

**BEYOND COMMON SENSE:
NEGOTIATING CONSTRUCTIONS OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN JAPAN**

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ABSTRACT.

This thesis is concerned with lifestyles in Japan that have hitherto remained largely unreported. The main research categories are gay men, lesbian women, single men and women, and feminist men and women. In addition attention is given to transvestites, transsexuals and hermaphrodites. The main aim of the thesis is to provide an ethnography of the lives of the various categories, which is a new angle from which to view Japanese society.

The research methods consist of participant observation and in-depth open-ended free attitude interviews. Participant observation in this case includes all aspects of people's life: personal relationships and reading what people from the categories say they read. In addition I developed experiential research, i.e. experiencing what informants may experience.

The major question from which the research started out is that of how people whose feelings, ideas or lifestyles do not agree with heterosexual marriage cope with life in a society in which everyone is expected to marry. In this sense the research goes a step beyond what much of anthropology does: establishing what are more or less standard lifestyles in a particular culture.

After discussing the position of marriage in Japanese society in chapter three, including political and legal aspects, this thesis discusses how people of the various research categories may try to fit in with the idea that one should marry by entering marriage and the problems this may give in chapter four. In chapter five alternative lifestyles are discussed and in six ways of dealing with an outside world that has little understanding of people with alternative lifestyles, feelings, or ideas. In chapter seven ways in which the various categories are regarded and relate to each other, especially the relations between gender and sexuality and discourses of sex and sexual activities are investigated, as well as debates within and between individual and circles consisting of people from the various categories.

In conclusion four themes, that played a role in the background throughout the ethnographic body of the thesis, are drawn together: 1) space, gender and sexuality, 2) constructions of homosexuality, 3) selves, and 4) changes: developments that took place while the research was conducted and have continued since.

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1: Introduction.

My first visit to Japan took place in 1986. I was aged 25 and stayed in Japan for one long hot summer. Contrary to my expectations, from the moment I descended from the plane I felt familiar with the people and the environment, almost as if I had come home. It was the clearest example of *déjà vu* I ever experienced. This did not mean that everything about Japan was unproblematic. One of the things I found disagreeable, was that people frequently asked whether I was married and if I was not, whether I had a girlfriend. Since I was openly gay in the Netherlands, such questions were as good as new to me and I had difficulty dealing with them without upsetting those who asked them. This made me wonder what Japanese like me do with such questions, and, indeed, how they cope with an environment in which everyone is expected to marry. Because of the almost total lack of material on homosexuality in contemporary Japan I limited my MA thesis to discrimination against women based on a rubric in Japanese women's magazine Fujin Kōron, called Watashi no Kokuhatu (My Complaint), which refers to the magazine's request that readers write about sex discrimination. Marriage was the major focus of the complaints (Lunsing 1989).

After I graduated I visited Japan again, in 1988. I contacted gay groups and spoke with lesbian and feminist women. In gay circles it was thought that most gay men in Japan marry, which was seen as detrimental to the formation of a gay movement. Among feminist women I found that marriage was a much discussed

theme, whether they were married themselves or not. My research theme was decided. I would investigate how gays, lesbians, women's and men's liberationists, singles and other people, such as transsexuals, transvestites and hermaphrodites, whose ideas, feelings, or lifestyles are at variance with Japanese constructions of marriage, and inherently the construction of life, live in Japan.

Common senses.

Common sense is a cultural construction which differs from one culture to another (Geertz 1983). Since many people think that common sense is a matter of using one's brain and sensible people will come to the same conclusion, if one questions it one may encounter reactions varying from ridicule to aggression, something I experienced often in England where common sense is held in high esteem. An example of common sense is the idea that milk bottles are ecologically more friendly than milk cartons, as The Guardian recently (May 1995) wrote. Dutch research, however, proved that the amount of energy and chemicals used to transport and clean the bottles for reuse is more polluting than the total pollution caused by manufacture, transport and discarding of cartons, as a Dutch newspaper, NRC Handelsblad, reported about a month earlier. Since many people perceive common sense as a manifestation of intelligence, it is little questioned. Common sense is a cultural phenomenon, liable to change¹. Geertz wrote that:

"...perhaps it is an inherent characteristic of common-sense thought precisely to deny that (it is a cultural phenomenon) and to affirm its tenets are immediate deliverances of experience, not deliberated reflections upon it (Geertz 1983:75)."

The Dutch equivalent of common sense is gezond verstand, which literally means healthy sense. This made me aware at an early age of common sense's potential lack of sensibility. My mother said: "Why don't you go and play outside like a healthy Dutch boy?" And I thought: "I don't wanna be a healthy Dutch boy." As Geertz writes, the idea of naturalness is one of the features characterizing common sense thought (Ibid.:85). Instead of common sense, Ohnuki-Tierney uses the term

"...naturalization to refer to a historical process whereby culturally determined values and norms acquire a state that makes them seem 'natural', not arbitrary, to people" (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993:6, borrowing from Bourdieu).

Naturalized ideas are part of common sense. Durkheim's "normal" sociological phenomena, phenomena that can be found in all or at least a majority of individuals in a society (Durkheim 1964:55), are, when it concerns collective thought, common sense ideas. He calls variations present in minorities "morbid" or "pathological" (Ibid.) and writes that the healthy is by

definition normal (Ibid.:58). This view denies the possibility of alternative ideas with a positive value.

In England nature appears to play a foremost role in deciding what is "normal" and what is not. Strathern wrote a book which discusses the way the naturalized view of life, that stems from the Victorian age, exerts influence on the way people relate to each other (Strathern 1992B). Seeing discussions on British television I noticed many times that in England common sense is closely related to ideas of what is normal or natural. To give an example, I watched a television programme in which the audience participated in a discussion about the question of whether lesbian women should be allowed to have children by artificial insemination. Some people remarked that it was "not natural" and "not normal" for lesbian women to have children in this manner, to which lesbian women replied that they were "natural" and "normal", which was repeated a number of times until the programme came to an end. Such discussions are about common sense. The lesbian women adapted their argument to the idea that it is important to be natural and normal and failed to question what these terms mean. By stressing that they are natural and normal, they adhered to the common sense idea that such a thing exists and failed to achieve something that might have become a discussion instead of a fight in which one party says yes and the other no.

Some lesbian and gay scholars are among the foremost questioners of common sense, even if they do not always realize it (Butler 1993, Probyn 1993, Weeks 1991A:16). There is much more advanced thinking about sexuality and relationships within some

lesbian and gay circles than within academia (Butler 1993:239-240). This thinking is often at variance with common sense ideas about sexuality and relationships and may lead to constructing alternative common senses. Because it is not academic in the sense that it does not find its base embedded in existing academic discourse, but rather in individual or group thought, it may be difficult to relate to existing academic work, but that does not mean that it is less interesting or valid. An example concerns prejudice against homosexuality in academic circles. Carol Warren, who conducted research on gay men, wrote that in the social sciences people are generally more tolerant of homosexuality than elsewhere (Warren 1988:63). Is it possible to tolerate something if one does not have negative feelings towards in the first place? Tolerance implies prejudice. When I was nineteen, in my environment in the Netherlands, we established that nobody has the right to tolerate, i.e. discriminate against, homosexuality. It seems that common sense within academic circles never arrived at this and that many scholars think that tolerance is acceptable.

Few scholars mention common sense as an important organizing principle in Japan. Although many must be aware of its existence, it is seldom explicated. The Japanese language has a number of terms that might be translated as common sense (Aoyama 1988:191-192), rhetorics (Lock 1992A, Lock 1993A & B, Martinez 1992), or generally prevalent ideas. The most all-encompassing is jôshiki, others include ippan tsûkan and ippan tsûnen, whereby the first translates as common sense and the last two as general feelings or general concepts. Jôshiki was a word many informants used to

explain what they had to deal with when relating to people who are not familiar with lifestyles and ideas other than "normal". At the same time jōshiki is used in the meaning of practical knowledge, which, unlike in England, is frequently questioned. Marriage is a prime example of a concept supported by common sense ideas, which is illustrated by the fact that marriage is widely believed to be "natural" (for England: Evans 1993, Strathern 1992B, Weeks 1983 & 1991B) or in Japanese shizen, notwithstanding anthropological evidence that shows that the contents of marriage vary from one culture to another to the extent that there are cultures in which there is hardly anything resembling marriage as it is known in western Europe, north America, or Japan (Rivière 1971, Leach 1991).

Much research on Japan concentrates on the household or the family in history (e.g. Kanjō 1992, Neuss-Kaneko 1990, Takamura 1991), changes which occurred recently (e.g. Fuse 1984, Kanei 1988, Möhwald 1990, Sasabe & Katsura 1990), or on women (e.g. Imamura 1987, Robins-Mowry 1983, Schooler & Smith 1978, Smith & Wiswell 1982, Vogel 1978), and changes in their position (e.g. Condon 1986, Geddes 1970, Lenz 1990). In this work marriage is considered to be of central importance in the life of people. The fact that for many people it constitutes a problem rather than being a self-evident part of their life-course is usually overlooked. Almost all research related to marriage concentrates on those who marry, seldom is attention given to those who do not. If attention is given it is little, as in Lebra (1984), who discusses unmarried women among her sample of one hundred women, but unmarried women receive a coverage that compares in no way

to that of married women. This is a bias. There is no reason to assume that those larger in numbers are necessarily more important for the understanding of societies and cultures than those smaller in numbers. Like Lebra, most researchers appear not to be aware of this bias².

An obvious cause of this bias in Japan is that the number of those who never marry has been extremely small, especially from the fifties to the eighties of this century. Until the late seventies 98% of Japanese women experienced marriage at least once in their lifetime (Higuchi 1984:106, Imamura 1987:24, Lunsing 1989, Keizai Kikakuchō 1992:29). This figure suggests that those whose feelings or ideologies do not comply with the expectations of marriage are in an awkward position. As Weeks (1991B) indicates this is not much different from the central position of marriage in Europe and north America until the seventies: other ways of life were hardly recognized. Considering the fact that most western scholars have grown up before the seventies the fact that most tend to overlook other ways of life is not all that surprising. As a result a picture of Japan has been painted that is largely coloured by "normality", which makes everything that deviates from an extremely restricted standard implicitly into anomalies. As De Lauretis writes, the "normal" does not exist independently, and she claims that Freud was adamant that homosexuality was not necessary pathological (De Lauretis 1994:17-28). Of course there is a thing called "normal" in people's minds, but this is an impossible construction, because who is to decide what is normal³?

Recently Japanese books have appeared on alternatives to

marriage, including what is called jijitsukon (common law marriage, Ninomiya 1991), being single (Ebisaka 1986, Aoki 1987, Kamisaka 1991, Matsubara 1988, Tanimura 1990, Yoshihiro 1987 & 1988) and even same sex relationships (Fushimi 1991, Itô S. 1993). A rare article by Ueno (1991B) discusses singles and same sex relationships in terms of alternative forms of households. In European languages work discussing these topics in Japan is very rare and even in Japan, while there has been a virtual explosion in recent years, the main stress of scholarly material related to marriage deals with changes in more or less standard, or "normal", marriage and household (Meguro 1987, Kamihara 1992, Itamoto 1992A), rather than with those who do not marry. It seems that common sense discourages scholars from investigating topics that are different from those that are established topics, simply because much previous research has been conducted on them.

Anthropology makes progress by refining debates about themes (Geertz 1993), as well as accumulating knowledge. We all need to be critical and question our own and each other's findings in order to help us avoid developing our own common sense which leads to stagnation. I believe common sense concerning the centrality of marriage in Japanese society has prevented scholars from looking beyond Japanese "normality", which is frustrating for those who endeavour not to be "normal" and try to relate to a subject in which people like themselves are neglected. Similar to black people and women who are said to have more worldviews than the one white heterosexual male scholars may have due to their particular background (Whitehead & Price 1986), I have worldviews that are little reflected in existing academic work.

Sex and gender.

This brings me to the major theme of this thesis: categorisation of people. Mary Douglas wrote that "the primary social distinction" of human beings is that of the two sexes, the female and the male, which she associates with "primitive cultures" (Douglas 1992:140), which according to later scholars do not exist and never existed (Ohnuki-Tierney 1987:4). I know of no culture in which the first question when someone is born is not: "Is it a boy or a girl?" People are divided into male and female, which is a division requested on most forms one has to fill out, and it is the only feature each person has that is expected to remain unaltered throughout his or her life. Height varies with age, eyes may change color and hair most likely does, names can change, but one's sex remains until death, or so says common sense. As De Lauretis writes, however, ticking the box of female or male on a form is entering a sex-gender system. Rather than marking an existing feature of oneself on the form, this process can be regarded as one in which the chosen category marks itself on the person who fills it out (quoted in Moore 1994A:85). Filling out forms may socialize people into regarding themselves as belonging to one category or another.

What is sex? Is it not merely having a particular type of genitals, i.e. either a penis or a vagina? Why is such a point being made of some small bodyparts that are usually kept covered

up when in company with others? Attached to sex as genitals are a large variety of attributes, known as gender attributes, that are constructed to be either feminine or masculine. Being a man or a woman gained in significance far beyond the mere genitals. From "men do not cry" to "real men do not eat quiche" and from "women are intuitive" to "women have babies", common senses are heavily loaded with limitations to how someone born with one set of genitals or the other behaves, including dress, food, hobbies, employment and speech.

It has been a long time since Simone de Beauvoir wrote her epic on the second sex, which states that one is not born a woman, but educated to be one (1976A & B). This implies that socialization forces people into "a mould that does not take their authentic form" (Strathern 1992A:67). Anthropologists have spent much effort mapping out gender structures in different societies, i.e. ideal types of behaviour of men and women. This brought proof that gender structures are not the same in every society (Ardener 1978, Sanday 1990). Features that are seen as masculine in one culture can be seen as feminine in another. Whereas in western cultures and in Japan emotionality is seen as feminine, in Iran it is seen as masculine (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomy 1988:48-49, quoting Hall). This does not mean that women in Iran are less emotional than those in Japan or western countries or that Iranian men are more emotional than those elsewhere, but that their culture constructed them to be less or more emotional. Discourses vary, even if features of real life may be similar. Within anthropology work in the area of gender socialization

"...has frequently been very functionalist, especially in the past, in that it tended to imply a situation in which society had need of particular sorts of acculturated persons, who were rather uncomplicatedly female or male. Gender identity was certainly thought to be culturally constructed, but it was conceived of, in the end, as little more than a self-evident outcome of sexual differentiation" (Moore 1994A:43).

This line of thinking can be related to the idea that nature is to culture as woman is to man (Ortner 1974), which, notwithstanding its close resemblance to constructions of the sexes according to Nazi ideology (Badinter 1986:184), seems to have been quite popular. It not only failed to question whether women see themselves as closer to nature (Moore 1994B), but also the possibility of people who do not socialize as is expected in line with their sex, who do not become male men or female women. It supports sexist ideas concerning the nature of the sexes. If gender is seen as a set of attributes that is not only assigned to a sex, but one that necessarily accompanies a sex, much of the value of making a distinction between gender and sex is lost. The self-evidency or naturalness of men being men and women being women is reinforced.

Following De Beauvoir's line of thought, Monique Wittig wrote an essay in which she concludes that lesbian women are not women, because they are not socialized as women (Wittig 1992).

This alters the meaning of the term "woman" in the sense that it does not refer to sex, to genitals, but to female gender attributes, which according to Wittig include loving men. Therefore lesbians are not women. Many people think that an important distinction between men and women is that women can bear children. This, when looked at more closely, implies that a majority of those with female genitals fall outside the category. The age at which most women can bear children is limited. Further there are women who are barren throughout their lives and women who do not wish to have children. Are they also not women? In all human societies women who are sexually accessible are constructed as a category different from those who are not (Needham 1979:18). Women who have passed the menopause also constitute a different category from those who can become pregnant (Lock 1993 A & B).

Can all these categories of women be assigned the same gender? If they are, it leads to their construction as abnormal women. If they are not, it implies that there are at least two genders of the female sex which leads the way to assuming that there are probably more. Another common sense idea concerning the sexes is that men are strong and women weak physically. When measuring averages such a result might be obtained, but what about weak men and strong women? What about women who do body building⁴ and men who hardly move about except in their car? When constructions of gender are taken strictly, it is most likely that the vast majority of all people are anomalous in one way or other. Seeing a society's gender ideology as some monolithic construction and therefore the category of the woman

as unitary and opposed to the category of the man is oversimplistic. There are hardly any people who totally fit either the female or the male gender. Multiplicity, complexity and the context have to be taken into account (Lepowsky 1990, Meigs 1990), but does that mean that we need more than two genders?

Lately the idea that seeing gender as two sets of attributes linked to sex is questioned in what is called "queer studies", by people like Judith Butler (1990, 1993). Her conclusion that people cannot simply be divided into two genders was my starting point. Freedom from gender limitations was a theme I discussed with many friends in the early eighties. We did not endeavour to invent more genders, but rather to destabilize the rigidity of gender constructions by combining existing gender attributes in different ways. That way attributes that are seen as female can remain female and those that are seen as male can remain male. They are dissociated from people's sexes, i.e. genitals. We saw gender not as wholes but as sets from which people can take parts to assemble any possible combination, which agrees with the view of Amadiume (1987), who found in Nigeria that gender attributes do not necessarily coincide with sex.

All my research categories consist of people who fail to fit Japanese common sense constructions of either female or male gender. Gay men and lesbian women are not primarily sexually attracted to the category they are supposed to be attracted to, single heterosexuals are not married and thereby fail to meet the idea that all people marry, and feminist women do not adhere to their assigned gender expectation which says that they should defer to men. Some scholars have pointed out that structurally

the only humans are men and that women are derivatives of them (Melhuus 1993, referring to Dumont). In the case of Japan this point was made by Kawashima Takeyoshi, who wrote that women were not seen as humans but as objects (1974:36). The feminist scholar Ueno Chizuko extends this, using Marxist-feminist theory, to children (1990A:e.g. 65, 103-106) and a further extension is made by Hashimoto Osamu, who includes unmarried men (1988:20-28, 62). Women, children and unmarried men are all outside the category of fully human. Hashimoto's reasoning includes all my research categories, except for married homosexual men, whose sexual desire conflicts with assigned gender attributes.

Finding selves.

How people who perceive their personal attributes as differing from the ones they are assigned live their lives in Japan, how they see and relate to Japanese society and how they construct selves in relation to society and for themselves, are central questions of this thesis. They may choose to try to adapt as well as possible to society's demands by suppressing their feelings (passing; Goode 1961), they may choose to divide their lives into a public part in which they behave conform to assigned gender attributes and a private part in which other characteristics are expressed (compartmentalisation; Ibid., or segmentation; Tuan 1982), or they may choose to think that society is wrong and that their problems are nothing but the result of a society that has ordered things "the wrong way" and try to change that, rather

than themselves. They may try to alter common sense.

These methods are known within western scholarship concerning gender and sexuality. All three methods are seen as conflict-ridden. The first and second produce conflict within the individual concerned, the third with society. Which is the more effective and less stressful way to deal with the problem depends on personal qualities as well as one's surroundings, and is liable to show cultural variation. Within lesbian and gay studies in western countries it is usually implicitly expected that the first two are psychologically harmful and that the third is the only way that can lead to a satisfactory lifestyle (e.g. Moses 1978, Signorile 1994, Schuyf 1994). Feminists rarely discuss their special position within society, but if they do, their reasoning is similar: feminist women should not be afraid to use the label of feminist and positively assume a feminist identity (Davis 1977, Probyn 1993).

Arguing differently, one can switch identities as suits oneself whenever one feels like it and still be positively gay, lesbian, feminist, single, or whatever, because it is after all something personal. Similar attitudes have been reinvented lately by American queer theorists like Judith Butler (1990, 1993) who argues that identities are not the same as roles. Butler wrote in an essay that she was "off to Yale to be a lesbian" (Butler 1991:18), which means not that she does not see herself as a lesbian otherwise, but that posing as one is something different. Butler and other Americans seem to find this idea disconcerting (Creet 1995), possibly because they are so used to identifying themselves as lesbian or gay that they feel their identity is at

stake when they do not. The strong identification with labels such as gay and lesbian seems to be particular to American and English culture. It is, nevertheless, an illusion to think that by identifying with a label one can make people see one as one wants to be seen. Whatever label one assumes, how one is perceived depends upon the other.

An angle that is frequently used in discussing lesbians, gays and feminist women is that of counter-culture or counter-values (Davis 1977, Ueno 1988B). An example of counter-culture might be the lesbian and gay communities in major American cities. Their values, however, are often not very different from mainstream culture (Murray 1992A) and people appear to have little difficulty leaving these communities and returning to mainstream lifestyles, suppressing their homosexuality (Lynch 1992). Gay communities are by and large not intentionally counter-cultural and do not have counter-values other than that it is good to be gay, which is often contradictorily combined with the idea that it is better to keep the expression of homosexuality within the boundaries of communities (Weeks 1983:224, Signorile 1994). Counter-values may be more prominent in feminist circles, but they also may decide that it is time to get on with life and adapt to general values and express their counter-values only within feminist circles.

Deviance, a term that is often used in relation to the categories of this thesis, is itself a term, the use of which suggests that scholars are themselves constrained by notions of "normal". Only in common sense does normality exist. People may try to appear as normal, which means that they try to make others

see them as such, but which does not mean that they really are. People present something of themselves rather than that they show what they are. This theme is discussed by people such as Goffman (1987), in his work on "presentation of self", and he and others liken it to playing roles in a drama (Lyman & Scott 1975) and adopt terms like mask, (Psathas 1980, Hollis 1985, Goffman 1987) and role, which are related to Mauss's concepts of personne and personnage (Mauss 1985). A common way of presentation is that of what is seen as normal in a given context. This presentation of selves as "normal" makes that others whose presentation differs come to be seen as deviant and are possibly labelled in a negative sense: they are stigmatized (Goffman 1980).

This interactionist approach has been widely used in explanations of Japanese behaviour. Japanese are said to make a distinction between tatemae (face) behaviour and their honne (real feelings). There are contexts in which they show their tatemae and others in which they show their honne, roughly overlapping with what are called soto (outside) and uchi (inside) contexts (e.g. Bachnik & Quinn eds. 1994). Both honne and tatemae are interactional concepts. Japanese are taught the ability to switch between different forms of behaviour and between different situations from an early age (Hendry 1984, 1986, Tobin 1992), and learn to be able to distinguish situations in which each type of behaviour is appropriate, an ability, called kejime, that is thought to be essential to the maintenance of Japanese social order (Bachnik 1992). If this is so, one might expect that Japanese lesbians and gays and other people with characteristics that disagree with gender ascriptions find it relatively easy to

switch between different presentations and to order their feelings in agreement with what situations expect of them. This hypothesis is investigated in this dissertation.

The interactionist approach towards the self has a major flaw. It says that people adapt their presentation to social structures (Carrithers 1985, Taylor 1985) which have been made by people. The individual self tends to be neglected. Durkheimian thought holds that the individual self-aware self only exists in modern western societies (Mauss 1985) and all other peoples are implicitly less developed. This stance is impossible (Cohen 1994). Japanese, and any other people, are individuals with their own individual views (Hendry 1992C). Cultural limitations may make it difficult or even impossible to express them openly, and even when expressed people may not understand them as intended but fit the expressions to their understanding. But this does not mean that they are not important for the understanding of people. There needs to be an inner self. While it may seem impossible to investigate this inner self, also called self-awareness or self-consciousness, ignoring it does not help to understand people. It must be taken into account (Cohen 1994, Moore 1994A).

In the Japanese case the inner invisible self, that part of the conscious self that people regard as private and do not discuss or show in other ways, is much larger than in America (Barnlund 1975), which might imply that it is also more important to the individual's sense of self. Lebra postulates an inner self from which the everyday behaviour is organized. This inner self is felt to be more important than the interactional self. She also postulates the importance of muga, the non-self, raw nature

without reflection, which is obviously related to the Buddhist anatma or non-soul (Morris 1994:49-69). She thinks this is the part of the self Japanese value most (Lebra 1992). In this thesis the relation between inner self, muga and the ways people cope with being "not normal" is also investigated. After all, it may for instance be all right for gay men to act as if they were heterosexual in most contexts, but where does that leave their inner self? How and why do people combine roles that are at odds with each other and what if they do not?

Historical developments and constructions.

To give some background on how the major research categories are discussed in academic circles, of the historical material that exists on constructions of them, and a history in which light they may be seen, I discuss here feminist women, female homosexuality and male homosexuality as constructed from Japanese history. Since it concerns academic and historical constructions, one should keep in mind that they may not have much to do with actual behaviour or their own constructions of what they are.

Feminism.

While most Japanese feminists who think about their origins place the beginning of feminism in Japan at the emergence of Seitôsha (Blue Stockings Society), and people like the poetess Yosano Akiko and the politician Hiratsuka Raichô who became active in the beginning of this century, others place it sooner.

Some think that for instance Sei Shônagon, writer of Makura no sôshi (The pillow book) who lived about 1,000 years ago, could be seen as a feminist avant la lettre. She writes for instance of irritating habits of lovers who do not get up quietly in the morning but bustle around flapping with their fans for a long time, waking her up, until they finally leave (Sei 1962). Since I use the term feminist women to represent women who do not comply with gender assignations, Sei Shônagon would be one of them, just like many other historical and mythical figures, such as Hôjô Masako, who appropriated supreme power in Japan in her time (Sansom 1961) and, indeed, Amaterasu ômikami, the sun goddess from whom the imperial family is said to stem in a direct lineage (Sansom 1978, Gössman 1990)⁵.

Sharon Sievers places the beginning of feminism in Japan with Kishida Toshiko, who toured Japan in the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century to talk to women about their civil rights (Sievers 1983:33-41). When I proposed Kishida as the starting point to one of the women who started the ôman ribu movement in the seventies, she was amazed. She regarded Kishida as a politician who was not particularly involved in women's issues. As she, and most contemporary feminists implicitly see it, feminism in Japan did not exist until Japanese women made contact with feminists in Europe and America. Feminism as presented in Japanese historical treatises parallels developments in Europe and America, including criticising pre-war movements as bourgeois women's movements which merely tried to obtain the vote for women without promoting the enormous changes that are considered necessary to change societies, to change common sense

concepts of sexuality and gender (Millet 1977:84-85, Fujieda 1983 & 1990, Ueno 1988B, Ehara 1992B)⁶.

Mass-media in the beginning of this century treated Seitô women as nyû ûman (new women). Seitô members were not always happy with the use of this term. Itô Noe thought that the term should be reserved for women like herself who were real pioneers by virtue of their experimental lifestyles and that other women should not appropriate the term because they were mere followers, including some of the women involved in Seitô (Itô 1913). In the mass-media the term referred increasingly to young women who dress different from how women used to dress, regardless of their ideology or lifestyle. Within Seitô they were criticised for appropriating the term nyû ûman (Hasogabe 1913).

The Japanese women's liberation movement that started in the early seventies was from the beginning strongly influenced by American developments, evidenced by the fact that initially one of their major activities was the translation of American feminists' work. The Urufu no Kai (Wolf's Group), the name of which refers to the wolf that raised Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome, translated American material into Japanese in order to promote discussion of feminist issues. When they dispersed in 1974, members continued activities as journalists, making the magazine Onna Erosu and preparing for the International Year of the Woman in 1975 (Akiyama 1992). The idea that feminism in Japan is a western import is criticised by feminists who claim that there are reasons inherent to the Japanese situation leading to the formation of a women's liberation movement in Japan. These reasons are similar to the

reasons that led to women's liberation movements in Western countries (Ueno 1988B), which makes it plausible that feminism in Japan is often similar to that in western countries. Even if feminism is seen as an import, it must be remembered that it was imported by people who found something in it they could relate to. Not everything that exists in western countries is automatically imported to Japan: a selection is made, as are adaptations, and these reflect existing values.

In Europe, America, and Japan women's liberationists united in the wake of student's movements and the characteristics of the movements at this time are similar. The protagonists tend to be highly educated, from middle or upper middle class backgrounds, and left-wing on the political spectrum. They are strongly anti-authority and concerned with issues like pornography, sexual violence and division of tasks based on sex, i.e. gender. The results of the movements vary. While in western countries the idea that men and women should be treated equally evolved to the idea that they are (Komter 1985, 1989), in Japan this did not happen. Most Japanese think that women and men are not treated equally and do not need to be treated equally⁷. Unequal treatment is evidenced by for instance the wage-gap (Saso 1990:11, 67-71, Naoi 1994), the existence of which is widely recognized and visible in all sectors of employment apart from the service industry, in which wages are relatively low overall and a majority of workers are women (Mori 1992).

It is sometimes suggested that Japanese feminists, unlike western feminists, strive for a feminisation of society by adapting labour circumstances to women's, especially mother's,

needs, instead of women adapting to the needs of employers (Iwao 1994, Ueno 1988B). While Ueno attacked Illich's ideas concerning vernacular gender (Illich 1982), which were embraced by many feminists in Japan (Katô 1990), she also sees women in the first place in relation to their role as mothers. Not because she thinks that women should be mothers, but because she sees it as an objective reality that most women become mother at some stage in their lives (Ueno 1990A, 1991A:120-127). A tendency to neglect women without children remains. The major change that took place in the seventies and eighties is that many women took up part-time work, while mainstream full-time employment remained largely the domain of men (Lam 1993, Naoi 1994, Saso 1990:53-80). It became more acceptable for women to work outside the house, but the choice of work remains limited. An Equal Labour Opportunity Law was adopted in 1986, but it is, amongst other reasons, criticised because it lacks sanctions, and it offers no protection for those who appeal to it (Lam 1993, Mori 1992, Weber 1990).

Female homosexuality.

Japanese women had to rediscover lesbian feelings generation after generation. Recently knowledge of lesbian life in foreign countries plays a role in supporting feelings of women for women. Again, translations of foreign writing is a foremost activity among lesbian women in Japan (e.g. Watanabe et al., transl., ed. 1990). While there are reports of lesbian activities in the Edo period (1603-1868 AD⁸; Morishita 1991, Bornoff 1992:639) and before, dating back as far as the Nara period (646-794 AD), very

few Japanese are aware of them. The evidence is scant. There are ukiyoe (pictures of the floating world) depicting women in sexual positions with women from the Edo period (Morishita 1991). Other evidence consists of hariqata (dildos) from the Nara period onwards. Those found in the Nara period are longer than later ones and it is assumed that this indicates that they were used for masturbation, which makes the link with lesbian feelings tenuous (Kokuhaku Rezu Kurabu 1992B), while those of the Edo period could be strapped around a woman's hips so that she could satisfy another woman (Morishita 1991).

There are also references to lesbian feelings in the feminist magazine Seitô in the Taishô period (1912-1926)⁹, which are wholly neglected in discussions of Seitô (Taudin Chabot 1981, Sievers 1983, Hane 1988) and omitted in compilations of discussions in the magazine (e.g. Horiba 1991). Lately several historical women have been pointed out as loving women, such as Murasaki Shikibu, writer of Genji monogatari (The tale of Genji) around 1,000 AD, who according to Komashaku Kimi could never have written so sensitively if she had not loved women (Komashaku 1982), writer Yoshiya Nobuko, who also wrote for Seitô (Higuchi 1993B) and Yuasa Shigeko and Miyamoto Yuriko, based on whose correspondence a book has been compiled (Sawabe 1990). Especially Yoshiya is related to the idea of shisutâfuddo (sisterhood), or "S" in short, which she described in romantic novels about intimate female relationships. Sex is not explicitly part of this construction (Honda 1991). There are no examples of sisterhood communities in Japan as there are of China and Chinese communities abroad (Sankar 1986, Wieringa 1987:9, 48-68), but that

does not mean that they did not exist.

The nineteen-seventies saw the advent of lesbian organizations. The Wakakusa no Kai (Youth Group), founded in 1971, was probably the first lesbian circle in Japan (Hirosawa 1991). It was a nationwide organization of lesbian women who enjoyed hiking and gasshuku (overnight group trips)¹⁰ in a lesbian context. They also produced a magazine, Ibu & Ibu (Eve & Eve), but this was discontinued because of lack of readership (Ibid.), which also seems to have happened with other magazines¹¹. The radical feminist magazine Onna Erosu has some discussions by lesbian women, which are characterized by separatism (Kawara 1981) and by activism against pornography and sexual violence, usually following developments in America (Rezubian Feminisuto Sentâ 1981). The mid-eighties saw something called a rezubian bômu (lesbian boom) in the media, in which lesbians were constructed in peculiar ways such as masculine women and women of the Takaratsuka revue (Robertson 1992, Shiba 1993A), but it was not until 1987 when a volume in the series Bessatsu Takarajima was devoted to lesbian women, that many lesbians discovered that they were not alone (Bessatsu Takarajima 1991).

Male homosexuality.

Strikingly different, there is abundant material on male homosexuality in Japanese history, knowledge of which was brought to Europe as early as in the sixteenth century by the Spanish Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier, who wrote about the prevalence of sodomy (Hirschfeld 1914:618). It is unlikely that he actually saw men having anal intercourse, but it seems that men did little

to hide their sexual interest in each other. One of Japan's oldest writings, the Nihongi, which is thought to have been completed around 720 AD, contains an episode concerning the love relationship of two priests (Ibid. referring to Karl Florenz' translation).

Three features characterize constructions of homosexuality in Japanese history. The first is that of homosexuality as practised among Buddhist monks, before they were allowed to marry. The typical construction is that of young novices being used for sexual relief by older monks. The marriage ban for Buddhist monks in Japan was abolished by Shinran, founder of the True Pure Land Sect in 1224 (Jōdō Shinshū; Kitagawa 1990), who was the first Buddhist monk to marry (Wöss 1980), encouraging others to follow his example (Sansom 1978:333). According to a female priest who made studies of sexuality in Buddhist contexts, Shinran advocated marriage because the monks of the Tendai sect, the headquarters of which are on mount Hiei near Kyoto, were continually sneaking out to the pleasure quarters of Kyoto to have sex with female prostitutes and often raped women in the woods of mount Hiei. Even today, there are signs on mount Hiei warning women not to walk alone (Hitori aruki o yamemashō), but this is a common admonition in the Japanese countryside. My interviewee was amazed when I told of literature on homosexuality among monks and said that she had never heard of it. Nevertheless, the stories of chigo, the beautiful novices who were the partners of monks, may have a relation to actually occurring behaviour, albeit probably overrated (Childs 1980).

A second frequently mentioned feature is that of love among

samurai (warriors), which is largely based on Saikaku Ihara's Danshoku ôkagami (The great mirror of male love), written in the seventeenth century (Saikaku 1976, 1990). It was a best-seller in its day. The third feature of homosexuality in historical Japan concerns the love for the onnagata (men who play female parts in kabuki theater) to be, the wakashû, or kagama yarô (Yamauchi 1991), which is a combination of a cross generational form and one in which difference in acquired gender plays its part.

Homosexual activity used to be called danshoku or nanshoku, as opposed to joshoku, which referred to heterosexual activity and it is assumed that homosexuality was regarded as accessible to all men (Watanabe & Iwata 1987), although prostitution by wakashû was ruled illegal at various times, as was prostitution by their female counterparts (Schalow 1989). Danshoku is usually translated as paederasty and joshoku might also be translated by paederasty, for women involved in sex work are also preferably young. In both cases it concerns adult men being attracted to either young men or young women (Watanabe & Iwata 1987, Furukawa M. 1992, 1993). Female sexuality did not exist in this division, which may account for the scarcity of constructions of female homosexuality. Homosexuality was constructed as involving an active masculine man having sex with a passive, younger or feminine man, i.e. the chigo or the wakashû.

But who made these constructions and what do they have to do with real life? While Saikaku's work includes a love relationship between adult men lasting a lifetime (Saikaku 1990:180-183) as well as stories of men who love men who clearly are no boys,

scholars usually take it as an example of paederasty, or love of adult men for boys, which figures dominantly in it (Watanabe & Iwata 1987, Furukawa M. 1992, 1993). In The Actor's Analects plays are discussed in which the major theme is homosexuality between men of about the same (Dunn & Torigoe 1969:41-44). Together with Saikaku's work, this makes the construction of homosexuality in Japanese history as only paederasty insustainable. Nonetheless, love of boys is a major theme in descriptions of homosexuality today in Japan (Inagaki 1986, Nakajima 1990, Saeki 1992). Benedict wrote that it was the only form Japanese thought to be acceptable (Benedict 1977:131), similar to constructions in ancient Greece (Foucault 1978, 1988A, Greenberg 1988). The construction of homosexuality as sex between a masculine and a feminine man is also alive today. It appears that there has to be a difference in power relations for people to envisage the idea of people having sex. This, however, does not prove that homosexual activities between two adult men whose age and gender are not much different do not occur. It may just as well indicate that most Japanese have no idea of what goes on.

According to Hirschfeld homosexuality existed abundantly in Japan in the Meiji era, and was said to be especially flourishing in the southern province Satsuma, a regional aspect he treated with much circumspection (Hirschfeld 1914:611). He claims that homosexual activity did not essentially differ from homosexuality as he found it in Egypt, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, or anywhere else (Ibid.:528). While constructions concerning homosexuality in China similar to those concerning Japan exist (Furth 1993, Hinsch 1990), they have also been

implicitly criticised as not representative for existing literature and actual occurring activities by a Chinese author who found examples of homosexual activity between adult men without a cross gender component (Xiao 1984). A recent novel describes homosexuality in Taiwan in a manner that should be familiar to gay men in western countries (Pai 1990).

Mishima's gay novels Kamen no kokuhaku (Confessions of a mask: 1949) and Kinjiki (Forbidden colors: 1953) and other gay novels (Senya 1986A & B) give some insight in the period directly after the war, in which homosexuality was much hidden from the everyday life of most people. Watanabe (Watanabe & Iwata 1987:126-127) writes even of a renaissance of homosexuality in the sixties, as if it did not exist for a period. Ample material indicates that male homosexual activities continued throughout that time, with reports of widespread homosexual activity among students in the Meiji era (Yamauchi 1991) and of gay groups in the fifties (Ôta 1987, Karasawa 1992). Homosexuality during the Second World War is a recurrent theme in pornography in especially Barazoku and Sabu (e.g. Nonomura 1986).

The renaissance of Watanabe is rather becoming visible again, which also may have led to a growth in the number of homosexually active men, simply because they knew where to find others. This development was furthered by the advent of nationwide gay magazines since 1971, through which gay men could contact each other and find addresses of gay bars and other gay establishments. Gay networks existed throughout the seventies and in the eighties contact was made with western groups and comprehensive political activities started. The question remains

to be answered whether there is anything particular about homosexual practice in Japan compared to elsewhere and to what extent constructions of homosexuality influence actual behaviour.

Ethnography and Scholarship.

This thesis aims first at filling the gap of ethnographic material about the themes and categories discussed in it. Rather than over-interpreting and over-analysing the material, I try to present my findings in a manner that leaves space for readers to interpret and analyse in their own way. Of course my analysis is present throughout the thesis and more or less implicit in the way themes are ordered and explicit in conclusions. Culture is non-sentential, but it is unavoidable to write in sentences, thereby transforming reality into a logical form comprehensible to others (Bloch 1991). Bloch thinks that we should not lose ourselves in what he calls "quasi-theory" of structuralism and transactionalism but be much more descriptive (Ibid.).

Many of my informants are quite anti-academic. This is not surprising, because what scholars have deemed fit to write about them has often been extremely biased, not to say homophobic¹². Since their voice was not heard much, Japanese scholars could write whatever came to mind, a problem that has also been noticeable in western science, with examples such as Freud and his Oedipus complex, which, according to some Japanese, was something he made up from his own dreams, or possibly nightmares. While Japanese psychologist^s and the like discuss Freud seriously,

gay informants typically had little patience with his theories. Gay writer Hashimoto even argues that Freud was a latent gay man with many psychological problems (Hashimoto 1986:130-178).

Although I present a hypothesis and some questions above, they were of little importance while I was conducting fieldwork. One traditional anthropological way of looking at the people was with me all the time. It is looking at the differences in the ways people say they act, the way they say they should act and the way they actually act. Anthropologists who base their research mostly on participant observation may find themselves confronted with questions like: "What is your hypothesis," or: "What is your research question" (Agar 1980:12-13), both of which often are not very important to anthropological work. Robertson (1991:2) explicitly questions the value of hypothesis testing for anthropological research and Moeran (1985:3) even writes that anthropology is not a science but a humanity. Lebra, defending her lack of empiricism, writes:

"... what matters is 'experiential' plausibility, not 'empirical' validity, a position that might be justified anthropologically in that stories and narratives provide sources for cultural interpretations" (1993:22).

To some anthropologists it may seem unnecessary to defend plausibility as a valid goal, but many scholars think differently. I would argue that qualitative research is likely to be more

reliable than quantitative, because quantitative also depends highly on interpretations by scholars of interpretations by informants, and controls on what these interpretations are, are much less, than when doing qualitative fieldwork. That figures look more academically acceptable is but a result of the image of science as unpenetrable. Resulting prejudices like: "If it does not look difficult it cannot be right," are in my eyes a mere mystification of science. I am not much concerned with asking what is most common or how most people act. This thesis is more concerned with finding a variety of lifestyles and thinking, whereby I maintain that even a lifestyle that is only enjoyed by one person is relevant in that it shows something about the latitude open to Japanese people in carving their own individual way of life. While results of available surveys are presented, it must be reminded that they are, in most cases, very biased which makes their significance limited.

The following chapter describes features of the fieldwork and provides some insight in numbers of interviewees and spread of informants. Chapter three deals with common sense ideas concerning marriage and what position marriage has in Japanese culture, socially and legally. Chapter four investigates how members of my research categories may try to adapt themselves to common sense by marrying and problems that may entail, after which chapter five investigates alternative lifestyles. Chapter six is concerned with relating to one's surroundings while maintaining an alternative lifestyle or alternative ideas and chapter seven with discourses concerning my research categories as they exist within circles constituted by them. After this,

basically ethnographic, work, I will return to the questions brought up here and investigate what it can tell us about Japanese society in relation to human life and its constructions.

Notes:

1. See for example Lock (1993A & B) who describes that among physicians in Japan the notion existed that men had more trouble with menopause than women and on the other hand north American women became very upset when she so much as suggested that menopausal problems such as hot flashes might be culturally induced rather than natural. In Japan, in the meantime, menopause among women has gained ground as has the idea that it is common for women to have menopausal problems: the common sense regarding menopause in Japan changed.

2. The choice is political in the sense that there is of course just as much to discuss about the lives of single women as there is about married women. This is not related to their numbers. The mere fact that married women are in the majority in a given sample does not, on academic grounds, automatically lead to giving more attention to them. It would make perfect sense if as much attention was given to single women as to married women, because variety is likely to be equally wide in both cases.

3. Dorothy Smith expanded on this theme in a discussion of who establishes whether a person called "K" is mentally ill or not, which leads to the conclusion that this depends wholly on the view of whoever happens to assume the power to decide, in this case flatmates (1990).

4. Body-building lesbian scholar Marcia Ian describes her body as masculine and compares it to an erect penis (1995).

5. Hiratsuka Raichō referred to Amaterasu in her opening article to the first issue of Seitō which criticises the dwindling power of women that characterizes much of Japanese history (Hiratsuka 1991).

6. Rhetorics concerning this "bourgeois feminism (burujōa feminizumu)" are that it may have been successful in getting the vote, or even equal opportunities for women on the condition that they meet the same criteria as men, but that it does not question the structure of society as such, which may be the reason why it has been successful (Ehara 1992B).

7. For instance in a government survey carried out in 1989 only 5.5% thought that men should take equal shares with women of household tasks, even though about half of them thought that men should do something (Keizai Kikakuchō Kokumin Seikatsukyoku ed. 1992:103).

8. My division in historical periods follows Sansom (1978), with the change of the start of the Edo period from 1615 to 1603 following Ohnuki-Tierney (1987), who writes that 1603 is the year most commonly used in Japan, which is also my experience.

9. For instance there is a description in the form of a letter to an anonymous friend by Kawada (1915) and Hiratsuka (1914) refers to being the object of lesbian admiration in an introduction to the translation of an American article on female homosexuality.

10. Gasshuku is also used for schooltrips and company trips. Essential is the sleeping together, which is the meaning of the word.

11. Shiba (1993B) mentions Bara no Koheya (The small room of roses) and Watanabe (1990) mentions Subarashii Onnatachi (Splendid Women), Za Daiku (The Dyke), by a group of lesbian carpenters, Hikariguruma (The Shining Car) in the seventies, all of which have gone out of print within a short period.

12. See for instance Ueno (1988A:13-14) who writes that homosexuality is unnatural and a manifestation of loving oneself, or Doi (1975) who deals with homosexuality under the head of pathology. Homosexuality as dealt with by Japanese heterosexual scholars is generally marked by gratuitousness, based on prejudice. Most do not conduct serious research on the subject, and those who do, like Kuroyanagi (1992), tend to investigate extreme samples and then analyse these without much concern about the question of representativity.

2: Methods and Ethics.

This chapter discusses my methods of research and the groups I worked with. Further it discusses sampling techniques and methods of interviewing, as well as the circumstances in which interviews took place. Attention is also given to questions of ethics: of protecting informants and of complying with their wishes. Personal relationships between the fieldworker and informants are discussed, as are the ways informants perceived me, the researcher, and the various personae and roles I came to have. Some sections about myself may seem very private and personal, but they are quite public in the research context, for they inform the quality of the data. Because I agree with Rabinow that experiential, reflective, and critical activities are "the very strength of anthropology" (Rabinow 1977:5), I discuss them in detail in order to provide insight in how the material this thesis is based on is composed, including biases, advantages and disadvantages.

Participant observation.

Participant observation is a method that occupies a central position in the field of social anthropology, but otherwise it is not widely understood or recognized. In participant observation a rigidly structured research outline that determines what questions are to be asked, and hence what questions are to

be overlooked, may be counterproductive. An example of this is the work of Pharr (1980) who investigated political women in Japan and apparently started out from the hypothesis that their being political women was a result of their upbringing by their parents. The major finding of her research is that the role of the parents is of little importance. This is of course an important finding, but if she had not been constrained by her hypothesis, her findings could have been more interesting, because she could have diverted her focus to what the women she worked with brought up as important.

Participant observation offers the possibility to find out what is important to informants, rather than imposing a theoretical structure on how they are seen. It aims more at "understanding" (Agar 1980:69-70, Cesara 1982:e.g.13, 59) informants than at fitting them into existing academic theories. This entails testing findings again and again before anything resembling hypotheses may be drawn up (Agar 1980:9, 202). In my research this appeared to be the only way to attain valid results, because very little research had been conducted on those with whom it is concerned. This made it imperative to go into the field and discover there what the important questions are.

One research goal was to investigate the variety of life in Japan, rather than what, for instance, most gay men do. For this questionnaires are futile. Uncommon cases are not likely to find the right answer in a multiple choice questionnaire and therefore they are likely not to respond. Questionnaires are extremely problematic in relation to research concerning boundaries like those investigated here. Even the simple categories of male and

female are rather offensive for those who have not decided on either, or those who do not want to be categorized in a category that is generally regarded in a way they feel does not fit them. The use of male and female in questionnaires does not simply refer to what genitals someone has, and since a definition is never given, it remains vague what is meant. My own experience in the Netherlands and in England has shown me that the answers preprinted in questionnaires usually do not allow me to give the right answer¹, simply because it is not there. This is very similar for my Japanese counterparts.

Malinowski's diary is generally believed to have shocked many people because he described his sexual desires (Malinowski 1989). Geertz, however, writes that the underlying cause of the shock was that it showed that doing participant observation is ultimately leading life itself, and that, as a consequence, a fieldworker leads "multiplex lives" (Geertz 1988:77). Most of the background of research methods I had before going into the field stems from feminist anthropology, which holds that it is important to identify with, even side with those one conducts research with (Mies 1983, Duelli Klein 1983). Empathizing with informants is considered to be necessary on ethical grounds as well as in order to obtain data. Experiencing what informants experience is the best way to further the ability to relate as well as possible to informants (Reinharz 1983). Ultimately this entails living a life similar to the informants' lives. In my case this included reading written sources such as gay magazines², and minikomi (small scale magazines) of the different research groups, and novels informants thought to be of interest.

In a highly literate culture like Japan I think reading what people read is of great importance. Reading is part of life and thus of participant observation.

Of course one leads life itself in the field, not necessarily multiple, but not the same as that before and after. The idea that leading "multiple lives" is something unusual strikes me as futile: most people live lives in more than one context. Living a life in participant observation is somewhat different from any other life, because the fieldworker usually does not want to disturb the usual flow of events. This may seem rather passive, but it does not need to be. One can be an active agent as long as one either places oneself outside the group or acts in a way others in the group may act. My lives in the field combined to result in living in the fullest sense of the word. They were, however, not "multiple", but integrated with my lives before and after, and they continue today. The only difference between participant observation and other "living" is that it is professional living, aimed at a goal that directs choices of how one lives.

Feminist anthropologists often have the wish to make a contribution to the improvement of the lives of those they conduct research with and, if they work in third world countries for which development aid is available, this may be successful (Schrijvers 1985). Even in their own country it is possible to envisage that they might be successful in acquiring funding for projects to improve women's lives. While I would have liked to improve the lives of my informants in Japan, this idea seemed increasingly paternalistic and even hilarious. They know ways of

furthering their interest much better than I, and they have better access to economic means. All I could do was to be present at court cases and discussions with authorities and write and speak my mind. Further, I introduced some informants to others or to networks. This was not different from what any one of them could do. The most useful thing I could do is what I am doing now, i.e. to write about our life in Japan, so that it becomes again a little harder to ignore us. I use "our" and "us", because the writings concern my life in Japan as well as that of the informants.

Groups .

Gay groups were located through gay magazines, in which the international gay and lesbian social group Out & About, the gay network of Sōka Gakkai, and others, advertised, and through contacting both Occur³ and JILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Organization Japan)⁴, the major political gay and lesbian organizations in Tokyo. Networking between different groups also widened my scope. Through Out & About I established contact with YLP (Yancho Lesbian Power), Kansai's major lesbian group. This contact was consolidated at the Asian Women's Conference in April 1992 in Osaka. They introduced me again to lesbian groups in Tokyo. Women's groups were mostly found through Onnatachi no Benrichō, a reference book on women's groups in Japan (Josei no Jōhō. ed. 1991).

The total number of groups with which participant observa-

tion was conducted is difficult to establish, because in many cases they overlap, which makes it difficult to determine boundaries between groups and whether some groups should be counted as subgroups or not, but it works out at about 20. Of these, nine consist exclusively of gay men, one is gay and lesbian, and one is exclusively lesbian. OGC (Osaka Gay Community) is dominated by gay men, but its meetings are open to anyone who wants to discuss personal matters related to sexuality and many non-gay people participate. Menzu Ribu Kenkyūkai (Men's Lib Study Group) excludes women except for infant daughters of participants and also draws people who go to other groups such as the singles' network (Shinguruzu Netto), of which the formal name is Kakushinhan? Shinguru (Crime of conviction? Single). A group of single women with whom I participated marginally, is Dokushin Fujin Renmei (Single Women's League) attended mostly by women aged over fifty. A cluster of five related gay groups, whose activities varied from sports events and sight-seeing to personal discussions, the manufacture of cassette-tapes, and politics was followed throughout my period in Japan. These groups are discussed more extensively in coming chapters. In the summer of 1992 I took part in a gasshuku (an overnight trip), of one of these groups.

Groups that were less directly related to my research were a number of research seminars in Kobe, Osaka and Kyoto. I attended meetings of Hitori Aruki no Kai (Group of People who Walk Alone), a group of varied individuals who meet for lectures on subjects related to emancipation and independence. They invited me to give a lecture on the reasons for the lack of human

rights for women in Japan, because they knew I had been working on the topic. I used this opportunity to try and have a discussion about sexuality. Umechika Fôramu (Umechika Forum), a group originally founded to support the case of newspaper salespersons who were forcibly removed from their selling position in the underground pedestrian area of Umeda (Umechika; Umechika Fôramu, 1990), is involved in issues like environment and architecture and invited me twice to talk about environmental issues, because the Netherlands is thought to be an advanced country in this field, which made me a specialist in their view. This offered the opportunity to establish contact with people who did not all belong to my research categories, but, being progressive, might have a positive attitude towards them.

Occasionally other meetings were attended, whereby especially the series of meetings called Renai no Tatsujin Kôza (Course for becoming Successful in Love), presided over by feminist scholar Uemura Kuniko, was interesting because it covered subjects very closely related to my research, such as "trans gender"⁵ phenomena, homosexuality, being a feminist and loving men and how to deal with having more than one lover at the same time. Another meeting I attended was that of the Toshi Minzokugaku Kenkyûkai (Studygroup for Urban Ethnology), to which Saeki Junko, author of a book on male homosexual culture, was invited (Saeki 1992). This includes many participants who are not involved in academic pursuits.

An occasional group was created to protest to the authorities of Osaka city and prefecture about their (lack of) Aids policies and I was asked to join in order to add additional

weight as a foreigner. I participated in activities on International Aids Day in Tokyo in December 1992. Invited by Onitsuka Tetsurô, who will be discussed later, I gave information about homosexuality to a network of young volunteers, mostly involved in voluntary work related to the physically disabled. Occur's Gay Rights Rally⁶ was attended in the autumn of 1991, as was a session of their court case in Tokyo and the meetings afterwards. I attended JILGA's annual meeting in the summer of 1992 and the day on homosexuality at Osaka University, organized by Puapua, a political gay group based in the Kansai area, in November 1992. Further I went to the yearly Women's Festival in Kyoto in March 1993 and to a number of other feminist meetings, organizations and spaces.

Participant observation in less formalised contexts, such as at parties and in bars, but also when riding the underground or train, when having a bath in the local sentô (public bath) or washing my clothes in the laundrette, proved to be very relevant to my aims. My research activities expanded speedily, so that only in the beginning did I spend much time with people who were not related to my research categories, but nevertheless provided important information on general attitudes towards marriage and sexuality and the extent of their pervasiveness. With some of them, however, I kept contact throughout my stay in Japan and thereafter.

Many of these informal venues were the parties held by those my research centered on, and especially two wider networks of friends proved to be valuable sources of information. One is centered in the area where I lived in Osaka. Most people involved

share left-wing political beliefs and many Japanese Koreans participate. The other is centered in Kyoto. Here political beliefs played a lesser role, although the atmosphere is extremely progressive, especially towards sexuality and gender. They included the high-tech performance group Dumb Type, in whose "seminar show" on sexuality and Aids I participated as a gay man, and the drag group Diamond, with whom I visited many clubs. While art was the main connecting factor, issues of gender and sexuality gradually became the major topics. The parties of this network often lasted until dawn. When I related this to my Japanese supervisor, she screamed: "But that is perverse! (Sore wa pabâsu!)", which suggests that such parties are unusual in Japan. Parties were vital occasions for informal discussions about my research and how people related to its topics.

This description of various sections of participant observation is by no means exhaustive, but I hope it gives some insight into the scope of the various sections of the research. Groups are discussed in more detail in following chapters and they are listed in appendix B. In most cases at least some of the participants knew that I was doing research and on what, although they may not always have expected me to do participant observation with them. Many (even social science graduates) were not familiar with the idea of participant observation in an urban environment. In this connection an interesting book was written by Satô (1992), which is presented as an introduction to fieldwork, but reads more like a desperate plea for the recognition of participant observation as an acceptable method for research. Interestingly, Satô calls the book "Fieldwork" and then

opposes it to quantitative research, including questionnaires. Fieldwork as used by Satô means participant observation.

On hearing that I was doing anthropology (jinruigaku) people advised me to go to remote areas like Tôhoku, north eastern Honshû, which was deemed to be the place to go for anthropologists. In other cases I said I was a sociologist (shakaigakusha), which led to people volunteering to assist with the distribution of questionnaires. Participant observation and indepth interviews seemed not to be acknowledged as methods of research suitable for a sociologist. Satô (1992) writes that he has great difficulty explaining the value of non-quantitative research to his students. According to him, they do not feel secure when they do not produce something quantifiable. They do not perceive work without tables, charts or diagrams as scientific.

In less formal contexts, such as parties, people usually knew about my research and volunteered to give their opinions, often leading to extensive discussions. Notes were taken mostly after the events, due to the difficulties of listening, talking, and writing at the same time, and because it would be terribly disruptive to take notes at a party or while ice-skating. At seminars and such I often took notes because that is a normal manner of behaviour. Even though they knew to some extent what my research was about, the other participants are not likely to have appreciated that the contents of my notes concentrated on the proceedings of the meetings rather than on the contents. This is where I came closest to covert work.

Finding informants and determining biases.

With a research theme comprising categories like homosexuals, feminists and singles the easiest and most obvious method of finding informants is through groups of gays, lesbians, feminists and singles. An obvious result of limiting the research to informants from these groups only is that the results are bound to be biased. Many people attending singles' meetings are very different from the majority of unmarried people, because they make a positive issue of it and choose to be single, whereas the majority would rather be married or at least say they would. By analogy women who join feminist or women's liberation groups are more outspoken about feminist ideas than women who act in accordance with feminist ideas, but do not consider themselves as feminists or even denounce feminism.

For gays and lesbians the picture is somewhat different, because there are major differences between various groups, from politically active to purely social. People joining purely social groups are different from the majority gay population in the sense that generally they are more assertive about being gay, while those who do not participate in any groups are more negative about being gay themselves as well as about homosexuality in general, although gay men who are negative about homosexuality can also be found in social groups and even in politically oriented ones. Especially in politically oriented groups there were relatively many people with Christian, Marxist, or Christian-Marxist backgrounds, something that is visible throughout voluntary organizations in Japan. This is undoubtedly linked to

humanism and to the fact that Christians and Marxists are traditionally outside the mainstream of Japanese social organization, which revolved around Buddhist temples.

A second method of finding informants was through the gay bar circuit and by contacting people who place advertisements in gay and other magazines⁷, a method I used to a small extent, mainly in the initial stage of my research. This was not very productive, but contacts with a woman married to a homosexual man, contacted through the personal advertisement section of a gay magazine, and gay men met in bars and in Japan's only gay club in Osaka, proved very informative. The bars and club were good for conducting participant observation and short directive interviews, which are not included in the count of interviewees below because it would ultimately include everyone I spoke with. Men frequenting gay bars, again, are a specific section of Japan's gay population and relatively free and financially well-off. Others never or rarely go there.

To a small extent the snowball method was used. I asked some people to introduce me to single friends, which in some cases resulted in interviews with totally isolated gays and lesbians, who had never before spoken to anyone about their homosexuality. One interviewee at least seems not likely to speak of it ever again. In another case I was introduced to someone who according to my introducer had never been married, while it turned out that she had. This method served to show how little Japanese may know those they call friends (tomodachi), when it comes to my research interests. It indicates how little my interests may be discussed on a personal level. I also interviewed heterosexual singles

outside networks, which provides insight into differences between networkers and isolated singles.

A problem I expected to arise before starting the research, and that eventually materialised, was that the possibility of carrying out interviews was limited by the time available to informants. Especially those who work in companies usually could only make time at weekends, when I was busy running from one meeting to another, because almost all of the meetings were held on weekend days, which made it very difficult to meet up. This initially seemed to lead to a bias towards those who have more freedom, i.e. those who work at universities, who have free-lance or self-made jobs, or who are unemployed or studying.

This was compensated for by making an extra effort in a later stage of my research to find mainstream companyworkers. The time they might be available for an interview was hard to predict, because they usually do not know at what time their job ends. The circumstances at their company caused them to be unable to predict when they had to work overtime or when they had to go to a bar with colleagues after office hours, while they could not very well excuse themselves because they were going to be interviewed by me. Because this made making an appointment virtually impossible, in the end I interviewed some of them by phone, usually around midnight, because that turned out to be the only time they could be certain to be available. Another mainstream company worker was interviewed while working on the newsletter for the singles' network in Osaka. He was quite happy having all the others present listening in and expressing their, often negative, reactions to his tales.

Regionally, informants are concentrated in the Kansai and the Kantô (the areas around Osaka and Tokyo respectively), while about ten percent of the cases lived in small towns or rural areas, thus providing insight in the question of whether circumstances in the inaka (countryside) are much different from those in the daitokai (metropolis). On a smaller scale it can be said that some categories concentrate in particular parts of cities, although they can be found all over. Well known and often mentioned examples are Shibuya and Meguro, two wards of Tokyo that are known to have a relatively large proportion of relatively well situated single women (Yoshihiro 1987). In Osaka my interviewees tended to live either in towns to the north of Osaka, or in the north or the south of Osaka city. The towns to the north of Osaka⁸ are relatively progressive and well-off⁹, two factors that combined to offer a greater amount of freedom. The southern part of Osaka city on the other hand is cheap to live in, as was the northern part where I lived myself. In both I found for instance a relatively high number of single parent households.

Especially the members or participants¹⁰ in the activities of the cluster of five interrelated gay groups came predominantly from the relatively rich area north of Osaka and west of Kobe, such as Nishinomiya, while others lived in Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto and even as far away as Himeji and Fukui. In Tokyo many informants were found in the western part of the city, including Nagano, Shinjuku, Setagaya and Shibuya wards, as well as the northern part, including Bunkyo, Tōshima and Kita wards, which are cheaper areas to live. In Kyoto the same dichotomy was noticeable,

participants living on the one hand in expensive manshon (concrete apartments) and on the other in cheap wooden rented apartments, often in southern parts of the city. Informants from Kobe generally lived in manshon, while those from the area East of Osaka tended to live in cheap housing.

Interviewees.

The total number of informants who were interviewed in-depth, is 109. Of these, 69 interviews were recorded on tape, resulting in approximately 110 hours of cassette tapes and 39 were recorded in written notes. I make a breakdown in sex and sexual preference to provide some idea of the numbers concerned, notwithstanding my explication in the introduction and above about the problematic nature of these categories. Fifty-five interviewees were female and fifty-two male. One was in the process of a sex change and preferred to be identified as a lesbian. Another informant was male, as in having male genitals, but identified himself as female. He thought of his brain and heart as female and had a career as a transvestite artist behind him. The former was counted as female and the latter as male. Many other informants described themselves as masculine while being female or as feminine while being male, which shows the problematic nature of the seemingly natural division in female and male.

To give a rough idea of the numbers of homosexual interviewees, 38 male interviewees can be categorized as gay and 21

female interviewees as lesbian. While most of them identified themselves as gay or lesbian, a small number are less decided. If someone is bisexual, he or she can still be categorized as homosexual, because it can be used not in the meaning that someone is homosexual and nothing else, but in the meaning that someone has homosexual desire, which is an attribute that does not preclude another, such as heterosexual, desire. Some men who said that they were not gay have been counted as gay because they were clearly attracted to men or because, although they identified themselves as heterosexual, in the interview it became apparent that they had no sexual interest in their wives whatsoever.

In the case of women it was more difficult to establish whether someone should be considered lesbian or heterosexual, as there exists greater ambivalence about what a lesbian is. The word sōsharu rezubian (social lesbian), mostly used in feminist circles, helped to explain the problem. The word lesbian may be used to refer to an intimate relation with a female friend. Popular media are a bit clearer with their chotto rezu (a little bit lesbian), which is used to indicate women who are heterosexual, but prefer not to get involved with a man in their surroundings, because they find them uninteresting and may ultimately get involved in homosexual activities. On reading and hearing about this phenomenon, I found it rather suspect because it reminded me of the prejudiced view that lesbian women could not find the right man, but women who said that their feelings agreed with this, made me conclude that it has more validity than expected. They are not counted as lesbian. This phenomenon is discussed in

more detail in chapter five.

Easier to establish is the marital state of the interviewees. Forty men and thirty-five women were single in the sense that they had never been married. Among women, the number of divorced was nine, of whom six were lesbian and among men five, of whom four were gay. There were six married men, of whom three were gay, and ten women, including one who became a lesbian after I left Japan and one who said that she would prefer to live with a woman, which she, however, did not relate to having a sexual relationship. The former is counted as lesbian, the latter not. Ideally, a third category would be that of cohabitators, who socially may not be very different from married people, up to the point that their superiors may believe they are married. However, in the classification given here I decided to keep to the legal definition of marriage, as whether people cohabit or not is again a different story, which will be discussed in chapter three.

Ages varied between 20 and 67, with the greater numbers between 25 and 45, whereby those aged 27 to 33 and 39 to 44 again occupied the greater numbers. This is due to several factors. Between 27 and 33 lies the age in which marriage becomes a pressing problem, and as a result people of that age were more likely to want to be interviewed; they loved the chance to talk about their problems and also wanted the world to know about their existence. They found my research important for themselves and were eager to participate, with some traveling up to three hours to make the interview possible. At the same time it is my own age group. Being 30 on arrival and 32 on leaving Japan, I could relate to this group on a very equal basis. The large

number of those between 39 and 44 must be attributed to the fact that this is the generation of the student revolts of the late sixties and early seventies. Although most of those who were active in the student movement eventually adopted common lifestyles, a relatively high number of this generation is politically active in one sense or another or refused to marry because that was a way to oppose the kanri shakai - literally the administration society, but used by some informants in a way reminiscent of Nineteen eighty-four's big brother (Orwell:1949) - in which marriage is seen as occupying a central position.

The selection of interviewees was highly controlled. They were selected from twenty different groups and through several social networks. Attention was given to not interviewing too many people from one group or network, but to spreading them as much as possible over the different groups, while taking into account their age, sex, education and occupation. An expected limitation of the interviews was that the interviewee had to be someone who thinks about things and knows how to express him- or herself. This was to some extent a criterion for selection. In order to get as wide a range of different attitudes towards life as possible, interviewees were rather chosen for being particular than for being representative. It may seem contradictory, but I believe that as a result the research is highly representative, not in numbers, but in scope.

Speaking of a sample in this context is misleading, as the word sample is taken too often to indicate quantitative representativity. Like Lebra's research on Japanese nobility (1993) the research does not provide for that, but for experiential

plausibility instead. Unlike Lebra I did not conduct a survey by questionnaire and any quantifications that will appear are based on my informants and what they conveyed to me in participant observation and interviews combined with statistics as they are produced by governmental and other organizations. I do not present numbers of categories of interviewees in tables, because when I did this people started to interpret them in an absolute quantitative manner, which is not only ridiculous, but also potentially harmful to my research categories¹¹. Like Lebra I insist that my informants must all be regarded as key informants, who by their accounts and their activities give insight into not only their own particular lives and ways of thinking, but into that of the rest of those living in Japan as well¹². When below I use the plural informants, it usually includes interviewees.

Setting and Contents of the Interviews.

Interviews were conducted in various locations, varying from coffeeshops to restaurants, parks, offices, shops and private living quarters. Usually I let the interviewee decide. Some came to my apartment and others were interviewed in an apartment that was at my convenience to use in Kyoto or in their own apartment. A setback with interviews in public locations was that the music, the waiters and other customers often caused disturbance, which was especially true for some interviews, the recorded tapes of which were difficult to understand due to background noises. Often it was not possible to find a quiet location and it may

have been preferable not to conduct the interview in a quiet location, because others might overhear, which is less likely in noisy circumstances.

One interview was recorded first in a restaurant, then outside a shopping center and finally in a coffeeshop. While we kept looking for a place to talk undisturbed, we were harassed into leaving two locations, first a restaurant, where noise became too loud to talk, then a park bench, where a man started interfering. Another was conducted in the car of my interviewee, since he seemed to be unable to find a suitable coffeeshop in Kobe. One interview was recorded by the Asahi Broadcasting Corporation of Osaka, on the request of my interviewee, Hirano Hiroaki, of whose life a documentary was being made in the week I contacted him. In the end the documentary did not include this interview, although I did appear briefly on screen in a take from a meeting of OGC.

The interviews were essentially open ended, but there were a number of subjects I planned to be discussed, such as the interviewee's relation to the family, the work environment, friends and lovers, thinking about the politics of gender and sexuality, feminism and gay movements, attitudes towards marriage and having children and instances of discrimination. The order of the topics was undetermined and often they came up quite naturally, without my having to steer. Often I began by asking the age of the interviewee, which is a somewhat impolite question and at times worked as an icebreaker. Usually I had no difficulty at all in getting my informants to talk. Within five minutes my role became limited to asking a question or proposing a new topic

when one was exhausted. Most questions were of the following nature: Tomodachi wa dō? (How about friends?), Kekkon wa dō omou? (How do you think about marriage?), or Anata ni yoru to feminizumu tte nani? (What is feminism according to you?).

The language I used was as much as I could the direct speech - which is considered rude in some circles or circumstances - and to my pleasure interviewees who initially used more distant and polite manners of talking, usually followed me after a while, thus entering the language level I thought to be most appropriate for my purposes: direct speech is used between people who confide in each other. I made major efforts to stop using the politer masu endings, let alone polite verbs and other words, which I had been taught to use in Leiden, but which maintain or even create distance and therefore are not very useful for relating to people the way I needed to for my research.

Four interviewees started commenting on my methods during the interview. One thought I was not prepared properly, because I had no prepared questions, which I never had for the sake of spontaneity. This was my most difficult interview experience. Both he and I were not feeling very well and the conversation just would not develop. Another wondered why I asked about lesbian bars and such, thinking I knew about them by then. I knew they existed, but wanted some more information about them and she was very well informed. The last two thought interviews as a method of research were totally useless, because people would give the answers they expected me to appreciate or answers that are generally acceptable.

Indeed, in some cases I could not help wondering whose words

the interviewee was recounting, but in most cases the accounts were very personal. However, even if they were recounting something they learned at a meeting, from a book or from teachers, friends or parents, that is also relevant to the aims of the research. Accounts of attitudes towards homosexuality by heterosexuals were sometimes suspect. Some were very positive, even if they clearly did not know about what they were talking. As will be discussed in chapter seven, negative views were also voiced, about homosexuality as well as feminism. Participating in people's daily lives and in the activities of the many groups provided a check and balance against these problems.

I also asked questions that were directed at finding out what interviewees thought to be acceptable behaviour. One of them almost became angry when he could not reply honestly why he married. Instead he started telling me that this question was not right and that I could never get the true answer by just asking it, because people would just say something they think appropriate. Of course he was right, and I agreed with him, but maintained that it still was interesting to know what people answer, which made him feel even more attacked. Instead of answering any more questions, he started to lecture me on research methods. Many other interviewees were very clear about the reasons for their marriage, and they were often different from those generally appearing in Japanese government surveys, where answers are preprinted and the complexity of decision making cannot be expressed.

Ethics.

Most scholars I discuss my research with, believe that it is highly sensitive and that it is important to be very careful in using the data generated. Ethics are thought to be related to morals which prescribe that one should not hurt one's informants (Sieber 1993). As stated, this is a reason to avoid quantifying results. Covert research is thought to be ethically more problem-ridden than overt, because informants are not aware of who they are talking with (Burgess 1984:47-48). Since my research was essentially overt, there is little worry in the area of using information informants might want to remain secret. Even if I write things that groups do not like to see printed about themselves they knew who they were dealing with and in some cases I have asked them to criticise findings that they might see as harmful. A problem that is important, however, is the question of the extent to which the anonymity of informants must be protected.

The word morals in a western academic context is related to Christian doctrines concerning human relationships, even among people who have long abandoned religion. Therefore the personal relationships a researcher in the field engages in are likely to become a focus of concern. Christian morals in the end proscribe having sex outside marriage and some researchers have tried to avoid having sex with informants, sometimes at great pains (Whitehead 1986). After discussing the protection of anonymity of informants, I discuss my relationships with them and how I dealt with ethical questions in that context.

Anonymity.

In the section on interviewees I have already mentioned some cases of people who will inevitably be recognized in some circles, even if I do not mention names, places, occupations and other information that would facilitate an easy identification. Many people did not really care much whether I mentioned their name or not, especially if I was going to write about them in English. Others were more concerned, but keeping their identity from being detected was easier, because they did not talk about being interviewed by me to anyone else.

In this sense, much of the power over being recognised or not lies in the hands of the informants themselves for, except where people are publicly known in Japan, I do not use names, and when necessary, I change or do not mention details like locations, occupations and such. In other cases I cut the stories of informants up and have them appear under different guises, in order to protect parts of their lives which may be generally known in one circle from becoming known in another, where they might not want them to be known. Because interviews comprised more than one area of people's lives and the ways people combine living in different areas is a focus of interest, my descriptions of this phenomenon are either more general or various details of actual examples are changed, cut up or mixed in order to make them unidentifiable. I believe that it is perfectly possible not to distort my findings without endangering the anonymity that may be desired.

Some people seemed to see my research as an opportunity for them to come out. This I feel must not be. I decided to protect

them against the uncontrolled exposure that writing their names could bring. Although I do not make much effort to hide their identity, I do not present their full names, even if they said I could, but may use nicknames under which they are known in particular networks, in which the contents of the interviews are largely known. I believe it to be useful for those who can read English to be able to recognise people who participated in my research. Since this can only happen with people they know well, this does not raise much of an ethical problem. This concerns informants who said that I could use their full name. If they still want to come out, they can do that otherwise, as some have in the meantime. This made me increasingly use full names during the process of writing.

Thus the protection of the anonymity of informants is dealt with on a case by case basis. Guiding principles are the importance of mentioning an informant's name for explication and clarity and the indications given by informants on their wish to remain anonymous or not. Informants who have been very open about being interviewed by me, will want to see something back in anything that is published about them to show the friends they told about it. I am certain that I cannot provide for this in all cases, however much I would want to. Here the power is in my hands and I have to make my choices for the sake of the research project. In giving names and protecting anonymity I err on the safe side, while being well aware that people may feel disappointed because they are not mentioned.

Never did I tell other people about those I interviewed. In a few cases, though, I confronted interviewees with findings of

other interviews, without saying anything about the identity of the former interviewee. Nevertheless, those who were in groups and networks almost invariably talked about the interview to anyone who would listen, something that even led to jealousy among those who were not interviewed. In some groups being interviewed gave status: one had been taken seriously and was thought to be important and interesting enough to be chosen as an interviewee. I would have loved to interview everyone who wanted to be interviewed, but that was impossible, because there was a time limit on my work, and it would have been superfluous, because even now so much material has been gathered that constructing a valid analytical view is extremely difficult.

The same can be said about interviewees who suggested I conduct follow up interviews, because their life and their thinking would be different on another day. The interviews represent only what they were and thought at the time of the interview. This is of course true, but except for a considerable number of interviewees whom I met more often for more indepth research, it was not feasible to conduct follow-up interviews with everyone, however interesting they would have been. Nevertheless, I gave all interviewees my telephone number and address, so that they could always contact me if they wished to talk more. In the beginning I had two interviewees who had shortly before attempted suicide, which made me apprehensive of that possibility. I felt the least I could do was to try and be available. Many informants phoned, which added valuable data.

Friends, love and sex.

Many individuals taking part in the research became good friends, some became lovers. Three visited me in the first six months after I left Japan for Europe, a gay man, a lesbian woman and a feminist woman, many followed later. These friends all knew what I was doing and supported my research to the extent that they bared their souls for me, something I did in return for them. Mostly they know one or more of my lovers and know how I feel about Japan and the rest of the world. This was beneficial for building the confidential kind of relationships I wanted. As a result the relationships ended up being much more than research relationships.

Because I was overt from the beginning about myself and my research with people from my research categories and they usually understood that they were of interest for my research, I did not experience problems met by Joy Hendry who describes a long-term friendship being upset when the friend agreed to be involved in participant observation (Hendry 1992A). The nearest example was when I told a friend that I wrote notes after parties, and he was somewhat shocked. He said: "kowai", which literally means frightening, but in this context is an expression of shock¹³. I explained my point of view, which was that having to be kowai (shocked) or not depended on the way I would present findings. This he found fully acceptable and his trust in me was apparently sufficient to let this have no influence on our relationship whatsoever. Contrary to Hendry, I found no paradox between friendship and research (Ibid.).

A highly valued American scholar advised me not to fall in love with informants because it might produce a bias towards

them. I thought about this and came to the conclusion that it was not a problem. As stated above, I am biased towards all the people I conducted research with and having a love relationship with one or the other does not make me less critical of them, rather on the contrary, because having a love relationship inevitably confronts one with less desirable aspects of a partner's character. Nevertheless, I think the advice from my American friend was very interesting, because it points at widely held common sense ideas about love. Love is supposed to make one blind and vulnerable. That did not happen with me, and therefore I saw no reason to avoid falling in love with informants.

Indeed, love relationships greatly expanded the scope of participant observation. Ideally participant observation should include love and sex, for just like eating, which is a logical part of participant observation, love and sex are important aspects of culture that should not be ignored, especially not if the research is on a theme in which love and sex play such a major role. The feelings of the researcher may produce problems, but this only happened when I had to leave. The pain of separation was much lessened when I learned that my life in Japan continues, including love relationships. When I visited Japan in the winter of 1993-1994 it was as if I had not been away and many phone-calls and visits by informants when I am in Europe make me stay in touch with developments. The ethical idea that researchers should not hurt informants cannot be extended to informants with whom the researcher engages in personal relationships. I hurt some by not being the lover they wanted me to be. I also hurt informants by refusing to be their friend and by turning

down dates. In personal relationships people hurt each other.

Initially I tried to prevent people from getting hurt, and I used it as an excuse for not getting involved, especially with young men who I thought might be more vulnerable. An interviewee, Tsutamori Tatsuru, however, pointed out that I was being paternalistic and should not think for others. Eventually I decided to engage in any kind of relationship I wished, while being honest about my feelings. I even ended up picking up a young man in a gay bar, which I do not usually do. In total I had amorous relationships with ten men during my research period, aged from nineteen to forty, of various walks of life. Western ethics are very constrictive about sex and I am not the first fieldworker getting tangled up in them. I have come to understand that in fieldwork situations it pays to adapt to local values (Cesara 1982:148), which in my context meant freedom from values concerning constrictions on sexual activity. The only ethic I kept up in this respect is honesty, which was not and needed not to be reciprocated by all lovers. Contrary to people who think that sex in fieldwork needs nothing but the same morals one usually follows (Abramson 1993), I believe that there is an essential difference in relationships outside fieldwork and those inside. Outside fieldwork anything goes: people lie, betray and cheat all the time. When relationships are part of research more overtness and honesty is ethically required.

Another line of reasoning that having love relationships in fieldwork is unethical seems to stem from a comparison of the position of the fieldworker with physicians or psychologists. The idea is that a fieldworker has power over her or his informants

(Abramson 1993). This may be a problem in some settings, especially when economic inequality comes into play, but in my research setting I am quite confident that it was not. If money played a role, it was because lovers paid expenses for me.

Sometimes people tried to force sex on me. Especially in the beginning I was the victim of sexual harassment a number of times. Such experiences were, like more pleasant sexual experiences, valuable sources of information about sex in Japan and helped me to understand informants' experiences. Having experienced sexual harassment was helpful when informants talked about harassment and rape. I could communicate that I knew how it feels when a man stronger than you with alcohol on his breath in smelly clothes restrains your movements and fondles your crotch in a train where everyone tries not to notice. Like sexual harassment, love relationships are part of my life in Japan, and thereby part of participant observation. They provided information on areas that are difficult to investigate otherwise.

Inside the Outside: A fieldworker's persona.

Dorinne Kondo, an American with a Japanese background, wrote that Japanese have an "eminently biological definition of Japaneseness," and that this made her, being an American of Japanese origin, "a living oxymoron". She devoted her first nine months of fieldwork in Japan to an attempt to become "Japanese" and eventually people ended up putting her in "a meaningful cultural role". Eventually she was treated by her environment as

"Japanese", be it one that was somewhat funny. She uses the word "war" when describing the fragmentation of her self and the collapse of her identity that "naturally" resulted from this (Kondo 1990:11-13). But what is a meaningful cultural role?

Unlike Kondo, I set out for Japan with the intention of not becoming "Japanese" any more than I was already. I am not used to having "a meaningful cultural role" other than questioning roles cultures provide, in the Netherlands, in Japan and in England. Being "a living oxymoron" is perhaps a role that fits me. This is not necessarily anomalous in my research context in Japan. My character and personality fit in quite well, and it is not hard to find Japanese who act and react in a similar way to me. As stated in the introduction, in general I feel quite at home in Japan and Japanese seem to agree that I fit in quite well. Not looking like a Japanese to most people makes my position different from Kondo's and probably gave me more latitude in what behaviour was allowed, but informants often said that I was more Japanese than they, strangers asked me the way, especially when my eyes were behind reflecting sun-glasses and some asked me whether I was hâfu (lit. half), i.e. whether one of my parents was Japanese.

Hamabata (1990:10-20) describes the anomaly of his position in Japan as an unmarried man, something that is also discussed by researchers in various other contexts (Agrinosa 1986, Back 1993, Wade 1993, Whitehead 1986). This anomaly was an integral part of all my personae in Japan. There are Japanese unmarried men and there is not anything un-Japanese about being anomalous in this sense. In the contexts in which Kondo and Hamabata

worked, a traditional sweets bakery and a wealthy business family respectively, being anomalous may be contrary to one's goals, but in my case it often was quite beneficial to be outright queer: it got people talking.

There were also contexts where my persona was that of a single man. I learned ways of dealing with those contexts, ranging from saying that in my country many people do not marry, that leading my life, moving from country to country, I could not possibly settle down and start a family, to that I did not wish to marry, because I was gay and even if I were not I would not marry, because I considered marriage to be a ridiculous institution. The last explanation is unheard of for most Japanese, although many informants agreed. It would end further discussion on the subject or lead to more interesting discussion on the topic of marriage in Japan or in their personal case, instead of my particular case. Some heterosexuals, on the other hand, were adamant at finding a bride for this young unmarried foreign man, which led to some complications, discussed in chapter six. In some of the families I visited, my being single was accepted for the moment, but especially the matrons of the houses tended to keep insisting that one day I would meet the right person. In these contexts I deliberately did not tell that I was gay, in order to experience to some extent what gay people in Japan experience, when they hide their sexuality from their relatives.

I played many roles, ranging from what an informant called burikkoburi (acting the ingenue), of which singer Matsuda Seiko, who continues acting like a naive girl even though she is well passed that age, is perhaps a prototype (Ogura 1989), to someone

who is very knowledgeable and has much to tell, especially where it concerns personal relationships, sexuality and gender. The roles I played and the ways I presented myself were not so much thought out in advance, but rather invented, influenced by whatever happened, on the spot, as everybody does always to some extent (Goffman 1987). I adapted to different situations continuously. This was not alienating, because, while I am an outsider as a white western European in Japan and in some of the contexts I conducted research in, I am an insider in most research groups as a feminist gay lesbian single person¹⁴. This made it easy to overcome the distrust of academics among informants. I was more queer than academic and agreed with informants that what scholars produce was often homophobic or otherwise unacceptable.

Often I was taken for an English language teacher, a profession that in Osaka seems to be occupied by the majority of white people. On other occasions I was thought to be a professional ice skater or a dancer or singer. Most people at the time estimated my age at 26 or 28, with extremes of 22 and 30. Gay men and lesbian women were quick to recognise me as gay, which usually was no problem, because they were aware that, while they recognised me as gay, the majority of Japanese did not, because they do not have a realistic concept of how gays look and even if they would have, being with someone who is recognised as gay was not seen as related to the possibility that they might be seen as gay or lesbian by implication. It was interesting to notice later in Singapore that there fear of being seen with me, unless I dressed very neutrally, was much greater. Before leaving for

Japan I bought clothes to achieve the looks that made many informants see me as suteki or kakkô ii (stylish or handsome)¹⁵, because I expected people to be more eager to talk with me if I fitted their aesthetics. I also had regular haircuts and kept myself clean to fit their aesthetics.

Playing different roles eventually led to some awkward situations, especially in Umeda, the entertainment and shopping area in the north of Osaka, which many informants regularly visited, because it is the most important centre for railway connections in the area, has a large concentration of shops, and has the largest concentration of gay bars in Japan outside Tokyo. It happened that I ran into someone I knew from one group while setting out with someone else to find a coffee shop to do an interview. We had to get rid of the person, who looked terribly disappointed at being excluded by us. Other occasions are discussed in chapter six. These experiences taught me the complexity of a compartmentalised life through experiencing it myself. This method, which is similar to learning from experiencing sexual harassment or having sex, is what I, bending Reinharz' concept of "experiential analysis" (1983), call experiential research: learning to understand mechanisms by experiencing them oneself. One becomes a subject in one's research.

Part of this was coming out in the media as a gay man, invited by my lover Onitsuka Tetsurô, about which more in chapter six. This changed my persona in certain parts of the field, especially in gay bars and in some clubs, where it seemed that everyone knew me all of a sudden. A result was that people came up to me to ask for information about lesbian and gay circles,

which brought some new contacts. In the gay and lesbian circles I participated in little changed, because they knew me before and coming out in the national media was becoming increasingly common by then. The exposure of my relationship with Onitsuka served to further discussion on having multiple relationships, and sex, because I assumed an explicitly sexual persona. Some informants, however, never found out.

In feminist circles much is made of the special position of the female researcher, who is supposed to have better access to especially women and to be better at discussing sensitive subjects (e.g. Warren 1988). This may of course be true in large scale fieldwork in which time to establish rapport with informants is limited which causes them to judge the researcher on directly visible features (Whitehead & Brown 1986), or in more traditional contexts (Schrijvers 1985, 1993), where men may be seen as threatening to women (Agrinosa 1986, Wade 1993). The idea that women have easier access is based on the idea that women have certain qualities men do not have.

When interviewing women I found them to be very obliging to answer the most personal questions and some said that they did not have such open discussions with their best female friends. Sometimes I stressed that they did not have to give answers to everything if they did not feel like it, but except for two instances - a woman who refused to give her age, and a woman who refused to give the direct incentives for her divorce, because she did not wish to talk about it at that time - women answered whatever I asked and often more than that, regardless whether they were heterosexual or lesbian. This may have been the same

if I had been a woman, but many women would have difficulty asking men what I asked them. According to a female colleague men did not see her as a suitable person to discuss their sexual activities with. This may have to do with her personality, which is precisely my point: in intensive and personal research personal qualities far outweigh the influence of one's sex.

Conclusion.

Throughout my research the topics I wished to investigate turned out to be important topics to informants of the research categories, but less so for those outside them. This suggests that I happened to start out with the right questions, to hit the right tone with the right people. Possibilities for living in Japan that are generally glossed over, because the number of people involved is too low to be statistically significant, are relevant as extremes on various continua. They provide insight into how loose boundaries can be for those who avoid being influenced by their environment.

Apart from the representativity in scope, or qualitative representativity, the findings can also be used in order to achieve a representation of not only the categories this research is concerned with, but Japanese society as a whole in relation to them as well. It is possible to achieve judgments on how Japanese society is structured in relation to the research categories, because all people who were interviewed had to deal with Japanese society and ways of dealing with it were a focus

of the interviews, of many discussions and of the examination of myself. Quantitative analysis is limited, but nevertheless judgments can be made as to which patterns of thinking and behaviour are more widespread and which are more particular.

Notes:

1. To give an example, in England I was asked to fill out a questionnaire about attitudes towards Aids prevention. Gradually it dawned on me that the questionnaire assumed that I am heterosexual, have one steady partner and possibly occasional sex with other people and that sex is vaginal sex. I had to work my brain so much to think how to cope with questions like: "If you have sex with your partner do you use a condom", that I ended up circling "don't know" most of the time, although I have a clear safe sex policy.

2. Five gay magazines existed in Japan at the time, of which I read four throughout my fieldwork period: Adon, Barazoku, Sabu, and Za Gei. The fifth, Samuson was not read regularly because it was not particularly different from the others and included less journalistic and reader's pages. A new magazine, Badii, has since appeared.

3. Occur or Akâ, as they call themselves in Japanese, is a group of at the time about 200 gays and lesbians (in this order, as it is theirs) who are relatively widely known for suing the Tokyo metropolitan government for having been denied the use of a youth hostel type facility in Fuchû, a town on the outskirts of Tokyo.

4. ILGA is an international network of gay and lesbian groups, that tries to promote the liberation of homosexuality worldwide. Its main base is Western Europe (and there the Netherlands), but the late eighties brought major inroads into Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. Minami Teishirô heads the Japanese chapter of ILGA, which is very actively building the network in Asia. I met Minami at the first Asian regional meeting in Tokyo in 1986 and again at the worldwide ILGA conference in Vienna in 1988, where I interpreted and translated for him. Contacts were thus well established before I started my fieldwork.

5. "Trans gender" is a literal translations of the Anglo-Japanese term toransu jendâ, which comprises everything that crosses gender boundaries. The term is further discussed in chapter

seven. See for instance Tsutamori ed. (1990A).

6. This tour of Japan, in order to raise interest in the proceedings of Occur's court case, visited Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya and Osaka. The visit to Osaka was boosted by the presence of some members of GAPA, Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, an organization based in San Francisco.

7. One interviewee drew my attention to a magazine called Gekkô Bunka (Moonlight Culture), with articles ranging in subject from witchcraft to ghost stories, sadomasochism and lesbianism and suggested that I reply to advertisements placed by lesbian women. This produced no result. Replying to advertisements in gay magazines produced some interesting results.

8. Such as Suita, Minoo, Toyonaka.

9. See also Ueno & Dentsû Nettowâku Kenkyûkai (1989), which is an investigation into women's networking in this very area and was criticised by Yamashita Etsuko (1991) for being overpositive about the progress of women's liberation, because the sample Ueno used were housewives who were in the minority position of having a husband who earned enough for them to freewheel in whatever activities.

10. Some of these groups do not have a "membership system" and in most everyone could join activities at any time, hence my use of "participants". The people in the centre of these groups can nevertheless be described as "members" and one of these groups was more or less closed to new participants for a particular period, making members a good description of its participants.

11. At a seminar I presented my interviewees in four categories of gay men, lesbian women, straight men and straight women, superimposing on them the numbers who were familiar with feminist ideas. Most straight men were familiar with feminist ideas and most gay men were not. Ueno Chizuko drew the "interesting" conclusion that gay men were less informed about feminism, because they had less contact with women, which agrees with her earlier writing (Ueno 1991A), but is nonsense. The reason that in my sample straight men were more informed was that they were chosen as interviewees because they had lifestyles or were involved in activities that made it likely for them to be familiar with feminist ideas, whereas gay men were chosen because they were gay, regardless of their views of feminism. I do not wish to have to foresee and explain such reasonings and therefore try to prevent them from coming up by not giving figures that might lead to them.

12. Informants include Koreans living in Japan (Zainichi Kankoku-Chôsen-jin), South East Asians, Chinese, Europeans, north Americans and Latin Americans, the last mostly of Japanese origin. Of these groups only some Koreans were extensively interviewed. In one case I was unaware of my informant being Korean until halfway the interview.

during

13. When I met people from the same circle in 1995, they did not use kowai anymore: it had been replaced by iân, which has no particular meaning but in this context is used to express shock.

14. The attributes are in alphabetic order. The idea that men can be lesbian is proposed by Hashimoto (1992A) and I instantly recognised it, because on the rare occasions I had sex with women I felt more feminine than in any other situation.

15. Clothes I bought before setting out for Japan included a leather jacket, some shirts and shoes, other clothes were sent later. Apart from the fact that Japanese sizes do not fit very well, I picked clothes to coincide with what I expected my informants to like. I proved to have chosen right.

3: Discourses and politics of marriage.

What is marriage supposed to be? Why are those who do not marry seen as problematic? And how do they feel about marriage? This chapter investigates various constructions of marriage. It starts by discussing mainstream discourses, or jōshiki, of marriage as they exist today in Japan. The reasons why marriage is thought to be an important part of people's lives and implicitly a fundamental organizing feature of society are presented. It continues to describe socio-political and legal dynamics that are the focus of several movements that try to change marriage, in content or outward appearance. Finally, some examples of discrimination related to marriage are investigated.

Kekkon: Common sense notions of marriage.

As proposed in the introduction, the only fully adult person is a married man (p.14, Hashimoto 1988:20-28, 62, Kawashima 1974:36, Ueno 1990A: 65, 103-106). Indeed, in Japan one of the most widely held jōshiki related to marriage is that in order to become ichininmae no shakaijin (a fully adult social being), one has to marry (Edwards 1989:124-129, Hamabata 1990:129, Hendry 1986B:115, 206-207). In this line of thinking men who do not take upon themselves the responsibility of supporting a household are not considered to be fully mature and thus can not be given responsibility for the most independent or powerful types of

work. Women can, in relation to the concept of ichininmae, at most become ichininmae no onna (fully adult women), which is a fully adult but gendered being (Kondo 1992), derived from the male norm, a position that is also obtained by marriage and having children (Hendry 1986B:100, Lebra 1984:87-100), often preferably a son (Higuchi 1986, Lunsing 1989).

One married couple amongst my informants whose sympathies lie on the left-wing spectrum of Japanese politics, said that marriage is more than a man and a woman pledging to share their lives together. While the man's brother, who had remained single, looked increasingly displeased, they continued to explain that man and wife are in fact physically combined into one entity, they become one person, and this person, that is represented by a married couple, is the ichininmae. In this line of thinking unmarried people are hanninmae, they are but the half of a couple, which means the half of a person. Those who are not married, are not independent individuals, but like children waiting to grow up, no matter what their age is. This idea of the oneness of the married couple has been traced back by Idota to the situation of peasants and townspeople as opposed to the samurai class in the Edo period:

"... one can say that a united (ittaiteki) couple-family cooperative was the basis of society. This united couple-family cooperative can be divided into two types: 1) the non-patriarchal, which is a relative qualification, based on equality and 2) the patriarchal, a

union in which the woman is subordinate to and absorbed by the man and his family" (Idota 1993:81).

Both types are based on the idea of the physical unity (ittai) of husband and wife. The first type is a blending of the male and the female and in the second the male and his family absorb the female, which denies the possibility that the female might make any significant contribution as a person in her own right to the outcome of the union. This second form also stresses that the woman enters her husband's ie (household), where she becomes subordinate not only to her husband but to his entire family. The ie seido (household system), which was continued by way of marriage and having children has even been used, with considerable popularity, as a metaphor to describe the social structure of Japanese society (Nakane 1973).

The ie system is usually described as a household organization in which the members of a household share an economic activity and in which ideally the eldest son brings in a wife to continue the essentially vertical line, a line of continuity through generations, from ancestors to next generations yet to be born (Hendry 1986B:15-17, Lebra 1984:20-21, Lebra 1993:108-111). If no suitable son is available other possibilities exist, such as the eldest daughter bringing in a husband (muko yōshi; Hendry 1986B:99-100, Lebra 1984:20, Lebra 1993:112-115) or even the adoption of a couple (fūfu yōshi; Bachnik 1983, Lebra 1993:111-112). Thus, although ideally the blood lineage is continued, in practice economic reasons and the continuity of the

ie are considered of such importance that they may override the blood links (Bachnick 1983, Hendry 1986B:101, Lebra 1984:20, Lebra 1993:109-110). From this, it follows that within the ie, positions or roles that must be filled by members are considered of more importance than individual proclivities.

Both of Idota's types can still be discerned in Japan, although the extended family moved somewhat to the background of academic discourse as a result of the legal demise of the ie seido after the second world war, and subsequent increase in nuclearisation of the family. The low incidence of women whose name a couple chooses after marriage¹ suggests, perhaps, that muko yōshi kekkon is not anymore as widespread as it may have been, which suggests a decline in the influence of the ie seido. Present day rhetorics are strongly based on the concept of equality in difference: husband and wife have different capabilities that are complementary to each other (Edwards 1989:120-129). On their own they would be hopelessly helpless, they need each other to stay alive (Lebra 1984:132), which is explained, as did my informant couple with the concepts of ittaika and ichininmae. This makes acknowledgement of the second type unlikely. The idea of the physical union as a method of explaining the importance of marriage is very popular, and underwritten by for instance Lebra who described the impossibility of talking with women when their husbands were present (1984:27). The closeness of husband and wife makes it unnecessary for them to display intimacy and even conversation beyond the indispensable may be seen as superfluous (Lebra 1984:124-125).

Historical evidence indicates that the ideal type of

marriage of two spouses who share their lives and love as it exists today, developed rather recently (Kawashima 1974:167, Takamura 1991). Different from the expectation, common among my informants, that husband and wife should be true to each other, only a hundred years ago it was considered to be "normal" for a man to have more than one wife, if he could afford it. This was called ippu tasai sei (One man, several women system; Kawashima 1974:143). Smith & Wiswell (1982)'s book on a poor village in Kyushu based on research in the thirties, showed that extra-marital relationships were common, although it seemed to be preferable to keep things quiet and discrete in order to avoid gossip which, nonetheless, was widespread.

While on the surface people may act out their roles as spouses and pretend they are true to each other, in reality having affairs (furin) and sex outside marriage is not uncommon for both men and women² and it seems that whatever the husband or the wife does, does not matter much as long as it remains discrete (Condon 1986, Ishikawa 1984, Maruyama 1988, Murata 1992). According to Lebra, structured promiscuity, that is a husband who keeps his involvement outside the house strictly separated from his wife, is less problematic than unstructured, in which case the other woman can become a nuisance to the man's family (Lebra 1984:138-141). As long as the shape or the illusion of a one-man/one-woman relationship (ippu ippu sei) is upheld, there is no problem. Outward appearance matters more than contents: as long as the wrapping (Hendry 1993A), or sekentei (public face; Inoue 1971), remains intact, the contents matter less.

In general, marriage in Japan can be said to be less bound by love than by a necessity felt either to comply with general standards about how one should live or to achieve enough economic power to afford what one thinks is necessary for leading an agreeable lifestyle. The type of marriage that is discussed by many western scholars in the field is the type in which the husband works outside the house and the wife inside (e.g. Imamura 1987, Lebra 1984). The husband makes the money and the wife holds the purse strings. According to many informants it is a generally accepted jôshiki that this marriage is what happiness for women (onna no shiawase) consists of. The description of the housewife's position as lifetime employment with three meals a day and an afternoon nap (Higuchi 1984:57) also suggests that housewives lead easy lives. When asked explicitly, older married informants often presented reasons why it is important to marry in seemingly rational materialist ways. They said for instance that, because Japan lacks a good system of care for the elderly and the ill, one needs to have a partner or children to take care of one in old age or when one becomes ill.

From at least the Heian period (794-1185 AD), in which women's position has been described as quite independent because high class women remained in their parent's house and their suitors or husbands visited them there (Takamura 1991), women have been seen as dependent on male family members, which culminated in the three obediences to the father, the husband and the son, of neo-Confucianist thought in the Edo period (1603-1868 AD; DeVos 1985, Hendry 1986B:20-21). There is, however, a difference between the influence of Confucianism in Korea and Japan.

In Japan it was much more limited to the upper classes, especially the samurai, and never really filtered down completely to the farmers, who comprised the largest part of the Japanese population; unlike Korea, where Confucianism arrived earlier and spread among the farmers, so that the position of Korean women was affected more by the low position women are accorded by Confucianism (Moon 1992).

This agrees with the view of Minamoto (1991) that the influence of Buddhism is of vital importance for the understanding of the difference between the sexes in Japan. Both intellectual traditions and folk traditions were strongly influenced by the Buddhist notion of women as less than people, as persons who were a danger to the purity of men and who could not attain enlightenment in this life. The best they could hope for was to be reborn as men (Marra 1993, Minamoto 1992, Wöss 1981). This argument offers an explanation for the general decline in the status of women starting with the arrival of Buddhism in Japan from the Nara period onwards and the easy acceptance of the Confucian depreciation of women (Imai 1994, Minamoto 1991). It further offers an explanation for the discrepancy in marriage mores between the samurai class and the lower classes, but while the women of farmers, traders and craftsmen origin may have had more freedom as to choosing partners for marriage, their role in the household was also subordinate. Already in the eighteenth century "women working outside the home were not perceived to be 'real women'" (Imai 1994:49).

Jōshiki concerning femininity prescribed that a woman's job is essentially of an assisting nature, which is expressed by the

contents of the job, ranging from nursing to private secretaries, and in the reasons why the job is held, ranging from the need to save before marriage to the need to boost the household budget (Fuse 1984, Higuchi 1984, Imamura 1987, Lunsing 1989). For a married woman to work in this context means to work for her family (Higuchi 1984:182-184). Women who work because they like their jobs or because they wish to have an independent income cross the boundary of their assigned gender role into the realm of masculinity. Women are not supposed to be independent. In the case of men a reverse picture can be discerned. Men are supposed to go out of the house and work for an income to provide for the financial needs of the family (Tanaka 1987).

The freedom of Japanese "professional" housewives whose husbands earn enough so that they do not have to work outside the house and can thus provide their families with a home that is well taken care of to come home to (Hendry 1993B), may be a debatable sort of freedom. For example, an informant quoted in Rosenberger (1992:79) says: "We would rather be out making good money than doing hobbies," but since she has no hope of getting a reasonable job she does ikebana (flower arranging). This case indicates that women are coerced into a particular lifestyle, which makes the fact that many women think they like what they are doing irrelevant. What matters more than the question whether some women are happy as housewives is the question whether they feel they have a choice not to be a housewife and many women feel they lack such a choice (Higuchi 1984, Lunsing 1989)³. While many women think that they are happy in this role, at the same time many women do not⁴.

In the households I visited, that can be described as more or less in accordance with jōshiki, the role of the housewife was invariably subordinate. As is described elsewhere in more length, the role of the housewife demands that she is to be present when the husband or the children are at home, to have the food on the table when they want to eat, to keep things clean and to provide whatever else may be demanded. This greatly limits the freedom the housewife has to engage in activities of her own, in or outside the house, including work (Higuchi 1984:23-24, 61-62, Imamura 1987:14-30, Lock 1987). Marriage may be a matter of practical choice for women who cannot hope to obtain a position in the main career track and, by marriage, have more chance of a relatively comfortable lifestyle.

A male interviewee, who was married to a feminist woman, said that many people think that the marriage system is there to protect women, which is a traditional stance based on the idea that if a man is not married legally he may always leave his wife to care for the children on her own. According to this line of thinking marriage provides the woman with the security that the man is legally bound to his responsibilities as a husband and father. In this construction, that stems from post-war rhetorics, the husband is a provider for and protector of his wife, who is a weaker caring creature (Ortmanns 1993). My interviewee seemed to be afraid to identify with this idea personally, possibly because his wife might not endorse it. When I asked him what he himself thought, not what many people think, he said this was not his opinion. He apparently preferred to keep his opinion secret: he failed to give any, and became very defensive when I asked him

what he saw as the reason for his marriage. I suspect that the answer was one that according to a government survey in 1974 was the answer 42% saw as the reason of their marriage: because all marry, because the surroundings press one to marry, because it is "normal" (Herold 1980).

Older married male informants usually had little difficulty with seeing the virtues of marriage as far as they themselves were concerned. They may see marriage as desirable because they want a warm (atatakai) home to return to after a day's work. The day of marriage for them is a transition to an easier life in which they may actually gain in freedom, because, if they were living alone and taking care of themselves, they no longer have to do their own shopping, cooking and cleaning. This gives them more time to spend as they please. If they were living with their parents, the marriage provides the idea of security in being taken care of in the future, when the mother may become too old and physically weak. Their main role is in the workplace and when they marry they receive spouse benefits. Their position is enhanced by having become ichininmae, because they have taken upon themselves the responsibility of supporting a household, which makes them more trustworthy in the eyes of their superiors at work. Although the above reasons surfaced, in general married men seemed not to have thought about reasons why they married. Jōshiki holds that marriage is what you do and they had no reason to question that, as was the case for many female informants, some of whom only after marriage started to wonder whether they took the right step, as discussed in the following chapter.

Some alternative views.

The prolific gay writer Hashimoto Osamu turns the ichininmae argument around and makes something positive of not being ichininmae. Being adult in his context is related to being dishonest and to the corruption of one's truer self leading to its pollution and therefore it is better to stay pure and a child, to stay unmarried (Hashimoto 1988). Such ideas exist among Japanese who oppose marriage, but are not widespread. The imperfectness of being unmarried is expressed by the Japanese term mikon, which means not yet married. Only recently new inventions like shinguru (single; Ebisaka 1986) and hikon (unmarried; Yoshihiro 1987 & 1988) have come into use, especially among those who take a positive political stance in this field, as will be discussed in chapter five.

Ideas about the physical union of marriage as being the only way to attain the status of ichininmae are under attack by feminists, men's liberationists and people from singles' networks. It is not very hard to undermine such ideas by making use of logical argument, such as that it is more ichininmae to be able to live on one's own and take care of oneself than to depend on a partner, but rationality is not very effective. Logic does not impinge on people who have believed all their life that marriage is the natural way of living for everybody and anybody who is not in a marriage must surely want to be. In their view people who say they do not wish to be married are absurd and hence not worthy of serious attention.

Many informants said that the materialist arguments,

mentioned above, such as that marriage is necessary in order to have a spouse or children take care of one in case of illness, are outdated, because many parents do not wish to live with their children and increasingly children do not want to or, due to their occupations, cannot live with their parents. Further, it was argued that the idea that a spouse will take care of one in case of illness and old age does not stand up for women, who very often outlive their husbands, and, even while they are younger, are not often looked after by their husbands in case of illness. But common sense is strong, resulting in many people "knowing" that if you do not marry and have children you will end up lonely and sad. Similarly, the idea that housewives have power because they hold the purse strings is also debatable, because it does not mean that they have the power to spend the money any way they like. Housewives are often bound by such tight budgets that they have no money to spend on themselves, while the pocket money men receive can be used by them at their own discretion (Higuchi 1984:80-88, Imamura 1987, Lunsing 1989)⁵.

It seems that people who believe marriage is the right way of living and are married themselves, are reluctant to give up this belief, which forms a secure base for sustaining their worldview that the life they live is "normal" or "natural". The idea that other ways of living might be equally feasible appears to undermine their whole philosophy of life. People who criticise ideas that say that marriage is the natural thing to do, are fobbed off with the expression rikutsuppoi (argumentative), which has the derogative connotation of "know-all", a very convenient word to use when one is confronted with an unwelcome argument to

which one does not want to give proper attention. How people may deal with this lack of a possibility to discuss their opinions is discussed further in chapter six.

Japanese scholars rarely discuss lifestyles other than marriage. Ueno gives a clue as to why this might be so. In the introduction to an article on alternative lifestyles she discusses the fear that conservative people have of what they perceive as the disintegration or destruction of the family. She counters this by arguing that the family is not being destroyed but changing into a variety of different shapes, such as the single person family or the same sex couple family (1991B:2). Precisely these changes, however, make the people in question feel unsettled. The idea that marriage may be something different than a union between man and wife has implications they are most likely to find unsettling. A variety of different shapes suggests that one has to choose. Placing for instance lesbian couples on the same level as heterosexual couples is felt as a threat by heterosexuals who are used to think that their way of life at least is more "normal" than that of lesbian couples. Because of these dynamics Ueno appears to have felt the need to defend her writing on lifestyles that are at variance with marriage, and appease those who might feel cornered, who are likely to be the majority which dictates common sense.

Japanese scholars discussing anything different from some standard lifestyle use terms like shakai byōri (social disease) or shōkōgun (syndrome). Many shōkōgun concern married women who are not happy with their lives and problems children have, both of which are generally blamed on the housewife or mother (Lock

1992B). The term shōkōgun also permeates discussions on the increase in numbers of single women, resulting for instance in a book entitled Kurowassan shōkōgun (The Croissant syndrome), the author of which concludes that positive articles on single women in the popular women's magazine Kurowassan (Croissant) have led to a large number of women who did not marry, although it would have been better for them if they had (Matsubara 1988). Countering this argument feminists have written a book called Anchi Kurowassan shōkōgun (Anti Croissant syndrome; Waifu Henshūbu ed. 1989), in which Matsubara's argument is undermined. Nevertheless, Matsubara's line of thinking probably remains more widespread. A book along the same lines called Kekkon shinai ka mo shirenai shōkōgun (The maybe-I-will-not marry syndrome; Tanimura 1990) has seen the light since. This reminds of the use of the term deviance. As earlier work of western scholars discusses, people who do not observe jōshiki regarding the roles of husband and wife, or any other jōshiki, may be stigmatized as deviant or mentally ill (Lebra 1976:169, DeVos 1986A, 1986B).

Among those who identify themselves as gays and lesbians many believe that marrying is the proper thing to do. Like most people, lesbian and gay informants often thought that remaining single would make them rather sad people and they also feared the loneliness old age might bring them. While they recognize the fact that their sexual preference poses a problem in relation to marriage, some think they can become heterosexual upon marriage and others are confident that they can put on the show of heterosexual affection. Some are resigned to the idea that they cannot marry, although they find this a sad fate, a nayami

(worry). In general, being lesbian or gay does not mean that people's ideas are different with regard to the pervasive importance adhered to marriage. As the next chapter discusses, many do not escape the jōshiki presented in this chapter, which confirms their pervasiveness.

Single people, whether they are single by choice or because they just happened not to marry, do not have much trouble with countering economic arguments. The problem is again, however, that it is not so much rationality that counts but rather what the base of the argument is. The argument that one must marry and have children in order to have a comfortable old age is based on long established jōshiki and backed up by a bureaucracy that still proposes that the old and the needy should be taken care of by their offspring (Lock 1987, 1988), especially by housewives, i.e. the wives of their sons, or according to Ueno Chizuko (verbal communication), lately increasingly their daughters, who are expected to put aside their personal interests whenever their assistance is needed. As discussed in the introduction, Japanese society still features systematic discrimination of women in the labour market (Lam 1993, Tsumura & Kita 1994). Marriage may be a mainly economic event and, if women could have had the money without the husband, they might very well have preferred that (Lunsing 1994C).

Feminists in Japan have been struggling with marriage ever since they came into existence. It started in the magazine Seitō (Blue Stockings) at the beginning of this century, where for instance Ibsen's play Nora was much discussed. The fifties saw the shufu ronsō (Discussions about the housewife), the discus-

sions about the position of the housewife and mother, and one of the major recent discussions centered around the question whether housewives are enemies of women's liberation or victims of patriarchy (Ueno, Ogura and Oda 1992). While the more radical, such as Ogura, hold that married women are enemies and feminists who are married have no credibility, which she sees evidenced by early feminists who started out demanding change in marriage and sexual relationships only to eventually change into a movement for obtaining the vote for women (1988:199-201), others criticize housewives while showing understanding, like Ueno (Ueno, Ogura and Oda 1992), or, and this is probably the majority, work themselves from the position of housewife and often mother, of which Hiratsuka Raichō was a proponent in the Seitō days and in the fifties (Takamura:1991:250-251).

Feminist women do not usually endorse marriage as it is in Japan. They want to change its contents, the husband to play a larger role in the household, more equality and the possibility for women to have a career besides being mother. Otherwise they are usually quite in line with the idea that marriage as such is "normal". It should only be arranged differently, so that women have more freedom, and relationships between husband and wife are more equal. This last position was ridiculed by two female interviewees, who found it rather useless to devote one's energy to changing something you do not like and therefore did not understand much of the feminist movement. Their solution: "Why, instead of complaining that this or that should be changed, don't they just quit marriage?"

Courting for marriage.

Methods of courting, as discussed by Hendry (1986B:116-149), Lebra (1984:79-105) and Edwards (1989:53-63), vary according to time, region, class and individual. In explaining Japanese ways of recruiting marriage partners, usually a division is made between miai (arranged) or renai (love) marriage. Miai means literally meet and see. Ideally, a nakôdo (go-between) arranges a meeting between a woman and a man so that they can meet and decide whether they want to go on to meet each other and eventually marry. Whereas there are people specializing in match-making, nowadays anyone can act as a nakôdo. Apart from very explicit cases of miai marriage, the distinction between miai and renai is mystifying rather than clarifying. Most marriages are a combination of the two (Lebra 1984:87-100, Hendry 1986B:147-149). Partners may have a miai arranged after they have fallen in love or they may fall in love after a miai. Love marriage does not preclude the possibility of force. A woman may feel forced to marry a man against her will, for instance because he made their colleagues think that she would marry him (Saitô 1983:169-178), or because the man emotionally blackmails her (Ibid. 1983:221-227). For men it may be considered impolite to refuse a proposed marriage, because "women are thought to be delicate and easily hurt by outright rejection" (Edwards 1989:60).

Notwithstanding the vagueness of the difference, Japanese statistics categorize marriage as miai or renai. They show a steep decline in miai marriages, from 36.9% in 1973 to 12.7% in 1991 (Keizai Kikakuchô 1992:40), in favour of renai marriages,

a decline that may very well be a mere result of the fact that the idea of love marriage is gaining in popularity, something that is related to the growing stress in the media on the supposed virtue of individual choice. This makes miai less appealing, because the influence of third parties in determining one's life is so evident. Remarkably, in the statistics of 1991 a new category of what is called renai kekkon (love marriage) is introduced. It is the category in which partners met through the introductions of friends, which occupies 25.7% of the total. Since the other major way of getting to know each other is meeting at the workplace (Ibid.), where the influence of colleagues or superiors may be present, the stress on a change from miai to renai is not very convincing. Might it not be that omiai has become less rigidly structured?

Love marriages are often based on calculations that take into account the other's status and capacities and one's own age and chances of finding a good match, more than the question of whether one actually loves someone (Lunsing 1994C). Although romantic love is the incentive for marriage according to what is presented to the outside world, or seken, in many cases other considerations may play important roles, regardless whether it concerns miai and renai (Lebra 1984:90-97). As a female interviewee said: "As long as he loves me, any man will do for me." Apparently, she did not consider her feelings towards him to be of much relevance. This may be wise, because, as she argued, while the love of the other for oneself is not a guarantee that everything will work out well, one's own love for the other is even less so.

The choice of marriage partners is influenced by many factors. Great influence is exerted by the jôshiki that one of course marries (Kekkon suru koto ga atarimae; Tsuji 1989:82). The basic question of whether one wants to marry or not is not really asked, because it is taken for granted that one will, which shifts the focus directly to the question with whom. This of course limits one's freedom in relation to choice of partners (Lunsing 1989). Another factor are ideas concerning the proper age to marry, kekkon tekireiki. Once past this age, which is not wholly stable, women may be written off as kurisumasu kêki (Christmas cakes), which lose their value after the 25th of December, a reference to the age of 25 (Brinton 1992). This plays a larger role in the case of women than in that of men, as having children is inevitably connected to marriage and a woman who passes the age of thirty is thought to become less fertile. For men this is hardly a problem, but they are, as many informants indicated, also increasingly seen as weird and confronted with proposals for miai when they reach their thirties single.

Young people interviewed on radio and TV programmes about their future plans often come up with the exact age at which they expect to marry. The idea that a partner might not be available at that precise moment is not considered. A woman on the radio made a whole speech about what sort of man she wished to marry: "Tall and handsome, with a good salary and a taste for outdoor sports, someone who would like to travel together." While it is of course a good thing to know what one is looking for, this also indicates that the individual one marries matters less than certain attributes he or she possesses. In this context

there is the much discussed phenomenon of san K, the three highs, which a man, according to the mass-media, is expected to possess if he wants to stand a chance with many women: he must be tall, have a high education and a high occupation. Glossy women's magazine SAY even ran an article featuring the average lifetime earning expectation of men according to their education, seemingly in order to make it easier for women to make up their minds about what sort of man they wish to marry.

Before anyone is actually encountered, a strong ideal is developed of what kind of person it should be, and when men found it increasingly hard to find a spouse in the early nineties, the media were quick to develop surveys and reports to show that the demands of the women had become too high, resulting in a decline in the overall percentage of marriages and especially in an increase in the number of men who remain unmarried. While the media first pointed at the women for being haughty, this attitude has changed to young men's magazines now describing what are good strategies for a young man who wants to hook a woman (Tarzan, Men's Nonno, Popeye, etc.): giving expensive presents, dining in the right restaurants and making good conversation (Lunsing 1994C). Mass-media increasingly present a picture of men who have difficulty finding a woman (Ueno 1990B). For desperate cases, there are even hanamuko gakkô, bridal schools for men, where they can learn how to be interesting and witty when taking a woman on a date (Higuchi, Saitô & Itamoto eds. 1990, Itamoto 1992B, Kawauchi 1992).

Recently the numbers of especially men who pass the proper age for marriage has grown considerably. Of men between the ages

of 35 and 40 19% had not married in 1990, compared to 14.2% in 1985 and 8.5% in 1980. This rise set in in 1955, when the figure was 3.1% and is accompanied by a rise of unmarried men in all age cohorts. Of men between 40 and 45 the figure rose to 6.7% in 1990, up from 4.7% in 1985 and of those between 30 and 35 corresponding figures are 32.6% in 1990, up from 28.1% in 1985. In the case of women the same tendency exists, albeit less outspoken, with a rise from 6.6% in 1985 to 7.5% in 1990 in the age between 35 and 39, from 10.45 to 13.9% in the age between 30 and 35 and from 4.3% to 4.6% in the age between 40 and 45 (Keizai Kikakuchô 1992:26, 409). This appears to have little influence on the idea that marriage is the proper thing to do.

While the numbers of unmarried men have increased, the media until recently stressed the growing numbers of unmarried women, though they are much smaller. This is likely to be related to the fact that relatively many women in high positions (kyaria ôman: career woman) remain unmarried, as opposed to unmarried men who tend to be in lower social positions. In general, it is believed that the husband should have "natural authority" over the wife, be taller, older and have a higher education, which makes it very plausible that men with a low education and women with a high education have difficulty finding suitable partners and thus a relatively good chance to remain unmarried.

Two interviewees who married a partner who was not suitable in this sense had great difficulty in convincing parents and superiors of the viability of their matches; one was a feminist woman who had a much higher education than her husband and the other a gay man who was ten years younger than his wife, who was

well past the age of childbirth. These two are types of marriage that have recently come to be discussed as possibilities. Terms for marriages in which the woman is older, or has a higher education have already been developed, such as akiramekei ("give-up" type), which refers to people who decide to look no longer for the love of their lives, but settle for less, or chôkôgakurekikei (high-educational-record type), which refers to people whose marriage was postponed by years of education, both of which are types of marriage that bind couples who are both in their thirties, and otoko petto kei (man-as-pet type), for couples where the man is younger and economically less powerful than the wife (Tamura 1989).

The decline in marriage can partly be attributed to the phenomenon of bankonka (marrying later in life), but at the same time people who reached their thirties without having married are more likely to decide not to marry at all, because they may have seen dreariness in the life of married friends and they may believe they have discovered the joys of being single. The contradictory phenomena of Japan having a high marriage rate and at the same time a high average age of marriage⁶, suggest that many people tend to postpone marriage rather than rushing into it. People may wish "to have some fun" (asobu) before they take the supposed social burdens of being married on their shoulders and become ichininmae. Two informants married, but decided to postpone having children, so that especially the wife could enjoy working life and the freedom to go out at night a bit longer. They presented themselves as very alternative compared to jôshiki that, in their interpretation, dictate that one has children

straight after marriage.

Law and politics.

The Japanese language possesses a number of terms for marriage, the meanings of which are varied. There are fully Japanese words like enmusubi (tying a bond), which is not much used any more, and the viricentric⁷ yome o morau (receiving a bride), still much in use, the Sino-Japanese words kekkon and the legal term konin and modern words like the Anglo-Japanese mariiji (marriage, often combined with "in the chapel"). The most commonly used word kekkon may be used to refer to legal marriage, to common law marriage and even to same sex unions, depending on the context. For this reason the word kekkon proved to be rather confusing in relation to the questions my research was concerned with.

Marriage as expressed by the word kekkon does not necessarily mean anything more than two persons whose involvement with each other has an element of permanence in intention or reality. They do not even have to live together, as there are types of kekkon like bekkyo kekkon (living apart marriage) and kayoi kekkon, in which partners commute, and the system of tanshin funin, whereby usually the husband is temporarily located elsewhere on his own for the sake of his job⁸, is widespread and much discussed (Tanaka 1992, Shiina 1994). Even if people live together they may not share much of their lives, which may amount to what is nowadays called kateinai rikon (divorce within the

household; Kanda 1992).

People may claim that they are married when they are not married legally. At the same time people may be considered as married, when they wish not to be seen as such. According to law, kekkon is supposed to consist of a relationship of a male and a female bound by a legal document, the koseki (household register), which is supposed to be set up when a couple marries. As the following discussion intends to clarify, the actual contents of the way the word kekkon may be used can be at great variance with this view.

Before my fieldwork started, rumour reached me that a friend had married. This friend however, was known to be the kind of person that I expected to have political objections to marriage, something which in Japan is an issue that has lately acquired growing public interest (Fukushima 1991B, Ninomiya 1992A, Idota 1993). The fact that when one legally marries one of the partners has to adopt the name of the other, which usually means that the woman adopts the name of the man⁹, is a focus for movements concentrating on the law that does not permit legally married couples to retain their own names¹⁰. The Japanese bureaucracy even started to discuss seriously the option of changing the marriage laws, in order to make it possible for spouses to keep their own names¹¹.

As it turned out, my friend had married in one sense while in another he had not. He and his wife held a marriage ceremony for their families and she transferred her official home address (jûminhyô) to his. They did not set up a shared koseki, (household register) or, in other words, they did not do nyûseki

(entering the register, which is a rudimentary term, left over from the ie seido, but still much in use)¹² or kekkon todoke (marriage registration), which made their marriage not a legal one. Technically they had a common law marriage, because she changed her jûmin todoke (official address) to his house. I write technically, because in practice they did not live together. Living together was impossible, because the workplaces of the woman and the man were separated by six hundred kilometers. Thus, in practice they were in what one could call bekkyo jijitsukon (living apart common law marriage) or kayoi jijitsukon (commuting common law marriage), terms I invented by analogy to existing terms, but that did not exist in Japan at the time.

At his work, superiors of the man think he is married and according to Japanese law he or she might even receive spouse benefits, if the income of the partner remains below the one million yen a spouse can earn per year before this benefit is lost. According to law she or he could enter his or her health insurance and they are entitled to almost all benefits that married partners have, such as pensions, the right for the partner to stay on in the rented house when the one whose name it is in dies, and even compensation money (ianryô) in case of divorce (Ninomiya 1991:123-143). In practice, however, informants in jijitsukon seemed not to expect most of these rights to be granted, although Ninomiya writes about people who received for instance time off for a wedding, for childbirth, and for taking care of a partner who falls ill (Ibid. 132). A condition for the granting of such rights is often that the couple have the same official address (jûminhyô; Ibid. 133). Though such rights exist,

many people are not aware of it and those who are, may not wish to make use of them, especially in the case of a divorce. Informants who live in jijitsukon do not want the state (kokka) to interfere (kanshō suru) in their personal lives, and they oppose legal marriage (hōritsukon) for the discriminating effects it has on women, and on those who are not married and their children.

The naien laws, that give common law couples equal rights to married couples, are based on the situation before the war, when many people did not marry legally for various reasons. Naien is expected to be a temporary state of living together with the goal of marriage, but there is no limit to the period of naien. The law made for naien was made with different goals from what it may be used for nowadays (Hendry 1987, Ninomiya 1991). The naien these laws were made for, were in many cases born out of necessity. For example, the partners could not marry legally because one of the partners was married and could not get a divorce, or because parents failed to give their consent (before the war consent of parents was needed for men until the age of thirty and for women until the age of twenty-five), or because both partners were the main inheritors to their parent's ie, which made it undesirable for one to enter the koseki of the partner's ie, because that would mean there would be no successor to their own ie (Ninomiya 1991:29).

More common reasons for naien were that the bride was not officially accepted into the new house until she had proven to be able to adjust to the culture of the house (kafū), or to have children. If she could not adjust she could be sent back without

having to go through a divorce procedure, something that would pollute the koseki (Ibid. 28). For many of the working class the bureaucratic procedure was difficult to fulfil. They had to take leave of their jobs to go to the town hall where their koseki was kept, which was often far away, because most factory labourers were registered in the village they had left to go and work in the city. They also had to write their own declaration of marriage, because there were no preprinted forms as there are today (Ibid. 30-31).

Tsunoda (1989) and Ninomiya (1991) suggest that the naien laws technically might even apply to same sex relationships, because they do not specify the sex of the partners, but use the neutral term haiqūsha (spouse). Tsunoda said at a meeting in Tokyo that even the law of marriage itself does not necessarily exclude same sex marriages because, although it is stated explicitly that marriage is based on the mutual consent of both sexes, this merely reflects the fact that those who drew up the law could not imagine the possibility of same sex marriage. Examples of gay or lesbian couples using these laws are not known to me and it would not be likely for the Japanese bureaucracy to grant gay and lesbian couples these rights. If demanded, though, they might produce interesting law-suits.

A possibility of casting a legal bond between same sex partners that is being used to a small extent is the adoption law. In Japan it is perfectly acceptable to adopt an adult, who is entered into one's koseki as a legal child. A remnant of the ie seido, this possibility was used to safeguard the continuity of the ie when a suitable successor was not present. This
(Tsunoda 1989:76)

law makes it possible for anyone to adopt someone who is younger. Usually even couples of the same age are not born the same minute, which makes the use of this law a viable possibility for those who wish to have a legal tie to back their relationship (Tsunoda 1989).

The couple mentioned above lives in an area in Osaka where many people refuse to marry. Further there are relatively many Koreans and disabled, and anti-discrimination activities are a strong binding factor. Many parties are arranged with what at times seems to be the excuse of discussing particular cases of discrimination, for instance the case of a Korean Japanese man who sued Osaka city for not allowing people of other than Japanese nationality to rent newly built public housing¹³. In these circles it is almost inconceivable to marry legally and set up a shared koseki. It is more or less a jōshiki that one does not set up a joint koseki, but defies the koseki seido, which is the legal side of what is left of the pre-war ie seido, and supports a popular understanding of marriage that finds its roots in the kafuchōsei (patriarchate) of the pre-war period. It is felt that this must be opposed. How strong this opposition works in some circles is shown by the case of a couple who married secretly. This was only found out by a friend when he called the woman at her job and there was no person of her former name working there anymore. Two informants from a similar context married abroad in order to have a legal tie that would make the employer of the man pay spouse benefits, so that he could support the woman, while avoiding setting up a koseki.

An example of a couple at variance with the idea that

jijitsukon is a sound policy to show disagreement with the position of women in marriage concerns an interviewee in her forties who works full-time while engaging in various political activities. She lives together with a lover, but does not want anyone to know this because she fears people would start treating her as the yome-san (bride) of her partner. To avoid discovery by friends, family, colleagues and fellow activists, they have separate phonelines. While in practice they live together, the man still officially lives in the apartment where he lived before he moved in with her. Without living together, this couple could not have much of a relationship, because they both work extremely long hours which do not coincide most of the time, so that there would hardly be any chance for them to meet if they would not see each other when they both happen to be home. Having separate telephone lines is a way of coping with the idea that the outside world must not know about one's relationship I also found to be employed by several lesbian couples who live together.

The riddle of the marriage of the couple that is the main example of this section is not solved by political opposition against the koseki seido. Could they not have gone on the way they did, after all they had a more or less stable relationship for over most of the past ten years? The reason for this change of heart is not to be found in financial benefits, for they are few. The parents were not happy with the fact that they did not follow what they saw as a jôshiki and set up a koseki, but they still had the kekkonshiki (marriage ceremony) in which they witnessed their son and daughter pledge fidelity to each other. But to make the parents happy was hardly the major motive. More

important were the feelings on the side of the spouses themselves. By having a marriage ceremony they pledged their intention to share the rest of their lives and by transferring her official residential registration to his house, they pledged the intention of living together as soon as economic circumstances, i.e. their job situations, would make that possible. In fact they pledged that they would be husband and wife and socially their position changed accordingly.

It is important to note that jijitsukon is typically based on the wish to share each other's lives, more than on the wish to improve one's status by marriage or to follow jōshiki. The partners to jijitsukon are, unlike those in a legal marriage, necessarily interested in each other as a person, otherwise they would not have started to live together. This is linked to a distinct ideology which counters the position of marriage in the Japanese social structure. People in jijitsukon, as opposed to those in hōritsukon (legal marriage), are opposed to the ie seido, to the koseki seido and, at least in name, to the oppression of women they feel is reinforced by it.

Children: Shiseiji, rabu chairudo, hichakushutsushi.

Closely related to the besshi undō, the movements striving for the right to keep different names in marriage, Japan has a number of groups that oppose the discrimination against illegitimate children¹⁴. According to progressive authors in Japan, one of the major problems of discrimination the koseki

seido brings with it is that of the illegitimate child: Shiseiji (illegitimate child), kongaishi (extramarital child), the legal term hichakushutsushi (illegitimate child), or the more positive term rabu chairudo (love child; Fukushima 1991A, Hino 1991, Ninomiya 1991, 1992A, B, Shigekawa 1990, Satô & Kaihara 1990). Legal discrimination consists of a different way of describing illegitimate children in the koseki - "only" son or daughter instead of the first, second etc. son or daughter - and fewer rights of inheritance than legitimate children (Ninomiya 1991:154-155, Satô & Kaihara 1990:97-98). Because this illegitimate status is explicitly reflected in the koseki, the koseki has become the focus of attention of these movements.

Illegitimately born interviewees drew a picture of social discrimination in the fields of education, marriage and employment. A young interviewee related this to a suicide attempt. Another interviewee, who was born before the war, related his lack of a career and the fact that he had not been admitted to a good university to study medicine directly to the fact that he was an illegitimate child, born to his father's second wife, or mistress, instead of his legitimate wife. While his father was a surgeon at one of Japan's top hospitals, he spent much of his life as a cleaner. Even today, being born as a love child appears to have repercussions on career opportunities and marriage possibilities, that is for those who want to marry into "good" families, where conservative ideas may dictate that having somebody who was born illegitimate marry into the family might defile the purity that is strived for¹⁵ and for those who wish to work at companies that treat illegitimacy as a fault in

character.

According to Hendry (1987A:16), referring to Seward, little stigma is attached to being illegitimate¹⁶. While in everyday life not much stigmatization may occur, I found all informants who were born outside a legal marriage had felt some sort of stigmatization, which would be evident when they had to deal with the bureaucracy or with anything for which they needed to reproduce their koseki. Feminist novelist Ochiai Keiko, who was a love child herself, felt a strong stigma attached to being illegitimate, which can be found reflected in some of her novels and her answers in Yomiuri Shinbun's Life's Guide (Jinsei Annai) column, where she advises a woman not to have an illegitimate child, because that child will "suffer the consequences" (Fukushima 1991A, Kawachi 1992:121, McKinstry & McKinstry 1991:152 quoting Ochiai, Ochiai 1990).

According to Mouer & Sugimoto (1990:259), children of single mother (boshi katei) or father households (fūshi katei) have been systematically singled out at school as probable trouble children, something that may not always be true, because many school teachers I know said that they think this is undue discrimination. What this suggests, however, is that not having a father or mother at home is more important than being illegitimate. Children with an absent father or mother are widely expected to become troublesome and until they do they are regarded as kawaisō (pathetic) and may become the victim of harassment by classmates calling them chichinashi ko (fatherless child).

As Marumo (1993) indicates, people frequently ask children

who are out with their mother where their father is and what he is doing. While such questions do not need to be taken seriously, the simple fact of being asked time and again is likely to have a stigmatizing effect on the child, because it is confronted with the fact that it does not have a father, something that apparently is thought to be strange. Fathers' days in schools do not do much good either, because they confront children with the fact that they do not have one. Marumo's (1993) son found the solution in letting a friend of the family take on this role as did the little boy in a novel of Ochiai Keiko (1990), a solution that indicates in itself how strongly the difference is felt. Children are taught at school not to "stick out", to appear to be the same as everybody (Hendry 1987B), which obviously makes not having a father unpleasant.

In accordance with the position of the child of a single mother unmarried pregnant women are treated badly. In 1991 a woman who worked at a kindergarten in Fukui was dismissed when she became pregnant because "she represented bad morals" (ôta 1992:117-119) and the bureaucracy in general appears to put much effort into making pregnant unmarried women feel that they are immoral and a nuisance to society (Yoshizumi 1992:141-142). For those in financially difficult situations, it is possible to get assistance for buying the many goods needed with the birth of a child and when one cannot work during pregnancy and after giving birth, it is possible to get social security payments, but many single women make as little use of it as possible because they prefer to avoid having to deal with the bureaucracy. Women who become pregnant and are abandoned by the father of their child,

that is those who did not positively choose to become a single mother, have most difficulty with the treatment they receive (Satô 1982:75-78)¹⁷. Fathers can walk away just like that: if they do not care to recognize a child, they cannot be made to (Shimazu 1992:211-212, 1994:85).

An informant couple who were in a common law marriage had a child, and for reasons such as access to the man's health insurance they decided to enter the child in the koseki of the mother, while the father would recognize the child (ninchi suru) as his own. The reaction of the civil servant on duty when they went to register it was that once the couple set up a shared koseki, the child would become legitimate, which was supposed to be a reassuring remark for the parents: even though they were at the moment living somewhat messily in a status of non-legal marriage, once they married legally, their child would become legal as well. Clearly, according to my interviewee, the civil servant in question did not begin to understand the reasons why this couple was not legally married. The civil servant assumed that everyone wants to marry legally.

A problem related to this is that encountered by children with a gay or lesbian parent. Usually gay or lesbian parents will not let their sexuality be known to a child, or they will keep it from becoming known at the child's school. Not so Tôgô Ken, who hit the mass-media in the late sixties, while his children were attending elementary and high school. His daughter described the terrible times she had being told by her classmates that her father was an okama, a term for homosexual that generally has a strongly effeminate and derogatory connotation. As a result, she

refused to go to school for years. The children of some lesbian couples I interviewed until then had not encountered any major problems, although their mothers found it extremely difficult to engage in activities related to their child's school, such as the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). The subjects the other children's mothers talked about were simply too remote from their interests.

The movements against the discrimination of hichakushutsushi are closely related to the movements advocating free choice to keep one's name for both partners in marriage. They claim that children are used by "the state" in order to pressure people to marry (Fukae 1988, Ninomiya 1992B:219). If they do not, their child will be the object of discrimination. As the discussion of divorce below shows, this is but one way the bureaucracy influences people's choices, be it one that is an easy target for movements, because those concerned are "innocent" children who have done nothing apart from being born to parents who are not married. In this sense one might also take the view that the movements, by focussing on the discrimination of children through the registration system, also use children as a means of gathering support for their ultimate goal: i.e. individualization of the registration system, using koseki with ko written with the character of ko in kojin (individual), which would mean personal register instead of the character for ko used in the present koseki, which literally means door and refers to household. As Satô Bunmei, author of a number of books about koseki explained, it is not feasible to start a movement to abolish the koseki seido as such, but it is much easier to organize people to oppose

particular effects and results of it.

Rikon: Divorce.

Legally, divorce is possible either if both partners agree to have a divorce or if the partner applying for divorce has been wronged by the other in a number of clearly determined ways (Tsunoda 1989). Among some informants this led to a problem where the spouse would not consent, while they themselves were wrong by having another lover or by neglecting their spouse. Tôgô Ken, mentioned above, is such a case. He deserted his wife to pursue a gay lifestyle, but his wife refused a divorce. In a similar situation I found several heterosexual women who were legally bound to a man who refused a divorce. While this deadlock situation continues, they may share their lives with another lover, with whom they would rather not marry, even if they could. Such situations can continue for extended periods.

According to jôshiki, divorce is seen very negatively. Many people believe that traces remain in the koseki, which as a result is "polluted", but it is possible to return to the pre-marital koseki or to set up a new one, in which case no trace of the marriage remains (Satô & Kaihara 1990:140). Further, divorce is still widely held to be the fault of the woman. Even though husbands can be brutes and this is acknowledged, the wife is expected to endure (gaman suru) and try to make the best of it with all the powers in her might. This leads to surprising autobiographical material, like a book by Ôhayashi Masako (1991),

a singer and tarento (television personality with no apparent talents), who was more or less forced into a marriage with a famous singer who was thirty-seven years her elder. From the beginning this marriage was problem-ridden and it did not improve: her step-children regarded her as a gold digger and worried about their inheritance, her husband forced her to have abortions and scolded her for being too fertile while he had sexual affairs with other women. It made me wonder why she did not try to escape this situation sooner. Part of the answer is provided by the title of the book: Warui onna ka shira? (Does this make me a bad woman?).

Yamashita Noriko, ex-wife of the famous singer James Miki, also felt the need to justify her divorce with an autobiographical explanation under the ominous title Kamen fufu (Masked married couple, Yamashita 1992), and many are the reports on what is called kateinai rikon (divorce within the household), which refers to a couple that are emotionally finished, but for the sake of seken (the public world, the surrounding people), or children, continue living together (Kanda 1992). Hayashi (1990) wrote a much acclaimed book discussing this phenomenon. The shape is that of marriage, the contents are not, the wrapping counts more than the contents (Hendry 1993A). An interviewee thus shared a house with a legal husband and children and husband and wife paid half of the bills and the rent. She had lovers outside the house, something she made no effort to hide from her family. In this case most friends were aware of the situation, but neighbours were probably not.

In line with the idea that women are the ones at fault in

case of divorce, the first divorced woman I met in Japan burst into tears when I asked her how people saw her after her divorce. Although parents increasingly seem to enjoy having their daughter return, so that she can take care of them in their old age, prejudice against divorced women remains. Another interviewee, who divorced himself after he had come to use violence against his wife, commented on the pending divorce of a couple who were in a ijitsukon: "It's terrible isn't it. And there are children." It did not occur to him that divorce might be good for both partners and the children. Divorce is seen as a problem rather than a solution.

There is some rationality in this, because in Japan women usually feel or are made to feel that they must be able to be economically independent from their husbands after their divorce and, unless they either have large savings or special skills, they will usually have to lower their living standards considerably, if not live in what they are likely to perceive as poverty. This incentive is used very much in official divorce counselling. An informant who worked as a divorce counsellor said that if the woman in question cannot be sure that she will find a good job, divorce is usually advised against. Nevertheless, most divorced women I spoke with in Japan are happy to have made this decision, even if it meant that they had extreme financial hardships and were living from day to day: at least they were living their own lives and not having them lived by a husband they did not care to be with.

Lately some groups have started to give advice on divorce that is more directed at supporting women to brace themselves to

enter the labour market, or in assisting them to find ways of having husbands pay alimony, usually in a lump sum, something that is perfectly possible in the case of husbands who became violent or committed adultery. Such assistance is still scarce and only provided by some more radical women's organizations¹⁸, to which most women do not have access, because they do not know they exist. As the divorce counsellor, mentioned above, suggested, divorce counselling as it exists in Japan at the moment, seems mostly directed at keeping the divorce rate down, without much consideration as to what the costs, in terms of personal emotions, are.

Marriage and discrimination.

While, as discussed, in some circles it is considered wrong to marry, in most of modern Japanese society today and in most of that of the recent past¹⁹, marriage is and was considered to be the right thing to do: couples living together without setting up their koseki are frowned upon by the bureaucracy and often also by family. Although Japanese laws related to naien do not recognize discrimination against those who are not legally married in most fields - they stipulate for instance that those in a naien relationship have the same rights as those who are legally married when it comes to the right of housing (Ninomiya 1991) - many landlords will not accept people who are not legally registered. The rights exerted by landlords supercede any rights of renters, not legally, but in practice.

Apart from this, functionaries at the town hall or any other place may be urusai (troublesome): they may ask again and again why you do not get things right and make the marriage "properly (chan to, kichin to)" legal. This is something people of course may get tired of. And because setting up a register takes hardly any effort at all, it can be carried out in a few minutes, the merits of not having to answer the urusai civil servants about one's personal choices may make it increasingly appealing. A number of married informants, indeed, gave the insistence of civil servants as the reason why they finally gave in and set up a shared koseki, even though they were against it for political reasons.

A young female informant said that she and her husband set up their koseki because of their landlord. They were adamant that in the "conservative town (hoshuteki na machi)" where they lived, Kyoto, it would be terribly difficult to find agreeable living quarters for themselves unless they set up a koseki. The landlord let them rent his apartment only on the condition that they would make their marriage legal. Because he kept asking about their civil status after they moved in, they decided to silence this nuisance and set up a koseki, even though they were ideologically opposed to the koseki seido.

Gay men who do not wish to marry may have obvious reasons, but that does not mean that they feel they can relate them or that they are accepted by those who wish to see them married. A gay informant wanted to live straightforwardly and therefore did not want to deceive a woman and marry her. His boss introduced him to a woman, but he refused to marry her, after which his boss

dismissed him. Of course refusal to marry is not a legal ground for dismissal, but trials in Japan tend to last for many years and cost large sums of money. In general trials about having been dismissed unjustly are a sort of race of exhaustion between the two parties concerned. Financial means and perseverance are conditional. One woman and her lawyer said that they spent six years to fight her case after she was lost her job because of illness which was caused by the labour circumstances in the first place. She could only proceed because she had the support of women's networks that brought together much of the needed money. An interviewee gave up after five years of fighting her dismissal caused by her protest against wage discrimination of women, in order to sort out her life and go to university. If the man in the case above would have had the financial means and perseverance, he might have been able to win compensation money.

The oldest never married man I met was Hase san (Mr. Hase), aged 60, who spent his life changing from one job to another and knew very well that the fact that he was not married increasingly restricted his job opportunities. Nevertheless he always thought that it was wrong for a gay man to marry and persisted in his principles. He never had a lover, because he would not start an affair with someone who wanted him, if he did not love them, and vice versa, the men he fell in love with rejected his advances. Hase san spent large parts of his life working as an office cleaner, which was one of the few jobs he could get once he reached the age of 40 and was made redundant at the publishing company where he worked until then.

Hase san discovered that many gay men worked in the cleaning

business. Among his colleagues at least fifty percent were gay men. Likewise, gay men are overrepresented among the day labourers (hiyatoi rōdōsha) who are concentrated around Kamagasaki in Osaka and, to smaller extents, Sanya in Tokyo, Kotobuki in Yokohama, and elsewhere. In Kamagasaki I recognized intuitively many men as gay. When I checked the validity of my intuition it usually turned out to be right. Among men who sexually harassed me in public situations, homeless and hiyatoi rōdōsha were overrepresented. Discussions with people involved in voluntary work or living in Kamagasaki supported my hypothesis. One of the major reasons for men to end up living in Kamagasaki is the breakdown of their social networks. Gay informants whose wives, or other relatives, found out about their homosexuality sometimes felt compelled to leave their village or neighbourhood and, if they had no friends or understanding relatives to go to, one of the places they could go was Kamagasaki. Kamagasaki figures often in fantasies of homosexuality, especially in the gay magazine Sabu, which even runs a manga (comics) series based on men from Kamagasaki, as well as in real life accounts in gay magazines²⁰.

Job discrimination also applies to single foreign men. An English teacher with the best of references found that he was turned down for a number of jobs because there was no Mrs., since his age was one at which people are expected to be married. Likewise, the general difficulty for foreigners to find housing is exacerbated when they are single and over a certain age. I personally experienced people in Tokyo who would not let me stay at their house, after having been asked by a mutual friend, giving as the reason that I might be gay because I was unmarried

and passed thirty. Many people "know" that many foreign single men in Japan are gay and many think they also know that many foreign gay men have Aids.

A last problem related to marriage is discrimination against the dead. In Japan most graves are family graves and many temples refuse to house the graves of people without a family to pay for their upkeep and for occasional prayers. Funerals are big business, but if there is no family there appears not to be much trust that other relations will be interested enough in the deceased to fulfil the duties of piety. Onnatachi no Ishibumi no Kai (The Group of the Women's Memorial Stone) is a group that erected a memorial stone to commemorate the loss of life the second world war brought, consisting mostly of single women who claim that they could not marry because so many men died during the war. Their president, Tani Kayoko, related in her speech at the yearly meeting in December 1992 that she had given a younger friend money to bring her ashes to Hawaii after her death. In the meantime however, Onnatachi no Ishibumi no Kai had founded a grave for single women at the Jōjakukōji, a temple in Kyoto. For one hundred thousand yen a single woman can have her ashes set in the grave, which consists of a deep round hole inside a tomb beneath a monument, and she can expect yearly ceremonies, held by the members of the group that in 1992 counted about four hundred members, and is growing faster than members die (Tani 1993). Gay activist Tōgō Ken hopes to found a temple where gay men can be buried.

But even when one is a member of Onnatachi no Ishibumi no Kai one is not sure that one's ashes will rest in the desired

spot. The year I visited the annual meeting there was talk of a woman who had died in the past year and whose ashes had been placed in a municipal grave by the city of Kyoto. When another member found out about this she went to the responsible bureaucratic body and asked for the ashes to be moved, but this could only be done with the consent of the family of the deceased. When calling on them, she found they were not at all interested in the deceased and did not care what happened to her wish to be buried at the Jōjakukōji. Although all they needed to do was put their seal on a document, they refused. Likewise, an interviewee related the story of an unmarried friend who was highly regarded in the community where he lived and wished to be buried there by his friends. In this case too, the family moved in and put him in the family grave without even consulting his closest friends. This prevalence of blood ties and legal ties over actual social ties is supported by the koseki seido.

Conclusion.

This chapter has sought to provide a basis from which to understand the following one, which is concerned with marriages of gay men, lesbian women and feminist women. Whether one is legally married or not may make great differences socially, politically, legally and economically, but not always. Socially, i.e. in neighbourhoods, the difference between legal and common law marriage can be marginal and the law provides loopholes in other fields. The ways people devise to overcome problems caused

by the omnipresence of the konin seido are a focus of investigation in chapter six. Here one example was given: founding grave monuments for particular groups. Reasons why people of the research categories wish to marry or think they cannot avoid marriage, should be clear: jōshiki have it that the only proper way to live is to marry. Most people think that it is important to live "the proper way".

Notes:

1. According to Toshitani in 1987 97.8% of all marrying couples chose the husband's name, and presumably 2.2% the wife's (1994:79). See also note 9.

2. Condon, Murata and Ishikawa all found that about 20% of male respondents said that they had extra-marital sex in the last one or two years. For women these figures are much lower, about 4%, but this still could lead to quite an accumulation over a lifetime (Murata 1992:76, Ishikawa 1984:141-142). Maruyama (1988:24-29) presents a figure of 30% of married women who have had the experience of extra-marital sex, based on a questionnaire conducted by a newspaper with 2,000 women in a danchi (a housing estate) in Tokyo in 1978.

3. Lebra (1984:78-79) discussed essays she asked school girls to write about their future. They tended to stop on the wedding day, the day when life ends in a way. One girl even thought it might be better to commit suicide before she had to marry and indeed, as Cecchini (1977) showed, there is a peak in suicides among women of marriageable age, which is also discussed in Ogura (1988:107-108), who also relates it to a confrontation with a society that, different from schools and universities, discriminates against women. Wöss (1990), on investigating reasons for suicides among young women in Japan, found that financial problems are the most often cited reason. Many are unemployed. Official unemployment figures in Japan are low, because the category is very narrowly defined. If one only works for one hour in a month one is not counted as unemployed in that month (Bosse 1994). An alternative solution for their problems would be to marry someone with a good income, which they obviously either see as not feasible or as not desirable.

4. See for instance McKinstry & McKinstry (1991) whose research on the "life advice column" in Yomiuri Shinbun indicates that dissatisfaction with the role of the housewife is a main focus of the complaints and Lunsing (1989) where it is the main focus of complaints sent in by women in a rubric in Fujin Kōron. The prize-winning investigative journalistic Tsumatachi no shishōki by Saitō (1984) discusses some of the problems the dissatisfaction of housewives can lead to. Higuchi (1984) also gives a number of examples of dissatisfied housewives. Abundant material can further be found in for instance Waifu, a magazine in which women write about their personal concerns. For instance Yamada (1993) who focusses on the relation with her husband's family is an interesting article in this relation.

5. The power Japanese housewives yield in the household is often discussed (e.g. Lebra 1984:129-138, Vogel 1978). This power clearly has nothing to do with autonomy. Dependence on the income of the husband excludes this idea. Further the activities of the housewife can be restricted by the husband or his father or mother. Lebra (1984:294-300) presented a totally incomparable (because highly educated and highly mobile) American group for comparison, who she refers to as having declared that "women are better off in other societies including Japan" (ibid.315) in what seems an attempt to say that Japanese women are possibly better off than American. I think the problem here lies in the idea that American women are relatively liberated, which recently has been refuted by books like Backlash (Faludi 1992) and The war against women (French 1992), than that it says much about Japan. Just like Japanese women cannot be represented by contented housewives, American women cannot be represented by liberated independent women.

6. In 1991 the average age for women to get married was 25.9 and for men 28.4 Keizai Kikaku ed. 1992:23-24, 408).

7. Viricentric is a term proposed by Schrijvers (1985) and others, who think that the American prevalent term androcentric is vague, because the Greek term andros means human as well as man. The Latin term vir, from which viricentric is derived, means only man, and is therefore clearer. I write viricentric rather than ie-centric here, because that is the way I was confronted with the term. Informants who mentioned it, referred mostly to colleagues and friends who said things like: "Isn't it time for you to receive a bride?", without any reference whatsoever to the ie. Although the character for yome is a combination of the characters for ie and onna (woman), which suggests the centrality of the ie, people may not realize this when they are using the word.

8. Usually the husband, but I found one case of the wife having started a successful career and leaving her husband and children to live temporarily elsewhere for the sake of her work.

9. Fukae (1988:116) writes almost all and Toshitani (1994:79), as mentioned in note 1, mentions the figure of 97.8% in 1987. Idota gives the figure of 98% (Idota 1993:98).

10. Two of these groups are Fûfu Besshi no Hôseika o Jitsugen suru Kai (Group for the realisation of separate names for married couples) and Fûfu Bessei Sentakusei o Susumeru Kai (Group for the promotion of free choice of separate names for married couples), both in Tokyo (Josei no Jôhô o Hirogeru Kai 1992:234).

11. Idota (1993:72-88) points out that the practice of husband and wife sharing the same name is a relatively recent development in Japan, established no sooner than the late nineteenth century. The only other countries that have koseki rather than individual registration are Taiwan and Korea, which suggests a relation to Confucianism. In Korea the wife is still not included in the koseki of the husband's family, but remains an outsider, reminiscent of the borrowed womb philosophy of the Japanese samurai class (Neuss-Kaneko 1990).

12. This term is still much in use, although its meaning has become redundant. In fact, one cannot do nyûseki when marrying anymore, but sets up a new koseki, as opposed to the pre-war system when nyûseki meant that in most cases the woman entered the koseki of her husband's family or less common, that the man entered the koseki of his wife's family (Satô & Kaihara 1990). The common use of the term nyûseki, indicates the remaining prevalence of thinking along lines of the ie seido. Usually the woman used to enter the koseki of the family of the house she married into, of which a patriarch, the father or grandfather of the groom or the groom, is the head. Wedding ceremonies are still announced as if the main feature was the linking of two ie, they are announced as the wedding ceremony of ie so and so to ie so and so (naninani ke to naninani ke).

13. According to Japanese law no difference is to be made in allocating public housing between Japanese nationals or foreign nationals living in Japan (Pe san. 1991). Apart from this it is rather perverse that a city like Osaka which prides itself with being "international" does not allow those without Japanese nationality to live in its houses.

14. For instance Shusseï Sabetsu no Hô Kaisei o Motomeru Onnatachi no Kai (Women's Group that Strives for Reform of the Laws of Birth Discrimination) and Kongaishi Sabetsu o Tatakau Kai (Group that Fights Discrimination against Extra-marital Children; Josei no Jôhô o Hirogeru Kai eds. 1991).

15. See Fukushima (1991B:100), who quotes the following: "If I let my child marry someone whose father is not known, the koseki will become polluted."

16. Hendry (1987A:16), referring to Seward, gives the example of a former emperor who was born illegitimate. This is not a good example at all, because the laws as they apply to the rest of the Japanese people do not apply to the imperial family. The imperial family does not have a family name or a koseki (Satô & Kaibara 1990:82). In legal terms, marriage in case of the imperial family is common law marriage, and if general Japanese law would apply, all emperors would be illegitimate.

17. Satô relates that when she was in hospital to have her baby, she was, to her pleasure, put on a ward with single mothers only. It is here that she learned that all the other single mothers had not chosen to become a single mother and all of them were anxious to start working again as soon as their feet could bear them in order to avoid further harassment by the bureaucracy.

18. For instance Nikoniko Rikon Kôza (Divorce with a Smile Course) is a course teaching women how to get the best deal out of a divorce and how to brace themselves for economic independence.

19. Recent past refers to the Meiji, Taishô and Showa periods, i.e. the period from 1868 until 1989 AD. Before the Meiji period most people did not have family names and if they did they were not supported by a bureaucracy that kept records of them. Koseki were invented no sooner than the Meiji period (Idota 1993:15-17). Before then there was the danka seido, which demanded that all households belong to and register at the local Buddhist temple.

20. Tom Gill, who conducted research with hiyatoi rôdôsha in Kotobuki, made me attentive of the fact that men who flock to areas like these in order to have sex with day labourers, are called yogoresen (dirt lovers).

4: Trying to fit: Homosexuality and feminism in marriage.

This chapter investigates how people are coping on a personal level with a system that does not fit their needs, and on the other hand does not leave them untouched either. Given the existence of marriage and its position in society, how do those whose feelings or ideologies disagree with marriage cope? While some marry and try to be as close to "normal" (nômaru, futsû) as they can, others do not marry and try to find alternative ways to live, usually calling that "normal" as well. In their context people who have omiai or otherwise try to bring their lifestyle into agreement with social constructions that do not fit their personal needs are weird (hentai). Some of those who are married later decide that they made the wrong choice and opt for divorce. Others remain married while the marriage becomes void in the sense that human contact ceases to exist beyond the absolutely necessary. This chapter discusses how homosexuality and feminism combine with marriage.

Male homosexuality and marriage.

It was very uncommon to remain unmarried for men who reached the marriageable age around the end of the Second World War and well into the sixties and seventies. This was a period in which marriage had become widely regarded as the only way of life and was practically the only way of life¹. Even nowadays many have

difficulty in warding off pleas and urges to get married by their families, superiors or friends. Most homosexual men in their fifties and above have been, or indeed, are still married. The cases of two gay activists illustrates the inescapable nature of marriage in Japan for these generations.

Tôgô Ken, gay politician and publisher of gay magazine Za Gei, is a descendant from ancient nobility, and his father and his step-grandfather were both members of parliament in the prewar period (Tôgô 1981:18-45 & 1984:9-11). In line with his standing Tôgô worked at a bank (Lebra 1993) in the fifties and eventually, at 24, was forced to marry. An omiaï was arranged for him and he agreed without even looking at his future bride: "As I didn't want to marry at all, I couldn't care with whom." Tôgô came out as gay in the late sixties and participated in elections, campaigning in traditional Japanese female attire. This led to the ostracism of him and his children from the family. His daughter claims never to have seen any of her cousins, aunts or uncles, since her father came out. His marriage was still not legally dissolved when I met Tôgô in Tokyo in December 1991, because his wife refused to give her consent and, as discussed in the previous chapter, one cannot divorce someone who has done nothing wrong without this consent.

Another leader of gay activities, Minami Teishirô, was also forced to marry, at 35, and also has children. He had more luck than Tôgô because his wife agreed to a divorce after their marriage had been void, in the sense that they had lived separately and hardly ever saw each other, for a long time. By then Minami had already set up his own gay magazine, Adon, but

this was not widely known. Although Minami these days appears on television and in the written media frequently, he does not believe that his children know that he is gay, because his relationship with his children was severed after his divorce.

People who are less strong minded than these two men are more common, and Minami is likely to be right when he says that the majority of men who visit Japan's main gay bar area in Shinjuku in Tokyo, comprising about two hundred bars, are married white collar workers, who visit Shinjuku on their way from their jobs to their homes (Lunsing 1994A)². Most patrons stay for only a short while, one hour or two, and then hurry off to catch their trains home³. While there are some indications that the number of homosexual men who marry, despite being aware of their homosexuality, is declining somewhat, other material suggests that the number of those wanting to marry is still high (Lunsing 1995).

Data from a survey published by Occur (Ugoku gei. 1992) indicate that about 30% of their sample of young gay men want to marry. Because this sample is constituted of young gays visiting gay bars in Shinjuku and members of gay organizations, this figure is definitely low compared to the overall situation. Many gays do not visit gay bars and some are even totally isolated from other gays. In their cases resistance to marriage demands much more energy than for those who are part of a gay network. Moreover the sample in question is very young, with a majority in their early twenties, which is an age at which marriage is not yet a very pressing problem⁴. Other surveys by gay magazines Sabu and Za Gei equally suggest that many gay men still seriously

think about marriage if they are not already actively involved in seeking a spouse⁵. Further, of Za Gei's sample over forty percent had been married, with over seventy percent of those past forty. This compares to the equally biased figures of ôta who, with a research population of one hundred, found that 41 were or had been married, data which he gathered by making use of a gay network in the fifties (ôta 1987:79). In relation to this it is also noteworthy that second hand gay magazines are widely available in Japan, because many men discard them before their marriage. As an interviewee who tried to establish a documentation center in connection with Adon said, often they send them back to the publisher.

As reasons for the wish to marry among young gay men in Sabu the desire to have children is mentioned most, followed by the wish to comply with demands of seken or those who make up one's daily environment, and parents. Young men in gay groups I participated in mostly do not wish to marry, but there is a strong tendency to recognize that they are still young and are liable to change their minds later on when pressure may increase. In general they wish, however, to remain unmarried, the question rather being whether this will be feasible when confronted with mounting demands by seken in their later twenties. Indeed, at a meeting of Fain Kurabu, a group of a composition like that of Occur's survey and the groups referred to above, but generally in their late twenties and early thirties, a majority of 13 out of 24 were seriously thinking about marriage. In this group there appears to be a negative correlation between seeking marriage and having had sexual experience with a woman, having had sexual

experience with a man at an early age, and thinking of oneself as charming (miriyokuteki)⁶. This suggests that the meeker and less experienced are more likely to opt for marriage.

Three groups I conducted research with in Osaka and a group in Tokyo discussed the question of marriage and in magazines (especially Barazoku) and minikomi (DON!, Behold, Kick Out) it featured in special issues. While Occur, the most ardent politically active gay group in Tokyo, condemns homosexual men who marry, calling it gisô kekkon (camouflage marriage), other groups are less dogmatic. At meetings of OGC and JILGA I met several married gay men and in the other groups in Osaka, which largely consist of young gay men, marriage is a serious topic of discussion. While OGC's Hirano Hiroaki opposes marriage for gay men, this must be understood as opposition to marriage in general. He opposes not only marriage among gay men, but marriage as such, whereas most gay groups tend to oppose marriage among gay men while at the same time regarding the acceptance of a homosexual marriage as a goal to strive for.

"True love" appears to be very much the ideal, for which reason the castigation of gay men who marry women is also understandable, because it disagrees with this ideal. In a vehement statement, Yukidaruma (Snowman, a nickname, 1993) attacks men who use being gay as an excuse for cheating on their wives, because "the world does not permit heterosexual men to have mistresses," either. A heterosexual man who told about his feelings towards his wife at a meeting of the men's liberation group, however, desired, much like many homosexual men, that his wife would consent to him having love and sex relationships with

other women, which was not made into a point of moral concern there. Kick Out! published an issue in which marriage for gay men was supported theoretically with the argument that in a society that does not accept homosexuality, gay men can hardly be blamed for going with the flow (Masakami 1992). Thus, within gay circles there is much animosity expressed around the theme of marriage.

The fact that, as discussed in chapter three (p.94) the rate of marriage among men has declined considerably, to the extent that in 1990 almost 20% of men aged from 35 to 40 had never married (Keizai Kikakuchō 1992:409), a decrease in the percentage of gay men who marry is to be expected. Furthermore, among those who do marry, there appears to be an increase in marrying a woman who knows of their homosexual preference (Lunsing 1995). Homosexuality is not something constantly present in the sense that people always know where their preference lies. Thus, men who find themselves wanting to share their sexuality with a man, may already be married. In my sample of married men who acknowledge their homosexual desire or activity I discern four types.

Marriage of convenience.

Uncommon, but existent, is the total sham. In this case the marriage is between a man and a woman who both know that the man is homosexual, but decide to marry, even though they do not want to share their lives. They may decide to live apart (bekkyo kekkon), or even decide on a date for divorce by contract before they get married (keiyaku kekkon: contract marriage). This subtype is based on the assumption that if you have been married

once, there will be less pressure to marry again. You have given it a try and thus you are now in a position to argue that marriage does not fit your personality.

Friendship marriage.

More common than sham marriages are the second type: marriages in which the wife knows about the man's homosexual preference, but still wishes to live with him and share her life with him to a varying extent. The men may want a mate to share their everyday life with, a housewife to take care of the household and/or a mother to give birth and take care of their children. Many homosexual men see this as an ideal arrangement, but also some women choose to marry a homosexual man on these terms, because it gives them the status of a married woman without much of the burden, such as demands by the husband to have sex. Moreover, in negotiations preceding marriage they are in a stronger position to exert pressure on the man to meet any demand they might have than they would be with a heterosexual man.

When emotional ties and companionship play a major role in these arrangements, they may be referred to as tomodachi kekkon (friendship marriage) or, more rarely, as kyōmei kekkon (brother-sister marriage). A novel which has been made into a movie of the same title, Kirakira hikaru, depicts such a situation (Ekuni 1992). The protagonists, Mutsuki, a gay physician, and Shōko, an alcoholic woman working as a translator, did not wish to marry, but were pressured by their parents to do omiaiai. When Mutsuki speaks his mind right away, Shōko becomes interested. Together

they work out that marrying each other might be a good way to avoid further harassment by their parents. Shôko makes sure that Mutsuki continues his relationship with his lover, whom she appears to be very fond of, even when her parents find out about Mutsuki's homosexuality and demand a separation of the lovers. Shôko works it all out to the effect that Mutsuki's lover comes to live in an apartment in the same building as theirs.

In the case of an interviewee it worked out less well. He married a friend who was about ten years older than himself, which led to criticism from his business relations: she could not even have children any more. Nevertheless he persisted and the marriage took place. She knew he was gay at the time of marriage, which for her was a reason to marry him. He explains:

"I was urged to do omiaï and arrived at a period in which I didn't have the strength to refuse, but I didn't want to marry in that way. I thought it would be good to marry, even though I am gay (gei), you might say in order to fit the structure, to take the form of marriage and live together (kyôdô seikatsu) as partners, and married. A female friend asked me if I wanted to marry her even though I was gay because she didn't want to marry a heterosexual man (futsû no otoko), but would be fine in a marriage with a gay man. So we married. (...) It was a woman who didn't like sex very much. She knew my feelings quite well and I also understood her

quite well, so we married thinking that it might work out fine."

It seemed nicely planned, but it was evidently not talked through thoroughly enough; when he started an affair with a male lover, she realized that she did not get what she had expected. She had wanted to spend more time together with her husband, who now increasingly left her alone in order to go and see his lover. After many fights she made him choose: either he had to break off his relationship with his lover, or she would divorce him. The outcome was divorce. He cared less than he expected. He had grown older and stronger⁷, and because he had been married once, pressure to marry again could be countered more easily: He had experienced marriage and could judge it to be not his way of life, something he would use whenever his business relations brought up the subject of remarriage. On a number of occasions I met gay men in the company of their wives in gay bars, in Tokyo as well as in Osaka. Most of these cases appeared to be of this type, the wife had married the man while knowing he was gay. Although the man was known to be gay by people present in the bars, they usually would not discuss this until after the couple left. While they were in the bar together, the man would often pose as heterosexual.

Deceiving husbands.

Much more common than this are cases in which the man marries his wife without letting her know about his sexuality, the third type. He may think that by getting married he can

change his ways and become nômaru (normal), that is heterosexual, or he may think it is a bad thing for him to do, but pressures of surrounding people - his parents, his superiors and colleagues at work, or his friends - make him feel there is no other way out. A man who married at 35 under pressure of what he calls shûi (environment), which in his case points in particular at the people he is working with, said about his wife, to whom he was introduced by mutual friends:

"I don't know whether she knew (that I was gay when we married). I did not say it, we didn't talk about it. (...) From the atmosphere (I think she might have known), but I don't know."

This marriage ended after two years in divorce, because it was clear that the marriage "didn't work". When they decided to separate, he talked to her about his homosexuality, but she did not tell him whether she had known all along and he did not ask. This man tried to adapt to a heterosexual lifestyle during his marriage and "of course" did not have affairs. Another man who decided at 27 that it was time to marry and become "normal", after he lost a lover, also did not tell about his past:

"Before we married I didn't talk (about my homosexual past). She didn't know anything about it. (...) From the beginning I didn't like having sex with women, but it was not that I couldn't. Well, she became pregnant and we

couldn't have sex and I started going to gay bars again. I corresponded with a boy I met there (...) and eventually started an affair with him. Then the child was born and finally I hadn't had sex with my wife for over a year in total. (...) My wife started to find this strange (okashii), she began wondering why we didn't have sex after the child was born. She asked me to have sex, because you're a couple and it's only natural. I excused myself saying that I was too tired,...."

His wife kept pressurizing him and eventually he ended up telling her that he was gay (homo), leaving it up to his wife to decide on the consequences. She did not accept his homosexuality and made him go to a psychologist, but the psychologist merely said that there was nothing wrong with him and that homosexuals have the opportunity to live a very interesting life not available to most people. This was unacceptable for his wife who now demanded a divorce. The man has not seen his daughter since, which is his main point of regret. He would like to marry and have a child again, but this time with a woman who accepts his homosexuality.

A small group hardly consider their wife's happiness, and marry in order to be able to lead a double life. In these cases there is always the fear of being found out, which limits the possibilities of having homosexual relationships. A man who married and thought he had a very good relationship with his

wife, was found out (barashita) within a year because lovers kept calling him at home. She demanded a divorce. He is still looking back to his happy year of marriage. What this indicates is that it is often not easy for a married man to have homosexual relationships. Even giving a phone number can be very dangerous. For this reason married men often do not even tell their names to sex partners. Often their homosexual affairs are limited to short excursions to parks, movie theaters, or prostitution quarters (Domenig 1991) which makes it all not very different from heterosexual marriages in which the man also may go and find his sexual pleasures outside the home⁸. Many married gay men, however, do not have sex with men at all. Not having a gay sex life was common among my informants and similar cases are abundant in gay magazines.

In Barazoku a man described how he was more or less lured into marriage, to which he had little resistance. A friendship with a female colleague at work led to the usual gossip and before he knew he was married to her. He tried to adapt to a heterosexual lifestyle, although it was all very "dark and heavy-handed". He had continued to hide his homosexual feelings ever since he discovered them at eleven, but at 28 he was seduced by a man who told him that there was nothing wrong with enjoying homosexual contacts while being married. These words sounded like "the devil's whisper". He started to hate himself and decided to do the right thing and divorce. While feeling terribly guilty towards his wife, he decided this was the only way to live honestly (Mayoeru Sarariiman 1990)⁹. Another man, also in Barazoku, writes about his "secret pleasure" of visiting a gay

sauna in Tokyo a couple of times a year, something he started doing only when he felt he had fulfilled his duty as a husband and father and had reached the age of fifty. He never had sex in the sauna, except for one time, when he masturbated a young man. Otherwise his "secret pleasure" was limited to watching (Yukio 1992).

A man who married because he wanted very much to have children and for the sake of seken has continued to have lovers, also after his wife found out about his homosexuality. He wishes very much to stay married, because he does not want to lose his daughter, but since his wife found out, his relationship has changed. He finds it particularly tsurai (painful, bitter) that he and his wife do not even share the same bedroom any more. When he told this at a meeting of OGC, Hirano Hiroaki was quick to remark that that is not uncommon in marriages in which both partners are heterosexual either.

Latent homosexuality.

Another common type of marriage of homosexual men, the fourth, is that of those who do not realize, or acknowledge, that they are attracted to their own sex at the time of marriage. Only after marriage they come to realize that that "dark feeling of longing inside" for physical contact with men they had in their teens, as an interviewee described it, was not something that belonged to a passing phase or something that had nothing to do with their sexuality as such, but a longing that would keep turning up time and again. Men in this predicament often label themselves as bisexual, whereby the love they feel for their wife

is often of a very different order to that of their feelings for men. With their wives they may find stability, warmth, and comradeship. With male partners, if they have any, they find passion and lust. In the words of an interviewee, who spoke about what he called his baisekushuariti (bisexuality) at meetings of OGC as well as the men's liberation group:

"What I often think is that I love her because she is my wife. But on the other side I feel attracted towards men. But it doesn't go so far that I want to divorce her. If you ask whether I have a love relationship (aijô kankei) with her, at this point I hope to be excused. (...) I mean I don't love a particular man to the extent that I can live with him or have such a love relationship (renai kankei). And I already am married to her, we are talking about me being married. I didn't marry against my wish and I didn't marry because I wanted to...."

This man married his wife when he was 29, half a year after they were introduced to each other by a colleague. At the time of marriage he did not know that there was such a thing as homosexuality, apart from the geinôkai, the world of television and show business, but when he later happened to find a gay magazine he remembered having felt a strong attraction towards men and becoming excited when looking at pictures of male nudes in his adolescence. He (re)discovered his appetite for the male

sex not long after his children were born, a not uncommon pattern. After this discovery he placed advertisements in gay magazines to find a lover, but apart from some contacts of short duration and low intensity, he was not successful.

He participates in meetings of OGC, often accompanied by one of his children, and his wife knows that he goes to a group but, according to him, she thinks nothing of it, because he has always been going to all sorts of meetings and always has been involved in voluntary activities and movements. In the gay group's meeting however, he is castigated for "hiding behind the guise of bisexuality" and "deceiving his wife", although he hardly deceives her in the sense of being untrue, because he has had no sexual relationships with men. Moreover, he is comparatively a very progressive husband. He claimed to take upon himself many household tasks, in particular laundry and washing up. In the men's liberation group reactions to his story were marked by a lack of understanding. His story was generally considered as weird (hen) and incomprehensible and not much effort was made to understand things better. This reflects the ideal of true love that is generally upheld in feminist circles and which men involved in the men's liberation group support without much questioning.

While in the case of men who deceive their wives knowingly divorces are common on being found out (parashita), in the case of those who deceived themselves rather than anyone else the marriage may continue after the man has been found out or told his wife. After all, the couple is likely to be in some sort of intimate or close relationship. The television series Dôsôkai

(Alumni Association), aired by Yomiuri Television in the Autumn of 1993 gives an example of this. When the wife, Natsuki, is searching for her husband, Fûma, in the gay quarter of Shinjuku she discovers that her suspicions are right, while looking at a television screen in the bar of a love hotel where she is invited to a drink by a yakuza boss. As it happens the boss, who has an appetite for men, is just looking at the video-screen that shows live how Fûma has sex with his lover. This leads her to start thinking of Fûma and the loneliness he must feel, and to stop being selfish and only think of her own problems, as she evaluates her attitude until then.

This is a somewhat extreme situation, and not many Japanese women would react like that, especially after so crude a confrontation, but positive reactions do occur: I met a married couple in a gay bar in Osaka and it appeared that they were married and that the man had only later discovered the attraction he felt towards men. In fact it was the first time he visited a gay bar and, because he found it a rather frightening and intimidating prospect, he asked his wife to accompany him. Tomorrow though, he promised to come again, alone. A man I met at a gay Christmas party in Tokyo, said that he had quit being a priest because he felt dissatisfaction with the church and that he married at thirty. When he married he did have homosexual feelings, but he did not know what to do with them. Later he came into contact with other gays and started meeting them. His wife, he said, knew he was at a gay Christmas party and understood (wakatte kureta) that he had a need to go to such gatherings.

A female interviewee married very romantically in Guam,

after absconding with her boyfriend, whom her parents forbade her to see. After three years of marriage, her husband told her he needed a man. He said that he loved her and needed her by his side, but that he at the same time needed a boyfriend. He called himself bisexual (baisekushuaru) and explained the word bisexual as referring to someone who needs to have relationships with people from both sexes at the same time. Initially she believed him and found this all very interesting. She started reading everything about homosexuality she could find and together they placed an advertisement in a gay magazine in order to find him a lover. Everything seemed to go smoothly, until he started to give his attention increasingly to his lover while ignoring his wife. She was not at all happy about this and in a major effort to attract attention attempted suicide, making use of sleeping pills. In her suicide note she wrote:

"We are a married couple. I thought we were lovers. Now that we are not any more, I don't have the confidence to live on. I can't see dreams and goals in a future with you. It is totally dark. (...) I don't want to live on without the energy of love coming from you. (...) When I think of you tears come to my eyes, I must be a happy person, but I am tired of the unreturned love. Forgive me for not being a good wife."

She continues by writing to his lover that she, as the wife,

knows that the feelings of her husband for him are true and by wishing him happiness with her husband after her death. The suicide attempt was aborted when, according to her, her husband came home earlier than expected to find her unconscious. He took her to the hospital to have her stomach pumped. The suicide attempt gained her some attention, but it did not last. However much he repeated that he really needed her, that he could not live without her, she felt increasingly neglected, a feeling which was exacerbated by his sneaking out of the house under all sorts of pretexts in order to phone his lover, and by his lack of being open about his activities. Furthermore she was concerned about Aids. He did not have safe sex, because he felt that true love was worth dying for. She decided to try and live on her own. This was a grandiose fiasco, altogether she slept one night in the apartment they had rented for her at much expense¹⁰. She decided to go back, or rather continue, to live with him, trying to make the best of both their lives, and that of his consecutive lovers. Although he said that if the relationships with his first lover came to an end, he might not look for another, as it turned out he found himself a new lover within a month of losing the first one.

A positive point she kept relating about her husband loving men was that it gave her a chance to meet many "interesting people". In order to talk about how she felt she had placed advertisements in gay magazines herself and thus made contact with a number of people with whom she gradually developed interesting friendships: mainly married gay men, but also other people who were interested in talking about their own problems

related to sexuality and marriage. She did not believe that her husband was bisexual, but rather that he was homosexual, considering the differences in attention he gave her and his lover.

The idea that homosexual men cannot have sex with women may be supportive of the idea men may construct of themselves as bisexual. Many gay men think themselves that they are unable to have sex with women, but it rather appears that, if they try very hard, they can, often by closing their eyes and thinking of men (Morioka 1979, Tamura 1988). Nevertheless, some men believe that they must be bisexual, because they are not unable to have sex with their wives. This interpretation of sexuality is based not on preference, attraction, or lust, but rather on experience, which, indeed, would mean that a large number of Japanese men are bisexual¹¹. In the gay magazine Sabu, however, a letter was published of the contrary case of a man who married his wife who "fortunately" became pregnant during their honeymoon:

"Since then we have sexual intercourse about twice a month and my wife does not desire more than that and in me about twice a month the desire to have sex comes up. Probably, if I would have continued seeing men (otoko asobi) after marriage, it wouldn't be like this. This way of putting things may be impolite towards my wife, but if my needs reach their limit, she fulfils the role of play-thing (omocha) satisfactorily. People (...) tell me that I must

be bisexual (ryôtô, lit. double sworded) because I can do it with women as well as men, but I must protest. I am not bisexual" (Anonymous 1991).

Among my informants, most married men who had before engaged in homosexual activities or had acknowledged attraction to the male sex did not believe they were bisexual, even though they managed to sexually satisfy their wives. They rather believed that they were homosexual, even in cases, like that quoted above, who had no sexual contacts with men. The group of men who try to become heterosexual upon marriage or see themselves as bisexual is rather small compared to this. Moreover, this group tends to be very unstable. Men who try to become heterosexual usually recognize or rediscover their homosexual preference after children have been born, if not sooner. Many men who see themselves as bisexual, tend to make a strong separation between the quality of their feelings for men and for women, which indicates, according to critiques by many gay groups and individuals, that bisexuality is not the right term for their situation.

Men who see themselves as bisexual and whose feelings for men and women do not show this difference of course also exist. In general, I found that their position was readily accepted in most groups, like the case of a young man who, in a discussion on marriage on a cassette tape recorded by Kamigata DJ Club says that he would only want to marry a woman he really loves, but that that is perfectly possible, because he is not fully

homosexual (kanzen na homo) but rather bisexual. This is accepted by the men appearing on the tape after they discussed the prevalence of men "who pose as bisexuals" (Kamigata DJ Club 1992:side 2)¹².

It appears that the situation of male homosexuality in marriage in Japan has much in common with that described for North America by Gochros (1989) and Humphreys (1971) or for Australia, New Zealand, Finland and Sweden by Ross (1983) in those cases where men hoped to become heterosexual, did not acknowledge their homosexual desire at the time of marriage, or wished to hide their homosexuality. What is different in Japan, is that there are also marriages in which the man recognizes his homosexual desire which is accepted by the wife or in which the man does not have many qualms about hiding his homosexual desire from his wife. In northern America, northern Europe and Australia such constructions appear to be less feasible due to the importance adhered to the contents of marital relationships, due to heterosexual couples being expected to present themselves as lovers. Further the incidence of men with a clearly acknowledged homosexual desire who marry is most likely to be higher in Japan than in the other areas, but so is the overall incidence of marriage. The term gisô kekkon, as used by Occur, does not describe marriage by gay men in Japan in an adequate way. Most homosexual men want something more out of marriage than hiding their homosexuality, such as friendship, warmth, children, and most of all, a guarantee against loneliness (Lunsing 1995).

Feminism and female homosexuality in marriage.

Although I originally intended to divide female homosexuality and feminism in relation to marriage into two separate sections, when writing drafts the overlaps turned out to be very large and a number of cases could belong to both sections. One of the reasons for this is that many lesbian women are also feminists, certainly in the wider meaning of women with independent ideas about how they wish to live that are not determined by the jōshiki of marriage as discussed in chapter three. Some lesbians, indeed, consider being feminisuto (feminist) of more importance to their identities than being lesbian and, as this section intends to clarify, in relation to marriage feminism may supercede or precede the importance of homosexual desire. While conducting my fieldwork in Japan and when presenting papers based on my fieldwork, some heterosexual women who fit into my definition of feminist expressed great doubts about the feasibility of combining feminists and lesbians in one framework. Ueno Chizuko for instance thought that I should limit my research to homosexuality. These doubts may be partially born from the fear of feminists of becoming socially less acceptable by being associated with homosexuality. Let me, therefore, state clearly that most feminists are "fully heterosexual (kanzen na hetero)", which is a way of putting things as they are prevalent in Japan.

The majority of lesbians over thirty I interviewed had been married to a man in one way or other, i.e. hōritsukon or jiitsukon (legally or not), and had been living a heterosexual lifestyle previously. Some also had children. Even if they

recognized their attraction towards women at the time of marriage, like gay men in their fifties and sixties they had not perceived remaining unmarried as feasible, for economic reasons, and above all for social reasons. One of the main returning features was that they did not know of other women with homosexual feelings and as a result of that they did not know what to do with them. Women who lived without men were not visible and the idea that they could live on their own was inconceivable. This is largely true for the gakusei undô (student movement) generation, that reached the marriageable age in the late sixties and early seventies. Feminists of the generation that developed from discontent with role patterns in the gakusei undô in the sixties, whose movement generally is called ûman ribu, had usually married and in many cases divorced once demands posed by married life became incompatible with their feminist activities.

The only figures available on the prevalence of marriage among lesbian women are produced by a survey that was spread among lesbian networks and in lesbian bars in Shinjuku. They are inevitably biased because the women reached by the survey are obviously more confident in their lesbian preference than other women, otherwise the survey would not have reached them. The sample consists of 234 women of whom in total about 23% had been married, but the figure is kept low by a large percentage of women in their teens and twenties. Of those in their forties over sixty percent had been or still were married (Hirosawa & Rezubian Ripôto Han 1991). I know of no figures on the prevalence of marriage among women who are involved in feminist activities, but given the high incidence of marriage in Japan, it is safe to say

that a majority are or have been married. As an interviewee of 41, who labelled herself as feminisuto said: "In my generation there was no question of getting married or not." I discern four groups of feminism and female sexualities in relation to marriage.

Opportunists.

The first is that of women who have a clear goal with their marriage and adapt their choice of husband to it. The feminisuto mentioned above is a case that fits this type. She married in the middle of the seventies to a man who was considered far below her standing. His family found this a reason to check up on her thoroughly because surely there must be something terribly wrong with her if she chose to marry someone so down market. Her choice, however, was more determined by the fact that the man she chose was very amenable to her wishes and accepted her demands about her continuing to pursue a career. Although she also takes upon herself the brunt of the housework - she is adamant that she loves to cook - her husband makes no problems when she goes away on a voyage related to her professional activities. Because she is unable to have children, that aspect of the relationship has become a non-issue. This case has much in common with the two cases of academic women, described by Hendry (1992B), who, as Hendry stresses, were dependent on passive support by their husbands and fathers and active cooperation by female relatives in order to be able to pursue their careers.

A lesbian woman of 36 married mostly because she wanted to have children, but also because a different way of life was not

considered to be feasible at the time. She did not know very clearly whether her husband knew she was a lesbian and she herself claims not to have been very certain about it at the time of the marriage either, notwithstanding the fact that she had had lesbian affairs previously. After having been expelled from a girls' college, because she had confessed her love for a classmate, she was so hurt by the inimical reaction to her feelings that:

"From then onwards I tried not to talk about it. (...) Still, at the time there were a lot of women I liked. With all my might I tried to avoid getting close to them, I tried not to become intimate with girls (onna no ko). At the same time I had very close gay male friends. (...) Later I did it with heterosexual boys (otoko no ko), I had some small affairs. But there was not someone I really liked very much. So I thought, let's quit for a while. (...) I couldn't become very heterosexual and there was not a man I liked that much and so I decided to make a child, I loved children."

Her major reason for getting together with a man was her wish to have children and that is what she did. At 27, however, she met and fell in love with a lesbian woman and decided that, already having her desired child and having suffered enough, it was time to start following her feelings. She now told her

husband that she wished to separate, because she was a lesbian and she wanted to go and live with a woman. Her husband, about whom she had very little to tell, had been necessary to father her child, but after that goal was achieved, he could go. By then it was the mid eighties, and in Tokyo lesbian circles, connected to feminist groups and a commercial bar circuit, had come into existence, making a lesbian lifestyle more feasible in her eyes. This woman has now become one of the most active lesbian networkers in Japan.

Another interviewee who mainly wanted a child became pregnant and, while scolding her for being so careless, her boyfriend decided that he must do his duty and moved in with her to help care for what was, after all, also his child. After some years of not having a very good relationship, the woman became involved in the Women's Labour Union in Osaka, because she had been dismissed from a company for refusing to put up with the sexual harassment she was expected to accept, such as continuous remarks and questions about her sex life. Through her contacts with the union she learned to see that her husband could hardly blame her for having become pregnant, as he did not use a condom at the time. She started to counterargue his depreciatory remarks towards her and, unable to provide her with a response that could satisfy himself, he became violent. They both agreed that this situation could not continue, and separated. But she already had what she had wanted in the first place: her child.

Having clear ideas about what is sought in marriage obviously influences the choice of partner and the structure a household is going to take. While the three cases above are very

dissimilar in the sense that the first woman maintains that she loves to be with her husband, the second has divorced him in search of her true feelings, and the third got rid of a husband she did not want in the first place, they are similar in the sense that all three knew what they wanted of marriage and achieved their goals.

In Japan as well as in Europe, I found a number of Japanese lesbians who had chosen to marry a foreign man. For instance, one woman married a Frenchman only to find that he was not better than Japanese men and divorced him, another married an Englishman with whom she had two children before she divorced him. Likewise, relatively many feminist women marry foreign men. The reasons behind these phenomena are that foreign men are generally believed to be more liberal in their attitudes towards women, and foreign men can be more easily handled when in Japan, because of the advantage Japanese women have compared to foreign men in dealings with Japanese. Marrying a foreign man also opens the way to living abroad and leaving Japan, possibly never to return.

Related to this is the phenomenon of women who wish to marry to become independent of their family. Marriage may be perceived as the only way to get away from the influence of parents. Gay magazine Barazoku's Kekkon Kônâ (marriage advertisement section) lists such cases, and the fact that advertisements seeking marriage by lesbians tend to come from rural areas more than those by gay men would indicate that some women see marriage as the only way to get some power over their own life. The total sham, as I called the first type of marriages of gay men, is indeed sought relatively more by lesbian women than by gay men

and otherwise lesbians tend to seek material benefits rather than companionship in marriage (Lunsing 1995). As the case of feminist women shows, heterosexual women may also want to marry rather to have the status, to get away from their parental home or to have children, not because they wish to share their life with a man. The keishiki kekkon of Shōko in Kirakira Hikaru (Ekuni 1991), whose marriage is described in the section on male homosexuality and marriage, also fits wonderfully well into this type. Indeed, contrary to the ideology of the kekkon besshi movements, who wish to keep their own names after marriage, I found that some women, even some that label themselves as feminisuto actually want to marry, precisely in order to free themselves of their father's name (Yamada 1993), because they do not wish to be associated with their father any longer.

No choice.

The second type of marriage is that of feminist women and lesbians who know that their ideas or feelings are not compatible with marriage as it is constructed in Japan, but who feel that they have no choice but to marry and so they try to play the role of a good wife in the traditional sense. As Kakefuda Hiroko, who writes about lesbian life in Japan, told me, most prevalent of the problems mentioned in letters she received in reaction to her publications (for instance Kakefuda 1992A) was marriage. The mostly young letter writers wanted advice on how to combine being a lesbian with marriage, or, in particular, with becoming a good wife. One interviewee sees marriage as inescapable, while at the same time she is certain that no man can cope with having a

sexual relationship with a woman as aggressive as herself. In lesbian and gay circles she refers to herself as bisexual. Being the chôjo (eldest daughter) of a house without male offspring she sees her role as spouse to the successor of the family business clearly ahead. Nevertheless, at the same time she is very clear that she does not think she can have a successful relationship with a man. For one thing, their lack of breasts make men rather unattractive to her. Her vision of her future role in life demands however that she be at least bisexual and cope with a relationship with a man.

This type is also represented by a woman who did not wish to marry and resisted as long as she could, but in the end grew exhausted with being forced to go through one omiaï after another and settled for a man who at first sight did not appear too repulsive. Fortunately, as she said, not long after their son was born the man died of a heart attack, so that she was alone once again. This concerns a woman who is now in her early sixties. There was no indication whatsoever that she might not be heterosexual: all she wanted was not to have to serve some man she did not care for. With serving her son however, she had clearly much less difficulty. But the idea of having a seventy year old man in the house, seemed too horrific to consider. It would rob her of her freedom, even if it would mean that she would have much more income to spend. Now she managed with her savings and pension to travel abroad frequently, usually on her own.

A woman answering the survey among lesbians mentioned above married through omiaï, while she knew that she had a sexual

preference for women:

"He is a kind (yasashii) man, but there is not much love (aijô). For some reason I can't like him very much. If he is everyday around my head starts to hurt. I don't remember how often I thought of divorce. Because we live separated now we can go on without divorce. If he comes home, he is not around very long, so that I can avoid sleeping with him by saying that my head or my stomach hurts...." (Hirosawa & Rezubian Ripôto Han, 1991:271-272).

This marriage appears to be the reverse of a homosexual man who marries without informing his wife. While at the time it seemed a good idea for this woman, by the time she wrote this, she had come to regret her marriage. However, because her husband is not much at home, she can cope with remaining married. While she knew beforehand that she did not like men, her education and her surroundings had made her believe that "to marry a man and have children" is what makes one happy. Children, however, she does not mention having, and as for marriage, it did not make her happy.

Latent feminism or homosexuality.

The third, and according to my findings, most common type of marriage is that of women who do not know of their homosexual preference or of their ideological differences with marriage. For

them marriage is the only way of life and the idea of other lifestyles never crossed their minds. Successfully socialized into believing Japanese jôshiki that marriage is the natural way of life for all women and being a housewife is their road to happiness, they marry only to find out later that marriage is not all that blissful. This may be quick, as in the case of women who divorce within a couple of years, or it may take a long time, as with women who divorce after having been married for twenty years or so. While some women almost instantly feel there is something wrong with the role they are given in marriage, others need inducement from outside. In a majority of these cases divorce is the final result.

Among lesbian interviewees a common pattern was to come into contact with another lesbian, often at feminist meetings, but also in other contexts¹³, and fall in love, after which it was usually only a matter of time until the divorce stage was reached. Among heterosexual women it usually involved some sort of activity outside the home, which might be professional or political, related to feminism or not. This would become incompatible with the demands of married life after which a divorce was eventually seen as the best solution. In very few cases did the husband have enough adaptive capabilities to make continuation of the marriage feasible.

Kagita Izumi, a heterosexual woman, related that she had been a very good and successful housewife. Even though her husband did not bring in much of an income, she was always praised by her in-laws for making do so well. For her husband, however, this situation became unbearable. His lack of success as a provider

led to an inferiority complex and eventually he started an affair with a less perfect woman. The couple divorced and to her own surprise the woman was much happier with her newly gained independence. Izumi now works as manager and actor of performance group Dumb Type, and feels she is finally doing something she really likes. In Dumb Type's performances she came out as a prostitute, which is her main source of income today. In the performance S/N she says that the first time she felt like a prostitute was when she let her ex-husband have sex with her even though she did not feel like it. In retrospect, she sees her married life as boring and uninteresting, and the only reason she could cope with it so well she seeks in her enormous ability to adapt to situations and play the roles required by them.

Matsuo Megumi, a heterosexual woman, who now manages an art gallery, likewise tried to be a good housewife and was also quite successful in that. First she worked only part-time at an art gallery and that was easy to combine with marriage. When the owner of the gallery decided to quit however, she felt that it was important to have a gallery for young talent and decided to start her own gallery. Because she was now the main responsible person, she did not succeed in being home in time to prepare her husband's dinner every evening. He grew rapidly discontented with this situation and because his attitude gradually became unbearable she decided to go and live on her own. She waited to get a divorce for eight years until her husband finally gave in and dropped his demand for ianryô (comfort money) to which he was legally entitled because she in the meantime had other lovers. Having to pay the money he demanded was for financial reasons out

of the question for the woman, so the divorce had to be postponed until he dropped his demands.

An interviewee had not married her husband legally, but intended to do so one day. She was thus part of a traditional naien relationship (common law marriage), underwritten by the fact that she even used her husband's name. Moved by the fate of an old newspaper seller, she started a movement against the decision of the Osaka city government to wipe out newspaper sales stands in Umechika, an underground shopping center and pedestrian traffic area in Umeda in Osaka, that connects three railway and three subway stations, besides a large number of office buildings, hotels, department stores and other shops and restaurants. Her involvement in this movement inevitably meant that she had less time to devote to housekeeping and, as her husband wanted a nice home to return to after his working day, he grew increasingly discontented. They ended up in divorce, rikon, as she calls it, but she is still generally known by her husband's name, as that is the name she used from the start of her social activities and it would produce difficulties if she were to change it.

Another woman who described her sexuality as tada no sukebe (just lewd, just a lecher) was mainly oriented towards men, but also had sexual experiences with women. She had been married to a man without giving much thought to what the contents of the marriage would be and after being confronted with the realities of married life, she did not particularly want to divorce her husband, with whom she also had a child, but she did want to lead her own life, which appeared not to agree with her husband's

ideas about marriage:

"(If you are married) it is as if you and your partner have to become one thing. While I resisted this very strongly, he did no such thing. So, when I went to work on my own or just thought independently about things, he became very dissatisfied. And I don't know if you call that love (aijô), but I could not handle that. (...) I went out to work and lived fully (sei ippai), but he seemed to be unable to endure (qaman suru) that."

This eventually led to fights and they started to talk about divorce. He found another lover, whom he married after the divorce. She thinks that he found someone who fits him very well, a woman who took over the mother role he expected her to assume, a woman who tells him how wonderful he is and is not going out to work or have her own interesting activities. The only problem that remains is that he does not want to see his son. She explained that he became ill at ease whenever he was confronted with her, and seeing their son, being closely connected to her, was too much of a confrontation.

Another woman married with the idea of becoming a good housewife and a wise mother, but after giving birth to two sons and trying to comply with the demands of the role she had taken upon herself, she could not deal with it any longer. She renegotiated her marriage to the effect that the relationship

with her husband became purely functional as parents to their children. Household expenses henceforth were paid equally by both, making this a case of kateinai rikon, that had been thought over carefully and works quite well. She had had a wide variety of odd jobs, but more recently found a better paid and more stable employment as a hostess. In the first years after the renegotiation she had several affairs with men, but recently she had fallen in love with a woman and within a short span of time she came out in the national media on the occasion of the first Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in Japan in Tokyo on August 28, 1994, in which she participated in the company of her children.

A feminisuto married before she was interested in feminism. When she became interested in it and started to go to meetings, to study, and to work, she had several upheavals in her married life because her husband needed to adapt to the fact that she was going out to work and thus would not always be in when he returned from his work. Eventually he swallowed his discontent and nowadays he even takes on tasks like cooking and vacuuming. The relationship of this couple is not very close. According to the interviewee her husband is more like a guest of the family who comes to stay at the house she shares with her children. Nevertheless, that is no reason to change the arrangement, they are not bothering each other and can live happily side by side, while ignoring each other's presence most of the time. In fact, she feels much closer to a female friend, with whom she "can talk about anything, even the most personal, even about sexuality." This relationship, of which her husband and sons are well informed, is so close that she equates it to a love relationship

and thinks that if she had not been married already, she might have preferred a lesbian lifestyle.

A woman writing in Kakefuda's lesbian minikomi, Labrys, married before she discovered her feelings for women. She maintains that she is bisexual and thus does not have many problems in relating sexually to her husband, but that there are also regrets. Nevertheless, she had to marry in order to be able to leave her parental home. The major problem, however, is that her husband needs to be made to feel superior:

"Because we are both selfish (wagamama), there are too many collisions and mostly I end up becoming neurotic and being hit until I lose consciousness. It makes me feel that it is just a matter of time."

She wants to quit this marriage, but thinks that she lacks the strength to take such a step because she married and became neurotic precisely because she lacked the strength to take her life in her own hands (Y.A. 1993).

The cases described here are likely to represent a large number of Japanese women who are married, today as well as in the future. But for instance the case of the woman who attempted suicide (p.138-140), described in the section on male homosexuality in marriage (p.138-140), would not fit in, because her ideas are not at variance with jōshiki concerning the role of women in marriage. The type described here is likely to be the most common, because it is a direct product of jōshiki concerning the

education of women in Japan (Higuchi 1986). These jōshiki are under fire, however, because increasingly mothers see it as important for their daughters to learn skills that will enable them to be independent of men (Hendry 1986:92).

Disappointment.

As a fourth type there are women who initially tried to fit the first type, in the sense that they tried to have the husband accept a married life that would fit their desires, but they found after marriage that there were more barriers to overcome than they expected. Some married women, who may not want to refer to themselves as feminists, nevertheless have egalitarian ideas about the position of women versus men, and they often find that marriage brings them a lot of unwanted changes. Even if they are quite confident in the egalitarianism of their husbands, and they are sure that they will impose no limits to the freedom for which they negotiated prior to marriage, relatives, the neighbourhood and friends, or seken, often turn out to impose constraints. They feel they are expected to behave as a yome (bride), towards the outside world. They have to appear to cook and clean for their husband, and to participate in neighbourly gossip with the housewives in the danchi or other living environment (cf. Imamura 1987, Hiromi 1992). Further, family and friends often develop an overwhelming interest in the children that are as a matter of fact expected to follow on marriage¹⁴, and would not hear of the couples' decision to plan to have them later or not at all.

In other cases the husband turned out not to be as egalitarian as he presented himself before marriage. Thus some informants

are in distress about the ongoing demands of husbands to have children, while before marriage it had been agreed that they would not have children, and of demands of husbands that the wife spends more time at home, especially when he expects to be returning from his job (cf. Imamura 1987) and wants dinner on the table. Most of these cases I encountered ended in divorce, after the wife decided to live her own life, even if it meant that her husband became grumpy or, in some cases, violent. His misbehaviour consequently made divorce a desirable option. Whether it concerns common law marriage or legal marriage makes not much difference, except that in the former case it is usually easier to reach an agreement about dividing possessions and care for the children.

A designer of 33 who now sees herself as a lesbian, although she did not at the time of marriage, grew dissatisfied with her husband who had agreed that they would share household chores equally:

"My work became interesting, and I had to do the housework and my work, and I began wondering why on earth I was doing all this. (...) We had agreed initially to share everything, but the man gradually became a sluggard (namakemono) and I had to do it alone. (...) Gradually our feelings came to be alienated from each other."

After three years she had had enough of this and decided to

divorce him, to which he consented. It was not until four years later again, that she became lesbian, which suggests that her divorce had little to do with her sexuality. Although she had always felt something was not quite right (nanka chigau), she did not know that there was such a thing as homosexuality, so she merely tried to adjust to reality as she knew it. Her divorce was rather the result of a desire to pursue her career, something the husband did not support sufficiently. While she initially had wanted children, her husband's attitude put her off the idea.

Another interviewee of 33, who is now one of the central figures of the singles' network in Osaka, lived with a man with whom equality was expected:

"(When I lived with him) he didn't say it directly, but he wanted me to obey him, and he showed this in his attitude without saying it clearly, but he showed it. When I nodded in agreement with whatever he said he was happy, but I didn't really agree, and I felt that this was useless and decided to stop doing that. (...) Whatever I did, as long as I nodded in agreement there wasn't a problem, but as soon as I confronted him..."

While the man did not actually demand that she did anything apart from showing a demure attitude, this woman, who was rather set on being honest and open, found that unacceptable. Although the man had appeared very progressive, and there was no discus-

sion of making their cohabitation legal, his attitude demanded that she put herself below him, if only by the ostentatious activity of nodding, which became insupportable. Most women might never have noticed that this man demanded her to act in a subservient manner, because they are socialized in a way that makes them act more subserviently than this man needed. Nevertheless, if a woman does not comply with what men expect of them, which may not be voiced, problems are likely to occur, because many men cannot deal with women standing up to them, a fact that has been recurrent throughout the cases described above. Furthermore, a heterosexual male divorcee I interviewed gave his violent behaviour as the reason for his divorce, and likewise, another man was seeking counselling because he could not express his feelings, which led him suddenly to beat his child or scold his wife, which surprised even himself when it occurred.

Many, but not all, lesbians had felt alienation in the sexual relationship with their husband, or in some cases a clear dislike of having sex with him. However, because they believed that to be not uncommon, since many women do not like to have sex with their husbands - an observation that is supported by findings in the More report (Moa Ripôto Han eds. 1983:510-513) - they did not think anything of it. At most they thought that they should try better and be more like other housewives who were, compared to themselves, perceived as more enduring (gaman suru). For mainly heterosexually oriented women the problem was not very different. Many clearly resented the way their husband thought sex was to be conducted. Resistance to this led in some cases to the husband becoming violent or in one case even to

rape, which according to Japanese law does not count as rape because it takes place within marriage (Fukushima 1991B:104-105, Tsunoda 1992:37-40). Tsunoda and the More report clarify the implications of this by giving various examples of women who do not like to have sex, but "the more I refuse the more he gets excited, so I understood that it was better not to resist (Tsunoda 1992:39)", "it is the duty as a married couple", or "if I don't give in, he'll become unpleasant (both Moa Ripôto Han eds. 1983:513)¹⁵."

It is remarkable that no criticism is voiced towards married lesbian women by those who strongly disapprove of married homosexual or bisexual men. Gay activists and feminist activists criticize the men but tend to be supportive of the women, if an opinion is voiced at all. The exception to this is Ogura Chikako (1988) who criticizes all married women, picking out especially those who regard themselves as feminisuto, which in Ogura's ideas cannot be combined with marriage. Further, husbands appear to be little concerned with their wives having a lesbian lover. In several cases in which the man was made aware that a woman was lesbian, the heterosexual man did not regard that as a ground for not asking her to marry him. Kakefuda Hiroko discusses this phenomenon and sees it as an indication that female sexuality is not taken seriously and that female homosexuality is not seen as threatening to the male prerogative, because in the end she remains at the disposition of the man (Kakefuda 1992A:141-142).

Most married women in my sample who established contact with lesbian circles, feminist circles, or who developed other interests that made a change in their lifestyle necessary,

eventually wanted to divorce. Apart from two cases - a lesbian woman who left her children with her husband, because he was very fond of them, and a feminist woman whose children chose to stay with her husband - they could keep their children. Given the situation in Japan, where until as late as the sixties the majority of children were officially allocated to the father¹⁶, this must have happened with the consent of the father. Especially if he would oppose and expose his wife as a lesbian in court, she would not be likely to win custody. Financial problems turned out not to play such an important role, because having the gratification of an emotionally more rewarding lifestyle, it appeared that financial needs could be enormously adjusted, once the choice for a different lifestyle was made.

While there are differences between feminist and lesbian women in relation to marriage, in both cases the expectations of the role of the housewife often form the major reason to opt out of marriage. While lesbians may stress their sexual preference and heterosexual feminists their role in the household, a considerable overlap is present. Although feminists may have a heterosexual preference, often they do not find emotional and sexual satisfaction with a husband who is not educated to please and esteem women, or they find that the husband has no regard for their intellectual capacities and is unable to adapt to a housewife who stopped being only that and started to do something that does not fit in with her role in the household as he sees it.

Comparing men and women.

Lesbians who positively see themselves as lesbians and have contact with lesbian networks, are less likely to opt for marriage than gay men in a comparable situation. Although pressure on women to marry is definitely stronger than on men, especially the indirect pressure provided by the economic discrimination against women, lesbian women feel that they have much more to lose. The type of marriage some women who want to marry opt for fits the platonic keishiki kekkon, which is discussed in the section on male homosexuality and marriage. They want their husband to know and to accept that sex is out of the question. Unlike gay men who often desire companionship and a warm home (atatakai katei), lesbians tend to want the shape and economic benefits, but as little of a relationship as possible (Lunsing 1995).

Itô Bungaku, the heterosexual editor of gay magazine Barazoku suggested that it might be a good idea for gay men to marry lesbian women. This, however, seems not to work very well, as Itô admits. Women who think of themselves as lesbians usually do not want to marry, except in order to achieve financial security or an official status that might alleviate pressure from the family. They tend not to follow the ippan jôshiki (general jôshiki), about marriage, but see possible personal advantages in complying with a system they generally do not believe is right. Gay men wanting to marry, on the other hand, tend to follow jôshiki quite closely. In marriage they seek things like children or warmth and security in old age (Ibid.). Mismatches

in marriages between gays and lesbians are thus likely. They are less likely in the case of gay men who marry heterosexual women who, if they choose to marry a gay man, are more likely to provide the warm home many gay men desire (Ibid.).

Among both lesbian and feminist women, dissatisfaction with the unequal division of household tasks and the wish to pursue activities outside the home in many cases increasingly strained the marital relationship which eventually led to divorce. The difference between male and female homosexuality in marriage is large. While women are much more likely to do whatever they think is expected of them and are more likely to discover some sort of emotional gratification in marriage, for men the wrapping aspect appears to be more important, the possibility marriage gives them to appear towards the outside world as "normal". This may seem contradictory to the reasons for gay men and lesbian women to seek marriage, but it is not. In the rarer cases in which openness in a relation is achieved, men turn out to expect a warm home and women are less eager to provide that. But in the more common cases that the feelings are hidden, the opposite occurs: gay men tend to avoid being home and lesbian or heterosexual women tend to try to be "good housewives".

Without exception the single women with children I spoke with (boshi katei) did not think of remarriage. They were very happy having made the decision to divorce and even though financially they were usually barely getting by, this was a slight problem compared to that of having a husband who expected to be waited on. Indeed, in the cases in which the husband became violent, it is not hard to imagine that women felt that they can

do better without a husband. These women thus chose to be single while taking upon themselves the role of the mother. Single mothers have or wish to have lovers, but do not want to marry or even live with a man. This contrasts sharply with single fathers who usually want to remarry as soon as they find someone willing to take on the role of mother for their children (Kasuga 1989).

Conclusion.

The major difference between homosexual men on one hand and homosexual women and feminists on the other in relation to marriage is that homosexual men tend to look back at their married life with regret and in many cases aspire to remarry. Among the women I interviewed there are none who aspire to remarry and all are quite content with having put married life behind them. Of those still in marriage, all men I spoke ^{with} want to continue, even though many things might be difficult and unpleasant, while among women there are many who are contemplating divorce. Homosexual men discussed in this chapter generally do not have ideas about emancipation and equality between husband and wife, ideas that are quite prevalent among the women. As will be discussed in later chapters however, among homosexual men who do not marry emancipatory and egalitarian tendencies are more prevalent.

Notes:

1. As discussed in the introduction (p.7), an extraordinary feature of Japan between the forties and the eighties of this century was that of both sexes over 98% married (Keizai Kikakuchō 1992:29).

2. Minami related this on several occasions and another core member of his organization, JILGA Japan, said the same thing again on television in a program of Fuji terebi, which centered on the activities of Occur, but included other groups as well. This program appeared on television in Osaka in October 1992.

3. Western gay men who visit Shinjuku Nichōme might find the contention that the majority of patrons are married to be an overstatement, because the bars that are frequented most by foreigners tend to be atypical in the sense that Japanese visiting them tend to be married less often than those in other bars. Further, they tend to be younger and more open about themselves, often under the influence of foreign lovers.

4. Ugoku Gei. (1992) interprets the fact that one third of their sample stated that they want to marry as proof of a considerable decrease in the number of gay men who aspire to marry. However, they disregard the bias in their sample, even though elsewhere they discuss the bias. Besides, because there are no comparative figures on the wish to marry among gays in earlier times, such a conclusion cannot legitimately be drawn. It seems rather to be an example of wishful thinking.

5. In Za Gei, a rather radical magazine that is more explicit in its pornography than any of the others and that discusses questions regarding the tennōsei (emperor system) and forms of discrimination that are thought to be related to it (See Irokawa (1988) for a short discussion of this phenomenon), the yearly survey of readers shows no decline in the numbers wanting to marry since 1989 (Za Gei Henshūbu 1992). In Sabu, which is, compared to other magazines, relatively more oriented towards sadomasochism and machoism, just under 30% of single respondents to the survey wanted to marry (Nakajima 1991).

6. This group held a small survey among themselves at a party in an izakaya, a Japanese style eating and drinking place, in Kobe. Replies were written on a piece of paper. People did not discuss their answers with each other and were anxious to prevent others from seeing what they wrote. The results of the two tables the people were divided over were compared to each other. While at the table I sat at a majority did not want to marry, most people on the other did, which correlated with answers to the other questions in the way described.

7. His precise words were tsuyoku narimashita: I became strong. He used "strong" in the sense that he had gained the power not to yield to social pressure.

8. Masakami (1992) uses this fact as a defence for homosexuals who get married.

9. Mayoeru Sarariiman means "puzzled company man" and here is used as a nickname.

10. In the Kansai, where this couple lives, one has to pay about six months' rent key money, of which merely half is received back after leaving the place, which makes renting a place for only one month horrendously expensive, because one ends up paying at least four months' rent.

11. Compared to the figures Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948) gave on sexual activities of American men this is not at all remarkable. As Kinsey showed, 37% of American men had engaged in homosexual activity up to the point of orgasm sometime in their lives. The Kinsey data have been criticized because in the sample university students and criminals were overrepresented (Gebhart & Johnson 1979), but the results have been roughly confirmed by follow up research. Ross (1983) refers to Gagnon and Simon (1973) whose research data show that 30% of men have had homosexual contact to orgasm. Singer and Deschamps (1994), in their Gay and lesbian stats, mention both these results as well as that of Smith and Garner (1976) among male athletes of whom 40% had homosexual contact to orgasm, a Playboy survey (1983) in which 35% of male respondents had the same and Fay et al. (1989), according to whom the figure was 20,3%. Other less spectacular figures also exist, but they are less convincing because the samples are smaller and a lot of critics has pointed out that the methods were rather disputable.

12. This series of tapes is called Midnight Mix, but pronounced "Midnight mix". Kamigata DJ Club makes these tapes and sends them to hundreds of listeners, many of whom live in rural areas.

13. Other places for chance meetings between lesbian women I encountered among informants were at a regular night-club, in the local neighborhood and in English language class. Hashimoto's much appraised story about a woman meeting and going off with a lesbian woman was set in the road restaurant where the main protagonist worked, while the woman who came to seduce her was a truck driver (Hashimoto 1987:126-185).

14. Hendry (1986A:14) mentions that she was confronted with this herself when doing research before she had children, while being married.

15. This puts the contention of for instance Lebra (1984:305) that rape is much rarer in Japan than in the United States, which she apparently based on the number of rape cases recorded by the police, in a dubious light. By calling large categories of sexual activity that are not different from rape not rape it is of course easy to keep such figures low, but this does not reflect reality. The statistical data clearly cannot be compared.

16. In fact this meant in many cases that they were brought up by their grandmothers. This indicates that the influence of the ie with its patrilineal structure persisted for a long time. See for instance Ueno (1990A) for a detailed discussion.

5: Private: Alternative lifestyles

This chapter discusses through specific cases why people may remain single and how experiments with alternative relationships and living patterns develop from the point of view of those directly concerned, including discussions about relationships that may occur in networks or circles. Two lifecourse routes can be discerned for all categories this thesis is concerned with. One is the route of marriage and divorce, whereby some have not yet arrived or indeed may never arrive at the divorce stage, the other is the route of remaining unmarried throughout, whereby relationships and living together with lovers are optional. People remain unmarried for various reasons, ranging from the impossibility to marry because of the shortage of men after the war to political rejection of the marriage system, including jijitsukon. Homosexuality and feminist ideals are obvious features among those who reject marriage, but others come to reject marriage only after realizing that they probably will not marry. Such a realization or the ideological rejection of marriage opens ways of experimenting with alternative forms of relationships and living.

Singles: dokushin, shinguru.

The oldest known network of singles in Japan is Dokushin Fujin Renmei (Single Women's League), an organization of single

women founded in 1967. Some of its central figures claim that members could not marry because so many of the generation of men they expected to marry died in the battlefields of the second world war (Dokushin Fujin Renmei. 1977, Dokushin Fujin Renmei. 1987, Tani 1982). Interviewees and informants of this group, however, are of all types of singles described below. There are those who could not marry because their fiancé had died in the battlefields and they would not settle for less than someone they really loved, those who wanted to marry very much but never found a husband, even though they tried everything they could think of, including joining this group, and there are those who did not want to marry to start with. This is confirmed by a survey among single women of the concerned age cohort conducted by ōkubo Sawako of Dokushin Fujin Renmei (ōkubo 1977). According to ōkubo, a match-making office the league maintained for a while did not result in any marriage. There is nevertheless a case of a member who married. She had not joined the league in order to find a husband, but when a man asked her to marry him she decided to agree, because the security the league offered made her confident that she would have a place to return to should the marriage go wrong. In this sense Dokushin Fujin Renmei took over a role that might otherwise be fulfilled by the parental home (ōkubo 1987).

While the percentage of single women in this age cohort is slightly higher than that in cohorts before and directly after them, leaders of this group systematically produce overestimations of the number of "war widows", as they sometimes call themselves¹. Such a strategy they apparently thought to be necessary in order to receive sympathy from the media and the

Japanese people. In the sixties a woman could not very well say that she was happy to be single. Such a line of thinking did not become acceptable until the late eighties and is still not widely recognized. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Dokushin Fujin Renmei's members now say that they are happy with having remained single, although they were aware of and troubled by the prejudice and discrimination society confronted them with (Ichibangase 1971:69-70, Naruse 1977, Tani 1982:131-162). This is underwritten by the fact that they simply felt that they could not say that they positively chose to remain single. The titles of two booklets produced by the league indicate that a change in this attitude has taken place. While the title of the booklet published in 1977 referred back to the war and those who never came back (Wadatsumi no koe o towa ni: For eternity voices of the ocean, Dokushin Fujin Renmei. 1977), the title of the publication of 1987 refers to the joys of being single (Hanayaka ni shinguru raifu: Joyful single life, Dokushin Fujin Renmei. 1987).

This change came with an increase of media attention for people, initially women, but later also men, who remain unmarried following an increase in the rise of singles in their thirties and forties. As discussed in chapter three (p.94, 95), not only has the average age of those who marry risen to 28.4 for men and 25.9 for women in 1990, a trend that started in 1970, when the trend towards marrying at a younger age, visible from 1950 was reversed (Keizai Kikakuchō ed. 1992:23-25, 408), but also has the number of men and women who have remained unmarried in their thirties and forties reached a level that was unthinkable only ten years ago (Ibid.:26-29, 409).

These trends are more conspicuous in large urban areas, and may be reported in a sensational manner, like when on the front-page of the quality newspaper Asahi Shinbun head^{lines} were blazing that of men in their forties in Tokyo one in five was unmarried and in Osaka one in ten (Asahi Shinbun 1992). In general those who see this development as a problem blame women who refuse to marry, possibly influenced by feminism, while single men tend to be portrayed, rather sadly, as men who cannot marry (Genshi Shuzaihan ed. 1991). This is widely believed to be a result of women having become strong and men weak, which itself is an idea that has become almost jōshiki in the late eighties (Watanabe 1989 & 1991, Nakamura 1991).

While figures of those who do not marry include those who live in ijitsukon, who thus might still be seen as married, there is also a growing trend for unmarried people to leave the parental home and live by themselves. The total number of single households passed the nine million mark between 1985 and 1990 in a continuous rise from about six million in 1970. This rise is considerably more than the increase in the number of single elderly persons, which is about 700,000 over the same period, and is a major focus of attention because of its problematic character, caused by a shortage of services to assist them (Sōmuchō Tōkeikyoku eds. 1992:18-19)..

The couple discussed in chapter three that lived apart in ijitsukon were eager to explain that they, just like most of their friends, were not married and thus fitted my research topic, but a single woman who was part of this circle of friends, when interviewed privately, disagreed vehemently with this.

According to her there was not much difference between being married with or without setting up a koseki. It amounted to the same thing and their situation could definitely not be compared to hers, because she was really single and living alone.

Support for this idea can be found in Ebisaka who defines singles as people who live by themselves, possibly with children. He adds to his definition that those who are married but temporarily separated because of their jobs (tanshin funin: Tanaka 1992, Shiina 1994) are not included, because they fit the system of marriage, nor are those who live together in jijit-sukon. Singles can have one or more lovers, but are not included if they live with them (Ebisaka, 1986:37-38). This is further supported by Yoshihiro Kiyoko's books on single women (1987) and single men (1988) which also exclude cohabitants and Matsubara Junko's book (1988) in which cohabitation is not considered at all. Aoki Yayoi, however, includes in her Shinguru karuchâ (Single culture, 1987) cohabiting couples. Apart from Matsubara, whose argument is that it would have been better if the women discussed in her book had married, these books tend to describe singles who are happy and confident with being singles and to overlook the fact that there are also unhappy singles who would rather be married. Here I define singles in a wider sense than Ebisaka, by including unmarried people who live with their parents. Among my informants three different routes of remaining single can be discerned.

Single by circumstances.

The most common and obvious reason for people to remain

single is that they happened not to find somebody they wanted to or could share their life with. For one thing, the koseki seido may make marriage impossible. Many Japanese still think today that koseki include criminal records, psychiatric patients and bankruptcies in the family, and that as a consequence having a brother, sister, father or mother tainted by such features damages one's chances of marrying into a "good" family. For this reason people may abstain from becoming too close to someone they love, because they do not wish to be exposed as being related to people who possess one of these features. Although koseki do not list such features any more, they can be found out through them, because for instance criminal records are linked to koseki and less scrupulous civil servants may mark koseki to indicate that a criminal record is related to it, because it is convenient when files on people are needed (Satô & Kaihara 1990:122-123, 151).

The wish to investigate a partner your child wants to marry is officially not a ground for being allowed to look at someone's koseki, but unscrupulous lawyers and detectives frequently find ways of access to them and compile files on them (Idota 1993:177-178). Especially if someone is discovered to be of burakumin (Japanese outcaste) descent, parents of the partner may effectively oppose marriage (Satô & Kaihara 1990:91, Tsuji 1992). Buraku descent can be deduced from looking at koseki, especially in the Kansai area, where buraku areas are generally known. Thus the koseki seido may prevent marriages that are desired by a woman and a man on personal grounds from taking place, because the parents will not accept the match. Although parents legally have no say in this, once their children are 20 years old, it is

still customary for children to ask parents' consent and they may defer to parents' wishes, even if they do not agree with them (DeVos 1986A).

A second major cause for remaining single because marriage is impossible can be found in the ideal of romantic love. A very clear case is that of an interviewee who grew up in the strong belief that she, as a matter of fact, would marry one day and become a housewife and have children. She fell in love with a man she could not marry, because he did not want to marry her. As a result of this love, however, she decided that she could not settle for someone she did not really love. Although she wanted to marry and have children, she did not want to have omia. Thus she remained single as a result of what she saw as remaining true to her feelings. Other interviewees fell in love with a man who was already married, which made marriage impossible. This way of remaining single is shared by many homosexual people. Hase san, introduced in chapter three (pp.144-145), was very clear that he could not possibly marry, because he did not wish to deceive a woman and make her unhappy. He had always thought that, being homosexual, it would be wrong to marry. At the same time he happened never to find a male partner he really loved, or when he did the other party did not love him. As a result he lived alone since he left his mother's home. For similar reasons many gay men and lesbian women have remained single.

Many gay men and lesbian women, however, were positive that, while they could not marry, they would want to live and share their lives with a same sex partner. Even some people in the singles' movement clearly stated that they would rather be

married, although usually they would not want to set up a koseki and thus have a jijitsukon. Women especially are of the opinion that the koseki seido must be opposed, men are less adamant about this. They often seemed to give lip service to this idea, because they know that this is the prevalent political stance among the independent women they see as desirable partners. The relationship based on equality and mutual love that is usually the ideal among this group, makes the possibility of omiaiai unthinkable. As a result they are restricted to meeting potential partners in their work or personal life, where chances are often limited. According to Higuchi (1984) this is an increasing problem, because many OL nowadays work in offices where, apart from a male supervisor, only women work, whereas they used to work among male colleagues. Marriage as a result of meeting through the singles' network did not occur to my knowledge.

Single against all intention.

A second category of singles are those who really want to marry and have made much effort, often including omiaiai, in order to find a spouse, but did not succeed. In some cases they are still hoping and trying, in others they have given up on the idea and decided to make the best of their single life, in the latter case usually with a very positive look at living alone from then onwards. In this category people who became single after a spouse died could also be included as well as those who were divorced on the instigation of their partners, such as homosexual men who, when their homosexuality was discovered, felt obliged to accept their wife's demand for divorce. For this category being single

is never a positive choice, but after a while it might come to be accepted as a fact of life and possibly embraced for positive aspects. Further people may decide on a re-evaluation of marriage once they come to accept the idea that they may not marry. A woman of 28 said:

"Well, sometimes I think that it might be good to live together with someone, if it was for a limited period. If it was for ever, I think that would be tiresome, hard to bear (shindoi, tsurai)."

This interviewee claimed that she had always been against legal marriage, but that she would consider cohabiting. At other points in the interview she, however, claimed to be very happy living alone and not to want to share an apartment with a man. After we discussed her friends and other relationships, and considered her behaviour towards me, I felt that she was rather lonely and in search of friends and a lover. A story about a previous love relationship with a man who had been psychically disturbed and had received much support from her before moving elsewhere and severing all contact, strengthened my feeling that if she found a lover, she would most likely agree to live with him, or possible even marry him, if that was his wish.

Similarly, a heterosexual man in his late thirties did not tire of talking about how interesting his life as a single man was. He had many hobbies and engaged in various activities, such as shimin undô (citizen's movements) artistic pursuits like

painting and writing, and the singles' network. While engaging in these activities he had become acquainted with many interesting people a regular married sarariiman was not likely to meet. When I asked him about the loves in his life, however, the hitherto very friendly and positive atmosphere changed, while he recognized that never in his life had he had a lover. He tried to remain positive about his life, but his attitude towards me had changed not to recover. When talking of the future, it also transpired that he really would very much like to marry, but only with a woman he would meet through his activities, most of whom do not want to marry. Such interviewees indicate that Yoshihiro's books on singles (1987 & 1988) are more directed to drawing a positive image of the lives of singles in Japan than to giving a true representation. As a method to give counterweight to prevalent negative images this of course has its value and the fact that such a need apparently is felt indicates all the more how powerful these negative images are.

Single by intention.

Finally there are of course the die-hards, those who will not marry or live together, not even if they encounter the proverbial prince or princess on a white horse. Some may not even want to have close relationships, like a member of the singles' network, who has sexual relationships with women, but thinks it is wrong to trouble them with personal problems and claims that he is even capable of abstaining from breaking wind when in the company of a sex partner. This he sees as a virtuous way of avoiding embarrassing the woman he is with. Embarrassing and

troubling people one has sexual relationships with in his context would be a corruption of the purity of a relationship marked by individuality and independence. It is more common for singles of this category to want to have more emotional and personal contact with lovers, but none of them want to live together or be bound economically in any way.

The wish to keep their independence is the most important reason for choosing to remain single, especially in the case of women, but also among some men. Even jijitsukon is not perceived as an alternative for hōritsukon, because the surrounding people, neighbourhood and friends will see you as part of a couple. A single woman lived for a large part of her life together with her lover, but always kept her own apartment, so that she always had a place to be alone. Further they made sure that they were not seen as having a permanent relationship in their neighbourhood. This woman was introduced to me by a colleague who did not know of this arrangement and presented her as a die-hard single.

A heterosexual male interviewee, who definitely did not want to marry, said that the example of his brother's marriage had brought him to this conclusion. His mother, whom he "hated very much (tottemo kirai)", treated his brother's wife very badly and he did not want to cause any woman to be treated like that. This reminds of DeVos' contention that people may refuse arranged marriage and engage in love marriage to hurt a parent (1986A), which today is probably largely outdated because the influence of parents has decreased and they are more likely to agree with love marriages. Hence, in order to hurt parents one may have to take a step further and refuse to marry altogether. Although my

interviewee wondered about problems like illness and old age, he enjoyed evenings out and having fun with girlfriends very much and did not want to forego such pleasures in favour of marriage. Nevertheless, he also told about a woman he loved very much, and he was not certain whether he would refuse to marry her if that would result in the discontinuation of their relationship. Especially among women the idea of having a partner in the house is not thought to be desirable, often based on experience, like the interviewee of 33 quoted in the previous chapter, who decided that she could definitely not bear to live with a man. A woman who was 20 in 1945 and managed to remain unmarried for whole her life, said:

"When I was twenty, everybody talked of marriage, which meant that you'd have to do the household work and cook for the rest of your life. I don't like cooking (...), it was this sort of feeling. But it's a long time ago, at the time I didn't know a thing about feminism and such, but I wouldn't go for (marriage). I never even considered getting married, I always thought it to be disadvantageous for women. If I'd been a man, I might have married."

When asked about children, her answer was similar, she would have liked to have children if she had been a man with a wife to take care of them. But being a woman, children would have been too much of a hindrance to her autonomy. Since she retired from

her job she has shared an apartment with another woman, which is much better than the times she lived with men, as she did for shorter periods previously.

This category would include those who divorced because they wanted to and cases like the woman discussed in the previous chapter (p.150), who was quite happy when her husband, whom she never wanted to marry, died suddenly at an early age. In this category one also finds many homosexual people. While one male interviewee thought he could not live together with most people, because it would be too stressful, he did not totally exclude the idea. However, he still felt he must be free to engage in other relationships. Another interviewee stated that he could not live with his lover, because their lifestyles were too different. While he always made a mess of his room, his boyfriend was very neat. Living together would produce too much strain on the relationship. This manner of arguing that emphasizes the stress of living together and the advantages of living apart can be found among all die-hard singles, heterosexual as well as homosexual, female as well as male. It is more common among women, lesbian as well as heterosexual (Ch8 1992). While men would hope to be understood by a woman, women often did not count on being understood and thus thought they would be better off single, rather than living together with a man in need of change without him being aware of what and how, or even that he should.

Alternative lifestyles.

This section discusses features concerning the sharing of living space in groups, same sex couples and other relationships that escape marriage in the legal sense as well as in sense of heterosexual jijitsukon. In addition, lifestyles and relationships of singles are discussed. There will be seven parts: group living, male same sex relationships, promiscuous gay men, female same sex relationships, promiscuous women, alternative female/male relationships, and Tsutamori Tatsuru: relations denying gender boundaries. It concentrates on the internal features of relationships rather than their relation to the outside world.

Group living.

Ochiai Keiko's novel Gūzen no kazoku (Family by coincidence 1990) is an account of the life of a number of people who are living together in a spacious house. The only ketsuen kankei (blood relationship) that exists is the one between a mother and her son. Otherwise all characters are related by nothing but friendship and love. A gay couple, one of whom inherited the house, a single woman, two single men and a divorced woman with child. Such living patterns are statistically negligible, with 77,000 non-family households (hishinzoku setai) in 1990, up from a low of 62,000 in 1980 (Sōmuchō Tōkeikyoku eds. 1992:19). It remains unclear what the reliability of these statistics is, because people may be registered differently from where they actually live. These figures would include most same sex partners living together and some, but not many, of the people in heterosexual jijitsukon. The fact that having children of less than six years old receives a horizontal line in the table, which

indicates that such a thing is not deemed possible, means that most jijitsukon couples must be counted under family households (shinzoku setai). Single mother households with one or more children comprised in 1990 well over two million and single fathers households 425,000, both rising continuously and significantly since 1970 (Ibid.).

One of the groups I found to be living remotely like the situation depicted by Ochiai, consisted at the time of my visit of a married couple with child sharing a household with a single man, which they called a kibbutz. There had been more people previously and, indeed, the house was spacious enough to easily provide room for three times as many. Internal strife, however, had made people leave and the latest news that reached me about this place is that the couple with child also left. Similarly, an experiment of communal living of two heterosexual couples, a single woman and two children did not last because the men could not adapt to this way of life, but the experiment continued all the same, without the men who left (Fujimoto 1982).

Another group consists of three lesbian women who live in separate rooms in a house. This situation developed gradually. The first woman of the group moved in when a friend left. Because she was looking for a place to live, the landlord agreed to rent it to her. When other rooms became vacant, the landlord agreed that she could choose friends to share the house with and thus it became a house where a group of lesbians live. In another case a group of gay men shared a spacious house in Osaka, which was inherited by one of the men. The owner preferred to have foreigners living in his house, because Japanese often gave

trouble as a result of their lack of directness in expressing any complaints they might have and instead sulked in silence until they burst into a rage. The owner apparently lacked omoiyari, empathy, which has been presented as a characteristic Japanese trait (Lebra 1976:38-49). If he had more of it, he would have understood from the silent sulking that something was wrong and taken steps to prevent the emotional outburst from materializing.

Omoiyari is something that has to be developed by relating to people. By relating one learns to understand the different moods and ways of non-verbal communication. This understanding then is to be used in order to make the other feel at ease. It has been suggested that Japanese who have to deal with people they do not know and in relation to whom their status role is not clearly defined, must develop patterns of behaviour they are not used to in everyday life, where usually their roles are clearly set, be it at home, at school, or at their jobs. In these set roles they are (de aru), rather than do (suru), as Maruyama (1987:154-180) points out. In relation to people one does not know, however, rapport has to be developed in some way or other without any clear rules determining how to behave. One can not just be (de aru) but has to act or do (suru), to be creative. Following this line of reasoning, it is obvious that many of the relationships here are under stress because of the absence of clear rules for behaviour.

As ōkubo Sawako of Dokushin Fujin Renmei said, it is very difficult for Japanese to cope with living with people they are not directly related to, especially once they have become used to living on their own and developed their own particular way of

doing things without having to negotiate anything with others. For this reason efforts to establish homes where single women could live together had rarely been successful. Putting up with habits of other people without the need to, is not something many people are prepared to do. This is a problem among people who are forced to live in institutions for the elderly, where conditions usually are such that rooms have to be shared, which makes it inescapable to find ways of dealing with others (Bethel 1992). Further, the social pressure to continue and put up with others, which may play an important role in sustaining marriages, does not exist in the case of non-kin groups living together, which makes it easier for people to quit as soon as there is something they do not like, and such things inevitably occur.

Male same sex relationship.

Here also lies one of the reasons for the short duration of many relationships between gay men. Among my informants three months was generally considered as long. A young man said that he was together with his lover for three months, upon which I remarked that this was a dangerous period and, indeed, the next time I met him the relationship had ended. Reasons why relationships were broken up were often unclear to the people involved. Often the other suddenly refused to talk up to the point of throwing the phone on the hook when being called. In one case two lovers chanced to meet each other in a gay sauna, which is a place where men go to have casual sexual contacts. After this episode my interviewee decided to end formally a relationship in which alienation had already grown considerably before this

event. In fact, with hindsight he thought that he only entered the relationship because he wanted very much to have a lover, rather than because this particular boy (ko), as he referred to him, really was his type. This method of rationalizing past relationships is one many interviewees used.

In almost all gay contexts I participated in, discussion of what type of person one could love occurred regularly. The first question was whether he should be younger or older, after which qualities such as physical build, i.e. fat, athletic, slim, slender, or muscular, usually followed. Of importance are further what he wears, for instance jeans or a suit, what kind of occupation he has and whether he is masculine, androgynous or feminine. Gay bars may even be divided along the lines of what customers like. There are bars for those who like young men (wakasen bâ), for those who like older men (fukesen bâ), and even for those who like fat men (debusen bâ; Lunsing 1994A). Thus, a first selection of prospective partners is based solely on outward appearances, after which character is judged. It appeared that most gay men had quite definite ideas of what their type is and usually practice agrees with this quite closely. Many, however, do not succeed in finding their ideal lover.

A survey by ^{the} gay magazine Sabu shows that of 186 respondents 56 had experienced living together with a man. This figure is greatly boosted by the fact that of those in their forties about three quarters had the experience, while of all other age cohorts this was a quarter (Nakajima 1992). The percentage in Occur's survey of 300 young gay men is 20 and of these most relationships only existed for a couple of years, which does not say much,

because it concerns young men (Ugoku Gei. 1992:364). In the few cases of gay men who live together I encountered while conducting participant observation I witnessed that there was usually a division of tasks that resembles the traditional male-female division in marriage.

In this light one might wonder what the grounds are for Hirano Hiroaki's criticism of Rasen no Sobyô, a movie that depicted exactly such a relationship. I rather saw this as a very realistic depiction of relations as they exist. The movie relationship was in fact modelled on the relationship the two main actors had at the time. While Hirano could not deny this, he, having embraced feminist thought, had ideological reasons for attacking a depiction of yet another relationship that resembles a heterosexist relationship. Thus the movie missed the chance of showing that other ways of role division are possible. Hirano's critique was all the more valid because he appeared in the movie himself and had made the director promise that its depiction of homosexuality would agree with his ideas (Hirano 1991). One elderly couple I met by chance, on the other hand, seemed to be close to Hirano's ideals. While they were both rather feminine in their behaviour and speech, there was nothing to indicate any division of role pattern along heterosexist lines.

Occur's leaders advocate the idea of equality in relationships. A gay couple consisting of members of Occur that was selected to appear in a television documentary exemplified equality between the partners, dividing tasks in a way that is common among egalitarian heterosexual couples. Itô Satoru also describes his relationship with his partner as egalitarian and

characterized by an absence of role patterns along the lines of those in heterosexual relationships. When Itô's aging mother moved in they had to divide the four rooms of their apartment: one for each of the three persons and a living room (ima) for the couple was the outcome (Itô S. 1993:153). Having a room of one's own was often mentioned as a condition for considering cohabiting with a lover among gay men, including those who never experienced it.

In January 1994 the quality newspaper Asahi Shinbun published an article as part of a series on the United Nation's Year of the Family in which a gay couple were depicted as "sitting in silence together, just like a heterosexual couple", which shows a feature that is thought to be positive in couples: they are so closely related that they do not need to talk, they know what the other thinks and feels. This is of course not always true, neither in the case of heterosexual couples nor in the case of gay couples. But this belief has greater consequences for gay couples, for whom chances that drifting apart may lead to separation are much greater than for heterosexual couples. As a young gay interviewee, who had lived with a lover for two years, said, it was not in the first place the role division, in which he took upon himself most of the household tasks, that made him want to separate:

"He was involved in various left wing movements.

Doing these activities, there seem to have been several struggles during meetings and because of that he got a in bad mood. (...) Because the

meetings didn't develop as he liked, he got angry and consequently he got angry at home as well. (...) I tried to talk to him about it and to make him understand that I didn't like his attitude, but he didn't understand. On top of that he was terribly jealous, and he got very angry when I'd go to meet friends (...) and so our feelings became gradually estranged."

The fact that his partner increasingly did not listen to what he had to say, that he took his presence for granted, was the major point of dissent, combined with his partner's jealousy of his friendships. Only after I asked specifically, this interviewee said that he also disliked the fact that in practice he did all the housekeeping. Just like the case of some of the women in the previous chapter, the fact that there was no possibility to discuss dissatisfaction with the way things were was the major ground for discontinuing living together. Different from most cases, however, this interviewee now has a relation of friendship with his previous lover. The idea that talking is not necessary clearly gives an edge to the more masculine of two partners, and the only method to counter this is making him see something is wrong. If he or she lacks in omoiyari this may be extremely difficult. If he or she refuses to recognize this, the choice of separation or accepting the situation appears to lie with the more feminine side. Omoi-yari seems to be a quality instilled in and expected of women more than men, as examples in chapter four, where women had difficulty with men expecting

things of them without discussing the reasons why, also indicate. In the context of personal relationships omoiyari must, perhaps, be seen as a female gender attribute.

Somewhat different from this case is that described by Taira, who lived half with a lover when he was a student. Half, because he kept his own apartment where he, however, did not stay often. His lover was a sarariiman and because it made sense that whoever had the time made dinner, Taira always made dinner. He ended up having to wait every day for a phone call from his lover to tell him when he would be coming home, so that he could prepare dinner in time. The daily insecurity produced by having to wait for these calls, made Taira think of questions like whether his lover was seeing other men. Gradually he lost contact with groups and friends he used to spend much time with and he started feeling very lonely. When Taira graduated, however, he moved to an apartment near his lover's, so that he could always go home and that there was no need for him constantly to know when his lover was home and when not. This changed the relationship, which Taira now hopes to develop further, while learning to know himself as well as his lover (Taira 1993).

In Taira's case, the existence of a widespread problem may be found, that of dependence in relationships. Taira obviously was oriented towards his lover to an extent that made him neglect his other needs. Doi Takeo referred to the pathology of amae in homosexual relationships in which usually, but not always, the younger of the partners assumes the position of dependence towards the other, usually older, partner (1975). Occur appears to have adopted this idea and condemns such relationships and

Kawamura san, who is related to the Kansai based gay organization OGC, also discusses his relation as problematic because his lover is acting as emotionally dependent on him, something he finds hard to comply with and would prefer to change (Miller 1992:177-178). Other informants have fewer problems with lovers being dependent on them or themselves being dependent and take it as a fact of life. Especially some informants who are over forty do not mind having a younger lover act emotionally dependent, as long as this lover is reliable. This relation of dependence among gay lovers is often mistaken as a typical Japanese characteristic. In the international groups in Japan I participated in I found that relations between Japanese and Americans were more clearly characterized by dependency^{den} than relationships between Japanese, and the dependent one could be the Japanese or the American.

Of course dependency violates the ideal of equality in relationships and as such it does not agree with for instance Occur's ideas of how a gay man should be, which is based on what they believe to be usual in America. Therefore Kanda, a member of Occur, even condemns relationships between people of different age, adding that in advertisements in Japanese gay magazines the terms aniki (older brother) and otôto (younger brother) are widely used (Miller 1992:178). There are three reasons why I believe this to be a misrepresentation of particular characteristics of gay relationships in Japan. Firstly, family terms are widely used in referring to people one is close to and there is no term for a brother of the same age. Secondly, in advertisements in European gay magazines, like The Gay Times in England,

there are many advertisements seeking a lover who is younger or older. Thirdly, among the couples I found and heard about in Japan there was no indication that age difference plays a larger role than in other countries I know, including the Netherlands. Apart from this, there is no reason to assume that there is something intrinsically wrong with age difference or dependence in relationships. Surely the latter can be temporary in many cases, like Taira's, and the roles of dependence and its opposite may be switched at some point in time.

More problematic are the following relationships which were unsuccessful because of attitudes of one of the partners. A man had several relationships that did not last for long for various reasons. In one, his partner was so concerned that anyone might discover the relationship that he only wanted to be together in his lover's private room. He did not want to be seen with him. This put so much stress upon the relationship that my informant decided to end it. In another case his lover was living with another man, who fulfilled more or less the role of housewife. My informant disliked this arrangement, because the relationship always had to progress in secret, so that his lover's lover would not find out. This relationship also ended soon. Other relationships ended because they became incompatible with the marriage of one of the partners, because one of the partners married, or because one of the partners was transferred. These endings of relationships are all strongly influenced by social circumstances, combined with a partner who fails to stand up for his love.

Two couples of men I found to be living together were not lovers but friends. While in both cases they were both homosexu-

al, their relationship was based on friendship rather than love and they had love and sex relationships with others independently. This solution to overcome the difficulties of living with a lover was one that appealed to many informants, especially those who were over thirty. The rationale behind this is that it is desirable to live with someone, but when sex and passion are the base of a relationship, it is difficult to sustain being together on a daily basis. Therefore living with a friend can be a good solution. It would also be a solution that is not very different from a man and a woman sharing a house in a platonic relationship, which is one of the types of marriage discussed in the previous chapter.

A survey on differences in lifestyle and ideas between heterosexuals and homosexuals and women and men, conducted by students of a Yajima seminar class of Chûô University questioned Occur members as the homosexual sample, which was compared to students of Chûô University. Here, the ideal of equality is clearly espoused by the homosexual sample, with 89.2% of gay men answering that they expect household chores to be divided equally and 80.6% of lesbian women, compared to 47.9% of heterosexual men and 51.6% of heterosexual women (Chô 1992). Because most couples I observed were over fifty, I believe that among younger generations equality may be more widespread. At the same time, I found that people who are not related to Occur have less set ideas about how a relationship should be and are more open to experimenting with different role patterns, lifestyles and relationships.

Promiscuous gay men.

The men discussed in this section are different from those in the section above not because they are necessarily more promiscuous, but because they do not desire a one^e-to-one relationship. They prefer the idea of promiscuity. Among gay men the ideal of ippu ippu sei is strong. In its usual writing with the characters meaning "one-man-one-woman-system", ippu ippu sei refers to heterosexual monogamy. It can, however, also be written with characters meaning one-woman-one-woman-system or one-man-one-man-system, while the pronunciation remains the same. In these writings the meaning is homosexual monogamy. Although monogamy is not the correct term here, because it does not concern marriage, ippu ippu sei is widely understood by gay men and lesbian women to refer to exclusive relationships. The ideal of ippu ippu sei is supported by publications on the prevention of Aids by the authorities who have stopped presenting gay men as a risk category, but have continued to point at other categories that are likely to carry HIV, such as foreigners, prostitutes and people who have sex with many or, more precisely, an indefinite number (futokutei tasû) of people rather than a steady (tokutei no) relationship and appear not to be able to understand what is wrong with that, even when told (Hirano 1992).

Aids information in ^{the} gay magazine Adon also stresses that one should be careful when having sex with somebody else than a steady partner, thereby closely following Japanese bureaucracy. What a steady partner is, however, is not determined, giving rise to the problem of people having a different "steady" partner every three months and using it as an excuse to engage in unsafe

sexual behaviour. Moreover, no attention whatsoever is paid to the problem that a steady partner might be cheating or to what those who do not want to limit their sex life to one partner must do. Safe sex according to the information provided in gay magazine Adon is limited to using a condom or no insertion of the penis in anus or mouth, without discrimination. Thus Adon fails to inform people about the low risk of oral sex, which is something radical gay magazine Za Gei does not fail to do (Aide Suisse. 1992).

Sapporo's gay group, Sapporo miitingu, published a discussion about the stress on "steady" lovers in relation to Aids prevention, and came to question the idea that sex within the ippu ippu sei is safe as a dangerous idea and to propose that there is no reason not to engage in multiple sexual contacts as long as one has safe sex (Mino 1992). Indeed, many informants, like one of the married men discussed in the previous chapter, thought that if they really love someone risking Aids does not matter, which is obviously a very dangerous stance when people really love another person every couple of months. That HIV spreads relatively slow within gay circles in Japan, is most likely due to two factors: many gay men do not or very rarely have sex with other men, i.e. have sex mostly or exclusively with themselves, and sexual practices among gay men tend to be limited to mutual masturbation and oral sex rather than anal sex (Takamizawa 1979, Itô S. 1993:132-135, Saitô & Fushimi 1993:155-161).

Another problem related to gay men wanting to have more than one lover or multiple sexual contacts is the disapproval it may

meet with in many gay circles. In a bar in Tokyo the masutâ (bartender) was discussing a man who had not been visiting the bar for some time. The reason for this was that his lover was temporarily abroad and that the man did not feel like going to gay bars alone, because that would entail the risk of being courted or becoming fascinated by another man. He was highly valued, while the masutâ checked how I reacted, knowing that I had more than one relationship simultaneously. Some people criticise Japanese gays for being squeamish about sex, like Pascal Nishi who poses as a child of Japanese and French parentage and in his pornographic writing of fantasized experiences in France often criticises Japanese for being boring and not given to lust (e.g. 1992).

Ozaki (1993) and Ogura (1993) describe the situation in gay saunas, where men have casual sex possibly with more than one man. Ozaki suggests that it might be a good place to work on spreading knowledge about safe sex and thereby to make gay saunas safer places than most. Ogura describes a night in the sauna and stresses the need for manners, i.e. the need for safe sex. An informant said that he does not feel capable of having a sexual relationship with one man for an extended period, because his lust for men is very much related to the thrill of the unknown, something that has been described by many European novelists (e.g. Busi 1990, 1991 & 1993, Genet 1977, 1978, Hollinghurst 1989, Warren 1986A & B, 1987) as well as gay thinkers (e.g. Hocquenghem 1978). Here it concerns sexual contacts instead of relationships, although relationships might result from these contacts.

Onitsuka Tetsurô advocates rankôgata, which originally was a derogative term to describe promiscuity, but nowadays is also used in a positive manner by more radical gay men and others, following the reasoning of Douglas Crimp (Tazaki 1993B:58-60). The ideal is to always be available for new encounters that may develop into relationships (Onitsuka 1993). Onitsuka is quite unique among my informants in Japan, although some others expressed a wish to experiment more, such as Fushimi Noriaki. He, however, at the time of the interview had promised his boyfriend that he would not engage in any other relationship or have sex with anyone else and therefore he could not follow his desires. This promise resulted partly from anxiety relating to Aids. Onitsuka, on the other hand, developed his ideas about rankôgata as a result of activities related to the Aids prevention law proposal, which appeared to be mainly directed at harassing prostitutes.

Ôhama Hôei, the man responsible for the proposal, aligns himself in his explanation of it explicitly with the National Front of France and the Christian Social Union of Bavaria, while unremittingly discussing the problem of the prostitute who continues working while being HIV-positive, and ignoring the men who are HIV-positive and continue to go to prostitutes and demand unsafe sex (Ôhama 1988: especially 106-128). This reasoning begged for reactions and served to bring together many people who occupied themselves with sexuality and gender related themes, including women's liberationists, lesbian women and gay men (Lunsing 1994B). Condemning people who became HIV positive through sexual contacts as immoral is a practice some scholars and

others persistently engage in (e.g. Iwai 1993, Matsuoka 1993), and Onitsuka's propagation of rankôgata may be a very powerful method of making people understand that it is not so much with whom you have sex, but what form of sex you have and how you protect yourself that makes the difference of being highly at risk of becoming HIV-positive or not. His propagation of rankôgata does not mean, however, that he is actually having sex with many different people. It means that he is in principle open to having sex with whomever he might meet. Furuhashi Teiji, on the other hand, says in Dumb Type's performance "S/N" that he has had sex, of course safe, with at least a hundred men, since he tested HIV-positive.

Female same sex relationships.

Compared to gay interviewees, many of my lesbian interviewees lived together with a woman and in a number of cases they even, usually unexpectedly, turned up together for the interview. It appeared that lesbians are generally more successful in maintaining long-term relationships than gay men. A number of reasons can be pointed out, internal as well as external. There appears to be less general awareness of the existence of lesbian sex, so that lesbians are relatively untouched by social condemnation of their relationships. More important is that among lesbians there is less focus on one ideology or other of how a relationship should be and more awareness that a relationship is something that needs time and effort to develop. There is more time and attention for the feelings of partners which are accepted as they are rather than only accepted when they are

agreed with.

Even in the survey conducted among members of Occur this is visible. Among lesbians three out of 31 do not want to share household chores evenly, but prefer to have their partner do most. Further the percentage of lesbians who want to live together is considerably smaller than that of Occur's gay men (Chô 1992). This might suggest that they are more aware of implications of any decision on these matters and therefore have more realistic ideas about the choices they make. Of a survey among 234 lesbian women a mere 14.9% of lesbians live with lovers and 35.1% live alone. The rest live with their parents or are married. At the same time, however, about 50% have a steady partner (Hirosawa & Rezubian Ripôto Han 1991), which is a percentage that is not approached by any survey on gay men.

Two lesbian interviewees in whose home I stayed were obviously quite egalitarian in relation to the division of all tasks. They both cooked and both sat with the guests when they felt like a break from cooking. This couple also engages in sadomasochistic lesbian shows in which one is usually the masochist, but not always: the roles may change halfway. When I interviewed them together, it was the one who usually played the underdog on stage who was initially most responsive and talkative but gradually the other started talking more and eventually almost took over totally. A couple of lesbian interviewees who work as carpenters also turned up together at a station in a Tokyo suburb. During the interview the same as above occurred. The one who started answering most left more space for the other to speak later on. In both cases mentioned here, the interviewees

did not only live together, but also worked together. While the first couple would have nothing to do with feminism, the second saw themselves as feminists more than as lesbians.

Sharing household chores equally does not mean that both do everything equally. An interviewee said that her lover usually returns from her job earlier than she and that it thus is purely logical that her lover makes dinner, something they both dislike. My interviewee, however, as a rule clears the table and washes up afterwards. In this case there is a major difference in income, for which reason the richer one pays about two thirds of the rent. If she would not do this, her lover would not be able to live with her. Thus social and financial facts may influence relationships and the scope of equality that is feasible.

Among lesbians I found it was common not to adhere to ippu ippu sei ideologically. Although informants in relationships were in practice often quite true to each other, in general it was agreed that if one or the other would fall in love with another woman this was to be respected:

"The mutual idea is: please, if you like, go ahead, if you meet someone else you like, please feel free to go with her. But at the moment I don't have the time to start loving someone. I don't know why, but I just don't have such a desire at all." (Interviewee of 31 years)

This may be related to the fact that for many lesbian couples companionship is more important than a sexual relation-

ship. As some interviewees told, they had been living together for such a long time now, that they did not see the other as a lover and were uncertain how to define their partners.

One couple was interviewed separately, while they knew I was interviewing both. In this case I was surprised to find that their ideas agreed to an enormous extent. Neither saw their present relationship as the one they would pursue for the rest of their lives and were quite open to meeting new lovers, but enjoyed what they had while it lasted. When I met one of them two years later, it transpired that the other had engaged in a relationship with another woman and that they had a triangular relationship for some time. This, however, became the focus of much gossip in the small lesbian scene of Osaka, which complicated matters, because it affected relationships with their friends. In the end, her girlfriend moved out to live with her new lover.

One lesbian couple, however, was in company characterized by a close bond of silence. They would not talk about their relationship, which seemed to be greatly dominated by the partner who did all the talking. This was the focus of some gossip, but it did not influence their lives much, because they were exclusively oriented towards each other and as a result they were almost fully emotionally independent of what other people might think or say. Others seemed to be perceived as dangers to their relationship and there was much jealousy if one would even talk with another woman for longer than a few minutes. Similarly, another interviewee thought that her lover had difficulty with her activities. She managed a place for lesbian women to come and

have tea and to play music and show art. According to her, her lover was very anxious about her meeting many other women she might be charmed by. When I interviewed her lover, however, she did not agree that she felt any such threat whatsoever.

In the case of lesbian couples with children, it appeared that the major problem consisted in the relation of the woman who was not the natural mother with the child and the way the child might perceive the relationship of her mother to her lover. Mostly the mother's lover would not play the role of mother, but rather switched between the roles of an older sister to the child and a lover to the mother. In one case the mother's lover and the child had a very difficult relationship with many fights. But when the mother was away on business travels for a fortnight, they managed to cooperate with each other very harmoniously. When the mother came back, though, they had an enormous fight, which my interviewee, the mother's lover, interpreted as the child releasing the stress that had built up during her mother's absence. This was the same explanation as the mother herself had provided in an earlier interview. My interviewee herself did not like children in particular, but because she loved the mother she had to find a way of making friends with the child.

Lesbian relationships may come to an end ^{for} similar reasons as male gay relationships and heterosexual relationships outside marriage, for instance because one of the partners marries or moves. Further relationships usually end when one of the partners found another lover, when the passion has gone, or as a result of the jealousy of a partner who has many other friends and interests. Nonetheless, in the latter cases women may stay

together for the sake of the companionship they have achieved and the lifestyle they have become used to.

Not all women who live together are sexually attracted to each other. Some heterosexual women also prefer the company of women over that of men. In feminisuto circles, i.e. among more academic feminists, they are often referred to as sôsharu rezubian, social lesbians. The most well known example of this is that of Komashaku Kimi, retired professor of Hôsei Daigaku and Konishi Aya, anarchist. Their age difference has lead to some criticism, Konishi could be Komashaku's mother. This example, that has been described elsewhere (e.g. Ueno 1988A:81-83), has given many other women ideas. I found many heterosexual women who thought it to be desirable to spend their old age together with a close female friend, among them many who were married.

Promiscuous women.

Among lesbian women I found some examples of much openness as to what lifestyles could be feasible. Contrary to gay men who think that they can become heterosexual upon marriage, they see no problem with having heterosexual relationships while remaining lesbian. Even though they may not like men as a category, they are sure there are men they can love. A woman of 26, who defines herself as lesbian, definitely does not want to marry legally, but thinks it possible that she might live together with a man (dôsei suru), something she experienced before:

"When I was at high school I had a girlfriend,
and we became close, but after we graduated we

became separated and it ended. At that time I met a boy I liked a lot. With him everything was also totally platonic. Until then I didn't know much about boys. There weren't many men nearby and I never had male friends. But thanks to him, I came to understand that I don't dislike all men. Among us (lesbians) there are those who hate men and among such (gay) men there are also those who hate women. But I don't have that because of this (experience). I had it a bit before though."

With this man she had no sexual relationship and he knew that she was attracted to women and accepted that. Together they would discuss the beautiful women they saw around them when they were in town. Although she is adamant that she is a lesbian, this in her viewpoint does not exclude the possibility to love a man, although chances that she will are small, because her eyes only search for women and the fact that she has experienced a close relationship with a man makes her all the more certain that she prefers women.

A woman of 28 also had a male lover before she had female ones and while she at the time of the interview clearly identified herself as lesbian, on later occasions she was less decided. Later again, after she appeared as a lesbian on stage in a performance and found a steady lover, she was very definite about being lesbian. When I met her at the European Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in Amsterdam in June 1994 she was joking about

her being a rezubian no obasan (lesbian aunt). Because her attention is drawn towards women wherever she goes, she had now decided to be lesbian. Another lesbian interviewee even said that she had a short affair with a man while she was having a steady relationship of eight years with a girlfriend. When he started to talk of marriage, however, she quickly brought an end to it.

Another woman who now was in a long-term relationship with a woman, previously had several relationships with men. While her lover had always seen herself as lesbian and had previous relationships with women, she had never considered the possibility of loving women until her present lover courted her. She did not define herself as lesbian and thought it very possible that she might have a male lover sometime later, although her experience had taught that it was much easier to remain true to herself in a relationship with a woman. The woman she has a relationship with has attention for her as a person, unlike the men who tended to see her rather as a woman, which operated to push her into a feminine role, more precisely that of the housewife. She strongly objected to labelling people in general and thought that it would be best to take everyone as a person one must get to know before making any judgements about her or his qualities. Both agreed that it might be interesting if one or the other would find a female lover they then both could share, trusting that the other would choose someone likeable.

The tada no sukebe, introduced in the previous chapter (p.154-155), had more than one relationship at the same time. One of them was with a woman she saw as very strange, because she was trying with all her might to be like a man or, indeed, to be a

man. She liked to enjoy her sex life in whichever way it developed and thought that she must always be open for new encounters and experiments. This was a view shared by a female Buddhist priest, who lately has come to present herself as bisexual, because at a qasshuku (overnight group trip) of a female Buddhist priest network she learned that she could also love women. People in this context are not divided into men or women, but into people one fancies and people one does not fancy. Both exist among men and women. In general women adhere to this standpoint more than men. As a survey among university students by a Yajima seminar class shows, the percentage of women who are eager to try sex with the same sex is about double that of men (Ôshima 1994). Some lesbians, however, said that they have become tired of women who are interested in having sex with a woman but do not decide that they are lesbians. Calling themselves rezubian separêtisuto (lesbian separatist), they want to organize weekends for women who label themselves as lesbians only.

In a similar way, a woman who saw herself mainly as heterosexual did not like to have relationships with men. She did like to have sex with them and use their bodies in that way, but did not want to listen to anything they might have to say, because experience taught her that this was usually very boring. She found it preferable if they had left before she woke up in the morning, so that she did not need to have breakfast with them or to make them leave. She also had a sexual relationship with a woman which lasted for a while, but in the end was not satisfactory. While she did enjoy having sex with her, she kept feeling lust for men. Stories like hers have lately been

described by two female Japanese writers, who are quite popular among young lesbians and feminists (Saitô 1993, Matsuura 1987), and whose work is comparable to that of Pat Califia (1988). Written from the standpoint of women, they contain a high dose of explicit sexual description and sadomasochism, whereby women and men both play both roles. The interviewee mentioned above said that she was fond of Matsuura's work and that she also liked soft sadomasochism, and, indeed, I discovered hand-cuffs when I was staying in her apartment. Nonetheless, shortly before leaving for a voyage around the world she fell in love with a man, which made her postpone her travel plans several months, because she wanted to enjoy his company just a little bit longer.

A feminist woman who does not like to use the label of feminisuto for herself, but otherwise fits rather well into the general perception of feminisuto as academics involved in women's studies, found a singular solution to organize her love and sex life. She has more than one ^{male} lover at the same time and sees the lover she wants to see when she feels like it. While one is good for intellectual discussion, another is better for sex and a third good to have fun with out drinking. As she has many aspects of herself to all of which in her opinion no man can answer adequately, she needs more than one man. She explained the organization of her feelings by referring to a painting by Dali, that of the woman with drawers in her body. For each of her lovers she has a separate drawer and whenever she is with one she opens the appropriate drawer and lets out the attitude that fits with this lover. This orderly way of organizing her love life also prevents her from becoming hung up on a man and when all her

lovers are locked up in their drawers, she still has other drawers to open up other parts of her life, such as her profession, on which she does not want her love life to have any influence, a position that is typical of many feminisuto.

Alternative female/male relationships.

The woman described above would also fit into this section, but because the position of the men in her story was almost not discussed and because she claims to make her own choices independent of what her lovers may think of it, I decided to place her in the section of promiscuous women. At the discussion where she explained her lifestyle another woman, who saw herself as a feminisuto, and is generally recognized as such, told of her difficulties in maintaining a love relationship with a man. She had been married before and also had children, but because she could not keep herself from centering her whole life around him and expecting him to comply with her desire to find everything she sought in lovers in one man, this relationship became insupportable. It neither agreed with her feminist ideas nor with her life as an academic. Moreover, her husband was incapable of being the perfect man she desired. They broke up and later relationships followed the same pattern.

This continued until, she reported, she found a solution in a relationship with a foreign man who lives overseas. The simple fact of limitation of the possibility to see him prevents her from seeking everything in him she sought in lovers who lived in Japan. She can still be romantic, but reality makes total indulgence impossible. To this, she added that she believed

foreign men to be easier to deal with than a Japanese "ossan" (short for ojisan: literally uncle, but also middle age man), a word that is increasingly used to typecast Japanese men of middle age and older, who are thus presented as rude, boring, self-centered creatures outside the league of people one wants to deal with.

A male interviewee who lived in a Tokyo suburb had an open relationship with a woman who was also the mother of their daughter. They did not live together, but had a steady long-term involvement. He had been greatly influenced by the ideal presentation of the open relationship between Sartre and De Beauvoir, and he claimed that he and the mother of his daughter had other relationships and that this progressed on an equal and unproblematic basis. Living apart was not only in agreement with ideological ideas, but also practical as their lifestyles differed greatly. While his lover had a day-time job, he worked as a writer, often deep into the night. During her youngest years the care of the daughter fell mainly to the mother, but once she started to attend school she would often go to her father's house, where she could be welcomed easily, because it coincided with the time of day he usually did not work much. In the evening she would then go to her mother's where she spent the night and was woken up and provided with a lunchbox before going to school again. After the mother died he moved partially to live with his daughter while keeping his working place separated. Lunchboxes are now prepared by a friendly neighbour².

The ideal of free love that was the base of this man's lifestyle was not entirely new to the Japan of the sixties. Itô

Noe, anarcho-feminist of the 1910's also believed in it, as did her major lover, anarchist ôsugi Sakae. They, however, were not wholly succesful in this. ôsugi's legal wife probably felt some objection - she wrote that she was not a nyû ôman, unlike Itô (Hori 1913, Sievers 1983:177) - but she could not stop them. When their relation started Kamichika Ichiko, a feminist friend of Itô and a lover of ôsugi became very jealous. These feelings drove her to stage an incident in which she slit ôsugi's throat , almost killing him. After this, Kamichika was arrested for attempted murder, and the relationship between Itô and ôsugi appears to have continued (Arahata 1978, Itô 1978A & B, ôsugi 1978A & B) until they were picked up by the police and strangled in a police cell on the occasion of the Kantô earthquake which destroyed Tokyo in 1923 (Sievers 1983:186).

Male interviewees who believed in free sex found it hard to find women who agree with their ideas. One eventually settled in a jijitsukon relationship and the other in practice spends most of his time without a lover. While he sees himself as emancipated he thinks it is difficult to find women who want a relationship on the basis of total freedom for both. He calls his problems, in an article he wrote, the Nausicaa complex (Nausika konpurekkusu), a name he derived from a popular Japanese comic heroine who is a strong, independent and politically active woman. According to his theory, progressive men who want a relationship with a woman who is their equal cannot find such women, because many of the strong, independent and politically active women, who are not all that common, do not want a relationship at all (Shida 1992).

In Kyoto I participated in a circle where sexual freedom was a much discussed subject. But this was not always directly related to discussing one's own sex life. At a New Year's party, a woman told me that she wanted very much to know about the contents and importance of the relationships her boyfriend had with other women. When we asked him to tell us about them, he did not answer but became silent. When we asked again he moved over to the other side of the room. Likewise another woman whose boyfriend was seeing another woman found it impossible to cope with the fact that he acted towards her as if he was not seeing anyone else, while everybody knew that he was. Because he refused to discuss it with her, she finally ended their relationship on the occasion of moving house to another city. These cases further confirm a bias in the distribution of omoiyari towards women. Female gender is expected to take care of relationships more than male gender, even in groups where equality is officially the norm.

Tsutamorei Tatsuru: relations denying gender boundaries.

Tsutamori Tatsuru used to be a free-lance writer specializing in motorcycles and the world of motorcycling in Japan. Pictures of him through time show a total image change, from a motorcyclist with an unkempt beard, to a beautiful woman (Popeye 1993). He said that he went through much turmoil, trying to deny his male sex, before he finally ended up accepting himself the way he is, i.e. a highly androgynous individual whose sex organ happens to have the shape of a penis. These developments were accompanied by changes of profession. He worked as a female

seamstress, a help in the kitchen of a dance hall, a nude model, a bar hostess and took upon himself the role of housewife. His changes and the accompanying development of his ideas are described in three books and some articles he published during these changes (Tsutamori 1990B, 1992 & 1993).

When I interviewed him, he said he was living with a woman and taking most of the household work upon himself. He was acting the role of a housewife who did some writing on the side. He told me his history, about which he was just writing a book that appeared later (Tsutamori 1993). When he started to use make up and wear women's clothes, the relationship with a woman he was engaged in had gradually deteriorated and they separated, which sent him on a period of several years of moving from place to place and job to job, while he was trying to discover how he could deal with gender ascriptions that did not agree with himself any longer. He contacted Watanabe Tsuneo, who wrote a book which discusses the increasing difficulty of being male and various problems concerning men who feel that the male role has become insupportable (Watanabe 1989).

Tsutamori had come to hate his own physique, especially his penis, the discussion of which among feminisuto had increasingly given him the idea that he had better have it cut off (Hashimoto & Tsutamori 1990). Because he saw his penis as repulsive, Tsutamori was not able to have sex with a woman until his new lover referred to his penis as a vagina (chitsu) and said she liked it, which made Tsutamori see that one's physique does not really matter all that much. Instead, one's feelings and emotions are the core of a relationship and if those feelings are not

sexist and discriminating against women, a penis does not need to stand in the way of achieving mutual sexual satisfaction (Tsutamori 1993). Likewise, a lesbian couple, of whom my interviewee was halfway through a sex change operation and still had a penis, also found a way to enjoy sex together. And when Hashimoto Osamu suggests that he might refer to himself as a lesbian (1992A), he does not mean that he has a female physique, but that his feelings may be similar to those of lesbian women.

During the interview Tsutamori said that he had experienced sex with men but that, in general, he preferred women, because their bodies are softer, just like the "bisexual" woman discussed in the previous chapter (p.149-150). He thought that he should always be open towards new relationships and not be afraid to hurt other people. By trying to avoid hurting other people one would most likely end up creating an undesirable situation for all people concerned. If one avoids engaging in a relationship in order to avoid hurting somebody one is already involved with, this will inevitably raise the demands posed on that relationship, because the costs of it have risen. A final result is likely to be that the relationship becomes insupportable. Tsutamori teaches that one should always be honest towards oneself and others and recognize one's feelings and act upon them, without fear of hurting oneself or others. The expression of fear of hurting or pain he dismisses as a way of excusing oneself for not following one's intuition, and that he calls "stupid (bakabakashii)". Likewise, Hashimoto discusses the contradiction between the recent value adhered to "true love" and the continuing condemnation of love affairs when one already has

a relationship, which is called furin (immoral, unethical). If love is a good thing, how can it be bad at the same time, he wonders (1992B:86-90).

Conclusion.

Among my interviewees and informants lesbian women tended to live in couples much more than gay men, although they often do not adhere to the ippu ippu sei. This indicates that men, no matter whether they are gay or heterosexual, are generally less critical of the marital system than women and adhere more to the ideal of exclusivity in love relationships. Heterosexual feminists are more in favour of the ippu ippu sei than lesbian women, which suggests that lesbian women have a more liberal attitude towards developing alternative lifestyles. Ways of thinking about ippu ippu sei do not appear to have much influence on what lifestyles people actually have. Lesbians who have decided to be lesbian have longer lasting relationships than gay men. Heterosexual singles tend either not to have love relationships or shorter, less compelling ones, although there are exceptions. Especially among the younger generations of women one can find relatively many with a free attitude towards sexuality, love, and living patterns and readiness or even eagerness to experiment. This is more true for women who label themselves as lesbian than those who do not label themselves, but they exist in both cases. Among men, such examples can be found, but they are much rarer. Men are, overall, less successful at achieving

their ideals and have much less inclination to discover personal alternatives and to experiment. Their ideas about relationships tend to be more in agreement with general jōshiki. Nevertheless, a wide variety of lifestyles is viable and exists in Japan.

Notes:

1. Ōkubo Sawako, who is one of the founders, when being interviewed by me, mentioned a figure of two and a half million, which is the approximate number of soldiers who were killed in the battlefields. Fujiwara (1972:285-286) and Yoshihiro (1987:140) mention about three million war victims in total and Ienaga (1982:233) mentions 658,595 civil victims. While Tani (1982:27) mentions 600,000 women as the figure concerned, statistics show that in this age group there are about 247,000 unmarried women in 1990 which is 3.7%. While this is higher than in the age cohorts before and directly after theirs, among women who are twenty years younger than they the percentage of unmarried women is already higher (Keizai Kikakuchō 1992:409). The surplus of two hundred thousand men before the war had changed into a shortage of one and a half million after, while the population grew by fourteen million (Sōmuchō Tōkeikyoku eds. 1992:8-9).

2. Lunchboxes became a topic at a seminar class with Ueno Chizuko in which Kasuga Kisuyo's book on single fathers was discussed (Kasuga 1989). An episode in this book concerns the sad story about children whose fathers could not make perfect looking lunch boxes. This I found rather ridiculous and so did a Chinese participant of the seminar. The Japanese women participating in the seminar, however, were moved to tears by the episode, including Ueno. Ueno's conclusion was that Kasuga apparently had touched a tender spot in the emotional realm of many Japanese women. That lunch boxes are important and not having a lunch box that looks as nice as that of other pupils, make one feel left out, is a point. The Chinese participant, who was male, and I found it ridiculous that it was taken for granted that the fathers could not make a decent-looking lunchbox.

6: Dealing with society: Practical problems, passing and coming out.

This chapter discusses strategies employed for coping with a social environment that often has little consideration for people whose lifestyles, feelings or ideologies are at variance with its norms. First, practical problems and strategies people may employ to cope with them are discussed. Housing and work are foremost examples of necessities and the distribution of these may be based on jōshiki concerning how one should live. Those whose lifestyle does not agree with jōshiki may take into account problems resulting from discrimination when making choices of where and how to live and what type of work to choose.

Strategies of dealing with surrounding people, such as family, friends, colleagues and classmates, vary from trying to keep people ignorant about one's lifestyle to explicitly making people know. While, for instance, remaining single is not doing something, rather than doing something, many single people feel that this not doing something demands a lot of their energy. Most people employ several strategies simultaneously, depending on specific situations and relationships. First "passing" in combination with "compartmentalisation", a strategy in which particular parts of one's life are kept completely separated from other parts of one's life (Goode 1960) is concentrated on. This strategy may agree very well with general patterns of conduct in Japan in which roles particular to contexts may be valued more than intrinsic and independent identities (Valentine 1990, Hendry

1992C, Bachnick 1994). Thereafter, the problematics and implications of coming out and being revealed (Davies 1992) are focussed on.

Solving practical problems.

Housing.

A problem is posed by difficulties in finding a place to live. Public housing is, according to the law¹, only available for people who are related legally, i.e. by marriage, by adoption, or by birth, for women over fifty and men over sixty, or handicapped. The age difference between women and men is the result of political activities by Dokushin Fujin Renmei, a leading figure of which, ōkubo Sawako, fought for recognition of the plight of women who remained single as the result of the war and had difficulty finding affordable housing. At the housing department in Kyoto's city hall a civil servant explained that I definitely would not be allowed to live in public housing, because I was single and neither handicapped nor over sixty. A reason he "forgot" to mention is that I was non-Japanese. As the case of the Korean Pe san (See chapter three, p.120, note 14) shows, public housing is more limited to foreigners than to Japanese. I found single people under fifty without a handicap living in public housing in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo. A Japanese woman of 28 was living on her own in a public housing apartment in Kyoto. In Tokyo I found a similar case of a man of 39.

Both apartments were rather old and small, with one room and

a kitchen, which makes them difficult to accord with present day housing standards for families. Moreover, "old" in the context of Japanese housing is usually perceived as synonymous with dirty (kitanai), which makes these places not desirable in the eyes of people who care about status more than money. Therefore older and smaller apartments are likely to become increasingly available to singles and also to same sex couples, because there is nothing to keep a partner from moving in. A man who lived alone in a danchi in Osaka stayed there after his wife demanded a divorce and moved out, and a woman in a similar apartment had lied that she was going to live there with her sister, who lived with a boyfriend elsewhere, but agreed to live together legally so that her sister could obtain a danchi apartment. Once a couple moved into a danchi they do not need to stay together. If one leaves the other can as a rule stay on.

As a case in chapter three (p.113) suggested, private housing can only be rented at the mercy of landlords who often do not want two men living together in their apartments and may become quite annoying if the second one moves in with the one who rented the apartment alone originally. Even giving birth to a baby may be a reason for eviction, because landlords may think that children will damage the house and cause trouble (meiwaku o kakeru) to other tenants because of the noise they make. In the case of single women having a baby, the landlord may also decide that her moral standards are such that he can not let her stay (Onodera 1982). Many contracts explicitly state that children may not be born and pets may not be kept.

While in the case of young students landlords have less

objection to two men living together, once they are past student age, which in general is believed to be twenty-two, landlords are likely to refuse male couples. For lesbian couples this problem is smaller, because it is widely accepted that women often do not have an income that allows them to live on their own. Sharing with a friend is seen as a logical way for women to save money. Neighbours might in the case of two men sharing a house start to gossip, but in the case of two women this is less likely. Lesbians benefit in this respect from the fact that the existence of female homosexuality is much less known than that of male homosexuality. One lesbian couple living together even thought that the neighbours believed that the one who looked less feminine, because she was taller and her hair shorter, was a man.

Nonetheless, there is a well known case of two women who live together (See chapter five, p.204) that is being criticised. In this case the ages of the women differ by twenty years, and therefore, as a friend of them said, their cohabitation is considered by some to be "unnatural (fushizen)" or "distasteful (iyarashii)". The apartment is owned by the two women, who may set a new trend because many women would like to share housing with other women in old age (Ueno 1988A:81-83). In cases where finances are available same sex couples, as well as singles, may buy an apartment and thereby eliminate a problem that otherwise would become increasingly difficult to overcome, because landlords increasingly dislike renting their apartments and houses to people advancing in age. Indeed, among those who expect to remain single there appears to be a relatively large number of people who buy apartments, which they regard as a security for

old age. As long as they can take care of themselves they have a place to live. If that becomes impossible, they can sell the apartment and use the money to pay for care. But, as a single female civil servant, who owns a two room apartment, clarified, this is not always an easy decision:

"To tell the truth I bought this manshon (apartment) with a mortgage of 35 years. When I have paid all that back I'll be 75. Because in Japan it's very expensive they can't sell unless they spread the mortgage over such long periods.(...) Halfway through I'll probably retire. And then I can probably pay off everything with the retirement bonus. Compared to other women, I definitely think that I'm privileged in the field of money."

Work.

Indeed, working as a civil servant is one of the careers in which women can be sure to receive a decent income, which is not lower than that received by men. She even thought that she was better off than a man with wife and children doing the same job, for whom life was more difficult financially, and that she was better off than female friends who work for companies, where initial wages may be higher, but pay rises for women remain behind, and pressure to retire early may soon mount (Saso 1990:37, 80). She feels that the mortgage binds her to her job. While she felt free to criticise sexism at her workplace and

discrimination against singles, homosexuals and single mothers by the bureaucratic system, when I promised her anonymity, she felt bound by the mortgage to remain silent about this otherwise, because criticising the system might cause her to lose her job. Since civil servants are legally bound to refrain from political activities related to their work and may not criticise the system², she felt that buying an apartment forced her to continue to apply regulations she thinks are wrong. For this reason Satô Bunmei resigned from his job at the population registration department of the ward office of Shinjuku in Tokyo when he found that it was impossible to criticise, let alone change, the system from within.

Those who choose positively to live outside marriage rather than that they could not find a partner to marry, can live as they please, apart from economic restraints like having to have a job in order to earn a living. Income, however, does not have to be all that high, as was pointed out by many informants, if only one forsakes the idea of having to live up to standards many Japanese take for granted. If, for example, one waits to buy new brandnamed clothes until prices go down in the sales one can save enormous amounts of money and still have the same. Further, not having children is a great economic asset, as it saves many millions of yen one might otherwise feel compelled to spend on their education and such. Indeed, the financial burden is prominent among the reasons Japanese give when asked why they believe the birth rate has declined lately, closely followed by the shortage of child minding facilities (Keizai Kikakuchô ed. 1993:26).

It is also important to find the right job. If one does not wish to marry, it is better to avoid working for a conservative company. Some progressive companies for instance nowadays have gay men who came out as gay on their jobs, which does not appear to influence their position in any way. These companies interfere very little in the personal lives of their employees, who as a result enjoy much freedom. A man working for the international telephone company ITJ said that there were no problems related to being openly gay there and the same was said about Japan's largest cosmetics company, Shiseido. Both men were, however, in their mid-twenties which makes it unclear whether their marital status might hamper them in climbing the career ladder.

In general being a kômuin, a civil servant, gives more security in this respect, because a kômuin cannot be fired because of personal circumstances that do not relate to her or his working capacities, which in the case of companies does occur. Indeed, the civil service has been known for a long time to provide a good job opportunity for single women. Already in the first half of this century the civil service was known as an occupation where lesbian women were relatively concentrated (Robertson 1992). Teaching at universities also offers a good option, but such jobs may become more difficult to obtain in years to come, due to a decline in student numbers combined with the large number of graduates among the generation born in the sixties.

Those working in creative professions, where the atmosphere may be very liberal on the one hand or very conservative on the other - consider for instance the artisan world of Kyoto (Haraven

1992) - were divided between very free and easy-going and very troubled. Informants working in designing and kimono painting in Kyoto could be divided between those who made it an independent occupation and therefore were bound to tsukiai (personal relationships) with suppliers and buyers, which made them feel that they need to comply with jōshiki to a great extent, and those who worked for others and had much more freedom in their choice of lifestyle. In the modern arts the atmosphere is generally very liberal, but it is very difficult to make a living. Most painters and performance artists I met derived their main income from doing arubaito (underpaid, unstable jobs such as waitress and shop assistant).

An option open to those who wish to live outside mainstream society is offered by the fūzoku sangyō (the pleasure industry) where one can work in positions from bartender and host or hostess to stripper or prostitute. All ^{the} people I asked who worked in gay bars claimed that their parents do not know about the nature of their jobs. They might have told their parents that they work in a bar, but not what sort of bar. Women and men working as hosts and hostesses, strippers and prostitutes alike, usually try to hide their occupation from family and often friends outside the industry (Kanematsu 1987, Kakinuma 1991, Louis 1992, Lunsing 1994C). Some people may perceive working in the pleasure industry as their only way to make a living. Especially in the case of transvestites and transsexuals it is difficult to find a mainstream occupation (Kuroyanagi 1992). There are bars where women work as men (Cross Dressing 1992) and where men work as women (Kuroyanagi 1992). Some gay men and

transsexual men who became women made a show-business career out of it, such as the gay twins Osugi and Piiko (Sugiura & Sugiura 1992) and Miwa Akihiro (Yamaguchi 1985:31-33, Miwa 1992), as did some lesbian women who work at the all-women musical theatre Takaratsuka. Although in publications on Takaratsuka any reference to sex and sexuality of the stars is avoided (Robertson 1992), people with inside knowledge confirmed this "secret" that is public knowledge in lesbian circles.

While most interviewees had not given much thought to discrimination problems when choosing a career, one gay man decided to take it into consideration. He was to be employed by a major bank in his hometown, but at the last moment decided not to accept the job, for two reasons. He did not want to live too close to his family, and the branch he was to be employed at was in his hometown. More important than that was that he thought he knew that if he did not marry his career opportunities within the bank would be limited. Single men's careers end up in side-tracks in banks, because they are not trusted to be mature enough to deal with large sums of money. Instead he chose to work as a civil servant for the metropolitan government of Tokyo, where being single is not much of an issue.

Coping with seken: Going along or ridiculing.

A major problem for the people discussed in the previous chapters is that many people think nothing of interfering in other people's private life, especially when it comes to marriage

and finding spouses. Even if one shows clearly that one is not eager to marry, all sorts of people may come up with prospective spouses. A common method of coping with the demands of seken and family employed by those who do not wish to marry is to have proposed omia, but to turn down the candidates every time. While this may be time-consuming, it serves to satisfy parents, superiors or friends, because one appears to be doing something about finding a marriage partner. An interviewee of 31 who works as a sarariiman had such a problem:

"In the end you can't refuse, if such talk comes from a superior. It's part of being sarariiman. (...) But I ended up behaving very impolite towards the woman concerned. (...) I didn't want her to think that I might be interested and ended up creating a very unpleasant atmosphere. I knew what I was doing and I think it was very impolite to let myself go like that."

This man reproaches himself for behaving unpleasantly, not for not refusing to have omia, because that would have been impossible in his eyes. The cost of refusing to have omia may be high: I found two cases of men who were dismissed because they refused to have the omia their superiors proposed. Many people, however, find having omia without any intention to marry an immoral activity. One interviewee only once had an omia, though he did not want to marry because he was gay and did not want to make a woman unhappy, which he saw as the inevitable outcome of

such a match. He turned her down, but as it turned out she quite fancied him which made him feel guilty for having raised false hopes. After this episode he decided never to consent to having omiaiai again and made clear to his parents that he chose not to marry. A female interviewee of 30 had had many omiaiai and saw them as a chance to meet people in various walks of life, although she was not sure whether she wanted to marry at all. She did not rule out the possibility of meeting a man she would want to marry, but she estimated the chances to be very low. Her mother, who arranged the omiaiai, usually chose quite interesting men for her to meet, but she invariably deemed them not suitable for marriage. Two years after the interview she sent a letter which showed growing distress over the question of whether she should marry.

A heterosexual man, who wanted to marry if he could only meet the right person had reached the age of 39 still single. His parents showed him pictures of women so that he might have an omiaiai, but this he always refused, because he thought that such "feudal (hōkenteki) practices" were not of this time and he felt that marriage should be based on love and equality. When his parents kept proposing women and showing him pictures he clearly showed his anger about their persistence, after which, according to him, they thought it wiser not to bring up the subject again out of fear they might lose him altogether. A female interviewee in her sixties said that whenever her mother, who was widowed during the war, so much as brought up the subject of marriage, she would react by saying: "Get married yourself (jibun de kekkon shite)", and thereby she managed to avoid marriage. Other people

are more subtle, but also keep refusing to have omiaai, which is after all something they cannot be forced to *have*.

One of the major difficulties expressed by those who are not married is the fact that many people think nothing of asking for an explanation: "Why aren't you married?" or: "Why don't you want to marry?" The question whether you are married is often a kind of greeting, rather than an expression of real concern. In this sense it often is a vital part of making initial contacts develop smoothly, which Hendry describes under the heading of the wrapping of language: it is not the actual content of what is said that matters, but rather the intention to be congenial expressed by words that do not have much importance otherwise (Hendry 1993A:64-65). People of thirty and over are usually expected to be married, but are still asked. If one is married, the next question is whether there are any children. If one is not married, the next question, or rather insinuation, is that surely there must be a loved one with whom one expects to marry shortly, and thus the ice is broken on many an uneasy introductory conversation.

If one gives all the wrong answers, however, that is if one is single and has no prospect of marriage in the near future or if one is married for over a year but without children, this is likely to keep the ice intact or make it freeze even harder. People whose answers are wrong may be shut out of the group in the same way that people are shut out of groups because they do not use the level of politeness or the vocabulary that binds groups (Hendry 1991). This is an example of discrimination in everyday life against unmarried and childless married people. The

concept of discrimination in everyday life is derived from the concept of "everyday racism" (Essed 1984), which fits the situation of singles and childless couples in Japan very well. It is a form of discrimination most people who transgress are not aware of. People who are subjected to it often come to accept it as a fact of life, until one day they may burst into a rage at one or other last straw, which in itself might not even be worth discussing. This happened to a gay interviewee who in a rage severed all contacts with his father when he started talking of marriage. Likewise, a lesbian interviewee thought that she would probably burst into a rage one day and say that she was lesbian if her parents would not leave her in peace. A member of Occur dubbed this form of discrimination gay harassment.

A common strategy to cope with this form of discrimination employed by almost all singles is to avoid family gatherings. A man who dislikes being asked about his marriage prospects by his family avoids going home on occasions such as shôgatsu (New Year Day/Days), when most Japanese families gather and celebrate, a common pattern among many interviewees. Others go on shôgatsu but that is the only occasion each year. Especially in the case of single women, the family may even prefer them not to come home at all. Tani (1982) provides some examples and an interviewee said that her family preferred her not to come home, because she was mura hachibu (ostracized) and her family would rather avoid having other villagers reminded of her existence. She related this story with pride and was quite happy that she did not need to visit her parents. While for those who moved away family may be relatively easy to evade by not visiting them, other people

in the daily social environment have also to be dealt with somehow. For many informants uchi (inside), be it the parental home or the workplace, is not a place where they can relax and show their real feelings, as it has so often been described (e.g. Lebra 1976, Hendry 1986, Bachnik 1994, Kondo 1994).

A typical method of dealing with situations in which one is expected to comply with jōshiki concerning marriage was often described by informants by the word gomakasu, which means avoiding giving an answer to a question so that, if carried out in a sophisticated manner, the questioner does not notice that one evades the subject. It may also refer to an effort to avoid giving a direct reaction to criticism and divert the attention to a less dangerous area, ideally without clearly appearing to avoid giving an answer. This behaviour can be understood as a polite way of avoiding difficult situations, and as such fits very well with the concepts of tatema (public face) and honne (real feelings; e.g. Smith 1983, Moeran 1989). While ideally the other should not see through the evasion, people often do, but what is said should make clear that the subject had better be put to rest or gomakasu may even make it impossible to pursue the subject any further. By gomakasu it is avoided that people's feelings are upset by hearing things that do not correlate positively with their world view. In this sense it can also be understood as a warning not to continue the line of conversation.

Some Japanese are very sophisticated in gomakasu and those who are not are not likely to end up in a high position, because gomakasu often is the only way to avoid awkward situations. Some informants would give the relative sophistication of people from

the Kansai in this field as a reason why there are so many successful politicians from the Kansai area. Ueno (1988A) writes that in Kyoto people ask, after having been given a honne answer: "What do you mean?" According to Ueno they cannot be satisfied with any answer, whether tatemae or honne, but need both, to make up their minds as to what to think of it. Kyoto people, in contrast to Tokyo people, perceive as the real answer something that is not actually said but lies between tatemae and honne. My interviewees were usually very committed to tell their honne, which they might contrast with the tatemae stories they told many others. Ueno's difference between Kyoto and Tokyo was not apparent among my informants. The two cases in which people changed their stories, were both Tokyo people.

The Japanese style of communication has been called affective and intuitive as opposed to the instrumental style in Western languages. The Japanese style of communication is said to be determined by awase, a style in which the speaker attempts to adjust himself to the feelings of his listeners (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey referring to Okabe 1988:112-113). Awaseru (going along), the verb of which awase is a stem, is another term informants used in describing their way of relating to problematic but significant others. Research comparing American and Japanese students has shown that Japanese students tend to be more reserved and formal towards others and to have "a larger private self that is hidden or unknown" (Barnlund 1975:50-52), which combines perfectly with the tendency to awaseru. It also combines perfectly with the idea that the use of polite language is not so much determined by verticality in relationships as it

is by degrees of intimacy (Neustupny 1978:200).

Because many people think that people often tell lies (usotsuku), they may end up believing whatever their fantasy places in their heads rather than what someone says. The idea behind this is that anything anyone says may be a lie and for some people it even seems to go so far that everything anyone says must be lies, because otherwise they would not have ventured to say it. This view implies that truths are preferably hidden at all times. In another light, it might also suggest that Japanese in general are relatively aware, although it may be unconsciously, of the shortcomings of language in representing reality.

A common, albeit somewhat clumsy way of gomakasu is to repeat the question somewhat differently: "Sâ, dô deshô na? (Yeah, how would it be?)" which should make the questioner understand that the question is perceived as embarrassing. More adept examples given by interviewees as answers to the question why they were not married include: "I'm still playing around (asonde ru), (I'll wait) a little longer until I am more adult", "I didn't find the right one yet," both of which defer the problem to the future, and "The crownprince isn't married either, and I'm even younger", which redirects the attention to the crownprince who remained unmarried at the age of 33. He made this diversion impossible by marrying in 1993. A man who compared his family with the English royal family, because almost every marriage ended in divorce, saw this situation as a gift from heaven. If his mother so much as hinted at marriage, he would point at the marriage record of his family and make clear that there seemed

to be little point in marrying if, as evidence showed, the usual outcome in his family was divorce. He thereby avoided talking about himself and the reason why he did not want to marry: he was gay. In all these cases the people were quite decided that they would never marry if they could help it.

Others who are less adept at gomakasu end up being silent, something that happened once when I asked a gay man how he personally intended to deal with the problem called marriage, after we had been discussing the general situation for a while. He remained silent for over ten minutes, until the situation had changed to the effect that someone else drew attention and a new subject came to be discussed. A similar method of avoiding unpleasant questions consists of walking away. Silence in Japan is a common method of expressing the unacceptability of a question (Morsbach 1973), but this is not always the case. In a group discussion with young gay men about coming out and marriage, one of the participants on being asked about his ideas reacted by saying that his head was turning around from all the things the others had said and that he could not make sense of his feelings. Such a genuine disturbance of someone's mind should not be mistaken for gomakasu.

Sometimes not giving a satisfactory answer may take a lot of stamina. In a crowded underground train a young man who stood right in front of me was recognized by a middle-aged woman, whom he addressed as obasan (aunt), a common term for younger people to use when addressing middle aged women. She called him niisan, literally older brother, but commonly used to address young men. She asked him where he was going. When he said that he was going

to meet a friend from Kyushu who was coming to stay with him in Osaka, her mind was made up to the effect that this friend was a lover. While he kept denying this and saying that they were tada no tomodachi (just friends), she kept insisting that they must be lovers all through the underground ride, which lasted for about 15 minutes, while he kept twisting and bending, trying to convince her that they were "just friends". Unfortunately I could not make out whether this friend was female or male.

A gay interviewee said that he would tekitô ni awaseru, go along as fits the situation. When talk of women came up among his friends he also made remarks like that he fancied one or the other and when the subject of marriage came up he said things like that it was not his time yet or that he had not met the right one yet. He also made jokes in order to gomakasu any conversation that had anything to do with homosexuality among his friends, in order to change the subject of discussion to another, because:

"I don't want to talk about such things. I'm afraid to see everybody's reactions. On the other hand I'm also interested, but I'm afraid (to know how they feel). Although I sometimes think that I should have more confidence in them."

He avoids talking about homosexuality in general with the friends living around him, because it makes him feel uneasy. Due to the so-called gei bômu, a boom of articles and television

programs about male homosexuality that started in 1991 with an article in women's magazine CREA, talk about homosexuality has become less uncommon in Japan, but many closeted gays do not see this as a positive development. This interviewee also said that he felt bad about lying (usotsuku) to his parents when he went to participate in the activities of a gay circle. He would say he was going to visit an old friend from his student days or that he was going shopping.

The differences between awaseru, gomakasu and usotsuku are subtle. When asked nobody could give a clear explanation, but there appear to be differences in seriousness and situation. Usotsuku is used in contexts concerning very direct ways of deception, such as having omiai without any intention to marry or telling parents that one is going somewhere one is not really going. Gomakasu is used for ways of evasion that refer to something in the future, i.e. something that might eventually become true, even if it is most unlikely, and ways of diverting attention, and awaseru is a matter of adapting what one says to the general line of discussion, even if one is saying things that are contrary to one's real ideas or feelings, one's honne.

Some gay groups developed a special vocabulary to talk in public contexts. The Kansai based leisure circle DON! call gei, which they may use in closed contexts in public surroundings asshu, the Franco-Japanese pronunciation of the letter "H" in French, which in this case refers to homo. They also developed words to discuss men they see when in public contexts, such as haipuri, abbreviated Anglo-Japanese for high school pretty, referring to a beautiful high school boy, and jei, Franco-

Japanese for the French letter "G", standing for the English word "good" and referring to men they like. Lesbians, when interviewed in public settings, often preferred to use the word daiku, Anglo-Japanese for dyke, to refer to themselves because they thought that most Japanese do not know that meaning. In Japanese daiku means carpenter. Further, many interviewees referred to homosexuality by sono koto (that) or similar vague descriptions. Part of this is due to people having difficulty using explicit terms for gay and lesbian (Kakefuda 1992A), but another reason is to prevent people who overhear the conversation understanding what it is about. Even when I was invited by gay activist Tôgô Ken for dinner in a Kani Dôraku (a crab restaurant chain) in Shinjuku, his aide tried to arrange for a separate room, because otherwise our discussion might embarrass or upset people at the next table.

When meeting closet-ed gays in a context in which they are not known as such, it is expected that one does not show that one knows the other. I was confronted with this when I saw someone I knew of a circle at Osaka station, where we bumped into each other while trying to catch the last train. Given the late hour, and knowing that he frequented the nearby gay bars, I assumed that he, like me, came from one of them and I went up to greet him. He reacted by anxiously looking beside me. When I looked around I saw that he was with someone else, a man who looked as if he might be a colleague. I walked on, but stayed within eyesight. Later he glanced intensely at me while shaking his head briefly, indicating that the other was not "one of us". I smiled briefly and bowed my head in an effort to communicate that I

understood.

Shortly before this episode he had related his anxiety about his use of language. Because he often visited gay bars and liked to use oné kotoba (feminine, camp language and manner of speech) he sometimes ended up using oné kotoba at his job. This made him very anxious that his colleagues might suspect him of being gay. Another man, who^m I could only perceive as obviously gay, because his whole shigusa (manner of movement) and manner of speech was extremely feminine, including holding his hand in front of his mouth when talking, was not in the least concerned about colleagues thinking that he might be gay. He was closeted at his company and expected to remain that way. This may be easier than it seems, because many Japanese do not think of lesbians and gays as people they might meet in everyday surroundings, and certainly not at a major company. On the other hand, a similarly feminine man was pointed out as gay by his colleague.

While the much cited psychologist Doi Takeo claims that Japanese are very adept at understanding the hidden meanings behind people's words (1985, 1986), in cases related to sexuality and the desire not to marry I found that listeners often are not aware. While this may be the goal of the speaker, it also gives problems in case the speaker wants to convey something about him or herself that does not agree with jōshiki. Awaseru may be forced upon people rather than them wanting to comply, simply because people fail to understand anything else. Hence, it may be very troublesome to make people see and believe that one is not joking. And even then people may not appreciate the significance of such revelations, as for example a female single

interviewee who thought that her mother understood and accepted that she did not wish to marry discovered. When she took up the subject after years of having been a central figure in the singles' network in Osaka, she discovered that her mother still thought that she would probably one day find the right man for her to marry.

The case of a gay man who works at a major company provides another illustration. At company parties, called enkai, it is not uncommon for a man to dress like a woman to the hilarity of his colleagues. My interviewee did this once out of curiosity and won much acclaim for his sophistication. Consequently the master of ceremonies, who organizes such performances, continued to ask him to perform in female drag at enkai. While he came to dislike this, he feels he cannot refuse. Everybody thinks he is very good at it and some even humour him by remarking that he must be gay, to which he then replies in the affirmative. This, however, is understood as a joke and only adds to the hilarity. He does not intend to make them understand that he is gay, but he finds it very tsurai (bitter, hard to bear) that he is forced to play this game. He was very worried about how things will develop in the near future, because he was approaching his thirties. He feels uncertain whether he will be able to avoid marriage without exposing his homosexuality.

While most people feel a great stress placed upon them by the continual questioning about their marital status, I found some cases of people who ridicule the whole situation by giving whatever answer came up in their minds. Some say things like they are married and their husband is off working in Iran or some

other place far away, or that he died. Other possibilities are to ridicule the question by giving an answer like: "Surely you don't mean to say you find me stable enough to have a marital relationship?" A woman said she was always thinking of answers to give the ossantachi (elderly men) who would ask: "Why is a beautiful young lady like you not married?" She came up with the following answer: "I was married, but he died last week in a plane crash." This may be a good method to end a conversation altogether, because people are likely to be so embarrassed that they will not venture to continue.

These tactics can, however, not be employed very well when one is dealing with someone one wants to continue or establish a relationship or even a conversation.

Coming out: With whom, how and to what effect.

Revealing one's homosexuality in English is referred to as coming out, a term that is also used in other languages, for instance German. In Japan, the Anglo-Japanese expressions kaminqu auto suru and kamu auto suru (to come out) have recently gained some currency and even singles, feminists and men's liberationists may use them to refer to the time they told their parents, their friends or colleagues, or the media, about the ideas that made them not want to marry or the political views that made them disagree with the roles of gender according to jôshiki. The analogy between the different research categories proved to be strong here.

Coming out in lesbian and gay contexts has been divided into three parts. The first is the coming out to the self, the recognition and acceptance of one's homosexual feelings. The second is the coming out in lesbian and gay circles and the third is coming out to significant others (Edwards 1994:26). Others separate the first step from the others and regard them as essentially different (Davies 1992), because the coming out towards the self is a psychological, rather than a social, event. From an anthropological point of view coming out has been likened to a rite of passage: the gay man or lesbian woman leaves general society to be gay or lesbian in lesbian and gay circles or networks to come out of there reborn as a lesbian woman or gay man who assertively presents this new identity (Herdt 1992). In this case, though, it often concerns a passage without a definite end, because in many people's lives there are continually new significant others. A further step, which is prominent in Japan today, is coming out in the mass-media, which implies coming out towards an unidentified number of readers or viewers. While not all these steps need to be taken in the order presented here, it is the most common order. Coming out towards friends is more common than and usually precedes coming out towards parents and those appearing in mass-media often tell their parents beforehand.

Ueno Chizuko suggested that lesbians and gays in Japan "do not need to come out", because Japan is a homosocial society, i.e. a society in which most activities take place within groups consisting of one sex only, as opposed to America where the need is felt because it is a heterosocial society, i.e. a society in

which most activities take place in groups consisting of both sexes. While her argument may hold some truth in the case of women, who may have extensive networks in which they can discuss private matters, in the case of men, there is nothing to compare, as men's liberationists pointed out. As I also found, even in radical women's groups discussion about sexuality is extremely limited and while lesbian women may feel relatively at ease when they are among women, sexuality is typically not discussed. Moreover, it is not true at all that American lesbians and gays generally come out beyond lesbian and gay circles, which they call communities (Signorile 1994), which makes this opposition of America and Japan nonsensical.

Lesbians and gays in Japan who engage in debates concerning lesbian and gay politics invariably point at the importance of coming out in order to be able to do anything at all (Ugoku gei. 1992, Kakefuda 1992A:196-198). After all, if there are no people known as lesbian and gay, there is nothing to discuss apart from theoretical and philosophical ideas. Even Itô Bungaku, who criticises Occur for what he sees as Americanized behavior, and stresses that the Japanese situation demands different strategies, also stresses the importance of coming out for lesbians and gays (1986).

Some lesbians and gays recognize that coming out is a rather unnatural form of behaviour, but given the present situation, in which all people are as a matter of fact expected to be heterosexual, or nômaru (normal) unless they show themselves to be different, there is no choice:

"Why do you need to go this far out of our way and come out? There are many people who think:"If you live as an earnest person, without making public such a personal feature, nobody would say anything," or:"I don't feel the need to come out myself". Indeed, coming out is letting an indefinite number of people know about the personal and private matter that you are homosexual (dōseiaisha). But opposed to this "very personal thing" there is discrimination and prejudice from society. And above all, homosexuals have to live while hiding that they are homosexuals. If they don't do that, they get various disadvantages and are hurt. Discrimination exists in reality (Morita 1992A)."

While it may be alright to be gay or lesbian in a lesbian and gay context, many people feel that it is rather unsatisfying to limit the scope of one's friends to gays and lesbians and therefore the need to come out and make friends with heterosexual people is felt (Furukawa T. 1993). Further, as I found, the lack of people who came out is a major problem for young people who think that they are the only lesbian or gay in their environment. For this reason I believe that lives may be saved when more people come out. In the case of lesbian women the near absence of information about the phenomenon of female homosexuality often makes people feel different from everybody else and very lonely.

One interviewee, who grew up on Okinawa, attempted suicide for a combination of reasons:

"I used drugs, medicine. At the time I was troubled (navanda) most, when I was at high school. Well, there were many things at the time. For instance, I'm a love child. That problem was also part of it, and because there were many things, I thought, well, I've had enough (mō ii wa)."

Shortly after this attempt she joined a theatre company and went to Tokyo where she found the lesbian edition of *Bessatsu Takarajima* (1991) in which addresses of lesbian groups were printed. Hesitatingly she made contact with a group in Tokyo and since then she has become self-assured and started to engage in activities such as writing for Regumi Tsūshin, a lesbian minikomishi and organizing lesbian dance parties in a club in Shinjuku. She describes herself as "lucky" for having discovered lesbian circles. In her case, like so many others, meeting lesbians for the first time was a condition for accepting her own homosexuality. In a survey among 124 lesbian women 38 had attempted suicide and 42 had seriously thought about it (Hirosawa et al. 1991:234).

Suicide stories can also be found among gay men. In a documentary by Fuji television on *Occur, JILGA and homosexuality in Japan*, one of the interviewees also says, while tears well up in his eyes, that at high school he was so depressed that he

wanted to kill himself. Shortly after this he established contact with Occur who showed him that gays are not necessarily weird and lewd people or transvestites. In 1986 a teenager committed suicide by jumping from the roof of a seven story building in Miyazaki after he was caught when stealing the gay magazine Barazoku in a local supermarket. It is assumed that he committed suicide out of shame for being caught with a gay magazine, because shoplifters of seventeen do not usually jump from high-rise buildings when caught. Another plausible assumption is that he stole the magazine because he was afraid to take it to the counter and pay for it, which would necessitate a confrontation with the salesperson (Itô 1986:198-209).

Fear of buying gay magazines is a common problem. Most gay men think that sales persons will notice that they buy a gay magazine and think that they are gay. Therefore many travel far, often to a shop in another town, to buy a gay magazine. The same holds for novels concerning homosexuality and for lesbian women buying for instance the lesbian issue of Bessatsu Takarajima. In this sense, buying a gay magazine or other literature or lectures may also be seen as a way of coming out. One interviewee solved this problem by pretending it was a game. In a popular game among youngsters in Japan participants are given awkward assignments to fulfil. He pretended he had been given the assignment to buy a gay magazine. Others buy several heterosexual erotic magazines and put a gay magazine in between in the hope that the salesperson will not notice or think that it is bought by mistake. Among all informants it was common to go in and out of a bookstore many times before making up one's mind to buy. After

buying a hasty exit followed. While there are bookshops that specialize in gay magazines and gay clientele, they are difficult to find without a gay magazine, in which they advertise. The role of the lesbian and gay press in accepting homosexual feelings is very important for many people, but not always. Many gays found that gay magazines were iyarashii (distasteful, disgusting) because of the nude pictures, which they saw as pornographic, and pornographic stories (Lunsing 1995).

Women who do not like to be feminine or accept the gender roles assigned to them, have similar difficulties with feelings of loneliness and the lack of information about feminist organizations. While I had no problem in locating Kyoto's women's bookstore, most people, even those living in Kyoto, were not aware of its existence. The same is true for Japan's two other women's bookstores, called Crayon House, in Osaka and Tokyo. Books by feminisuto, that are sold in bookstores throughout the country, are often found to be difficult and inaccessible (katai) and not to have much relevance to individual situations. Most informants, even if they bought feminist books, said that they seldom read any of them.

Friends, classmates, colleagues.

Occur's data of 300 gay men show that gay men are most likely to come out first towards close friends (39.9%), followed by gay friends (12.7%) with parents and brothers and sisters in third place (6.3%). 20.7% told nobody and 13.3% gave no answer (Ugoku gei. 1992:365). These results are supported by my own findings and by those of the Yajima survey where lesbians and

bisexuals are also included (Taniguchi 1992). Further there is a clear bias towards telling women rather than men. The same results follow from research among lesbians and my research showed that similar patterns can also be discerned among heterosexual singles and feminists who talk about their ideas and personal matters.

The decision to come out towards heterosexual friends, classmates and colleagues, in general was determined by the question whether the person in question could be trusted (shinrai dekiru) to treat the information in an acceptable manner and not gossip about it to others. Some tested people they considered revealing their sexual preference to by talking about homosexuality in general, others thought they knew, for reasons they could not identify, that they knew which of their friends would be supportive. Gay men usually tell at least some of their friends, women more than men, when they are at university or around twenty. Lesbian women tend to come out later and have a stronger preference for coming out to female friends. Singles and feminists usually do not make much effort to establish an identity towards others relating to their ideas, but talk about personal matters to people selected along lines similar to lesbians and gays.

Because sexuality is rarely discussed seriously in Japan³ in order to talk about one's own sexuality in terms that differentiate it from what is perceived as normal, a major problem lies in the need to overcome the layers prohibiting discussion of personal matters. A relatively close relationship has to be established before sexuality can be discussed.

Otherwise it might even be considered impolite (shitsurei), or troublesome (meiwaku). Some interviewees mentioned these terms to indicate why they did not consider coming out or confronting people with their ideas about gender roles and sexism. When I proposed to a wholly closeted interviewee that he could talk about his homosexuality with a mutual friend with whom I had discussed her and my sexuality before, he thought that they did not have the sort of relationship in which he could trouble (meiwaku o kakeru) her with his problems (nayami). Another reason not to tell particular people is that they are thought to be incapable of understanding (rikai dekinai). Why they thought this, nobody really could explain. Feelings, rather than rational deduction, are important means of selection.

Those who talked to friends, colleagues or classmates about personal matters were in general not confronted by homophobic or sexist reactions. Typically the reaction amounted to next to nothing, for instance a mumbled: a sô na no (oh?). In other cases the reaction was very positive. People were interested to talk further about it and the relation in general improved. A gay interviewee told a classmate he fancied that he was gay the first time he revealed his sexual preference to anyone. As it turned out, this classmate was also gay and the happy outcome of this was a love relationship. All surveys also show that the most likely reaction to revelation is positive⁴, which, given the selection of people to come out to, mentioned above, is not surprising.

Sometimes people may feel compelled to tell about their sexual preference in order to prevent complications. This is

especially the case when someone of the opposite sex develops an amorous interest. A woman, with whom I had gone to a movie, was thought by another to be developing an affair with me. I first told the woman I went to the movie with that I was gay and she became one of my best friends in Japan. The next day I informed the woman who thought we had an affair and she never spoke to me again. A gay interviewee of 33 told the following story about his experience with a female colleague who had her eye on him:

"One day I went for dinner with a girl (onna no ko) from my job. The food came and we were talking throughout in the restaurant. And this girl says all of a sudden that she separated from her boyfriend (kareshi). I said it was terrible. But she said not at all, there were reasons why she had to separate, three reasons. The first was that he was very nice when they started to see each other, but the longer they were together, he gradually became very violent. (...) The second reason, she always thought that this was not the way things should be, but he saw another woman. (...) The third reason was that she had fallen in love. When I said that's good, lucky for you to have found someone and so on, she turned towards me. She looked straight at me and said it's you. This was an enormous shock, I was at a loss what to do. But since we had been talking so intimately, I thought I

should come clear and said, to tell the truth, I can't have sex with women, I'm gay (gei), just like that. She shrank and looked down, she lost her spirits. I felt badly about myself, shocking her like that, but suddenly she looked up and smiled, saying that it was all right."

She meant by this that they can still be friends and, indeed, that is what happened. They enjoy going for dinner or drinking together and, according to my interviewee, have a relationship in which they can talk about anything. The only thing he regrets is that, while he is liked among women, among men he is less popular.

As Hase san, discussed in chapter three (pp.144-145) and chapter four (p.176), said, you cannot really call someone who does not know that you are gay a friend. Many lesbians and gays and feminists and singles who talked about personal matters found that it greatly improved and deepened their friendships. In fewer cases people lost a friend or what they called a friend until then. Recognizing that they were faced with the choice of either having increasingly meaningless, or "thin (asai)", relationships with people with whom they could not talk confidentially about matters that were close to their hearts, or revealing their feelings or thoughts at the risk of losing the relationship altogether, most thought it worth the hazard, whatever the result. A lesbian of 32 from LIO, (Lesbians in Occur) the lesbian group of Occur, thought that things had changed over the past ten years. Among young people, whose parents are of the generation

of the student movements in the sixties, it is increasingly acceptable to discuss subjects like masturbation or what form of sex one likes. Therefore, she thought that it had become easier to talk about homosexuality. She does not regard it as very special that she came out to her friends:

"I've always been out, since high-school. At high-school I didn't exactly say that I was lesbian. I only said things like I fancy that woman. I have always been told by people that they thought I fancied women.(...) In that respect I never met with negative reactions (iya na me: lit. nasty eyes) If I'd say I like (women), I got reactions like, oh, there was a student like you last year in a higher class, or don't worry about it. I haven't (lost any friends by coming out). Only, there were some who said stop it, I'm not like that. If I confessed I loved her, there were friends who reacted like that. But I was really fortunate.(...) If you make clear that you tell because you trust them, I don't think they will react funny."

Telling people that you like someone rather than that you are gay or lesbian, is a common method of coming out, especially among young people. Kosaburô, a gay singer/song writer and caretaker at a day-centre for mentally handicapped people, aged

31, told friends at his vocational school that he liked a particular "boy" (ko). Among colleagues of his nursing job he also came out. If he was asked whether he had a girlfriend (kanojo), he said that he preferred men. Nowadays, in his shows, he always discusses his homosexuality and his songs are often about his loves. His shows are also visited by many of his heterosexual colleagues. At his job there are, nonetheless, also people who find the idea of love between men unthinkable. They seem to regard Kosaburô as someone with a handicap, but he is not troubled much by them. They are a minority and he has decided long ago that being gay is nothing special (nan to mo nai).

Feminists usually remain silent about their ideas unless they are among feminist friends. Eventually their circle of friends tends to consist increasingly of feminist women. In work situations it was usually seen as hazardous to vent opinions about sex discrimination. Indeed, several interviewees were fired or made to resign after complaining about sexual harassment or wage discrimination. The topic of tea serving was avoided by many, because they expected that many of their female colleagues would attack them if they complained about women having to do it, saying that they like to serve tea. An interviewee of 33 who was working as a designer and said that she does not understand much of feminism, tried to discuss discrimination against women at her job:

"It's a small company. I asked all the time why do we have to do it like this, but there were never understanding answers. Always I got

strange answers, answers I don't understand. (...). Their way of looking at things is after all totally different, seeing things from men's side or seeing things from my side. Therefore I felt totally misunderstood, and that's still the same. (...). They make you feel bad for saying it, only because I want to say that they should look at it from the idea of humans, and that we are all the same human beings, only that everyone has strong points and that (they shouldn't judge you) just because you happen to be a woman. I want them to see women as the individuals (kojin) they are, and like there are men who like doing the laundry or cleaning, among women there are those who don't like that. That's not because you are a woman, that varies from person to person."

Her frustration about not being able to talk about these things made her look for another job. This was notwithstanding the fact that her superiors had been very positive when she divorced, because they thought that that meant that she would continue to work. I hardly encountered women who were successful in questioning the way things are in their workplace. A woman who refused to wear a company uniform, because men doing the same line of work do not have to wear one and she saw it as an invasion of her privacy, was allowed not to wear it, but at the cost of constantly being harassed for being uncooperative.

Another woman who in a publication questioned the pressure applied on people who do not wish to marry and who do not wish to have children (Watanabe Y. 1991), said that experience had taught her that it was useless to try and discuss such subjects with colleagues. They would only think she was being strange and stop listening to her altogether. There are many books on these subjects that are little read by people who do not already agree with the ideas expounded in them and little discussion among people with differing views.

If one does not mind being different and is not insecure when others think one is hen or hentai (weird or queer), life may be easier. A single man working at a small company was given a job in a room apart from the rest of the staff and was quite happy with this, because he never enjoyed the everyday contact with his colleagues. A lesbian woman who worked at one of the major companies showed people she thought she could trust pictures of her female lover and avoided contact with those she did not like as much as possible. This was not always successful. On a company trip to Kyushu, a male colleague tried to kiss her and harassed her for turning him down. On return she filed a complaint with a superior and had him transferred to a position in which she did not have to see him any more. She never joined social events after hours, which usually are thought to be obligatory by people in positions like hers.

The difference between discussing homosexuality and feminism is striking. While lesbians and gays may be more closetted and isolated overall, when they come out they choose and find people with whom they can talk and in some cases the workplace may be

quite accepting. Feminists may discuss the way things are organized at their jobs in relation to sex. Doing this, they often find doors being closed to them. This suggests that revealing a purely personal matter, one's sexual preference, is less problematic than matters that have a political component and are related to the division of tasks, acceptance of which would demand change in everyone's behaviour.

Parents.

While many gays and lesbians have come out among a selection of friends, parents, and especially the father, are often seen as people who are not likely to understand because they are too old or their minds lack the suppleness to accept alterations to their jōshiki, and thus had better be kept ignorant. In other cases it is expected that the shock would be too great for them to overcome, many even saying that they would die of it. It is not so much the reaction towards oneself that is feared, but rather the problems it might cause the parents. A major reason people gave for not talking about their homosexuality, but also feminist ideals or the wish to remain unmarried, was that they did not want to trouble (meiwaku o kakeru) the parents with their ideas or worries (nayami). Further the love of a parent, usually the mother, for the child, was often given as a reason not to openly defy the parent's wishes. While motherly love in the Netherlands is expressed by her utmost efforts to understand her child, whatever he or she may do, in Japan motherly love is rather felt like a burden and used to clarify why it is impossible to do anything she might dislike.

Mothers are by far the favorite of the two parents to discuss personal matters with. For gay men this is underlined by data in the survey by the Za Gei, where the siblings knew in 25.8%, the mother in 21.6% and the father in 14.4% of the cases about their brother's or son's homosexuality (Za Gei Henshōbu 1992). A survey of 312 gay men by Sabu confirms this, although the overall rate of being known by family members is lower (Takakakura 1992). In a majority of the cases the respondents thought that none of their family knew (Ibid., Za Gei Henshōbu 1992). A Yajima seminar survey did not diversify different family members, but found that 49 think someone in their family knows opposed to 105 who think nobody knows. Of those who think they know, 25 told them, 22 think they ended up understanding it (wakatte shimatta) and 2 had been asked and answered in the affirmative (Taniguchi 1992:78). Of the lesbian survey 27.0% think their family knows, 10.7% think they might know to some extent (usuusu shitte iru) and 60.4% think they do not know (Hirosawa et al. 1991:229).

In cases where people told one or both of their parents reactions ranged from outright indignation and telling their child that he or she had no home anymore, via urges to get married soon, to positive acceptance. The last is most common among my informants and according to surveys⁵. In one case the mother went so far^{as} to buy gay magazines for her son, who himself was afraid to confront shopkeepers. Again it should not be a surprise that positive reactions are more common, because children of parents who are more likely to react positively are more likely to tell them. In some cases parents, on hearing that

their son saw himself as gay, decided that it would be best for him to marry soon and that then everything would become all right. For this reason, in a group discussion with young gay men of JILGA in Tokyo my idea that coming out towards one's parents might be a way to stop them from urging you to marry, was refuted from the beginning. Other reactions were to tell the child to be discrete and keep this information from the neighbours and the admonition not to do anything weird (hen), which also refers to being indiscrete.

In this context it was evident that those who had one parent, because their mother never married, because the parents were divorced, or because one of the parents died, generally had much better relationships with that parent, including the ability to discuss their sexual preference or their ideas regarding marriage or women's or men's roles. If this is taken as an indicator of good parenthood, it suggests that it is better for children to grow up in a one parent household than in what often is called a "complete family". In some cases it transpired that the single parent depended more on the child emotionally, which would have the positive effect of the parent being forced to try and understand the child. On the other hand, a lesbian woman of 32 felt that she could not easily leave her father to live on his own, because of this dependence and because she thought that he could not take good care of himself, especially when it came to preparing food. About his knowledge of her personal life she said:

"I didn't really come out to my father. But he

knows. Saying without saying is an enigma (nazo) of the Japanese. (...) Last year I went to the Gay Parade in San Francisco, with Occur. And because I had said that I was going there I was sent information about lesbian places, saunas and so on. My father found the letter. He thought it was directed to him and opened it. When I came home it was opened and I thought, well let's come out, but when my father returned and I said: "welcome back (okaeri)," he said: "I didn't read the letter." (...) I didn't believe my ears. But he doesn't harass me about marriage and in the end he always says things like that I must make sure that I can support myself. In that sense I'm fortunate."

Among lesbians and gays who think that their homosexuality has been found out (barashita) by their parents, finding letters or lesbian or gay magazines were often mentioned as the reasons. Kosaburô's mother once went to clean his room, which is something many mothers of single sons do, when he was out. When he returned he found that his collection of gay magazines was gone. Because he had a whole shelf of them, he thought that his mother could not have avoided concluding that he was genuinely interested in them. If there was only one, she might have thought that he bought it by mistake, but one does not buy a shelf full by mistake. All his mother had to say about it was, however, that she had thrown away the distasteful (iyarashii) magazines, which

does not indicate acceptance. Similarly, an informant who was active in making a gay minikomi returned home one night to find his mother reading it. She showed it and asked whether he intended to continue making it, which he confirmed. That was the end of the discussion.

A man who told his mother that he was gay thought that she did not accept it. She did not react at all. He thought that she did not want to be confronted with it again, and that as long as he would be discrete, she would not trouble him. She conveys omia invitations to him which are offered by aunts and other relatives. He believes that his mother would be offended if he would be so indiscrete as to let other relatives know about his sexual preference. As long as it remains their little secret and nobody else knows, there is no need to talk about it.

I also found some more positive parental reactions. The mother of one lesbian asked her whether she was S, which is a word that was in vogue in the twenties and thirties of this century to refer to special friendships between women, as discussed in the introduction (p.24), S is short for shisutâfuddo (sisterhood: Higuchi 1993A)⁶. Other mothers prized their daughters' girlfriends when they visited together. The mother of a gay man also showed understanding, in this case when he confronted her with the fact that he had come from Osaka back home to Yokohama because he wanted to attend the hearings of the court case Occur had started against the metropolitan government of Tokyo, because Fuchû Seinen no Ie, a sort of youth hostel in the outskirts of Tokyo refused to let them stay. Like the parents who found a book, this coming out follows a lead, in this case

a court case, after which the reasons for going there and his own homosexuality came to be discussed. On later occasions he brought a boy-friend home and they stayed together in his mother's house. A lead may also be found by parents in the way their child behaves. A hospitalized father was visited by his son:

"My father died last year, but (I came out) about seven years ago, at the time I went with a boy (ko) from Osaka. I lived in Tokyo and traveled up and down from Osaka. After about a year we separated and I felt really terrible. My feelings were such that I almost wanted to die. At the time I happened to return to Fukuoka, to my own town (inaka). My father was hospitalised. When I went to see him he saw my troubled face and asked directly whether something was wrong. If so, tell me, anything, please tell me, he said. I decided to tell. I told him, to be honest, I love someone and that someone is a man. My father understood what I was saying. He knew me from my childhood and had always wondered why I always played with girls but never had a girlfriend. Now his riddle was solved. My father's reaction was very simple, I really love what he said: (...) If you can change being gay, it would be better to become straight. If you can stop being gay, it is better to stop. When I asked why, it was because

I would probably not become happy. (...) That was all. And in the end he said, among men, such things also exist. He meant that because he was also a man, he could understand my feelings."

Among women I categorized as feminists their failure to comply with parents' wishes can be regarded in the same way as coming out. In several cases this led to a severance of contacts with parents. A woman who decided to go and live together with the boyfriend with whom she was expecting a child, was heavily opposed by her parents and at the time I interviewed her, five years later, all contact was still suspended, although they live in the same town. In the meantime she had thrown out her boyfriend and she was contemplating taking up contact with her parents, also in order to give her daughter grandparents. They had never expressed interest in the child, but since she had now reached the age to go to school, she thought they might at last accept their granddaughter. The tada no sukebe, who figured in chapter four (p.154-155) and five (p.206), also lost all contact with her parents when she decided to divorce. She is quite happy with that, because especially her father is, according to her, a very conservative man with whom she prefers having nothing to do. A woman of an older generation equally was heavily criticised by her parents for not getting properly married and pursuing studies even after she passed the age of thirty. She also has not seen them again.

All cases I found of parents who refuse to see their children again have two things in common. One is that it always

concerns two parents living together and the other is that it always concerns women. Men who decided not to live up to their parents' ideals tend to meet with opposition also, but their choices appear to be accepted more easily. Parents appear to accept that a son has a right to make his own choices. In some cases parents wanted their son to get married properly, instead of living in a jijitsukon, but typically they would think that they just could not follow the younger generation's way of life. Furthermore, it appears that there are fewer men who openly confront their parents with their choices and those who do tend to have progressive parents, who show understanding and interest in the ideas of their children. Overall, parents' ideas appeared to be highly irrelevant to the lifestyles informants enjoy.

Media.

Coming out in the media may be easier than coming out directly towards people one knows personally. People who read it in magazines or see it on television may think negatively, but they are not so likely to voice their opinions. Those who think positively, on the contrary, are likely to make contact and express support. A lesbian woman who told her mother that she was lesbian was urged not to do anything weird (hen na koto), which she interpreted as an admonition not to appear in the media as a lesbian. This she did not intend to do anyway, because she, like many lesbians of her generation, i.e. in their forties, believed it to be totally impossible to come out as lesbian to the general public, because life would be made impossible. They invariably referred to the case of the singer Sagara Naomi who,

like Martina Navratilova, was exposed as lesbian by a lover with whom she had broken up. Sagara denied this allegation which served to increase the media interest. As a result Sagara, who until then appeared regularly on NHK (Nihon Hōsō Kyōku), Japan's national broadcasting company, lost her contracts and disappeared into oblivion.

This is also said to have made Kakefuda Hiroko worried when she published her book on being lesbian in Japan (Kakefuda 1992A). Before it appeared she moved and changed her phone number and I had difficulty locating her, because most lesbians could only tell that she was hiding and the few people who knew how to contact her refused to help me get into contact with her. Six months later, however, I met her and she said that she did not know that I was trying to contact her before and if she had, she would have been happy to see me. She was dismissive when I told her what people had said six months before about her fears. In the meantime it had become clear that the negative reactions she might have feared did not materialize.

In fact, her book was largely ignored by the media. Although it was sold in the largest bookstores, smaller ones usually did not store it. The many letters she received from young lesbian women who read the book, however, indicate that at least they knew where to find it. The lack of attention for her book is also the reason why she was happy when Ueno Chizuko criticised it in an article (Ueno 1992). Although she found the contents of the criticism bakabakashii (silly), Ueno at least did not ignore her book. Because, like many people, she did not feel like discussion with Ueno, she sent Ueno a fax thanking her for the article,

leaving Ueno assuming that she appreciated the contents. Nowadays the media appear to take an opposite position to the times of Sagara. A popular singer who is eager to come out as lesbian and in interviews frequently makes reference to girlfriends and to women she admires, in order to give journalists a reason to ask her whether she is lesbian, is not asked this question, which makes it difficult for her to find a natural way to come out.

Shortly after my relationship with Onitsuka Tetsurô began, Hirano Hiroaki from OGC was asked by a photographer whether he knew any lesbian or gay couples who were willing to appear in his photobook about unmarried couples in Japan. Hearing about this, Oni asked me, after some thought, if I wanted to appear with him. Oni's main reason for wanting to appear was that he wanted to do something together that would make a difference. We appeared first in the picture collection Couple by photographer Hashiguchi Jôji (1992) and later were asked for an interview in a gay special of youth magazine Takarajima (Takarajima 1993).

Oni saw my presence as a chance to come out in a natural fashion. Instead of saying that he was gay, he could say that I was his lover. This can be likened to heterosexuals introducing their partners. They do not explicitly say that they are heterosexual, but show it by showing their lover who is of the other sex. If there is no lover and you want to come out, there is no choice but to say things in so many words, which is a plight for homosexuals as opposed to heterosexuals who are assumed to be heterosexual anyway. Moreover, if there is no lover it may be difficult to make people understand what the issue is. Beforehand, Oni had come out in several circumstances and with

most, if not all, his friends, including his university colleagues, with whom he had a more personal relationship. A group of students that was invited to his house for dinner was confronted with a large number of books on sexuality and especially homosexuality, which made them wonder and ask whether he was gay. At that time, Oni did not feel content about the way he handled the situation, as he merely said he was, without promoting further discussion on the subject, because he felt cornered by this large group.

Our appearance in the media did not go unnoticed by most people who knew us and many old friends phoned Oni and renewed relationships. Problems in the form of negative reactions did not occur and Oni presumes that this is because people who find homosexuality kimochiwarui (distasteful), which is common, would sooner bite off their tongues than mention it. Furthermore he works at a university and, as in many countries, people working at universities in Japan are relatively tolerant in the sense that they have learned to act as if they were liberal and not bigot-ed, even if the latter is closer to their actual feelings. I was surprised by a member of the office staff of my university, who on our first meeting had shocked me by referring to a mutual acquaintance as okama, a term for homosexual he used in a very derogative sense, but now told me smiling in a supportive manner that he read Takarajima.

Oni and I were neither the first to come out in the media nor the last. We were part of a growing stream which started in 1990 when members of Occur and JILGA started coming out. Early examples were by writer Fushimi Noriaki and OGC's Hirano Hiroaki,

who before that had gained fame for being a school teacher with a Mohikan (Mohawk) haircut and alternative ways of dressing (Izumi 1990:329-330). In the same book Couple many members of Occur as well as an aspiring fashion designer and his lover appeared. Further one lesbian couple is pictured in the book. After us many more people kept appearing in magazines and on television and there was even a television program featuring a "coming out of the week" as a set item.

It is difficult to establish whether Oni's coming out had any particular influence, but among Oni's circle of friends people wanted increasingly to show themselves. The befriended high-tech performance group Dumb Type, that performs throughout the world, decided to make a programme about sexuality and Aids, also because one of its most prominent figures, Furuhashi Teiji developed the disease. The first time this performance took place was in Kyoto in March 1993 and Oni and I were asked to participate by talking about ourselves. Further, Matsuo Megumi, a friend who manages an art gallery, participated as a heterosexual woman coming out as divorced and having lovers. Later a journalist friend made a series of her life story in Kyoto Shinbun (Hayashi 1993A, B, C). As a result many old time friends contacted her and expressed their admiration. During the performance another friend, a lesbian woman, stood up from the audience and started discussing things from her, lesbian, point of view.

A year later the performance was repeated in Adelaide, Australia, and this time Teiji for the first time came out not only as gay, but also as a person living with Aids. Alex, which

is the artistic name of another friend, performed as himself, i.e. deaf and gay. In Tokyo, where they performed in January 1995 the line was developed further and in the spring of 1995 they toured Europe. Of the same circle of friends many people participated in the first Aids Candlelight Parade in Kyoto in 1993, and in the first Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in Japan, which took place in Tokyo in August 1994. The only woman interviewed on the occasion by Asahi Shinbun and identified by her real name, Hiramatsu Miho, is also part of this network of friendship and love (Asahi Shinbun 1994).

On the other hand, I found a number of well-known lesbians, who presented themselves as feminists. When they are established media-personalities, they do not consider coming out as lesbian and tended to avoid meeting me. Heterosexual feminist Uemura Kuniko, who said she wanted to write a book about sex found it impossible to write without discussing herself. This, however, she thought she could not do, because the reaction (hanpatsu) would be insufferable. She could not, however, explain how she knows this and I believe that she cannot know it, because such projects have hardly been attempted before. Closest to such an attempt might still be the work of women's liberationist Tanaka Mitsu, who became famous with a book she published in the seventies (Tanaka 1975). Other feminist women, like Fukushima Mizuho or Ochiai Keiko discuss their lifestyles - Fukushima lives in jijitsukon and Ochiai is single - frequently in fora throughout Japan, but again, not their sexuality. A heterosexual informant, who works as a day-labourer, said that he was gay at a meeting of single parents, after someone present joked that he

had no objection to gay people. The man who made the joke asked what sort of man was his type, to which he reacted by saying that it was the joker. One does not even have to be gay to come out as gay and confront people with their narrow-mindedness.

Conclusion.

There are ample opportunities for people to develop and maintain lifestyles that disagree with jōshiki concerning marriage in Japan. For those who are prepared to invest effort and to look forward in planning these lifestyles need not necessarily be characterized by marginality or poverty. Many people, however, do not plan ahead and, especially where it concerns love relationships, this may not be possible, because much depends on partners. Many people run into trouble because they initially tried to follow a mainstream lifecourse, while they might have been better off developing their own alternative from the start. While women, or feminine men, may have a worse starting position economically than men, once they set out on an alternative course they are much more decided and as a result more successful. Masculine men, often tied by their occupations, have more difficulty in working out alternatives, emotionally as well as practically. As long as they can manage to awaseru to other people in conversations, the surfacing of problems can easily be avoided. This may be easier to achieve by those who are socialized in a more feminine way. It is, however, also clear that awaseru has its cost.

Examples of people who have come out in the media since the beginning of the nineties have encouraged many people in many walks of life to do the same. The attitude of many young people nowadays, whether they are gay, lesbian, or they just do not want to marry or otherwise live in agreement with jōshiki that seem to have gone somewhat outdated, can be presented by the simple expression: sore de ii n ja nai no? (what's wrong with that?, or so what?), which is reminiscent of the E^eianaika movement that swept through Japan in the end of the nineteenth century and was marked by hedonism (Born-off 1992:307-308) and is remembered today by a magazine of that name. This attitude prevents the criticism that they are rikutsuppoi (know-alls). Now it is the role of critics of alternative lifestyles to use rational argument. This is a departure from general patterns of behaviour that have governed Japanese society since the end of the second world war and, as Benedict's work suggests, also before then (Benedict 1977). While Tsutamori teaches transvestites that nobody says that they cannot dress up in clothes of the opposite sex (Tsutamori 1991), classically trained female singer Haruka Mari who performed at Minoya Hōru in Osaka with drag queen singer Simone (Shimōne) Fukayuki said when introducing a song: "Nowadays in Japan, anything goes." If only people want to believe this, there is little to stop them.

Notes:

1. This is the Kōei Jūtaku Hō: the public housing law.
2. This concerns the Kokka Kōmuin Hō, the state civil servant law. It stipulates that civil servants can be fired if they go against the law or orders based on the law, if they go against the duties of their function, or if they did something that made them not suitable to serve the whole people (Kokka Kōmuin Hō, art. 3, par. 82; Shiono et al. 1993:139).
3. I think that people who read descriptions of talk about sex in for instance Smith and Wiswell (1982) as proof of liberal attitudes towards sexuality are mistaken. While Smith and Wiswell may seem to imply that, the very text makes it obvious that talk about sex is limited to jokes and making fun of or criticising other people, which, as Foucault (1978) suggested, functions to set norms which restrict sexual behavior. As Wiswell found, it was almost totally impossible to talk with women about their actual sexual activities, even if they were the frequent subject of gossip and jokes. Comparing Wiswell and Smith's work to low educated and/or traditionally sexist people in my own country I see not much difference in ways sex is talked about. This critique leaves intact the enormous value of the book for, while my interpretation may be at variance with theirs, the manner in which the data are presented allow me to interpret them freely.
4. The lesbian survey gives the following figures: in 35.1% of the cases the reaction was one of understanding, in 21.3% it taken in a normal or natural way, 18.1% felt misunderstood, in 16.0% it led to surprise and in the same percentage it did not lead to surprise. In 7.4% of the cases distance developed (Hirosawa et al. 1991:227). In the Yajima seminar survey among 77 gays, lesbians and bisexuals who came out, 48 thought that the relation did not change, 19 thought it changed and 10 were not sure (Taniguchi 1992). In Occur's survey the reactions also were predominantly positive (Ugoku gei. 1992:366-368).
5. In the lesbian survey 36.4% showed understanding, 20.55 was not surprised, 15.9% became angry, and 9.1% did not understand (Hirosawa et al. 1991:229). The Yajima seminar survey shows that the relation remained unchanged in 23 cases and it changed in 24 cases. Changes are mostly for the good. Among those who did not come out to their parents, a large majority thought that the reaction would be negative (Taniguchi 1992:79-80).
6. As discussed in the introduction, writer Yoshiya Nobuko is the example that is always mentioned in this context. She wrote romantic girl's novels, about love relationships between women, some of which are famous (e.g. Yoshiya 1924).

7: Circles: Discussing gender, sex, and the other and the self.

This chapter discusses discourses and constructions concerning gender and sex and how they affect people belonging to the various research categories. There are two possible ways of relating to these discourses: criticising and defying them or agreeing with them and adapting to them. Both these possibilities are prevalent in various combinations, depending on the theme and the circle. A third possibility is to neglect constructions. This is what happens with discourses on historical constructions of homosexuality in academic circles, as discussed in the introduction, which most informants did not know about or if they did, they did not regard them as relevant to their situation. Therefore they are not discussed in this chapter, which is based on participant observation and contemporary writing by people belonging to my research categories. Then this chapter continues by discussing features concerning the many circles I participated in and discussed with informants. A major topic is how circles and categories relate to each other.

Sex and gender: Female and male, feminine and masculine.

Three categories of people are particularly troubled by the duality of female and male: "trans gender" people, transvestites, and transsexuals. The first category is discussed in Japan as toransu jendâ (e.g. Hashimoto & Tsutamori 1990, Tsutamori 1990A,

1993) but has not been much recognized as a category in western academic circles, apart from some lesbian feminists (Butler 1990, 1993, Wittig 1992, De Lauretis 1994) who, while basically writing on manifestations of the same phenomenon, do not mention such a word. Gender ambiguity, a term that is sometimes used, may be close in meaning, but it is used in a more limited sense for people who are partly transformed physically (Cornwall 1994, Kandiyoti 1994) and hermaphrodites (Nanda 1990), both of whom are in Japan labelled by the same term: jendâ fukaishô (Ishii 1991, Kuroyanagi 1992, Ino 1992). Toransu jendâ is a more comprehensive term. It comprises all women with masculine and all men with feminine attributes, i.e. all people whose assigned gender does not wholly correspond with what they are or do. It includes for instance career women who by pursuing a career crossed the boundary enclosing female gender in relation to occupational activities. It also includes men who engage in housekeeping. It includes all my research categories and all my interviewees, and ultimately probably a majority of the Japanese, or any other, people.

Transvestism and transsexuality.

Transvestism, or cross sex dressing, which may include wearing make-up in the case of men and moustaches in the case of women, is perhaps the clearest category of the three. Japanese words for transvestites include the Anglo-Japanese toransubesuta-ito and Japanese terms isôsha (different dresser: Ishii 1991), iseisôsha (different sex dresser), dansôsha (male dresser) and josôsha (female dresser), terms that refer to women who wear

men's outfits and men who wear women's outfits and make-up. There are some situations in which men are expected to dress as women, such as the onnagata in the Kabuki theatre, which is a man playing a female role. They may be regular superstars, who write their memoirs (Kawarasaki 1991). It is common for male students to wear women's clothes at university festivals¹ and at company parties transvestism by men is a common part of the programme.

Further there are men who work in female clothes as gei bōi (lit. gay boy), okama or mr. redii (lit. Mr. Lady) in gei bā or okama bā, which in this context are transvestite bars, often combined with prostitution. An okama is a cooking pot and it is said to have become a term for feminine gay men in the beginning of this century (Robertson 1992), when gay men were constructed as feminine only. In gay pornography okama is often used to refer to the anus and in Kenkyūsha's dictionary it is equalled to danshō (male prostitute: Masuda 1988). Thus, gay men were seen as feminine male prostitutes. In the case of women there is Takaratsuka Kagekidan, the Takaratsuka Revue, in which all roles are played by women and some women specialize in playing men (Robertson 1992). There are also bars in which women work as male hosts (Cross Dressing 1992), onabe bā, some of them taking hormones to promote the growth of facial hair and the development of muscles. Onabe is, like okama, a cooking pot. Kenkyūsha's dictionary includes the meaning of maidservant but not that of lesbian or transvestite (Masuda 1988).

Drag queens, men who exaggerate femininity in dressing and making-up grotesquely as women, are not very common, but two groups, Takara in Tokyo and Diamond in Osaka, employ drag as part

of shows they perform in clubs. One of them, Diamond from Osaka consists mostly of women, and one of their policies is to make the audience oblivious of who is female and who is male, with considerable success. A lesbian friend who often appears with Diamond participated in drag in the European Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in Amsterdam in 1994. She was filmed many times and later she was shown in a television programme on sexual variety in the Netherlands as an example of a Dutch male drag queen. Further, there are pop bands whose male members wear make-up and look very feminine, such as By-sexual (Tanaka 1991), whose name refers not to sexual preference but to looks.

There are, however, men and women who desire to crossdress but are not actors and who do not want to do it for show but for their personal pleasure, often following compulsive inner urges. The way they dress is generally not much appreciated by people who like or are drag queens, because they tend to dress like average women or men or even more conservatively than that. In the case of men it is common to crossdress only in closed contexts (Tsutamori 1993, Queen), which may be in their own house or in a transvestite club such as the Erisabesu (Elizabeth) chain with branches in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya (Queen). Outside such contexts they may limit their transvestism to wearing women's underwear. A small group, led by a man who calls himself Candy Milky go out on the street in drag, and Himawari (Sunflower), the magazine they produce, prints reports of transvestite men out in town or countryside, in one case a couple attending the marriage ceremony of a friend (Kaoru 1992).

A historical example of female transvestites, Kawashima

Shigeko, who has been compared to Mata Hari, the Frisian woman who was convicted of espionage in the First World War in Paris, is discussed in a recent book (Kamisaka 1992). One lesbian informant sometimes wore a complete sarariiman outfit in which it was hard to tell that she was not a man physically. Some early feminists, such as Hiratsuka Raichô and Ichikawa Fusae, cut their hair short and smoked cigars, which was revolutionary behaviour in the beginning of the century and led, together with their behaviour and political activities, to criticism that they were unwomanly (Robins-Mowry 1983:68), but it is now generally acceptable, although few women, or men, smoke cigars in Japan. Interviewees who cut their hair short, sometimes shortly after being hired by a company, or wore androgynous clothes, noticed sometimes an initial shock, but no longterm effects. There are also women who live in men's clothes and underwear transvestism, although less clear than in the case of men wearing women's lingerie, also exist with women wearing boxer shorts (Ueno 1989, Kokuhaku Rezu Kurabu 1992A).

Transsexuals change their genitals from one sex to the other with the use of operations. These operations are illegal in Japan and therefore they are mostly carried out in Singapore and America, at huge cost (Torai 1992, Mika & Torai 1993 A & B). Hormone treatments in order to develop a more feminine or masculine physique usually precede operations. A particular group in this context are what in today's Japan is called nyû hâfu, literally new half, which refers to a halfway status between man and woman. They use female hormones and sometimes silicone implants in order to acquire female breasts, but, like the

travestis of Brazil (Cornwall 1994), they do not wish to change their genitals. The risks involved led a wife of a transvestite man to demand that he refrains from using hormones (Sunaya 1992).

A person who grew up as a man, but is ryōsei gūyu (hermaphrodite), which he only discovered later in life, calls himself gei (Hasshi 1994). To compound the general chaos about what is what, nyū hāfu, as well as fully changed male to female transsexuals, may refer to themselves and be referred to as gei or gei bōi, something that also confounded Ueno when she wrote on gay men basing her ideas on the male to female transsexual Miwa Akihiro, whom she called a gei ojisan, a gay old man, and the gay twins Osugi and Piiko². The seven year old son of a participant at a meeting of OGC called a participant okama, much to the horror of his mother. When she questioned him why he said that, it became clear that he thought that men with long hair were okama and that he thought he was an okama himself also, much to the hilarity of all.

Gay magazines in Japan basically present two types of gay men. The young and handsome and the masculine and muscled. Adon and Barazoku present both of these, while Sabu and Badii, the newest magazine, present the muscular masculine type. Za Gei presents all sorts of men, but, like the other magazines, no feminine men. The odd one out is the magazine Samson which presents fat men. The monthly gay magazines in 1992 sold from 7,000 for Za Gei to over 30,000 for Adon (Lunsing 1995). Transvestites and transsexuals have their own magazines, Queen, Himawari, and Cross Dressing, the last of which ceased to appear after two issues. According to their editors, all sell about

7,000 copies bi-monthly and they thought that they are all bought by the same people. While the public at large is not much aware, there is a clear distinction between the world of the transvestites and transsexuals and that of gay men, the first two having different places and networks for meeting from the last. This even goes for movie theaters. In the pornographic movie theater Umeda Rose in Osaka gay pornography was shown upstairs and straight pornography downstairs. The cashier downstairs said that downstairs was much more interesting, because there came all sorts of people, such as nyû hâfu, josôsha, and the like, while upstairs there were only gay men.

There is much misunderstanding concerning the difference between homosexuality, transvestism and transsexuality. When I gave a talk about my research to students at my university in Japan I passed some gay magazines around. Some students were puzzled by the masculine images, which were at odds with their images of gay men. In many people's minds there is a clear link between male homosexuality and femininity in men and female homosexuality and masculinity in women. Both of these are influential for people in the process of constructing selves in relation to their homosexual feelings. Visibility of difference plays a more important role in classifying people than their feelings or what activities they engage in, both of which are generally invisible. The idea that someone can be gay or lesbian without any clearly visible features is for many people, including some who recognize they have homosexual feelings, difficult to perceive. While this may assist gays and lesbians by providing them with the privacy to investigate their feelings

(Valentine forthcoming), it may also hinder them because they do not feel they are, or do not wish to become, like jōshiki concerning homosexuality and unless they learn of other ways of being lesbian or gay they may have difficulty to recognize and accept their feelings. It often makes them afraid of visiting gay or lesbian places, events or groups. It also causes trouble for people who try to align themselves with constructions of masculinity or femininity.

Femininity and masculinity.

The words ooshii and memeshii (masculine and feminine), stemming from the fauna terminology of osu and mesu, are, according to informants, nowadays regarded as sabetsu yōgo (discriminatory terms). Different from the rather rude terms ooshii and memeshii are the nowadays much used terms otokorashii (manlike) and onnarashii (womanlike). While the former set of words refers to unalienable traits of people, the latter refers more to behavioural traits. Hence the frequent admonitions: otokorashiku shinasai (behave like a man) and onnarashiku shinasai (behave like a woman). One does not have to actually be one or the other, but one has to behave like one or the other. In practice this means that those born with a vagina have to behave like a woman and those with a penis like a man. Men with feminine traits are more likely to be ridiculed than women with masculine traits, who as children may be seen as tomboys, which may be a source of pride.

The main lesbian network in Osaka even used yancha (tomboy) in their name, Yancha Lesbian Power (YLP), but recently they

changed the "Y" into an "O" which, according to them, may stand for otona (adult), ōki na (big), or organization (OLP 1994). They appear to have become ambivalent towards the childlikeness expressed by yancha, but to be undecided whether they wish to be adult. While women as small children may have a wider latitude of behaviour, when they start attending school femininity, expressed by demureness in attitude and speech, is expected of them (Higuchi 1986). Resistance against this seemed to be easier psychologically than in the case of men who do not wish to be masculine, because the value attached to masculinity is higher than that attached to femininity.

Men who cannot manage to use masculine language and, for instance, keep referring to themselves as watashi instead of the more masculine boku, may feel uneasy about the way they are regarded (Fushimi 1991:35). This seems to be more of a problem in Tokyo than in Osaka and Kyoto, where men in general are thought to be more feminine, while at the same time they have the aura of being romantic lovers, a difference that is similar to the difference attributed to the "cool" northern Europeans opposed to the "warm" Latin lovers. Among informants from the Kansai area the use of watashi is quite common, among gay as well as straight men, but in Tokyo it is rare, it is only used by men to those older than them. Hirano Hiroaki, who grew up in Nagoya, could not make himself say the word ore, which is a step more masculine than boku, and referred to himself by the use of boku. He felt that as a result he was not accepted by his classmates (Hirano 1994:182-183).

Among male interviewees a considerable number had trouble

during their childhood with not being as masculine as their environment expected of them. Apart from non-masculine behavior and playing with girls, a light colour of skin, shortness and thinness were mentioned as physical features that are in conflict with masculinity. It appeared that physical features are more problematic than behavioural. Men who played with girls during childhood were usually not much troubled by parents and friends. Several male informants played with girls and with the support and approval of their mothers some learned to knit and do needlework when children. Some interviewees who were short, thin, or had a light skin had become ijimekko (the victim of bullying), one saying that girls in his class had undressed him and fondled his genitals. While male homosexuality and femininity in men overlap in some cases, in many they do not, and some heterosexual informants also felt that their feminine traits, which they saw as unalienable parts of their selves, caused them to be regarded as hen (weird). In Barazoku some cases were reported of gay men who were seen as hen at the offices where they worked and became the focus of jokes. This influenced their well-being to the extent that they became mentally ill and, while one was welcomed back to his job after seeking medical care, the other had to find a different job (Itô B. 1993, Oya Fukô 1993).

Experiences relating to masculinity at school are varied, as a discussion on a tape by Kamigata DJ Club shows. It starts with a man discussing what he calls "overacting (kasô ni enjiru) masculinity", which most of his classmates did. He finds this weird (hen) and wonders where this image of masculinity stems from. While comparing those overacting men to onabe, he thinks

that this overacting of masculinity may be a result of the existence of okama. This agrees with an explanation of the origin of homophobia: because men are afraid to recognize homosexual feelings in themselves they become uncertain when they are confronted with it and react in homophobic ways, which may be aggressive, ridiculing, or talkative. To counter the possibility of anyone thinking that they might be gay, they overact their masculinity (Harper 1992). The discussion on the tape continues as follows:

"If they sit in the company of people they always sit wide-legged. (...) But they don't always do that, if they return to their private rooms they'll sit like amazon-s. (...) Really, such things must be a result of remnants of bad education; schools, in which you are taught that men should be men, that men are like that, are very common."

"It's tiresome, really, I hate it for being so conservative."

"I became defiant (hanpatsu shita) because of it."

"I don't mean that they must behave according to the values of okama, but why can't they act normally. (...) If they live naturally (nachuraru ni) straights (nonke) can also be my friends."

"Yeah, because they're natural (shizen). I

didn't understand (what you meant) because I found people that agree with me (jibun ni au), people who live naturally. I think that that's why I lived without problems (umaku ikita) until now. People who are like (what you say, i.e. overacting), don't exist in my memory (...). Were there few of such (natural) people around you?"

"I suppose you didn't look for them."

"I didn't. At high-school there were no people with whom I got along (mizu ga au) in my class. If I could I was with people from other classes."

(...)

"What a man is has been decided just like that (katte ni). Although we were born like we are, our environment says just like that that a man is so and so, and because you have a willy (chinchin), you have to live so and so, that sort of thing."

"Yeah, that's really strong in Japan."

"I hate it terribly. It is not the same problem as loving men, that is another question, but I hate to be told to behave normally (futsû ni), to choose my clothes while thinking that I am a man." (Kamigata DJ Club 1993:side one).

The last remark refers especially to the colour of clothes:

colours like red, pink and purple are in general not deemed suitable for men (Lebra 1976:78-79). Some gay men like to wear these colours because they like the colours and think they look good in them. While this discussion took place among gay men, there are also heterosexual men questioning the same. One interviewee even took pride in being different by often wearing bright colours. Some young gay men followed Tsutamori Tatsuru's call for men to work on their beauty (Tsutamori 1990B) by shaving their legs. Body hair was generally seen as kitanai (dirty), also compared to northern European, because Japanese body hair is black. Shaving legs was a method to try and remain in the category of young and beautiful. Several men in the men's network Menzu Ribu Kenkyūkai in the Kansai explicitly stated that they participated because they felt strong disagreement with gender ascriptions and some thought that they were hampered in their possibilities because they failed to live up to general ideas of masculinity, which was mostly a problem in the workplace. Others stressed more political ideas about changing society by changing the self and the perception of what is male and discovering ways of dealing with emotional problems, which they thought men had not been educated to do.

Within gay circles two opposing views concerning masculinity can be discerned. One is that gay men are just as masculine as heterosexual men, as presented by members of Occur from Tokyo, some of whom, like Niimi Hiroshi and Kazama Takashi, are portrayed in very masculine postures in Couple. They stand straddle-legged and have their arms crossed over the breast or in the pockets (Hashiguchi 1992). Niimi even pronounced in an

interview that he was "perfectly male" (kanzen na otoko: Ida 1991). In Kansai groups this attitude is widely criticised. Central figures in OGC see the concept of masculinity as negative and associate it with conservative and uninteresting men, the ossantachi who have the power in the Japanese establishment. The younger group Puapua, now part of Gay Front Kansai, also places gender related problems high on the agenda (Morita 1994). A member, who is often called obâchan (granny) by fellow members, said he uses oné-kotoba (gay camp language) in order to discern himself from straight men (Uchikoshi 1995).

In Tokyo, at the annual national JILGA conference in August 1992, the relation between discrimination against homosexuality and that against feminine men was the central theme during a plenary session. Negative attitudes towards feminine gay men were presented and a feminine man vented his anger at being discriminated against within gay circles that are supposed to further the liberation of gay men. Occur has been widely criticised for its stance that gay men are masculine, because of the repressive qualities of it. Critics may think that it is understandable that they wish to distance themselves from the feminine image of gay men that has often been presented in the media, but that does not make it acceptable. A member of Puapua thinks that it would be good to agree that all three categories, transvestites, male to female transsexuals, and gay men, are confronted with the derogatory term okama, which makes it desirable that they do not fight amongst each other but work together for improvement of their positions (Morita 1994).

Within lesbian circles such problems do not play much of a

role. While lesbians of LIO (Lesbians in Occur), when appearing on television, stressed that they liked femininity, particularly referring to beautiful long hair, I found no adversity towards women with masculine features. In LIO and other circles there are women with short hair and androgynous clothing, as well as women with feminine looks. A member of LIO said she was shocked by a woman who called the lesbian information line and asked what they looked like. The caller seemed to think that lesbian women looked like professional wrestlers (puro-resurâ) and all had short hair. Lesbians of the generation that became active in relation to ûman ribu in the seventies tend to be more androgynous in their looks. Two reasons can be found for this. They are older, and older women in Japan in general use less make-up than women whose age dictates that they are in the market for marriage and from whom the environment demands more conformity to jôshiki about femininity. Further older lesbians are often connected to feminism, which often dictated that women should not make themselves attractive to please men, in the context of which beauty contests have been much criticised (Ehara 1992C, Sechiyama 1992, Yoshizawa 1992).

A woman who was taught women's studies at a university in Kyoto was not interested in feminism at all and found it appalling when a classmate said that she should not wear skirts or make-up. Later she experienced sexual harassment in her workplace and became involved in feminist activities, but she continues to wear make-up. A feminisuto who has been important in giving feminist women back the opportunity to care about the way they look and to dress feminine is Ueno Chizuko, who described the positive

feelings that can result from caring about one's looks (1988A, 1989) and the tactical use of looks (1991C). She herself wore what is often called bodikon clothes, clothes that show the lines of the body to its advantage. She has cut her long hair short now, but her clothes remain highly fashionable. Her racing car does not agree with ideas in some feminist circles either. She was criticised by some informants who thought that it was wrong for a woman to use her looks to further her goals.

An interviewee who was in the process of a sex change from male to female became a major topic at a party when "he", as most people present saw her, said that she was a lesbian woman. Since most people present saw her as a man, and genitally³ she still was a man at that time, she was heavily criticised for assuming this position. She had the courage to speak out because she had a lesbian girlfriend and was accepted by lesbian circles, which greatly boosted her confidence. One of the people present, a gay man, criticised her and thought that she could not appropriate the label of lesbian because she did not talk in a "lesbian manner". He thought she was using "masculine" ways of expression, and gave the example of her saying that rezu was a wrong word to use, because it was linked to pornography. While this problem had been pointed out by Kakefuda Hiroko (1992A), whose book the man liked very much, he now thought that a lesbian would not use such general theories (ippanron), but start from her personal feelings. This way of viewing things stems from contacts with feminist women, with whom he was involved in Aids related activities. Their masculine ways of reasoning are seen as characterized by the tendency to use ippanron as opposed to

feminine ways of reasoning that start from personal experience.

While overall in Japanese society such a picture clearly emerges, it is not always true, and both among feminist women who label themselves as feminisuto and among lesbian women, "masculine" ways of reasoning are common. The case above shows that transsexuality is in Japan, as elsewhere (Bornstein 1994), one of the phenomena most likely to lead to heated discussions among people who are involved in sexual politics. If she had been a woman by birth, this discussion would not have developed, no matter how "masculine" her reasoning was. Because people involved in sexual and gender politics often divide everything into male and female, masculine and feminine, it is difficult to accommodate people who do not fit in readily.

Talking sex and having sex.

Discourses concerning sex in Japan can be roughly divided into three types. One is the pornographic discourse, strongly characterized by violence, rape and sadomasochism, opposed to which there is a discourse characterized by disgust over violence and rape, pornography and prostitution, which has been a major feature of feminist constructions of sex in Japan (Ogura 1988, Minamoto 1991, Yamashita Akiko 1991, Ehara 1992C, Hashizume 1992, Sechiyama 1992, Tajima 1992). Lately this discourse has come under fire from critics within feminist circles (ôgoshi 1991) and feminists have started to discuss sex also as part of human relationships rather than only in terms of something loathsome

and dirty (Uemura 1988, Kawano 1990) and to question men on their sexual activities (Onna no Sei to Sei o Kanagaeru Bunkakai 1991).

This leads the way to a third discourse, the influence of which is growing. It is characterized by a liberal attitude towards sexual activity, sometimes even including rape and violence, and always including sadomasochism (Tazaki 1993A & B), which is increasingly a trendy subject to discuss. In gay pornography as well as heterosexual pornography sadomasochism plays a major role (Sabu, S & M Sunaipâ, SM Hishôsetsu). Pornography is looked at in more than one way and it is argued that gay pornography cannot be caught under the general heading of oppression of women (Fushimi 1992) and that women can also enjoy pornography (Kakefuda 1992B, 1993), although some still find it incomprehensible that women may enjoy pornography in which they are victimized (Fujitani 1992). Much is written on hentai sex, from anal intercourse (e.g. Ichikawa 1991, Kanezuka 1993, Tazaki 1993A) to bondage (e.g. Sawaragi 1991), fetishism (e.g. Mutsuki 1991) and sadomasochism (e.g. Kitahara 1991, Nakada 1991, Tazaki 1993A), and even people who have been convicted of murder and cannibalism may get space to vent their experience (Sagawa 1991). A persistent element in this genre is the idea that such practices are much more widespread in Europe and America (Tomonari 1991), which mirrors the writing on sexuality in Japan in the press in western countries. This idea is supported by the existence of flourishing sadomasochist toy shops in England, whereas in Japan they hardly exist.

A male interviewee, who often talked about sadomasochism and opened a shop selling attributes for sadomasochist play, said

that he did not engage in it himself with his lover. The widespread appearance of sadomasochism in pornographic videos and magazines suggests that many people are excited by it as a fantasy but not many engage in it themselves. Among my lovers in Japan those who ventured to employ sadomasochist ways of pleasure pursuit limited it to the softest forms. Games in which ijimeru (tease, abuse) and semeru (tease, torture), mostly in the form of restraining the movements of the other while making him reach his climax, are quite common. Among lesbian informants outright sadomasochism appeared to be more popular. Several lesbian informants even came to London in order to buy toys and go to sadomasochist parties. Nevertheless, I do not believe that sadomasochist activities are more common among lesbian women than any other category in Japan. It is most likely that there was a bias among the people I met. A survey among almost 1,000 university students by the Yajima seminar shows that women are much less likely to want to get involved in experimenting with various ways of sexual expression than men, except when it comes to homosexual activity (Asahi 1994, Kawakoshi 1994, Miyauchi 1994, Ōshima 1994, Umeyama 1994).

Talking about sex in a personal and serious manner is largely prohibited by discourses concerning it. In general sex is regarded as asobi (play) and not seen as an activity decent people discuss. Etchi is a word that is much used to refer to sexual activities. Explanations about its origins vary from the idea that it is the Anglo-Japanese pronunciation of the letter "H", said originally to stand for hentai or hentaisei (queer, abnormal or queerness, abnormality: Constantine 1992:37-38,

Tazaki 1993A:34), to the idea of an informant that it stems from sexual activities with American GI's during the occupation, whereby the "H" refers to the letter between the "G" and the "I". Yet another informant thought it might represent the first letter of harenchi, which means shamelessness or impudence. I initially thought that it stemmed from erochikku (erotic), because that comprises most of the meanings in which it is used. In a gay manga, for example, a man asks his lover not to undress, because he finds his sarariiman suit so etchi (Yamazaki 1993). It also is used to refer to sexual activity and anything that is sexually exciting. A young gay informant, for instance, said that he had done sukoshi etchi (a bit of etchi), with a friend, which referred to masturbation. When watching pornographic videos at a clandestine video shop in Osaka, people used etchi to refer to scenes and actors they found especially exciting.

This attitude is widespread among men, but among women talk of sex often produces a more serious mood. A lesbian interviewee thought that women could not discuss sex because they lacked the words for it, but this seems to have changed considerably lately and increasingly informants showed no sign of lacking words for discussing sex. A feminisuto thought she had a very good relationship with a close friend, because they could talk about everything, even about sex, which suggests that discussing sex is very uncommon. This tendency not to talk about sex in a personal way especially by and among feminisuto might be a result of their marginality within the academic world in which sex is not considered a proper subject for discussion, unless it is in terms of syndromes and illness, and only in terms of "other

people" or "research populations".

Female informants were often little concerned with finding lust in sex. An interviewee called me to ask advice about how to react towards the advances of a married man at her job. She wondered whether it was morally wrong for her to comply. Her main concern was whether she was wronging someone else, i.e. his wife, not whether she wished to have sex with him or what was in her own benefit. And, indeed, few female informants seemed to care much about themselves when it concerned sex. One was shocked after she had sex with a member of a foreign pop group and her boyfriend dumped her saying that she was stupid, because she had expected him to accept her escapade like she accepted his before. Another informant tried to enjoy sex but has difficulty finding men who are not boring. She wrote about her experiences and ideas, concluding that in general her feelings with regard to sex are characterized by the feeling of prostituting herself (Shibuya 1990). Similarly, Kagita Izumi, who works as a prostitute, or sex worker (sekkusu wākā), as she prefers to refer to herself, felt that having sex with her now ex-husband was at times not essentially different.

At a discussion with performance group Dumb Type, in preparation of the S/N performance staged in March 1993 in Kyoto, a woman said that she did not wish to have sex, because she could not stand the idea of lying under a man. In her eyes, heterosexual sex meant that a man was lying on top of her grinding his penis inside her vagina. This, indeed, seems to be the general picture people in Japan have of sex that is not hentai. Hirano Hiroaki of OGC wrote an essay concerning the way sex is con-

structured around the penis and that sex in the minds of most people seems to consist of sticking the penis in one orifice or another: the mouth, the vagina, or the anus (Hirano 1994:184-207). The typical pattern of heterosexual sex in pornography as well as in heterosexual relationships is that the woman resists weakly and says things like: "Please stop", to gradually become excited and overcome by her feelings of lust. The English writer John David Morley also describes heterosexual sex in Japan in this vein (Morley 1985).

Many women are not very pleased with this pattern of heterosexual sex and grow tired of pleasing men without having much pleasure themselves and resort to masturbation (Baba 1988, Moa Ripôto han 1983). This attitude has been linked to the so-called "second virgin syndrome", i.e. women who decide to return to celibacy after having been sexually active for a while. This syndrome is a hoax. Most women interviewed for a book on it did not have sex for one or two years after separating from boyfriends. Not having sex for a while hardly warrants the label of "syndrome" (Mizuno 1992). Others put up with their husband's and boyfriend's desires, because "it can't be helped", or "because he will become aggressive otherwise" (Moa Ripôto Han 1983:512-513). Among feminist women who were asked how they thought about love with men, twelve thought that love with men was possible, one that it was impossible, eleven that love was not something to strive for, that it was a mere illusion, and ten had opinions at odds with this division, one of them, Fujieda Miyoko criticising it for its heterosexist implications: love as presented in the survey questions was heterosexual love (Ueno ed.

1990).

Similarly, in a book on the history of sexuality in Japan, sexuality appears to mean heterosexuality: homosexuality is wholly ignored (Teruoka 1992). Large scale research has been conducted on sexuality, but it invariably ignores the possibility of homosexuality (Moa Ripôto Han 1983, Kyôdô Tsûshin. 1984, Baba 1988, Munakata & Tajima 1992). In Ueno Chizuko's work the existence of homosexuality is not ignored, but the contents deal only with homosexuality in America and in its most visible forms in Japan, both of which are not very informative about homosexuality in Japan in general (Ueno 1988A, 1989, 1991A, 1992). Female sexuality is mostly discussed in terms of men who do not please and how to find satisfactory relationships (Uemura 1988, Kawano 1990, Tajima 1992). Discussed least seriously of all is the sexuality of heterosexual men. While there is much literature on prostitutes, very little exists on the men who visit them (Fukushima 1991B), which is a feature also present in western discourses (Hart 1994).

Two male informants were raped as a child, one at eight, 25 years ago by a neighbour, and the other at thirteen. The latter said during the interview that he was raped when in boarding school by classmates and used it to explain further developments in his life. Women who were raped usually saw it as part of an abusive relationship and did not stress the rape itself as of any particular significance. In the weekly magazine Asahi Journal a discussion even developed after Matsuura Rieko, who has been raped herself, said that feminisuto should not get so upset about rape and that it was not really of great importance (Andachi &

Matsuura 1992). This was strongly criticised by women who felt that such pronouncements hurt rape victims (e.g. Murayama 1992). Among female informants rape appeared to be taken as an extreme form of sexual harassment when it concerned relationships at work. Sexual harassment itself has only recently been recognized as a problem. Until then it was standard for victims to "cry themselves to sleep (nakineiri)", a common attitude also among other victims, such as those of industrial pollution (Kawamura 1994).

The construction of sex as sticking a penis into an orifice makes it plausible that most people think that homosexual activity between men consists of anal intercourse, which within gay circles sometimes is represented by the chrysanthemum and the sword (kiku to katana). Ruth Benedict probably did not know this. Hashimoto Osamu complained because she robbed him of a book title that would have fitted his book on Japanese gay men (Hashimoto 1986:55). A gay informant even bought Benedict's Kiku to katana in the sixties, because he expected it to be on homosexuality. Hashimoto resorted to use the lotus (hasu) instead of the chrysanthemum, which he uses to represent gokuraku chinko (happy-go-lucky willy). In this book Hashimoto, like Hirano, criticises the simplicity of anal intercourse and advocates other ways of reaching sexual satisfaction (Hashimoto 1986, Hirano 1994). My own experience in Japan, interview results, and written sources such as personal advertisements in gay magazines, indicate that ways of having sex other than anal intercourse are common among gay Japanese men. Many informants explicitly stated that they "cannot have anal sex," usually referring to the inability of

receiving a penis, but sometimes also the reverse.

The construction of sex as sticking a penis into an orifice denies the possibility of sex between women. Non-lesbian informants, indeed, wondered how on earth lesbians could have sex, "penisu ga nai no ni (even though they have no penis)." While in more streetwise circles possibilities as rubbing clitorisses against each other and oral sex may be known (Constantine 1992:140), many people seem not to be able to imagine such possibilities. Lesbian pornography, made for men, is the form of pornography that is most under fire from those who want to protect youth from "bad influences". For example, the Osaka prefectural government established a ruling (jôrei) which makes it illegal to sell lesbian pornographic cartoons and picture collections in shops where minors go. They called this "homosexual pornography", which gave rise to complaints from gay groups in the area, who felt that their freedom of information was endangered. Some gay magazines are important sources of information on what is happening in Japan and abroad (Adon, Barazoku) and they and the others are important for making contact with other gay men (Morita 1992B, Dôseiâi Kaihō Undō Dantai Puapua 1992). In lesbian circles minikomi are the major means of spreading information and keeping contact and these minikomi contain no pornography.

An important and influential discourse concerning homosexuality has been developed since the mid seventies by authors of shōjo manga (girls' comics), who describe homosexual relationships between boys or men. The presentation of homosexual relationships in them is very romantic and the protagonists are

invariably beautiful. Japanese scholars discuss gay shōjo manga addressing the question why they are popular among girls and young women (Aoyama 1988, Ogura 1991, Fujimoto 1991A, Matsui 1993, Tanikawa 1993) ignoring the fact that many of them are bought by boys and men. They do, apart from reading the manga, little research into the question why girls like them, but merely philosophise wondering whether girls find it easier to read about sex in which no women are involved and such. Many gay informants read these manga when they were at high-school and later which leads me to believe that much of their success is due to the fact that men read them. June, a magazine that based itself on the genre, increasingly leans towards gay magazines, including drawings by Kimura Ben, who draws for gay magazine Sabu.

Women who read gay shōjo manga said that they thought the drawings of the boys, who often are very androgynous or feminine, were suteki (attractive) and that they felt attracted by the romantic stories, which is what male informants said too. They are said to be stories to dream away from daily reality, even if they are increasingly realistic. Often they are set in future or past times, and usually in foreign countries. Gay writer Fushimi recognises that the presentation of homosexuality in shōjo manga is at variance with reality, but since his childhood days he has enjoyed reading them and he could reassure manga writer Yoshida Akemi that he does not feel that she is hurting gay men (Yoshida & Fushimi 1992, Fushimi 1993). While readers of manga are of course aware that they do not depict reality and idealise and romanticise homosexual relationships to a great extent, I found several women who referred to them as a reason why they became

interested in meeting gay men in real life. For young gay men they were supportive in the sense that they provide something positive to identify with and especially since the newest publications often deal with problems with family and colleagues or classmates in contemporary situations (Akisato 1986, 1992 Takaguchi 1991, 1993)⁴, they give them something to compare themselves to. I found that young gay men who dislike the gay magazines for their pornographic character often like shōjo manga.

Shōjo manga most likely have contributed to positive attitudes towards homosexuality among women and gay men. Some gay bars nowadays are frequented by heterosexual women who like to be with gay men. They are called okoge, after the burnt residue that sticks to the okama (cooking pot). It is this phenomenon that is discussed in the article that marks the start of the gei bōmu (gay boom) in the mass media (CREA 1991) and it is also the theme of a book, called Okoge, later made into a film, which toured Japan with much success in 1992 (Nakajima 1992). At a workshop someone suggested that the popularity of films about gay men among young women in Japan is due to the fact that they are filmed from a female viewpoint. This may be true for most Japanese films, but does not agree with the fact that movies like the English film Maurice or the Canadian movie No skin off my ass, in which women hardly play a role, are equally popular. Shōjo manga on gay men also often feature very few women playing an active part. It appears that the aesthetics of male homosexuality, combined with the socially subversive aspect of their love, which makes it the quintessence of true love, are what draw

women towards them.

In contrast to the often positive depictions in shōjo manga, homosexuality is in Japan widely seen as iyarashii (disgusting) or kimochiwarui (sickening), as a result of which many gay men and lesbian women think of it as hazukashii (shameful). These labels are methods of dismissing a phenomenon, rather than being related to strong feelings and in that sense they are rather superficial. They are jōshiki which keep order in a system of thought that does not consider homosexuality seriously (Shibatani 1990:129). If people are confronted by someone who presents him or herself as lesbian or gay they may not see that person as iyarashii or kimochiwarui, which in general refers rather to activities than states of being. Sex as such is often seen as iyarashii and many gay men think of it as such as well, although they do not often think that they themselves are particularly iyarashii. They think that certain sexual activities are, and that sex for the pursuit of lust and unrelated to love is iyarashii.

Hazukashii is anything concerning sex when it becomes known or visible. As long as no one knows there is nothing to be ashamed about. An interviewee at whose house I stayed brought me to the station because I had much luggage and he wanted to help me carry it. He thought it was hazukashii to walk next to me because people would know that he was gay. This did not concern the people who actually knew him, because they know that he is gay, but rather people who do not know him. At a Christmas party with a gay circle participants were asked to bring underpants as a gift for an exchange. Those who received sexy and scanty briefs

like G-strings and Y-fronts screamed: hazukashii, while many others had bought large boxer shorts, which are seen as erotically neutral. Contrary to Ueno's idea that single men wear boxer shorts because they can wear them longer than briefs so that they have less laundry (Ueno 1989), they wear them because briefs come only in two varieties, the traditional large ones their fathers wear and the new sexy ones, which only became generally available in the nineties and make sex objects of those who wear them.

Words like iyarashii can be used in a positive sense. In pornography the words iyarashii, kimochiwarui and especially hazukashii are frequently used to add to the excitement. Sex is all these things and it seems that the subversive character attributed to it is what makes it interesting to many people. My only sadist lover used these words frequently when we played, referring to various poses and activities.

Circles: Discussing the self and the other.

Rather than giving an outline of all circles and discussing in detail their activities, this section intends to describe some of the debates that exist within categories and between them. Reasons for joining circles are often multiple. Making friends can be more important than a political goal. This is especially true for people engaging in gay and lesbian circles, some of which are solely oriented towards leisure. But women may also engage in politically oriented groups because they like the atmosphere rather than because they subscribe to the political

aims. The function of some gay circles was explicitly to provide a yasuragi no ba (a place to be at ease), where stress could be released. This suggests that they may be seen as replacing uchi (home), which according to jōshiki is the place where men can release their tensions and feel at ease.

Feminist women.

Most feminist informants in their forties started their feminist activities in the seventies under the banner of ūman ribu (women's lib), which is a word some still use. They do not call themselves ūman ribā, women's liberationist, and they rarely call themselves feminisuto, which, according to them, refers to women working at universities and engaging in and writing books concerning women's studies, or, as one of them said, is in Japan widely understood to mean ^αgallant man. Women engaged in ūman ribu said that they are different from the academic, well-known feminisuto because they engage in grass-roots activities and often did not follow the intellectual debates of feminisuto, although they enjoyed seeing feminisuto like Ueno Chizuko or Tajima Yōko win an argument in live and television debates.

When I mentioned that Ueno Chizuko was my supervisor they sometimes called me erai (great, eminent), as if Ueno's qualities would automatically be transferred to me. A thin line divides erai from erasō, which is erai-like and very negative. It is used to refer to people who are haughty and use vocabulary that many people do not follow, such as many Anglo-Japanese terms that seem to be invented by the day, or to arguments that may seem sound because they are vocalized in a very sophisticated manner, but

are on closer examination not very relevant. All these features were brought forward in critiques of Ueno, who elsewhere has been criticised for ignoring the realities in the dreary lives of poor women (Yamashita E. 1991) and for being a show-business person riding on the waves of popularity and thereby creating distance from women who might otherwise become interested in feminism (Ehara 1992A). No one, however, can ignore the fact that she has brought growing attention to feminist ideas, especially because her language is understood by many men. Among my informants it appeared that Ueno is read more by men, whereas women prefer Ogura Chikako's work, which they see as more personal and direct (Ogura 1988, 1989, 1991).

The younger generation of women around thirty or younger who engage in feminist grass-roots activities feel they do not have much in common with ûman ribu, which in their ideas seems to be represented by Chûpiren, a group that had a brief but loud history in the seventies and aimed at legalizing the contraceptive pill. It split off from the group that set up Shinjuku Ribu Sentâ, a centre in Tokyo where feminist activities were assembled, after its founder, Enoki Misako, wrote a report on the use of the pill which blatantly ignored the disadvantages the other women wanted included. Enoki has even been accused of being an agent for the pharmaceutical industry because of her uncritical advocacy of the pill and because she disappeared after her movement's failure (Akiyama 1991). Because its activities were characterized by storming onto stages and making their claims -as a lesbian interviewee remembered, they once stormed the stage at the yearly New Years' Eve television show Kôhaku Kagassen, in

which the male singers, dressed in white, compete with female singers, dressed in red - the ensuing press coverage gave the whole ûman ribu movement a bad name that still resonates.

Nevertheless, feminists who do not label themselves engaging in grass-roots activities are the successors to the ûman ribu movement of the seventies, even if they do not ascribe to it. Some of them can be found in groups like Pâpuru: Sei Bôryoku o Yurusanai Onnatachi no Kumiai (Purple: Women's Union against Sexual Violence), which fights sexual harassment and is one of the most radical feminist groups in Japan. Pâpuru split off from Onnatachi no Rôdô Kumiai (Women's Labor Union) after an internal fight over a case in which a member was sexually harassed by a man from a labour union with which they collaborated. While the women of Pâpuru wanted to take on the case and sue the man in question, the others felt sorry for his wife and wanted to keep things quiet. An interviewee of Onnatachi no Rôdô Kumiai said that they should not be too radical because that would only serve to make them inaccessible to women caught up in labour disputes. This is also a reason why they do not use words like feminisuto or ûman ribu.

Feminist women may participate in meetings like those of gay circle OGC and many were present at the Onna no Fesutibaru (Women's Festival), which is held in relation to International Women's Day in March in Kyoto. This festival is an ûman ribu type of happening rather than one dominated by feminisuto, who tend to meet more in kenkyûkai or gakukai (study meetings or conferences). The difference between feminisuto and other women's liberationists may be somewhat overconstructed, because there are

also academics engaging in grass-roots activities and because the large majority of women's liberationists do not label themselves at all. The majority of women described above just do what they feel they should do, a trend that can be seen in many places in the Japan of the early nineties. Working without labels seems to be more effective, because most labels have negative connotations attached to them.

Feminisuto in their forties have shown prejudice towards homosexuality, such as Ueno who wrote that gay men are women-haters and lesbian women men-haters (Ueno 1991A:13-14), but also others, who tend to be prejudiced about lesbian women and conclude from some rare meetings that they are man-hating. A feminist woman who herself was by feminisuto described as the prime example of a sōsharu rezubian (social lesbian), thought that women become lesbian because they find men unlikeable. I did not meet any rezubian who thought that and such reasoning is refuted by most lesbians, who, like gay men, maintain that their homosexuality is part of their most inner being.

Lesbian women.

Lesbian women have been among the most radical feminist women in Japan, but the fact that those who brought this contribution to feminism are lesbians is hardly recognized. Some ten years ago Ueno Chizuko even wrote that, unlike America, lesbians had little influence within the women's movement in Japan (Ueno 1991A:120-123). Lesbians who are active in feminist groups said that they did not think others knew that they were lesbian and that they thought it did not really matter, because

it was more important to share feminist activities in sisterhood (shisutáfuddo). As a result lesbians are often not recognized within feminist circles and sexuality is not discussed. An interviewee from Pápuru said that she did not know what the sexual preference of most of the group members was, and some time after the interview commented that she had been investigating her own feelings which led her to wonder whether she was lesbian herself.

In 1984 the lesbian group Regumi (Le Group: Lesbian Group) was founded by women who came together from feminist scenes and from the lesbian bar scene in Shinjuku (Hisada 1991). Some years later Regumi Sutajio was founded. This is an office space where meetings can be held, where a telephone line is set up for people seeking contact, and which is the base where Regumi Tsúshin, the newsletter of Regumi is produced. Interviewees who are active in Regumi said that this space, which is located in a building where feminist organizations are assembled, is surrounded by heterosexual women who do not know very well how to deal with the presence of a lesbian organization in their midst. Lesbian circles are loosely organized and tend to place the stress on talking or partying together. Regumi in Tokyo is not really a group, but rather a loose network which offers the possibility for women to use a space and a name under which to develop activities.

Not until the early nineties did lesbians start to discuss being lesbian at major women's conferences in Japan. The first time was at the Asian Women's Conference in Tokyo in the Spring of 1992, which was repeated two weeks later in Osaka. In the plenary session a lesbian woman from Thailand spoke about

lesbians in Asia, stressing the need for an economic base for a woman to be able to maintain a lesbian lifestyle, that is to be able to remain unmarried and to take care of her own financial needs. This is underwritten by the case of a women's community in Kwangtung in Southern China, where women could live independently from men because they had the power to make an income through a particular form of agriculture that did not exist elsewhere in China (Sankar 1986).

At the same conferences lesbian women held workshops about being lesbian, which lesbian women I spoke with afterwards found not very satisfying, because heterosexual feminists attending were only interested in the question of how they have sex, which was not a topic the lesbian women wished to discuss. They felt that demands by heterosexual feminists of lesbian women that they reveal their sexual activities, while heterosexual feminists remain silent about their own, is a form of unwarranted curiosity. Similarly, Ueno Chizuko was widely attacked for her critique of Kakefuda's book, in which she writes that Kakefuda writes about many things, but omits discussing her (Ueno's) point of interest: lesbian sex (Kakefuda 1992A, Ueno 1992). While Ueno tried to defend herself against allegations that she was insensitive (donkan) where it concerns homosexuality, her critics read in her article a confirmation of her insensitivity (Asakura 1992, Irokawa 1992, Hirano 1993). In March 1993 lesbian mothers were the theme of a workshop at the Women's Festival in Kyoto, which led to a more satisfying discussion, according to lesbian informants. Grass-roots feminists in general seemed to be more open towards lesbians than feminisuto who tend to draw con-

clusions after hearing very little instead of questioning their own beliefs and feelings.

Ueno Chizuko became a major example in this chapter for a number of reasons. She was my supervisor and therefore I learned to know her well. Further she has a high profile, which added to the tendency among informants to want to talk about her. Last, she is one of few feminisuto who have written about homosexuality, which has been picked up by gay and lesbian writers as discussed above. Other feminisuto often had similar opinions, but never put them into writing. While criticizing her, however, it must be remembered that she wrote about homosexuality in a time when most scholars wholly neglected it and thereby helped to promote discussion. Although it may seem like it, she is not homophobic, which is also indicated by the fact that she agreed to be my supervisor.

Constructions of lesbian women often follow American constructions and the influence of international feminist contacts is clearly present, although the meanings may shift somewhat. They include sōsharu rezubian (social lesbian), which refers to close female friendships, chotto rezubian (a bit lesbian), which refers to women who are dissatisfied with having sex with men and may try lesbian sex, political lesbian, which refers to lesbians who say that they are lesbian for feminist reasons and rezubian separetisuto, lesbian separatist, which may be understood as lesbians who do not want to have anything to do with non-lesbians. Political lesbians, i.e. women who say that they became lesbian for political reasons, exist in the generation of ūman ribu who became active in the seventies, but

Takefuda Hiroko thought that such claims are nonsensical (Takefuda 1992A). When I interviewed her she explained that she understood that people may explain their sexual preference in that manner, but that she thought that it was an explanation developed after the fact. To informants who said that they were separetisuto it means that they wish to have gasshuku with only women who explicitly state that they are lesbian, i.e. without women who are not sure or who say that they are bisexual. Many younger lesbians thought that the labels above are superfluous constructions and that women who use them, mostly lesbian and heterosexual feminists, were katai (tough, difficult) and having irrelevant theoretical discussions. Calling themselves rezubian was quite enough and they did not need all these different labels.

Gay men.

Liberal people are sometimes at a loss as to what word to use to describe gay men, because they are all tainted by negative connotations. There may even be a danger that people start avoiding discussing homosexuality for fear of unwittingly discriminating against gay men, as happened with the burakumin, a "special status group" or outcastes (Ohnuki-Tierney 1987), discussion of whom is taboo in many contexts (Pharr 1990). Homo is most widely understood to have the same meaning as gay in English - which is one of the reasons why I agreed to use it in the title of a Japanese publication on homosexuality in the Netherlands, the other being that homo is the common and neutral Dutch word for gay (Lunsing 1994D) -, but in gay activist circles

it is attacked because it is an abbreviation of homosekushuaru, and "abbreviations are derogatory". The word gei, which is their choice, based on the homophony with the English gay, meant at the time of my fieldwork to most other Japanese transvestite or transsexual. When I used it in an essay, the liberal Buddhist monk who reviewed it thought that it was sabetsu yōgo (discriminatory terminology) until I clarified that gay activists advocate its use. Since they have been very tenacious in using gay, it has become a common term in the media and for the first time gays in Japan have succeeded in influencing the wording used to speak of them.

Many gay men call the world of gay bars and other localities kono sekai (this world), which clearly refers to otherworldliness. Terms for becoming involved in gay scenes include kono sekai ni hairu and kono michi ni hairu (entering this world and entering this way) and the more traditional kono michi/sekai ni ochiiru (fall down to this way). These terms are still much in use and to those who use them in relation to themselves they have no negative connotation. The world of gay bars is, however, patronized by a minority of gay men. While it is well known that one of the largest concentration of gay bars in numbers in the world exists in Tokyo, these numbers are misleading, because most of them are very tiny, some seating no more than eight persons (Lunsing 1994A).

Some nights the bars remain virtually empty - I once spent the night on my own with a waiter until five o'clock in the morning without any other customer arriving - and on other nights there may be but a small number of customers. All in all, about

ten customers might be the average number of customers per gay bar at most, which means that no more than 2,000 gay men visit Shinjuku's 200 gay bars (Lunsing 1994A) on average nights. Adding to this the gay bars in Ueno and other areas of Tokyo, the number still remains well below 5,000, compared to a population of 30 million in the area. Occur's survey shows that many gay men do not go to bars, whether for lack of money or for lack of interest (Ugoku gei. 1992). Occur maintains that gay bars are not sufficient for living a gay lifestyle. They want to be gay for twenty-four hours a day, not for a couple of hours in the evening. Like many other circles, they organize events like hiking in the mountains, picnics, sports events and visits to temples and shrines to further the goal of being gay the whole day, besides their political activities.

In 1986 Occur split off from JILGA, which was founded in 1984 when the Swedish president of the ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Organization) came to Japan and visited Minami Teishirô (Minami 1990). Foreign influence is thus undeniably present in the formation of gay movements in Japan. Minami succeeded in setting up branches of JILGA in Osaka, Nagoya and Sapporo, but the Osaka branch, of which Hirano Hiroaki is a central figure, severed relations with him because he was too authoritarian. Osaka groups have very little contact with foreign organizations, but I felt that they were ideologically closer to groups in western countries, because they stressed equality and the importance of everyone to be able to have his or her say, as opposed to Occur and JILGA which at times have been quite hierarchical. Other groups have developed unrelated to JILGA,

many at universities, but in one case bound by religion.

A man who lost his second lover decided that he should try and find a lover from his own background. Being a member of the new religion Sôka Gakkai⁵ he placed an advertisement in the gay magazine Barazoku using wording that he knew would be understood as wording related to Sôka Gakkai by other members. He received many replies of gay Sôka Gakkai members and others, but found no lover. Nevertheless, he met most of them and they decided to start a gay network for members of Sôka Gakkai and what they call friends: people who are not members of Sôka Gakkai, but may nevertheless participate. They asked Ikeda Daisaku, the honorary president of the sect, whether it was all right for them to start a gay network and received a positive reply, which greatly enhanced their zeal. Contrary to my information on other new religions, such as Tenrikyô and Seichô no Ie, who prohibit homosexuality⁶, Sôka Gakkai stresses the growth of the individual, which means that anything that comes from the inside of a person is good and deserves to be developed, and it appears that Ikeda thinks that this includes homosexuality. Placing additional advertisements in gay magazines the network, called B-netto, for Buddhist network, grew within a year to one hundred members and several chapters throughout Japan. After an internal rift following the exposure as gay of a member in a local young men's group of Sôka Gakkai by the founder of the group, who was ostracised subsequently, the Tokyo branch changed its name to Kokoro no Nettowâku: Network of the Heart.

In the Kansai area five gay circles are closely related and have enormous overlaps in participants. They are DON! (Do Over

Naturally!), which is a leisure circle engaging in outdoor activities and sports, Sâkuru T (Circle T), which engages in personal discussion, Puapua, which engages in political activities, and Kamigata DJ Club, which makes cassette tapes with discussions and music that are sent to hundreds of gay men throughout Japan. DON! evolved from Ru Kurabu Asshu (Le Club H), which was a circle that tried to combine leisure and activism and from DON! the group Fain Kurabu (Fine Club), later renamed Puraimu Kurabu (Prime Club), was formed. It wanted to be a group of more mature gay men, as DON! members who were close to their thirties felt that they could not relate well to those in their teens or early twenties. In their first advertisement they invited people not to be alone with their nayami concerning marriage, but to come and share their worries. Many people reacted, some of whom had been isolated as gay men until then. One of them, a twenty-eight year old man from a small town, said that he had been afraid to come but that the men were not as scary and weird as he had always imagined other gay men to be and that he made many friends. He was, however, disappointed in the lack of discussion of nayami, although he understood that they first should get to know each other by engaging in various activities.

This seemed to be a problem in most gay circles that intend to do more than playing around (asobu). OGC meetings are characterized by undirected discussions about anything that is brought up. Puapua's meetings were characterized by lengthy discussions about how they should operate as a group before activities finally started. Since new members continually join these groups,

trying to keep everyone in place would mean that nothing could be done. The solutions vary. OGC makes decisions in an informal way and people usually agree that any action undertaken is all right, following a proposal by those who intend to undertake it, usually some of OGC's central figures. Puapau has combined with other groups to form Gay Front Kansai and they established a special group to welcome newcomers. Occur is hierarchically organized and newcomers have to express their adherence to a set of rules and to the leadership. For reasons unknown to me, Occur often refuses people's participation, especially when they are from western Japan⁷.

In Tokyo contacts between lesbian and gay groups are mostly limited to contacts between individuals. JILGA has very few lesbian members and while Occur claims that about half of its members are lesbian, in practice LIO is a separate organization that does very little together with the male members. Lesbians related to Regumi often felt that Occur's men as well as Minami were too macho and too little interested in women to warrant efforts to cooperate, but lesbian circles around Kakefuda Hiroko, who herself has many male gay friends, nowadays cooperate with JILGA on many occasions, not least of them the first Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade, held in August 1994 after the annual JILGA conference. In Osaka lesbians and gays work together at times, especially OGC and YLP or OLP, who held a session together questioning feminism in relation to homosexuality at the Women's Festival in Kyoto in 1988 and in 1995 had a shared New Year's party. Lesbians and gays are in general quite positive about each other, unless they know no gays or lesbians respectively, in

which case their ideas may be based on general prejudiced ideas about the other.

Among gay men a form of sexism was prevalent in some circles, especially those who frequent gay bars and saunas and those who are more advanced in age. One interviewee, who lived in France for a long time, thought that French feminists were quite alright, but hated (daikirai) Japanese feminisuto, whom he found dogmatic and homophobic. When I asked him to elaborate, however, he seemed not too sure what he meant. Among his friends he counted many lesbian women. Young gay men often have very good relationships with women, whether they are heterosexual or lesbian, and OGC is even criticised by Occur for not being a gay group but a feminist group, because they are strongly oriented towards feminist ideology (Miller 1992), which is largely attributable to Hirano Hiroaki.

OGC worked together with feminist groups, such as Pápuru, in a demonstration against a violent rape that occurred on the platform of the Midōsujisen, the central underground line that runs between north and south in Osaka, while people walked by acting as if they did not notice. Further OGC members work in a creche for children at the yearly Women's Festival in Kyoto. Nevertheless, their activities are increasingly focused at informing people about homosexuality, something that has been furthered strongly by appearances in the media, following which people of various organizations contacted OGC to ask them to come and give information. Hirano Hiroaki was asked to give a presentation at a meeting of the singles' network, after which a member of that network started coming to OGC meetings.

Similarly, members of Menzu Ribu Kenkyūkai may turn up at meetings of the singles' network and at meetings of OGC. Some people spend nearly every Sunday with one group or other.

The threshold for participation in almost all these groups is low. One can just turn up and participate. The only problem consists of the psychological threshold. Many people have images of gay men and lesbian women influenced by media depictions and therefore they are afraid to meet them. Once they do, they are usually relieved to find that people are often quite "normal" in their eyes. While their ideas may be very different from mainstream thought, these ideas are important features for which participants appreciate the meetings. Ideas different from jōshiki is more often than not what people seek, for jōshiki concerning their sexual preferences can often not be combined with a lifestyle and an identity they wish to have.

Conclusion.

In this chapter I hope to have given some idea about the problems concerning the establishment and acceptance by members of my research categories of their feelings or ideas and the discussions surrounding them within circles consisting of them. Apart from the themes discussed here, such as discourses on sex and gender, there are more themes that I could have discussed, but this field is so wide that I had to limit myself to themes that pushed themselves forward throughout the research and while writing. Debates in and between circles and categories are lively

and often emotionally loaded, because they often border on discussing each other's most personal good. I witnessed and heard of many more debates than described here, but I hope the description here suffices to provide some insight of the environment in which many people come to assert their identities as feminist, gay, or lesbian, also if they do not label themselves.

Notes:

1. See for instance a report on such a happening in Queen (Tsuru & Kame 1993).

2. Ueno quotes Miwa as saying that she did not love women and Osugi and Piiko frequently make jokes at the cost of women, which for Ueno was enough to conclude that gay men are women haters, an argument she then develops further to write that lesbian women are men haters, which seems to be based on scarce experience in the US (Ueno 1991A:13-14). Like Ueno, Minami Teishirō, founder of JILGA, presents Miwa Akihiro as part of the history of homosexuality in Japan and discusses her as if she were gay (Minami 1991).

3. I use genitally here, as I did in the introduction, because Japanese transsexuals said that biologically is not the correct term, because biological features include genes, which are not an issue here. They proposed physically, but after reading an essay about women and bodybuilding in which the female author described her body as physically male (Ian 1995), I feel the only correct term is genitally, referring to what genitals someone has, female or male.

4. An early, and very famous example of the genre is Takemiya Keiko's Kaze to ki no uta (Poem of the wind and the tree), a very complex story set in nineteenth century France. The main protagonists are two boarding school boys, one of whom, Gilbert, is initially portrayed as bad and working his way through school by offering sexual services, but later is deepened out in long flashbacks of what happened before. The other, Serge comes to love him is virtuous, but has gypsy blood which means he is being discriminated against from the beginning. Eventually they have to run away from the boarding school in order to escape the evil uncle of the bad one and make a living in poverty. Finally Gilbert is run over by a carriage and dies and Serge returns home to assume his title of marquis (Takemiya 1977-1984, seventeen

volumes, originally published from 1976). Another one is Yamagishi Ryōko, whose Hiizuredokoro no tenshi (The angel from the sun) describes liberally the life of Shōtoku Taishi, the consolidator of Buddhism in the Nara-period, who is believed to have lived in the seventh century and is described in this manga as an extremely beautiful and feminine homosexual man. His love for a friend, however, does not materialize (Yamagishi 1991-1992, eight volumes). One example, which gay men advised me to read was a story about a young man who leaves his parents to go and work as a female prostitute in the city. Later he returns home in his new identity as a woman, but his parents want him not to be seen by the neighbours and ask him to leave and not return (Ōshima 1992), which seems to be quite a possible story in the Japan of today. More recently shōjo manga in the genre show more reality, for instance Akisato Wakuni, whose Nemureru mori no binan (The beautiful sleeping man in the woods) and Tomoi deal with a love story in which one of the protagonists develops Aids and leaves his lover for Germany, where he came from, and a second love story in which the jealous wife of one of the lovers kills her husband to leave the other disillusioned and meeting his death in Afghanistan (Akisato 1986, 1992) and Takaguchi Satosumi, whose heroes fall in love with each other and defy their classmates after their father and mother move together. In this case one of the protagonists dies in a traffic accident, leaving the other in loneliness (Takaguchi 1991, 1993).

5. See Earhart (1974), Metraux (1988), or White (1970) for more information on Sōka Gakkai. Members of Sōka Gakkai I spoke with pride Sōka Gakkai with being a philosophy of life, not a religion, but their practices include chanting at meetings and other behaviour that is similar to that in other sects.

6. My information on this is purely verbal. One informant had been a member of Tōitsu Kyōkai (the Unification Church) and at a discussion it appeared that it was general knowledge that Tōitsu Kyōkai saw homosexuality as a sin. Other informants provided similar information about Tenrikyō, Seichō no Ie and some other new religions. They tend to be conservative in that they usually ardently support marriage and parenthood against divorce and anything else that is not in line with the continuation of a heterosexual lifestyle. See Hardacre (1968) or Earhart (1974) for more information about new religions.

7. One interviewee who called Occur's helpline felt rebuked by them after he tried to talk about his personal problems, another informant was told that they would call him back, which they never did, and a man with cerebral palsy wrote that he was dexterously (migoto ni) refused (Hanada 1994), something that was not much different from the reaction of the cerebral palsy society when he tried to discuss homosexuality there. Occur, however seems to have changed its policy in that it referred Hanada to Osaka based groups, something which they did not do previously.

8: Conclusion.

"Marriage is a reprehensible institution. Stuck to a partner until your spirit is broken, you resign yourself to your fate and trudge on to death. For the survivor an afterbloom is possible, but usually the good years are gone. In the period you should deliver important work you are a burden to each other (Warren 1991:85)."

This quote is translated from the diaries of the Dutch gay writer Hans Warren who, like most gay men of his generation, has been married. It was originally written in the early seventies, when lifestyles other than heterosexual marriage became gradually possible in the Netherlands, and there are very few Dutch gay men or lesbian women of over fifty who have not been, or indeed, still are married. In Japan the situation is similar, albeit that younger generations also often have been or are married, a phenomenon that in the Netherlands declined considerably after the sixties. This quote indicates the extent to which a social institution can be a burden to people's lives, if that institution does not agree with their feelings. Much of anthropology occupies itself with describing social institutions and social constructions, while ignoring people for whom these are a burden. Throughout this investigation I have focussed precisely on those people and their lives, for whom the social system is a burden,

rather than anything else.

Foremost, this thesis provides ethnographic descriptions of topics and features that have been underreported and, in my opinion, remain underreported^{even} after this work. I have discussed the life of people from several angles. I started from the angle of marriage as it is generally viewed and political discussions relating to it in chapter three, and continued from the angle of those who try to comply with the idea that marriage is the only proper way to live in chapter four, and subsequently wrote from the angle of how people live who do not comply with this idea in chapter five and from the angle of how people cope with an environment that does not readily accept their ways of living and thinking in chapter six. In chapter seven discussions within circles were presented in order to provide a picture of how they think about particular themes and see each other and themselves. Using these different angles, even though presented in a linear way, I have tried to preserve some of the many sided chaos that is life. Much more work needs to be done in this field and therefore I do not believe it to be sensible to draw it too much into theoretical frames. I believe that, especially in the case of homosexuality, there is already an imbalance between relatively few empirical and plausible data and an abundance of theoretical insights. I do not believe that such insights are always to the benefit of lesbians and gays.

Below I draw out four themes. Three of these were discussed in the introduction and one concerns changes that occurred while I was in the field and afterwards from which I draw ideas of what the future might bring. Since these themes underpinned the thesis

throughout, I intend to use the conclusion to make their roles explicit: 1) space, gender and sexuality, 2) constructions of homosexuality, 3) selves and 4) changes, in the last of which possible future developments are investigated. Since these themes were not discussed as separate themes in the previous chapters, I may at times introduce material that has not been presented previously, in order to promote clarity.

Space, sexuality and gender.

Japanese society has for long provided niches for those who feel they cannot live like everyone else. As discussed in chapters six (p.224) and seven (p.272), for single women, gay men and other "trans gender" people there are the roles of prostitute or the role of entertainer, in shows and in clubs as well as on television, whereby the latter is reminiscent of the role of "special status people," who were itinerant performers (Ohnuki-Tierney 1987). The geinōkai (show-business world) is cast as outside "normal" society. It is not until recently felt to be possible to maintain a single or gay lifestyle apart from such contexts and therefore those who desire to live outside of them often feel that they have to suppress their homosexuality, or any gender attribute that does not agree with jōshiki, not only in public, but also in private contexts. The existence of a gay shadowworld in which gay men can have their moments of pleasure may function as a safety valve for gay men's feelings of stress produced by the suppression of their feelings for men. But it is a limited

world, in which they cannot live entirely, unless they bid farewell to their life in the mainstream world: men who work for instance in gay bars on a more permanent basis rarely maintain much contact with relatives.

Gay networks typically try to build a base different from this world, culminating in Occur's wish to build a gay community by asking members to move to Nakano-ku, a ward in Tokyo (Ugoku Gei. 1992:270). Other networks do not entertain such ideas and are more directed towards changing society as a whole in order to accommodate the possibility for gay men and lesbian women to live anywhere without suppressing their homosexuality. In a critique of Occur's idea of building a community in a geographical sense, even the term "gay ghetto" has been mentioned (Onitsuka 1993). As discussed in chapter seven (p.311-313), in the Kansai relations between gay groups and other groups relevant to this thesis are well developed, which makes the idea of a community in which only gays and lesbians are concentrated less appealing: they have many heterosexual friends. As discussed in chapter six (p.242), Furukawa T. from Tokyo also found that his wish not to live entirely in gay contexts made him want to come out as gay to heterosexual friends.

As discussed in the introduction (p.14) and in chapter three (p.74), any man who is not married lacks credibility as a fully adult person. A single man is seen as in a state of incompleteness, and, unless he can make people believe that he is not entirely single, by for instance making people believe that he has a girlfriend, this implies that he is not taken as a serious and reliable person. While single heterosexual men, like gay men,

may find relief from the stress produced by their status by visiting bars and drinking, unlike the case of gay men, there are no bars that cater specifically to single heterosexual men. Staff in regular bars are not likely to harass them much, but the question of whether they are married is likely to be asked and may lead to embarrassment. Even in a bar run by two single women an single elderly woman and I were cautioned to be careful not to chase other costumers away, when we were loudly saying that people should not marry and that single life is much more enjoyable. Showing that one is happy to be single may be seen as offensive, which prohibits the possibility for single men to be happily single in most bars. Even though in Japan it is usual for men to go out without their wives, a wife is assumed to be present in the background and waiting at home to assist her husband.

For lesbian women the picture looks somewhat less daunting. As discussed in chapter three (p.75), their sex implies that they are not seen as fully adult persons in the sense of ungendered fully adult persons to start with, and therefore women who decide that they do not wish to live like anyone else may feel less psychological stress if they decide not to marry. Because they are usually not part of the mainstream male lifestyle, they may perceive that they have less to lose than men, especially if they come into contact with women's networks, within which it is even possible to find employment. Chances are also that, unlike the case ^{of} men, not being married even enhances their career prospects because companies may think that married women are not worth investing in, as is suggested by the case of a woman,

discussed in chapter six (p.252), whose divorce was warmly approved of by her company because it meant that she would not have children and quit work.

If a woman marries, her existence is seen as dependent on another person's. If she does not, it is seen as dependent on parents or other family. The latter case, whether it concerns lesbian or heterosexual single women, implies that they have failed to accomplish their assigned gender roles as daughter, wife and mother, which has the implication that they are even less of a person than women who live in accordance with jōshiki concerning their gender role. Among my informants women mostly had low-paid insecure jobs. Those who worked at universities felt that they had been discriminated against: it was much more difficult for them than for men to get hired as full-time staff. Often they were temporary lecturers on hourly contracts and hourly wages are typically hardly enough to live on. Nevertheless, ^{however much} money and the status it may bring, was often not considered to be all that important, as long as there was enough of it to get by.

Space in Japanese society may be seen as neatly divided into women's space and men's space. Women's space is inside the house and men's outside. Where they meet roles are clearly defined and leave little space for people to behave differently. In bars as well as in the household women are expected to serve, although there are exceptions to the rule, such as clubs where women are served by male hosts (Lunsing 1994C). These exceptions are, however, like the gay bars, part of another world, in which one cannot live entirely. Feminist groups are an example of women's

space that is different from other women's spaces in the sense that ideally men have no influence on it. Men cannot enter this space unless they behave in a manner that denies the gender attributes that jōshiki assigned to their sex. Other networks, such as the singles' network and the men's liberation group, similarly demand of participants that they distance themselves from gender attributes as they are assigned to their sex according to jōshiki.

In interaction the social status of a person matters more than his or her feelings, and status is measured in clearcut ways such as marital status and occupation. The concept of compulsory heterosexuality is proposed by Adrienne Rich to refer to the force used to make people, especially women, adapt to heterosexual lifestyles, which may culminate in rape if they do not comply (Rich 1993). People are expected to marry and therefore to be heterosexual and heterosexual sex may be forced upon women. In Japan many people feel a strong compulsion to at least appear to live in accordance with the marriage system, but because there is not much need to present a spouse, or to act out feelings of affection in public, the contents are less important. Kateinai rikon (divorce within the household), as discussed in chapters three (p.97) and four (p.156), is the clearest example of a marriage that is not what it may seem. As long as people appear to be "properly" (chan to, kichin to) married, they can do whatever they like otherwise. The major problems are encountered by those who are not married and cannot pass themselves off as being part of a heterosexual couple. Unless they agree that they would rather be married, and thereby deny the validity of their

own lifestyle, their unmarried status implicitly questions part of the very basis of society, even if they do not make pronouncements against marriage.

Japanese society provides for some contexts in which women can present male gender attributes and men female, most notably the theatre and company parties at which wearing drag is a common part of the programme, as discussed in chapter six (p.224) and seven (p.272). These places and spaces are, like the areas where men can be gay and women can be lesbian, very restricted. Nevertheless, I found some people who live their lives in ways that defy the gender boundaries. Tsutamori Tatsuru, discussed in chapter five (p.212-214), is the most famous example and one of the most extreme, for he does not simply cross over to female gender, but appropriates and discards attributes of both female and male gender at will. I found many informants who do similar things, albeit in a less extreme manner and often more limited in time and space.

This defies the traditional view of gender as two large wholes opposing each other, for which I set out in the introduction (p.13) my personal view of gender as opposing sets of attributes from which people compose their own selection, if they can find the freedom to do so. In Japan this freedom is there to be used by anyone who dares to defy jōshiki, and people increasingly seem to do this. As Badinter wrote about young high-class people in France that there is little left to discern men from women (Badinter 1986), in Japan also, in some circles the overlap of the divisions of gender and sex is disappearing. Women are men and men are women, or, more simply: people are people. Differen-

ces remain, but not in accordance with the division of the sexes. As stated in the introduction (p.13), this allows also for labelling attributes feminine and masculine without a sexist connotation: what is feminine is not bound to women, as is what is masculine not bound to men. As long as we disregard social structure, we can be anything we want, the only limit is set ^{by} our creativity.

Constructions of homosexuality.

As discussed in the introduction (p.25), there are many historical constructions of male homosexuality in Japan in contrast to a relatively small number of constructions concerning female homosexuality¹ and feminist women. Sex was a man's world. This does, however, not necessarily give men an advantage over women in achieving alternative lifestyles. Constructions may be more of a burden than offer support. As noticed in chapter seven (p.270), I found no male homosexual informants who related historical constructions to their own situation. This may be due to two possible causes: either a large change took place somewhere between the Meiji era and the end of the Second World War, or the historical constructions were never of much relevance to the majority of Japanese men engaging in homosexuality. While changes are most likely to have occurred, I believe that Watanabe exaggerates when he writes that all men could engage in paederasty, as he translates danshoku, before the Meiji era and that this system was lost when modern homosexuality surfaced in the sixties

(Watanabe & Iwata 1987:127). Today all men have easy access to sex with young men, but many do not care for it, which may not have been different in earlier times.

The construction of homosexuality in historical periods as paederasty is related to ancient Greek constructions (Greenberg 1988), which have been transplanted to Japan, as evidenced by the translation of the word danshoku into paederasty. Why love of older men for younger men needs a special label, whereas the more common love of older men for younger women is hardly ever discussed as something particular, is never explicated and the only explanation I can think of is that heterosexual thought dominated most discourses throughout time and therefore homosexuality was an area that was more subject to scrutiny than heterosexuality. Foucault's writings suggest that paederastic activities gradually became less acceptable in ancient Greece, as a result of discourses concerning it (Foucault 1978, 1988A & B).

Foucault has been criticised for constructing the whole from the part, because he constructed Greek sexuality from debates among free male citizens, who made up but a small minority of those living in Athens, where his work is set (Foxhall 1994). This critique is, however, based upon a misreading. Foucault is very clear that he is not constructing a whole, but only a part. The critique should not be aimed at Foucault but at readers who misread Foucault's intentions and treat his constructions as if they are more than constructions particular of a small group in ancient Greece. As Foucault writes, the major function of constructions is to constrain behaviour. In The history of

sexuality the most revealing episode might be the one where the question of whether love of boys or love of women is morally superior leads to a discussion between Charides, whose stance is that the love of women is superior, because it is "nature" and Callicratides who argues that the love of boys is superior, because it is better than nature: it is culture (Foucault 1988B:214-224). The arbiter Lycinus declares that Callicratides is the winner of the argument, because of the purity accorded to the love of boys (Ibid.:226). But Theomnestus disagrees:

"Whereas, in order to link together pleasure and virtue, the advocates of boys stressed the absence of any sexual act, he reinstates the physical contacts that one enjoys, the kisses, the caresses, and the gratification, as the real reason for the existence of his love. Seriously, he says, they can't make us believe that the whole pleasure of this relationship is in looking into each other's eyes and in being enchanted by friendly conversation. Looking is agreeable, certainly, but it is only the first stage. After that comes touching, which thrills the whole body. Then kissing, which is timid at first but soon becomes eager. The hand does not remain idle during this time; it glides down under the clothing, squeezes the breasts for a moment, descends the length of the firm belly, reaches the 'flower of puberty', and finally

strikes the target" (Foucault referring to Plutarch 1988B:227).

Foucault interprets this as a reminder that "it is not possible (...) to keep the aphrodisia outside the domain of love and its justifications (Ibid.)," thereby suggesting that an obligation was felt to deny what was really important in the love of boys, i.e. sexual gratification, in order to keep it acceptable. While this kept paederasty in ancient Greece acceptable among free men, sex between two adult men met with strong disapproval, but nevertheless occurred (Foucault 1978, 1988B).

Constructions of homosexuality as paederasty also exist in China (Furth 1993, Hinsch 1990, Xiao 1984) and in Islamic countries (Chebel 1988, Schmitt 1992), where recent research has shown that adult men also engage in homosexual activities with adult men and that the roles of the insertor and insertee are not necessarily always clearly separated (Xiao 1984 and McGough 1981 on China, Khan 1992, Reed 1992, Sofer 1992, Tapinc 1992 and the novelist Busi 1993 on Islamic countries). This also holds for the construction of homosexuality as sex between a passive, feminine man and an active, masculine man. This construction can be related to a debate concerning male homosexuality in Mexico and among Latin Americans in north America. In Mexico and among Latin Americans homosexuality meets with strong disapproval, but bisexuality is acceptable, whereby it is assumed that the bisexual man is sexually dominant. Therefore, especially middle class men who prefer sex with men but can manage sex with women often have a heterosexual lifestyle publicly, while calling

themselves bisexual and feeling strong attraction towards men, which leaves their male sexual partners to bear the brunt of discrimination against gay men. This construction is criticised because it is not actually always true that the "bisexual" man is active and the other passive (Taylor 1986, Lumsden 1991, Murray 1992, Almaguer 1993).

The native American berdache, which was a man who dressed like a woman, did women's work, and often had ritual functions, was prevalent in many native north American tribes. The berdache has been constructed as a prototype of institutionalized homosexuality (Whitehead 1981). Berdaches have been thought to be hermaphrodites and sodomites (Ibid.). Berdaches did, however, not necessarily engage in homosexuality. Among native Americans homosexual activity was not necessarily related to gender and homosexual activity between men who otherwise had male gender attributes also has been reported. In some tribes people did not mind if male men engaged in homosexual activities, in others it met with negative sanctions (Ibid.). This suggests that the categorization of the berdache as homosexual and the view of the institution of the berdache as a niche for homosexual men, was a result of constructions concerning homosexuality prevalent among western scholars. In reality there was no direct relation between the gender crossing activities of the berdache and male homosexual activities.

Among the Sambia of Papua New Guinea there also is a famous example of ritualized homosexuality. Boys become men by fellating older men and later are fellated themselves by boys. Nevertheless, there are also men who persist in homosexual activities

beyond ritual and refuse to marry. They are regarded as "rubbish men", men who failed to become "proper" adult men (Herdt 1987). What Herdt's work suggests is that any man can engage in homosexual activity if it is culturally constructed as necessary. But it does not show that homosexuality is determined by culture. The existence of gay "rubbish men" suggests rather the contrary, which supports Whitehead's tentative conclusion that in any culture, regardless of its constructions of homosexuality, there are men who prefer to engage in homosexual activity (Whitehead 1981), which also is the only explanation for men risking death penalties for their love of men, as happens in Iran today. Hirschfeld's stress on the similarity of homosexuality throughout the world, although it may have been given partly for political motives, seems not to be far from the mark (Hirschfeld 1914:528).

In the Japanese situation it is plausible that paederasty, better translated into shōnenai (lit. love of boys) than danshoku which, as discussed in the introduction (pp.26-28) was also used to refer to love between adult men (Hirschfeld 1914:618, Saikaku 1990:180-183, Dunn & Torigoe 1969-41-44), was more readily accepted by Japanese than homosexual activity between adult men (Benedict 1977:131) and that even if the younger one was actually adult he might have presented himself as a minor or adolescent. Sex is, as discussed in chapter seven (p.288-294), seen as an activity taking place between an active and a passive person, characterized by an imbalance of power, which makes it difficult to perceive that two adult men, between whom an imbalance in power may not be evident, might engage in sex. Many gay men, and lesbian women, call their lovers ko (boy or girl, chapter six,

p.250, 259), but this does not mean that they are minors or even younger than themselves. It is a way of expressing intimacy.

A general contention among scholars I know is that modern homosexuality, that is a homosexual relationship between men who are gay rather than men who engage in gay sex (Greenberg 1988:484-486), did not come into existence in Japan until after the Second World War (e.g. Furukawa M. 1992, 1993). While this is true in the sense of modern homosexuality becoming a widely held construction, which it still is not, as discussed above, Japanese history knows examples of long-term homosexual relationships between adult men, similar to the construction of modern homosexuality. The neglect of them may be a result of a zealous following of western constructions concerning changes in homosexuality that led to people turning a blind eye to proof that did not fit in.

It seems that, apart from its recently having become a construction that is widely adhered to, there is nothing modern about modern homosexuality as an activity, as Greenberg also suggests with his writing on European men who saw themselves as gay in past centuries (Greenberg 1988:484). Just as, as discussed in chapter seven (p.294-296), the present day shōjo manga often do not present homosexuality in a realistic way, and as the mass-media have until recently persisted in depicting gay men only as prostitutes and transvestites, neglecting the majority, so are earlier writings unlikely to provide a representative picture of homosexual activities in Japanese history.

Women may be constructed as weak and dependent, as incapable of taking care of themselves and living on their own. Japanese

history provides examples of women who lived indepen^{den}tly and exercised great power, as discussed in the introduction (p.20). They have been picked up by feminist women to defy constructions of women as weak and dependent. I believe there are two reasons why gay scholars have not done the same thing. One is that there were, until very recently, no gay scholars in Japan working in this field and the second is that foreign, mostly American, gay scholars have chosen to deal with Japan as something other-worldly, something they could use to their own advantage. It seems that, rather than consider the relation of constructions that are widely adhered to actually occurring behaviour, they were content with finding constructions that did not wholly deny homosexuality its right of existence, as widely held constructions in their culture did.

While gay movements in western countries, and most pronouncedly in America, make great effort to dispel the construction of gay men as paederasts, scholars have accepted similar constructions about other cultures in history as well as in present times, without asking gay people in the cultures concerned about their activities, which, when it concerns historical data, is unfortunately impossible. Many Anglo-American lesbian and gay scholars appear to have tried to present a construction of homosexuality in their own culture that they expected to be least offensive to people having difficulty accepting anything different from a heterosexual standard. This led to the construction of homosexual relationships as relationships between two consenting adults who love and respect each other and, apart from the fact that they are both of the same

sex, are in any other respect similar to some idealized type of heterosexual relationships (Kitzinger & Coyle 1995), even though, if they would look around, they would notice that equality in relations is not that common in heterosexual as well as homosexual contexts. And why should it be?

Politics seem to have had a rather deplorable influence on gay studies in Anglo-American contexts. Maybe lesbians are not that unfortunate with having little historical constructions to deal with. Notwithstanding lesbian and gay historians' efforts to reclaim a past, it is the present that matters most and a past can be as much of a burden as anything else. Many informants, lesbians as well as gays, were little concerned with the past or the not-so-near future: they live today and are quite happy to construct their own selves without reference to history. Foucault said many years ago, when he spoke at New York University, that what was thought one way can be thought another (Greenberg, referring to Foucault, 1988:489) and therefore, I would suggest, what was thought can become irrelevant.

The idea, prevalent among anthropologists specializing in Japan (verbal communication), that married men can have gay sex on the side is in Japan generally thought to be very strange (Hikage 1987, and many informants). While bisexuality can be found in literature (e.g. Ōe 1989) and may be discussed as a possibility, I found that there is nothing remarkable about the prevalence of men who see themselves as bisexual, as discussed below, compared to European countries where I lived².

The prevalence of the use of the term nōmaru (normal) for heterosexual suggests that people have only begun to consider

heterosexuality as something particular after they came to know gay men or lesbian women in their daily surroundings. Until then they may see homosexuality as an asobi some weird people may engage in or as something that exists on television or is an interesting topic to philosophize about in academic ways. When they are made to consider the existence of homosexuality right beside them in their daily lives, in their families or in their workplaces, the meaning of homosexuality changes in the sense that it may become something anyone might be, which may produce the recognition of the self as hetero instead of nômaru. Many Japanese have as of today not realized this, but the numbers who have are growing. While Ueno wrote that homosexuality can only exist by the grace of heterosexuality, as a counter-value (Ueno 1992), it seems to be the other way around: heterosexuality only exists by the grace of homosexuality. If the existence of homosexuality is not recognised as a legitimate possibility, heterosexuality is merely "normal", an aspect of everyone and as such does not require a label. Homosexuality can change "normal" heterosexuality.

Selves.

Among feminist women there were three major themes related to asserting their emancipatory and feminist ideas. Firstly, there are women who think that they were born feminist or, more precisely, with egalitarian ideas. Already as children they felt strong disagreement with roles and patterns of behaviour assigned

to them and their childhood was in many cases characterized by conflicts with parents who wanted them to be onnarashii. Secondly, causes for embracing feminist ideas have been experiences like sexual harassment or forms of discrimination in the workplace, such as the expectation that they serve tea, problems in marital relationships, and problems with parents relating to matters such as a choice not to marry legally or a choice to pursue higher education. Thirdly, it was important that they established contact with feminist women or organizations. Among heterosexual singles things are similar. While some feel that they were born with ideas against jōshiki concerning marriage and many other realms of life in Japan and hated the wan patân (one pattern) lifestyle that they felt was forced upon them, others asserted themselves only after they saw themselves confronted by the fact that they might never marry. Likewise, contact with singles' networks or feminist groups, was often a condition for heterosexual singles to regard being single positively.

Among lesbians and gays a major problem concerns the fact that asserting oneself as gay or lesbian means that one cannot maintain a mainstream lifestyle. Unlike feminist women and assertive singles, who do not wish to have a mainstream lifestyle, many gays and lesbians are quite conservative, which may prohibit them from asserting a gay or lesbian identity. One young man said that he was heterosexual, but contradicted this by seeking sex with men. He was young, inexperienced and insecure, and said that he was heterosexual while actively courting men. Even most men who say that they are gay of his age are afraid to visit the gay bar area where I met him. In a gay bar where we sat

later that night the bartender told him that he could not be heterosexual and seek sex with men: he must at least be bisexual. On a later meeting it appeared that he felt he could not be bisexual or gay, because he was supposed to return to the countryside to continue his parents' farm after completing his studies. He would have to marry. Therefore he insisted on calling himself heterosexual, even though he was solely attracted to men and when he had sex with a woman he felt that something was not right (nanka hen).

Some liberal heterosexual men gave the explanation that all people are born with the possibility of having sex with both sexes, which is an idea that was also popular in gay circles in some western countries (Duberman 1977), but they had never experienced sex with men themselves. In the men's liberation network in Osaka I suggested that they could try and have homosexual sex, without success. They were mostly involved in long term relationships with women so deceiving them was thought to be wrong, and they simply could not imagine it to be pleasant. Feminist women, who like to use the term sisterhood to refer to intimate relationships with women, similarly do not extend this to having sex with women, even if they said that they might prefer to share their life with a woman. Gay men, on the contrary, often have sexual experiences with women and they seldom produce such explanations, which seem to be philosophical reasonings without much relation to activities. The only place where I found it to be common for heterosexual men to have sex with men is in prostitution, in which case money is their motive (Lunsing 1994C).

The philosopher Asada Akira writes in support of homosexuality (Asada 1991, 1992), but remains vague about his own sexual preference. At a recent panel discussion he was asked about it and answered that he was 30% to 40% gay and 60% to 70% straight (Asada & Hirano 1995). The influence of the Kinsey scale³ is obviously present here. Terayama Shūji and Nakazawa Shinichi, both of the same generation as Asada say that they are gay in their mind, but do not desire to engage in homosexual activities (Terayama according to informants, Nakazawa & Yōrō 1992). This position is generally ridiculed in gay circles.

Within gay groups I witnessed some debates on the question of why people become gay, in which case the whole plethora from Freud's Oedipus complex via behaviourism to the latest genetic and biological explanations are presented merely to conclude that all explanations, which are investigated seriously, lack credibility. Like many feminist women who thought that they were born feminist, most gay men thought that they were born gay and found the question why irrelevant. Lesbian women added to this that all these explanations are about gay men and leave lesbian women untouched. One way of dealing with constructions is to adapt the view of the self to them. Even if constructions are stigmatizing, people may find it easier to behave in accordance with them, because they feel that is what is expected of them (Goffman 1980). The construction of gay men as transvestites and transsexuals leads to suicides by gay men who have come to regret having taken hormones to grow breasts or sometimes even having had a sex-change operation in order to fit the construction (Kuroyanagi 1992).

The hypothesis, discussed in the introduction (p.17-18), that the fact that Japanese taught to switch between role performances from one context to another may make it relatively easy for them to cope with certain parts of themselves that they prefer to keep, needs to be qualified. While it may be easier in the sense that they have to make less effort to switch in accordance with contexts, this does not make people's feelings less problematic. It is a nayami (trouble, worry) to feel compelled to cover up part of one's being by switching role behaviour. While the idea of "multiple selves" (Kondo 1992) could very well fit in with being gay in one context and "normal" in another on the level of the "interactional self" (Lebra 1992), I found that in the end Japanese gay men see themselves as gay and lesbian women see themselves as lesbian.

Those who were closet-ed felt that their tatemae behaviour was not their self and that even what some people perceived as expressions of their honne was not either. Their view is that homosexuality is an inalienable part of their personal identity, of their inner selves, no matter whether it is expressed on the interactional level or not. In some cases it might be seen as part of the non-self, the muga, which is raw nature (Lebra 1992), and when seen as the source of homosexuality agrees very well with the ideas Japanese have of why they prefer same sex relationships. A man who forsook having sex with men in favour of marriage even wrote that his honnô (instinct) was homosexual (Yukio 1992). If homosexuality remains in the muga, homosexual activities are engaged in without the inner self of the person in question recognising it as part of his or her being: the young

man who said he was heterosexual while seeking sex with men can be seen as having been interactional in words while being muga in deeds, as was the woman, discussed in chapter four (pp.149-150), who said she was bisexual while clearly being more interested in women. Both feel that they cannot be homosexual because of their duty to continue the ie (household) they were born into.

Lebra's non-self can, perhaps, be found in sexual activity. Gay men sometimes describe sex as losing themselves. In gay magazines many men describe sexual adventures in which they were made mechakucha (incoherent, confused), which means that the partner did whatever he wished with them, without giving them much of a chance to influence the course of events, which ultimately makes them become nothing but feelings. They lose themselves in this play that seemingly has no boundaries, and indeed may in extreme cases have none. Ultimately murder may be part of the game, which clearly indicates that muga is not the same as the Sanskrit anatma, as suggested in the introduction (p.19). Whereas Indian Buddhism held that anatma was nature itself and nature was good (Carriethers 1985:254), as does Sōka Gakkai's Ikeda Daisaku, as discussed in chapter seven (p.309), critiques of Buddhism from the Trika Kaula sect of Kashmir as well as my findings suggest that muga is nature and nature itself is without value: ^{neither} good nor bad (Anderson 1985:203). It can be anything.

While activities engaged in a muga context may otherwise be regarded as hazukashii (shameful), that fact itself adds to the excitement. As discussed in chapter seven, transgressing

boundaries of decency is part of the pleasure. The lesbian couple, discussed in chapter five (p.200), that performs sadomasochist shows for audiences said, similarly, that when they were performing they were so obsessed by their play that the presence of an audience made no difference whatsoever. Becoming mechakucha is like letting a ghost out of the bottle, becoming one's most inner feelings, one's muga. As I discovered myself, people may be unaware of the possibility of these feelings until they have been experienced.

Japanese society is not different from most other societies in that in general homosexuality is viewed in ways that are difficult to accept for those it directly concerns. Typically it is "other", and the idea that one might actually meet someone who is gay or lesbian in one's daily life is alien to many people, as expressed by a woman who said her mother saw her as "ET" when she told her she was a lesbian. This, as for instance Rich (1993) has pointed out, and has also been clarified by recent Japanese lesbian and gay publications (Kakefuda 1992, Ugoku Gei. 1992, Itô 1993), often makes it difficult for people to express their attraction to persons of their own sex. While many Japanese are unclear about their own sexual preference, acceptance of one's own feelings appears to be less problematic than in many western countries. The problem is how and whether to express them.

Opposed to shame, which is felt when other people become aware of one's homosexuality, guilt over homosexuality is seldom felt, because usually people believe that it is not something they have any influence over. Guilt only comes into play when a person has wronged someone such as a spouse who has been kept in

the dark about one's homosexuality and even that seems to be a novel development. Guilt towards parents was expressed by no interviewee or informant, although empathy with parents' worries over having a child that does not live up to their hopes was, but this also cannot be helped. The problems expressed by nayami relating to homosexuality are located in the interactional self, the self that deals with society (Lebra 1992), where the question of revealing one's feelings or hiding them is constantly present.

Feminists were ridiculed in the seventies. Although feminism may be the word to describe how women think and act, feminizumu is not the word most feminists identify themselves with. As in the case of lesbians and gays, the activities and the ideology are not so much the problem as the label. For coming out in America and England labels are extremely important. Rather than what one actually does or feels, it is the label that is mentioned. Labels are short and seemingly comprehensive. Rather than acknowledging and identifying with a label, people may act and identify with the activity as long as they are engaged in it. This seems to be more characteristic of Japanese manners of identity management than in most western societies. When a major activity is uncontested and valued as positive people may use it to construct their interactional self, which is of elementary importance in work or family situations (Kondo 1990, 1992), but otherwise it may remain in their inner self or in their non-self (Lebra 1992).

Coming out towards oneself in this relation is an acknowledgement that the role of a feminist or gay, lesbian or single is a role that fits one, rather than determining one's

whole identity, as is often the case in western countries. This acknowledgement is, however, important. Although it may not seem much, it is a step away from not recognising a possibility people encompass in their selves. It is a step away from seeing oneself as the same as anyone else. It is taking a little distance from jōshiki of what men and women are, a step away from the assigned gender roles and, in that sense, a revolutionary deed in a culture where the idea that a man naturally marries a woman and vice versa is very strong and omnipresent. One identifies not directly with some particular label that is generally regarded as deviant, but one does acknowledge that one is different and at odds with the surrounding's jōshiki concerning what people are.

Changes .

One of my major questions was whether it is possible to live an openly gay, lesbian, feminist, or single lifestyle in Japan. This question I can answer with yes, it is. That I can, has much to do with the political and economical climate of today's Japan. The political climate is very liberal and there is much fear of being accused of discriminatory activities. When I went with a group of gay men to complain about the Aids policy of the Osaka city and prefectural governments the functionaries demanded that we not record anything that was being said in order to keep a friendly atmosphere. Nevertheless the talks were written about by Hirano Hiroaki and others and the city government was

criticised, but this did not lead to any change in their attitude: the talks continued. Initially they showed surprise that there was something like a gay network in Osaka, which, as one of us said, means that they must have had to try hard to overlook the many publications and television programmes in which gay individuals and networks appeared. They did not, however, do anything with the knowledge we offered, among other things that Aids testing facilities were insufficient and should be open at times other than office hours, because a working man is not likely to ask his boss for time off to have an HIV test, something they seem not to have heeded until now (more than two years later).

Nevertheless the fact that the talks continue indicates that they are willing to listen and with the increasing numbers of organized gay men, it is most likely that their influence will grow. In the end it is in the interest of Japanese society as a whole to take Aids seriously and there is no category which has as many well-informed members as gay men, something that is also true in western countries or other Asian countries, such as Thailand, Hongkong and Singapore (verbal information from personal contacts and television). Aids related activities led to the Aids Candlelight Parades in Tokyo and Kyoto in which a majority of participants were lesbian and gay (Lunsing 1994B). This certainly helped to build up the momentum for the first succesful Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade, which is a development that is most likely to occur in some other Asian countries in the near future. Aids brings together gay men for reasons other than to have sex, and once they are together, it is likely that they

will develop more activities.

The other reason why I believe that lesbian, gay, single, and feminist lifestyles are more possible in Japan today than for instance twenty years ago, is economical. A growing demand for workers has made it possible for many women to find jobs and, even if they are still underpaid and insecure compared to men's jobs, they make it possible for women to live independently of men, which also makes it possible to engage in feminism openly, without hiding their activities from husbands and fathers or to maintain lesbian lifestyles. The increase in the sheer numbers of unmarried men makes it increasingly difficult and unprofitable for companies to base their hiring and promotion policy on the question of marital status. If they do, they are bound to lose where it concerns the quality of their personnel, because their choice is limited more than the choice for companies who do not select on such criteria.

Applying this argument to a debate in two NATO countries, England and the US, which refuse access to openly gay men and lesbian women to the army, suggests that their army personnel is less highly qualified than that of other nations. Asked about the Japanese army's (euphemistically called self-defence forces; jieitai) policy concerning homosexuality, a General answered that it was not a problem and he thought that there were not many gay men in the army. This ostrich policy may have enabled gay men to serve in the army without many problems, just like they always have served in the British army. It is very unlikely that the Japanese army would try to eliminate gay men from its ranks, as is done in England.

In theory, human rights are quite well regulated and the Japanese Constitution clearly states that no discrimination can be made against adult citizens, where the term adult is not related to the marital status but to the age of the person. If one demands one's constitutional rights they seem to be granted usually, although it may take a long time. The outcome of Occur's court case against the city of Tokyo, where a youth hostel refused them lodgings because they were openly gay, was positive for Occur. The metropolitan government had to pay ianryō (compensation) for having disregarded the human rights of members of Occur. A legal framework supporting the equality of gays, lesbians, singles and feminist women already exists, although it is little made use of and it may take a long time before jurisprudence will be established that recognises our rights.

For feminists, gay men and lesbian women the early nineties were a most interesting period. Japan made great strides on the way to the improvement of their social positions, so much so, that an informant who was awarded a fellowship to study abroad decided to stay in Japan in order not to miss out on the developments. It was simply thought to be more interesting to be in Japan than elsewhere. If this momentum keeps going at the pace it has been since 1990, Japan may soon become one of the most liberal countries with regard to sexuality and possibly gender. Famous feminists increasingly let their voices be heard and they are increasingly taken seriously by the media, even leading to attempts at serious criticism (e.g. Sawada 1992), whereas they used to be laughed away. On the grass-roots level many young women who are not particularly interested in feminism are fending

for themselves and questioning the gender roles assigned to them. While many still will marry and be housewives, others will find alternative ways of living their life. Being single may not be generally seen as "normal", but the diversification of Japanese society has allowed for circles, networks and neighbourhoods, where it is not considered to be weird (hen).

When I conducted my fieldwork, already many students had decided to write dissertations on homosexuality and, even if their supervisors did not know what to think of it, I only found one case in which it was refused. Lesbian and gay circles are appearing all over the country, many at universities, but also outside them, with the latest news (1995) of new lesbian groups in Okayama, Takamatsu and Hiroshima, being brought together by way of Kakefuda Hiroko's minikomishi Labrys. While most of them initially are social rather than political, from them political ones tend to develop, as I witnessed in the Kansai during my fieldwork period.

The Japanese government is advised to take them seriously, because they are not likely to disappear. Since Japan, unlike many western countries, has no national moral system based on religion, it should be easy to adapt smoothly to the needs of people with new lifestyles. The major change needed is a change in common sense, that makes alternative lifestyles acceptable to the majority of Japanese people. This work has only just begun, but it appears to be much easier than for instance in England, where, as discussed in the introduction (p.4), open discussion seems to be difficult to achieve. Japan knows a tradition of listening to the other carefully if the other has enough power

to make herself or himself heard. This power gay men, lesbian women, singles, feminists, people in common law marriages, single parents, transvestites and transsexuals increasingly have. In fact, they may have had it all along, but not realized that they had or not have known ways of putting it to good use.

People have started to live their life the way they like it, without trying always to comply with the demands of family and society at large. Sometimes they will hit upon a boundary, but at least then they will know where the boundary is. If Kakefuda Hiroko had not decided to come out as a lesbian, lesbians in Japan might still have thought that such an action would lead to powerful negative reactions. This did not happen, nor did it in any other case I know of. The only negative reactions concern people who did not come out themselves, but were found out, which weakens one's position considerably. Boundaries are being explored and, it seems, most of them have not yet been reached. Where the allowed space ends is not clear, but it appears to be much larger than anyone expected.

Notes:

1. Jennifer Robertson writes that there is much historical evidence of female homosexuality in Japanese history, without indicating what she is referring to (Robertson 1992), but I assume that much of it is covered by the evidence I found and discussed in the introduction. This evidence does not point at widely held constructions, and it has hardly been picked up and discussed by western scholars, as Robertson notes.

2. The Netherlands, Austria, and England.

3. The Kinsey scale divides people into a scale from fully homosexual via dominantly homosexual, bisexual, dominantly heterosexual to fully heterosexual, based on people's sexual experience. On this scale any variation is possible between the two extremes (Kinsey et al. 1948).

Appendix A: Glossary.

In the glossary Japanese words and their translations are given. Page-numbers indicate where the words are introduced and **fat** where they are discussed most thoroughly, if applicable. Rather than meanings in dictionaries I present meanings as I perceived them to be present in the field.

- aijō: love, especially between spouses, 151, 155
 aijō kankei: love relationship, especially between spouses, 135
 akiramekei: give-up type, refers to giving up trying to find the ideal spouse and settling for someone less, 95
 amai: emotional dependence, 191
 aniki: older brother, 192
 arubaito: low paid, unstable jobs, 224
 asai: thin, light, 249
 asobi: play, not serious activity, 288, 333
 asobu, asonde ru: play, have fun, enjoy oneself, 95, 232, 310
 asshu: gay, Franco-Japanese pronunciation of "H", referring to homo, 235
 atatakai: warm in both meanings, 83
 atatakai katei: warm home, 164
 awase, awaseru: go along, adapt to, 231, 234, 235, 237, 267
 baisekushuariti: bisexuality, 135
 baisekushuaru: bisexual, 138
 bakabakashii: silly, stupid, ridiculous, 214, 262
 bankonka: marrying later in life, 95
 barashita: have been found out, past tense of verb barasu: be found out, 133, 136, 257
 bekkyo jijitsukon: living apart common law marriage, 98
 bekkyo kekkon: living apart marriage, 96, 127
 besshi undō: movements for obtaining the right for spouses to keep their different names in marriage, 103
 bodikon: clothes that show the lines of the body to its advantage, often short, tight, skirts, 285
 boku: I, polite masculine, may be avoided when speaking to superiors, but not necessarily, 278
 boshi katei: single mother household, 105, 165
 buraku: area where outcasts (burakumin) live or just to live, 175
 burakumin: outcasts, 175, 306
 burikkoburi: acting the ingenue, a burikko is a woman who keeps presenting herself as a naive girl, 66
 burujoa feminizumu: bourgeois feminism, 34
 chan to: properly, 113, 322
 chichinashi ko: fatherless child, 105
 chigo: Buddhist novice engaging in sexual activities with adult monks, 26, 27
 chinchin: willy, 281
 chinko: willy, 293
 chitsu: vagina, 213
 chōjo: eldest daughter, 150

- chōkōgakurekikei: high-educational-record type, referring to marriages taking place at relatively advanced age because high education was pursued, 95
- chotto rezu: a little bit lesbian, used for women who are predominantly heterosexual, but may engage in lesbian sex occasionally out of curiosity or for want of agreeable men, 50, 305
- daikirai: hate, 312
- daitokai: metropolis, 48
- daiku: dyke, 236
- danchi: public or company housing complex with high rise buildings, similar to a housing estate in England, 118, 158, 219
- danka seido: system of registration of households in buddhist temples, prevalent in the Tokugawa period (1603-1868AD), 121
- danshō: male prostitute, 272
- danshoku, also nanshoku: homosexuality, or love of men, often translated as paederasty, opposite of joshoku, 27, 324, 325, 329
- dansōsha: male dresser, female transvestite, 271
- de aru: be, 185
- debusen bā: gay bar specializing in fat men and those who seek fat men, 187
- dokushin: single, 170
- donkan: insensitive, blunt, 304
- dōseiaisha: homosexual, 242
- dōsei suru: live together, cohabit, 204
- enkai: company or other group parties with food and drink, 238
- enmusubi: tying a bond, referring to marriage, 96
- erai: great, eminent, 299
- erasō: erai-like, presenting oneself as great, eminent while not really being all that eminent, 299
- erochikku: erotic, 289
- etchi: Anglo-Japanese H, queer, abnormal, refers often to sexual activity and what is found erotic or exciting, 288, 289
- feminisuto: feminist, mostly understood as a feminist scholar, but also as a gallant man, 143, 145, 149, 161, 204, 208, 209, 213, 245, 284, 286, 289, 292, **299**, 301, 302, 305, 312
- feminizumu: feminism, 340
- fūfu yōshi: adoption of a couple that become successors to the household, 76
- fukesen bā: gay bar specializing in older men and those who seek older men, 187
- fushi katei: single father household, 105
- furin: illegitimate sex, extra-marital sex, immorality, unethical 78, 215
- futokutei tasū: indefinite number, 195
- futsū: ordinary, normal, common, heterosexual, 122, 129
- futsū ni: normally, 281
- futsū no otoko: ordinary, normal, common, or heterosexual man, 129
- fūzoku sangyō: the pleasure industry, 224
- gakkai: conference, 301

- gakusei undō: student movement, 144
- gaman suru: endure, 109, 155, 161
- gasshuku: overnight group trip, 25, 34, 40, 207, 306
- gei: gay, often understood as transvestite or transsexual, but by gay movement presented as politically correct, 129, 235, 249, 275, 307
- gei bā: gay bar, male transvestite bar, 272
- gei bōi: gay boy, occupational transvestite, male prostitute, 272, 275
- gei bōmu: gay boom, media hype concerning male homosexuality, 234, 286
- geinōkai: world of show business, 135, 318
- gei ojisan. a gay old man, 275
- gisō kekkon: camouflage marriage, 126, 142
- gokuraku: happy-go-lucky, nirwana, paradise, bliss, 293
- gomakasu: evade giving answer to a question, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235
- haigūsha: spouse, 100
- haipuri: pretty high school boy, 235
- hanamuko gakkō: bridal school for men, school where men are taught how to present themselves in order to make a woman wish to marry them, 93
- hanninmae: half a person, see also ichininmae, 75
- hanpatsu: averse, defiant reaction, 266, 280
- harenchi: shamelessness, impudence, 289
- harigata: dildo, 24
- hasu: lotus flower, 293
- hazukashii: shameful, 297, 298, 338
- hen: weird, strange, anomalous, abnormal, 136, 253, 256, 261, 279, 345
- hentai: weird, queer, anomalous, abnormal, 122, 253, 287, 288, 290
- hentaisei: queerness, abnormality, anomaly, 288
- hetero: heterosexual, 333
- hichakushutsushi: illegitimate child, legal term, 103, 104, 108
- hikon: unmarried, 84
- hishinzoku setai: non-family household, 183
- hiyatoi rōdōsha: day labourer, 115, 121
- hōkenteki: feudal, 227
- homo: gay, homo, in some circles seen as derogative, abbreviation of homosekushuaru, 132, 235, 306
- homosekushuaru: gay, homosexual, 307
- honne: real feelings, opposite of tatema, 17, 230, 231, 235, 337
- honnō: instinct, 337
- hōritsukon: legal marriage, 99, 103, 143, 180
- ianryō: compenstion or comfort money, 98, 153, 344
- ichininmae: adult, or adult married couple, 74-75, 77, 83, 84, 95
- ichininmae no onna: fully adult women, i.e. a fully adult gendered being, 75
- ichininmae no shakaijin: a fully adult person, 74
- ie: household, continued through generations, 76-77, 99, 100, 119, 120, 169
- ie seido: household system, 76, 77, 98, 100, 103, 120
- ijimekko. the victim of bullying, 279

- ijimeru: tease, abuse, 286
 ikebana: flower arranging, 81
 ima: living room, 189.
 inaka: countryside, also used to refer to town one is born, if that is not Osaka or Tokyo and one lives in one of these towns, 48, 259
 ippan jōshiki: general jōshiki, general common sense, 164
 ippanron: general theory, 285, 286
 ippan tsūkan: general feelings, 5
 ippan tsūnen: general concepts, 5
 ippu ippu sei: one man, one woman system, monogamy, in gay and lesbian context also one man one man system, and one woman one woman system, 78, 195, 196, 201, 215
 ippu tasai sei: one man, several women system, system in which a man has sexual relationships with several women simultaneously or several wives simultaneously, 78
 iseisōsha: different sex dresser, 271
 isōsha: different dresser, 271
 ittaika: physical unity, 76, 77
 ittaiteki: unified, united, in one body, 75
 iya na me: nasty eyes, negative reactions, 250
 iyarashii: disgusting, distasteful, 245, 257, 297, 298
 izakaya: Japanese style drinking and eating place, 167
 jân: exclamation used in a particular network to express shock, 73
 jei: good, Franco-Japanese pronunciation of "G", referring to desirable men among some gay men, 235
 jendā fukaishō: gender ambiguity, 271
 jibun ni au: agree with oneself, 281
 jieitai: self defence forces, euphemism for army, 343
 jijitsukon: common law marriage, 8, 98-99, 102, 103, 111, 143, 170, 173, 174, 177, 180, 183, 184, 211, 261, 266
 jinruigaku: anthropology, 44
 jōrei: local ruling, 294
 jōshiki: common sense, 5-6, 74, 79, 80, 82, 83, 87, 88, 92, 95, 101, 102, 103, 107, 118, 143, 152, 157, 158, 164, 173, 216, 217, 224, 230, 237, 239, 254, 267, 268, 277, 284, 297, 299, 313, 318, 321, 323, 324, 334, 341
 joshoku: heterosexuality, or love of women, opposite of danshoku, 27
 josōsha: female dresser, male transvestite, 271, 276
 jūminhyō: official address register, 97, 98
 jūmin todoke: registration of official address, 98
 kabuki: type of theatre, 27
 kafū: culture of the house, 99
 kafuchōsei: patriarchate, 101
 kagama yarō: young actor being taught to become onnagata and often expected to engage in prostitution, 27
 kakkō ii: handsome, good-looking, stylish, 68
 kamingu auto suru: coming out, 239
 kamu auto suru: coming out, 239
 kanojo: she, girlfriend, female partner, 251
 kanri shakai: the administration society, used in left-wing circles to refer to the power of the bureaucracy,

- which is presented as all-mighty, 52
- kanshō suru: interfere, 99
- kanzen na hetero: fully or perfectly heterosexual, 143
- kanzen na homo: fully or perfectly homosexual, 142
- kanzen na otoko: fully or perfectly male, 283
- kareshi: he, boyfriend, male partner, 248, 251
- kasō ni enjiru: overact, 279
- katai: difficult, hard, tough, inaccessible, 245, 306
- katana: sword, also symbol for penis, 293
- kateinai rikon: divorce within the household, 96, 110, 156, 322
- katte ni: just like that, 281
- kawaisō: pathetic, sad, 105
- kayoi jijitsukon: commuting common law marriage, 98
- kayoi kekkon: commuting marriage, 96
- keishiki kekkon: marriage in form, 149, 164
- keiyaku kekkon: contract marriage, marriage whereby a contract is signed to establish the date of divorce, 128
- kejime: ability to distinguish, 17
- kekkon: marriage, 96-97, 227
- kekkon besshi undō: movements for obtaining the right for spouses to keep their respective names in marriage, same as besshi undō, 149
- kekkonshiki: marriage ceremony, 102
- kekkon tekireiki: the proper age to marry, 92
- kekkon todoke: marriage registration, 98
- kenkyūkai: studygroup, studygroup meeting, 301
- ketsuen kankei: blood relationship, 183
- kichin to: properly, neatly, 113, 322
- kiku: chrysanthemum, symbol of the imperial house, also symbol for anus in gay contexts, 293
- kimochiwarui: sickening, sick, distasteful, 264, 297, 298
- kirai: dislike, hate, 180, 312
- kitanai: dirty, filthy, 219, 282
- ko: door, household, 108
- ko: boy, 250, 259
- kojin: individual, 108, 252
- kokka: state, 99
- kōmuin: civil servant: 223
- kongaishi: extramarital child, 104
- konin: marriage, legal term, 96
- konin seido: marriage system, 118
- kono michi: this way, see kono sekai, 307
- kono sekai: this world, used to refer to gay world or gay bar circuit, 307
- koseki: household register, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 112, 113, 120, 121, 174, 175, 177
- koseki seido: household registration system, 101, 102, 103, 104, 108, 113, 117, 175, 177
- kowai: frightening, frightened, but among some informants used to express shock, see also jan, 61, 73
- kurisumasu kēki: Christmas cake, also used to refer to women who remain unmarried after having become 25 years of age, 92
- kyariā ūman: career woman, career women, 94
- kyōdō seikatsu: living together, 129

- kyōmei kekkon: brother-sister marriage, marriage in which the relationship between the spouses is likened to that of a brother and sister, 128
- manga: comics, 115, 289, 294, 295, 296, 315
- manshon: concrete apartment, high-class, expensive housing in cities, 49, 221
- masutā: bartender, 197
- mechakucha: incoherent, confused, messed around, 338, 339
- meiwaku: trouble, 219, 247
- meiwaku o kakeru: cause trouble, 219, 247, 254
- memeshii: feminine, derogative of men, 277
- mesu: female, fauna terminology, 277
- miai: meeting a prospective marriage candidate, also omiaiai, 90, 91, 92
- migoto ni: dexterously, 315
- mikon: not yet married, single, 84
- minikomi, also minikomishi: small scale publications or magazines, mostly produced by politically oriented groups and organizations, but also by individuals and not politically oriented organizations, 37, 126, 157, 243, 257, 294, 345
- miriyokuteki: charming, 126
- mizu ga au: the water meets, getting along with, 281
- mr. redii: Mr. Lady, occupational transvestite, 272
- muga: non-self, 18, 337, 338, 339
- muko yōshi: adopted husband, refers to type of marriage in which the husband adopts the name of the house he marries into and eventually becomes the successor to the head of household, 76
- muko yōshi kekkon: marriage in which the husband is adopted into a household, see muko yoshi, 77
- mura hachibu: ostracism, 229
- nachuraru ni: naturally, 280
- naien: common law marriage with the intention of legal marriage, 99, 112, 154
- nakineiri: crying oneself to sleep, 293
- nakōdo: marriage go-between, 90
- namakemono: sluggard, 159
- nanka chigau: something's not quite right, 160
- nanka hen: something's not quite right, same as nanka chigau, 335
- nayami, nayamu: worry, trouble, be troubled, 87, 254, 310, 337, 340
- nayanda: past tense of nayamu, 243
- nazo: riddle, enigma, 256
- niisan: older brother, polite way of addressing young and middle aged men, 233
- ninchi suru: recognize, 107
- nōmaru: normal, 122, 131, 241, 332, 333
- nonke: straights, used in gay circles, 280
- nyū hāfu: new half, half man, half woman, man who uses hormones and/or silicone transplants to have breasts and look feminine, transvestite, man, 274, 275, 276
- nyūseki: entering the register, i.e. koseki, 97, 120
- nyū ōman: new women, new woman, 20, 21, 211
- obāchan: granny, 283

- obasan: aunt, way of addressing middle aged women, 233
okaeri: welcome back, 257
okama: cooking pot, often derogative; feminine gay man, transvestite man, male prostitute, 107, 264, **272**, 275, 280, 283, 296
okama bâ: male transvestite bar, 272
okashii: weird, funny, strange, 132
ôki na: big, 278
okoge: residue that sticks to cooking pot (okama), hence fag hag, 296
OL: Office Lady, female clerical worker, 177
omocha: toy, play-thing, 140
omoiyari: empathy, **185**, 190, 191, 211
omiaai: see miaai, 91, 122, 123, 129, 150, 176, 177, 226, 227
onabe: cooking pot, lesbian, masculine woman, transvestite woman, 272, 279
onabe bâ: female transvestite bar, 272
onê kotoba: gay camp speech, effeminate speech used by men, 237, 283
onnagata: men who play female parts in kabuki theatre, 27, 272
onna no ko: girl, 146, 248
onna no shiawase: women's happiness, marriage, 79
onnarashii: womanlike, 277, 334
ooshii: masculine, derogative of women, 277
ore: I, masculine, not polite, 278
ossan: derogative for oisan, middle-aged man, older man, 210
ossantachi: plural of ossan, 239, 283
osu: male, fauna terminology, 277
otoko asobi: playing with men, male homosexual activities, 140
otoko no ko: boy, 146
otoko petto kei: man as pet type, referring to marriage in which the woman is older or has a higher position in society than the man, 95
otokorashii: manlike, 277
otona: adult, 278
otôto: younger brother, 192
penisu: penis, 294
puro-resurâ: professional wrestler, 284
rabu chairudo: love child, 103, 104
rankôgata: promiscuity, 198, 199
renai: love, 90
renai kankei: love relationship, 135
renai kekkon: love marriage, 91
rezu: lesbian, often seen as derogative, abbreviation of rezubian, 285
rezubian: lesbian, 25, 50, 204, 205, 207, 302, 305, 306
rezubian bûmu: lesbian boom, media hype, concerning lesbian women, 25
rezubian no obasan: elderly lesbian woman, 206
rezubian separetisuto: lesbian separatist, 207, 305, **306**
rikai dekinai: cannot understand, incapable of understanding, 247
rikon: divorce, 109, 154
rikutsuppoi: argumentative, know-all, 86, 268
ryôsei guyu: hermaphrodite, 275
ryôtô: double sworded, bisexual, 141

- S: short for sisterhood or shisutáfuddo, 24, 258
- samurai: warrior, 27, 75, 80, 120
- sabetsu yōgo: discriminatory term, 277, 305
- san: Mr., Ms., Mrs., 114, 176, 218
- san K: three K, three highs, referring to tallness, high educational record and high occupational position of men, 93
- sarariiman: salaried worker, company employee, 179, 191, 226, 274, 289
- sei ippai: fully, to the full, to the utmost, 155
- seken: the surrounding world, the outside world, the surrounding people, the neighbourhood, other people, 91, 110, 125, 134, 158, 225, 226
- sekentei: public face, 78
- sekkusu wākā: sex worker, 290
- semeru: tease, torture, 288
- sentō: public bath, 42
- shakai byōri: social disease, 86
- shakaigaku: sociology, 44
- shigusa: manner of movement, 237
- shimin undō: citizen's movement, 178
- shindoi: tiresome, 178
- shinguru, single, 84, 170
- shinrai dekiru: trustworthy, 246
- shinzoku setai: family household, 184
- shiseiji: illegitimate child, 103, 104
- shisutáfuddo: sisterhood, referring to a bond between women as opposed to men, also S, 24, 258, 303
- shitsurei: impolite, 246
- shizen: nature, natural, 6, 280
- shōgatsu: New Year's days, usually three days, but shōgatsu parties may be held weeks later, 229
- shōjo manga: girls' comic, 294, 295, 296, 297, 315, 330
- shōkōgun: syndrome, 87
- shōnenai: love of boys, paederasty, 329
- shufu ronsō: discussion about the housewife, 88
- shūi: environment, surrounding people, 131
- sōsharu rezubian: social lesbian, used to refer to women who live with women or prefer to be with women without being sexually engaged, 50, 204, 302, 305
- sono koto: that, used to refer to homosexuality in order to avoid the word homosexuality, 236
- soto: outside, opposite of uchi, 17
- suru: do, 185
- suteki: stylish, fashionable, 68, 295
- tada no sukebe: just lewd, just a lecher, 154, 206, 260
- tada no tomodachi: just friends, 234
- tanshin funin: one spouse temporarily living elsewhere for the sake of work, 96, 174
- tarento: talent, television personality without apparent talents, 110
- tatemaie: face behaviour, opposite of honne, 17, 230, 231, 337
- tekitō ni awaseru: go along as fits the situation, adapt to the situation, 234
- tennōsei: emperor system, 167

- tokutei no: steady, definite, 195
tomodachi: friend, 46, 234
tomodachi kekkon: friendship marriage, 128
toransubesutaito: transvestite, 271
toransu jendâ: "trans gender", referring to people who have attributes that are not generally attributed to their sex, 71, 270-271
tsukiai: personal relationships, 224
tsurai: painful, bitter, hard to bear, 134, 178, 238
uchi: inside, opposite of soto, 17, 230, 299
ukiyoe: picture of the floating world, 24
Ôman ribâ: women's libber, 299
Ôman ribu: women's lib, 20, 144, 284, 299, 300, 301, 306
urusai: troublesome, 113
usotsuku: lie, 232, 235
wagamama: selfish, self-centered, egoistic, but also used proudly and positively to discern oneself from other people with not much of an own will, 157
wakasen bâ: gay bar specializing in young men and those who seek young men, 187
wakashû: young actor being taught to become onnagata and often expected to engage in prostitution, 27
wan patân: one pattern, the same as everyone, 334
watashi: I, polite, 278
yakuza: Japanese maffia, 137
yancha: tomboy, 277, 278
yasashii: kind, friendly, 151
yasuragi no ba: a place to be at ease, to relieve stress, 299
yogoresen: dirt lovers, men who like to have sex with day labourers, 121
yome: bride, also yome-san, 119, 158
yome o morau: receiving a bride, marrying for man, 96
yome-san: bride, also yome, 102
Zainichi Kankoku-/Chôsen-jin, Koreans living in Japan, respectively aligned to southern (Kankokujin) and northern (Chôsenjin) Korea, 72

Appendix B: Research groups.

This list includes groups participant observation was conducted with, indicated by P.O., as well as groups on which data were sought through interviewing members, reading their writings, and writings about them. Pol. stands for political, soc. for social, and stud. for study oriented.

Feminist groups

Pâpuru: Sei Bôryoku o Yurusanai Onnatachi no Rôdô Kumiai: Purple: Women's Labour Union against Sexual Violence. Pol.

Onnatachi no Rôdôkumiai: Women's Labour Union. Pol.

Other emancipatory groups

Menzu Ribû Kenkyûkai: Men's Liberation Study Group. P.O., stud., soc.

Kakushinhan?: Shinguruzu: Crime of Conviction?: Singles, also Shinguruzu Netto: Singles' Network. P.O., stud., soc.

Dokushin Fujin Renmei: Single Women's League. Pol., stud., soc.

Onna no Ishibumi no Kai: Women's Group of the Commemoration Stone. P.O., soc.

Hitori Aruki no Kai: Group of people who Walk Alone. P.O., stud.

Fûfu Besshi no Hoseika o Jitsugen suru Kai: Group for the Realizaion of Legalisation of different Names for Spouses. pol.

Fûfu Bessei Sentakusei o Susumeru Kai: Group for the Promotion of Free Choice of different Names for Spouses. pol.

Shusseï Sabetsu no Kaihô o motomeru Onnatachi no Kai: Women's Group that seeks Liberation from Birth Discrimination. pol.

Gay and gay and lesbian groups.

JILGA: International Lesbian and Gay Association Japan. P.O.

Akâ: Ugoku Gei to Rezubian no Kai: Occur: Group of Moving Gays and Lesbians. P.O., pol., soc., stud.

OGC: Osaka Gei Kummyuniti: Osaka Gay Community. P.O., pol., stud., soc.

Ru Kurabu Asshu: Le Club H, P.O., soc., stud., pol.

DON!: (Do Over Naturally!). P.O., soc.

Puapua: Sekushuariti to Jendâ Kaihō Dantai: Group for the Liberation of Sexuality and Gender. P.O., pol., stud., soc.

Kamigata DJ Kurabu: Kamigata DJ Club, P.O., soc., stud.

Fain Kurabu, later Puraimu Kurabu: Fine Club, Prime Club, P.O., soc.

B-nettowâku, in Osaka B-nettowâku Kansai, later in Tokyo Kokoro no Nettowâku: B (Buddhist) Network, Network of the Heart. P.O., soc., stud.

Out & About, International lesbian and leisure circle. P.O., soc.

Lesbian groups

Regumi: Lesbian Group, soc., stud., pol.

LIO: Lesbians in Occur. soc., pol., stud.

YLP, later OLP: Yancha Rezubian Pawâ, Osaka Rezubian Pawâ: Tomboy's Lesbain Power, Osaka Lesbian Power. P.O., pol., soc., stud.

Takefuda Hiroko's Lesbian Network. P.O., soc., stud., pol.

Miscellaneous groups and circles

Renai no Tatsujin Kōza: Course for becoming an Achiever in Love. P.O., stud., soc.

Ueno Chizuko Zemi: Ueno Chizuko's Seminar, P.O., stud. soc.

KKSK: Kansai Kazoku Shakaigaku Kenkyūkai: Kansai Study group of Sociology of the Family. P.O., stud.

Umechika Fōramu: Umechika Forum, P.O., pol., stud., soc.

Damu Taipu: Dumb Type, theatre performance group. P.O., soc., pol. stud.

Diamond, Shanghai Love Theater, drag performance group, P.O., soc.

Kyoto-based Private Network of people involved in activities concerning gender, sexuality and Aids. P.O., soc., pol.

Osaka-based Private Network of people involved in traditional

left-wing activities and feminist activities. soc., pol., P.O.

Tokyo-based Private Networks similar to the two above., P.O.,
soc., pol.

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