

(1) Overview of Japan

1-1) Land and Society

a) Location and Physical Features

Japan is an island nation situated off the eastern coast of the Asian continent. The nation's roughly 7,000 islands extend in an arc of about 3,000 kilometres northeast to southwest. Total land area, if the Northern Territories are included, is 377,837 square kilometres, nearly 1.5 times the land area of the United Kingdom.

b) Land Use

- Area by landforms: mountainous areas (230,331 km²: 61,0%), hilly areas (44,337 km²: 11,8%), plateau (41,471 km²: 11,0%), lowland (51,963 km²: 13,8%) and inland waters (9,232 km²: 2,4%).
- Area by land use: rice fields, farms, orchards, etc. (69,294 km²: 18,6%), forests, woodland and wasteland (268,531 km²: 72,1%), building sites (17,702 km²: 4,7%), trunk line and road sites (6,659 km²: 1,8%), lakes, marshes and rivers (9,597 km²: 2,6%) and seashores and unclassified land (761 km²: 0,2%).

c) Population

As of 1st October, 1997, the population of Japan is about 126,166,000: 61,805,000 for men and 64,361,000 for women.

The ageing trend in Japan is moving forward in full force. In 1997, for the first time ever, there were more people in the 65-and-over age group (with an increase of 0.741 million over the year before) than in the 0-14 age group, whose numbers decreased by 0.28 million from 1996. There are now 59 times more people 100 years older than there were 37 years ago.

d) Population Concentration

Starting around 1960, there was a shift in population to the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya areas, with resulting depopulation of regional areas. From the 1980's, this shift in population continued only regarding the Tokyo area, but its pace has slowed since 1988. The population in these three urban areas now exceeds 43% of the total national population.

e) Religion in Japan

Since freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution, the government does not conduct statistical surveys on religion. The "Religion Yearbook" issued by the Agency for Cultural Affairs contains data provided voluntarily by religious organisations. According to this data, the

number of members of religious organisations in Japan is about 208 million or close to twice the country's total population (Shintoism: 49.2%, Buddhism: 44.7%, Christianity: 1.5%, Other religions: 5.2%).

f) Total number and size of Homes

Japanese homes have been mocked as “rabbit hutches,” but housing surveys carried out every five years show steady improvements. In the last 25 years, the per capita floor space has increased 1.9 times from 5.6 tatami to 10.4 tatami (one tatami, or straw mat, is approximately 180cm × 90cm). The number of rooms per home has risen by about 26%. The total number of homes has roughly doubled.

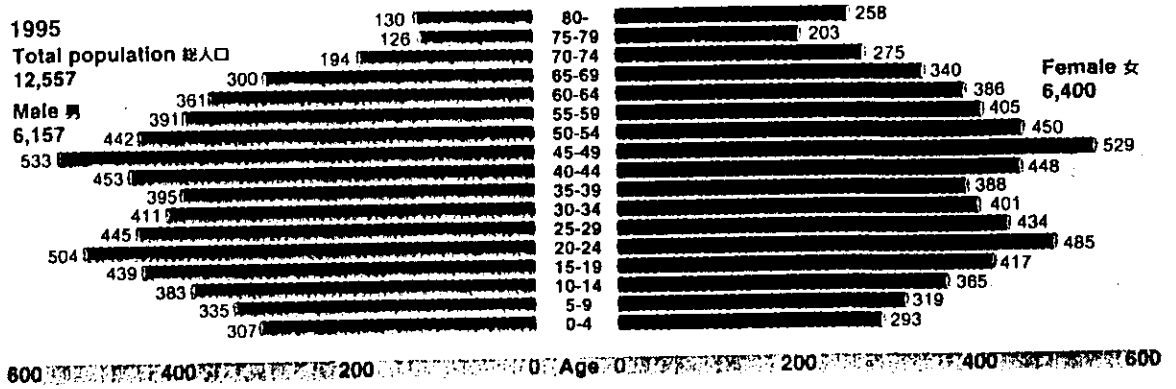
With respect to housing conditions, Japan still lags behind Europe and North America. In Tokyo, the cost of a residence is 12.9 times a person's annual income (9.5 times in the Osaka area,), in comparison to 2.9 times in New York.

国土庁 監修 (1993): 平成 5 年版 国土統計要覧、大成出版社

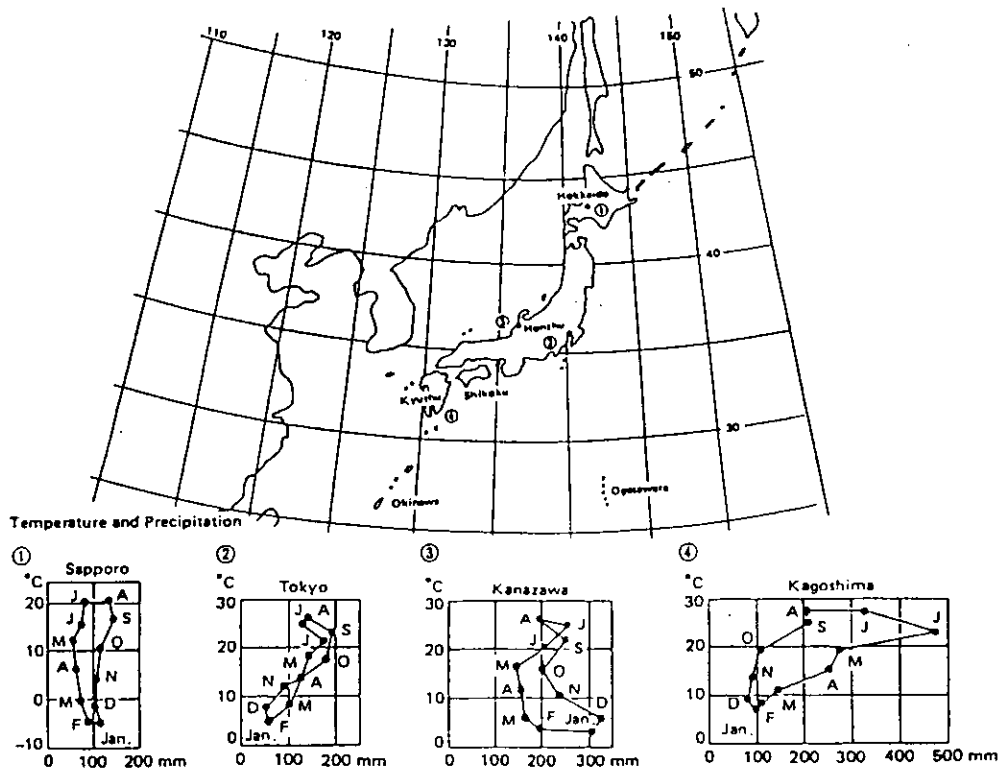
Asahi Shinbun (1998): Asahi shinbun Japan Almanac 1999

(1) Overview of Japan 1-1) Land and Society

Population in 1995



Location of Japanese Archipelago



Asahi Shinbun (1998): Asahi shinbun Japan Almanac 1999

Nature Conservation Bureau, The Environment Agency (1999): Nature Conservation in Japan

(1) Overview of Japan

1-2) Political and Economy

a) Capital City: Tokyo

b) Main ethnic group and Language: Japanese

c) Political System: constitutional monarchy (the Emperor: as the Symbol of State)

d) Legislation, Administration and Justice

According to the Constitution, the Diet is the sole legislative organ, the Cabinet is the executive organ and the law courts are the judicial organ. These three branches are separate. The Constitution is the basic law of the land, and none of the legislative, executive or judicial branches may violate its provisions.

e) Budget: Initial budget of FY1998 was ¥776,692(unit: 100million).

f) Gross Domestic Product

The gross domestic product (GDP) is the total amount of added value of goods and services created by producers with operations in a country, including foreign-affiliated enterprises and foreign workers. Whereas the GNP deals with the economic activity of all the members of a nation, including those living overseas, the GDP shows the size of economic activity and economic conditions that occur within a country. In Europe and the U.S., GDP-based statistics form the mainstream. In view of the increase in Japanese investments overseas, Japan, too, changed the base of statistics from GNP to GDP in 1993. The rate of increase in the GDP is the economic growth rate.

A breakdown of the world GNP/GDP in 1997 (nominal) is as follows: U.S.A. 78,240 (26.5%), Japan 41,951 (14.2%), EU 80,801 (27.4%) / Germany 20,899 (7.1%), France 13,941 (4.7%), U.K. 12,825 (4.3%), Italy 11,454 (3.9%), Asia 31,567 (10.7%), Latin America 20,031 (8.8%), Middle East 13,544 (4.6%), Oceania 4,661 (1.6%), East Europe 3,796 (1.3%), Africa 4,061 (1.4%) etc.

g) Domestic and Foreign Price Gap

The high level of prices in Japan is widely known. The Economic Planning Agency conducted a survey of Tokyo and four U.S. and European cities in terms of the overall cost of living. It found that the cost of living in Tokyo was 1.33 times higher than in New York, 1.28

times than in London, 1.19 times than in Paris and 1.24 times than in Berlin.

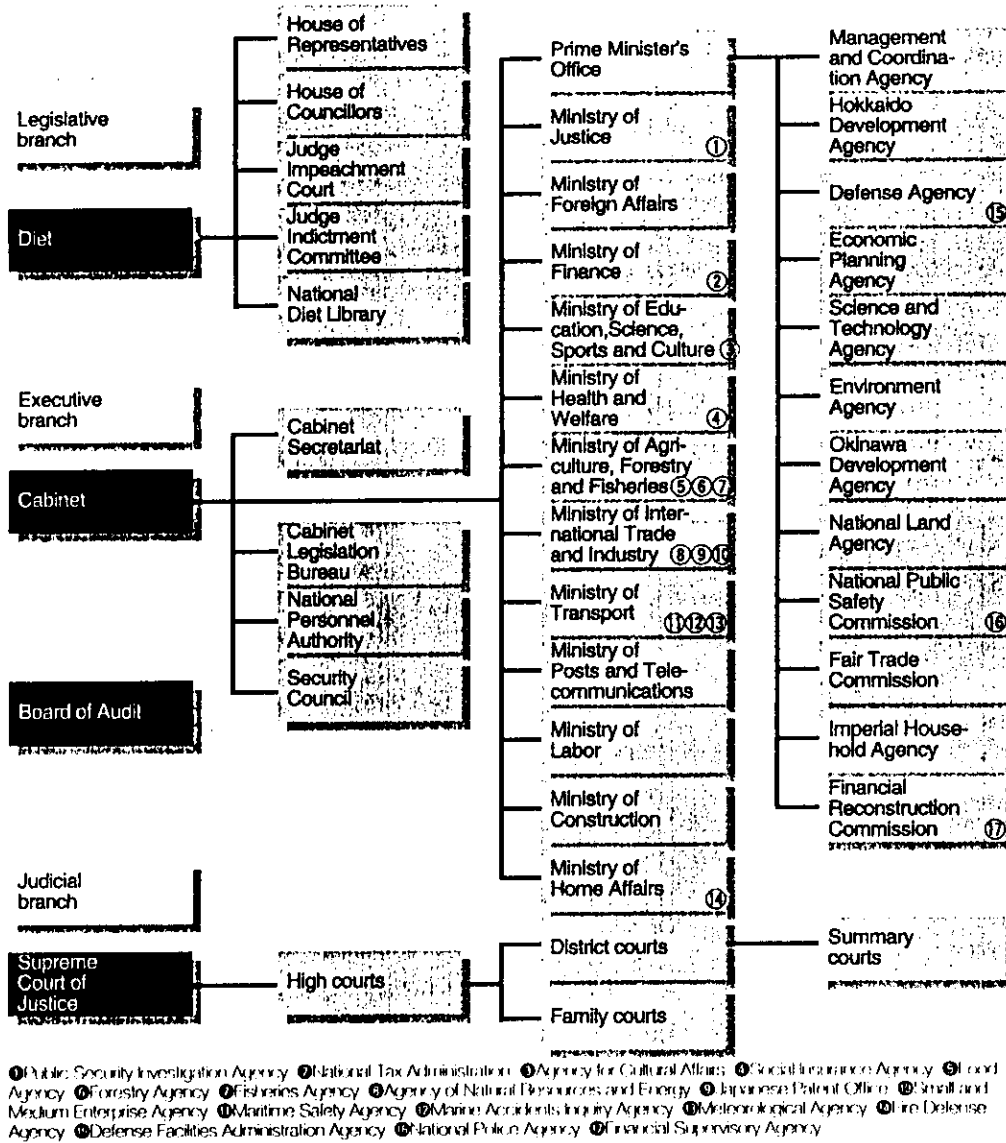
h) Education and Adult Literacy.

- Education system: 6-3-3-4 schooling system (9 years of compulsory education);
- Adult literacy rate: 99% (for both men and women) in 1989.

東京書籍 (1991): 世界各国要覧 6 訂版

Asahi Shinbun (1998): Asahi shinbun Japan Almanac 1999

(1) Overview of Japan 1-2) Political and Economy
 Government organisation (As of Oct., 1999)



Asahi Shinbun (1998): Asahi shinbun Japan Almanac 1999

