

# NWEC

## NEWSLETTER

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

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY ON COURSES RELATED TO WOMEN'S STUDIES IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (FISCAL 1990)

#### I. History

Since 1983, the National Women's Education Centre (NWEC) has conducted an annual survey concerning the establishment of courses on women's studies and related courses in Japan. The survey's purpose is to contribute to the development of the field of women's studies through the collection and an analysis of basic information concerning recent trends in education and research.

It is the only national survey conducted in this particular field. This report is based on a FY 1990 survey and presents the characteristics and trends of women's studies education in institutions of higher learning in Japan. Incidentally, each year the survey results have been published as a report and the FY 1990 report has been published in March 1991 (in Japanese).

#### II. Methodology, Contents and Target of the Survey

The 1990 survey was conducted in two stages, a primary survey which is of a preliminary nature, and a secondary survey which is the main report. The preliminary survey was conducted at a total of 919 universities and junior colleges throughout the country (as of 1990, there were a total of 1,101 universities and junior colleges in Japan).

The survey was addressed to the Registrar's Office and asked whether the institution offers courses on women's studies and related subjects, and if so, to relay the name of the course and the person in charge. Six hundreds and thirty institutions replied, resulting in a response rate of 68.6%.

The secondary survey covered a total of 759 persons in the field including the names collected in the primary survey and names gathered by the NWEC from lists of women's studies groups, scholars and researchers. The secondary survey asked those in charge of courses on women's studies and related subjects to provide detailed information on the courses they offered. There were 615 respondents with an 81.0% response rate.

The questions asked in the secondary survey are as follows:

Name of the university (junior college), faculty, department, course, subject/theme, number of credits, elective or required, course length, number of students, open to everyone or limited to just students on campus, year the course was established, reasons for establishment, subject of the course and reasons for its selection, course outline, teaching method and form (lecture or seminar).

**Table 1** Number of Institutions and Courses on Women's Studies and Related Subjects by Type of Institution

FY 1990

Type of institution	Institution / Course	Total number of universities and junior colleges in Japan	Number of institution offering course concerned			Number of courses offering course concerned		
			Women's	Coeducational	Total	Women's	Coeducational	Total
National	University	96	2	25	27 (28.1%)	8	46	54
	Junior College	41	0	1	1 ( 2.4%)	0	1	1
Local public	University	39	5	5	10 (25.6%)	8	5	13
	Junior College	54	4	6	10 (18.5%)	14	6	20
Private	University	372	42	44	86 (23.1%)	89	78	167
	Junior College	498	102	15	117 (23.5%)	179	29	208
	University of the Air	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>251 (22.8%)</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>463</b>

( ) Shows the number of universities and junior colleges offering courses related to women's studies versus the total number of universities and junior colleges in Japan.

In addition, the questions included any changes in the consciousness level of the students after enrolling in the course, the impact of the course on the university and future challenges and issues of the course.

### III. Analysis of the Survey Results

#### 3-1 Number of Universities and Courses

In FY 1990, there were a total of 123 universities and 128 junior colleges which offered courses on women's studies and related subjects. As for four-year universities, courses on women's studies and related subjects were available in 123 out of 508 universities, accounting for 24.2% or roughly one out of every four. On the other hand, there were 593 junior colleges in FY 1990, in other words, 21.6%, or one out of every five junior colleges offered courses on women's studies and related subjects.

In 1983, when NWEC conducted the first survey, there were only 49 universities and 26 junior colleges offering women's studies courses. This is a 3.3 fold increase over the last seven years.

Table 1 presents the breakdown of institutions with courses on women's studies and related subjects by type of university. Table 1 shows that courses on women's studies and related subjects offered by national junior colleges are very limited, the reason being that most of the national junior colleges are for training either industrial or medical technicians. For that reason, they must have found it difficult to inaugurate humanities or social science courses, to which women's studies courses belong.

Similarly, public junior colleges also had a very limited number of courses related women's studies. They represent mainly industrial, agricultural, health and nursing technical colleges. For reasons similar to the national junior colleges, they did not have favorable conditions for starting women's studies courses.

In fiscal 1990, there were a total of 463 courses (Table 1). In 1983, there were only 94 courses, suggesting a large increase over the last few years. Of the 463 courses, 357 were general, and 106 were comprehensive.

By general, it is meant that usually one person will conduct the whole course for a semester, covering such subjects as 'Women's Studies', 'Women in Literature', and 'Women's Issues'. In contrast, comprehensive courses are run by a variety of faculty which address 'Women's Studies' and "Women's Issues" in a specific field. In this case, the subject is common, but courses will be run from the perspective of different specialized fields.

Women's issues are historically social in nature and deeply rooted in the discrimination occurring in the fields of culture, society, economic and political life. As such, more recently in Japan the women's studies courses offered in universities have taken a political, economic and cultural perspective, that is, comprehensive approach. The tendency to use this approach rather than the general approach is increasing perhaps because the comprehensive approach is more suited to addressing women's issues, which is after all, a multi-faceted problem.

Table 2 shows the number of newly established courses related to women's studies. For example, in 1987, there were 38 new courses established, in 1988 there were 45 new courses established, and in 1990, 66. These statistics alone suggest that in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the establishment of women's studies and related courses, reflecting the rising interest of universities in this field.

**Table 2 Number of Newly Established Courses related to Women's Studies**

FY 1990

Fiscal Year	Number of newly established courses		
	General	Comprehensive	Total
1990	45	21	66
1989	34	6	40
1988	37	8	45
1987	20	18	38
1986	14	7	21
1985	16	8	24
1984	14	4	18
1983	15	5	20
1982	14	6	20
1981	10	0	10
1980	7	1	8
1979	4	3	7
1978	5	0	5
1977	2	0	2
1976	1	4	5
1975	1	1	2
Before 1974	14	1	15
Unspecified	104	13	117
Total	357	106	463

#### 3-2 Contents of Women's Studies and Related Subjects Courses

The courses offered differ slightly, depending on whether it is a women's or co-ed university. Notably, in women's universities there is a prevalence of subjects such as 'Women and Society', 'Women and Career', 'Women and Culture', 'Family and Child-raising', 'Female Labor', 'Women's Education', 'History of Women', and 'Women in Literature'. In contrast, co-ed universities had a prevalence for titles such as 'Women and Men', 'Gender', 'Sex and Sexual Discrimination', 'Human Rights' and 'Dowa Minority Issues'.

**Table 3 Number of Students in Courses on Women's Studies and Related Subjects by Sex and by Type of Institution**

FY 1990

Type of institution	Sex		Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
Students	National	University	1,843	2,068	696	4,607
		Junior College				
	Local Public	University	594	237	105	936
		Junior College	359	12	0	371
	Private	University	9,799	3,204	62	13,065
		Junior College	19,759	26	0	19,785
Total			32,354	5,547	863	38,764

The difference in the subjects covered by these two types of institutions suggests that women's universities emphasize the importance of encouraging female students to challenge the established concepts of women in the Japanese culture and social framework and to gain confidence and independence. The co-ed universities, on the other hand, appear to aim at inviting students to address the issues of discrimination between the sexes, the complementary nature of men and women, or mutual respect for each other through women's studies.

**3-3 Number of Students Enrolled in Women's Studies and Related Subjects Courses**

The number of students enrolled in women's studies course is shown in Table 3. It must be pointed out, however, that the number presented is not exact since some of the respondents only gave rounded figures, but a general idea of the number can be gained. According to Table 3, there were 38,800 enrolled students in women's studies and related subjects courses, representing 1.5 % of the 2,613,000 students enrolled in four-year universities, graduate schools and junior colleges.

**3-4 Impact on Students**

Respondents who were in charge of running women's courses and related subjects courses generally gave a very positive response regarding the impact of the courses. Many pointed out that the

courses contributed to challenging the established traditional image of sex role and provided a realistic understanding of the nature of discrimination which exists. In particular, female students have been encouraged to pursue a career and marriage regardless of the established social mores. These responses suggest that many female students are encouraged to choose a more independent way of life.

On the other hand, some professors have pointed out that young male students have been reacting negatively against feminism and have even been expressing fear and uncertainty. According to some professors, there is a need to control this negative reaction. Other professors have pointed out that in an atmosphere of increasing conservative tendencies at women's universities, it is often difficult to interest female students in women's studies. Similarly, they find it challenging to promote understanding of discrimination, and more importantly, to find some way of following up on students after graduation so that they will remain actively involved in these issues.

**3-5 Person in Charge of the Courses**

Table 4 analyzes persons in charge of the courses by sex and by working conditions. There were 559 women in charge of these courses, representing more than double the number of men. Of women course leaders, 356 were full-time, accounting for 63.7%, while full-time male leaders numbered 218, accounting for 82.3% of all leaders.

**Table 4 Number of Course Instructors by Sex and by Working Conditions**

FY 1990

Type of institution	Sex Status	Female			Male			Total		
		full-time	part-time	total	full-time	part-time	total	full-time	part-time	total
		National	university	46	39	85	41	8	49	87
	junior college	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Local Public	university	15	13	28	8	0	8	24	13	37
	junior college	16	1	17	8	2	10	23	3	26
Private	university	126	85	211	89	10	99	215	95	310
	junior college	153	64	217	72	27	99	225	91	316
Total		356	203	559	218	47	265	574	250	824
		(63.7%)	(36.3%)	(100%)	(82.3%)	(17.7%)	(100%)	(69.7%)	(30.3%)	(100%)

Table 5 breaks down the field of speciality of the course leaders. While 499 respondents answered this question and 170 did not, the results should be ample enough to provide a general direction. In the order of frequency, the fields of speciality covered: literature, linguistics, history, education, and sociology. In other words, humanities represented 52.3%, social sciences 29.9%, natural sciences 5.8%, and others, including women's studies, 12.0%.

**3-6 Education Methodology**

Apart from lectures, teaching took the form of group discussions, reports, comparative presentations, seminars and writing personal histories. Sometimes the participants attended off-site activities, listened to speeches by guest lecturers or visited women-related facilities. In some cases, professors have provided their own materials using newspaper or magazine articles. Some have used video clips and slides and other innovative, creative methods.

**IV. Future Issues**

The latest survey suggests the following areas for future work:

1. The need to improve women's studies curriculum, the need to independently strengthen women's studies course as the general education subject and as the professional education subject, as well as the need to link and relate these two areas.
2. The need to maintain consistency in the comprehensive courses, so that they will not simply be a compilation of different fields of study. There is also an urgent need for women's studies to find its own perspective, methodology and unique content.
3. The need to develop relevant course material.
4. The need to increase opportunities for information exchange among the course leaders. The need also to create a network of concerned persons on and off campus.
5. The need to maintain contact with graduates and those who have attended courses so what they have learned can be applied to real life situations.
6. The need to encourage interest and awareness of women's studies on campus, particularly among professors.
7. The need to appeal to male students.
8. The need to coordinate with social education.

**Table 5 Number of Course Instructors by Field of Speciality**

FY 1990

	Field of speciality	Female	Male	Total	Percentage (rate)	
Humanities	Literature, Linguistics	63	28	91	18.3%	52.3%
	History	33	27	60	12.0%	
	Philosophy, Ethics, Theology, Thought, Aesthetics	16	19	35	7.0%	
	Psychology	11	6	17	3.4%	
	Pedagogy	34	19	53	10.6%	
	Others	2	3	5	1.0%	
Social sciences	Politics, Law	22	24	46	9.2%	29.9%
	Economics	19	11	30	6.0%	
	Sociology	47	16	63	12.7%	
	Cultural Anthropology	3	1	4	0.8%	
	Other	5	1	6	1.2%	
Natural Sciences	Physics	11	6	17	3.4%	5.8%
	Engineering	0	0	0	0.0%	
	Medicine	6	6	12	2.4%	
	Agronomy	0	0	0	0.0%	
Others	Home Economics	18	2	20	4.0%	12.0%
	Women's Studies	26	0	26	5.2%	
	Physical Education	9	1	10	2.0%	
	Information Science	1	1	2	0.4%	
	Area Studies	0	1	1	0.2%	
	History of Science and Technology	0	1	1	0.2%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>326</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Note: Respondents: 499  
Non-respondents: 170

**V. Conclusion**

The establishment of women's studies and related courses in Japanese universities has become more active as of the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women. Particularly in these last two or three years, there has been a proliferation of new courses. Unfortunately, however, there is not a single faculty or department dedicated to women's studies. There is no university awarding Bachelor of the Arts or Masters degrees, or Phds in Women's studies.

At present, the number of courses on women's studies in undergraduate and graduate levels is still quite limited, but as the survey revealed, there is an active interest in women's studies courses with an increasing number of new courses. As a conclusion of this latest survey, it must be pointed out that it is hoped that an independent department or faculty of women's studies will be established.

(Wakako NISHIBORI, Information Specialist, NWEC)

## INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FAMILY EDUCATION

From March 13 through 15, 1991, the National Women's Education Centre (NWEC) held its International Seminar on Family Education with the theme of "Child-Socialization and 'Parenting' Education".

Professor Kazuko FUKAYA of Tokyo Gakugei University headed the seminar, which formed a part of a four-year plan for research seminars on family education. The plan began in 1988. In FY 1990, two specialists from the U.S.A. participated: Dr. Michael LAMB, Senior Research Scientist of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Prof. Sheila B. KAMERMAN of Columbia University; as well as one from Canada: Prof. Margaret E. ARCUS of the University of British Columbia, in addition to seven other Japanese specialists.

The purpose of the seminar was first to examine the status of the family in today's society and the meaning and role of parents and then

to conduct international research and consultation based on interdisciplinary and demonstrative research studies for parents on when and how to rear children. The seminar dealt with the three agenda items, i.e., "The Current State of Child-Socialization and Child-Rearing", "Child-Care Networking and Child-Care Services" and "Contemporary Issues in 'Parenting' Education".

During discussion of the first item, "The Current State of Child-socialization and Child-rearing", the participants reviewed the issues of parents who were unable to rear children satisfactorily and the increasing number of children who were difficult to raise because parents acted according to manuals and children who were given too many objects and lost a grasp of their fellow human beings. In the search for solutions to these problems in today's child-rearing, the following two challenges were pointed out:



The first challenge is to create conditions under which parents can make their own decisions. It is therefore necessary to establish relations which allow men and women to share child-rearing responsibilities, to expand education systems including day care centers, to supply parents with educational opportunities, and to give assistance to voluntary child-care activities.

The second challenge is to nurture "parenting". "Parenting" refers to a mindset and attitude which transcend fatherhood and motherhood. To give society its warmth and compassion everyone must embrace these precepts. The research done by Ms. Fukaya's group identified the main components of parenting as (1) fondness for children, (2) readiness to help and sympathize with others, (3) stability of mind, and (4) love for one's own self.

In the discussion of the second agenda, "Child-Care Networking and Child-Care Services", it was reported that the generations born after 1950 have few siblings because of low-fertility. Parents therefore could not look to relatives for help in child-care, so child-care networks in urban areas were voluntarily established in Japan's apartment complexes.

The necessity of respecting each person's own choice of whether or not to bear children and the importance of social child-care assistance, including for those who do not have children, were singled out in an environment where social discrimination against women who had not borne children intensified.

A new gap between reproducing and non-reproducing families was observed after the total fertility rate (the estimated number of children a woman bears during her reproductive years, 14 to 49 years old) declined to 1.57 children in 1986.

Whether or not a mother has a job, child-care is considered as social responsibility in western countries and is included in public budgets. Various policies are undertaken to provide parents with a variety of options.

The third agenda, "Contemporary issues in 'parenting' education", covered home economics courses in schools. It was pointed out that the courses should include studies on family relations, issues of the elderly, understanding one's self and being independent before becoming a parent. The necessity of linking sex education to parenting education was also discussed.

In Northern Europe, parental education is done either by specialists or through discussions with other parents to help find solutions. It was reported that it was important to utilize both methods in a balanced manner depending on parents' needs and the stage of children's development; to pay attention to the various subcultures of parents; to develop an evaluation system for parental education programs which would enable decisions on what would be effective for whom and under which conditions; and to promote fathers' participation in child-rearing.

The International Seminar has been explained along its three agenda and at this point an argument regarding what should receive special attention when deciding effective parenting education from prior research will be introduced. The thesis contends that psychological research does not provide a prescription for effective parenting education.

For example, while what is considered a "good parent" for a child would differ according to the child's developmental stage, disposition, and ability, the child would also have socializing effects on the parent. There are many ways to be an effective parent, and the argument concludes that only the parent's objectives and style, combined with the child's disposition and stage of development are able to decide the most effective method.

On the basis of various discussions held at the International Seminar in 1991, a report will be written compiling the results of the four-year research seminars on family education.

*\*Note: The word "parenting" as used in this seminar means "to understand and learn the meaning and the role of parents".*

## JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

### WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

The Women's Group Section is written by representatives of the group introduced.

#### THE NATIONAL STUDY ASSOCIATION OF HOME-LIVING IMPROVEMENT

**ESTABLISHMENT:** Established March 1964 as a Voluntary Organization

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:** The objective of this Association is to encourage home life improvement groups in rural and fishing villages to exchange information and techniques with other groups and to mutually

assist each other in promoting better home life. Most of the members are women engaged in farming and fishing.

Every year, the groups establish common objectives and common tasks based on their current condition. Their activities are also dictated by the needs of each region. In addition, the Association publishes bulletins and organizes national conventions in collaboration with other organizations.

Common Objectives for 1991: "Towards a healthy and comfortable farm and fishing life"

Common Issues for 1991:

1. Designing Family Life and Improving Management
  - i. Developing healthy eating habits using locally available resources and innovative distribution of food.

- ii. Supporting and nurturing young wives and successors and creating an amenable environment for an aging society
- iii. Promoting habits of writing diaries and notes for dialogue and improving life
2. Innovative Work Life and Designing Holidays
  - i. Realize agreeable work by insuring the safety of equipment and the use of shared facilities.
  - ii. Compensation for work and accepting regular holidays
  - iii. Promoting work plans conducive to an aging society
3. Expanding Opportunities for Lifelong Education at Home and in the Local Community



- i. Encouraging transfer and development of local techniques through dialogue and exchange with consumers
- ii. Establishing common objectives to improve women's status
- iii. Constructing a human resources bank and contributing

- to regional communities undergoing transformation by promoting international exchange
- 4. Expanding the Use of Rice in Ways Appropriate to the Condition of the Home and Region

**ACTION PROGRAM:** Collecting data concerning farm work (Labelling agro-chemicals and improving agricultural machinery)

For further inquiries, please contact:  
*Seikatsu Kaizen Jikko Gurupu Zenkoku Renraku Kenkyukai*  
(The National Study Association of Home-Living Improvement)  
1-9-5 Roppongi  
Minato-ku, Tokyo 106

### ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The Association for Women's Education is a foundation established to contribute to the promotion of women's and family education in our country. It was established in 1937 and has been operating for 55 years. The Association conducts projects for women's group, study groups and administrative personnel, in order to promote lifelong learning opportunities for women and compiles the project reports for distribution to various organizations.

- (1) Research (\*Research Programme on Self-development, \*Seminar on Women's Issues: "The History of Women's Education", \*Research Programme on Family Education)
- (2) Study Meetings (\*Study group on Women's Education: "Equal Education and Learning for Men and Women", \*Study group on family education, following the theme "Changing Aspects of Families and Children")
- (3) General Lectures (\*Literature course on "The Tale of Genji", \*Japanese Flower Arrangement Class)
- (4) Publication of an information magazine: Monthly Magazine "Women's Cultural

Education" (in Japanese) (Covering issues of learning and practical activities for self-development, changing aspects of families and children, and the aging society and community, from a new point of view. These are the problems we now face regarding women's education and family education.)

The Japan Research Institute for Families and Households, which is an associated organization, conducts the following research and educational activities to improve the quality of family life and to contribute to the promotion of family education.

- Research Projects regarding family life and new media.
- Publishing of "Katei Kagaku" (Journal of Japan Research Institute for Families and

- Households) in Japanese.
- Summer college courses.

For further inquiries, please contact:  
*Nihon Joshi Shakai Kyoikukai*  
(The Association for Women's Education)  
2-6-8, Shiba-Koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105  
Tel: 03-3434-7575



## THE FIRST REVISION OF THE NEW NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women (The Prime Minister as President) recently announced the first revision of the "New

National Plan of Action towards the year 2000". Revision was made subject to termination of the promotion period for concrete measures (1987-1990) as stated in the previous "New National Action Plan" formulated in 1987.

The revision's major objective was to identify concrete measures for the next five years, starting in 1991. The revisions are based on the United Nation's recommendation to hasten implementation of the "Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women".

### Pillars of the Revision Plan

The revised plan states the following 5 basic policies and related 16 concrete measures.

#### 1. Improvement of People's Awareness of Equality between Men and Women

- 1. Correction of Traditional Stereotyped Sex Role Concepts.
- 2. Upgrading School Education and Promoting Social Education
- 3. Enhancing Awareness of the Importance of Maternity and Maternal Protection, etc.

**II. Active and Joint Participation of Men and Women on the Basis of Equality**

4. Expansion of Women's Active Participation in Policy Decision-making.
5. Promotion of Equal Employment Opportunity and Treatment among Men and Women.
6. Promotion of Measures for Women in Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing Villages.
7. Expansion of Active and Joint Participation by Men and Women in the Community and in Family Life.

**III. Improvement of Conditions Giving Women Greater Choice**

8. Improvement of Lifelong Learning Opportunities and the Establishment of

- Systems to Develop Vocational Abilities.
9. Improvement of Child-Care Conditions.
10. Improvement of Conditions for Women in Various Types of Employment.

**IV. Assuring Women's Welfare in Old Age**

11. Enhancing Income Security.
12. Improvement of Welfare Services.
13. Promotion of Health Care and Participation in Society.
14. Independence and Stability for Fatherless Families, etc.

**V. International Cooperation and Contribution to Peace**

15. Promotion of Women's International Cooperation in Response to Increasing Internationalization.
16. Contribution of Women to Peace.

**Characteristics of the New National Plan**

The revised plan emphasizes that: Joint and equal participation by men and women in various fields is absolutely necessary in the society of the 21 century. Accordingly, the sub-theme of the New Plan was changed from "Creating a Social System in which Men and Women Participate Jointly" to a more positive objective, "A Social System in which Men and Women Participate Actively and Jointly".

Furthermore, as a global approach is required to resolve problems relating to women, the need to positively address the development and peace of the world was reconfirmed.

## THE CHILDCARE LEAVE LAW

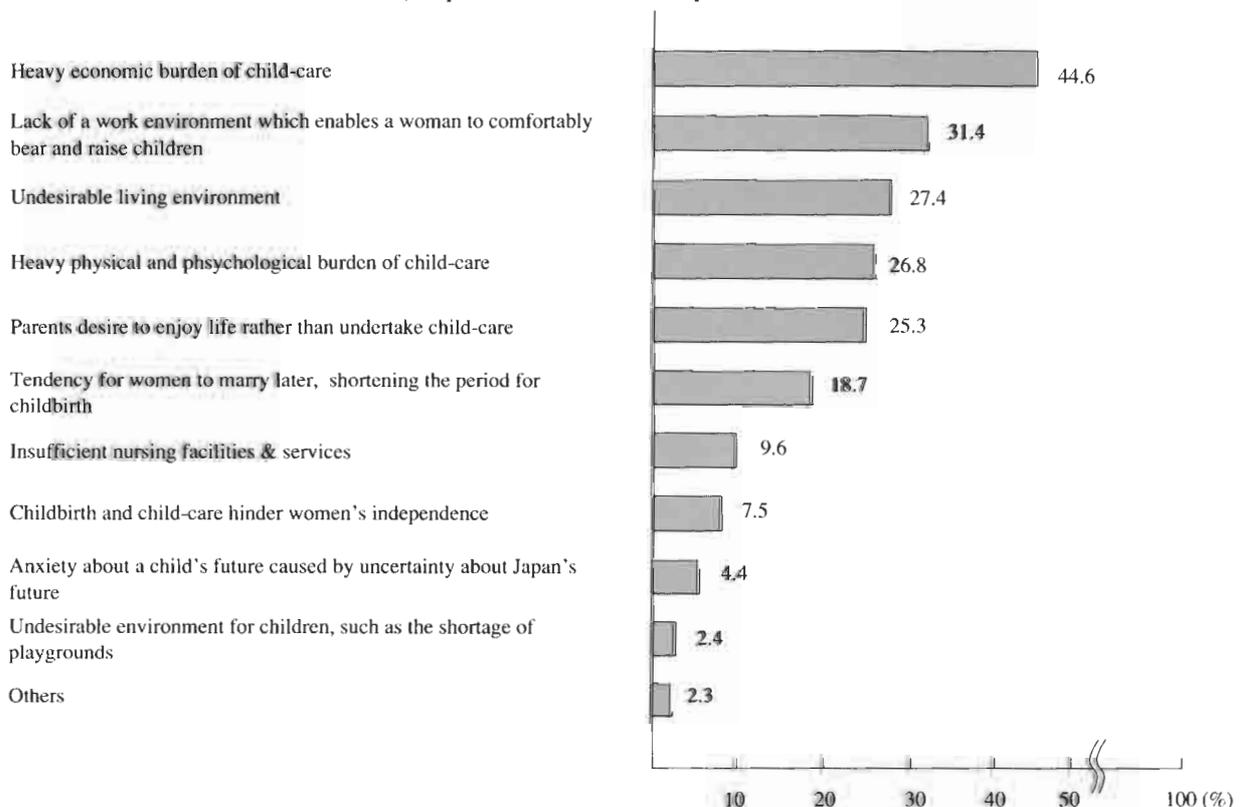
Etsuko FURUHASHI  
Associate Professor  
Hanazono College

**I. Background**

Since the late 1960s, women's participation in society has heightened, especially in terms of the increasing number of working women. The major causes for this phenomenon are the demands of the labor market as well as the changes in women's life cycles.

For example, in the average life cycle of a woman born in 1960, her youngest child starts school when she is 35.5 years old, an age short of the mid point of her average life span of 81 years. It has led to a changed working pattern for women who used to resign from their jobs after childbirth, but hold now continue to work while taking care of their children.

**Chart 1 Reasons for the Gap Between the Ideal and Actual Number of Children**  
(Respondents could choose up to two answers)



Source: Prepared based on "the Intelligent Survey of High IQ Individuals on Fulfillment of Measures for Children and Families" (Children and Families Bureau, Ministry of Health and Welfare)

At present, the ratio of working women to the total number of workers is 40.4%. 67.5% of married women hold jobs. (Source: "Labor Statistics" 1989, Bureau of Statistics, General Affairs Agency) Married women's participation in the workforce transformed the challenge of reconciling a job and family responsibilities (housework, raising children, taking care of adult family members).

Chores which used to be the sole responsibility of women, are now the responsibility of both sexes. The following events contributed to this trend:

In 1981, Japan voted in favor of "Convention 156 and Recommendation 165 concerning Equal Opportunity and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers with Family Responsibilities" which had been adopted by the General Assembly of the ILO.

In 1985, Japan ratified the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women", the preamble of which provided that "the responsibilities regarding child-rearing should be divided between men, women and the whole society".

In 1987, it was clearly written in the New National Plan of Action Toward the Year 2000 that "housework, raising children, and taking care of adult family members are the joint responsibility of men and women, and both sexes should cooperate with each other".

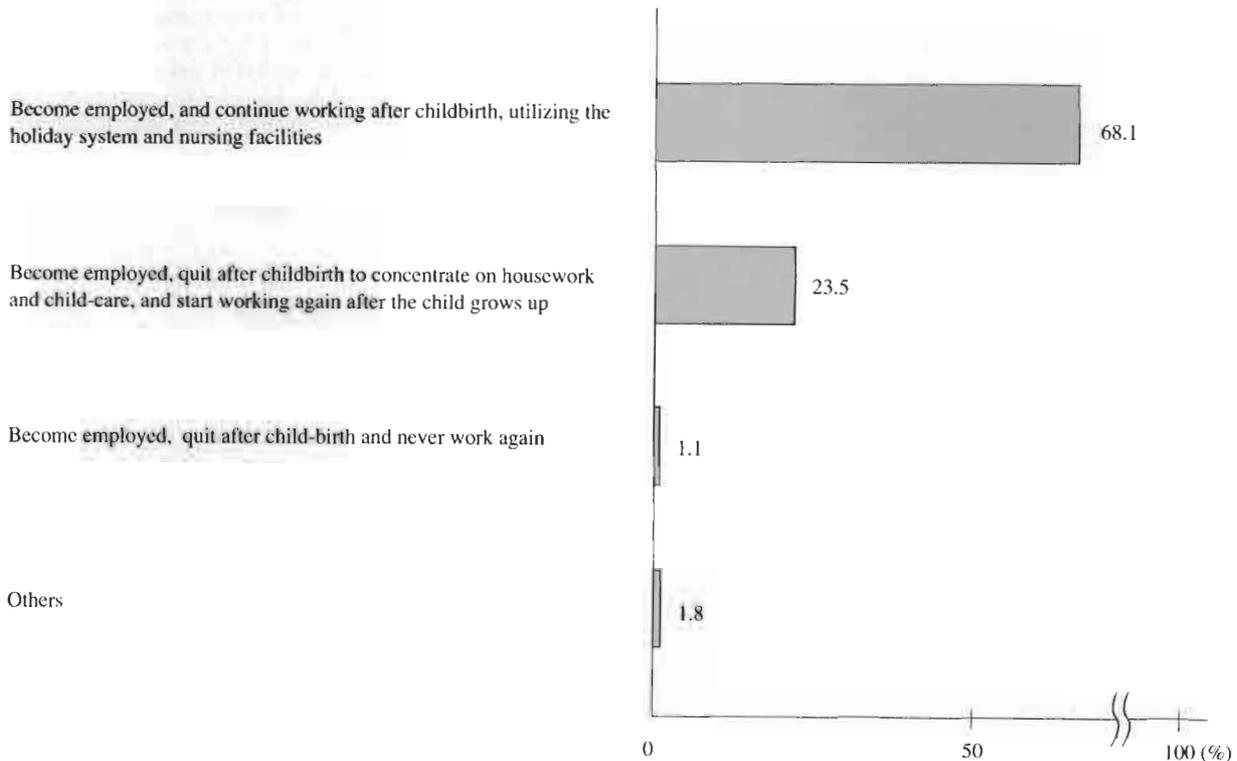
In Japan, however, nursing time as provided by the Labor Standards Law and childcare leave as provided by the Childcare Leave Act for National Women Public Employees in Specified Trades and the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, are only allowed for women workers. Japan is expected to become a more elderly society in the 21st century, when one fourth of the population will be 65 years old or over, and there are the effects of the low total fertility rate which hit a post war low of 1.53 children in 1990.

Against such a background, certain issues were highlighted including women's hesitation to bear children and the need to prepare statutes which would enable men and women to reconcile jobs and family responsibilities.

For example, in response to the question of why there was a gap between the number of desired and actual children, 44.6% answered because of "the heavy economic burden of childcare", and 31.4% answered because of the "lack of a work environment which enables a woman to comfortably bear and raise children". (Refer to *Chart 1*)

As for the working pattern of married women workers, 68.1% answered that they wanted to find a job and continue to work after childbirth by utilizing childcare leave and childcare facilities. (Refer to *Chart 2*)

**Chart 2 Rate of Married Women Workers in their Desired Working Patterns**

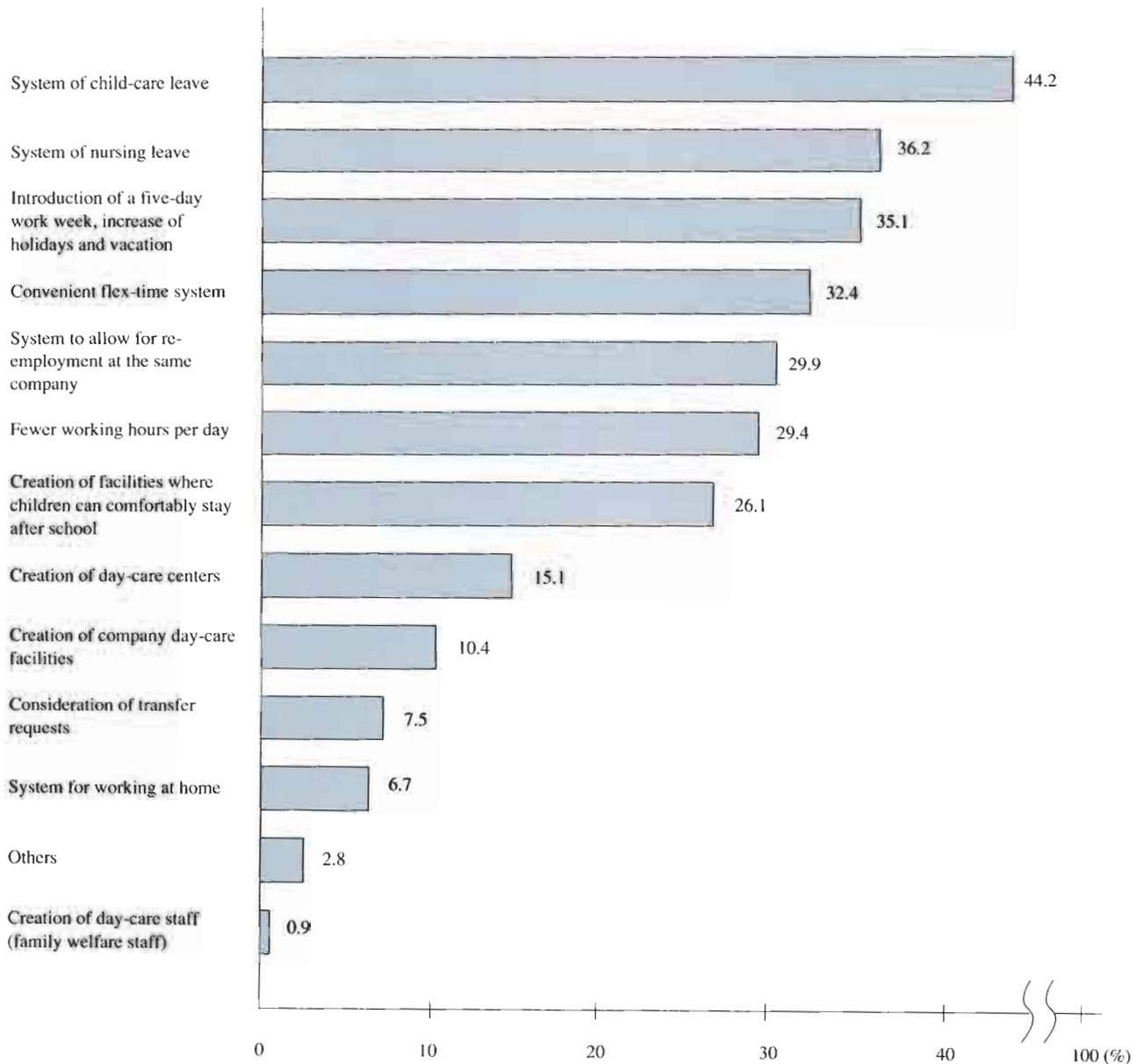


Source: "Survey on the Actual Lifestyle of Married Female Workers-Actual Conditions of Working Mothers During Child-care" (Women and Young Workers Society, September 1989)

As for the conditions and systems which would enable them to continue working, 44.2% of working women demanded "a system of childcare leave" and 36.2% of them demanded "a system that would grant leave to take care of adult family members". (Refer to *Chart 3*) In order to enable both fathers and mothers to take part in child-rearing, a "work system which allows fathers to take care of children" was asked for by 42.3% of mothers and 36.6% of fathers, and a "maternity and childcare leave system for either the father or mother" was requested by 37.5% of mothers and 36.6% of fathers. (Refer to *Table 1*)

Regarding the birthrate, companies and female workers both chose the "introduction of a flexible working hours system", "improvement and expansion of childcare institutions" and the "introduction of childcare leave" far more than "economic assistance in the form of child allowance" as a condition to enable women to reconcile jobs and the responsibilities of raising children. (Summary of the results of "The Questionnaire on the Issues of Declining Birthrate and Revision of the Child Allowance System" and "The Questionnaire on Attitudes of Working Women", Japan Federation of Employer's Associations, October, 1990).

**Chart 3 Ratio of the Number of Married Female Workers according to Conditions and Systems Required to Continue Work (Multiple answers allowed)**



Source: "Survey on the Actual Lifestyle of Married Female Workers-Actual Conditions of Working Mothers during Child-care" (Women and Young Workers Society, September 1989)

**II. New Childcare Leave Law**

In response to these demands, an increasing number of companies are adopting a childcare leave system. A 1988 study revealed, however, that only 19.2% of female employees were granted childcare leave, including those in the public sector who enjoy the leave under the childcare leave law.

During the period from 1987 to 1990, the four opposition parties introduced a childcare leave bill to the Diet three times, but none were enacted. The government, however, studied the failed opposition party bills and presented its own childcare leave bill to the Diet in March, 1991.

During its deliberation, the issue of income security during childcare leave became controversial, so it was included as an outstanding issue in the supplementary provisions to examine it further. In May 1991, the Childcare Leave Law was enacted.

The outline of the new childcare law is as follows:

- 1) Female and male workers shall be allowed to take childcare leave until their children reach one year.
- 2) Those workers who are employed "on a daily basis" or "for a fixed period" (temporary employees) shall be ineligible for childcare leave.
- 3) It is prohibited to fire employees because they took childcare leave.

- 4) Employers shall make an effort to provide i. rules for treatment during childcare leave, ii. rules for wages, position and other working conditions after childcare leave, iii. necessary measures to develop and improve employees' skills during childcare leave, iv. reduced work hours for employees who are taking care of children under one year old but not taking childcare leave, v. reduced work hours for employees who are taking care of children one year or older but are not yet in school.
- 5) Business entities with less than thirty one employees shall be given a

three year allowance (until April 1,1995) to comply with the childcare leave law.

- 6) The childcare leave law shall be enforced as of April 1,1992.

The Department of Labor will outline the actual operational details in its guidelines and ordinances, and will promote the childcare leave system through its administrative guidance. Details of the guidelines will be discussed at the Women's and Young Workers' Problems Council.

**Table 1 Requests for Child-care Facilities and Systems  
(Multiple answers allowed)**

Item	Mother	Father
Work system which allows fathers to take care of children	42.3 %	36.6 %
Maternity and child-care leave system for either the mother or father	37.5	36.6
Child-care leave system which facilitates later re-entry into the workforce	36.7	32.9
Extension of nursery hours	33.6	28.1
Day-care centers at public facilities	24.7	19.8
Nurseries for sick children	23.6	19.6
Nursery facilities in offices	18.4	19.7
Nurseries for babies less than one year old	17.1	15.0
Child-care consultation at day-care centers	13.4	14.3
Places and facilities for cooperative nursery	12.8	11.0
Private volunteer organizations	7.9	7.7
Baby-sitters	7.2	8.7
Evening hour nurseries	6.6	8.0
Family welfare staff (child-care staff)	6.4	6.9
Telephone counseling for child-care	6.0	9.4

Source: Prepared based on P.115 - p.116 of "Survey Report on Social Participation of Working Mothers and Parents' Roles" October 1990, Bureau of Citizens' and Cultural Affairs, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office

### III. Problems of the Childcare Leave Law

On the other hand, the new Childcare Leave Law is criticized as inefficient and deviating from the principles of the Law concerning Childcare Leave for Women Public Service Personal in Specified Fields of Job.

The criticism that this law is inefficient is based on the fact that the law lacks the following 1.) income security during leave, 2.) a ban on disadvantageous actions resulting from utilization of the childcare leave system, 3.) a rule for treatment during childcare leave, 4.) a rule requiring reinstatement to the former position after the leave and 5.) punishment for employers who do not comply with the law.

There is also a difference between this law and childcare leave for women public employees, in that while public employees' status is secured and disadvantageous treatment is banned during the leave, eligible private employees are not protected in the same way. The problems of the new Childcare Leave Law were recognized by the

Diet during the bill's deliberation.

The results of a survey on "the life style of those taking childcare leave" (conducted in February 1991 by the Japan Private Sector Trade Union Confederation (JPTUC)) in particular showed that 80% of public workers and 65% of private workers responded that their life was difficult because they were not paid during leave. In addition, their husbands had to work more overtime to cover the swelling economic burden during the leave so were not in a condition to share childcare responsibilities.

On the other hand, certain aspects of the law deserve credit. "The system of reducing work hours of men and women workers who are taking care of pre-school children" is commendable. Some private companies set up a system of reducing work hours to five or six hours per day following childcare leave. This system is introduced mainly where there are many women workers.

Some companies provide options depending on the worker's childcare needs such as 1) a worker is given time for childcare, 2) a worker takes childcare leave, and 3) work hours are reduced. The last option of reduced work hour is beneficial to both employers and workers because it 1) enables workers to continue their jobs without interruption, 2) reduces the economic loss of workers, 3) does not hinder reinstatement to a full-time post, 4) shortens the re-education and training period, and 5) helps parents and children have more intimate time together.

Among those countries which have already enforced a childcare leave law, some have a system of reduced work hours operating together with the childcare leave. (Refer to the *Table 2*.) Sweden is one where parental leave has been in operation since 1974 and a part-time childcare leave was introduced in the 1978 revision. As a result of the revision, the ratio of fathers who took childcare leave shot up to as high as around 25% (1988 survey) from a few percent before the revision.

For the countries which recognize a father's right to childcare leave, the problem is how to raise the ratio of those taking the leave. The reason is that when fathers share the childcare responsibilities, a working mother can utilize her full ability to develop a career, unlike

when she was the only one to bear the responsibility. Equal rights for men and women in the workplace are significant to women.

If women have to interrupt or quit their jobs, their pension will be smaller, so it has a great influence on women's "economic independence" in their old age. Sweden takes this very seriously and teaches the importance of sexual equality in the home and workplace and the system of parental leave is equality's legal basis in primary education.

#### **IV. Women's Participation in Society and Men's Participation in Childcare**

The new Childcare Leave Law will be enforced as of April 1, 1992. This law attracts attention to the extent it is parodied in cartoons. It will take a lot of effort, however, to make this law effective because of the low instance of current childcare leave and the less than one minute husbands spend on childcare even when wives are working. ("Basic Survey of Social Life" by General Affairs Agency, 1988.)

When the Childcare Leave Law was enacted, people said "though it was born small, we will raise it to be big." It is for us to make this law big. We must start by promoting "women's participation in society" and "men's participation in childcare".

**Table 2 Examples of Nursing Leave Systems in Other Countries**

Sweden	Either the father or mother can take leave until the baby reaches one and a half years. Daily work hours can be shortened to 4 or 6 hours until the child becomes 8 years old or finishes the first grade of primary school.
Germany	Either the father or mother may request nursing leave until the child reaches 18 months. They can switch to part-time work of less than 19 hours per week.
France	Natural parents or foster parents who are raising a child may request nursing leave for one year and in principle up to 3 years, and may reduce work hours by half.
Italy	After the allowed 3 month maternity leave, women workers may take a 6 month leave anytime before the child becomes one year old. (Working Mothers Protection Law) If the father is the sole person responsible for the child's welfare or when the mother declines to exercise her right to leave, the father may request childcare leave.
Belgium	A request to discontinue work may be made for various reasons, but it is mainly used for reasons of child-care and education. Anyone who has worked for the same person/company for more than one year may request a job leave of 6 months to one year.
Denmark	In addition to maternity leave (14 weeks), one of the parents may request a 10 week holiday.
Greece	Both the mother and father can leave work for 3 months until the child reaches the age of two and a half years (Applicable to workers at private companies with more than 100 employees.)
New Zealand	Parents raising a child may leave work for a total of 52 weeks (mother & father combined) until the child becomes one year old. (For adopted children, they must be under 5 years old and it must be within one year after the child-care leave starts.)
U.K.	Working women may return to their job within 29 weeks after child-birth.
U.S.A.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No Federal regulations.</li> <li>2. State Laws In Maine, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and Vermont, both male and female workers have the right to request a 6 to 13 week child-care leave.</li> </ol>

<Researched by the Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labor>

Note: The systems of U.K. and Belgium are not strictly leaves for child-care.

## 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 group 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 at least 10 days in advance but not six months

### NWEC Newsletter

National Women's Education  
Centre

728 Sugaya, Ranzan-machi,  
Hiki-gun, Saitama 355-02

Japan

Tel : 0493-62-6711

Fax : 0493-62-6721

Cable : NWEC HIGASHI-  
MATSUYAMA

## PUBLICATION

### FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERING ON JAPANESE WOMEN

#### JAPANESE WOMEN ARTISTS 1600-1900

(by Patricia FISTER. Published in 1988 by the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045, USA. 197 pages. US\$ 16.95. ISBN 0-06-430181-8. For information please address Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10022)

This book introduces Japanese women artists who flowered in Japan during the 300 years between 1600 and 1900. Through their artworks the author analyses political, social and economic conditions and women's lifestyle of the era. The book presents 27 women artists in chronological order, introducing 88 of their artworks with photos.

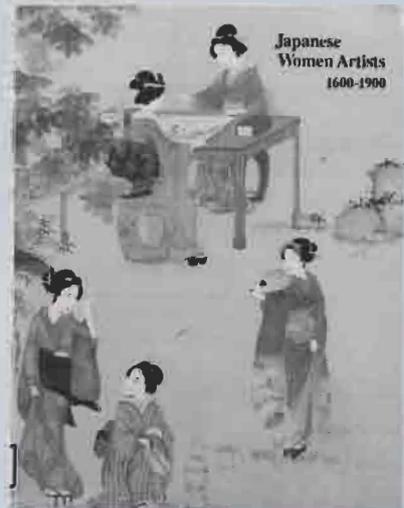
It also explains the background and artistic features of the artworks, and further includes a description of the life and personality of each artist. Artists cover various fields of art from calligraphy, ukiyo-e, Japanese waka and haiku poems, to paintings.

The author of the book, Patricia Fister, curator of Oriental Arts at the Spencer Museum of Art, explains that there are two reasons that made women artists emerge successively during the period.

The first reason is that the government at that time had adopted a closed-door policy towards foreign countries and divided the populace into four social classes. Therefore, in this closed and rigid environment, people directed their energy to domestic affairs. Second reason is that despite the environment, the country enjoyed peace and prosperity, and with the rise in the level of education, cultures thrived.

Through an analysis of their artworks, Fister makes the following two conclusions about Japanese women artists. First is the issue of whether there was a "women's style"?

This controversial statement contradicts the common belief among Japanese scholars who said that woman's art is feminine and "womanlike" compared to art by men.



Fister believes that, with regard to specific pieces, "artworks of the same school in the same era basically are not much different in style and theme, whether the artist is a man or a woman".

The second issue considers the contribution of women artists to Japanese art. Women artists often were not integrated into literature on Japanese art. Fister presumes that the reason for this is that, until the late 19th century, the idea that women should not take a leadership role dominated society.

Therefore, radical expression, creative activities which challenged traditional artistic norms, or displayed one's talent were not accepted.

In addition, women traditionally were not regarded as individuals but viewed from their relationship to men (for example, wife, sister or daughter). So, they were unable to gain social status just through their talent.

The names of women artists are rarely included in modern literature. However, Fister states that many women's names were mentioned with high regard in much of the contemporary literature. The author hopes that this book can rectify the view of Japanese women artists which has been overlooked in Japanese art history.