had become a key priority of the social education administration at the state level. In March 1955, the Social Education Council reported its findings on "how to develop a new life movement from a social education perspective." The Council proposed that a new life movement should be tailored to the circumstances of the communities concerned and based on local resident-led action and democratic dialogue. Aligned to this principle, the New Life Movement Council was established in September that year as an organization that would facilitate autonomous local action across the country. From this background, it can be inferred that the New Life Movement Council was to be closely linked with the social education administration from its inception. However, for a budgetary reason, the council was placed under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office, rather than the Ministry of Education.¹³⁾

(3) The National Kōminkans Liaison Council and New Life Movement

Another notable development during this time was that the staff of the kōminkans, which were established across Japan as social education facilities, began seriously considering how to engage with the new life movement.

The national organization for kōminkan workers, the National Kōminkans Liaison Council (now the National Federation of Kōminkans), began holding discussions at its national conferences on how to engage with the new life movement from the early 1950s. At its second conference (June 1953), the topic for the fifth subcommittee was "Kōminkans and life reform," and ideas were exchanged among delegates from all over the country.¹⁴⁾

In 1955, the council started officially collaborating with the new life movement. In June that year, the council in the name of its chairman Teiichi

Tatsuno submitted a petition entitled, “Petition regarding the New Life Movement” to the government and ruling party. The petition strongly urged the government to support the *kōminkans* in their efforts to promote the new life movement.¹⁵⁾ The new life movement continued to be discussed in the subcommittees, panel discussions, and symposia of subsequent annual conferences of the council throughout the rest of the decade.¹⁶⁾

Why did *kōminkan* personnel become so interested in the new life movement? One reason was their concern that the dissemination of *kōminkans* and their activities had stalled. The Social Education Act (1949) enshrined the *kōminkans* as social education facilities; however, in practice, many lacked adequate staffing and physical facilities. Furthermore, the transfer in 1952 of the *kōminkans* to municipal education boards, combined with the large-scale merging of local governments from 1953 onward, resulted in problems such as reduced budgets for and fewer *kōminkans* following the mergers.¹⁷⁾ For *kōminkan* personnel, who were looking for a way to break through this impasse, the decision to start fully-fledged collaboration with the new life movement was an attractive choice.

(4) Relationships between the Actors involved in the New Life Movement

To summarize the above developments, from the late 1940s through to the late 1950s, private businesses and the social education administration increasingly focused on the life reform activities flourishing in local communities throughout Japan thanks to the agriculture and forestry administration’s life reform extension project. Note that many actors involved in the life reform and new life movements at this time (such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and New Life Movement Council) emphasized democratization of the local community and family, voluntary activities, and resolution through dialogue. In other words, these actors hoped not only for the *outcome* of resident-led activities—namely, changes in everyday life practices—but also that the *process* should be

democratic.

However, these actors did not all share the same perspectives on the life reform and new life movements. In fact, in some cases, actors took a critical view of one another, arguing that the other's approach was causing problems for the new life movement, and asserting the legitimacy of their own role within it.

For example, a document produced by the Ministry of Education's Social Education Bureau in 1954 criticized the new life movements spurred by the governors of some prefectures, municipalities, which were based on the life reform extension project. It claimed that their management structure was too top-heavy, that the movements were too uniform and formulaic, and that they tended to think lightly of the mutual study and collective learning aspects, seeking only superficial outcomes.¹⁸⁾ Similar criticisms are found among the statements of social education bureaucrats from the Ministry of Education at the time, such as Sakuo Teranaka and Tadaichi Kondo.¹⁹⁾ However, as illustrated earlier, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's life reform extension project was not belittling the process of collective learning. Furthermore, later in the early 1960s, many people involved in the New Life Movement Council stated that the social education administration and *kōminkans* were holding the movement back. They often accused officials from the social education administration and *kōminkan* personnel of too heavily emphasizing the outward form of "education" while failing in their duty to support local resident-led movements grounded in everyday life.²⁰⁾

Thus, amid these state-level developments, what role did the early postwar social education administrations of *local* governments play in the new life movement? To address this question, I now introduce Ehime Prefecture as a case study.

3. Relationship between the New Life Movement and Social Education Administration of Local Governments: Ehime Prefecture

(1) The Life Reform Extension Project, Dietary Life Reform Movement, and Kōminkans

In September 1948, Ehime Prefecture established the Agriculture Reform Section at a prefectural agricultural experimentation site. By 1950, Ehime Prefecture had deployed 12 life reform extension workers to various sites across the prefecture. Thereafter, until the mid-1950s, the life reform extension project for Ehime devoted its energy to training autonomous life reform groups. These groups focused on improving dietary habits, primarily by producing processed agricultural products.²¹⁾

Alongside this effort, some kōminkans in the prefecture were independently engaging in the life reform and new life movements by the early 1950s. For example, the kōminkan of Ippommatsu Village (now part of Ainan Town) had implemented a marriage reform movement since 1949.²²⁾ The kōminkan of Yodo Village (now part of Matsuyama City) is another example. Designated by the prefecture as a kōminkan for pilot projects in 1950, Yodo Village engaged in various efforts including completing water and sewage works, disseminating solar-heated baths, and holding weddings in the kōminkan. In November 1951, the Yomiuri Shimbun awarded this kōminkan as the first class prize in Ehime Prefecture in honor of its contribution to the new life movement.²³⁾ Yomiuri Shimbun also awarded Yoshii Kōminkan of Nyugawa Town (now part of Saijō City) for its contribution to the “New life movement: Recreating domestic life” project after its involvement in domestic culinary reform.²⁴⁾ The activities conducted by the kōminkans during the early 1950s were inspired by overlapping rallying promotions by multiple actors such as the agricultural reform administration, private firms, and social education administration.

In October 1955, Ehime Prefecture established its own organization to

promote the new life movement, namely the Ehime Prefecture Dietary Life Reform Movement Promotion Council (*Ehime-ken Shoku-Seikatsu Kaizen Undō Suishin Kyōgikai*). This pan-prefectural body was established following discussions between the general prefectural administration and education boards, and chaired by the deputy prefectural governor. The thinking behind setting up an organization focused on “dietary life” was that rather than targeting everyday life as a whole, it would be more effective to focus on a particular sphere to achieve satisfactory outcomes in this area, and then use this success to rally efforts towards another specific sphere.²⁵⁾ Initially, the immediate aim of this pan-prefectural body was to facilitate collaboration between the dieticians stationed in the prefecture’s public health centers and life reform extension workers stationed in the agricultural reform extension center.²⁶⁾ Inspired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry’s life reform extension project, this dietary life reform project expanded throughout the prefecture, enlisting the efforts of the *kōminkans*. The Ehime Prefecture Dietary Life Reform Movement Promotion Council also adopted the new life movement slogan trumpeted by the government at the time, believing that doing so would rigorously promote and expand the dietary life reform project in tandem with the activities of public health centers, which were under the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Initially, the members of the Ehime Prefecture Dietary Life Reform Movement Promotion Council were delegates from the prefectural administration, but from 1960, its membership also included representatives from federations of community-level facilities and organizations (such as the prefectural federation of women’s groups and the prefectural federation of *kōminkans*). In 1963, the council changed its name to the Life Reform Promotion Council. From then, Ehime Prefecture’s new life movement expanded its scope beyond the dietary sphere, adopting goals like “creating bright and healthy homes” and “creating a beautiful environment.” In 1971, the council changed its name again, this time to the Community Promotion

Council, and shifted its policy to focus on community-building efforts.²⁷⁾

(2) Developments in Ehime Prefecture's Social Education Administration and Effects on the New Life Movement

Ehime Prefecture's social education administration started using its own catchword in 1952, namely "village-wide education." A 1954 document from the Ehime Prefecture Education Board's Social Education Section defined village-wide education as follows:²⁸⁾

Social education activities in a local community should aim to identify local issues that encapsulate the various everyday life issues that residents face. Then, to resolve these problems, they should be organically linked with industrial and economic activities, social welfare (public health, welfare) activities, public order and peacekeeping, disaster prevention activities, cultural activities, and all other societal functions, and promoted strategically to channel these societal functions. This is the correct approach of so-called village-wide education. The essence of village-wide education is "resident-led and resident-inspired collaborative activities for resolving the everyday life issues that residents face." Herein lies the ideal of village-wide education. The activities of *kōminkans* also should be based on this purport.

Thus, the concept of village-wide education emphasized strategically promoting social education administration projects and connecting them to the demands of the local community. In 1952, the Social Education Section designated 14 local communities as social education experimentation communities, and called on these to conduct various studies and practices such as having the *kōminkans* promote social education from multiple perspectives and examining approaches to education planning conducive to local community building.²⁹⁾

Shortly thereafter, the concept of village-wide education came to be associated with the new life movement and municipal mergers (the so-called Great Showa Mergers) of 1953 onward.

In the priority measures outlined in Ehime Prefecture's social education administration plan for 1954, the goal stated for women's education was "disseminating and enforcing political education and promoting the life reform movement."³⁰⁾ The use of the term life reform movement implies the dietary reform and marriage reform projects already conducted by the *kōminkans* from the end of the 1940s. The basic plan for that year does not mention linking local government mergers with social education administration.

The basic plan for the following year (1955) linked the new life movement with village-wide education (see Table 2). One of the priority measures for that year was to "promote activities that identify and resolve educational issues associated with the mergers." Furthermore, "collective learning (*kyōdō gakushū*)" appears for each of the three goals: *kōminkan*-led education, educational courses, and organization-led education.³¹⁾ Collective learning or "learning through dialogue (*hanashiai gakushū*)" was considered a basic approach for the new life movement. Thus, proactively introducing new life movement approaches into social education administration projects was a goal at the prefecture level.

In this way, the Social Education Section slightly modified the idea of the village-wide education it had run with since 1952 to reflect the changing political backdrop (the progress in the local government mergers). Alongside this modification, the Social Education Section used the notion of the "new life movement" being promoted at the national level to emphasize the importance of village-wide education as a goal.

However, many of the municipality-level actors involved in the new life movement at the time did not regard the life reform movement as significantly different from the new life movement, and as such, did not believe it necessary to radically alter existing community-level activities.³²⁾ Similarly, those

Table 2: Basic Strategy, Aspirational Goals, and Priority Measures of the Ehime Prefecture Social Education Administration from 1954 to 1957

Year	Basic strategy	Aspirational goals	Priority measures
1954	(1) Residents of the prefecture to be independent and have highly practical skills (2) Build Ehime with a peaceful and rich culture	Establish administration/finance for social education. All social education activities to be coordinated as village-wide education activities that (1) Disseminate political education (2) Promote industrial education (3) Implement life rationalization (4) End feudalism	(1) Establish administration/finance (secure budget for social education, establish organizational framework for social education) (2) Promote village-wide education (educate and train leaders, develop facility resources for social education) (3) Establish cultural asset administration
1955	Establish administration/finance for social education All social education activities to be coordinated as village (municipality)-wide education with a view to <i>promoting the new life movement</i> . In particular, identify education-related issues stemming from the establishment of new municipalities following the municipal mergers, and increase momentum to resolve them.	Focus on a strategy to ground social education activities in the everyday life of individual residents and ensure that residents lead the way in developing activities.	(1) Systematically structure activities: Promote structured collective learning activities of residents (2) Promote Concrete activities: Develop training opportunities and strengthen guidance to stimulate collective learning in which each group investigates a specific issue (3) Strengthen the organizational framework for activities: Endeavor to establish leadership organizations and to secure opportunities of social education organizations in local communities
1956	Establish a cooperative framework to develop an everyday life for residents that is ever fresh, bright, and enriched Promote <i>village-wide education activities as part of a new life movement</i> intended to reform attitudes to everyday life	To reform attitudes to everyday life, in both material and immaterial aspects, endeavor to implement collective learning beginning with small organizations and successively bringing in larger, wide-area organizations.	Work with related organizations (prefectural and municipal) to strengthen the capacity for collective action. (1) Promote organized and ongoing collective learning activities among residents by 1. extending opportunities for educating and training leaders, 2. improving the provision of informational resources and public information services and disseminating guidance, (2) strengthening the leadership team in the communities of each municipality and commit more funds to social education, and (3) strengthening guidance for the areas where social education is faltering
1957	Twelve years have passed since the end of the war, and the country seems to have survived the period of upheaval and moved onto the development and progress stage. In view of this development, we wish for the prefecture's residents to grow into people who are attempting, with passion, vigor, and a sense of responsibility, to devote to the task of making Ehime a place of democracy and flourishing culture and a place where various industries can pursue development. Aiming to instill such a determination and facilitate efforts among residents, we will continue to promote last year's municipality-wide education activities.	(1) Endeavor to increase work motivation and production (2) Endeavor to raise public standards of morality and create bright interpersonal relations (3) Promote cultural activities to enrich everyday life	(1) Focusing on the activities of kominkans, disseminate guidance by 1. strengthening the leadership team in the communities of each municipality, 2. improving opportunities to educate and train leaders, 3. improving the provision of informational resources and public information services, (2) committing more funds to social education, and (3) guiding, advising, and supporting backward areas in social education

1958	Following the 1957 plan, kominkans will take the lead in promoting social education, and we will establish an economic life by increasing production and rationalizing consumer life. At the same time, we will promote movements to elevate public moral standards, establish bright interpersonal relationships, promote cultural activities, and thereby lay the ground for an aesthetically enriched life among the prefecture's residents. We will also work to raise residents' motivation to develop our cherished home of Ehime and work to ensure that the system of social education encourages all the prefecture's residents to embody a vigorous sense of duty and responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Endeavor to increase work motivation and production (2) Endeavor to raise public standards of morality and create bright interpersonal relations (3) Promote cultural activities to enrich everyday life (4) Rationalize life through the mastery of high-level scientific technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Through the activities of kominkans, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develop organizational frameworks for leaders in the communities of each municipality, 2. improve leaders' skills and instill in them a sense of duty, and 3. provide resources for activities and strengthen public information services. (2) Commit more funds to social education (3) Strengthen guidance for backward areas in social education (4) Strengthen cooperation with related organizations and groups
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Note: I standardized the terms and numbering systems of the items. Italics mine.
Source: Social Education Section of Ehime Prefectural Education Board, Ehime Prefectural Kominkans Liaison Council, *Ehime no Shakai Kyōiku: Sono Genjō to Hōko* [Social Education in Ehime: Current Situation and Future Directions], 1960, pp.10-13.

involved in the life reform extension project in Ehime Prefecture considered all efforts to continue the prefecture's dietary life reform-centered movement sofar as a goal of the new life movement in practice. These individuals viewed Ehime Prefecture's new life movement as independent from the movement advocated by the New Life Movement Council established in Tokyo in 1955.³³⁾

In 1956, the social education administration's basic strategy stipulated "promoting village-wide education activities as part of a new life movement intended to reform attitudes toward everyday life." This indicates that the Social Education Section regarded the new life movement and village-wide (community-wide) education as the same thing.³⁴⁾ Relatedly, the 1956 document from the Social Education Section stated the following on Ehime Prefecture's new life movement:³⁵⁾

In Ehime Prefecture, the Dietary Life Reform Movement Promotion Council, chaired by the Deputy Prefectural Governor, was founded to serve as part of the new life movement.

Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the role of the municipal office in relation to the prefecture's new life movement is to deal with

dietary problems. However, since there is more to everyday life than dietary life, we examine approaches and methods for the new life movement considering all spheres of life, including dietary life.

The statement above was followed by an explanation about the idea of the new life movement. The explanation implies that Ehime Prefecture's administration regarded the new life movement as synonymous with the dietary life reform movement, and that the Social Education Section was critical of this perspective to a certain extent.

However, the term new life movement was included in Ehime Prefecture's social education administration plans for only two years. In the 1957 plan, the basic strategy for social education administration included the stipulation to "continue promoting the previous year's village-wide education," but the term new life movement was not used in the basic strategy and did not appear among the aspirational goals or priority measures. In the prefecture's social education administration plans from 1957 onward, one finds terminology closely associated with the new life movement such as "bright interpersonal relations," "democratic," and "rationalization of consumer life" (see Table 2). However, new life movement, a term that connected these concepts with life reform, disappeared from the prefecture's social education administration plans.

(3) Relationship between the new life movement and Kōminkans, Women's Groups

How did the community-level actors involved in the social education administration's projects such as the kōminkans and women's groups respond to the new life movement?

In 1954, amid the ongoing mergers of local governments, promoting kōminkan projects became crucial in Ehime Prefecture. As noted in section 2, kōminkan workers countrywide were concerned about the adverse effects of

recent developments such as the *kōminkans* being placed under the jurisdiction of the municipal education boards and the so-called Great Showa Mergers. Because of the mergers of local governments, Ehime Prefectural *Kōminkans* Liaison Council had to divide much of its energy into maintaining the qualitative and quantitative levels of the prefecture's *kōminkans*.³⁶⁾

In September 1955, a conference on the prefecture's society for social education resolved that the new life movement should be rooted in the local community and commence from local residents' voluntary learning, and that *kōminkans* should act as "good stimulators and consultants" for the movement.³⁷⁾ It was then determined at the 4th Ehime Prefectural *Kōminkans* Conference in March 1956 that *kōminkans* should serve as bases for the new life movement and that the prefecture's *kōminkans* should proactively promote it. As mentioned in section 2, the National *Kōminkans* Liaison Council argued that *kōminkans* were nodes for the new life movement and as such, required further financial assistance. It had also started a campaign for the enactment of a *kōminkan* law. In December 1956, the Ehime Prefectural *Kōminkans* Liaison Council received notice from the National *Kōminkans* Liaison Council regarding a petition for the enactment of a *kōminkan* law. In response, it gathered signatures from about 40,000 people in the prefecture and sent them to the national council. Of all the prefectures in Japan, Ehime Prefecture gathered the largest number of signatures.³⁸⁾

Those involved in Ehime Prefecture's *kōminkans* used the new life movement as a key term in their quest for better funding. By linking the nationwide new life movement with *kōminkans*, they attempted to advocate expanding funding to the *kōminkans*.

By the mid-1950s, the federal bodies for women's groups in Ehime Prefecture had become active in the new life movement, similar to the federal bodies for *kōminkans*. In 1955, the Ehime Prefectural Federation of Women's Groups advocated the new life movement. In response, local women's groups in the prefecture implemented activities including marriage

and public sanitation reforms.³⁹⁾ In 1956, the federation set the “rigorous implementation of the new life movement” as the goal of its activities, and cited as specific examples of activities “strengthening collaboration with related organizations and activities in municipalities,” “strengthening information resource services,” and “establishing leadership training opportunities.”⁴⁰⁾ In the same year, the federation launched an annual conference, namely the “Conference of Women of Ehime Prefecture for New Life Movement” in collaboration with other federal organizations for women’s groups within the prefecture (the women’s section of the agricultural association, women’s section of the fisheries association, and the Mother-child Welfare Association (*Boshi Fukushi-Kai*)).⁴¹⁾ It is obvious that the federation’s proposal to support the new life movement intended to rejuvenate the activities of the prefecture’s women’s groups, many of which were inactive. However, the new life movement activities conducted by women’s groups were not intended to differentiate the groups from other women’s organizations, as argued by Ministry of Education officials.⁴²⁾ In contrast, as far as can be seen in the example of Ehime Prefecture, these activities were predicated on deepening ties with other women’s organizations.

Having based on the above policy, what activities did community-level actors conduct? I cite some examples of the activities of *kōminkans* below.

Shimo-Hatanokawa *Kōminkan* of Kawase Village (now part of Kuma-Kōgen Town) developed a new life movement activity in conjunction with the learning activities of the women’s groups and classes. This activity garnered attention outside the prefecture thanks to media coverage. This *kōminkan* had engaged in the village-wide education and new life movements from 1951. In 1952, it earned the *Yomiuri Shimbun*’s new life award prize. In these efforts, women’s groups played the core role. During the late 1950s, the efforts of women’s groups, which were based on the *kōminkan*’s women’s learning class activities, extended beyond the districts under Shimo-Hatanokawa *Kōminkan*’s jurisdiction, encompassing the whole of Kawase

Village.⁴³⁾

Shimo-Naose Kōminkan did not conduct noteworthy new life movement activities until 1952, but in 1953, it had a 2,000-yen budget for life reform seminars. In 1954, the prefecture designated the district under Shimo-Hatanokawa Kōminkan's jurisdiction as a new life movement model district. In response, this kōminkan formed a life reform committee in July 1954 consisting of local residents, and in August the following year, established the goals of the movement. These goals, which covered various areas, were "strict time management," "break through superstitious customs," "simplify ceremonies," "reform sartorial and dietary practices," and "reform culinary practices." In many cases, the goals did not include detailed implementation strategies, but stipulated that residents should individually implement the goals as they saw fit. Regarding the item "reform sartorial and dietary practices," women's learning class of the kōminkan took the lead in reforming dietary practices. Also noteworthy is that in 1956, Shimo-Naose Kōminkan established the "life section" in its local resident organization.⁴⁴⁾

In 1955, Kume Kōminkan of Matsuyama City was designated by the Matsuyama City Education Board as a "pilot kōminkan" and tasked with researching "the new life movement and municipality-wide education." In response, that year, Kume Kōminkan set the following goals: "strict time management," "develop a children's association," "stool examination and parasite prevention," and "embody a spirit of friendship and cooperation." Of these, the activities for stool examination and parasite prevention achieved notable outcomes and became an annual undertaking of the community. In 1957, Kume Kōminkan set three new life movement tasks: "marriage reform", "early rising and greater efficiency", and "environmental improvements". These tasks were pursued with the support of the women's group and other organizations. However, while these activities were meaningful in terms of rallying people's civic spirit, they did not achieve clear outcomes. In 1958, Kume Kōminkan announced the dietary life reform movement as the new

goal.⁴⁵⁾

Although the *kōminkans* conducted specific life reform activities, few continued using the term “new life”. A commemorative publication compiled by a *kōminkan* in Ehime Prefecture cites the fact that the *kōminkan*-centered new life movement became active in 1956 as an example of social developments at the time, but other than this, the new life movement is not mentioned at all.⁴⁶⁾ This source indicates that the people involved in *kōminkans* regarded the enlivened activities that took place under the banner of the “new life movement” as a phenomenon limited to the mid-1950s.

However, the Ehime Prefectural *Kōminkans* Liaison Council and Ehime Prefectural Federation of Women’s Groups continued cooperating under the dietary life reform movement until the 1960s. The early 1960s represented the watermark of the dietary life reform movement in Ehime Prefecture.⁴⁷⁾

4. Conclusion

We can understand two things about the way in which the new life movement proliferated in Ehime Prefecture during the 1950s.

First, the people involved in social education, *kōminkans*, and women’s groups interpreted and employed the term “new life movement” according to their surrounding context. Ehime Prefecture’s Social Education Section took the new life movement slogan touted by the mass media and Ministry of Education, and used it in its administrative plans to emphasize the significance of its village-wide education concept. Regarding the Ehime Prefectural *Kōminkans* Liaison Council, hoping to overcome the financial crisis affecting *kōminkans*, the council argued *kōminkans* as the nodes of the new life movement, and sought to underscore the connection between the movement—then a national concern—and the *kōminkans*. As for the Ehime Prefectural Federation of Women’s Groups, seeing new life movement

activities as an opportunity to enliven the prefecture's women's groups, it promoted the movement in collaboration with other women's federations.

Second, the notion of the new life movement was included in the prefecture's social education administration plans for only a short time. The term "new life movement" had connotations of democracy, life rationalization, collective learning, and the like, and these concepts had been present among the social education administration principles since the early postwar reforms. In this sense, it would not have been difficult to present the social education administration policy without using the term new life movement. In addition, measures related to the new life movement slipped down the list of the social education administration's priorities of the Ministry of Education towards the end of the decade,⁴⁸⁾ which might have been another factor behind the disappearance of the term from the prefecture's social education administration plans.

However, the federal bodies of *kōminkans* and women's organizations continued their involvement in the Dietary Life Reform Movement Promotion Council, even after 1960. Likewise, the *kōminkans* and women's groups across the prefecture continued to engage in life reform activities, even if many did not use the new life slogan. Why did these actors maintain their involvement? Possibly, the life reform extension project (the activities of the life reform extension workers) remained in force, as did the organizational framework it developed—which was centered on the prefectural planning office. This provided the *kōminkans* and women's groups with an effective platform for conducting their activities.

The new life movement sought material reforms to improve everyday life practices and environments. It also set out the immaterial reforms necessary to achieve these, for example, reforming public attitudes and relationships between people in the community. It is the unique significance of the new life movement that these two aspects were always co-present. However, the ideological elements of the movement were not its monopoly,

as the social education administration had already developed the same principles in the early postwar years. Accordingly, prefectural social education administration plans, intended as broad policy outlines, temporarily prioritized the new life movement in line with trends at the state level, although this focus in the plans did not last. The new life movement connotes various undertakings and ideas, and during its heyday as a slogan, it was used in various contexts by various actors. However, because the new life movement had such diverse connotations and associations, it was difficult to define its intrinsic significance clearly. Therefore, as the enthusiasm for the catchword increasingly faded, it became increasingly unnecessary to employ the term new life movement as a policy principle.

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Notes

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- 6) In some prefectures, local governments’ efforts under the life reform extension project focused on the women’s groups, and in others, they focused on life reform groups. For more details, see the series of studies by Kazuyoshi Uchida and Yukiko Nakama. The following is the key example of these studies. Uchida, K., Nakama, Y., “Showa 20 nendai ni okeru seikatsu kaizen fukyū jigyo to chihō jichitai: Nōrinshō no hōshin ni taisuru iwateken no taiō o jirei ni [The life reform extension project in the Shōwa 20s (1945-1955) and local governments: Focusing on Iwate prefecture’s response to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry],” *Nōgyō Keizai Kenkyū* [*The Japanese Journal of Rural Economics*], No.87-2, 2015.
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- 19) The Social Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, *Shōwa 29 nendo Zenkoku Fujin Kyōiku Shidōsha Kaigi* [*National Conference on Leaders in Women’s Education in 1954*], 1954, pp.65-74; Teranaka, S., “Onkochishin: Shakai kyōiku wa kono jyū nen dō ayundekitaka [Consulting the Past to Learn about the Future: How has Social Education Progressed over the Past Ten Years?],” *Monbu Jihō* [*The Monthly Journal of the Ministry of Education*], no.936, July 1955, pp.43-44.
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