

124 Chop Wood, Carry Water

“Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.”

Zen Koan

This figure represents the heart of life - all of the extraordinary efforts necessary to run a home and family, a role that traditionally falls to women.

While more women than ever are educated and employed today they still do the majority of household and familial tasks. As the population ages, women are the ones sandwiched between caretaking the babies, the old and now the very old.

And although family leave and sick days should be everyone’s concern, women as primary caregivers are the most affected - even though they are rarely the ones making policy.

Unpaid labor and stark wage gaps increasingly set women up for retirement shortfalls and guarantee the poverty cycle for the next generation of caretakers. The problem grows exponentially more grim with circumstances of race, poverty, education, abuse, and homelessness.