

NWEC

N E W S L E T T E R

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE EXPLORES FAMILY EDUCATION ISSUES



Family education specialists exchange views at NWEC.

The father's role in parenting, in Western countries and Japan, was one major focus of a NWEC-sponsored international conference, held September 29th through October 2nd, 1986. The conference wound up three years of substantive, interdisciplinary research on "Working Mothers and Family Education." Chaired by Ochanomizu University Professor Dr. Hiroko Hara, 13 family education specialists from Japan and overseas convened to present lectures and participate in animated discussion.

Panelists from abroad included Swedish psychologist Dr. C. Philip Hwang; West German sociologist Dr. Franz X. Kaufmann; British specialist in social administration Dr. Berry Mayall; British psychiatrist Dr. A.C. Robin Skynner; and American labour economist Dr. James P. Smith.

Dr. Kaufmann launched the programme with a keynote speech on "Child, Family, and Society--Today and Tomorrow." Dr. Hara followed up with a special report on the Working Mother Study Survey conducted from November 1985 to January 1986 by the Japanese panelists in attendance at the conference.

The conference covered a broad array of issues, ranging from social and economic

background to changes in the family, changing roles in parenting--particularly the father's--new relationships between wife and husband, the roles of neighbourhood and community, and social policy pertaining to children.

The part fathers play in childrearing and related social policy drew considerable attention during the debate. Japanese panelists expressed the opinion that fathers in Western countries are beginning to have a clear-eyed view of their parental responsibilities, while in Japan, the father's role is hotly debated by mothers and specialists--by everyone except fathers themselves. One foreign panelist suggested that paternal authority was the key to preventing problem behaviour in children; a Japanese psychiatrist countered that excessive discipline would only accelerate children's weakness, the root of their problem behaviour.

Summing up the conference, one guest panelist remarked: "I was terribly impressed by the fact that the panelists remained calm and friendly while debating these controversial issues. Perhaps this is Japanese wisdom; in the West, such topics usually arouse emotions and antagonism." Another panelist from overseas observed Japanese society to be "flexible to a certain degree, though I had been taught that it was quite rigid."

The extent of Japan's flexibility and desired objectives for family education matters are areas targeted for major NWEC research efforts in the future.

NWEC ACTIVITIES**WOMEN'S STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEYED**

NWEC has conducted surveys of women's studies courses in higher education annually since 1983. What follows is a report on 1986 survey results.

A total of 113 universities and junior colleges, or 11.1% of Japan's institutions of higher learning, offered women's studies programmes in 1986--17 more than last year. The percentage of schools with such programmes was 9.6% in 1985 and 9.2% the year before; clearly, interest is on the rise.

Separate women's studies courses numbered 204; 72 had "Women" in their titles--Women's Studies, Women's History, Women's Issues, and so on. The remaining courses taught feminist perspectives on

such fields as literature, education, and law. In addition to lectures, A/V materials, field trips, and group discussion are becoming the most popular teaching methods for all programmes.

Making these classes available to the community is a notable recent trend. Outreach students in the 1986 programmes included 15,900 women and 2,500 men--0.78% of Japan's total university-level student population.

Many instructors observed that women's studies courses had a major impact on women students' career and marriage plans, while the increasing number of men enrolled in these classes came to feel that "women's" issues were relevant to them, too.

Of the 242 people in charge of women's studies programmes, 51.6% hail from social sciences, and 33.9% from the humanities. Women account for 72.7% of the programme instructors, with one third of them holding part-time lecturer status. Almost all male instructors are full-time members of the teaching staff.

'86 STUDY FOCUSES ON GENDER RESEARCH

From August 29th to 31st, 1986, the seventh annual women's studies course at NWEC drew 388 participants for an in-depth "Study of Sex, Sex Differences, and Sex Roles." Researchers planning the event included representatives of four major research associations: the International Group for the Study of Women; the Women's Study Group; the Women's Studies Association of Japan; and the Women's Studies Society of Japan.

Although the last decade saw diversification in men's and women's roles in society, employment, and education, most Japanese are still bound to traditional

divisions between the sexes. Accordingly, the study group examined biological differences and the genders' actual roles in society and culture to align common perceptions with the changing reality.

Ten subcommittees confronted perception versus reality in the areas of marriage, motherhood, sexuality, and femininity. They concluded that the ideology of "good wife/good mother" in Japan is promoted by the government. In response, the symposium put forth several suggestions to further the diversification of sex roles: Shorten working hours for both sexes, explore and challenge government policies maintaining sex stereotypes, coordinate women's studies programmes in higher education, conduct research into subconscious impressions of sex-typing, and continue analysing sex differences and roles.

THE JAPAN FOUNDATION

A public corporation under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry, the Japan Foundation was estab-

lished in 1972 to promote better understanding of Japan and its people overseas while fostering international friendship through cultural exchange.

The Foundation's programmes are many and varied. It sponsors long- and short-term missions to other countries by Japanese athletic teams, scholars, artists, and other emissaries of goodwill eager to share their skills and learn from the world. The Foundation is also a welcoming host to foreign students, researchers,

and specialists visiting Japan. The Foundation promotes Japanese language instruction by providing teachers, materials, and financial aid; sponsors research on Japan; and promotes exhibitions and other Japan-related projects both at home and abroad.

The Foundation also translates and produces books and audio/visual materials about Japan. Its regular publications include *The Japan Foundation Annual Report*, *The Japan Foundation Newsletter*, and *Centre News*.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING PROMOTES UNDERSTANDING

A Japanese instructor shares views on her nation at the International Exchange Meeting.



The Japan Foundation and NWEC joined to host the major Women's International Cultural Exchange Meeting in July 1986. The meeting drew 133 Japanese women and 94 Japanese language teachers from 27 nations.

Hitotsubashi University Professor Irumera Hijiya's lecture on "Understanding Other Cultures: Problems and Potential" stressed that national borders need not be obstacles if we emphasize nations' common values rather than their differences. Hijiya's remarks provided a backdrop for animated discussion.

Participants split (by region) into four groups to discuss "The Changing Family and Children's Education." Major topics included the rise in the incidence of working mothers with new financial independence--and the growing divorce rate. It was commonly agreed that Japan's traditional image of motherhood arises from a male viewpoint. Women feel that parents should share childrearing chores, although custom keeps paternal hands off in many countries. Child labour and prostitution were cited as growing problems in some areas.

Since the first step in successful international understanding is the exchange of opinions, person to person, the meeting was a stride in the right direction. The next such opportunity for foreign visitors and Japanese women to exchange views is slated for February 15th-16th, 1987.

NWEC PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Dr. Agnes De Munter.



De Munter speaks on families

On the first day of a NWEC-sponsored Women's National Exchange Meeting held September 17th-19th, Dr. Agnes De Munter, Director of the Women's Education Research Centre, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium gave a presentation on "Family Education in Belgium." Her report was based on a survey that included interviews with 1,400 mothers and children.

Women's Education Information

NWEC has just issued the *Journal of Education for Women, No. 14* on the topic of planning women's lives for an aged society. The report takes a look at the issues associated with the fastest-aging citizenry in the world--Japan's. In 1985, Japan's over-65ers represented 10.24% of the total population. Projections for 2025 put that figure at 23.3%, second only to Switzerland's 23.8% forecast. This issue focuses on economic, health, happiness, educational, and training issues, with special emphasis on the future of women's education.

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

WORKING LIFE PREP PILOT PROJECT

Although Japan's ranks of employed and job-seeking women have swollen in recent years, many women, isolated by years of childrearing, are unable to assess accurately their vocational aptitude and employment opportunities. Nor do they know how to balance the demands of home and

office. That's why the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture initiated a pilot series of seminars to prepare women for working life. The seminars were presented in 1984 and 1985 in four prefectures for women seeking to re-enter the workforce.

The seminars provide basic knowledge necessary for women at work, establish a professional consciousness, pinpoint vocational aptitudes, and analyse job opportunity data. Teaching methods include surveys, workshops, discussion, films, field trips, and one-to-one counselling. In 1985 the Ministry began extending the seminars nationwide.

RURAL WOMEN WORKERS' LIVES

Women account for more than 50% of all agricultural labourers in Japan, but their arduous working conditions are rarely examined. Thanks to a recent Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry survey, however, we now know more about the lives of these hard-working women.

According to survey results, announced on April 14th, agriculture in Japan is still a family affair. Most women in the agricultural sector must balance the demands of farming, housekeeping, childcare, and nursing the elderly, and 60% of these women are aged 50 and above. The Ministry canvassed 336 married women between ages 30 and 69 engaged in rice and vegetable farming. Nearly 95% of the women, 314 in total, responded to the questionnaires, which were sent in January 1985. They represented 42 prefectures in all.

Here are some of the results:

Working days: 84.1% of the respondents are engaged in farmwork 200 or more days a year, about the same percentage as their husbands. Sixty percent of them are "constantly busy" during this period,

with more than half of them working ten hours or more per day. Sixty percent of the farm households surveyed also call on other family members to help during busy periods.

Holidays: When do these women rest? About 37% of them take short breaks when they can. As for all-day breaks, 29% rest when the weather turns inclement, 16.6% take a holiday when they please, 7% do so periodically, and 3.8% rest when they're tired. Nearly one in five rarely vacation and 12.4% take no holidays at all.

Maternity leave: Almost half of the respondents took maternity leave before delivery (12% for more than one month) and 99% took time off after delivery (48% of them took more than one month's leave).

Compensation: Four in ten of the respondents felt that some compensation should be given to those engaging in agricultural labour, even when they are involved in a family operation.

Job satisfaction: Nearly half of the women indicated that they found their work satisfying.

Household chores: Farmwork is not their only concern; 80.9% of the women respondents are solely responsible for all household chores, even during extremely busy periods.

N.I.C. REPS STUDY JAPAN'S RURAL LIFESTYLES

May 26th through August 10th saw eight visitors from seven countries--Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Tonga--studying the lifestyle patterns of Japan's farming and fishing communities. Now in its seventh year, the programme is

sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, with the cooperation of the Rural Home and Living Improvement Study Association. To date, 56 representatives of 14 countries have attended the course, sharing what they learned with villages back home.

The programme, which included two days of intensive study at NWEC, was designed to enhance students' awareness of rural housing, environmental is-

sues, nutrition, labour practices, family planning, and other issues. Raising the status of rural women was another focus. Methodology for the course comprised lecture-demonstrations and field study.

To qualify for the course, participants must be English-speaking women under age 45, with a recommendation from their government and/or other organisations concerned with promoting participation in agricultural work.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY LAW UPDATE

Many women are telephone operators; only a few are managers.



A recent survey reveals that policy and reality often differ as concerns promotion opportunities for women employees. The private agency survey aimed to examine Japanese corporate behaviour since the April 1st, 1986 enactment of the Equal

Employment Opportunity Law. The survey went to 1,850 companies listed on major stock exchanges and another 700 unlisted firms, each with over ¥500 million in capital and at least 500 employees.

Of the 321 companies actually responding to the survey, 79.9% replied that they provided opportunities for women's promotion; 14.3% did not. Some 2-3% of the firms began providing promotion opportunities after the law was enacted or improved their policies. Nevertheless, a look at the actual status of their female staff reveals that only 1.2% the companies have women at executive-level positions, 4.1% have female directors, 21.6% have female managers, and 22.8% have women as chief clerks. Slightly more than one-quarter of the firms have no women in any managerial positions. Six out of ten of the responding companies further indicated that they would not consider transferring their female employees (often a prerequisite for high-level promotion), while only 28.9% would consider it.

INSTITUTE ADVANCES WORKING WOMEN'S STATUS

Last April saw the establishment of an organisation which seeks to better conditions for the more than 50% of Japanese women who are employed. The Japan Institute for Advancement of Women's Employment, supported by the Ministry of Labour, is a public organisation headed by Nobuko

Takahashi, former Ambassador to Denmark. It plans to conduct research on female employment trends; hold seminars for companies and working women; serve as a forum where women executives, professionals, and employers exchange views and experiences; collect and distribute information and literature about working women; and publish works of their own. For more information on their activities, contact the Institute at the DKB Shinbashi Building, 3F, 4-6-15, Shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105. Tel: (03) 432-6495.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM EFFORTS

The Extraordinary Council on Education submitted a "Second Report on Educational Reform," with numerous links to women's education thrusts, to the Prime Minister's Office last spring. Among other highlights, the report promoted lifelong education and career development for women,

as well as opportunities for women who have raised their children to fulfill themselves and secure employment. Since Japanese women's participation in the workforce is burgeoning, companies must really push training efforts; at the same time, vocational/technical schools must step up their retraining programmes for women desiring to re-enter the ranks of the employed.

OPEN UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE RISES

In April 1985, the Open University went on the air (via television) to become Japan's most innovative provider of higher education. A university survey of

students registered in 1985 reveals that roughly the same number of men and women tune in; most women students are in their 30s and 40s while their male counterparts tend to be in their 20s and 30s; company employees and housewives each account for a third of enrollees; and 62% of students are high school and middle school grads, while those

with technical college, junior college, university, and graduate school diplomas account for 30% of the total.

As for major areas of study, "Life and Welfare" and "Development and Education" attracted mostly women majors--87% and 76%, respectively--while over 80% of men majored in "Society and Economy" and "Industry and Technology."

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY**WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN**

Ms. Tokumatsu (3rd from l.), Chairman of the Japan Section, welcomes guests from overseas.

This issue reviews the programmes and publications of two of Japan's influential women's organisations.

**Japan Section,
Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom**

Established May 21st, 1921, the Japan Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom now boasts seven branches and 600 members nationwide whose mission it is to study and implement ways to increase the role of women in building a peaceful world.

The Section's activities and projects include hosting annual seminars for Japanese and foreign young people with follow-up reports; conducting training sessions, study groups, and lectures; holding "friendship meetings" to deepen mutual understanding with foreign students; and collecting and delivering used clothing and other aid to the needy worldwide.

The Section works in concert with its parent League to conduct activities with allied federations worldwide. In addition to cooperative efforts with local government groups, the Japan Section produces and distributes two Japanese-language newsletters: *Women and Peace* (published three times a year) and *WILPF News*.

For more information about the Section's projects and programmes, please write: Japan Section, WILPF Naruse Memorial

Bldg., Japan Women's University,
2-8-1, Mejirodai, Bunkyo-ku,
Tokyo 112. Tel: (03) 944-6730.

**The association of subscribers
to Fujin-no-Tomo (Woman's Friend)
magazine**

Tomo-no-kai (Friendship Society), the association of subscribers to one of Japan's most popular women's magazines, is a voluntary association of women aspiring to improve home and community life through "Love, Liberty, and the Christian Spirit." There are 31,000 Tomo-no-kai members around the world today. Founded in 1936 by Mrs. Y. Motoko Hani, Tomo-no-kai now has 177 chapters in Japan and seven overseas; 85 of the chapters have their own activity centres (Friends' Houses).

Each Tomo-no-kai chapter is self-supporting, with its own elected leader and a study/work plan designed to fit the needs of the specific community. All Tomo-no-kai groups are dedicated to good fellowship, lifelong education for women, and promotion of world peace efforts in coordination with other women's organisations.

Tomo-no-kai members' efforts begin at home. Toward the end of each year, each chapter plans and hosts seminars on better budgeting and housekeeping. Tomo-no-kai also offers regular workshops on childcare, nutrition, clothing, housekeeping, and time management, as well as homemaking hints for young women.

During the last five decades, Tomo-no-kai has sponsored seven large-scale travelling exhibitions; the first, "The Rationalisation of Home Life," mounted in the 1930s, attracted 500,000 visitors during its two-year run.

Tomo-no-kai stresses time management: If a woman can finish her housework efficiently, she has more time to spend bettering her community. The organisation's recent five-year survey, which gathered responses from the majority of members on how they used their waking hours, is a revealing document of Japanese women's lifestyles and changing trends.

Childrearing is a central concern for members, who work together to promote children's health, spiritual growth, and citizenship.

Each Tomo-no-kai chapter is composed of "Moyori-kai," small groups of members who live near each other; there are more than 4,000 Moyori-kai in Japan.

Tomo-no-kai recently dispatched members to Bangladesh to assist in efforts to improve nutrition--especially for young children. The association is also promoting cooperation with the women of other Asian countries.

For more information about Tomo-no-kai and its chapters in Japan and overseas, please write: The Central Office, Zenkoku Tomo-no-kai, 2-20-11 Nishi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171.
Tel: (03) 971-9602.



MOTHERS AT WORK: THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

NWEC has hosted a three-year study project on "Working Mothers and Family Education" since 1984. Chaired by Dr. Hiroko Hara, Professor, Ochanomizu Women's University, the interdisciplinary study project was conducted by six members: a labour economist, an anthropologist, an educational sociologist, a family sociologist, a developmental psychologist, and a psychiatrist.

As part of the project, the team conducted a survey, financed by the Ministry of Education, of 1,500 Tokyo families with children aged 10-15. It was aimed at discovering the impact of maternal employment on children. Full replies from wife, husband, and children were received from 817 families. Overall, they reported few differences between children whose mothers were employed and those who had full-time mums, with some 80-90% of all respondents evaluating their home lives favourably.

Over 60% of respondent mothers worked, a third of them part-time. Sixty percent of working mothers dropped out of the job market temporarily to marry and/or raise children, rejoining the workforce later.

Seventy to 90 percent of the children of both employed and nonemployed women held highly positive images of their parents, saying that they were "respectable, understanding, and reliable," and "took good care" of their children. How-

ever, 80% of the children of working women felt that their mothers were "fatigued," according to the survey. The latter finding is not surprising, since working women generally shoulder most of the family housekeeping chores, too.

Most mothers, workers and housewives alike, find pleasure and satisfaction in raising their children. Their anxieties tend to stem from their relationships with their husbands and their degree of satisfaction with family life. Few differences were seen between employed mothers and housewives.

Forty-four percent of children whose mothers worked preferred it that way, while another 38% were noncommittal about their mums' working. Over 41% of children stated that their mothers' working caused no problems. Fifty-five percent of working women's husbands preferred that their wives work, while 19% withheld judgement.

Husbands and children of working women are less likely to hold the traditional notion of "men at work, women at home" than those of non-working women. Especially when mothers are employed full-time, husbands and children begin to participate actively in household chores. However, more than half of all husbands surveyed reported that they leave housekeeping to their wives, and fathers played a less important role than mothers in the lives (and eyes) of their children. There are two major factors coming between Dad and the kitchen: hard-to-shake perceptions of traditional sex roles, and the fact that fathers usually spend some 11 hours a day commuting and working, leaving precious little time to push a broom.

ESCAP SEMINAR BUILDS NETWORK

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) holds a "Regional Seminar on Development of a Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific" at NWEC from December 1st to 6th.

For many years, representatives of UN subcommittees and women's associations have clamoured for a comprehensive women's information network system throughout Asia and the Pacific, a demand made urgent by the need to collate and assess the results of efforts related to the United Nations Decade for Women.

ESCAP launched the "Women's Infor-

mation Network for Asia and the Pacific" project in May 1986. Its major objectives are to gather, analyse, and disseminate views, ideas, and statistics related to women. The network will provide a channel for promoting cooperative activities among women in Asia and the Pacific, and enable monitoring of the advancement of women's status in the region in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The project will expand existing national information systems for women and develop new ones, all of which will link with the regional network centre established in the Social Development Division of ESCAP.

The December conference draws representatives from 20 countries and the UN to focus on the nuts and bolts of getting the network onstream.

INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1977 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.

Exchange of 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 libraries of printed and audio/visual materials.

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



Since 1980, the Centre has drawn 4,400 visitors from 102 countries.

Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are available to women's groups and individuals for study programmes and cultural exchange free of charge (excluding meals and accommodation). To use our facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form no more than six months nor less than two weeks in advance.

NWEC welcomes your questions and comments.

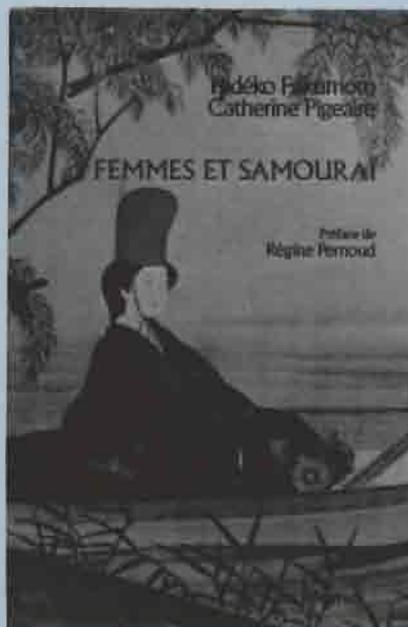
NWEC Newsletter
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PUBLICATIONS

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERINGS ON JAPANESE WOMEN



Problems of Working Women, (Japanese Industrial Relations Series, No. 8; The Japan Institute of Labor; 1986; 26 pages; ¥1,000). The first chapter of this handy little booklet analyses Japanese women's employment activities, from 1960-1985, in terms of numbers of working women, categories of employment, working conditions, and more. Chapter Two covers current labour policy for Japanese women. The Equal Opportunity Employment Law is a starting point for examination of current job opportunities, policies regarding part-time workers, development of women's abilities, corporate Japan's stance towards childbirth and childrearing, and policies on working hours and employment in the home. The book is a fine overview of Japanese women in the workplace today.



Femmes et Samourai, by Hideko Fukumoto and Catherine Pigeaire (Paris; Des Femmes; 1986; 279 pages; 98 francs).

This book probes the lives and literature of 30 prominent women who lived between the beginning of Japan's Heian Period and the early Edo Era some 300 years ago. During this time, the nobility that had long been the pivotal force in Japanese society gave way to a samurai-dominated culture. Sei Shonagon and Murasaki Shikibu are two of the aristocratic women representing the earlier centuries, while Yodo, Gracia Hosokawa, and Kasuga-no-Tsubone wove their influence in the samurai era. The women depicted in the book were novelists, wives of prominent men, Buddhist nuns, and other distinguished achievers whose ideals and actions helped shape the course of Japanese history. These mostly unsung heroines steered their men to affect great changes in government, culture, and society. The book documents their central contributions to Japan, as well as their fascinating lifestyles.