Blue Daisies as a Mother’s Day Present
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On Mother’s Day, my daughter and son—from their primary school days until they were grown up—have usually given me a modest present such as a carnation and a cake. Although they are not expensive presents, I am satisfied with them, because it is by no means certain that I would be satisfied with the presents when I get them. To buy expensive presents would be a waste of money, especially if I were not pleased with them.

On Mother’s Day this year, I was a little happier than on previous occasions, because I was asked what flower I wanted as the present. The truth is, however, what I most want now is not a present. To be frank, I do not like their easygoing way of thinking that they can repay their debt of gratitude simply through the formality of giving a present.

It is a long time since I started doing housework, and even now I am not particularly good at it. I wish from the bottom of my heart I could be free from such work for an entire day just once in a blue moon, especially because I do not believe housework is my vocation.

For many years it has been my longstanding dream to wake up and find that breakfast is ready on the table and that someone has taken my place as a housewife for the whole day. Someone will say that I ought to have a break and go on a trip; but I am afraid I would not feel relaxed, since during that time I would be driven by my usual schedule from morning till night.

Several years ago, I lived alone in the house for a week, because my husband went off on a business trip and my children went away on an excursion. I prepared the meals, did the laundry and went shopping just for myself. In fact, I did almost the same things as usual during the week, but I enjoyed a relaxing time. I practised Japanese
penmanship. I made a chart of my TV viewing schedule, including the programme names and the broadcast times and followed the schedule without interference from anyone. Enveloped in an atmosphere of freedom, I enjoyed an uplifting feeling of happiness.

That was because, for the first time since my marriage, I was entirely relieved of a housekeeper’s, wife’s and mother’s obligations after I had been working for so many years without taking a rest. Sometimes I told my daughter about my feelings and views as a housewife so often that she seemed to understand me, but she was not willing to take my place and do the housework.

When the children were too busy to remember Mother’s Day, my husband, reading my mind, kindly said to me, ‘Shall we dine out? Today is Mother’s Day’. But, though feeling grateful to him, I was unwilling to do so, thinking to myself ‘Don’t try and take the children’s place, please. I am not your mother.’

On Mother’s Day this year, we, my husband, my daughter and I went to a garden plant fair held near my house. Saplings of dogwoods, maple trees and gold crests were displayed for sale. Near them there were a lot of pots of pink dwarf carnations. My husband seemed to be urging my daughter to buy a pot of dwarf carnations as a Mother’s Day present. My daughter had already bought a cake, however, so she looked slightly sullen and was unwilling to buy it. Nevertheless, she asked me which flower I liked.

Seizing the opportunity, I said, ‘Thank you very much. I would love to have those blue daisies.’

I had been attracted by some varieties of blue daisies, which were on display beside the pots of dwarf carnations.

‘Quite all right, as long as they please, Mum.’

In this way, to my great joy, I got a pot of pretty daisies with conspicuously blue flowers.

My daughter looked happy because I was pleased with her present. My husband looked dissatisfied only because I did not choose a carnation, as I have always done. He did not interfere, though, since the interested parties were satisfied, and walked a few steps apart from us.

I was happy that day, because my cherished desire, although I did not clearly express it, was accepted by my daughter. The best thing