

NWEC

NEWSLETTER

A Biannual Publication of the National Women's Education Centre of Japan

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 (NWEC). Chaired by Hiroko Hara, Professor, Ochanomizu University, six Japanese and two American family education specialists addressed working mothers' impact on their families and on society. The seminar is part of a three-year research project concerning this subject which was launched by the Centre in 1984.

Japanese panelists included Masako Amano, Associate Professor of Sociology, Chiba University; Hiroshi Inamura, Associate Professor of Mental Health, University of Tsukuba; Yasuo Kuwahara, 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 persuasive 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 mothers' relationships to 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 Topics covered included outdated employment criteria; a new labor evaluation system that assigns much more value to housework; and the apparent lack of correlation between a rising divorce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 work-

ing 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.



Family education specialists (standing, l. to r.) Hiroshi Inamura, Masako Amano, Michiko Takahashi, Yasuo Kuwahara, and Katsuko Makino; (seated, l. to r.) Lois W. Hoffman, Hiroko Hara (Chair), and Myra M. Ferree.

NWEC ACTIVITIES

NWEC DESIGNS PROGRAMMES TO MEET WOMEN'S CHANGING NEEDS

Japan's smaller families, simplified housework, 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 raising them, work-

ed 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, dispatches major 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 80.9 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 bi-annual **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 reso-



The NWEC library hosts International Information Centre planners - and will eventually house the Information Centre, too.

lutions 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 ESCAP...").

CULTURAL EXCHANGE MEETING SET

Living together — sharing lives through cultural exchange will be the theme of a two-day (one night) NWEC conference slated for 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.

NWEC CONDUCTS A SURVEY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN JAPAN

In 1984, NWEC 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. Three 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 open their women's studies courses to the public as well as to registered students. While more and more

Researchers present their findings at seminars like this one.



Japanese universities have begun offering extension courses, college attendance is still very rare for Japanese adults. A coordinator for one of the "mixed" classes reports great benefits, as students learn about sex discrimination from the real world experiences of house-

wife and worker students.

Instructors of women's studies courses are concentrated in the social sciences and humanities; 77.9% of instructors are female. The survey revealed that female participants in women's studies courses tend to opt for more independent lives following graduation, while male attendees gain a fresh viewpoint on women and the stereotyping of sex roles.

Hiroko Hashimoto, NWEC Information Specialist and author of the survey, was invited to present her findings at the Annual Conference of the Michigan Women's Studies Association on April 12. Her report, **Women's Studies Programmes in Japan**, is available at NWEC.

WOMEN'S STUDIES FLOURISH AT TWO JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES

Hokkaido University offered its first women's studies course in October, 1984. "Women and Male Society" attracted 130 women and 530 men students. Students later requested a broadened women's stud-

ies curriculum.

Osaka Women's University's comprehensive two-semester "Theory of Women" course is open to registered students and adult women alike. Instruction for the course is by both faculty and outside lecturers, including women's movement leaders, and women lawyers and journalists. Spring, 1985, was marked by admission of 15 men from the general public — a bold step for a Japanese women's college.

NWEC TO SPONSOR INFORMATION SEMINAR AND EXHIBITION

October 29-31 will see an International Seminar on Information and Communications Networking at NWEC. Invited experts from Japan, Europe,

the U.S., and Asia will exchange views and share experiences concerning women's information and discuss the formation of a communications network of participating institutions. The goal of the event, which includes a seminar, a symposium, and an internal 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 magazines to the exhibition.

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

WOMEN'S CLASSES FILL GAPS

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 34,321 such classes in 1983. Participants are of all ages — though most are between 30 and 50. Average class size and length

are 50 persons and 20 to 59 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. Their goal is to go beyond targeting the problems to finding practical methods for solving them.

WOMEN'S DECADE HIGHLIGHTS IN JAPAN

1975: 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 IWY convention 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 surnames 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.

1978: The Prime Minister's Office issues a White Paper, "The Present Situation of Japanese Women and Government Policies," that analyses the progress of the government's National Plan of Action. A parliamentary group forms the Diet Members' Association for the U.N. Decade for Women.

1979: The United Nations adopts the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Ryoko Akamatsu is appointed Minister at the U.N. Mission. Ten Japanese delegates attend the ESCAP Regional Preparatory Conference for the U.N. Decade for Women in New Delhi, India.

1980: Nobuko Takahashi is named Japan's first woman ambassador, to Denmark. A Japanese delegation attends the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women in Copenhagen; it is highlighted by



the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which is announced at Japan's own interim conference in October. NWEC plays host to a joint UNESCO and Japanese National Commission for UNESCO International Seminar on Women's Education, Training, and Employment.

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: Kumi Kurokouchi is appointed Minister of the U.N. Mission.

1983: The Headquarters for the Planning and Promotion of Poli-



From flower-arranging to legislating, modern Japanese women are helping to change the face of their society.

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 183 women and 367 men designated national policy monitors by the Prime Minister's Office. Respond-

ents numbered 436 — a 79% rate of response. Here are a few highlights:

□ 78% of respondents believe that women's status has improved since 1975; 19% disagree.

□ Of the 342 who noted improvement, 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.

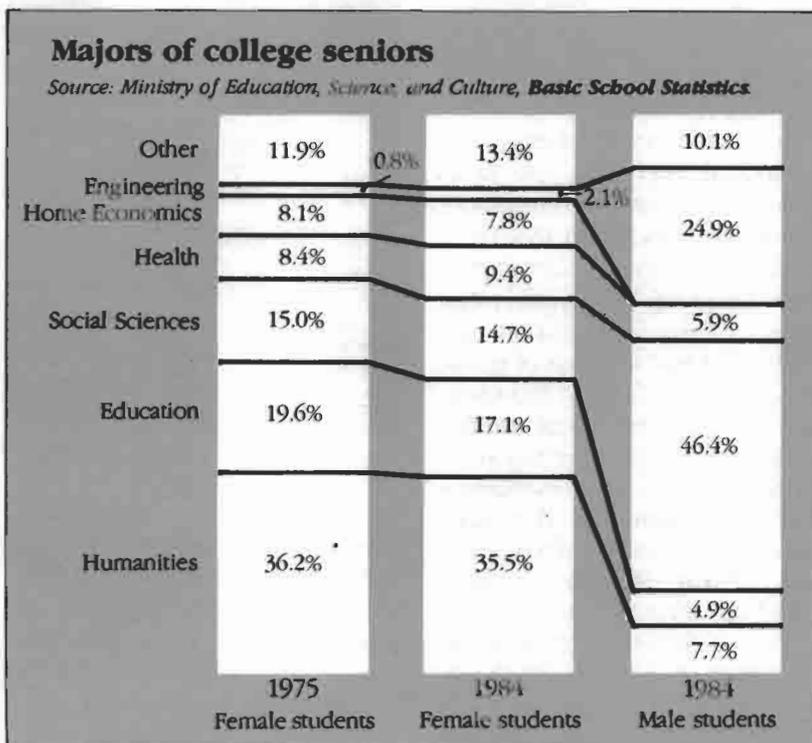
□ 58% believed that appointment of a Minister for Women's Affairs would help boost women's status.

WOMEN AT WORK

□ Respondents welcomed women's advancement to the following positions: legislator (92/94%);

cies Relating to Women pledges greater efforts towards realizing the goals of all public advisory councils (10% of whose membership is women).

1984: ESCAP's Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the 1985 World Conference is held in Tokyo, with Japanese non-governmental organisations 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.



Postmaster (87%); Minister of Health and Welfare (85%); prefectural governor or corporate chair (83%); Minister of Education (80%); Central Affairs Director (71%).

□ Respondents rejected women's advancement to the following positions: fire or police chief (78% and 76%); freighter captain (77%); airline captain (75%); prison superintendent (73%); Attorney General (62%); Prime Minister (53%); Chief Cabinet Secretary, Foreign Minister (44%); bank director (40%).

□ Asked why the number of female legislators in Japan is so low, 45% cited one of these reasons: "Japanese custom fails to recognize women's leadership abilities"

and "women have a low level of awareness and interest in politics and society."

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;" 35.9% 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 18.6% said basic schooling was sufficient.

WOMEN AT SCHOOL

While the percentage of female entrants to higher education has remained 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 first 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 Woman's Christian Temperance Union was launched in 1886 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 programmes, social welfare programmes, the promotion of world peace, and evangelical Christian programmes. The organisation publishes a monthly magazine, **Fujin Shinpo**, to keep members abreast of its activities.

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



Kimi Shinobara, President of the JWCTU

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 JWCTU'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 JWCTU major projects include the expansion and renovation of its shelter for women in crisis, including runaways, prostitutes, and battered women. The new facilities will provide refuge and relief for Southeast Asian women brought into Japan for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as other distressed women, regardless of nationality. It's slated to open in April, 1986.

The JWCTU's 3,200 members are divided into 18 districts and 100 local branches. The organisation is an active member of the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The JWCTU's address is: 23-5 Hyakunin-cho, 2-chome, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160. Tel.: (03) 361-0934



Shigeru Ishimoto



Tomoko Hisatome



Mayumi Moriyama



Tomoko Ohta

WOMEN IN THE NEWS

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

1. Shigeru Ishimoto — The first woman to gain a Cabinet post in 22 years is a registered nurse-turned-politician who was appointed Minister of State for the Environment in November, 1984. Ishimoto has vowed to work with business interests to create a natural environment more conducive to human health.

2. Mayumi Moriyama — The number two Foreign 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 Education Ministry, there are 74 women presidents of private institutions of higher learning in Japan.

4. Tomoko Ohta — This 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 achievers in every academic field. Ohta 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 officers.

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 relay instructions exclusively through TV 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 18,650 to reflect the unanticipated public response. Most of the applicants were aged 30-50, with the oldest full-time male student aged 83 and the oldest female student aged 73. Nearly 7,000 students listed themselves as without employment — 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 Standard Law, approved in 1952, 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 Tanashi 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 audio/visual 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

PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH OFFERINGS ON JAPANESE WOMEN

1. **Japanese Women in Turmoil (Changing Lifestyle Series #2)** (Tokyo: Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living, 1984, US\$150).

Based on a 1983 survey, this book focuses on women's concerns in coping with an evolving society. Younger housewives worry most about family matters, while their older counterparts hope to play a greater social role and wield more decision-making power in their lives. Full-time 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: HILL, 22, Kanda-Nishikicho, 3-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101.

2. **Bringing Up Girls: Start Aiming at Love and Independence**, Keiko Higuchi (Kyoto: Shoukadoh Booksellers, 1985, US\$7.50).

The author, a famous social commentator and feminist, discusses the effect 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 ex-

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perience. This is one of a broad range of women's publications from Shoukadoh. Their address is: Shimodachiuri-Tori, Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan.

3. **Japanese Women**, (semiannual, Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association, published since 1938, available on an information-exchange basis).

This was Japan's only English newsletter concerning women prior to the **NWEC Newsletter**. The Fusae 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 Nuita, is also a member of the U.N. Committee on the Status of Women. To order the four-page semiannual, write: 21-11, Yoyogi 2-chome, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo.

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.

NWEC welcomes your questions and comments.

NWEC Newsletter®
c/o Yoshimori Suzuki
National Women's
Education Centre
728 Sugaya, Ranzan-machi,
Hiki-gun, Saitama 355-02 Japan