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“The Waste of Society as Seen through Women’s Eyes”: waste, gender, and national belonging in Japan

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Chapter 2

“Uncovering the Waste of Society:”

Women and the Japanese State in Wartime Waste Campaigns, 1937-1945

“...[A]lthough most women commonly remain inside the home, for the eyes of these women to go out in the streets and uncover the waste of society is extremely enlightening for women, and is also quite a splendid thing for society now...”

Josei Tenbō, August 1938

The relationship between women and the modern Japanese state, particularly during the period of the Asia-Pacific War (1937-1945), has been a subject of deep interest for historians of Japan in recent years. Muta (1994) observes that during the state-led “modernization” of the Meiji period (1868-1912), a new ideology of the home (*katei*) began to emerge which placed women at the center of family life: “At this point, the woman became the center of the household, the *shufu* or housewife, who devoted herself to raising her children and serving her husband and his parents” (Muta 1994, 54). This “feminization and privatization of the home” made it “the women’s place, excluded from the public sphere, though linked intimately to the national interest” (Muta 1994, 54). Koyama (1999, 2014) argues that the connection between women and the state, which had previously been only through their husbands and children, became a direct relationship after the First World War once the state realized the importance of the household to national policies: “Through their domestic responsibilities women came to build a connection with the nation and its politics, and when the importance of the family in terms of executing national policies was realized there were more opportunities for women to contribute to public debate” (Koyama 2014, 97). This creation of a direct relationship between women and the state through women’s domestic duties signified the incorporation of women in to the nation-state (*josei no kokuminka*).

In this chapter, I will follow Germer et al. 2014 in “distinguish[ing] between the nation as an entity with which its citizens have an emotional or cultural identification,” “the state as a series of institutions of governance,” and “the hyphenated ‘nation-state,’ which combines both of these dimensions” (Germer et al. 2014, 2). For the most part, this chapter deals with the Japanese “state” in terms of its policies, but Koyama’s conception of *josei no kokuminka* concerns women’s connection to

both the “state” and the “nation,” and in her English publications she translates this phrase as “the incorporation of women into the nation-state” (Koyama 1999; Koyama 2014). I will therefore use the term “nation-state” when referring to themes related to *josei no kokuminka*. As for English terminology related to the word *kokumin*, Koyama (2014, 98) notes, “Depending on the political system at different times in Japanese history, *kokumin* could either be rendered as ‘national subject’ or ‘citizen;’” in this chapter I will primarily use the phrase “national subject” for *kokumin*. *Josei no kokuminka* refers to the process of women becoming *kokumin*, and can alternately be translated as “the incorporation of women into the nation-state” (Koyama 2014), “the nationalization of women” (Ueno 2004), or “the conversion of women into national subjects” (Narita 1998). Here I will primarily use the phrase “the incorporation of women into the nation-state” to refer to this concept.

The incorporation of women into the nation-state is closely connected to the wartime mobilization of women on the home front. Narita (1998) contends that it was women’s mobilization in the 1930s (from the 1931 Manchurian Incident that began the hostilities that eventually erupted into full-scale war in 1937) that enabled women’s full integration into the nation-state: “Total war brought the ‘conversion of women into national subjects’” (Narita 1998, 142). Similarly, Frühstück (2014) argues that it was “after the Sino-Japanese conflict turned into a full-blown war on 7 July 1937” and the express mobilization of women on the “home front”¹⁷ that women became national subjects: “The notion of female virtues being manifested in ‘good wives and wise mothers’ was transformed, and by the mid-1930s every woman was a national subject (*hitori no kokumin*) who was supposed to join the war effort ‘for the nation’ (*okuni no tame*) by fulfilling home duties while men fought outside the country at the front line” (Frühstück 2014, 168).

However, while war may indeed have been the catalyst for the integration of women into the nation-state, it was not the “total war” that emerged during the later years of the Asia-Pacific War that initiated the change, but rather the Japanese government’s observation of the home front activities of the Western nations involved in the First World War. Koyama describes the efforts of both the Education Ministry and the War Ministry to investigate and report on the home front activities of women in European countries; from these observations, Koyama argues, “the government realized the necessity of developing the latent power of women away from the home, in activities other than housework and child rearing” (Koyama 1994, 38-39). This shift, which necessitated changes to the “good wife, wise mother” ideal, sparked increasing interest in the household as a source of national strength (Koyama 2014). The social policies aimed at strengthening household finances and improving daily life of various government

¹⁷ Although this chapter is focused on women’s role on the Japanese “home front,” it is important to remember that women were also mobilized, in gendered ways, on the battle front. Frühstück discusses women’s roles on the battle front as army nurses and as sex slaves euphemistically termed “comfort women” (*ianfu*), and at the end of the war as soldiers on the front line in the Battle of Okinawa (Frühstück 2014, 170-176).

ministries beginning in the late 1910s were successful in mobilizing women to achieve these state aims, and were a direct precursor to the wartime mobilization of women on a larger scale.

The topic of women's relationship with the state specifically during the war years has received significant attention. In particular, Japanese feminist scholars have addressed the question of the war responsibility of both the leaders of the women's movement (Suzuki 1986) and of ordinary women mobilized for the war effort (Kanō [1987] 1995). In examining women's participation in the war, both Suzuki and Kanō "emphasize the collaborative aspects of such participation" (Narita 1998).

This chapter will also discuss the question of women's agency in cooperation with the Japanese state during the war, in order to highlight the complex nature of the relationship between women and the Japanese state both during and before the war. The term "mobilization" (*dōin*) strongly implies a vertical relationship between the mobilizer (usually a governmental authority) and the mobilized. This is certainly the case in most instances of wartime mobilization, in which both natural and human resources are managed and directed by the state toward the goal of military victory (Yamanouchi 1998, 3). However, a narrow focus on state objectives and strategies can elide the contributions and initiatives of the citizens being mobilized.

The state was of course the primary force behind women's wartime mobilization activities. But above and beyond enthusiastically participating in such activities, there were also cases where women devised and implemented their own efforts to support the war. This chapter will use waste-related wartime activities as a lens through which to examine women's shifting relationship with and role within the Japanese state, with a particular focus on the agency and initiative of women's groups. Waste is an ideal arena to examine this relationship between women and the state because of its inherent connections between the private – the home and especially the kitchen – and the public – it must be removed from the home and dealt with more or less communally. During the war years, waste became a topic of especial interest to the state because of its potential effects on the wartime economy: reducing household waste could stretch scarce resources a little further, and collecting certain types of household waste could potentially provide materials necessary for the war effort. The location of these materials, this waste, in the home necessitated the cooperation of women and, while women had already been "mobilized" to a certain extent even before the Asia-Pacific War, during wartime waste became an increasingly important target for women's mobilization. As the examples presented in this chapter show, this mobilization was largely directed by the state from above, but there were also occasions in which women organized their own "mobilization" efforts, with their own goals and targets, in support of the nation and the war.

This chapter will first explore the continuity between the mobilization of women in pre-war social campaigns and wartime mobilization of women, followed by a discussion of wartime women's organizations. It will describe the waste-related mobilization activities that occurred during the wartime

period and the various groups that contributed to them, and go on to touch on the subject of women as active agents in wartime mobilization activities. It will then examine the 1938 “Finding Waste in the Streets” campaign, analyzing this event’s significance in demonstrating women’s proactive efforts to define their own position within the nation-state.

Mobilization of Women in Peace and War in the Early Twentieth Century

The modern Japanese state’s efforts to shape its own development, promulgate specific ideologies, and manage the lives of its populace have been the subject of numerous scholarly works (see, e.g., Gluck 1985, Koyama 1991, Garon 1997). In particular, the period following World War I saw a dramatic increase in social policies aimed at improving the lives of ordinary citizens. Koyama Shizuko attributes this shift to a newfound recognition on the part of the state of the importance of the household (*katei*) to the success of domestic policies (Koyama 1999). Beginning in the late 1910s, the social policies of government ministries began specifically targeting women as the central figures of the household.

[During the early 1920s], the Ministry of Education embarked upon the first of several “daily life improvement campaigns” (*seikatsu kaizen undō*), which proved more appealing to the middle classes. The improvement campaigns similarly urged the populace to be thrifty, yet they also introduced methods of bettering the quality of life by means of scientific budgeting, better nutrition and hygiene, and avoiding wasteful spending on festivals, alcohol, and tobacco. (Garon 1997, 11)

These campaigns established a direct relationship between women and the state through women’s domestic duties, newly recognized to be of national importance. The areas in which women were encouraged to interact with the state were those associated with the domestic sphere: housework, cleanliness, and hygiene; child-rearing and childhood education; home economics (thrift and frugality); nutrition, etc. This new discourse invited women to see their role as mothers and housewives as contributing directly to the strength of the nation, and created space for women to enter the public sphere, if in narrow and prescribed ways. As a result, women’s participation in public spaces and public discourse increased throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Koyama describes this development as the initial establishment of a direct (rather than indirect, through husbands and children) relationship between women and the state, and as an extremely significant development in the process of the incorporation of women into the nation state (*josei no kokuminka*) (Koyama 1999).

Prewar social campaigns, which engaged the populace in activities directed toward achieving specific state goals, have been likened to wartime mobilization. As Sheldon Garon has observed, “the modern Japanese state has managed its society in peacetime much as Western democracies have done only while at war” (Garon 1997, 13). Koyama describes the state’s goal in these prewar campaigns as the mobilization of women:

Eventually, on the grounds that women were the ones responsible for consumer economics and household education, called for the cooperation of households with state policies, and in the Campaign to Encourage Diligence and Thrift, the Public and Private Economic Austerity Campaign, and the Moral Suasion Mobilization Campaign, the state aimed for the mobilization of women [*josei no dōin*]. (Koyama 1999, 264)

In fact, the initial mobilization of Japanese women on the home front in the Asia-Pacific War was largely indistinguishable from prewar mobilization in social campaigns; women’s mobilization, until the last years of the war, was centered on their domestic duties. The difference between prewar and wartime mobilization of women was one of degree, not of kind.

During the Asia-Pacific War, Japan did not mobilize its female population in the labor force to the same extent as other combatant nations (Mathias 1999, Miyake 1991). Mobilization of women in Japan was circumscribed out of an express desire on the part of government leaders to preserve the family system:

In Japan, however, we observe a great reluctance to employ women, except at the lowest level of the economy. In a February 1942 speech to the Diet, the Japanese Minister of Health and Welfare, Koizumi Chikahiko, proudly stated that in order to secure its labour force, the enemy was drafting women, but in Japan, out of consideration for the family system, the Japanese would not draft them (cited in Havens 1975: 919-920). Throughout the war, Japanese women were never forcefully drafted into the labour force, unlike the case in the United States and Great Britain. Nevertheless, as the war dragged on, the rapidly growing demand for female labour forced the Japanese government to make various attempts to tap the under-utilized reservoir of female labour. These attempts, which emphasized voluntary action and relied on the patriotic spirit of the women, were, on the whole, not very successful. (Mathias 1999, 65)

Wartime mobilization of women in Japan was implemented, similarly to the mobilization of women in the state campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s, with the mindset that women’s social role was

primarily as the center of the home and family, and activities outside the home, even when undertaken in support of state goals, should not interfere with women's domestic duties. Mackie (2003) notes that women's wartime efforts often emphasized the connection between such activities and the home, even when women had to leave the home to perform them:

The activities of the National Women's Defence Association thus preserved gendered divisions of labour whereby men were responsible for fighting for the women and children at home, while women supported those activities. Activities such as thrift campaigns or the collection of scrap and waste materials reinforced this connection. The association also, however, brought women out of the kitchen to perform their support activities in the streets where they collected donations, and at the ports and railway stations where they assembled to farewell departing soldiers. The very juxtaposition of the two phrases 'National Defence' (*Kokubō*) and 'Women' (*Fujin*) suggested that these activities had national significance, and the association was formed under the slogan 'National defence starts in the kitchen' (*Kokubō wa Daidokoro kara*). (Mackie 2003, 104)

Kanō further explains that under wartime mobilization, women's activities outside the home were in fact still seen as "domestic" and in accordance with the family system because in total war, the country itself – the "home front" – became the home: "Men to the front line overseas and women to the home front... In a situation of total war that was also a war of aggression, norms concerning the existing gendered division of labour that made a distinction between the 'inside' (the home) and the 'outside' were, at a stroke, expanded to the whole of the state" (Kanō [1987] 1995, 67, quoted in translation in Ueno 2004, 44).

Ueno (2004) sees the state's reliance on the maintenance of the family system even in war as a strategy of "gender segregation," or "the nationalisation of the private sphere while maintaining the gender role assignment" (Ueno 2004, 43). In this system, which maintained the Japanese state's family ideology, "what the state expected of women on the home front was that they would play the roles of 'reproductive soldiers' and of 'warriors in the economic war'. [...] We can add to this the role of consumer, or put another way 'lifestyle reform' (the name for frugality and contribution)" (Ueno 2004, 44). However, as the war progressed and women's labor became urgently required outside of the home, this "gender strategy" began to break down. According to Miyake (1991), although the Japanese state realized the necessity of drafting women into the labor force towards the end of the war, it was unwilling to completely abandon its dedication of the family system:

It was not until August 1944, when a scarcity of raw materials and a series of air raids had already interrupted production, that the wartime cabinet decided to implement compulsory conscription of women for the munitions industry. Even then, the conscription ordinance applied only to widows and unmarried women between the ages of twelve and forty and specifically excluded those women “pivotal [*konjiku*] to a family” – that is, women in their procreative years whose roles as housewives and mothers were indispensable for family cohesion. (Miyake 1991, 267)

Ueno attributes the difficulty faced by the Japanese state in its attempts, late in the war, at mobilizing women for the labor force to its choice of the “gender segregation” strategy: “It was fine while the role of the ‘warriors in the economic war’ was limited to consumer activities within the household, but once women’s labour was demanded in the domain of production (due to a shortage of male labour) a conflict between this and motherhood emerged. Women’s policy under the total mobilization system showed plainly the difficulties of this gender strategy” (Ueno 2004, 49).

Similarly, Sandra Wilson points out the “basic contradictions” of the state’s wartime rhetoric on women’s duties: “there was a straightforward clash between, on the one hand, the strong focus of the state-sponsored women’s associations on home and motherhood, and, on the other, the same state’s need for women to be active outside the home. [...] By the end of the war, the notion that family and state necessarily supported each other was bankrupt” (Wilson 2006, 210-211). In this sense, wartime mobilization of women challenged prevailing conceptions of the proper relationship between women and the state. One arena in which this contradiction was evident was in the mass-mobilization women’s patriotic associations, which proclaimed the primary importance of women’s place in the home and the family but undertook a variety of duties (on behalf of the state) in the public sphere.

Women’s Organizations in Wartime

At the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, there were two major women’s patriotic associations: the Patriotic Women’s Association (Aikoku Fujinkai) and the Greater Japan National Defense Women’s Association (Dai Nihon Kokubō Fujinkai). The Patriotic Women’s Association was founded in 1901 during the Russo-Japanese War as a charitable organization for assisting the families of dead or wounded soldiers; its membership, which expanded rapidly from 13,049 in 1902 to 806,887 in 1911, was largely composed of upper-class and upper-middle-class women. This group’s main activity was raising money to help needy families of soldiers. The group was initially supported by both the Home Ministry and the army (Hayakawa 1995). The National Defense Women’s Association was founded by a small group of housewives in Osaka in 1932 as the Osaka Kokubō Fujinkai (Osaka

National Defense Women's Association). Within a few months it had expanded to the national level with the strong support of the army. This group, which competed with the Patriotic Women's Association for members, emphasized the important role of "ordinary housewives" of the middle and working classes; its symbol was the white apron worn by its members, marking them as women who worked in the home and the kitchen (unlike upper-class women who hired servants) (Tsunematsu 1994). Perhaps because of its appeal to a broader range of women (or its vocal support from army officials), the National Defense Women's Association grew rapidly and swiftly surpassed the older Patriotic Women's Association, which had about 1,500,000 members in 1929, in membership. By 1934, the National Defense Women's Association boasted 1,230,000 members, eleven headquarters and 11,150 local branches across the nation; its membership had doubled to 2,550,000 by 1935, and reached 6,850,000 by the end of 1937 (Tsunematsu 1994, 53).

In the mid-1930s and into the early years of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the rivalry between the Patriotic Women's Association and the National Defense Women's Association was well-known. Wilson (2006) cites an *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* article's description of their disputes: "At ceremonies to receive the remains of dead heroes they quarreled over who should offer incense first; and they clashed at parades to bid farewell to soldiers or to welcome them home. If one group began a campaign to collect blankets for the front, the other would avoid any mention of blankets" (Wilson 2006, 212). Kanō asserts that this struggle was indicative of the tension between the traditionalist Home Ministry, which backed the Patriotic Women's Association, and the reformist Army, which backed the National Defense Women's Association; the ascendance of the National Defense Women's Association thus reflected the changing political power structure in the years preceding the war (Kanō [1987] 1995, 93-94).

Despite the insistence of members of both the Patriotic Women's Association and the National Defense Women's Association that their organization's ideology and mission were unique, in practice their activities often overlapped (Wilson 2006). One major activity frequently engaged in by both groups was creating and sending "comfort bags" (*imonbukuro*) containing gifts and daily necessities to soldiers on the front lines. Another major cause was promoting and contributing to national savings campaigns; while not unique to the wartime period, the rhetoric used to promote these campaigns during the war became more nationalistic and militaristic compared with savings campaigns in the 1920s and early 1930s (Garon 2000). In order to support the war effort, both women's organizations "raised money for soldiers and to buy weapons, visited shrines to pray for soldiers, visited soldiers' graves, and visited and helped to find wives for wounded soldiers. [...] Other activities directed at the civilian population included distributing information about how to deal with air raids and poison gas, running campaigns for the recycling of household items, constructing registers of potential blood donors, and training women drivers for the home front in anticipation of a shortage of men" (Wilson 2006, 213). Although most of these

activities took place outside the home, they generally conformed to prevailing notions of women's duties and were seen as acceptable roles for women to perform.

Another women's organization that played a significant role in wartime mobilization efforts was the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations (Nihon Fujin Dantai Renmei), which was formed in 1937 following the outbreak of war with China. It was composed of eight autonomous women's organizations: the League for Women's Suffrage (Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei), the Young Women's Christian Association, the Japan Amity Association (Zenkoku Tomo no Kai), the Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai), the Association of Women Doctors (Nihon Joikai), the Women's Consumers' Association (Nihon Shōhi Kumiai Fujin Kyōkai), the Women's Alliance (Fujin Dōshikai), and the Women's Union for Peace (Fujin Heiwa Kyōkai). Gauntlett Tsuneko, the outspoken leader of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, was elected president of the new federation (Nishikawa 1997, 57).

These eight organizations chose to band together in light of the government's "increased efforts to mobilize society spiritually, materially, and militarily" (Molony 2011, 19). The group's founding declaration explained their purpose in terms of maintaining their existence in the face of national mobilization:

In this autumn of national mobilization, we members of women's organizations, sincerely hoping to lend our cooperation to the cause of protecting those at home, have gathered here to establish an affiliation of those organizations. We are committed to maintaining the long-term existence of our organizations, and at the same time to demonstrating women's true worth, as, in surmounting this crisis, the nation draws on the spiritual resources of its women. (Quoted in translation in Nishikawa 1997, 57)

The leaders of these organizations, as expressed through their writings in *Josei Tenbō* from 1937 and 1938, hoped to maintain their autonomy while proving women's value to the wartime state in the hope of attaining greater rights for women (most or all of these organizations were pro-women's suffrage) (Nishikawa 1997; Molony 2011). In this way the Federation of Women's Organizations' principles and goals differed from those of the state-sponsored women's patriotic associations, although it, like the patriotic associations and all women's groups, was dissolved with the creation of the Greater Japan Women's Association in 1942.

In February 1942, all women's organizations in Japan were forcibly merged into the Greater Japan Women's Association (Dai Nihon Fujinkai), under the joint supervision of the Home Affairs, Army, Navy, Colonization, Welfare, and Education Ministries. Leaders of the former women's

organizations were generally disappointed by this merger, especially as the new organization was essentially run by men: “Its effective leaders, as opposed to those in ceremonial positions, were male” (Wilson 2006, 214). The amalgamation, directed from above, was intended to serve as a symbol of unity as well as a means of directly mobilizing the female population: “As for the actual relationship between Nippu [an abbreviation of Dai Nihon Fujinkai] and the state, there was to be absolutely no ambiguity. An official of the association explained that Nippu was ‘one important instrument (*kikan*) of the state.’ [...] On another occasion, Kawanishi [the male director of Dai Nihon Fujinkai] explained that through Nippu there was a direct line from government policy to the household; it was almost as if there were no distinction between government and household” (Wilson 2006, 224-225).

Kawanishi’s statements make it clear that the formation of Dai Nihon Fujinkai was an attempt by the government to define and structure the role of women within the state. At this point women were officially acknowledged by the state, arguably for the first time, as national subjects with a specific, gendered role to fulfill. Indeed, it is for this reason that liberal feminists like Ichikawa Fusae had been advocating for greater integration of women into the structures of wartime mobilization: by supporting the state, they believed, women would attain greater rights and influence (Molony 2011).

One major area of mobilization that relied heavily on women’s labor both inside and outside the home – and that demonstrated women’s agency in using elements of mobilization to shape their relationship with the state – was waste reduction and scrap collection. The next section will examine these wartime waste campaigns in terms of their impact on the relationship between the state and citizens/national subjects, women in particular.

Wartime Waste Collection Campaigns

During the war, waste collection, which previously had been discussed as an issue of municipal administration, quickly became a matter of patriotic duty. Mizoiri (2010) notes that before the war, newspaper articles about garbage were mainly related to garbage collection, focusing on issues that would be of interest to citizens such as changes in the garbage collection rules, water pollution caused by garbage on collection days, or littering problems. However, once the war began, articles began to focus on waste as a resource, many of them running special features on transforming waste into “resources” (*shigen*) and material conservation campaigns (Mizoiri 2010, 151). According to Mizoiri, reuse movements (*sairiyō undō*) grew in popularity during the war years, and group collection of waste items by organizations like neighborhood associations and women’s associations were characteristic of waste management in wartime (Mizoiri 2010, 148). The principles of resource conservation which motivated these voluntary resource collection campaigns were codified into law with the revision of the Waste

Cleaning Law Regulations (Obutsu sōji hō kisoku) in May 1941 (see Chapter 1). The revision changed the waste disposal requirements from “waste must be incinerated” to “waste must be managed,” and mandated that valuable materials be proactively collected from garbage (Mizoiri 2010, 151).

A variety of groups, both private and governmental, organized waste and scrap collection campaigns during the war. In November 1939, the *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper company, in collaboration with the city of Tokyo, organized a waste collection campaign in Tokyo they called the “Anti-Aircraft Gun Donation Campaign” (Kōshahō ken’nō undō), in which the money raised from selling the donated scrap was donated to the military for the purpose of funding an anti-aircraft gun. The *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun* also carried out a similar scrap collection campaign in 1939, called the “Gold Donation Campaign” (Kin no ken’nō undō) (Mizoiri 2010, 148). National mass-mobilization organizations, women’s associations, and neighborhood associations were the most prominent groups to be involved in the organization of waste reduction, reuse, and collection campaigns. Each of these groups will be discussed in the following sections.

National Waste Collection Campaigns

The most prominent governmental organization involved in scrap collection campaigns in the early years of the war was the National Spiritual Mobilization Council (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin linkai), an organization formed through the consolidation of dozens of nationalist groups in 1937 under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education. After the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA, Taisei Yokusankai) in 1940, this new group took over the organization of most forms of civilian home front mobilization, including scrap collection campaigns. These two organizations were responsible for managing several large-scale waste collection campaigns at both the national and local levels throughout the war years.

One of the earliest efforts in terms of national scrap collection campaigns was the “One House, One Item Donation Campaign” (Ikko ippin ken’nō undō) in July 1938. On July 7 and 8, 1938, donations of worn out or unwanted goods were collected door to door by neighborhood association members, former soldiers, and members of young men’s associations, and brought to the offices of local neighborhood associations across the country. In Tokyo, most of the donations were comprised of items like “scraps of iron goods like buckets, washtubs, water pipes [*toi*] or empty cans;” aluminum goods and scraps were also found in great number. The *Asahi Shinbun* estimated that the value of donations within the city of Tokyo alone during the two-day event totaled about 150,000 yen (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 9, 1938).

The campaign took place on the anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (referred to in the *Asahi Shinbun* as the China Incident [*Shina jihen*] and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* as the July Seventh Incident [*Shichigatsu nanoka jihen*], and “the incident” as shorthand in both newspapers), the skirmish between Japanese and Chinese forces that took place on July 7-8, 1937 near the town of Wanping which marked the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The purpose of the campaign was to collect valuable materials, particularly metal, for the war effort, but also to “effect the training of national subjects toward a consensus of resource protection” (*shigen aigo no sōi o fukumeta kokumin kunren to nasu*) (*Asahi Shinbun*, June 10, 1938). In Tokyo, scrap collected from 1,407,626 households was sold for a total of over 200,000 yen, which was donated to a hospital for wounded soldiers. In a statement given when formally handing over the donation to the wounded soldiers’ hospital, the mayor of Tokyo city and the governor of Tokyo prefecture highlighted the efforts of the citizens’ groups whose efforts had made the campaign a success: “In Tokyo, primarily the neighborhood associations (*chōkai*), as well as former soldiers’ association, young men’s association, the National Defense Women’s Association, the Patriotic Women’s Association, and others mobilized and gathered up [everything] from even a single old nail to a dirty tube” (*Asahi Shinbun*, August 31, 1938). An interim report on the results of the campaign published in September 1938 stated that with 20 prefectures reporting, the total amount raised nationwide had reached 541,753 yen and 41 sen (*Asahi Shinbun*, September 6, 1938).

The government-initiated campaign was coordinated at the national level by the Central League of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Chūō Renmei), and carried out at the local level by members of the various organizations listed above. According to the *Asahi Shinbun*, the success of the campaign could be attributed to each individual and group playing their assigned role – particularly, conforming to prescribed gender roles. In the concluding section of one *Asahi* article published just after the campaign (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 9, 1938), under the sub-heading “The efficacy of men outside, women inside,” the newspaper praised the participants for performing their assigned (gendered) duties, and included a quote from the head of the Tokyo City General Mobilization Department indicating that this interpretation of the reasons for the campaign’s success was endorsed by the authorities:

Because in this one item, one house donation campaign thousands of neighborhood association members, former soldiers, members of youth associations, etc. went around to collect donations, and women, including members of the Patriotic Women’s Association [Aikoku Fujinkai], the Women’s National Defense League [Kokubō Fujinkai], and other women’s associations, went around on the side of searching for and handing out donations in the home [*katei*] as they are accustomed, [this campaign] was able to achieve great results.

“Up until now in this kind of campaign, because people went out into the streets in a disorderly fashion, it was not uncommon that the expected results were on the contrary not achieved, but from now we have the valuable experience that each individual serving at the appropriate post is far more effective.” (Commentary from Tokyo City General Mobilization Department Head) (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 9, 1938)

The inclusion of this commentary about the importance of fulfilling one’s proper role, in particular gender roles, for the success of waste campaigns (and perhaps by extension other forms of wartime mobilization) is striking. Its criticism of past campaigns in which “people went out into the streets in a disorderly fashion,” combined with the sub-heading “The efficacy of men outside, women inside,” seems to imply that it is specifically campaigns in which women go outside that are disorderly and ineffective. This view can also be seen in the *Asahi Shinbun* reporting on the “Finding Waste in the Streets” campaign organized by the Greater Japan Alliance of Women’s Organizations less than two weeks after the national “One House, One Item” campaign, to be discussed in a later section.

Neighborhood Associations and Waste Campaigns

The locus of most waste collection campaigns, whether organized by a national movement or spontaneously by local citizens, was the neighborhood association (*chōkai* or *chōnaikai*). Neighborhood associations were formally incorporated into the structure of wartime mobilization in 1940, when all towns and villages were ordered to form neighborhood associations under the auspices of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. The official goals of the neighborhood associations under this directive were the “dissemination of national policy and the achievement of a controlled economy” (Hastings 1995, 81).

However, most cities and towns already had informal or semi-formal neighborhood associations, some of which had existed for decades as informal residential associations organized around community activities such as arranging local shrine festivals. In Tokyo, many neighborhood associations had their origins in sanitation unions. In July 1900 (at the same time that the Waste Cleaning Law was promulgated at the national level), Tokyo prefecture passed a law requiring “the establishment of sanitation unions in each city and village to prevent the spread of disease and to disseminate knowledge of sanitation” (Hastings 1995, 77). This regulation required the head of each household to join the sanitation union and established the *chō* (“town” or neighborhood¹⁸) as the fundamental organizational unit. Although most

¹⁸ Hastings explains that the term *chō*, which literally means “town” and for which there is no direct English equivalent, typically refers to “the spaces formed by the intersections of the major thoroughfares” (Hastings 1995, 70). *Chōkai* or *chōnaikai* refers to an association of residents living in a particular *chō*. In the modern period, *chō*

sanitation unions eventually disbanded due to lack of funding, their structure became the basis for Tokyo's neighborhood associations: "A number of ward histories suggest that the neighborhood associations developed from the sanitation unions. By the 1920s, most sanitation unions had become part of a neighborhood association" (Hastings 1995, 77). The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, which devastated Tokyo and surrounding areas, hastened the spread of neighborhood associations in the capital as residents banded together for mutual support. By 1936, a year before the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War, 89% of Tokyo households were members of a neighborhood association (Mizoiri 2010, 149).

After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, neighborhood associations engaged in a variety of activities in support of the war effort, both voluntary and compelled. One of their most important activities, especially in the later years of the war, was food rationing (Cwierka 2013). Another was participating in national savings campaigns, which financed the war in Japan to a much greater extent than similar efforts at voluntary savings in other countries involved in the war. Most savings associations, which proliferated rapidly during the war years to the extent that by the end of 1944 nearly every household was a member of at least one savings association, were associated with neighborhood associations (Garon 2000, 58).

Neighborhood associations frequently organized their own waste collection schemes, and were almost always called upon to participate in campaigns organized by other groups as well. For national campaigns such as the "One House, One Item" campaign organized on the anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1938, neighborhood association members, as well as members of other types of associations, were the ones to collect the items door-to-door, and the collected items were stored at the neighborhood association office. The results of the campaign were tallied based on the amount collected by each neighborhood association.

Some neighborhood associations organized their own efforts to reduce and collect waste and scrap. In an April 1941 article, the *Asahi Shinbun* highlighted a neighborhood association in Tokyo's Itabashi Ward that had devised an elaborate waste separation system in order to reduce waste and raise money by selling valuable scrap. In this neighborhood, all types of waste, from paper scraps to old *geta* sandals to straw, were disposed of in separate trash cans so that each type could be sold as a resource:

became the lowest level of formal administration in cities. The lowest unit of the neighborhood association system under the wartime IRAA was the *tonarigumi*, consisting of about ten households in a neighborhood. A group of *tonarigumi* comprised a *chōnaikai* or *burakukai* ("village association"); these were under the direction of the city and prefectural levels of the IRAA. Here I follow Hastings and others in translating both *tonarigumi* and *chōkai* / *chōnaikai* as "neighborhood association" unless a distinction is necessary, in which case I will use the Japanese term.

In this way, one family in the *tonarigumi* has a trash can where only straw is collected. And someone else's trash can has only metal scraps. Because of this, the burden on the person who comes to buy it is much reduced, and moreover, because there are a lot of bales to buy in *tonarigumi* units, it naturally becomes far higher than the official price. (*Asahi Shinbun*, April 18, 1941)

The female head of this *tonarigumi*, Okabe Teruko, described the neighborhood association's garbage separation scheme as part of a larger effort to promote frugality in everyday life:

The members of the *tonarigumi* all wanted to do this and that, and all of the people in the *tonarigumi* cooperating to do it, that's the motto of our *tonarigumi*.

The first goal decided at the meetings was to stop the eagerness, at times of congratulations and condolences [*keichō nado no atta toki*], to say "that house put out this much, so our house will put out this much" and spend a lot.

Saving and collecting 5 sen each day, we decided for important family ceremonies [*kankonsōsai*] or sending soldiers off to war, the *tonarigumi* will give out two yen only, and they won't be done individually. "He who laughs off a penny now will later cry for its lack" [*issen o warau mono wa issen ni naku*] is written on the donation box, and it is sent around the neighborhood [*tōbanjun*], but everyone contributes enthusiastically. Next, the first thing was collecting ten sen each month in a bullet savings deposit [*dangan chokin*] to remember our troops on the front line.

Apart from that, 30 sen goes for patriotic savings [*aikoku chokin*] each month, and we have also been doing this for three years. With this savings, in May of next year the doorway will be furnished with a set of 12 yen masks of the highest quality.

In the vacant land in the back we can also grow fresh vegetables. The *tonarigumi* members gather in this vacant land to hold meetings. Well, I guess you could also call them open-air meetings. (*Asahi Shinbun*, April 18, 1941)

Similarly, an *Asahi Shinbun* article written by guest author Kageyama Ikuyo in March 1941 describes the author's effort to implement a trash sorting scheme in his own neighborhood association. Kageyama explains the purpose of this effort in terms of not only reducing material waste and saving resources, but also as reducing "waste" (*muda*) in the form of the labor and currency consumed by waste

collection in Tokyo: “In the city about 700,000 *kan*¹⁹ of garbage [*gomi*] from the garbage bins of 1,200,000 households is collected and incinerated. That requires about 2,100 workers each day, and costs 5,800,000 yen a year, but in these times of war this is within the limits of wastefulness. We think we should do something about this with our own hands” (Kageyama 1941). The author convinced his neighborhood association to install separate garbage bins for three types of garbage, “kitchen waste [*chūkai*] (things from the kitchen), mixed waste [*zakkai*] (dust [*chiri*], rubbish [*gomi*]), [and] recyclable material [*saisei busshitsu*] (metal, rags, paper scraps, etc.)” (Kageyama 1941). The author concludes the short article by proclaiming that proactive efforts such as these will help to alleviate the problem of material shortage, and that everyone should introduce such measures in their own neighborhood association meetings.

Both of these voluntary efforts at waste reduction and material conservation by neighborhood associations seem to have been in response to a call from the Tokyo city government in January 1941 for cooperation from citizens in order to reduce waste through reusing old materials (Tokyo Sanitation Bureau 2000, 107). It was around this time that wartime scarcity began to be felt more strongly in everyday life, and government propaganda to be frugal and save resources increased. In May 1941, an order from the Ministry of Health and Welfare mandated that each household should have separate containers for kitchen waste (*chūkai*), burnable mixed waste (*kanen zakkai*), and unburnable mixed waste (*funen zakkai*) (Tokyo Sanitation Bureau 2000, 107). Through pamphlets and circulars distributed through neighborhood associations, as well as through special lectures, demonstrations, and events, various branches of the national and local governments spread information about the importance of reducing and reusing waste. The majority of this propaganda was directed specifically at women, and much of it focused on reducing waste in the kitchen. For example, women leaders in collaboration with Tokyo city authorities and neighborhood associations held a “Symposium on Reducing Kitchen Garbage” (*Daidokoro gomi o herasu zadankai*) at which topics such as the best ways to prepare food and how to thoroughly use up ingredients were discussed (Tokyo Sanitation Bureau 2000, 110).

Women's Associations and Waste Campaigns

Mass-membership women's organizations such as the Patriotic Women's Association and the National Defense Women's Association were also major organizers of and contributors to waste reduction and collection movements. These organizations were often called on by government bodies like the National Spiritual Mobilization Council to turn out their members in support of official, national

¹⁹ A unit of weight equivalent to approximately 3.75 kilograms.

campaigns like the 1938 “One House, One Item” campaign, and they also frequently organized their own collection movements, usually to raise money for a specific goal.

One example of this is a waste collection campaign organized by the Patriotic Women’s Association in Tokyo in September 1939 called the “Gold Waste Collection Campaign” (Kin fuchaku haihin kaishū undō). Members of the Tokyo branches of the Patriotic Women’s Association went door to door, collecting the “buried gold” which they said was to be found in household waste. Their goal was to reach about 260,000 homes, or 20% of households in Tokyo city (*Asahi Shinbun*, August 20, 1939). The collected gold items were then transported to an extraction facility, where the gold and other valuable metals were removed from the items, melted down, and remade into gold bars or nuggets (*kinkai*). On September 22, 1939, several members of the Patriotic Women’s Association visited the facility to learn about the gold extraction process and help the workers. Their visit, as well as their dedication in continuing to collect gold waste from households, was praised by the *Asahi Shinbun* as a laudable expression of patriotism: “[...] by helping the workers in the high-temperature scrap melting room [...], they demonstrated the zeal of women of the home front” (*Asahi Shinbun*, September 23, 1939). The money raised from the sale of the precious metals collected in the campaign was donated to the army widows and orphans fund. As has often been noted, one of the major slogans during the war years was “Luxury is the enemy” (Garon 2000, Havens 1978). This and other campaigns to collect gold and silver run by other organizations were likely a reflection of this sentiment: extravagant items containing gold or other precious metals could be put to better use melted down to support the war effort.

The role of women and women’s organizations in organizing and participating in waste collection campaigns and other forms of wartime patriotic activities raises the question of to what extent these women were involuntarily “mobilized” by the state, and to what extent they chose to participate in these activities of their own volition, for their own reasons. The next section will discuss the issue of women’s agency in the context of wartime mobilization.

Wartime Mobilization and Women’s Agency

Wartime mobilization policies reflect the predominant gender ideology the Japanese state, but it is equally important to examine the ideas and actions of the mobilized women themselves. As noted above, the state had been mobilizing women to enact its social policies for decades. Although state policies were opposed by some women, particularly socialist women (see Mackie 2003), most women, including liberal feminists, ultimately embraced cooperation with the state, both in the prewar social campaigns and during the war. Indeed, prominent women leaders had been recruited to positions of authority in government committees and campaigns since the 1920s; their continued collaboration with

the state during the war should not be seen as anomalous (see Koyama 2014; Garon 1997; Nishikawa 1997; Katzoff 2000).

By the early 1930s, Ichikawa Fusae, one of the most prominent Japanese feminists and the founder of the League for Women's Suffrage, had already come to believe that cooperation with the authorities was essential for women's advancement. In a 1933 article advocating cooperation with the Tokyo city government to resolve the city's garbage crisis (see Chapter 1), she wrote, "However, by progressively taking on more responsibility, we will demonstrate the importance of the cooperation of women both in municipal governance and in general society, and additionally raise awareness among the female population of the connection between municipal governance and home life" (Ichikawa 1933, 4). Her prominent role in the state's wartime mobilization of women can be seen in the same light. Miyake points out that "the state's emphasis on women as the subjects of family-state ideology appeared to Ichikawa and other women as a step forward in their fight for sexual equality, because 'for the first time' women were being given an officially acknowledged role outside the home – even if that role merely allowed them to join patriotic associations and to come out to the train stations to send soldiers off to the front" (Miyake 1991, 273-274).

For many women, wartime mobilization was experienced as a type of liberation. Ueno, referencing Kanō, observes that "Women's participation in the public sphere, made possible by war, was both exhilarating and brought with it a new identity for women, and this is remembered as a feeling of spiritual uplift" (Ueno 2004, 38). Ichikawa and other women activists advocated strongly for the mobilization of ordinary women during the war; Miyake posits that "In so doing, they thought that they could demonstrate women's abilities" (Miyake 1991, 275).

The state was of course the primary force behind women's wartime mobilization activities. But above and beyond enthusiastically participating in such activities, there were also cases in which women devised and implemented their own efforts to support the war. The next section will examine one such event, the "Finding Waste in the Streets" campaign of 1938.

The "Finding Waste in the Streets" Campaign

Starting in the morning of 22 July 1938, "under the blazing sun," according to an *Asahi Shinbun* headline, hundreds of women set out onto the streets of Tokyo, searching for instances of "waste" (*muda*) (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 23, 1938). The women – members of women's groups such as the League for Women's Suffrage, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the Women's Peace Association, among others, which together constituted the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations (Nihon Fujin Dantai Renmei) – walked through and examined "amusement quarters, parks, offices, markets, and

eateries,” recording any waste they observed on cards distributed by the event’s organizers, the leaders of the Federation (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 23, 1938).

Eight hundred and eighty-three women from eleven women’s organizations (the eight organizations comprising the Japan Federation of Women’s Organizations as well as three other women’s organizations) participated, discovering 1,257 cases of “waste” in total. The results were announced at a presentation held in the Federation’s office the following day, 23 July 1938; a report on the event published in *Josei Tenbō* (Women’s Outlook)²⁰, the journal of the League for Women’s Suffrage, noted that the findings were “quite interesting” (*nakanaka omoshiroi kekka*) (*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938).

The occasion was an event to raise awareness of unnecessary waste called “Finding Waste in the Streets” (*Gaitō ni muda o hirou*), initiated by the women’s groups in response to a government campaign to strengthen the home economy. In the summer of 1938, the Japanese government announced the “Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle” (*Keizaisen kyōchō shūkan*) starting from 21 July. The week’s activities, organized by the Central League of the Spiritual Mobilization Movement, were carried out nationwide, and according to an *Asahi Shinbun* article, “in Tokyo frugal consumption and practical use of materials, scrap collection, promoting savings, etc. in every direction are to be implemented” (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 20, 1938). Women were to play a large role in the week’s events because, as the newspaper article reported was the basis of the weeklong campaign, “Following the China Incident, national subjects are all soldiers in the economic battle” (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 20, 1938). This article reported on the activities for the “Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle” being planned by women’s organizations, including a conference on hoarding prevention to be held on July 21, and the “Finding Waste in the Streets” event to be held on the following day. The article concluded by describing these events as examples of “the great efforts of women’s participation in the economic battle” (*keizaisen fujin sankā ni ōwarawa de aru*) (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 20, 1938).

The “Finding Waste in the Streets” event, which was held in Tokyo on July 22, the second day of the government’s weeklong campaign, was organized jointly by the leaders of the various groups in the Federation of Women’s Organizations. In contrast to the 1933 “garbage campaign” (*gomi undō*) organized by the League for Women’s Suffrage (see Chapter 1), which focused on material waste or garbage (*gomi*), especially in the household, the target of this event was *muda*, “waste” in a more abstract sense. The “waste” found in this campaign did include tangible waste like food, clothing, and paper, but also wastes of energy, land, and even time.

²⁰ *Josei Tenbō* was the continuation of *Fusen* (Women’s Suffrage), the official publication of the Women’s Suffrage League; the name of the journal was changed in 1936 “when that name [*Fusen*] became too controversial” (Molony 2011, 21).

The report of the event in the August 1938 issue of *Josei Tenbō* described its initial organization as follows:

For one week starting from July 21, as part of the Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle [Keizaisen kyōchō shūkan], the government requested citizens [*kokumin*] to do such things as the conservation of all types of materials, hoarding prevention [*kaidame bōshi*], and savings promotion [*chochiku shōrei*]. Therefore, the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations, which was established for the purpose of investigating and implementing what women should do in light of current circumstances, – the League for Women's Suffrage is also one of the participating groups – devised and implemented an interesting plan called “Finding waste in the street” [*Gaitō ni muda o hirou*]. (*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938)

The purpose of the campaign, as reported in *Josei Tenbō*, was to discover waste in public spaces that may have been overlooked by men. Women, normally secluded in the home and with different sensibilities than men, would perhaps be able to notice wastefulness that men regarded as normal. Such an excursion would also be beneficial for the women themselves:

In other words, although most women commonly remain inside the home, for the eyes of these women to go out in the streets and uncover the waste of society is extremely enlightening for women, and is also quite a splendid thing for society now; [the event] was implemented from this idea [...] (*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938)

The *Josei Tenbō* article described some of the most common observations of waste reported by participants in the event, and occasionally offered commentary as to the causes of the waste or suggestions on how to improve the situation. Notably, the author of the anonymous article (likely Kaneko Shigeri²¹) directed criticism not towards individuals, but toward systems and standards that tolerated wastefulness.

²¹ I suspect Kaneko was the author of this piece because of similarities in writing style to other articles published under Kaneko's name in *Fusen/Josei Tenbō*, because Kaneko was the League for Women's Suffrage leader most likely to write about waste-related issues, and more significantly because Kaneko's name was not included in the article's list of women leaders present for the event (the article mentioned Gauntlett, Ichikawa, Kawasaki, and Matsuoka). Kaneko was one of the most well-known woman activists of the time, and the *Asahi Shinbun* reported her to be among the first women leaders present for the event (her name was listed second after Gauntlett Tsuneko, the leader of the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations, and the article featured a photograph of Kaneko and Gauntlett at the event). The most likely explanation for the omission of her name in the *Josei Tenbō* article is that she was its author, and humbly chose not to mention herself among the prominent women leaders.

For example, when describing the many instances of reusable waste being put into garbage cans, the article emphasized that this was a problem with the waste collection system, rather than the fault of those throwing things away:

Among the second [category], garbage [*gomi*], an extremely large number [of cases] pointed out valuable materials that were thrown into garbage bins as-is. Specifically, among materials that should be conserved in line with national policy, if things that should be effectively recovered [*saisei no kiku hazu no mono*] are thrown into the garbage can as waste and then incinerated, that's the end of it. Therefore, rather than saying the ones throwing [things] out are bad, the question that should be settled first is the way the garbage collection method is devised. (*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938)

In other words, the report contended, there should be a system in place to divert useful materials out of the waste stream, rather than relying on citizens to know how such things could be reused. The article dealt similarly with food waste from cafeterias, blaming not the customers but the practices of the establishments: “Similarly for food waste (*zanpan*), if something is not done about the food arrangement doctrines (*moritsuke shugi*) of eateries, etc., as a rule we must not blame those leaving [food on the plate]” (*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938).

The report concluded with an itemized tally of the waste discovered during the event, organized into eleven categories. Table 2 shows the results as listed in the *Josei Tenbō* article.

Table 2. List of “waste” discovered in the “Finding Waste in the Streets” event, July 22, 1938

Category	Number of cases	Detailed list
1. Electricity	201	Government agencies 104; Shops 25 Individuals 28; Transportation 12; Electric fans, radios 16; Neon 16
2. Gomi	186	Vegetables, food waste 52; Incomplete 58; Wood 27; [Illegible] 16; Glass 8; Rubber 4; Rags (<i>boro</i>) 10; Various 11
3. Water	176	Public use 81; Private use 40; Shops 26; Drinking fountains 29
4. Steel	174	Public 25; Private 39; Waste 110

5. Paper	98	Public (streets, trains) 36; [Illegible] 7; Garbage bin 20; Packaging paper 15; Tickets 6; Governmental, printed 3; Other 11
6. Advertisements (<i>Kōkoku</i>)	79	Posters, fliers 53; Standing sign boards 9; In trains 2; [Illegible] 2; Flags 2; Various 2
7. Clothing	76	Women's 41; Men's 17; Common (<i>kyōtsū</i>) 10; Various 8
8. Fuel (<i>Nenryō</i>)	37	Gasoline 14; Coal 13; Matches 7; Gas 3
9. Time (<i>Jikan</i>)	29	
10. Vacant Land	23	
11. Various (<i>Zatsu</i>)	159	Tobacco 28; Saké 4; Buying sweets (<i>kaigui</i>) 6; Restaurants (<i>inshokuten</i>) 10; Public transportation 6; Offices 3; Lost property 11; Eatery samples (<i>bentō</i> , groceries) 16; [Illegible] 6; Packaging 4; Wreaths 10; Life improvement (<i>seikatsu kaizen</i>) 8; Buildings 6; Various 41

(*Josei Tenbō*, August 1938)

The *Asahi Shinbun* article reporting on the event described its purpose in a similar fashion to the *Josei Tenbō* article, presumably quoting the organizers: “[...] the women's group, in two and threes, went looking for ‘the waste of society as seen through women's eyes’ (*onna no me de mita yo no naka no muda*)” (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 23, 1938). However, after listing the organizations involved and some women's leaders who were present, the newspaper described the activities in a somewhat condescending manner, characterizing them as faintly ridiculous:

Although [the women] slightly confused the townsfolk (*shimin*) with their show of zeal (*nesshinburi*), “unexpectedly there seems to be no waste” (*angai muda wa nai yō desu ne*) was the conclusion, the department store being targeted having escaped the difficult question due to being closed that day. (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 23, 1938)

At the end of the article, the *Asahi Shinbun* described another event that was held on the same day, also as part of the “Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle:” a colloquium (*kondankai*) entitled “Women and Economics” (*Fujin to keizai*), jointly sponsored by the Tokyo prefectural governor, the Ministry of Health and Welfare (*Kōseishō*), and the Saving Promotions Department (*Chochiku shōrei*

kyoku). The panel, which began at 11:30 on 22 July at the Hibiya Matsumoto Tower, featured speakers from several government ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce (Shōkōshō) and Ministry of Finance (Ōgurashō), as well as more than ten women commentators (*fujin hyōronka*). The newspaper article, although it did not describe the content of the colloquium in detail, concluded by appraising it quite positively: “[They] agreed upon aiming for and striving toward victory in the battle of household economics through women’s initiative” (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 23, 1938).

The *Asahi Shinbun* article’s juxtaposition of the women’s waste finding event with the officially sponsored colloquium is telling. The latter event, attended by high-ranking (male) bureaucrats, was characterized as a fruitful discussion, while the description of the women’s waste finding event was filled with examples that made it seem less than serious. In addition to the anecdote about the department store that was free of waste because it happened to be closed, the examples of the waste recorded by the women on cards given by the newspaper included only “flower garlands for funerals” and “a man’s Western-style overcoat.” The major findings of the campaign – such as electricity being the most common form of waste, the many instances of water leaking from pipes and faucets, the role of restaurants’ plating customs in the amount of food waste, or the prevalence of printed documents from government offices among paper waste, which were discussed in the *Josei Tenbō* report of the event – were mentioned in the *Asahi Shinbun* article either briefly or not at all. The newspaper’s somewhat condescending treatment of the women’s event – which, while created in response to the government’s official “Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle,” was organized and carried out entirely by the women’s groups themselves, with no sponsorship from government agencies – may have been a reaction to the novelty of women (quite literally) stepping outside their prescribed place in the home and entering the domain of men for the purpose of criticizing it.

The Significance of the Campaign

While this event is just one example of women’s active involvement in wartime mobilization efforts, it is significant because it demonstrates women’s agency in shaping their relationship with the state. Most wartime mobilization of women was indeed top-down and directed by the state; while women participated, often with great enthusiasm, the activities themselves were usually determined by the state. The “Finding Waste in the Streets” campaign, however, was carried out entirely through the women’s own initiative, and in fact directly conflicted with a state-sponsored event, the colloquium on women and economics that was held the same day. The event, involving women leaving the home and applying a critical gaze onto society, also subtly challenged the prevailing ideology that women’s role should primarily be domestic in nature.

Koyama's (1999) analysis of the process of the integration of women into the nation-state (*josei no kokuminka*) emphasizes the role of the state in shaping the home (*katei*), which defined the role of women in the nation-state. Because women were positioned as the central figures of the household, their cooperation became necessary when the state began implementing policies related to "daily life," and these state campaigns resulted in a direct relationship between women and the modern nation-state. Koyama notes that the state actively sought the contributions of women to its social policies, for example by appointing women as commissioners and members of various policy survey committees or inviting them to be speakers at government-sponsored educational lectures (Koyama 1999, 188). Women in turn were active and enthusiastic participants in these endeavors. From June 22 to August 31, 1918, for example, the Ministry of Education (Monbushō) held an "Exhibition on Using Waste" (*Haibutsu riyō tenrankai*) that demonstrated ways to reuse materials that would otherwise go waste (for example, the cloth from an old umbrella could be made into a sitting pillow or a shawl). Several lectures on the reuse of waste were also conducted during the exhibition period. The exhibition, which was scheduled to end on July 22, was extended an extra month due to its popularity, and attracted about 67,000 total viewers, or approximately 944 per day (Koyama 1999, 78-79). This event exhorted women to comply with state policy by reducing waste in their everyday lives, and while women participated gladly²², neither the goal nor the methods were determined by them.

While this conception of women's evolving relationship with the state acknowledges women's active participation, it nevertheless frames the *kokuminka* process as fundamentally directed by the state in service of state goals. However, events like the 1933 garbage campaign led by Kaneko Shigeri and other members of the League for Women's Suffrage and the 1938 "Finding Waste in the Streets" campaign show that women not only accepted their new relationship with the state, they also attempted to actively influence it by devising and implementing social campaigns of their own.

With the "Finding Waste in the Streets" event, the women's groups pushed the boundaries of their prescribed role, not only by leaving the home and roaming the streets, but also by taking the initiative to address a social problem on their own terms rather than participating in a government-sponsored event – such as the colloquium on women and economics which was held the same day. Additionally, the women's initiative, while ostensibly held to further the goals of the government's "Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle," actually took the form of a critique of existing systems. Rather than criticize households or individuals for the waste they found, the *Josei Tenbō* article instead pointed the finger at the systems – the garbage collection system, restaurant plating customs, government

²² The event was popular among most women, but was also criticized in women's magazines for failing to take into account the time such "reuse" would take; the usefulness of some of the re-made objects to the average housewife was also questioned (Koyama 1999, 80).

bureaucracies – which created waste either directly or indirectly. This event shows that even those women who embraced cooperation with the state and actively worked to support state goals did not accept this relationship uncritically. Rather, they acted as full (if not equal) participants in their relationship with the state, contributing their own ideas, initiatives, and even criticism to wartime mobilization efforts.

After realizing the importance of the household to national strategy after World War I, the Japanese state, particularly the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Education, “adopted new programs that made women the state’s prime agents in improving ‘daily life’” (Garon 1997, 129). Women, as the managers of the household, gained a new importance to the national economy: “Women were mobilised for various government campaigns aimed at reducing consumption and rationalizing everyday life, such as the ‘Thrift and Diligence Promotion’ campaign which started in 1924 and the ‘Public and Private Economic Austerity’ campaign starting in 1929” (Koyama 2014, 96). The mobilization of women in these interwar campaigns continued in much the same fashion as wartime mobilization as Japan entered the Second Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s. Until the last years of the war, in an explicit effort to preserve the family system, Japanese mobilization of women on the home front focused on the primacy of their domestic roles as mothers and housewives: “the roles of ‘reproductive soldiers’ and of ‘warriors in the economic war’” (Ueno 2004, 44). The cooperation of both women’s leaders and ordinary women with the state began much earlier than the implementation of a “total war” system in the later years of the Asia-Pacific War.

Although most scholarship on the incorporation of women into the nation-state tends to emphasize the role of the state (e.g., the state’s shaping of the modern household [Koyama 1999], the state’s “gender strategy” [Ueno 2004]), the case presented in this chapter, the 1938 “Finding Waste in the Streets” event, demonstrates women’s agency as active partners in their relationship with the Japanese state. While the state retained almost all the power in its relationship with women, women were nevertheless able to subtly critique the current way of doing things (in this case, the waste collection system), offer their own ideas for improvement, and design and implement their own campaigns in support of the war effort. In this case, women’s groups seized on the government’s “Week for Emphasis on the Economic Battle” to stage their own initiative supporting the war economy through identifying needless waste, directed and implemented by the women’s groups themselves, which was (coincidentally or not) held on the same day as an officially sponsored colloquium on “women and economics.” With this event, the women’s groups asserted that “women’s eyes” being on the streets, rather than in the home as usual, would enable them to see waste that men could not, and would thus be of major benefit to the state and society. By asserting that women could be of benefit to the war effort in a manner that had not been expressly condoned by the state (and that subtly questioned the primacy of women’s domestic role), the

women's groups demonstrated their autonomy as national subjects in shaping their place in the nation-state.