

# AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON JAPANESE BIRTH CONTROL 201

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The birth control pill was legalized in the United States in 1965, and in 1999, it was legalized in Japan. For decades, Japan clinged to pronatalist ideas for moral and economic reasons. A decreased birth rate was considered an economic threat, as a smaller workforce would seemingly result in decreased productivity. Activists, such as Margaret Sanger and Shidzue Ishimoto, disputed misinformation about birth control by opposing the government's censorship policies. They educated people about how valuable birth control and family planning could be; it can allow women to gain more independence, women to preserve their health, families to prevent economically burdensome births, etc. The success of the birth control movement in Japan is particularly notable, as it was an especially long effort that exemplified that with dedication change can occur, even in the most resistant places.

## AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL MOVEMENT

Birth control activists failed to amend Section 1142 of the New York State Penal Code to allow birth control to be distributed by non-physicians. Margaret Sanger was arrested for distributing information and birth control pills.

In 1923 the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau was established under the supervision of a physician. It was one of the first legal birth control clinics in the US. Because a physician supervised the clinic and consulted with patients, the clinic did not violate Section 1142 of the Penal Code.

After the establishment of this clinic, many other birth control clinics were established under physicians to educate and provide resources about contraception to women.

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## MARGARET SANGER



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## HISTORY OF CENSORSHIP AND BIRTH CONTROL IN JAPAN

**1912-1926**- time of social upheaval. Government controls more and more of public discord. In 1922, Margaret Sanger tours Japan.

**1926-1945**- government controls most medias. A special police force is created to deal with ideological offences and the death penalty is added for certain violations. By 1942, freedom of the press is completely eliminated.

**1945**- Allied Powers abolish all forms of censorship. However, the government continues to censor their society, including on information about birth control.

**1974**- The sale and distribution of IUDs is authorized.

**1999**- The contraceptive pill is legalized.

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## SHIDZUE ISHIMOTO AND MARGARET SANGER'S TOUR



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