

# Assassins, Madonnas, and Career Women: Reflections on Six Decades of Women's Suffrage in Japan

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In Japan's September 11, 2005, election for the lower house of the national legislature, there were forty-three women among the successful candidates, the highest number ever.<sup>1)</sup> The election of 2005 marked the first time that the number of women who won seats in any one lower house election exceeded the total of thirty-nine elected on April 10, 1946, the first occasion on which women could vote and run for office. The fact that the number of women in the lower house has now reached parity with the number of female representatives elected in 1946 provides an opportunity to reflect on the continuities and discontinuities in characteristics and functions of women in elected office in Japan during six decades of women's suffrage.

The 1946 and 2005 elections offer an apt comparison, for in both elections women candidates represented themselves as symbols of change. The women of 1946 offered a clear alternative to the military imperatives that had dominated Japan prior to defeat in war. In the 2005 election, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō dispatched women candidates as “assassins” or “female ninja” to challenge rebels within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) who had opposed Koizumi's bill on postal reform. In a further effort to attract women voters, Koizumi increased the number of LDP women candidates from eleven in the 2003 election to twenty-six and guaranteed their election by slating them high on the party lists for the proportional representation blocs.<sup>2)</sup> Thanks to Koizumi's strategy, the number of women legislators in the lower house affiliated with the LDP increased from nine to twenty-six, making the total number of women in the lower house the highest ever.

In 2005, six decades after women's suffrage became law, women in Japanese politics were still sufficiently rare that a slight increase in numbers caused a media stir and gave a conservative party a temporary face lift. As Ōgoshi Aiko has observed, patriarchy did not end in 1945; rather, it became “the hallmark of postwar democracy.”<sup>3)</sup> Nevertheless, electoral reform, economic prosperity, social change, and shifting national identity have transformed the ways that patriarchy plays out in politics. This essay will show that while structural changes now allow Japanese women to enter politics with educational and professional credentials equal to those of men, women's political roles are still determined by ideas of gender difference. Women in politics today still labor under many of the same disadvantages as their pioneering predecessors.

## Contextualizing the Assassins

In order to understand the significance of Koizumi's deployment of women, it is

necessary to distinguish his recruits from the women who already represented the LDP in the Diet. The twenty-six LDP women elected in 2005 fall into three categories. Seven were incumbents or former members of the Diet, able to win their single-member districts. I include in this category Kamikawa Yōko, Matsushima Midori, Moriyama Mayumi, Obuchi Yūko, Okashita Nobuko (former), Tsuchiya Shinako, and Yamanaka Akiko (former).<sup>4</sup> Ten women were among the “assassins” dispatched by Koizumi in 2005 to defeat former members of the LDP who were expelled from the party for voting against Koizumi’s postal reform bill: Abe Toshiko, Hirotsu Motoko, Iijima Yukari, Inada Tomomi, Katayama Satsuki, Kawajō Shika, Koike Yuriko, Nishikawa Kyōko, Satō Yukari, and Takaichi Sanae.<sup>5</sup> Three of these—Koike, Nishikawa, and Takaichi—were incumbents or former members of the Diet. The remaining nine were political neophytes recruited to the LDP. In most cases, their purpose on the LDP roster was to attract unaffiliated voters; Nagaoka Keiko, by contrast, had a political base inherited from her husband Yōji. In addition to Nagaoka, they were Fujino Makiko, Inoguchi Kuniko, Iwaki Nobuko, Izawa Kyōko, Kondō Mitsue, Nakamori Fukuyo, Nishimoto Katsuko, and Tokashiki Naomi. This section will focus on the latter two groups of women.

Koizumi used political neophytes to discipline party regulars. We might compare this to the way that Mao Zedong deployed the Red Guards in the 1960s to critique the Chinese Communist Party. Kobayashi Kōki, one of the postal rebels, suggested a different analogy, that of Roman emperors “forcing prisoners to fight against ferocious beasts simply for the emperor’s pleasure.”<sup>6</sup> The international press stressed the newcomer status of the women, identifying Koizumi’s female recruits as young and telegenic.<sup>7</sup> The focus was on individual women whose reputations were built on characteristically feminine qualities. Much attention was devoted, for instance, to the fact that Katayama Satsuki had been a beauty queen in her student days at Tokyo University.<sup>8</sup> In point of fact, the women Koizumi chose as assassins had impressive credentials as accomplished professionals and experienced politicians.

Katayama Satsuki was a successful career woman. In order to run in Shizuoka as a “madonna of reform” against Kiuchi Minoru, one of the politicians expelled from the LDP for voting against the postal reform bill, she resigned a senior bureaucratic position in the Ministry of Finance. A graduate of Tokyo University, she made headlines in 2004 as the first female Budget Bureau officer in charge of the Defense Agency budget. Despite her distinguished bureaucratic career, the press repeatedly referred to her as a former beauty queen.<sup>9</sup>

Another prominent career woman who joined the ranks of Koizumi’s reformers was Satō Yukari. She was chief economist for Credit Suisse First Boston Japan when she was asked by the LDP to run against Noda Seiko, a former minister of Posts and Telecommunications, sometimes mentioned as a possible candidate to be Japan’s first woman prime minister.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps because this race pitted two women against each other, it attracted particularly intense media attention.<sup>11</sup>

Abe Toshiko, vice president of the Japan Nursing Association (JNA), had a successful career in a field considered appropriate for women. She was a first-time candidate when she ran in Okayama against Hiranuma Takeo, a man twenty years her senior.<sup>12</sup> Because the JNA has had regular representation in the Diet for most of the postwar

era, it was likely that Abe would, as an officer of the association, enter politics. The president of the local chapter of the nursing association said, “I’d heard she wanted to pursue politics in the future, but I didn’t think she would run in an election this early or in Okayama.” The other assassins who were newly recruited to politics likewise had impressive professional credentials. Hirotsu Makiko was a certified public accountant, Inada Tomomi a lawyer, Iijima Yukari an educator, and Kawajō Shika a company employee.

Koizumi’s female assassins included seasoned politicians as well as neophytes. Koizumi persuaded Koike Yuriko, a former television anchorwoman, to change her plans to run from Hyōgō and instead to oppose Kobayashi Kōki, one of the postal rebels, in Tokyo District 10. Koike, who had already served thirteen years in the Diet, accomplished her mission, although she rejected the label of assassin. She told an audience at the Correspondents’ Club of Japan, “I am not an assassin. I am a mere challenger seeking victory for true democracy and reform.”<sup>13)</sup> Another experienced politician whom Koizumi recruited to his band of assassins was Takaichi Sanae, a veteran of three terms in the Diet, who lost her seat in the 2003 election. Takaichi was matched against postal rebel Taki Makoto. Nishikawa Kyōko, a veteran of two terms, was dispatched to Fukuoka to oppose Jimi Shōzaburō.<sup>14)</sup>

In addition to the assassins he recruited to discipline the postal rebels, Koizumi supplemented the ranks of the LDP candidates with women, most of whom he placed high on the proportional lists, thus guaranteeing his recruits seats in the Diet. Most prominent among them was Inoguchi Kuniko, a professor of political science at Sophia University, who had served as Japan’s ambassador to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament.<sup>15)</sup>

Another recruit who attracted media attention was Fujino Makiko, a television chef and author of cookbooks. Because of her well established career as an expert on deserts, Fujino Makiko brought to her candidacy broad name recognition among women. Born in 1949 and married not long after her graduation from Sacred Heart University, Fujino developed her culinary expertise while accompanying her husband to diplomatic posts in New York and Paris.<sup>16)</sup> With her reputation as a “charismatic housewife,” Fujino embodied the status of the Japanese home maker as an outsider to politics, an image reinforced by her “self-declared political naivety.” “I can’t enter into a debate on any subject like fiscal policy or foreign policy,” she said, “or really any area beyond what I know, which is food.” She also admitted to knowing virtually nothing about Nagoya, the city in central Japan from which she ran.<sup>17)</sup> To another reporter, she admitted that she is “politically unsophisticated, more confident talking about pastries and putting on parties for children than about Japan’s relations with China.”<sup>18)</sup> However self-deprecating about her political experience, Fujino was confident that she had expertise on matters relevant to government, for instance food safety and children’s nutrition. “Japanese men don’t understand these issues, they don’t understand the issues of children.”<sup>19)</sup>

In Fujino’s case, the status of “charismatic housewife” has little to do with motherhood. Writers refer to her as “stylish” rather than as motherly.<sup>20)</sup> One woman told a reporter, “I think she’s very personable.”<sup>21)</sup> Although there are references to her as a grandmother and she claimed expertise on the problems of working mothers on the

basis that her husband did not help in bringing up the children, the children and grandchildren themselves remain invisible in accounts of her political life.<sup>22)</sup> The press coverage reflects her webpage, which includes her husband and her trips abroad, but makes no mention of her children.<sup>23)</sup>

Despite the press emphasis on Fujino's glamorous and expert housewifery, her career can equally well be understood in a different way. She is the wife of an LDP politician; her husband Kimitaka is a member of the upper house. When the party needed additional candidates, they turned to a known woman with an impressive career as an author and television personality. Understood in this way, Fujino's entry into politics is parallel to that of other LDP women such as Moriyama Mayumi and Nakayama Kyōko. Moriyama's husband was a member of the Diet when, she, after a thirty-year career in the Labor Ministry, ran successfully for the upper house in 1980. Nakayama had an even longer career in the Finance Ministry before running successfully for the upper house in 2007, when her husband Nariaki was a member of the lower house.

In contrast to the women who entered politics through their professional achievements, Nagaoka Keiko first participated in politics as a political wife. Her husband Yōji, a Harvard-educated veteran of the Agriculture Ministry, was recruited in 1996 by the Ibaraki branch of the LDP to run against Nakamura Kishirō, a former Minister of Construction, who had been convicted of bribery.<sup>24)</sup> Nagaoka lost in 2000, but he won a bi-election in 2003 and then a seat in the general election later that year. A member of the LDP faction headed by Kamei Shizuka, a staunch opponent of Prime Minister Koizumi's postal reforms, Yōji spoke out against the reforms but then, under party pressure, voted for them on July 5, 2005, thus, one magazine argued, betraying his faction. On August 1, Yōji hung himself, leaving no note. Kamei Shizuka blamed the suicide on the postal privatization bill. "I can't think of any other reason that troubled him and would lead to suicide," he said.<sup>25)</sup> Investigators reported that Nagaoka had been under a doctor's care for depression.<sup>26)</sup> Nevertheless, opponents of the reform pointed to the suicide of Nagaoka Yōji as symptomatic of the LDP's strong-armed tactics. Nagaoka Keiko, however, honored her husband's cooperation with the party and took his place as the candidate.

By recruiting attractive, accomplished, and personable women, Koizumi succeeded in drawing media attention to the LDP, but essentially his candidates were similar to LDP recruits of the past: bureaucrats, lawyers, academics, writers, television personalities, and members of political families. As the political scientist Masami Junnosuke observed, Koizumi fielded women, "not because he likes women but because they can be a useful part of election tactics."<sup>27)</sup> Koizumi's rival Kamei observed, "He is sending assassins, thinking people will accept it if they are women,"<sup>28)</sup> thus suggesting that the women were different only in appearance from any other political rival.<sup>29)</sup> From a scholarly point of view, Ray Christensen has concluded, "Koizumi has made only superficial changes in candidate selection practices."<sup>30)</sup>

In point of fact, the newly elected young and telegenic representatives of the LDP were not very different from the women legislators of the other parties. The youth of the newly recruited LDP women has been somewhat exaggerated. Koizumi's assassins were usually younger than the rebels they were assigned to defeat, but there were exceptions even to that generality; Katayama Satsuki was six years older than her reb-

el opponent, Kiuchi Minoru. The median age of the Koizumi women was fifty-two, only one year younger than for the LDP women who were incumbents or former Diet members and considerably higher than forty-six, the median age of the non-LDP women.

The non-LDP women, like their LDP counterparts, had considerable political and professional experience. Not surprisingly in a year when the LDP sweep reduced the number of members from other parties, all but one had already served in the Diet. The one newcomer was Kōri Kazuko of the Democratic Party Japan (DPJ), a former broadcaster and commentator for Tōhoku Broadcasting. Although the seven women of the DPJ were experienced legislators, their experience was of relatively short length; the most senior of them, Komiyama Yōko, had served only three terms.<sup>31)</sup> The DPJ had no reason to cede boasting rights over telegenic women to the LDP; both Kōri and Komiyama came to politics from careers in broadcasting. In addition to the DPJ women, the non-LDP women included four members of the New Kōmeitō, two members of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), two members of the Japan Communist Party (JCP), and two independents. Both independents, Tanaka Makiko and Noda Seiko, were former members of the LDP. The two SDP representatives were a physician and a peace activist. Both JCP representatives were veterans of careers in education. The comparison of Koizumi's new recruits to the incumbents and representatives of other parties makes clear that although his political ploys may have increased the number of LDP women and drawn media attention, he did not appreciably change the type of woman serving in the Diet, nor did he advance women's issues.

### **Assassins and Pioneers**

In the 1946 election, women candidates emerged from professional work (usually in fields regarded as appropriate for women), leadership in civic organizations (especially women's organizations), and political families. The women legislators of 2005 shared with the pioneers of 1946 relatively high levels of education and professional work experience. As a result of the postwar constitutional reforms that made Japanese women equal under the law, the levels of education attained by women legislators and the nature of the careers they had pursued were quite different in 2005 from the circumstances of 1946. Only six of the twenty-six LDP women elected in 2005 had studied in women-only institutions or had less than a college degree. The majority had studied at co-educational institutions that would have been closed to them prior to 1945 such as Tokyo University, Sophia University, Nihon University, Chūō University, Waseda University, or Keiō University. A number (Abe Toshiko, Inoguchi Kuniko, and Satō Yuriko) had doctoral degrees from American universities. And Koike Yuriko had received her undergraduate degree from Cairo University. Unlike the women of 1946, the women of 2005 had enjoyed opportunities to serve in local and national government. Ten of the LDP women had held Diet seats before and the rate of incumbency was even higher among non-LDP women. The connection to women's organizations, however, was much lower in 2005 than it had been in 1946. As will be noted below, family connections actually increased in importance for all legislators between 1946 and 2005.

The women legislators of 1946 had forged their careers when bureaucratic posts

were closed to women and the career opportunities that existed for women were shaped by state interest in women's bodies and women's capacities for nurture. The successful women candidates in 1946 included three physicians, a midwife, and a nurse as well as about fifteen teachers, most at the women's higher school level.<sup>32)</sup> In the years since 1946, women with medical and scientific expertise have declined in importance as potential political leaders. Women physicians, who no longer retain their prestige as experts on women's bodies, have almost disappeared from the ranks of legislators. Abe Tomoko, a pediatrician who belongs to the Social Democratic Party Japan, is exceptional. Midwives, who were once local authorities on modern medicine, have been subordinated to physicians in the postwar era. The presence of nurses such as Abe Toshiko in the Diet is one of the few remaining vestiges of the earlier importance of women's medical expertise in the politics of the nation.

In 2005, most of the women politicians with experience as educators came from universities rather than from girls' higher schools as had several of the pioneers of 1946.<sup>33)</sup> In the coeducational public high schools of postwar Japan male leadership has predominated. Such institutions have not fostered women leaders to the same extent that prewar women's higher schools did. Yamanaka Akiko, a faculty member at Hokkai Gakuen and the United Nations University, resembled her 1946 predecessors in that she, a graduate of Tsuda College, entered academia from the separate track created by women-only institutions. By contrast, Inoguchi Kuniko, a faculty member at Sophia University, earned her way into the ranks of the professoriate with a Ph.D. in political science from Yale University.<sup>34)</sup>

The women elected in 1946 had been active participants in women's organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Young Women's Christian Association, and suffrage groups. Seven had been officers of the Women's Suffrage League or its regional branches.<sup>35)</sup> Because so many of Koizumi's recruits had demanding careers, relatively few of them gained their reputations and political experience through civic organizations. In contrast to women in the immediate postwar era, however, the women of the new millennium have had opportunities to serve in local government. Several of the non-LDP women legislators have prior political experience in municipal or prefectural assemblies.

Membership in political families has facilitated women's access to politics. In 1946, when the American military occupation force had banned eighty percent of the incumbents from office, many Americans harbored suspicions that women in politics were stand-ins for ineligible men. There were a few, although not many, cases that lent credence to these suspicions. Kōro Mitsu, Mogami Hideko, and Togano Satoko in fact ran in place of their purged husbands. Kondō Tsuruyo sought office from Okayama after her incumbent brother was purged. Yamazaki Michiko ran in place of her husband, not because he was ineligible for office but because he had not arrived back from the war when candidacy papers had to be filed. Katō Shizue participated in politics in parallel with her husband.<sup>36)</sup> Only four of the thirty-nine women elected, then, could be considered replacements for purged politicians and the women who were related in any way to former Diet members totaled only six.

Political heirs were even more in evidence in 2005 than they were in 1946, with several women succeeding to office as daughters or granddaughters rather than as

wives. Tanaka Makiko and Obuchi Yūko are daughters of prime ministers who won office after their fathers died, Tanaka in 1993 and Obuchi in 2000. Noda Seiko's grandfather held a Diet seat, and in 1993 Noda won the seat he had held. Tsuchiya Shinako's father Yoshihiko served several terms in the upper house of the Diet before becoming governor of Saitama Prefecture. Tanabu Masayo worked as her father Masami's parliamentary secretary when he served in the lower house and after he moved to the upper. She won a seat in the lower house, while he continued to serve in the upper. Although these daughters and granddaughters present a sharp contrast to 1946, in fact second-generation politicians are considerably less common among women than among men. Over all, second generation politicians constitute approximately thirty percent of the lower house membership.<sup>37)</sup>

In addition to these five daughters or granddaughters, several women in the lower house of the legislature are now or were once married to other legislators. Two of the second-generation women legislators are or have been married to fellow legislators, Tanaka Makiko to Tanaka Naoki and Noda Seiko to Tsuruho Yosuke. Moriyama Mami and Fujino Makiko entered the Diet when their husbands were already members. Takaichi Sanae is married to fellow Diet member Yamamoto Taku. As noted above, Nagaoka Keiko is a widow who succeeded her husband. Okashita Nobuko likewise made the transition from political wife to politician. Her husband Akihiro had made two runs for the Diet, one as an independent in 1990 and one in 1996. After he died suddenly in 1998, Nobuko ran and won a seat. Of the ten women with family connections to politicians, then, only two are in any sense successors as widows. Naoko Taniguchi suggests that the prevalence of children rather than wives as successors can be explained by the LDP seniority system, which "encourages successors to enter politics at a young age and continuously return to the Diet as many times as possible so as to rise to a high intraparty position."<sup>38)</sup> Taniguchi's theory accounts for the behavior of the Hashimoto family when former prime minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō decided to retire from office rather than run in the 2005 election. Supporters called on his sixty-three-year-old wife Kumiko to run in his place, and neither Hashimoto nor his wife objected to the proposal.<sup>39)</sup> Just a few days later, however, Hashimoto Gaku, the prime minister's son, announced that he would run for the seat.<sup>40)</sup>

The changes in the gendered construction of political heirs in the era of women's suffrage are instructive. The 1946 election was notable as a moment of discontinuity rather than continuity in political history, but there were nevertheless second-generation politicians in the Diet, Hatoyama Ichirō and Inukai Ken being notable examples. Such political sons evoked little comment. Women who ran in place of their husbands were criticized for appearing to be forces of reform when in fact they were preserving the past. Naoko Taniguchi's formulation that successor wives are being replaced by successor children represents the normalization of women in Japan's electoral politics, for there could not have been successor wives prior to 1946. The daughter successors of 2005 present a contrast to 1946, when there were none, but women are not equal heirs with their brothers. The percentage of second-generation politicians is much lower among women members of the lower house (roughly ten percent) than in the body as a whole (thirty percent).<sup>41)</sup> Moreover, daughter heirs seem to be in some measure products of small family size in Japan; they often come, as in the case of Tanaka

Makiko and Obuchi Yūko, from families where there are no sons.

One constant in six decades of women's suffrage in Japan has been the close scrutiny under which elected women have to perform their public duties. In 1946, the press gave extraordinary attention to four women investigated for election violations. In three cases, the violations related to statements about the highest level of education of the candidate, minor violations that would normally have drawn little attention.<sup>42)</sup> In 2005, LDP officials chastised one newly elected woman for absence from the Diet. When Fujino Makiko kept a commitment made six months earlier to give presentations on cooking and thus failed to attend a Diet session, she was attacked both by her own party and by the opposition. Sasagawa Takashi, acting chair of the LDP General Council said, "She should be reminded of the responsibilities that come with being a Diet member." The LDP General Secretary maintained that "Public service must take precedence." Noda Yoshihiko, Diet Affairs Chief of the DPJ said, "She got her priorities completely wrong. She is like a child when it comes to politics."<sup>43)</sup>

There have been subtle changes over the decades in how women legislators position themselves as political actors. On June 20, 1946, when women Diet members met with General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, Katō Shizue spoke on behalf of the group, asking for permanent abolition of war, legislation protecting women and children, elimination of the feudalistic family system, and improved supplies of food.<sup>44)</sup> As noted above, Fujino Makiko is an example of a woman elected in 2005 who likewise asserts her special expertise on children and matters relating to kitchens. Koizumi's assassins, however, made few claims to gendered expertise but rather positioned themselves as Koike Yuriko did, as gender-neutral reformers. Far from acting as reformers fighting for equality for women, some of Koizumi's recruits, as women of the ruling party, defend the status quo. For instance, when Takaichi Sanae was named to a cabinet post in 2006, she opposed allowing married couples to use different surnames, in spite of the fact that she herself used her maiden name in her political career.<sup>45)</sup>

However carefully the LDP women position themselves as political actors equal in credentials to any contenders, they nevertheless find themselves deployed as emblems of women's reproductive functions. It was widely rumored that Koizumi would make Inoguchi Kuniko his foreign minister, a post that would have made use of her education in political science and her experience as an ambassador to a United Nations conference. Koizumi did appoint her to a cabinet position (in the process violating the LDP seniority system), but the appointment was to be the first minister for Gender Equality and Social Affairs rather than foreign minister. To be sure, Inoguchi has sometimes positioned herself as a wife and mother. On her 2005 web page, she described herself also as the wife of Inoguchi Takashi, professor at Tokyo University, and the mother of two daughters, rather than limiting information to her public activities.<sup>46)</sup> In a scholarly article published in 1987 at the height of Japan's prosperity, Inoguchi positioned herself as an advocate of the Japanese family. She complained about the hollowing out of the Japanese family as husbands and fathers left to work in luxurious offices and newly built factories. To a lesser extent, she made herself an advocate of the children growing up in bedroom suburbs without amenities such as sidewalks. She wrote approvingly of corporations that supported families through flexible



working hours and child-care leaves.<sup>47)</sup>

## Conclusion

One year after the first thirty-nine women were elected to the Diet on April 10, 1946, new elections were held in preparation for the implementation of the new constitution. Under new conditions (redrawn boundaries for electoral districts and a single rather than a plural vote) and without much support from the parties, many women failed to win reelection. Only fourteen of the first thirty-nine women legislators ever held office again.

There are several reasons to think that the women newly elected as LDP Diet members in 2005 may have difficulty retaining their seats in the next election. First, Koizumi, the architect of the scheme that brought so many women into politics is no longer prime minister and announced in September 2008 that he will not run in the next election, allowing his second son Shinjirō to be the candidate in his stead.<sup>48)</sup> Kristi Govell and Steven Vogel have noted that the victory of the LDP in 2005 depended so heavily on Koizumi's personal charisma that it will be "difficult to replicate without him at the helm."<sup>49)</sup>

The candidates whom Koizumi recruited in 2005 are particularly vulnerable. Because Prime Minister Abe Shinzō decided in December 2006 to readmit to the LDP postal rebels who had defeated assassins, there will be more than the usual number of incumbents vying for party endorsements.<sup>50)</sup> Further, "Koizumi's Children," the eighty-three legislators (sixteen of whom were women) who won seats for the first time in 2005, have not been well integrated into the LDP. They were discouraged from joining factions. Thus, they lack ties with politicians other than Koizumi to advocate for their placement on the party lists for the proportional seats. Because of Koizumi's retirement many of his so-called children feel that they are like "carp on a chopping board." LDP officials say, for instance, that Inoguchi Kuniko and Kondō Mitsue, who were at the top of proportional representation lists in 2005, are no longer in line for preferential treatment.<sup>51)</sup> Especially if the LDP should decline in popularity, candidates lower on the proportional lists will not get seats and just as the number of DPJ women representatives in the lower house fell from fifteen to seven with the LDP sweep in 2005, the number of LDP women in the Diet may fall.

The high number of women elected in 2005 is not, however, simply a temporary by-product of Koizumi's plan for revenge. Rather, Koizumi's somewhat eccentric strategy of parachuting women into districts was made possible by the high levels of women's education in Japan and by a growing cohort of women with university, bureaucratic, and other professional careers. These conditions will make it possible for women of other parties to take their place in the Diet. The 2007 elections for the upper house brought a record number of women to the Diet. The total of twenty-six women elected exceeded the twenty-two elected in 1989. The fact that fourteen of the twenty-six women were members of the DPJ serves as a warning that the LDP has no monopoly on the recruitment of women into politics.

## Notes

- 1) "Women Win 43 Seats in General Election," *Japanese Women* no. 95 (March 1, 2006), 1. In April 2006, Ōta Kazumi of the DJP won a by-election in Chiba 7, increasing the total number of women to forty-four.
- 2) George Nishiyama, "'Madonna' Candidates Just Flashy Spin on Same Old LDP," *Japan Times*, September 9, 2005.
- 3) As discussed in Franciska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 311.
- 4) The only other woman besides the assassins who was able to emerge victorious in a single-member district was Tokashiki Naomi. Because I am not certain how dependent she was on Koizumi, I am including her among "other newcomers." Of the nine LDP women elected in 2003, two were postal rebels (Noda Seiko and Nose Kazuko) and two were recruited as assassins (Koike Yuriko and Nishikawa Kyōko). For statistics on the number of women elected from each party in 2003, see *Japanese Women* no. 91 (March 1, 2004), 1.
- 5) For a list of the assassins and their targets, see Matthew Carlson, "Japan's Postal Privatization Battle: The Continuing Reverberations for the Liberal Democratic Party of Rebels-Assassins Conflicts," *Asian Survey* vol. 48 no. 4 (July–August 2008), 612.
- 6) Reiji Yoshida, "Koike Takes on Kobayashi as LDP Hits Postal Rebels," *Japan Times*, August 11, 2005.
- 7) Norimitsu Onishi uses "telegenic" in "Why Japan Seems Content to Be Run by One Party," *New York Times*, September 7, 2005, and "younger" in "Koizumi's Party, Backing Reform, Wins by Landslide," *New York Times*, September 12, 2005.
- 8) See for instance Richard Lloyd Parry, "Victory for the Bold: Koizumi Crushes his Election Enemies," *Times*, September 12, 2005.
- 9) Parry, "Victory for the Bold"; Reiji Yoshida, "Bureaucrat Weighs Election Run as 'Assassin' for Koizumi," *Japan Times*, August 14, 2005; Miwa Suzuki, "Koizumi's Secret Weapon: Women," *Japan Times*, August 19, 2005.
- 10) Andrew Monahan, "SIPA's Assassin," *Communiqué* [Columbia University School of International & Public Affairs] vol. 15 no. 3 (March 20, 2006), 1.
- 11) See for instance photographs in *Mainichi shinbun*, August 21, 2005, and *Japan Times*, August 31, 2005.
- 12) "Nurse Group Exec Abe to Run for LDP in Okayama vs. Hiranuma," *Japan Policy and Politics*, August 22, 2005.
- 13) "'Assassin' Koike, Ex-LDP Old Guard Kobayashi Clash in Debate," *Japan Policy and Politics*, September 5, 2005.
- 14) On the assignments of assassins, see Carlson, "Japan's Postal Privatization Battle," 612.
- 15) "LDP Taps Ex-disarmament Envoy Inoguchi as Candidate," *Japan Times*, August 17, 2005.
- 16) For a brief account of Fujino's life, see Veronica Chambers, *Kickboxing Geishas: How Modern Japanese Women are Changing Their Nation*, (New York: Free Press, 2007), 162–166.
- 17) Leo Lewis, "TV Pastry Chef Offers Voters a Lighter Brand of Politics," *Times*, September 2, 2005.
- 18) Bruce Wallace, "Japan Election Campaign Kicks off with Color, Heat," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 2005.
- 19) Wallace, "Japan Election Campaign."
- 20) See for instance Lewis, "TV Pastry Chef."
- 21) Olivier Fabre, "Japan's Cookery Candidate Says Politics about Love," *Toronto Star*, September 8, 2005.
- 22) Fabre, "Japan's Cookery Candidate Says Politics about Love." The claim to expertise on working mothers is from Lewis, "TV Pastry Chef."
- 23) <http://www.makikofujino.com>. Retrieved November 5, 2008.
- 24) Sonni Efron, "In Japan, Voter Loyalty Withstands the Winds of Change," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 2000.
- 25) "LDP Lawmaker Nagaoka Found Hanged," *Japan Times*, August 2, 2005.
- 26) "Depression Cited," *Japan Times*, August 3, 2008.
- 27) Suzuki, "Koizumi's Secret Weapon."
- 28) "LDP Rebel Slams Koizumi's Tactics," *Japan Times*, August 15, 2005.

- 29) The LDP slated a young male, Horie Takafumi, rather than a woman against Kamei.
- 30) Ray Christensen, "An Analysis of the 2005 Japanese General Election: Will Koizumi's Reforms Endure?" *Asian Survey* vol. 46 no. 4 (July–August 2006), 498.
- 31) Basic information on DPJ incumbents is available at <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/member>. The seven DPJ women elected were Kikuta Makito, Komiyama Yasuko, Komiyama Yoko, Kōri Kazuko, Nakano Hiroko, Nishimura Chinami, and Tanabu Masayo. Takai Miho lost her seat in the September election but regained it after a resignation in December. Retrieved November 5, 2008.
- 32) Sally Ann Hastings, "Women Legislators in the Postwar Diet," in *Re-imagining Japanese Women*, ed. Anne E. Imamura, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 273.
- 33) Exceptions were Iijima Yukari (LDP), Iwaki Nobuko (LDP), and Takahashi Chizuko (JCP).
- 34) Her curriculum vitae can be found at <http://www.kunikoinoguchi.jp/en/index.html>. Retrieved November 5, 2008.
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- 36) Hastings, "Women Legislators," 273–275.
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- 38) Taniguchi, "Diet Members and Seat Inheritance," 69.
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- 51) "Koizumi Kids' Brace for Battle," *Yomiuri shimbun*, October 5, 2008.