INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR FOCUSES ON WORKING MOTHERS AND FAMILY EDUCATION

March 19-22, 1985, marked the first International Seminar on Family Education sponsored by the National Women's Education Centre of Japan (NWEC). Chairing the event was Hiroshi Hara, Professor, Osaka City University, six Japanese and two American family education specialists discussed working mothers' impact on their families and society. The seminar, part of a three-year research project concerning this subject which was launched by the Centre in 1984.

Japanese panelists included Masatoshi Arima, Associate Professor of Sociology, Chiba University; Hiroshi Iwamura, Associate Professor of Mental Health, University of Tsukuba; Yasuo Kinoshita, Senior Research Associate, Japan Institute of Labor; Michiko Takahashi, Associate Professor of Child Psychology, Tokyo Gakugei University; and Katsuko Makino, Associate Professor of Home Economics Education, Yokohama National University. American participants were Myra M. Ferree, Associate Professor, University of Connecticut; and Lois W. Hoffman, Professor, University of Michigan.

The burgeoning number of Japanese mothers employed outside the home is having dramatic social effects. NWEC's seminar took an in-depth look at the components of this change—including redefined gender and parenting roles and the impact of mothers' work on children.

THE EXPERTS DISCUSS THE ISSUES

The two American panelists launched the seminar, one discussed the difficulty of striking a balance between career and childcare, the other gave provocative evidence that maternal employment does children no harm and may even be beneficial.

During the next two days, the Japanese panelists led the discussion on working mother relationships in changing society, to their families, and to family education. Topics covered included outdated employment criteria; a new labor evaluation system that assigns much more value to housework; and the apparent lack of correlation between a rising divorce rate and a growing number of employed mothers. Panelists also discussed the need for long-term monitoring of the impact of working mothers on child development; some mothers' overly ambitious expectations, which tend to cause unnecessary interference in their children's behavior; and the phenomenon of "parent abuse" by children, which has become noticeable in Japan.

On the third afternoon, seminar participants broke into small working groups to compare and contrast the status of working mothers and family education in Japan and the United States.

The seminar's summary report, which wrapped up the four-day programme, yielded the following general conclusions: Having a working mother is not detrimental to a child's development and may indeed yield positive benefits, and men and women must strive to strike an equitable balance between career and domestic responsibilities.

The second International Seminar will be held from September 29 to October 2, 1986, to assess the results of ongoing research on family education by the six Japanese specialists. Foreign participation is also encouraged.
NWEC ACTIVITIES

NWEC DESIGNS PROGRAMMES TO MEET WOMEN'S CHANGING NEEDS

Japan's smaller families, simplified household, growing number of working mothers, and longer life-spans have wrought sweeping changes in women's roles and needs.

Before World War II, the typical Japanese woman married at 23, had four or five children before 38, spent 12 years rearing them, worked at home until the age of 55, and spent her golden years looking after grandchildren. Today, she marries at 25, has two children before 30, is released from child-rearing responsibilities by 36 when the children are in school, and is left with some 45 years to fill before she reaches Japan's female life expectancy of 80.5 years.

Helping to make those decades rich and meaningful is NWEC's goal. To that end, NWEC conducts a host of educational and research programmes and international seminars for and about women. And, to provide Japanese with news on women's issues worldwide, the Centre maintains a specialized library and publishes the bimonthly Journal of Education for Women. To educate the rest of the world about Japanese women, the Centre publishes this NWEC Newsletter twice each year.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION CENTRE IN THE WORKS

Japanese students and researchers of women's issues, and various women's groups, are eager to take advantage of sophisticated data-exchange technology to access information on women's issues around the world. In 1983, NWEC convened a committee to evaluate and develop the existing information and documentation services of the Centre's library and to make recommendations for establishing an Information Centre for Women's Education.

The committee recently issued a report recommending that the Centre serve as Japan's national and international base for collecting, storing, and disseminating comprehensive information on women's issues. NWEC would also offer a data base which groups could access via computer terminal.

This proposal is based on resolutions adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 1975 ('The wide exchange of information and research findings should be promoted and maximum use made of existing national and regional research institutes...'), and by ESCAP at a 1984 Tokyo meeting ('A stronger data and research-base on women should be developed in regional countries and in INCAP...').


CULTURAL EXCHANGE MEETING SET

Living together — sharing lives through cultural exchange will be the theme of a two-day one-night NWEC conference due to be held on February 19-20, 1986. The seminar will promote international understanding by offering opportunities for cultural exchange between non-Japanese living in Japan and representatives of Japanese women's groups.
NWEA CONDUCTS A SURVEY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN JAPAN

In 1984, NWEA conducted its second annual survey of women's studies courses given at Japan's institutions of higher education.

Respondents revealed that 92 institutions—or some 9% of Japanese colleges and universities—are offering a total of 144 women's studies courses, as compared to 75 institutions and 94 courses in 1983. These national universities offer comprehensive interdisciplinary programmes. Seventy percent of all women's studies courses—and 91% of comprehensive courses—were started after 1979.

A REAL WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Three women's colleges opened their women's studies courses to the public as well as to registered students. While more and more women are attending, the number of registered students remains limited. The problem of male students is not significant.

WORKSHOP ON SPONSORED INFORMATION SEMINAR AND EXHIBITION

NWEC will sponsor an international seminar on Information and Communications Networking at NWEA. Invited experts from Japan, Europe, the U.S., and Asia will exchange views and share experiences in communications and software.

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Equal Rights, Development, and Peace.

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In the U.S., and Asia will exchange views and share experiences concerning women's information and software. The goal of the event, which includes a seminar, a symposium, and an international study tour, is to contribute to the better understanding of the world's women in concert with the objectives of the U.N. Decade for Women:

Equality, Development, and Peace.

A special exhibition of international women's magazines will accompany the seminar. It will feature popular and scholarly women's journals as well as general interest magazines with women-related articles. Participants from abroad are invited to contribute recent issues (January 1985 and later) of any pertinent magazine to the exhibition.

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Japan's municipal boards of education offer classes for women ranging from home management and consumerism to vocational guidance, health and safety, and arts and hobbies.

A survey by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture reveals that 1.55 million women attended 24,351 such classes in 1985. Participants are of all ages—though most are between 50 and 70. Average class size and length are 50 persons and 20 to 50 hours, respectively.

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture traditionally provides support for these classes. In recognition of the final year of the U.N. Decade for Women, the Ministry is currently stepping up the funding. Its goal is to go beyond targeting the problems to finding practical methods for solving them.

**WOMEN'S DECADE HIGHLIGHTS IN JAPAN**

1976: The U.N. World Conference of the International Women's Year is held in Mexico City. Consequently, the Japanese government launches the Headquarters for the Planning and Promotion of Policies Relating to Women, the Advisory Council on Women's Affairs, and the Office for Women's Affairs. In November, the government sponsors a National Conference for International Women's Year, and a non-governmental PFI conference attracts delegates from 41 organisations; they later become the liaison Council of Women's Organisations.

1976: Sadako Ogata is appointed Minister of the Japanese Mission at the U.N. In June, a Civil Code Amendment stipulates that married people may retain their married surname following divorce.

1977: The government adopts the National Plan of Action and announces target areas for the first half of the U.N. Decade for Women. The National Women's Education Centre (NWEC) opens in October.


1981: The government announces target areas for the latter half of the U.N. Decade. For Women. A Civil Code Amendment increasing wives' share of their husbands' estates goes into effect in Japan.

1982: Kuniti Kurokoshi is appointed Minister of the U.N. Mission.

1983: The Headquarters for the Planning and Promotion of Poli-
1984: ESCAP’s Regional Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting for the 1985 World Conference is held in Tokyo, with Japanese non-governmental organizations playing an active role. The House of Representatives passes a controversial law granting equal employment opportunities for women. The Japanese National Conference for the 1985 World Conference in Nairobi draws 1,200 participants, and “A Report on Home Economics Teaching” is issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture to ensure equality in the high school curriculum.

1985: January marks a Revision of the Nationality Law to enable children born of Japanese mothers and foreign fathers to claim Japanese citizenship. The government asks the Diet to ratify a comprehensive international treaty barring discrimination against women.

SURVEY FINDINGS

In January, the Prime Minister’s Office announced the results of a survey on Japanese women’s status and participation in policy-making at the end of the U.N. Decade for Women. The survey was mailed to 168 women and 367 men designated as national policy monitors by the Prime Minister’s Office. Respondents numbered 436—a 79% rate of response. Here are a few highlights:

- 79% of respondents believe that women’s status has improved since 1975, 19% disagree.
- Of the 342 who noted improvements, more than half—55%—felt that it had come in the social arena, with 28% citing the workplace, 18% mentioning law and statutes, and only 8% noting improved status in the family. Eight out of ten felt that the International Women’s Year and Decade had been influential.
- 86% of respondents felt that activities related to the Women’s Decade should continue beyond 1985.
- 98% believed that the appointment of a Minister for Women’s Affairs would boost women’s status.

WOMEN AT WORK

Respondents welcomed women’s advancement to the following positions: legislator (92.94%);
Satoshi (67%); Minister of Health and Welfare (68%); prefectural governor or corporate chair (65%); Minister of Education (60%); Central Affairs Director (71%).

Results of an opinion poll of 3,000 women by the Prime Minister's Office

41.3% of respondents disagreed with the statement: "Men at work, women at home," 55.9% agreed. 52.1% of young single women disagreed. Elderly women selected "agreed" by a wide margin. Nearly 70% of respondents felt male and female students should be free to study home economics in high school.

68.7% felt it is necessary for women to get a practical, work-related education, while 18.0% said basic schooling was sufficient.

Women at School

While the percentage of female entrants to higher education has re- mained constant, the type of educational institutions they choose is changing. Fewer are attending four- year universities and more are entering junior colleges. And women's major areas of study are quite distinct from men's. (See graph on previous page.)

Women's Groups in Japan

The fall issue of the NWEC Newsletter featured an overview of Japan's women's groups. This issue focuses on a specific group that operates nationwide.

Scheduled to celebrate their centennial next year, the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union was launched in 1890 by 56 Christian women in Tokyo. Since then, the group has devoted major efforts to women's equality and political rights, abolition of prostitution, anti-alcohol and anti-smoking programs, social welfare programs, the promotion of world peace, and evangelical Christian programs. The organization publishes a monthly magazine, Fujin Shimpo, to keep members abreast of its activities.

Various JWCU departments devote their efforts to specific goals. For example, the Peace and Social Justice Department works for mu-

clear disarmament and the elimination of discrimination of sexism and racism, and the promotion of human rights the world over. The Department for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation combats sexual discrimination and degradation of women in Japan and Asia. And the JWCU's Department for the Prevention of Alcohol and Tobacco Abuse vigorously promotes total abstinence through anti-alcohol programmes for minors, pregnant women, and drivers, counselling for alcoholics, and a variety of literature. The Department also joins with other anti-smoking groups to lobby for non-smoking areas in public places.

Current JWCU major projects include the expansion and renovation of its shelter for women in crisis, including pregnant women, and battered women. The new facilities will provide refuge and relief for Japanese as well as foreign women brought into Japan for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as other distressed women, regardless of nationality. It is slated to open in April, 1986.

The JWCU's 3,200 members are divided into 18 districts and 160 local branches. The organization is an active member of the World Women's Christian Temperance Union. The JWCU's address is 25-5 Hyakunin cho, 2-chome, Shinjuku ku, Tokyo 160. Tel. (03) 361-0959.
WOMEN IN THE NEWS

Japanese women are making waves as increasing numbers attain positions of high responsibility and receive official recognition of their achievements. Following are a few of the noteworthy news events reported in Japan's media:

1. Shigeru Ishimoto — The first woman to gain a cabinet post in 22 years as a registered male-oriented politician who was appointed Minister of State for the First Secretary in November, 1984. Ishimoto has vowed to work with business interests to create a natural environment more conducive to human health.

2. Miyumi Moriyma — The number two Finance Ministry post, that of Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, is now held by a woman. She will be Japan's Chief Delegate to the World Conference in Nairobi this July.

3. Tomoko Hisatome — Japan's first woman public university president was named head of the Tokyo Metropolitan Junior College of Commerce on December 13, 1984. According to the Ministry, there are 74 women presidents of private institutions of higher learning in Japan.

4. Tomoko Ohita — The scientist and professor at the National Institute of Genetics of Japan was one of ten recipients of the 1985 Japan Academy Prize, presented annually to outstanding achievements in every academic field. Ohita was the first woman so honored.

5. Not one, but 16 women share the honor of being the first females to pass the taxing entrance examination of the National Defense Medical College. Half of the women entered the college and are now on their way to becoming Japan's first female medical doctors.

UNIVERSITY OF THE AIR BEGINS COURSES OVER THE AIR WAVES

Nearly 20,000 Japanese, over half of them women, applied to become the first students of the University, which will rely heavily on television and radio broadcasting channels, starting in April, 1985.

While the university's matriculating class was originally limited to 10,000 students, the total was later raised to 16,000 to reflect the unanticipated public response. Most of the applicants were aged 19-50, with the oldest full-time male student aged 83 and the oldest female student aged 78. Nearly 7,000 students listed themselves as unemployed — most appear to be housewives. These figures all point to a deepening interest in adult and women's education in Japan.

Paternity Leave Is Approved

Article 66 of Japan's labor standards law, approved in 1982, stipulates that working mothers of infants receive at least half an hour extra time per day to care for their children. Now, for the first time, a municipal government body — the municipal assembly of Toyahashi City — has extended "nursing leave" to its male staff as well. So far, three fathers, whose wives also work, have taken advantage of the new policy. Paternity leave is still a topic for heated debate in other Japanese communities.
INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1977 as a subsidiary of Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. Its purpose is to further women's education through research into women's education and practical training for leaders in the field. The Centre's areas of activity are fourfold, including:

TRAINING for women in the form of seminars, lectures, group discussions, individual study projects, and other educational programmes. The Centre offers comprehensive training facilities—from small seminar rooms to a multi-purpose hall accommodating 600 people. They are available to any group whose subject matter relates to women's education—including family problems, the arts, vocational topics, sports, traditional areas of study, and myriad other issues.

EXCHANGE of information among women's education leaders from Japan and overseas, as well as others who are interested in women's issues. Opportunities for exchange range from the formality of conferences to spontaneous conversations in the lounge.

INFORMATION gathered and disseminated by NWEC's extensive libraries of printed and audiovisual materials.

RESEARCH of issues touching on women's and family education. Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are available to women's groups and individuals for their own study, cultural exchange, and research. To use NWEC's facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form no more than six months nor less than two weeks in advance. Use of NWEC facilities, except for cafeteria meals and accommodations, is free of charge.

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PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH OFFERINGS ON JAPANESE WOMEN


Based on a 1983 survey, this book focuses on women's concerns in coping with an exciting society. Younger housewives worry most about family names, while their older counterparts hope to play a greater role in society and work more. The book's ten working wives appear able to balance demands of home and work, while part-time working wives indicate job discontent.

The author notes that Japanese women's growing ability to assert their own goals will have irreversible impact on men, as well. The book is available from FUMI, 22, Kanda-Nishikicho, 3-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101.


The author, a famous social commentator and feminist, discusses the effects of conventional child-rearing practices and gender distinctions, such as in play guidance, praise and scolding, and extra-curricular activities, on female behavior. She offers guidelines for raising independent daughters by... drawing on her own mothering experience. This is one of a broad range of women's publications from Shokadoh. Their address is Shimodaichurn- Tori, Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan.


This was Japan's only English newsletter concerning women prior to the NWEC Newsletter. The Foru Ichikawa Memorial Association, named in honour of a women's rights pioneer in Japan, works to improve women's status through political education, research, disseminating pertinent information, and other activities. The newsletter's editor, Yoko Nasta, is also a member of the U.N. Committee for the Status of Women. To order the four-page semiannual write: 21-11, Yoyogi 2-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo.