

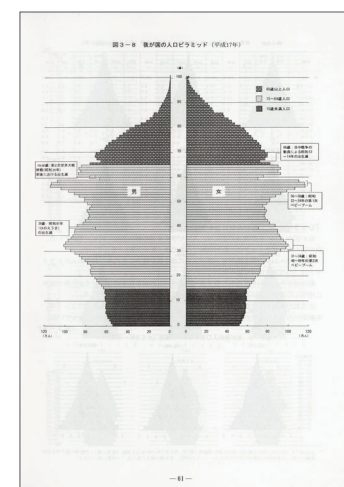
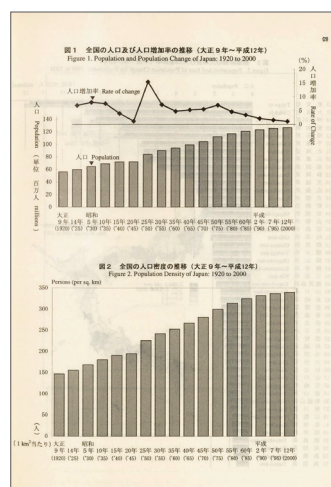
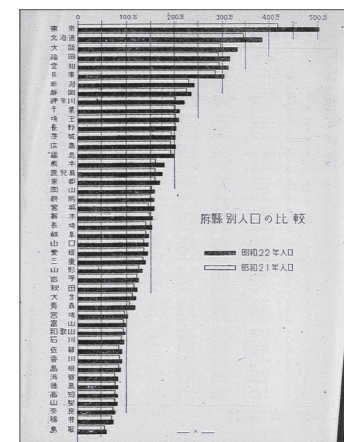
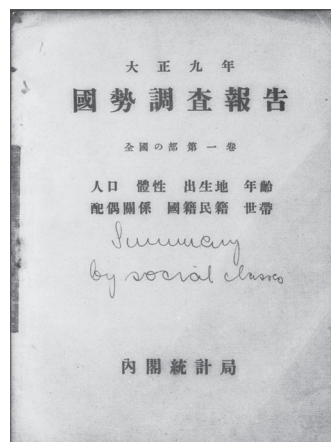
A newsletter from East View highlighting census data from around the world

## JAPAN'S SHRINKING POPULATION

According to the preliminary 2025 census results released at the end of May, Japan's population, as of October 1 of last year, stood at 123 million. In the 2020 census, the country's population was 126.1 million, which makes the decline the largest in Japan's history. The rate of decline also rose from 0.7% in 2020 to 2.5% in 2025. These numbers indicate an acceleration in population decrease, and demographers consider it a harbinger of what many developed nations will face in the near future.

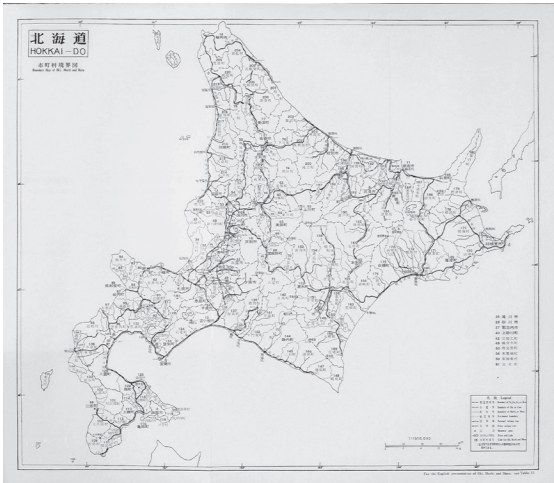
**Japan's recent census numbers indicate an acceleration in population decrease, and demographers consider it a harbinger of what many developed nations will face in the near future.**

Based on the preliminary census results, of Japan's 47 prefectures only Tokyo and Okinawa had population increases. Tokyo, with a population of 14,246,219, makes up for almost 12% of the total population. Its metro area, which includes neighboring prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba, makes up 30.1% of the national population. In its 10th consecutive year of decline, Japan's fertility rate – the average number of births per woman – dropped to 1.14. The estimated population of children under the age of 15 was 13.29 million as of April 1, declining for the 45th consecutive year and to the lowest level since 1950.



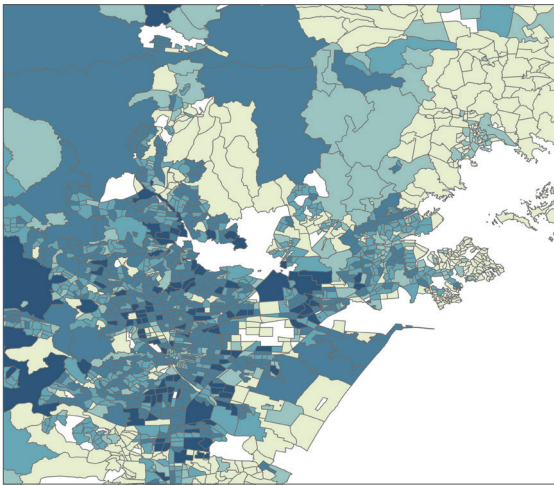
Clockwise, from top left:

- Japan, 1920. Census Results. Japan. v01. Population Statistics p. 1. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2569402B0.1.1>
- Japan, 1947. Census Report. pt01. Population Overview, p. 10. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2507322B0.1.10>
- Japan, 2005. Final Census Report. Summary Report, p. 61. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2670235B0.1.75>
- Japan, 2000. Census Results. v01. Total Population, p. 29. <https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2667467B0.1.40>



Some predict that this is not a reversible decline, at least in the short or medium term. Although the government formulated the “Children’s Future Strategy” in December 2023 to address the declining birth rates, the costs of childcare and education still prevent young people from having children. Moreover, women are still not well-represented in senior professional positions, indicating that many are forced to choose between motherhood and their careers. Demographers have warned about this trajectory for decades, but this sharp decline points to the urgency of the problem. With an aging population, Japan faces significant strain on healthcare and the labor force.

Japan presents an interesting case not just for demographic research but also for sociological analysis. The Global Census Archive contains thousands of e-book publications dating from 1920 to 2020, Excel-format tables, and GIS datasets for four censuses (2020, 2015, 2005, 1995) to facilitate research. By bringing together multiple census years in accessible formats, the archive enables researchers to conduct comparative and multidisciplinary analyses of long-term demographic and social change in Japan.



Top: Japan, 1965. Census Results. v04. Prefecture Reports. pt01. Hokkaido, p. 882.  
<https://gca.eastview.com/CENSUS-2508766B0.1.882>

Bottom: Image from Japan 2020 GIS Census Data

### Further reading on Japan’s shrinking population:

- “A bleak prognosis for Japan’s demographic future,” The Japan Times: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/editorials/2026/06/05/japans-demographic-future/>
- “How Japan Lost 3 Million People in Five Years,” The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/05/29/world/asia/japan-census-population-decline.html?smid=nytcore-android-share>
- “The Shrinking of Japan: A Harbinger of What Will Happen to the U.S.?” Center for Retirement Research at Boston College: <https://crr.bc.edu/the-shrinking-of-japan-a-harbinger-of-what-will-happen-to-the-u-s/>



The East View **Global Census Archive**® (GCA) is an innovative program to collect official data and publications issued by the national census authorities of more than 200 countries, from the early 19th century to the present day, providing a key resource for scholars and analysts to find current and historical census data to support critical research into our changing world. GCA provides a single platform experience to explore the world’s census publications: all countries and regions, the complete depth of published census materials, including original census publications in e-book form, as well as modern tabular data in Excel format and GIS files for advanced users.