

## From the Meiji Era to the End of World War

It is difficult to imagine woman scientists in a Japan which had not yet absorbed modern science from Europe. However, if we look for a practitioner of Western medicine rather than a scientist as such, we will find the name of Ine Siebold whose father was a famous German botanist. Philipp Franz von Siebold came to Japan in 1823 and studied Japanese animals and plants, geography, history, and the Japanese language. After his return to Germany, his daughter Ine (her Japanese name was Ine Kusumoto) was brought up by her Japanese mother and grew up to be an obstetrician with the latest medical knowledge. Other woman doctors may have existed, but there are no details before the Meiji Era.

After the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese government imported Western civilization rapidly and hired a great many foreign science teachers to develop modern science in Japan. In the course of these developments, it introduced an examination system for a license to practice western medicine in 1874. Those women who hoped to become medical doctors could attempt it and enter the medical world if they passed the exami-

nation. This system ensured women a degree of equality in profession and status. In 1885, several women attempted this examination but only one woman, Ginko Ogino, passed. She became the first woman doctor. This was not a bad start, particularly if the situation in Japan were compared with the situation in England, the most advanced country of its day. The first woman doctor in England was Garret Anderson, who started her job at St. Mary's Dispensary for Women in 1866. After Ginko Ogino, more women attempted the examination and subsequently became doctors. One exceptional woman doctor who followed an unusual career as a Japanese woman was Kyoko Okami. She graduated from Pennsylvania Women's Medical College and then was appointed chief doctor of obstetrics in the Jikei dispensary (later Jikei University) in 1889.

Anyway, in the ten years following Ogino becoming a doctor, over 50 woman doctors emerged. One of them, Sonoko Maezono, founded the Japan Medical Women's Association in 1902, and another, Yayoi Yoshioka, founded Tokyo Woman's Medical School in 1900. The former associa-