

# NWEC

## NEWSLETTER

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

### INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS ON WOMEN'S INFORMATION NETWORK SYSTEMS

(held in 1985, 1987 and 1988)



*Participants in the 1988 Seminar*

National Women's Education Centre organized International Seminar on Women's Information Networking in 1985, 1987 and 1988 as part of the survey and research efforts of its information division. The objectives of the seminar were to study information needed to raise the status of women and to examine appropriate methods to disseminate and transmit information internationally. The outline of the summary of discussions is as follows.

**(1) What do we mean by information for women?**

Information for women refers to the kind of information which helps solve the problems of women and raise their status. As such it is intended to serve as a source of power for women. The information is classified under various "indicators", "Women's Thesaurus" and other documents, prepared at national or regional level.

Information urgently required today is that related to: a) women's physiology, health and reproduction, b) relationship between national economic crisis and poverty of women, c) religious oppression of women, d) trafficking in women, prostitution, immigrant labour, women working in other countries and violence against women, e) ill-treatment and molestation of women in exile, f) women and development, g) assessment and dollar valuation of women's labour in housekeeping and informal sector, h) population census that reflects the status of women, and i) condition of working women including the latest areas of job transfer and political fields.

Pornography is certainly the kind of information

we do not need. It is well that we keep our vigilance against those.

**(2) Building multi-level women's information network**

It is desirable that women's information network covering various fields and domain is built on regional, national and global levels in a mutually complementary manner. The cooperation of NGOs and public institutions such as the national governments and the United Nations is essential in creating such a network. Use of computers, exchange of data processing technology, exchange of information and data, preparation of database, training and exchange of personnel and fund raising must be carried out as an integral part of building networks.

**(3) Preparation of database for women's information**

Given the broad coverage and volume of information on women as well as variety of mode of access, preparation of a database for women's information will improve the efficiency of data storage and provision. Priority should be placed on information which point to "whereabouts" of information sought, "who's doing what" and "information on women's studies"

**(4) Broad dissemination of women's information**

Women's information network should actively reach out to the mass media to make use of its power to propagate message and influence people.

**(5) Overcoming language barriers**

a) Via translation

Information recorded in local and vernacular languages should be translated into an international language such as English, and vice versa.

b) Encouraging use of appropriate words and improving speech etc.

Appropriate use of words and expressions should be chosen considering the type of audience; i.e. generation, class, group, expert/non-expert.

c) Development of women's language

Some words and expressions enjoying wide use should be redefined from women's point of view. In this process expressions that discriminate against women would be eliminated. Moreover, women should try to create words that would accurately express women's issues.

**(6) Effectiveness of audio-visual media and its use**

Audio-visual devices are effective tools to directly convey specific message. Video, drama, poster, song,

and film are particularly effective in education and training as well as in raising the consciousness level of the people. They are effective modes of communication, for example, to illiterate group. Industrialized nations are expected to provide technical and financial assistance in developing and disseminating the use of audio-visual media.

**(7) Supporting developing nations to prepare women's information**

It must be borne in mind that recent trend for computerization has the danger of concentrating information in regions, countries and individuals that have financial and human resources to use computers. In

order to distribute information worldwide, women in advanced countries, their governments and the United Nations are called upon to assist developing countries in the field of new technologies by providing technical and financial assistance as well as training and education.

NGOs and public organizations worldwide are in the process of systematically building and distributing meaningful information on women. Information experts will need to incorporate into the information system results of discussions on each of the relevant issues listed earlier. In this way information can truly exercise power in raising the status of women towards the coming century.

**NWEC ACTIVITIES**

**RESEARCH ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND EDUCATION IN THE WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

National Women's Education Centre jointly with the Institute for Women's Studies, Ochanomizu University conducted a research on the status of women's studies and education in the West European countries with a view to developing women's research programmes, building international network and furthering the studies in Japan. The research received grants-in-aid from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture under the Scientific Research Programme FY 1988.

**Background :**

Research on women's studies

and education have been carried out in many parts of the world since the 1960s. Much of the information available in Japan on the topic is limited to that from the United States. In view of this it was decided that information from Europe should be collected. It was agreed also that results and status of women's studies in Japan, little known in other countries, should be made more widely known. The research will help promote comparative research on women, a topic which has received little attention in the past.

**Method and subject of study**

The study group visited institutions of higher education and adult education and centres for women's studies in U.K., West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands, and collected information on educational and research activities and exchanged information with researchers. This on-the-site research was supplemented by a questionnaire survey. Subjects of the research were : 1) trends of women's studies in other countries, 2) relationship between women's studies and public policy concerning women, 3) women's employment and family, 4) gender ideology in different cultures, 5) relationship between life-long learning and working women, 6) women's studies and education in institutions of higher learning, and 7) development of women's studies and educational programmes in adult educational institutions. Participants of the research will compile the findings on the above topics.

**Countries and research institutions visited**

**<U. K.>**

- Department of Education and Science
- University of London (Centre for Extramural Studies/Centre for Research and Education of Gender)
- Islington Adult Education Institute
- Open University
- Richmond Adult and Community College
- Hillcroft College
- Women's Education Resource Centre
- Fawcett Library
- Feminist Library
- London Women's Centre

**<West Germany>**

- IFO-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung
- F.A.M. (The Women's Academy for Research on Gender and Society)
- Institut für Arbeitsmarkt-und Berufsforschung
- Die Grünen
- Deutscher Frauenrat
- Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie, Frauen und Gesundheit
- Universität Bielefeld
- Freie Universität Berlin
- Frauengeschichtsladen
- Gleichstellungsstelle
- Frankfurter Frauenschule
- Frauenbetriebe Frankfurt
- Koordinationsstelle Frauenstudien /Frauenforschung
- Berlin FFBIZ

**<France>**

- Retra travailler (Provence/Ile de France)
- UNESCO (Women's Affairs/Equal Opportunities for Girls and Women)
- Université de la Marseille III
- Université de Paris VII
- Université de Paris VIII
- Centre Nationale Recherches Scientifique
- Delegation à la Condition Feminine.

**<Italy>**

- Università de Bocconi

**<Belgium>**

- Commission of the European Communities
- Free University of Brussels

**<Netherlands>**

- Institute of Social Studies

## WORKSHOP OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE FOR WOMEN IN 1988

The Workshop was held on 17 and 18 February, 1989 on the theme of "Women and International Exchange" bringing together 110 participants across the nation including 31 foreign residents of 12 different nationalities. Active discussions took place on international exchange as participants addressed various issues from women's point of view.

The keynote address, on the theme of "International Networking; realism and vision", was given by Ms Noeleen Heyzer who plans and promotes development programmes for women in Asia at APDC (the Asian and Pacific Development Centre)-an intergovernmental organization stationed in Malaysia. She described the condition of women in Asia; how they were being kept away from the benefits of development and were becoming poorer while the world at large was benefitting from economic development and technological innovation. She appealed that in a rapidly shrinking world, women must share their concerns through international exchange and networking.

At the six discussion groups that followed, participants exchanged their opinions on the following topics: "Rights of women"; "Experience of living abroad and international exchange"; "Women's involvement in the social development of the developing countries"; "Exchange with foreign residents in Japan"; "International exchange at the local level"; and English

session—"Women and international exchange".

At the above session vivid explanations were given on the activities as well as the problems encountered. They included grass roots level of international exchange activities by local municipalities and groups covering human rights protection, consultation on home stay and studies abroad, publication of newsletters on local information and groups to study development issues in Asia. Foreign housewives and students living in Japan voiced their frank views on the psychological and social barriers they faced living in Japan and suggested attitudes helpful in successful trans-cultural communication.

The final section of the workshop was devoted to a symposium on "Why do women need to cooperate with each other? —Call for an international network". Three panelists - Ms Kuniko Funabashi of the Asian Women's Association, Ms Yasuko Yamashita, managing director of the Japanese Association of International Women's Rights Action Watch and Ms Setsuko Kitamura, reporter for Yomiuri Newspaper - contributed to lively discussion based on their experiences and won the hearts of the audience. During the two days, participants exchanged their frank opinions on international exchange in search of a foothold for future action.



*abstract of the keynote speech*

### "Women's International Exchange and Networking; Realism and Vision"

(Ms. Noeleen Heyzer)

During the last decade there has been an upsurge of women organizing, rethinking and strategising in Asia to change the position of women and their value in society. Organizations have grown around issues of health, work, housing, food, environment, the debt crisis, education. Through their collective sharing and search, they are attempting to take charge of their lives and deepen their understanding of the social structures within which they live and participate. Increasingly, women's lives and the social structures within which their lives unfold are being affected by international processes of development and change. These processes have included the international division of labour, the international migration of women, the international relocation of capital, the creation of international systems of trade, finance, pricing policies, exchange rates. Because of the current information revolution, cultures

and attitudes are also being internationalized. These processes have created both opportunities as well as inequalities depending on the power structures and relationships of countries in the international system, of the location of households within the national class and ethnic context, and depending on the nature of gender relationships in society and within the household. It is within this context that women's international networking and sharing become important and need examination and reflection. Women's international exchange can become another avenue in the search for new approaches to education and organizing that adequately express the experiences and perspectives of broad sectors of people whose voices were previously unrepresented in the shaping of our world into a place of peace and true human security of freedom from poverty and violence.

## SURVEY ON INFORMATION CENTRES AND LIBRARIES ON WOMEN'S ISSUES IN JAPAN

While NWEC's Information Centre for Women's Education serve as a comprehensive national and international centre for women and family issues, materials on women's issues are also available at

local women's centres and university affiliated women's research centres.

NWEC conducted survey on libraries and information centres on women's issues in Japan in 1988.

Followings are some findings from the survey.

Women's centres in Japan fall into two categories from a historical perspective; those established by private initiatives, mostly by women's organizations, to serve as the basis for women's movement and those created by the government as a major tool for promoting the status of women. The former has been created in the wake of

World War II whereas the latter primarily during the International Women's Year and the U N Decade for Women. Most women's centres in Japan belong to the second category. While NWEC is the only nationally supported centre, the others are supported by local governments. The total number of women's centres in Japan as of March 1987 was approximately 680 according to the survey of the Women's Suffrage Centre. Public women's centres continue to increase with heightening awareness of the importance of women's issues. As a rule, large public women's centres offer well-stocked materials with a notable exception of Women's Suffrage Centre (dedicated to the late Fusae Ichikawa).

### 1. Libraries and information centres at local women's centres

#### 1) Collection and services

Forty-five women's centres have library facilities and are engaged in information activities of one kind or another. Sixteen among them hold more than 5,000 volumes of monographs. Two women's centres, i.e., Yokohama Women's Forum and Fukuoka Women's Centre both with 10,000 titles or more, opened since the survey had been

conducted.

Local centres mainly serve the needs of the community and women's groups and organizations. Women's Library of Kanagawa Women's Centre holds the largest collection on women's issues. It also has the most comprehensive collection in Japan on women's labour issues. The Women's Suffrage Hall has an invaluable collection of works on women's suffrage movement predating World War II and serves a special and useful role. It charges an admission fee.

Most of the women's centres which are active in information activities maintain newspaper clippings on local women and keep directories of women's groups as well as catalogue of their holdings.

#### 2) Computerization

Following NWEC's announcement of the Basic Plan concerning the Information Centre for Women's Education in 1985, major public women's centres in Sapporo, Nagoya, Tokyo, Kanagawa and Osaka are studying the possibilities of installing computers as a part of the information system using NWEC database. The Yokohama Women's Forum has a super minicomputer and provides online services to five terminals in

the city. It uses NWEC Thesaurus on Women and the Family to compile its bibliographic database.

#### 3) Information personnel

One if not two, part time person is usually assigned to information related activities at most women's centres. If a full time person undertakes the job it is usually in addition to her other duties such as that of a librarian. Only three centres post full time professional staff while others are operated by volunteers or temporary staff. Thirteen centres have professional librarians, whether volunteer, part-time or full-time.

#### 4) Future

Most centres feel the need for increasing the budget for purchasing books and materials, assigning full-time librarians and training professionals. Ten centres have plans to install computer systems.

#### 2. Libraries attached to research institutes on women

The Institute for Women's Studies at Ochanomizu University boasts the largest collection of materials on women's studies and history. It houses 7,983 Japanese books and 4,477 foreign, 197 titles of Japanese journals and 71 foreign. The Library of Research Institute of Women's Culture connected with the Toyoko Gakuen Junior College has the second largest collection. The Library is open to all who are interested while most others are closed to the general public.

Libraries of women's colleges also maintain special collections and publish catalogues. These are, however, mainly intended for use by students and related personnel.

Number of holdings

(volumes)

No. of holdings	-1000 vols.	1001-2000 vols.	2001-3000 vols.	3001-4000 vols.	4001-5000 vols.	5001-7000 vols.	7001-10000 vols.	10000-20000 vols.	over 20000 vols.
No. of centres	11	6	4	6	3	1	5	8	1

## LECTURE ON SCANDINAVIAN FAMILIES

A lecture meeting of Dr. Jan Trost, President of ISA-CFR (International Sociological Association, Committee of Family Research), and professor of sociology at the Uppsala University, Sweden, was held on 6 December, 1988. Forty-one participants attended the meeting. They include university faculty and administration personnel in family education, and NWEC staff. The theme of the lecture was "Scandinavian families: the present state and prospects for the future". The following is the outline of the lecture.

In Sweden, labour shortage since the 1960s helped expand employment of women. As of 1988, 97 percent of men and 80 percent of women are at work. The figure appears to indicate that equality between men and women has been achieved. In reality, however, half the women in the labour force work part-time while raising their children.

The status of marriage has changed with increasing number of women working. The marriage rate

dropped to 40 percent in the decade after 1965. Cohabitation and number of extramarital children increased. Extramarital children now account for 50 percent (one in every two children) compared to 12 to 13 percent in 1965. There is no discrimination against extramarital children.

The divorce rate, which was almost none a century ago, rapidly increased since around 1965. Seventy percent of married couples and cohabitating couples live separately. It appears that the recently enacted divorce law stating that a couple may get a divorce when either party desires it has resulted in this high divorce rate.



# CREATING A NEW COMMUNITY: REVIEW OF NATIONAL SEMINAR FOR LEADERS OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS (1986-1988)

## 1. Introduction

The primary goal of the National Seminar for Leaders of Women's Organizations held from fiscal 1986 to 1988 was to discover how women's power can be best employed in the community through "acting and living together". The topics of discussions included the aging of the society, increase in the number of working women and encouraging them to take part in activities of women's organizations and promoting young people to take part in social activities. The following sub-topics were discussed in the past seminars:

- 1986 "Increase in the number of working women and community activities"
- 1987 "Cooperation between men and women towards the year 2000"
- 1988 "Policies for the aging society and community activities".

## 2. Participants

A total of 379 participants attended the seminar for three years. They included leaders of prefectural and municipal level organizations in the seminar theme. Regional women's organizations represented the largest group of participants and people in their 40's to 60's, the most representational.

## 3. Programme development

Discussions by sectional meetings, study and training on information, symposia and plenary sessions were held to identify the present situation of women's organizations and to suggest directions for the future activities as we look to the 21st century.

## 4. Findings from three-year activities

Through three years of activities on the theme of "Creating a new community", it was recognized that a clear need existed to 1) define the actual condition of local communities, 2) raise consciousness of women in local communities, 3) define problems facing organizations and groups operating in local communities, and 4) create linkages

between organizations and groups in local communities.

(1) Present situation and future tasks of community development

- a) Condition of local communities
  - 1) Long standing customs and ideas on sexual division of labour remain.
  - 2) Decline of education.
  - 3) Increase of aged population.
  - 4) Weak human relations.
  - 5) Increase in working women.

b) Consciousness of women living in local communities

- 1) Women are anxious to learn and to be involved but due to lack of supportive human relations, many find social involvement and family duties incompatible.
- 2) Local custom hampers women to lead an independent way of life (making it difficult for self-improvement).

c) Condition of organizations and groups operating in local community

- 1) Aging of members, lack of personnel and concentration of roles prevent organizations from effective activities.
- 2) Often lack clear directions.
- 3) Inter-generational communication suffers due to small number of participation of young people in social activities.

d) Linkage of groups and organizations situated in local community

- 1) Limited opportunities for mutual information exchange leave each other isolated without effective linkage.
- 2) Networking within the organization suffers often from difficulties in inter-personal relations.

## 5. Future tasks

"Creating a new community" means resolving problems that hinder creation of a society in which both sexes enjoy equal participation as provided for in the New National Plan of Action. To achieve this goal we need to change the con-

sciousness of women to encourage them to live independently and to promote closer ties in the community.

(1) Changing the consciousness of women

a) Established customs and traditions that prevent women from living an independent way of life should be challenged and changed.

b) With increasing number of elderly people in the community, the care of the elderly requires a balanced combination of self-help, public-aid and mutual help supported by individual and collective commitments.

c) Need to foster inter-personal relations to promote mutual help to supplement declining levels of education as a result of increased number of working women and decreased association with each other.

(2) Promoting linkage

a) Encouraging networking

Rapid social changes have brought about many problems to the community. In creating a new community women must expand their spheres of activities and share their interests and concerns with members of other groups and organizations. Emphasis should also be given to encouraging the participation of local residents, particularly the young in community activities.

b) Reviewing group activities

Democratic organization and management of women's groups will promote better linkages. Review of group activities should include the following agenda:

i) Review of educational activities

With a view towards the coming century, group activities should have the flexibility and a broad vision to respond to changing needs of the society.

Each member of the group must ask her or himself what learning means for the person. Emphasis should be placed on long-term benefits of learning rather than on short term gains.

ii) Review of organization and management

(1) Revitalizing group activities

Groups should identify their goals, initiate activities with clear vision in

order to revitalize their organizations. Clear action policy is required to involve local community particularly to encourage broad participation of young and old.

(2) Participating in decision-making process

Taking part in decision-making processes means electing women

members to local and national parliaments and appointing them to the members of governmental advisory councils. Due to shortage of leadership persons and general reluctance among women to assume leadership roles few women have been successfully elected or appointed. There is clear

need for greater number of women to participate in the policy making process to revitalize women's group activities and to raise the social status of women. Groups must support this endeavour by studying politics and fortifying linkages with other organizations.

## JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

### WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

Starting from this issue, the Women's Group section will be written by representatives of the group introduced.

#### JAPANESE WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Japanese Women's Democratic Club was organized in 1946, the year after the war was lost on Japan and its axis powers, Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. The Sino-Japanese War and the war with the United States had been the result of Japanese militaristic invasion of Manchuria, the north-east part of present China.

Some 20 million people in Asia fell victim to the 15-year war which ravaged the region. Three million Japanese also lost their lives in the war, including those killed in air raids and by atomic bomb.

Most Japanese women were forced to collaborate with the military in the home front.

Standing amidst the ruins of the war and in search of daily food, some women got together to organize a club determined to do their best "to put an end to war and to promote peace in the world". Founders of the Japanese Women's Democratic Club vowed to "bring about an era in which women would think, choose and act for themselves and to build a future which promised decent life and progress for posterity".

For 43 years since the founding, the members of the Club were consistent in their commitment to opposition to war and to improvement of their status. Their activities encompassed wide range of concerns as reflected in the slogan: "rice, miso, soy sauce (bread and butter of the Japanese diet) and culture".

In March 1950 on the eve of the outbreak of the Korean War,

the members of the Club collected signatures to support the Stockholm Appeal calling for an unconditional ban of nuclear arms at the World Conference for Promotion of Peace. The members also went to the Fifth Street, New York with large square poetry cards for peace signed by Japanese celebrities to make public appeal.

The Japanese Women's Democratic Club was at the forefront of anti-atom and hydrogen bomb movement triggered by the hydrogen bomb test conducted by the United States in 1954 on the Bikini Islands in the Pacific. The radioactive fallout struck the crew of Dai-go Fukuryumaru, a Japanese fishing vessel operating in the vicinity killing the captain of the ship. The incident stirred a nationwide movement to collect signatures calling for the ban on nuclear bombs. The JWDC not only actively collected the signatures but sent a delegation to Vienna in 1955 to the world Mother's Conference held on the subject.

The Club, while welcoming

the super power agreement on the reduction of INF, is opposed to Japan's militarization (gradually becoming the second in the world) which goes against the spirit of the detente. The Club is engaged in a wide range of peace activities including the annual speech meeting organized on August 15, the date marking the end of the W.W.II jointly with the women's group "Never Again on the Path to War". Members of the Club support housewives in Ikego, Kanagawa, fighting to stop the construction of a housing complex for the U.S. forces in Japan and join mothers in Miyake Island opposing the establishment of exercise landing strip for the U.S. fighter planes. The Club has made a protest to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for obliging children to sing national anthem and raise national flag at school.

Other activities include those related to women's status such as calling for review and revision of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law which works to categorize women into elite and non-elite groups. The Club members are taking a stand on the problems of Japanese farming which go beyond the issue of arranging Philippine



The weekly journal and publication of the Japanese Women's Democratic Club.

brides. Promoting the use of soap instead of synthetic detergents that contaminate water is part of its campaign against pollution and protection of the environment. It is vocal against the use of pesticides and food irradiation. It is calling for monitoring the safety of imported foods. It is for immediate and total suspension of nuclear power generation as it is for total ban of nuclear arms. The former because of its concern for the possible destruction of lives and pollution of the earth attendant on accidents such as the

Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

This summer the Club will be attending an international conference to discuss ways in which the Japanese can live in peace with the peoples of Asia. The attitudes of some Japanese companies operating in Asia has been the target of criticism for their exploitation of local resources and labour.

Since its establishment, the Japanese Women's Democratic Club has published the weekly journal "Fujin Minshu Shinbun" (in Japanese) reporting the activities

and battles not only of the Club but also of women in the world. The Club hopes that it will reach not only 5,000 members in 50 chapters throughout Japan but by all women everywhere and that it will contribute to realizing a peaceful, free and equal society.

**Address inquiries to the following :**  
Fujin Minshu Kurabu (Japanese Women's Democratic Club)  
31-18 Jingumae 3-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 150 JAPAN  
TEL : 03.402.3244, or 03.402.3238

## YWCA OF JAPAN

The YWCA of Japan was founded in 1905, by a group of Japanese Christian women under the leadership of Miss Caroline MacDonald, a Canadian, sent to Japan by the World YWCA.

Up until World War II, the primary focus of its work was on the liberation of women and social welfare, but with the ending of that war, the focus changed to peace and human rights.

At the first national board meeting after the war, board members confessed that they had not done all they could to resist the war, and decided that they must be more intentional in their work. A resolution was adopted at the next national convention to struggle for peace by whatever means possible. They strongly supported the new Japanese Constitution: its stance on peace, human rights, the sovereignty of the people, and the renunciation of war, and have continued to stand up for these issues since that time.

In 1970, the YWCA of Japan opened its membership to both Christians and non-Christians alike, with the stipulation that anyone who agreed with the Christian Basis of the YWCA could join and take part in the movement. As of 1988, its membership accounted for 5,000 and total programme participants for the same year numbered 20,000. At the National Convention held in November 1988, the following programme emphasis was agreed for the next three years.

1. Towards a Nuclear-Free World
2. Towards an Inclusive Society (in which the rights of all are respected)
3. Towards More Active Participation by, for, and with Youth

Major programmes conducted by YWCA are: at the national level

Constitution Day Seminar: May 3rd is a national holiday honouring the



*Young men and women from Japan visited Thailand under the 1988 international programme for Youth.*

Constitution of Japan. Every year at this time, in connection with its stance on peace and human rights, the YWCA of Japan sponsors a study seminar focusing on relevant issues. The 25th annual seminar (1988) considered nuclear issues, discrimination, and Japan's role as a part of Asia.

Youth Activities: The new national Youth Committee that was formed in 1986 works to increase the involvement of youth at all levels. The first major project planned on the national level was "Youth Meeting '88", which was held in Yokohama, October 8-10, 1988. A total of 85 persons (from 9 local YWCAs and from abroad) participated in the programme, the purpose of which was to enable participants to experience their relationship to the world and to the world movement of the YWCA.

The first international programme for youth: Young men and women from Japan Experienced Thailand in late 1988.

Jr-Sr High school YWCAs: Located in Christian schools, their programmes center around Bible study and service. Regional Conferences and a national-level Seminar for Faculty Advisors are also held. Number of Junior and Senior High School YWCAs as of 1988 was 32.

Other local/regional programmes are:

- Language classes in English, Japanese, and other languages
- Nursery schools, including programmes for learning and/or physically impaired children
- Support groups for non-Japanese students (especially from Asian countries)
- Special study groups on the Bible, peace, human rights, environment, natural foods, etc.
- Study tours in/outside of Japan
- Regional seminars, especially dealing with issues related to a specific region (i.e. nuclear power plants, Minamata disease, long-term foreign residents)
- Networking between local YWCAs, within a region, on the national level on various issues
- Bazaar-recycle, natural foods, etc.
- Health/Physical Education
- Outdoor Education/Camping

**Address inquiries to the following :**

YWCA of Japan,  
National Headquarters  
8-8 Kudan Minami 4-chome  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102 JAPAN  
TEL : 03.264.0661  
TELEFAX : 03.264.0663  
CABLE : "Emissarius", Tokyo

## MOVEMENT SUPPORTING MARRIED COUPLES TO RETAIN SEPARATE SURNAMES

*Increasing number of women wish to work and continue to do so after marriage. Many of them wish to keep their maiden name at work after marriage. There is increasing momentum calling for revision of the law and social institutions to authorize wife and husband to use different surnames.*

While it is customary in Japan for the couples to share a common surname, Article 750 of the Civil Code stipulates that "married couples should take the surname of either husband or wife". In other words, couples have the choice between using either the surname of the husband or that of the wife.

According to the vital statistics of the Ministry of Health and Welfare conducted in fiscal 1987, however, **97.8 percent of the married couples chose to use the husband's surname** with only 10,000 or so couples who assumed the wife's surname.

Institutions of marriage and family name differ widely in the various countries as shown on the attached table. Some countries oblige married couples to take different surnames while others let the couple decide whether to assume the same surname or different ones. A simple comparison among countries would be difficult due to different cultural background. In general, however, many advanced nations revised the family law around the 1970s and the 80s so that married couples may choose to use same or different surnames. The revision took place primarily out of concern for equality of sexes.

The comparative survey shows that *the Japanese marriage law is unique* in that it obliges either the husband or the wife to drop his or her surname upon marriage.

*The Japanese marriage law is closely associated with the institution of family register which obliges the couple and children bearing the same surname to be entered on it. The date of birth, marriage and death of each family member is also kept. This form of family registration system is rare in the world with only Korea and Taiwan (Republic of China) having a similar system. Most countries register birth, marriage and death on individual basis and not on the basis of family units; i. e. married couple or parent and children.*

Under the present Japanese law, therefore, women who do not want to change their surname have two alternatives: either they do not register their marriage or use their maiden names or non-registered common names.

However, women who do not register marriage encounter various difficulties. They cannot receive dependency allowance. There may be problems related to inheritance of property and family relations on official documents. The use of common names, on the other hand, is met by much social resistance. Many employers and institutions simply do not accept their use.

Changes in the surname after marriage, divorce

and remarriage are a great drawback for married working women who account for more than 60 percent of working women. Women in sales and marketing may lose customers or credit. For female scholars, it means presenting papers and lecturing under a new name often associates with giving up past achievements made under the previous name.

In November 1988, a professor at the national University of Library and Information Science filed a suit at the Tokyo District Court, dealing with the issue head on. Professor Reiko Sekiguchi registered herself under her husband's surname at the time of their marriage in 1966 but continued to use her maiden name "Reiko Sekiguchi" in everyday life and in publishing papers, research and educational activities. In 1982, she was transferred to the present university where the use of name on the family register was compulsory. Because the university does not accept the use of common names, she lost her academic credit made under the name "Sekiguchi". The change caused confusion among students in the selection of courses. Professor Sekiguchi sued the government and the university on the ground that depriving a person of the use of her maiden name at the workplace constituted a case of violation of personal rights.

Sekiguchi says, *"the name is a proof of one's existence, inseparable from that individual. Long years of effort and work is associated with the name. It is not reasonable that anyone should be asked to abandon one's own identity upon marriage."*

Another lawsuit was filed at the Tokyo District Court in May 1988 by a couple who did not register their marriage because they wished to continue to use their own separate names. Their appeal was to remove from the registry the description of their child as "illegitimate".

According to the *opinion survey* conducted in 1987 by the Tokyo metropolitan government on the issue, 64 percent of the metropolitan government employees polled were satisfied with the present system, while 11 percent supported separate names for husband and wife. 23 percent replied they were comfortable with either way. On the whole two thirds of surveyed supported the current system. The ratio, however, for female employee population was different. Only 33 percent supported the present system, 23 percent was for retaining separate names and 42 percent was happy either way. On the whole only one third supported status quo.

In line with this general trend of today, some legal experts are now supporting the view that the couples may keep separate surname after marriage. The Tokyo Bar Association submitted a written opinion in January 1989 to the Ministry of Justice, Prime Minister's Office and to the Upper and Lower Houses. The statement suggested that "the present marriage law compelling couples to use one surname should be revised allowing married couples a choice". This is the first time a public institution has officially announced its view opposing the current law providing for the use of a same surname.

The reasons for proposed revision of the law cited in the statement are as follows: **(1) the name is recognized as part of the individual, a change of well-established and commonly used name can lead to a sense of loss of self invoking a high degree of psychological resistance, and (2) inequality on the part of either wife or husband and relatives of either party.**

The proposal says that under the new system, wife and husband be registered separately and the child of the couple is registered under one parent's registry and apply to Family Court between the age of 15 and 20

(When she or he comes of age) if she or he wishes to change the surname to that of the other parent.

Some of the big companies which employ a large number of female workers allow the use of maiden names at the company if they so desire. In such cases, the maiden name is printed on business card, nameplate, ID card, employee register and health insurance card.

While the majority of people still resist the notion of using separate surnames as posing a threat to the stability of the family and a sense of oneness between the married couple. Increasing number of women, however, consider unnatural to have to change surname at the time of marriage. Social environment in Japan is gradually changing towards acceptance of this view.

### System of surname selection upon marriage in different countries

System	Classification	Country	Law on surnames of married couple
System of same surname		Japan	Married couples taken by negotiation the name of either husband or wife.
	Selective System	Married couples take the surname of husband or wife	West Germany
		East Germany	Either husband or wife can add name previously used to the common surname.
		Soviet Union	Husband and wife can use their original surnames (combined surnames can be used in some republics).
	The surname of husband is taken in principle	Australia	Married couples can take the surname of wife. The wife's maiden name can be added after the common surname with a hyphen.
		Switzerland	The wife can add her previous name in front of the common surname.
	Completely free	Sweden	Married couples can use the surname of husband or wife, or keep their previous names. They can change their names back to old names any time.
System of different surnames	Completely different surnames	South Korea	Husband and wife retain their surnames after marriage (based on the principle that surnames should not be changed). Marriage with persons with same surname from the same province is not permitted
		Quebec, Canada	Married couples keep their first and family names
	System of same surname with additions	China	Husband and wife have the right to retain the surnames before marriage. Couples can take the surname of husband or wife.
		Taiwan	Wife can add the surname of husband in front of her surname and vice versa.
	Others	Italy	Wife adds the surname of husband to her surname, which is retained until remarriage in case husband dies.
No civil code regulations		France	Husband and wife keep their own surnames. Wife uses the surname of husband during marriage.
		England	Wife normally takes husband's surnames but there is no legal obligation to do so.
		U.S.A.	Regulations differ from state to state.
		North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)	It is customary for husband and wife to keep their own surnames after marriage but there is no regulation on the matter. North Korea has no restrictions on marriage between the people with same surnames as in South Korea.

## SURVEY REPORT

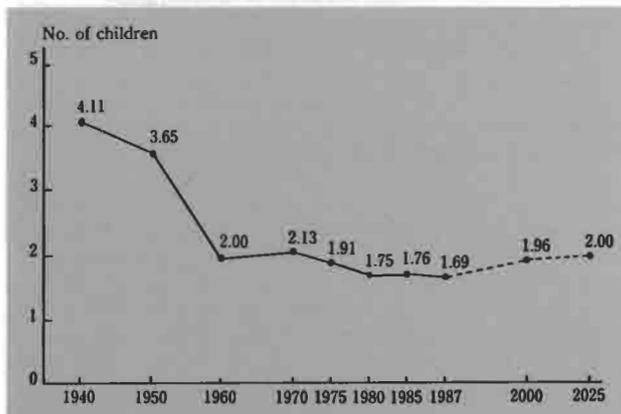
As a result of dramatic changes in the social environment, women's lifestyle has become indeed diverse. An accurate understanding of the situation surrounding women is an important key for women to make decisions about our lives.

It was with this view that National Women's Education Centre initiated Women's Education Study Group in fiscal 1986. The Study Group collects and analyzes basic data on women selected from various statistical sources. The purpose is to identify the changing profiles of the consciousness of women and the role they play in society. The results are published annually in the "Status of Women as seen in Statistics"

The following gives excerpts from the study result focusing on family and home in Japan.

(1) The number of births (number of children woman is expected to bear during her reproductive age ([17-49]) which was 4.11 in 1940 halved to 2.00 in 1960. The figure dropped further to 1.69 in 1987.

### Changes in the number of children born



(2) The ratio of nuclear family households against total number of households was 45.4% in 1955 rising thereafter and peaked at 61.1% in 1985. It showed a slight decline in 1987 (60.5%). The ratio of three generation households continued to fall since 1955 (43.9%) to 15.0% in 1987. The average number of persons per household is decreasing gradually from 5.0 in 1953 (all figures are average number of persons per household).

### Changes in the average number of persons per household by type

(No. of persons)

Year	All households	Households of employers and self-employed	Farming households
1953	5.00	4.43	6.38
1960	4.13	3.61	5.91
1970	3.45	3.17	5.01
1980	3.28	3.13	4.67
1985	3.22	3.08	4.61

(3) The number of marriages is falling, though slowly, after peaking during 1970 to 1974 when the so-called post-war baby boomers reached their marriageable age. The divorce rate, which continued to rise since 1960, reached its peak in 1983 at 1.51 dropping to 1.30 in 1987 (all figures represent number per a population of 1,000).

### Changes in the number and rate of marriage and divorce

(\* per population of 1,000)

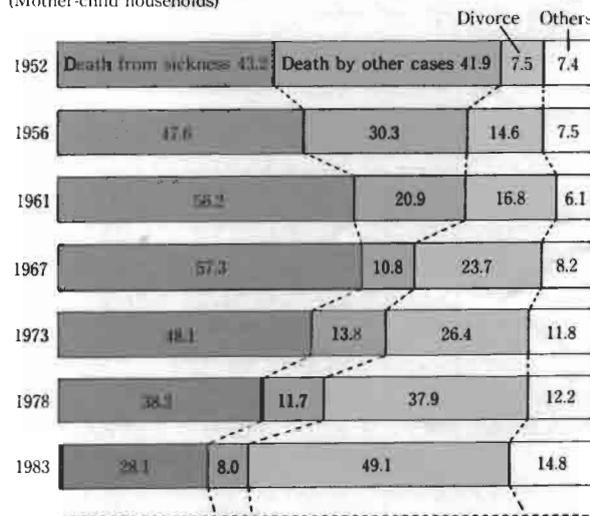
Year	No. of marriage	No. of divorce	Marriage rate*	Divorce rate*
1935	556,730	48,528	8.0	0.70
1947	934,170	79,551	12.0	1.02
1950	715,081	83,689	8.6	1.01
1960	866,115	69,410	9.3	0.74
1970	1,029,405	95,937	10.0	0.93
1980	774,702	141,689	6.7	1.22
1985	735,850	166,640	6.1	1.39
1987	696,173	158,227	5.7	1.30
1988	715,000	152,000	5.9	1.25

(4) The number of mother-and-child households increased from 603,746 in 1970 to 802,651 in 1985. With regard to causes associated with mother-and-child households, "death of husband from sickness" and "death of husband from other causes" have fallen while "divorce" has increased. In 1983, divorce accounted for about half of the mother-and-child households.

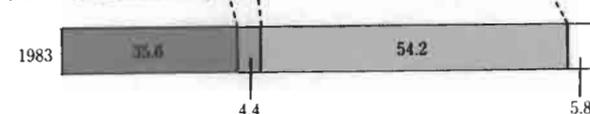
The number of father-and-child households rose from 106,451 in 1970 to 137,290 in 1985. As in the case of mother-and-child households, the most numerous cause was "divorce", at 54.2%.

### Causes for mother-child and father-child households

(Mother-child households) (%)

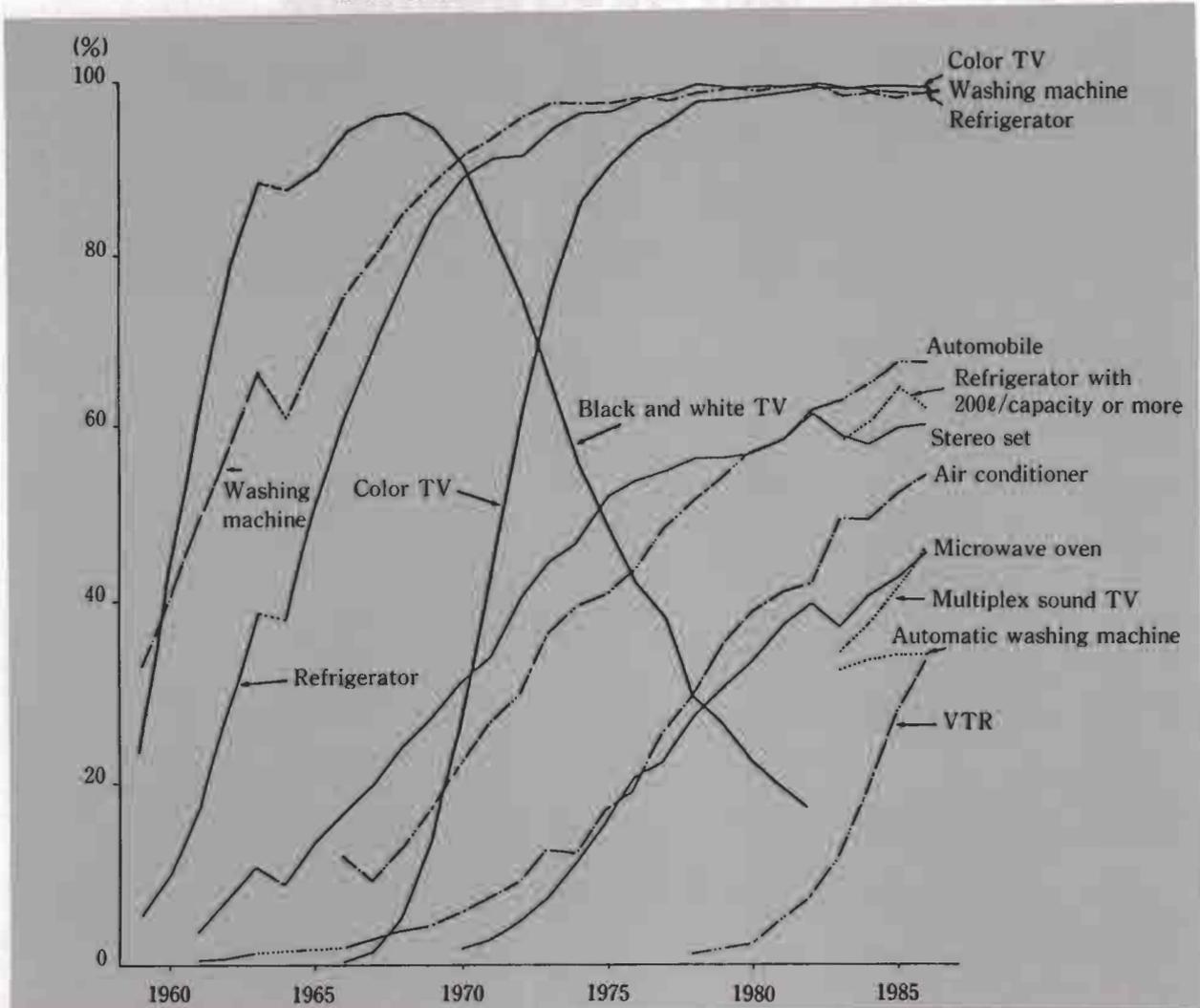


(Father-child households)



(5) Durable consumer goods enjoyed by more than 90% of the people are: black and white TV (1955-1965), washing machine and refrigerator (1965-1975) and color TV (1975-1985).

*Ratio of households with major electric appliances*



(6) In 1965, 58.4% of people owned their homes. After declining slightly, the figure rose again to 61.5% in 1985. The ratio of rented houses dropped after peaking in 1975.

**Changes in the number of households by tenure of dwelling**

Year	Owned houses (%)	Rented houses (%)	Issued houses (%)
1965	58.4	34.5	7.0
1970	57.0	36.2	6.8
1975	57.2	36.4	6.4
1980	60.7	33.5	5.9
1985	61.5	33.2	5.2

(7) The labour force participation of women has increased in recent years pushing up the number of double-income households. In 1984, double-income households accounted for 35.3% of all households.

**Ratio of double-income households by age of head of household (working households)**

Age	Year (%)	
	1979	1984
Average	32.8	35.3
Below 30	27.7	28.1
30~39	29.5	30.5
40~49	41.0	44.7
50~59	30.7	35.0
Over 60	21.1	17.0

(note : )

Ratio of double-income households

$$= \frac{\text{double-income working households}}{\text{working households}} \times 100$$

## 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.

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 and no less than 10 days in advance.

NWEC welcomes your inquiries and comments.

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MATSUYAMA

## PUBLICATION

# FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERING ON JAPANESE WOMEN

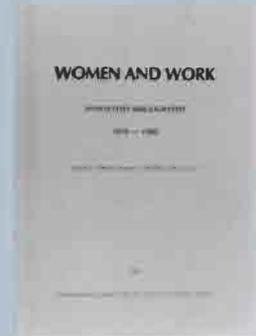
**WOMEN AND WORK**—Annotated bibliography 1970-1980

(International Group for the Study of Women, C.P.O.Box 65, Tokyo 100-91. 155 pages, Spring 1988, Tokyo. This is not for sale. Any inquiries on the publication are requested to be made to the above address)

Two volumes of annotated bibliographies on Japanese Women and Work, covering important materials on this subject published in Japan between 1945 and 1984, were first published in Japanese by Keiso Shobo in 1985 and 1986 respectively. Their publication undoubtedly provided much needed information to those interested in studying issues related to women and work. This book is an English translation of selected materials from those two volumes.

A total of 153 publications are selected and for each publication, the author's or editor's name, publishing company, year of publication, number of pages or volumes, and the bibliographic summary are given.

The rapid increase of the



number of employed women as well as their changing status has greatly aroused the interest of not only Japanese but also non-Japanese scholars in Japanese women and work. During the last decade, the number of non-Japanese researchers who study various aspects of the Japanese women are increasing steadily.

Certainly, women with diverse experience and perspectives can approach problems facing women from different angle and can better contribute to finding solutions to their problems. The publication is therefore of special significance, especially to those who have limited access to information in these fields.

## FOREIGN VISITORS TO NWEC

As of 31 March 1989, the NWEC has received 6,335 visitors from 117 countries. Followings are some of the guests who visited the Centre since the latter half of 1988.

28 August 1988: Dr. Diana Leonard, Chair of the Department of the Sociology of Education, Institute of Education, University of London, U.K.



*Ms. M. Alva visiting NWEC*

29 September 1988: Ms. Margaret Alva, Union Minister of State, Human Resource Development, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Women and Child Development, India.



*Dr. Kerber giving the lecture on women's history in USA*

22 March 1989: Dr. Linba K. Kerber, President of American Studies Association, Professor of the University of Iowa, U.S.A.