WOMEN'S NETWORK FORGES LINKS

October 29-31, 1985 was marked by a conference on "International Information Networks for Women," hosted by the National Women's Education Centre (NWEC). It featured reports by nine information specialists from Japan and abroad that served as the basis for lively discussion of women's information issues.

A key topic was the formation of an international network of women's groups to develop and consolidate a worldwide data base on women.

The quantity of data on Japanese women has kept pace with the development of the women's movement and his balanced lately, thanks to pressure exerted by International Women's Year. The data reveals that stereotyping of women at work and home, and deinstitutionalization of sex, routine nurtured,

NWEC and other women's groups strive to ameliorate the situation by gathering data and disseminating it to raise the consciousness of both sexes. Networking is a critical step in this direction.

NWEC is actively strengthening its domestic and international information network and is at work on a computerized data base system.

Other groups joining the network included the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTTC), since 1976 the "glue" for women's group activities all over the world. IWTTC distributes The Tribune in three languages to

22,000 organizations and individuals worldwide; produces a directory of women's organizations, resource books, and A/V materials; actively supports and sponsors workshops and training programs; and has developed a microcomputer data base.

Another group, Hit Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange, works to improve the status of women by publishing Women's World and suggesting training and cultural exchange opportunities.

The European Community Committee Women's Information Services, founded in 1976 at the behest of 129 women activists and politicians, distributes information on its efforts to reflect the needs of EC women in government today. The group publishes Women of Europe in seven languages, conducts surveys, and promotes conferences and seminars.

The EUROP women's program works to break down legal and social barriers to women's participation in the political and economic spheres. The group is also planning to establish a

Vol. 3, No1, May, 1986
THE LATEST WORD ON WOMEN'S STUDIES IN THE U.S.

On March 11th, 1986, Marian K. Chamberlain, President of the National Council for Research on Women, enlightened an audience of 80 women about the roots and current status of women's studies in America. Here's her report.

The study of gender differences dates back to the 1830s, but women's studies were actually launched in the 1920s, following women's entry into the labour force during World War I and the earlier strides attending the women's suffrage movement. Popular study topics included women's political participation, working conditions, education, and family roles.

The next 40 years saw sluggish growth in the field, but Americans were jolted awake in 1963 by the publication of Betty Friedan's eye-opening work, "The Feminine Mystique." Women's studies soon turned to the topics of sexual discrimination in employment, education, government, and the family.

The 1970s were the boom years, with women's studies centres and courses established at hundreds of campuses nationwide. Interest has consolidated into the "80s, but attention has shifted to gender-based research and focused studies on women's employment issues, including the controversial concept of "comparable pay for comparable work." Today's courses tend to be interdisciplinary, weaving together education, psychology, literature, history, and other fields.

Dr. Marian K. Chamberlain

Dr. Chamberlain's provided information NWEC can use in planning our third three-year women's studies programme, and her visit has strengthened our links with U.S. groups.
NWEC PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Thesaurus on women and family

In 1984, the Centre began to develop a thesaurus on women and family. Seven scholars in such fields as women's studies, sociology, education, and labor have been assisting us with the logistical work. The Centre is also cooperating with the U.S. National Council for Research on Women to develop the Women's Index.

On to the third women's studies programme

NWEC's third women's studies series (1985-88) looks at today's changing sex roles—their impact on men and women, social barriers, and ways to accelerate change. NWEC studies in 1986 will examine changing relations between men and women.

One of this year's major events will be a seminar at the Centre on August 29-31 that examines how social and biological factors affect sex roles, sexual discrimination, human rights, and motherhood. It will focus on the ways women's studies programmes are conducted on campus and off.

Global views on family education

Among the highlights of NWEC's three-year research project on working mothers and family education are our International Seminars. The Second International Seminar, slated for September 26th to October 2nd, will bring together such eminent scholars as Swedish psychologist Dr. Carl-Philip Hvidt, West German sociologist Dr. Franz X. Kaufmann, American labor economist Dr. James P. Smith, and Dr. Barry Mayall, a British specialist in social administration. Chairing the seminar will be Prof. Hiroko Hara, who will present the results of a NWEC survey of Tokyo school children and their parents.

Dr. Kaufmann will present the keynote speech: "Children, families, and society—today and tomorrow." Much of the discussion during the seminar will center on ways mothers, fathers, and the community can contribute to family education.

Tokyo kids, parents get along fine, says survey

What generation gap? According to a recent NWEC survey of family life and attitudes, communication between Japanese parents and their children is relatively problem-free. A survey of 1,500 Tokyo children aged 10-15 was followed by 817 interviews with both parents and 116

interviews with mothers only. Here are preliminary results:

More than half the mothers doubted that there should be a sexual division of roles and responsibilities, while fathers' responses were evenly divided between agreement, denial, and "don't know." Over 60% of the children reported that they had "no particular problems," while 80% of both mothers and fathers felt that their families had mutual understanding.

Women tell why they're involved

Why join women's studies activities? Of what benefit are they? These were among the questions asked 403 participants in the National Women's Educational Exchange Conferences held in August and September of 1985. NWEC conducted the survey to evaluate the effectiveness of its programmes and to learn more about participants.

Almost 90% of the respondents are active in women's groups, social welfare, or volunteer activities. In addition, 60% are involved in a study program. Many respondents noted that the Centre conferences sparked "a strong desire to encourage other women to be active." Others credited the conferences for "opening their eyes" to social issues and widening their perspectives.

They suggested that NWEC establish new groups, publish works on women's history, and become more active in overseas training projects. These suggestions will be reflected in future NWEC activities.

VISITORS FROM OVERSEAS


Touring NWEC's facilities from March 12th to 14th was Ursula Gah, Area Vice-President, South East Asia and Far East, of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

The following Malaysian women came to Japan on UNESCO fellowships to conduct research on family education programmes in Adul Sabah Ahmad and Norah Mohamed, respectively Director and Home Economics Officer, Community Development Division, Ministry of National and Rural Development; and Abd Rashid, Training Officer, Family Life Education Project.

Page 3, May, 1986
JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

FAMILY, REGION
INFLUENCE WOMEN'S
DECISION TO WORK

The Demographic Survey on Married Women's Labour Force Participation, conducted by the Institute of Population Problems, Ministry of Health and Welfare, revealed some interesting regional and family differences in married women's employment patterns. The Institute surveyed 8,635 married women aged 20-59 living in four cities in widely different regions of Japan. According to the results of the survey, the rate of women who work, grouped by length of marriage, greatly depends on their ages, numbers of years married, and the age of the youngest child.

For example, the majority of women in their early 20s work, but the workforce participation rate falls drastically in most areas when women reach their late 20s and early 30s. The working rate tends to be higher among women who have been married a short time, irrespective of age. But this is not always the case: women in Inazawa, Kofu Prefecture, which is dominated by weaving and other small-scale home industries that largely depend on female labour, show very high, consistent labour participation rates until their late 40s. Women in Fujiwara, Kanagawa Prefecture (a dormitory town near Tokyo and Yokohama) display more typical working patterns. While some women who married 30-35 years ago returned to work in their late 30s, almost all of them retired in their early 40s. Among women who were married 10-12 years ago, however, the rate of returning to work increases throughout ages 30-50.

Although half the responding companies asserted that their employment policies treat men and women equally, nearly 68% admitted that discrimination occurs in actual practice.

COMPANIES ADMIT GENDER BIAS

Some 76% of 550 large Japanese companies recently surveyed by the Labour Administration Research Institute affirmed that their promotion and placement policies will change as a result of Japan's new Equal Employment Opportunity Law. Most of these companies, however, have not yet decided how to conform to the law, which guarantees women equal treatment in the workplace but lacks provisions for punishing companies that don't comply.

HEADQUARTERS CONTINUES PRO-WOMEN WORK

The Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women was established in 1975 to publicize and support the UN Women's Decade (1976-85). Today, much remains to be done to improve the status of women. Consequently, on January 17th, 1986, the Japanese Cabinet elected to continue the Headquarters' activities with some structural reform. Major revisions include:

1. A new scale at last year's National Conference will be implemented domestically, and measures will be taken to fight discrimination against women and better apply existing policies.

2. Administrative Vice-Ministers from all Government ministries and agencies will join the Headquarters group.

3. A new 29-member committee will advise the Headquarters to replace the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs.

Page 4, May, 1986
CLASSES FOR WORKING PARENTS

The number of working mothers with young children is on the rise, raising awareness of the special concerns of dual-income families. Parents often worry about the lack of time and opportunities to care for and communicate with their children, and fathers' contributions to homework and child-rearing become essential.

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture is addressing some of these issues in a set of parent education classes for working mothers and fathers. Participants will study the problems that arise in trying to balance demands of work and family, the role of the father in the home, and children's needs and perspectives.

This year will mark the start of 124 Ministry-subsidized classes for working parents offered by local boards of education. They will join the huge number of parenting classes already offered nationwide. In 1983, a total of 22,737 locally and nationally funded courses were attended by more than 1.5 million parents and prospective parents.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY LAW GOES INTO EFFECT

Japan's Cabinet enacted the Equal Employment Opportunity Law on May 17th, 1983 and it went into effect on April 1st, 1986. The controversial law marks a milestone in Japan's legal treatment of women workers; whether it will actually have a great impact in promoting sexual equality in the workplace remains to be seen. Passage of the law was the major thrust of an effort to seek compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which Japan signed last year.

The law mandates equal opportunities for men and women at all stages of the employment process including recruitment, hiring, promotion, education and training, health and benefits, retirement, transfers, and dismissals. It also notes unattractive corporate activities, although the legislation lacks provisions for punishing non-compliance.

Whether or not the spirit as well as the letter of the law will be observed depends on corporate will, activism by women, cooperation between men and women at work and at home, development of adequate day-care facilities, and more flexible working hours for mothers, among other factors. Whether it alleviates the situation or not, this law is raising public awareness of the disparate treatment currently received by men and women workers.

HELP FOR EXPLOITED ASIAN WOMEN

HELP offers clean, cheerful services to Asian women in distress.

Japan's current prosperity has had some unexpected side-effects. One is the increasing number of young Asian women— from Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand—lured here by the promise of employment and money to remit home. Once they arrive, these women are often exploited and find themselves in need of emergency aid. To lend a helping hand, the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union (JWCTU) opened a Tokyo emergency shelter for Asian women on April 1st. The shelter, called HELP (House in Emergency of Love and Peace), was first conceived by the JWCTU in 1980, the 100th anniversary of the group's founding. The next six years were spent in preparation and in soliciting the needed ¥280,000,000 ($20,000,000) to reconstruct the shelters for individuals, citizen's groups, and church organizations in Japan and abroad.

The two-floor shelter, located in JWCTU headquarters, can house up to 11 women at any time. Women of any age and male children aged 12 and under are welcome, and they can stay up to two weeks. During that time counsellors and lawyers will meet with the women to offer counselling services and discuss their future plans. In many cases, the women decide to return to their home countries.

As publicity builds, more women will undoubtedly be turning to the shelter for help, but securing ample funds to continue operations—$5,000 per month—is always a problem, and the JWCTU seeks contributions. It will be reporting on HELP activities and related news through a new publication titled Network. (Write HELP, 2-23-5, Hyakusin-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Tel. 03) 360-8805.)
WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

This issue reviews the development—and previews the future—of three of Japan’s most influential women’s groups.

The National Federation of Regional Women’s Organisations

On July 9th, 1962, 19 local women’s groups banded together as the National Federation of Regional Women’s Organisations, targeted to serve as a liaison for women’s groups nationwide. Early on, the Federation campaigned for clean elections and lobbied for anti-prostitution legislation. Subsequent activities have ranged from local to national to international in focus, including campaigns for the revision of Okinawa to Japanese administration and against nuclear proliferation; provision of aid to the children of developing countries; promotion of the Federation’s line of cosmetics; and exchange with foreign women’s groups.

Today, all of the organization’s activities aim towards achieving sexual equality in the workplace, healthy child-rearing practices, family and social reform, new measures for coping with Japan’s graying society, improved local social welfare programs, and more.

Highlights of the Federation’s wide-ranging projects in 1965 included joint activities with consumer groups towards legacies such as energy conservation efforts; campaigns to reduce obscene content in print and broadcast media; and conferences on prostitution, urban and agricultural problems, and peace promotion.

Today, the Federation boasts some six million individual members belonging to groups that represent every prefecture in the nation, as well as numerous governmental organizations. All members receive a monthly newsletter entitled Zenchofure, and February 1965 was marked by the publication of Thirty Years of Zenchofure, a book detailing the history of the Federation.

For more information on the National Federation of Regional Women’s Organisations, please write to Zenchofure: Fukuoka, 1-17-7, Shibuya, 5-5-5, Tokyo 155, Tel: 031-100-4231/2. The Japan Housewives’ Association

Established in a consumer protection group in 1964, the mandate of the Japan Housewives’ Association (Sokufurekohin) has expanded to embrace the promotion of peace (especially anti-nuclear activities), consumer rights and compensation practices, environmental protection, housing policy, welfare measures for the aged, consumer education, and the status of women. The Association’s founder, Mrs. Mameko Obu, will serve as President.

Consumer education is a major thrust of the Association’s work. Themes explored this year—through seminars, study committees, travelling classes, and publications—include Japan’s “throwaway culture,” nutrition issues, environmental issues, and the perils and advantages of consumer credit, and the impact of TV commercials on children. The Association also collects and publishes news of specific consumer complaints, using this material as a “textbook” for such consumer education courses as its Housewives’ College, a three-day seminar that addresses issues related to daily life.

Today, the Japan Housewives’ Association’s dues-paying membership totals 445 women’s groups and 325 individual members. For more information on the Association’s activities and publications, or for copies of Suijirekoyori, a monthly newsletter, please write: Shunyaikan, 15 Rokuhan-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Tel: (03) 265-8121.

The Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association

Voting rights were conferred on Japanese women in 1945. To commemorate this historic event, a modest centre was opened; it became a base for many activities and served to promote diverse political stances—promoting the liberation of Japanese women.

The years took their toll, and in 1962, an even larger and more-concrete building replaced the original centre. It became home to Women’s Suffrage Centre, a corporation born of enthusiasm formed in the old structure.

To commemorate the life and work of Centre founder Fusae Ichikawa, who died in 1981 at age 67, the building was altered in 1993 to accommodate the Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Museum. At that time, the organisation’s name was changed to the Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association (though the building is still called the Women’s Suffrage Centre).

Today, 40,000 people take advantage of the Centre’s facilities each year; its programmes include various classes and seminars aimed at expanding and in-
with the International Women’s Year Conference of Japan. The committee is represented by a broad cross-section of political affiliations.

The Centre is also available for meetings of groups and individuals, providing ample physical and documentation resources, plus coordination as necessary.

The Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association is located at: Fusae Ichikawa, 2-21-11 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151. Tel: (03) 370-0289.

The Centre displays these photographs of Fusae Ichikawa.

PIONEER ACTIVIST
FUHAE ICHIKAWA
(1893-1981)

In 1919, Fusae Ichikawa helped found the New Women’s Association to battle laws prohibiting women from political activities. In 1924, she joined the Tokyo Branch of the ILO, where she helped launch legal measures forbidding women’s employment as pit workers or on midnight shifts. Also that year, Ichikawa founded the Women’s Suffrage League of Japan.

After World War II, Ichikawa was instrumental in organizing several important groups, including the New Women’s Alliance (now the League of Women Voters of Japan). Ichikawa was elected to the House of Councillors in 1955, where she fought political corruption wherever she found it and sought equitable solutions to “women’s problems.” Her participation in the International Women’s Decade was of immediate benefit to Japanese women.

WOMEN IN
THE NEWS

Freelance journalist Makiko Arai was recently appointed a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women by the Economic and Social Council, replacing Yoko Noda as Japan’s representative. Arai began her career as a reporter for the Asahi Shimbun; later she served a stint as a newsreader at Fuji Television. She is presently active as a freelance writer and lecturer specializing in women’s issues. Arai launched her new role by attending the 31st meeting of the UN Commission held in Vienna, Austria from February 24th to March 4th, 1986. January and February 1986 were marked by a first: Seven women were invited to join

the Keizai Shinbun (Japan Committee for Economic Development), one of Japan’s four largest economic associations. The list includes Iehiko Ichiham (Director, Takahama Department Store Co., Ltd.), Shiiho Okada (President, The R Co.), Kikuko Kajima (President and Chairman of the Board, Tokyo Suis Co., Ltd.), Masako Takeda (Chairman, Takeda Department Store Co., Ltd.), and Chieko Sato (Executive Director, Nippon Publishing Co., Ltd.).

Ryohto Akasaka was appointed Ambassador to Uruguay on January 2nd, 1986. He became Japan’s second woman ambassador. A graduate of Tokyo University, Akasaka entered the Ministry of Labour in 1953, where she has been a tireless worker for women’s employment rights. As Director-General of the Ministry’s Women’s Bureau, she oversaw passage of the Equal Employment Law on May 17th, 1985. Akasaka has also served in the Japanese delegation to the United Nations and to the UN Decade of Women Copenhagan Conference. She was also elected to the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which met at the UN on March 22nd, 1986.

Page 7, May 1986
INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1972 by Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. The Centre's activities include:

Training for women in the form of seminars, lectures, group discussions, individual study projects, and other educational programmes. The Centre's comprehensive training facilities are available to any group whose subject matter relates to women's education.

Extended information among women's education leaders from Japan and overseas, as well as others who are interested in women's issues.

Information gathered and disseminated by NWEC's extensive library of printed and audio-visual materials.

Research of issues touching on women's and family education.

NWEC's facilities are comprehensive and attractive.

Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are available to women's groups and individuals for study programmes and cultural exchange (excluding meals and accommodation). To use our facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form no more than six months in advance.

NWEC welcomes your questions and comments.

NWEC Newsletter

6-4 Yoshinomori Sazaizaka
National Women's Education Centre
728 Sugaya, Koto-ku, Tokyo
Japan

Page 2, May, 1986

PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH OFFERINGS ON WOMEN JAPANESE

Asian Women's Liberation, a journal of the Asian Women's Association (annual, since 1977). The Asian Women's Association was established in 1977 to bring together Asian feminists seeking to foster women's liberation throughout the region. They publish materials in English and Japanese, and media when it was originally published in 1975. Shinzo Irihaiba was a moderate, middle-aged professor of law who studied pre-war Japan with her work in family planning and was later active in politics. She wrote the book to share her perspective on women's lives and limitations in the Meiji, Taisho, and early Shōwa periods. Those wishing to know more about family planning, women's activism, relations between husbands and wives, domestic education, or women's issues in this period are well-recommended to read this compelling autobiography.


(monthly, $35/year in Japan, $55/year in foreign countries). This monthly newsletter provides the latest information on feminist issues in Japan and abroad, filtered through the perspectives of Japanese authors. Some topics have included: Negro Island, the Pulitzer Prizes, and the Hiroshima Conference. The authors seek new dimensions and activities around the world. Please write: Department of Western Women's Education, 2-30-3 Zeppaku, Sugamachi, Tokyo 137.