The legacy of the British women's suffrage movement and its influence upon the Japanese women's movement

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Introduction

2018 marked the centenary of the British 1918 Suffrage Act, which granted the vote to a limited number of women over 30 years old who met certain conditions. The centenary of the Act, which had finally allowed British women to vote, elicited enthusiastic national interest and its history and implications were widely covered by all the media throughout the year. In 2017, on International Women's Day (8th March), the Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond announced in his budget a £5 million fund for the commemoration of the upcoming centenary.[1] Part of the government initiative was the Women's Vote Centenary Grant Scheme, a £1.5 million fund to support local and community groups across England in celebrating the centenary. This generous financial support made it possible to hold various celebratory and educational events and projects. Indeed, many international conferences, public lectures, seminars and exhibitions were held throughout Britain. One of the most notable was a conference, entitled 'The campaign for women's suffrage: national and international perspectives', which was organised by Professor June Purvis, an authority on the British women's suffrage movement, from 31st August to 1st September 2018.[2] More than 200 people, mainly women, from 17 countries attended, which indicates the universal popularity of the issue of women's suffrage. It provided a wide range of women of different nationalities, coming from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds, with an ideal

opportunity to exchange their views on the significance of the British women's suffrage movement and its legacies.

A major exhibition called 'Voice & Vote' was held in Westminster Hall from June to October 2018. It combined interactive features and historical exhibits, and highlighted the campaign for votes for women and the representation of women in the House of Commons and House of Lords.[3] The Museum of London also had a special exhibition called, 'Keeping alive the suffragette spirit', and showed a short film, which was mainly based on interviews with a selective number of British women from different age groups and occupational backgrounds.[4] It explored various ways in which the suffragette movement continues to inspire contemporary British women.

On 24th April 2018 a statue of the prominent suffragist, Mrs Millicent Fawcett, was unveiled in Parliament Square. Prime Minister Theresa May attended the ceremony and paid tribute to the lasting impact of the 'truly great campaigner' Mrs Fawcett.[5] The bronze statue shows the 50-year-old Millicent Fawcett holding a banner that bears the words 'courage calls to courage everywhere'. Created by the award-winning artist Gillian Wearing, it is the first statue of a woman erected in Parliament Square.[6] In Leicester, a statue of Alice Hawkins, a leading local suffragette, was unveiled in New Market Square on 4th February 2018.[7] The statue portrays Hawkins speaking and gesturing with her right arm raised.[8] Thousands of people attended the ceremony.

On 11th September 2018, a statue of Emily Wilding Davison was unveiled in the market town of Morpeth near to Longhorsley, Davison's family home.[9] She was an active member of the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union) and was reported to have gone on hunger strike in prison 49 times.[10] In June 1913, she ran out onto the racetrack at the Epsom Derby and flung herself at King George V's horse Anmer. Her skull was fractured and she died without regaining consciousness. Although she remains 'one of the genuine martyrs of the suffrage movement', she had had no memorial other than her grave until this new steel

statue was created by the sculptor Roy Lonsdale.

Although the British women's suffrage organisations led by the Pankhursts and Mrs Fawcett have been well researched not only in Britain but also in America and other English speaking countries, publications about them have tended to focus on their influence upon British society and history and the further social, economic, occupational, legal and political development of British women.[11] Some existing studies have discussed the British suffrage movement's impact on the women's movements in other countries such as America, Germany and France, and also used comparative international approaches. Although some English publications have covered the development of the Japanese women's suffrage movement, no research has been carried out to explore the British campaign's influence upon the Japanese women's movement.[12]

This article covers three major areas. First, the emergence and development of the women's suffrage movement in Britain are explored. Many women's suffrage groups were founded in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Among them, the two best-known were the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), known as the suffragists, and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), known as the suffragettes. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* the term 'suffragist' was first used in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1822, and came into frequent use after about 1885 to indicate an advocate of the extension of the political franchise.[13] On the other hand, the term 'suffragette' was created in 1906 by a journalist working for the *Daily Mail,* implying a female supporter of the cause of women's political enfranchisement, especially one of a violent or 'militant' type.[14] From then on, the members of the WSPU were called suffragettes, while those of the NUWSS were called suffragists. Special attention is drawn here to the WSPU, which was founded by the Pankhursts.

Secondly, the aims of the women's suffrage movement in Britain, its members and major activities are assessed. Some comparisons are made between

the WSPU and the NUWSS to show their similarities and differences. What impact did the WSPU have on British society at that time? How did it promote women's status, and what contributions did it make to further develop British women's movements?

Thirdly, this article attempts to establish a link between the British and the Japanese women's franchise movements, and to investigate the former's influence upon the latter. I will trace when and how the British women's suffrage campaigns were reported in the Japanese press and assess what impact the press coverage had on the emergence and further development of the Japanese women's movement.

Historical background

Britain has already produced two female Prime Ministers – Margaret Thatcher (the first female British prime minister, who was known as 'the iron lady') and Theresa May, the present prime minister. Moreover the country has had powerful female monarchs such as Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria. The latter in particular became a national icon and enjoyed immense power as the queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India.[15] During her reign, the British Empire was extended until the country ruled more than one quarter of the entire world.

However, neither of these powerful queens proposed raising the status of the women in their realm. On the contrary, Queen Victoria had fixed ideas of gender roles and vehemently opposed 'women's rights'. When she came to the British throne in 1837, women were still deprived of political, legal, economic and marital rights. Generally speaking, women were regarded as inferior creatures, and most of them had few opportunities for independent advancement.[16] Therefore most women aspired to marriage. Their role in life was that of a wife and mother, and their main function was to perpetuate the race. In Lord

Tennyson's narrative poem *The Princess* (published in 1847) he defined separate domains and duties which men and women in the Victorian period were destined to have:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
> Man for the sword, and for the needle she;
> Man with the head, and woman with the heart;
> Man to command, and woman to obey;
> All else confusion. [Part V, 11] [17]

The ideal woman of the times was considered to be one with 'womanly' virtues who served as a faithful servant to her husband and was loyal and patriotic. Indeed a married woman had little separate existence in law, and in effect became her husband's property upon their marriage. Any money she earned was legally his, as was any property she owned or inherited. Until the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, divorce was not an option available to her, and even after the Act, the burden of providing sufficient proof was onerous. The following parliamentary report published in *The Times* on 18th March 1853, gives some indication of women's extremely low legal status in the Victorian period:

> During a debate in the House of Commons, a Mr Fitzroy stated that under English law a woman was worth less than poodle dogs or a Skye terrier. His conclusion came from a comparison of punishments imposed by the courts. It reported that 'any man may, at his pleasure, kick, bruise, beat, knock down, and stamp upon' a woman and the fine was a quarter of that for stealing a dog. Worse still, if the fine was unpaid, the crime of viciously beating a woman would bring a two-month prison sentence with hard labour, whereas the theft of a dog brought the much harsher sentence of six months in prison with hard labour. He went on to suggest that women should be classified as animals so that they could be better protected under the Cruelty to Animals Act.[18]

This report, which was ironically comic to make its point more forcefully, demonstrates how badly the law treated women at that time. However, not all women remained passive victims of their fates. For example, Caroline Norton, a successful poet and novelist, who had suffered from her husband's domestic violence, became separated from him.[19] He refused to let her see their children because under the law at that time, a father had absolute rights over his children, while a mother had no rights at all. Therefore in desperation, she used her literary talent, writing two pamphlets arguing for mothers' natural rights to have custody of their children. Her first pamphlet in 1836 was entitled *The Natural Claim of a Mother to the Custody of her Children as Affected by the Common Law Rights of the Father* in 1836, and the second one in 1838 was *A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Law of Custody of Infants.* She sent the latter to every MP, and it won much sympathy among Parliamentarians. Due to her intense campaigning, Parliament passed the Custody of Infants Act in 1839, which allowed a mother to petition the courts for custody of her children up to the age of seven, and for access to older children. This was the first piece of feminist legislation to be passed into law.

With the Industrial Revolution employing increasing numbers of women, certain improvements were gradually carried out in the 19th century to protect women workers and to improve their legal status. For example, the 1842 Factory Act was passed by Parliament to regulate the working hours of female textile workers, and the twelve-hour day was introduced. This Act was followed by the 1847 Factory Act, which further reduced their working hours to ten per day. The Married Women's Property Act of 1870 allowed married women to keep their own earnings, which hitherto, they had not been able to do. In 1873 all women were allowed to continue to see their children after a divorce. Thus, slow but steady improvements in the legal rights of women were made in the 19th century.

One of the most important advancements for women in the 19th century was seen in the field of higher education. Bedford College was founded by Elizabeth

Jesser Reid in London in 1849 as the first higher education college for women in Britain.[20] In 1869 Emily Davies founded a women's college in Hitchin, which moved in 1873 to the outskirts of Cambridge, and was established as Girton College.[21] Henry Sidgwick had taken the personal initiative of organising special lectures for women in Cambridge, and provided a house in which young female students could reside while attending lectures in Cambridge in 1871.[22] The initially modest venture had expanded to become Newnham College by 1880 and Anne Clough became its first principle.[23] Royal Holloway College was officially opened in 1886 in London as a women's college. In 1879 Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville College came to be established as women's colleges in Oxford. They were followed by the foundation of two more women's colleges, St Hugh's College in 1886 and St Hilda's College in 1893.[24]

The availability of expanded higher education for women and the foundations of women's colleges in London, Oxford and Cambridge contributed to the increase in the number of women who completed secondary school education. Such improvements in women's education created better career opportunities for them. The number of women, especially middle-class women, employed in Britain rose from 1890 onwards. Many of these women became school-teachers, journalists and nurses. The expanding commercial world also provided women with new fields of work, for example, as typists or clerks. In spite of extreme reluctance to welcome women into the medical profession, in 1865 Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was allowed to sit the examinations of the Society of Apothecaries and so was able to practise as a doctor.[25]

It is significant that in the 1890s, many women, who had been educated to a standard unknown to previous generations, began to show great interest in their rights and the possibility of changes in their legal status. They started to turn against convention, with its fixed notions of women and Victorian values that favoured men. Challenging the existing, patriarchal society, they were eager to create a better one where equal educational, employment and legal rights would

be available to all women. They refused to conform to traditional feminine roles, and attempted to emancipate themselves, becoming financially independent. They came to be called 'new women', and were to be harbingers of the women's suffrage movement.[26]

The emergence of the 'new woman' as a social phenomenon was matched by an increasing interest among novelists in 'the woman question' as a source of artistic inspiration. Leading novelists such as George Gissing and Thomas Hardy created heroines who are considered exemplars of the 'new woman' in their novels, which were sometimes termed 'New Woman Fiction'.[27]

The origins of the women's suffrage movement

Many scholars working on British women's history date the women's suffrage movement from 7th June 1866 when Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Emily Davies, representing the Kensington Society, gave a petition for women's enfranchisement to MP John Stuart Mill.[28]

Prior to 1866, the intellectual argument for women's suffrage was established by the publication of feminist works such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), William Thompson's *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery* (1825), and John Stuart Mill's *The Enfranchisement of Women* (1851).[29]

Other key incidents in the history of British women's suffrage occurred before 1866. For example, in 1832, Mary Smith from Stanmore in Yorkshire submitted the first-ever women's suffrage petition, stating that she paid taxes and was subject to the rule of law, and therefore did not see why she should not vote.[30] It was the first petition from an individual woman asking for the vote. Her petition was presented to Parliament by Henry Hunt, a radical MP, but it was laughed out of the House of Commons. In 1847 Anne Knight, a social

reformer and a feminist pioneer, produced and distributed what is considered to be the first leaflet calling for women's suffrage. In 1851, Anne Knight, together with Anne Kent and several other local women, founded the Sheffield Female Political Association, the first British organisation to call for women's suffrage.[31] The Association published 'An Address to the Women of England', which was the first petition in England demanding women's suffrage, and it was presented to the House of Lords by George Howard. However, it was rejected.

However, it was the Kensington Society's women's suffrage petition in 1866 that was the most significant landmark in suffragist history. The Kensington Society was a discussion group formed in London in 1865. It consisted of all-female members including Barbara Bodichon, Emily Davies, Helen Taylor, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Dorothea Beale, who were all notable feminist campaigners of the nineteenth century. Many of them were attempting to pursue a career in education or medicine. The topic which they dealt with on 21st November 1865 was parliamentary reform, and they discussed the question, 'Is the extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women desirable, and if so, under what conditions?' The members of the Kensington Society felt that it was unfair that women were not allowed to vote in Parliamentary elections. Therefore they drafted a petition to Parliament demanding the enfranchisement of all householders regardless of sex. The petition was signed by almost 1,500 women.

John Stuart Mill, an eminent liberal philosopher who was elected to Parliament in 1866, was a radical Member of Parliament and a leading supporter of women's suffrage.[32] In this regard he was the ideal person for the Kensington Society to trust with handling the petition. He believed wholeheartedly in equal rights between men and women, and strongly advocated the removal of legal and political restrictions on women's freedom of actions. He considered it vital for women to take the lead in their own emancipation and to gain their suffrage. As an MP, he was in a position to give political support to women, so he presented the Kensington Society's petition to the House of Commons on

their behalf. In 1867 he introduced a women's suffrage amendment to Disraeli's 1867 Reform Bill, asking that the word 'man' to be replaced by the word 'person', which would have given women the same political rights as men. However, his amendment was defeated by 196 votes to 73.

Although the members of the Kensington Society were greatly disappointed with this result, they did not accept defeat. They decided to found the London Society for Women's Suffrage with Mill as president and Mentia Taylor as secretary. Other members included Helen Taylor, Frances Power Cobbe, Millicent Fawcett, Barbara Bodichon, Emily Davies, Francis Mary Buss, Dorothea Beale, Anne Clough, Elizabeth Garrett and Jessie Boucherett. The Society held several meetings every year. In the meeting on women's suffrage held on 26th March 1870, Helen Taylor was the main speaker with John Stuart Mill and Millicent Fawcett also speaking. According to Elizabeth Crawford, the Society's main objective was to obtain the parliamentary franchise for widows and spinsters on the same conditions as those on which it was granted to men.

Meanwhile, the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage was founded by Lydia Becker who became its secretary.[33] In 1866, Becker attended the Social Science Annual Meeting held in Manchester, and was greatly inspired when she heard Barbara Bodichon's paper entitled 'Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women'. Subsequently, she drew closer to the London suffrage group and began to exert more influence in Manchester. Her article 'Female Suffrage', which was published in the *Contemporary Review* in 1867, made her name known to the public.[34] In March 1870 the *Journal of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage* was launched by the Manchester Executive Committee, and Becker became its editor. Within a year, the title of the journal was changed to the *Women's Suffrage Journal,* and it became a national journal after divorcing itself from the Manchester Society. It included news of events affecting all areas of women's lives, and its coverage was wide-ranging. Publication lasted twenty years until 1890, the year of

Becker's death. She also became the chief parliamentary agent for the suffrage movement and was a familiar person in lobbies, making her a national figure in the women’s suffrage movement.

Following the foundation of the Manchester National Society for Women’s Suffrage, a number of similar and smaller local women’s suffrage societies were formed in other cities including Birmingham, Bristol and Edinburgh. However, after Becker’s death in 1890 and the demise of the *Women’s Suffrage Journal,* interest in the whole question of women’s suffrage declined. To remedy this weakening of the women’s movement, 17 local women’s suffrage societies were amalgamated in 1897 to form the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).[35] The NUWSS was democratically run and later developed into the largest women’s suffrage organisation in Britain. Mrs Millicent Garrett Fawcett was elected to be the president, and retained this position until 1919, by which time the principle of women’s suffrage had been won.[36]

The main aim of the NUWSS was ‘to obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men’. Its methods were always respectable and law-abiding, and it conducted petitioning and political lobbying. Mrs Fawcett’s view of women’s emancipation was that it was for the good of all society, stating ‘We believe that men cannot be truly free so long as women are held in political subjection’. She disapproved of militant tactics and did not want a gender-based war.

However, after the women’s suffrage movement was effectively reborn with the foundation of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), even Mrs Fawcett acknowledged the success of the new militant methods. Under the influence of the WSPU, she adopted more colourful methods for her own organisation although they were always constitutional. The NUWSS embarked on organising processions, public lectures and other means to attract public interest and support.

The foundation and the development of the Women's Social and Political Union

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in Manchester in October 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst.[37] It was initially supported by her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia and a small group of women, who were supporters of the Independent Labour Party. Emmeline was an ideal leader in many respects. She had superb organisational ability, as well as charisma, and was prepared to make personal sacrifices to help vulnerable women. She was born into a radical family, and attended her first suffrage meeting with her mother at the age of fourteen.

Her marriage to Richard Pankhurst no doubt deepened her knowledge of and interest in women's causes. Pankhurst was a lawyer who had already established a reputation as a reformer and an advocate of women's suffrage. Olive Banks described him as 'an important male feminist in his own right, contributing both to the extension of women's suffrage in local government and the extension of married women's property'.[38] Indeed he served on the Married Women's Property Committee and drafted a women's property bill in 1868. In 1889 he helped to form the Women's Franchise League, a group emphasising married women's rights, and Emmeline also became an active member, which provided her an apprenticeship in the women's suffrage movement.

In addition, her experience of working as a Poor Law Guardian gave her many opportunities to witness the sufferings of women, particularly widows, mothers of illegitimate children, and women driven into prostitution by poverty. As Olive Banks states, such experience contributed to her belief in the need for women's suffrage.[39]

Even though Emmeline herself was middle-class she was very sympathetic to working-class women. She was determined to improve their lives and to promote their interests, and the WSPU's membership was initially targeted at

working-class women. In her autobiography *My Own Story* Emmeline Pankhurst described the objectives of the WSPU as follows:

> …to secure for women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men…to limit our membership exclusively to women and to be satisfied with nothing but action on our question. Deeds, not Words, was to be our permanent motto.[40]

The early days of the WSPU's activities were occupied with petitioning and Parliamentary lobbying, which were similar to those of the NUWSS. However, in 1905 the WSPU's moderate and law-abiding approaches changed. On 13th October 1905 Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney went to the Free Trade Hall in Manchester to attend a huge Liberal Party meeting, in which they shouted the question, 'Will the Liberal Government give the vote to women?' Their repeated question was completely ignored, and the two protesters were thrown out of the meeting. To their surprise, this incident received considerable publicity. This made them realise that for the promotion of women's suffrage, outrageous behaviour was the best way to obtain the maximum attention of the media, the general public and the government, even if it caused them to be sent to prison. Christabel hit and spat at policemen, for which she was arrested and sentenced to ten days in prison.[41] Annie Kenney was sentenced to three days for obstruction and disorderly behaviour.[42] Their 'unwomanly behaviour' shocked many people.

After this first imprisonment for the suffrage cause, other members of the WSPU began to take militant action, for which they became commonly known as 'suffragettes', in sharp contrast with the law-abiding suffragists. In 1906 the WSPU's headquarters moved from Manchester to London, and Clement's Inn became the centre of its operations. Members of the WSPU were encouraged to take militant action. They organised mass demonstrations and marches,

trespassed in buildings, disrupted political speeches, damaged or destroyed property by window-breaking, by burning and bombing buildings, cutting telephone and telegraph lines, and destroying mail-boxes.[43]

Indeed thousands of WSPU members broke the law, and more and more were arrested and sent to prison because they refused to pay fines. Although they should have been given the status of political prisoners, the great majority of them were treated as ordinary criminals in jail. As a result of this, Marion Wallace-Dunlop protested against the authorities' treatment and went on hunger strike, refusing all food until she was given political status. After she had fasted for 91 hours in London's Holloway Prison, the Home Office ordered her release because her health began to fail. However, when three WSPU members were sent to prison and went on hunger strike a few weeks later, they were force-fed.[44]

An increasing number of the WSPU members carried out arson attacks, were arrested and sent to prison where they immediately went on hunger strike. Consequently the government introduced the Prisoner's Temporary Discharge for Ill Health Act, which was known as the Cat and Mouse Act, to avoid their becoming martyrs.[45] By this act, suffragettes were released as soon as they became ill, and the police re-arrested them and sent them to prison to complete their sentences after they had recovered. The suffragettes' militancy continued to escalate because they wanted to make the electors and the Government so uncomfortable that, in order to 'put an end to the nuisance, they will give women the vote'.

The militant campaign came to an end, however, due to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Both Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst felt that 'victory against Germany was a more immediate priority than the vote'. They and their followers stopped suffrage campaigns and devoted themselves to recruiting female war workers for munitions factories.

Similarly Mrs Fawcett, the leader of the NUWSS, urged women to engage in war work for the Home Front. Women from all social classes helped the

war effort by taking on work which had previously been done by the men who had been drafted into the armed forces. By demonstrating their capabilities, they banished the old preconceived ideas about women being weak, frail, unintelligent creatures.

After Britain won the war, the government decided to reward women for their war contributions, and in February 1918 the Representation of the People Act was introduced. It enfranchised women over the age of thirty who were householders, the wives of householders, occupiers of property with an annual rent of £5, and graduates of British universities, or women who were qualified but not graduates.[46] About 8.5 million women became eligible to vote in the 1918 election, as well as being able to stand as MPs. In 1919 Nancy Astor won a by-election and became the first female MP.[47] She kept her seat in the House of Commons, and campaigned for various women's issues. Although the 1918 Act gave a limited form of women's suffrage, the bill introduced in March 1928, which became law on 2nd July 1928, finally enfranchised all women over the age of 21 and completely removed the gender barrier.

Now I would like to draw attention to the achievements and influence of the British women's suffrage movement. Mrs Fawcett, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst possessed distinguished qualities as leaders. They were eloquent and often spell-binding speakers. They had charisma, strong leadership and determination to bring the members together in a unified and enduring way. As Paula Bartley states, the British women's suffrage campaigns made a huge impact on Edwardian society at many different levels.[48] In addition, the WSPU's activities had an influence not only on the British public but also on many suffragists abroad, who often adopted their tactics. For example, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, two American students, who had become active members of the WSPU during their stay in Britain, attempted on their return to America to adopt militant methods to promote the women's suffrage campaign there. To many people's eyes, establishing a link between the British women's suffrage

movement and the Japanese women's emancipation movement seems to be impossible. However, the former was of great consequence for the emergence and development of the latter.

The influence of the British women's suffrage movement upon the Japanese women's movement

It was *Sekai Fujin* (*Women of the World*), a socialist women's newspaper, edited by Hideko Fukuda between 1907 and 1909, that first published reports on the women's political movements in Britain. In *Sekai Fujin* the British women's suffrage campaigners were identified as 'new women', and their activities were discussed.[49]

In the summer of 1910 a series of detailed articles on large-scale British women's suffrage demonstrations led by the WSPU appeared in Japanese newspapers. These were written by two male journalists, Nyozekan Hasegawa from Osaka Asahi Newspaper Company, and Yūhō Kikuchi from Osaka Mainichi Newspaper Company.[50] One wonders why they suddenly drew attention to the British women's movement. This was due to the Japan-British Exhibition (Nichi-Ei Hakuran-kai) held at Shepherds Bush in London from 14th May 1910 to 29th October 1910, when many Japanese journalists including Hasegawa and Kikuchi were sent to Britain to report on the event.[51]

The exhibition promoted Japanese tradition and culture, and contributed to advancing international links. Moreover this provided the Japanese delegates with an ideal opportunity to learn about British women's causes since a congress of women representing various fields of women's public and social work was held for one month in the Congress Hall of the Japan-British Exhibition from 6th June 1910.[52]

Many women's suffrage demonstrations were organised in London while the exhibition was on. Among them, the women's suffrage procession held on

18th June was one of the largest yet, marching from the Thames Embankment to the Albert Hall. It consisted of seven sections, four of which were made up of members of the WSPU carrying between 600 and 700 banners. The march was accompanied by the music of 40 bands, headed by the drum and fife band of the WSPU.

The Japanese journalists, Hasegawa and Kikuchi, witnessed this procession and were intrigued by the English women's agitation, which was alien to them. Hasegawa saw actresses, female writers, artists, nurses, typists and teachers marching in their occupational uniforms and carrying banners. He was particularly impressed with a group of nurses who participated in the procession, and said:

> I heard that the nurses in London were selected extremely rigorously, and so many of them are dignified ladies. Indeed they are such impressive-looking women that the people looking at the nurses' procession showed much respect for them and never jeered at them.[53]

Hasegawa and Kikuchi's articles were sent back to Japan and published in leading newspapers with a large circulation.[54] Moreover the *Tokyo Daily Newspaper* (*Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun*) reported the WSPU's militant actions such as breaking windows, cutting telephone wires and starting fires on race and golf courses.

Their press coverage had a great impact on Japanese men and women. For example, Shōyō Tsubouchi, a professor of Waseda University in Tokyo, and an authority on western literature, was stimulated by the articles on the British women's suffrage movement. As British suffragettes were identified as 'new women', whom Japanese people were unfamiliar with, he decided to lecture on western new women in the summer and autumn of 1910.[55] He discussed the heroines of popular western plays such as Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's*

House, and Hedda in his *Hedda Gabler,* and Vivie in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession,* who were regarded as exemplars of 'new women'.[56] Tsubouchi contributed to the wider usage of the term 'a new woman'.

However, the British suffragettes' militant behaviour gave negative impressions to most Japanese men. For example, Baron Yoshirō Fujimura (a member of the House of Peers who studied at Cambridge University), gave the following account of his encounter with British suffragettes.[57]

> During my stay in London, I had the opportunity to see many militant women's suffrage campaigns organised by the notorious British suffragettes. I saw many women with bobbed hair, whose appearance could hardly be distinguished from men. I saw these women walk arm in arm with others and march through the main streets of London. They sometimes shouted 'Votes for women'. I also saw them put up their suffrage posters at every street corner. In addition to this their actions went to extremes, and they began to throw fire into post-boxes, and to smash the windows of government offices. They became utterly out of control. This first-hand experience of militant British suffragettes made me realise that our country's family system would be destroyed if such militant, violent women as the British suffragettes began to appear in Japan. [58]

Fujimura was appalled by the violent actions of British suffragettes, and strongly objected to them. His first-hand experience of militant British suffragettes made him realise that the Japanese patriarchal family system (called the *ie seido*), whose main objective was to codify and buttress family lineage, would be destroyed if such militant, violent women as the British suffragettes began to appear in Japan.

What influence did the British suffragettes have upon Japanese women who were still deprived of political, legal, economic and marital rights even after

the Meiji Restoration in 1868? Educated Japanese women were inspired by the British women's suffrage movement, but they knew that the only feasible way to promote their rights at that time was through writing. It was from this context that the Seitō Society, the first women's literary society (which was named after the British Bluestocking Society) and its magazine *Seitō* emerged.[59] The members of the Seitō Society, who went to see the performances of *A Doll's House,* were inspired by western new women, so *Seitō* had special issues on 'new women'. Their most frequent discussions on women's issues were on personal family problems such as separation, divorce and husbands' adultery, but they never remarked on women's suffrage. This was simply because the main objectives of the Seitō Society and *Seitō* were to help other women disregard 'feudalistic' ideas in their minds, find new identities and emancipate themselves before considering female suffrage.

The Seitō Society's rival, the Real New Women's Society (Shin Shin Fujinkai), which was founded by Fumiko Nishikawa in March 1913, had the more serious objective of elevating women's social, legal and political position.[60] Unlike the Seitō Society, the Real New Women's Society was concerned with the promotion of female job opportunities, the realization of gender equality and women's suffrage. Its magazine, *Real New Women* (*Shin Shin Fujin*) published short biographical sketches of Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Fawcett, and reported on women's international political issues focusing on the American and British women's suffrage movements. The magazine also published the Japanese translation of an article 'Yoshio Markino's visit to the Women's Social and Political Union', which was initially published in his book *My Idealed John Bullesses.*[61] Markino was a Japanese artist who had lived in London for more than thirty years.[62] As he held enlightened views on women's emancipation, he admired British women (for whom he invented a special name 'John Bullesses', a variation of the traditional English male symbol John Bull) and wanted to write a tribute to them.

Markino was asked to make sketches of suffragettes by an editor of *The English Review.*[63] He visited Clement's Inn, the headquarters of the WSPU and was shown around by Christabel Pankhurst herself. He was impressed with the variety of WSPU activities there and stated:

> Everywhere I found that several John Bullesses were writing, typing, or collecting press cuttings.[64]

He also saw several women designing and sewing banners. In the map room there was a very large map of Great Britain hanging on a board and he was fascinated to see some women pinning their colours on places they had successfully 'invaded'. After this visit, he was invited by Christabel Pankhurst to attend a few meetings of the WSPU known as 'At Home'.

Markino also met Mrs Fawcett and was impressed with her dignity and refined manners. He wrote a chapter on her in his book which was translated into Japanese and published in *Real New Women.*[65] The Real New Women's Society had great potential to develop into an equivalent of a western women's organisation such as the WSPU. However, it did not last long, and did not expand its activities into defined political action such as presenting women's suffrage petitions and organising demonstrations. This contributed to its longer-term obscurity in the history of the Japanese women's movement.

It was not until 1920 when the Association of New Women (Shin Fujin Kyōkai), founded by Raichō Hiratsuka and Fusae Ichikawa, submitted the first Japanese petition on women's suffrage to the Diet.[66] However, the Association's campaigns on women's suffrage achieved so little that the youngest member of the Association, Hide Tajima, angrily stated that if Japanese women had been like the British militant suffragettes, they would have taken aggressive direct physical actions against male Diet members and achieved much more.[67]

Fusae Ichikawa, one of the founding members of the Association, went

to America in 1921, and visited women's suffrage organisations such as the National Woman's Party and the National League of Women's Voters.[68] Her meeting with Alice Paul, who had been an active member of the WSPU during her stay in Britain and later became a women's suffrage leader in America, was crucial for Ichikawa's outlook on female suffrage.[69] Following Alice Paul's advice, that women's suffrage is the key to solving all women's problems, Ichikawa focused on developing the women's suffrage campaign in Japan. After her return, she joined the League for the Attainment of Women's Suffrage (Fujin Sanseiken Kakutoku Kisei Dōmei) which was founded in 1924.[70] She became its leader and played a significant role in developing an active suffrage movement before World War II. The League was more structured and shared more similarities with western suffrage organisations such as the WSPU although the League's campaigns were always law-abiding. However, due to the outbreak of the Second World War, the League was discontinued. After Japan lost the war, on 17th December 1945 suffrage was granted to women by the Allied Forces.

Conclusion

It is deeply paradoxical that the loss of that war, via the use of atomic weapons, led through General MacArthur to the victory of women's suffrage for Japanese women. The ending of a male-dominated, expansionist, military system was thus linked historically to key reforms affecting the legal status of women, both in the public-political arena, and indeed in other ways in the domestic situation of the Japanese family systems. However, those reforms, enacted by the occupying powers, clearly coalesced with the heritage of agitation and women's movements in Japan, and they were not contrary to the spirit of those earlier movements, from *Seitō* onwards. This is arguably one reason why the 1945-47 reforms were largely successful, even allowing for the persistence of many forms of female subjugation in Japan. In this article I have stressed the influence of

the western women's movements, notably the WSPU on the Japanese women's movement, and indeed this has not been fully appreciated hitherto. The cultural differences have often occluded this perspective. It is clear from current research that such influence was pervasive elsewhere as well, affecting options and tactics for other suffrage movements. This international dimension warrants further research and assessment in the future.

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Chronological table concerning women's suffrage in Britain

1832: The Great Reform Act was introduced. It gave the vote to half a million more men, but the Act still excluded women.

1865: The Kensington Society, a debating group, was founded. It advocated women's suffrage among other reforms.

1866: The Manchester Society for Women's Suffrage was established.
The women's suffrage petition, prepared by Barbara Bodichon and the members of her women's group, was presented to Parliament by John Stuart Mill.

1867: The National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS) was founded.
The Second Reform Act was passed. It increased the number of male voters, but no progress was made on votes for women.

1869: The Municipal Franchise Act allowed female rate-payers to vote in municipal elections.

1870: Jacob Bright introduced the first women's suffrage bill, which was drafted by Richard Pankhurst.
Lydia Becker founded the *Women's Suffrage Journal*.
1884: The Third Reform Act was introduced. It gave the vote to nearly two-thirds of the male population (about 58 %), but no progress was made on votes for women.
1889: The Women's Franchise League was formed by Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy.
1893: The Independent Labour Party (ILP) was established.
1897: The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was created.
1903: The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded in Manchester.
1905: Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney were arrested.
1906: The Liberal Party won the general election.
The Women's Social and Political Union moved its headquarters from Manchester to London.
1907: The Men's League for Women's Suffrage was formed.
The first issue of *Votes for Women* was published by the Women's Social and Political Union.
The Women's Freedom League was established.
1908: The Women's National Anti-Suffrage League was established by Lady Jersey.
Henry Asquith became Prime Minister.
The Hyde Park mass meeting was organised by the Women's Social and Political Union.
1910: The Conciliation Committee was created.
The Conciliation Bill passed its Second Reading, but it was shelved.
The Women's Social and Political Union clashed with police, on what became known as 'Black Friday'.
1912: Christabel Pankhurst fled to Paris.
The Pethick-Lawrences were expelled from the Women's Social and Political Union.
1913: Emily Wilding Davison ran onto the Derby course during a race, and died after colliding with the King's horse.
The Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act, which was known as the Cat and Mouse Act, was introduced.
1914: Sylvia Pankhurst was expelled from the Women's Social and Political Union.
The First World War began.
The Women's Social and Political Union suspended its suffrage activities and joined the war effort.
1918: The end of the First World War.

The Representation of the People Act extended the vote to women aged 30 and above who were also local electors or the wives of local government electors. It also increased the number of men eligible to vote to all those over 21.

1928: The Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act enfranchised women aged 21 and over.