

NWEC

NEWSLETTER

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

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE 1992

Since 1991, the National Women's Education Centre has held International Forum on Intercultural Exchange on the subject of "Women in Development." The forum is to disseminate the perspective of "Women in Development" in Japan and to build an international network at the grass roots level.

The 1992 International Forum on Intercultural Exchange, on the theme of "Women in Development - towards the Development Making Women Visible" was held from 30 September to 2 October 1992. The Forum was planned for 100 participants, but over 200 applications were received and 178 people attended. Various groups of occupation were represented, including researchers, students, politicians, administrators, activists in women's issues, volunteers and housewives. Questionnaire responses indicated that participants felt that the Forum had helped them deepen their understanding of the subject.

The issues that stimulated the greatest debate included the need for a better understanding of the workplace in order to evaluate women's work fairly, the need for women's views to be incorporated in development, the necessity of introducing women's point of view in ODA (official development assistance) and encouragement of women's participation in policy making.

On the first day of the three-day forum a case-study session on "From the Field - Women in Development" was held. To promote greater understanding of the theme of the Forum, results of research studies and informative reports were presented focusing on women's contribution to socio-economic development. On the second day, five concurrent group meetings were held. The programme was concluded on the third day with a symposium entitled "Let Us Join Hands - Towards a Human-oriented Global Community."

The following experts from Japan were invited to attend:

Dr. Hiroko Hara (chairperson), Professor, Ochanomizu University,
Ms. Hiroko Tabe, Deputy Director in charge of Women and the Aged,
Women and Life Division, Agricultural Production Bureau, Min-

istry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,

Ms. Kiyoko Ikegami, Programme Officer, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning, Inc. (JOICFP),

Ms. Yumiko Tanaka, Development Specialist, Institute for International Cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and

Mr. Terumasa Akio, Executive Director, Japan Minsai Center.

In addition, a number of experts were invited from overseas:

Ms. Margaret Shields, Director, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), based in Dominica,

Ms. Peggy Antrobus, General Coordinator, Development Alternative with Women for a New Era (DAWN), currently based in Barbados,

Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto, Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), based in Thailand,

Dr. Govind Kelkar, Coordinator, Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), based in Thailand, and

Dr. Thanh-Dam Truong, Senior Lecturer, Women and Development Programme, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), based in Holland.



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The speakers and case-study subjects for the first day were as follows:

- Ms. Shields spoke on "Making Women Count."
- Ms. Antrobus spoke on "Making Women Visible in Development: the Role of DAWN."
- Ms. Tabe spoke on "Japanese Women in Rural Areas and Activities for Home Living Improvement."
- Ms. Ikegami spoke on "Adolescent Health and Women in Latin America and the Caribbean."
- Ms. Hashimoto spoke on "UN ESCAP and Women in Development."

At the symposium on the third day, presentations were given as follows:

- Ms. Shields spoke on "Making Women Count."
- Dr. Govind Kelkar spoke on "Empowering Women: The Questions of Gender and Class in Women's Effective Access to Land /Property."
- Dr. Thanh-Dam Truong spoke on "Human-oriented Development: Theoretical and Practical Issues."
- Ms. Tanaka spoke on "Tackling ODA from Women's Viewpoint."
- Mr. Akio gave a "Resume of Women in Development."

These presentations will be published in separate reports. Those interested are kindly requested to contact the NWEC newsletter editorial office.

On the second day, all participants took part in one of the five group discussions which are summarized as follows:

The subject for Group One was "Examination of the Environment, Development and Women." The meeting was coordinated by Ms. Hashimoto and Dr. Kelkar who acted as advisor. The session started off with an assessment of the extent of destruction of regional and global environment followed by discussion of possible causes. The discussion focused on specific issues and participants discussed how women can best be involved in environmental issues and development. The following six approaches were suggested to pursue sustainable development based on an equal partnership between men and women:



1. Collecting information through media (newspapers, TV, books etc.) and local activities.
2. Educating children at home, school, and in the community to prepare them for future responsibilities.
3. Changing our own attitude about modern lifestyles biased towards material wealth.
4. Approaching business enterprises to encourage greater social contribution.

5. Building and extending networks at the national and international levels.
6. Promoting greater participation of women in policy and decision making at the local- and central-governmental levels.

Group Two discussed various issues on "development education to promote a sense of solidarity with women in developing countries," coordinated by Ms. Ikegami and acted by Dr. Hara as advisor. Various issues were raised including a survey of 58 textbooks used in junior and senior high schools in Japan on aid to developing countries. This survey revealed that many textbooks had only standardized information required for examinations, while very few portrayed a realistic picture of developing countries. A questionnaire survey of first-year junior college students indicated that their image of Asia was considerably distorted from the reality. In Japan there is little chance to learn about the developing world either through education system or mass media. This lack of understanding of developing countries is a major obstacle for Japanese people to keep pace with other peoples in the international community. Several proposals were made to improve this situation.



1. Development education cannot be undertaken by a single individual thus requires a comprehensive approach with various people taking part.
2. A manual for development education must be written, for the purpose of self-education.
3. Latent prejudices we hold must be removed.

Ms. Tabe coordinated the meeting of Group Three, with Ms. Shields acting as advisor. The subject for discussion was "Reviewing the evaluation of women's contribution to society and economy." Issues addressed included the problem of paid and unpaid labour, evaluation of work at home, and of volunteer work. Evaluation of the same work is different depending on whether or not it is paid for. The making of shirts at home is not evaluated, whereas that in a factory appears in the statistics contributing to countries' GNP. In the discussion it was pointed out that there was a need for a better understanding of the effect of unpaid work on society and economy. A standard method of evaluation applicable world-wide should be identified. Ms. Shields, as advisor, asked whether economic development was a success for Japan. In response to her question, one participant mentioned "I learned right from elementary school that the major purpose for studying was coming out on top in this competitive society. I completed my education, graduated, then took a job. I felt happy, buying clothes and going to parties. But what was left at the end of the day? I wonder whether this is a fulfilling lifestyle." Ms. Shields commented that while this was her fourth visit to Japan, it was the first time she had heard Japanese women express their true feelings. She said this helped her see Japanese women as individuals.

The topic of Group Four was "Women in Development for NGO Activities," coordinated by Mr. Akio and acted by Ms. Antrobus as advisor. During the morning session various issues were raised, and the afternoon session focused on three. The first issue discussed what the "South" meant. The second was development education as seen from the North and South, and the third, NGO's and volunteer

activities. Discussion exceeded the time allocated. Ms. Antrobus argued that we needed to change the value system that emphasizes economic efficiency above humanity. He also pointed out that the foundation of NGO's is not to do charitable work, but to say "no" to structures of exploitation. The session concluded to assure the importance of "Women and Development" should be introduced widely at other women's centres.



With Ms. Tanaka as coordinator and Dr. Thanh-Dam Truong as advisor, Group Five looked at "ODA from Women's Perspective." Ms. Tanaka gave an outline of Japan's ODA which in 1991 had a budget of about ¥1.43 trillion. This figure represents more than ¥10,000 (or over US\$80) contribution per capita every year. However, little is known about how this budget is used. The group was divided into three smaller groups for discussion. 'Group A' talked about how to collect information on developing countries. 'Group B' discussed international cultural exchange at the local governmental level. Finally 'Group C' focused on activities centred around local centres. In conclusion, Group Five presented the opinion that we should stimulate interest and concern about ODA.

The symposium on the third day featured presentations by the experts, a role play on "WID" and discussion on international cooperation in light of "WID" from diverse perspectives.

Mr. Terumasa Akio told a short story prior to the discussion. "A father and his son went for a drive and had a traffic accident. The father lost his life, and his son was barely breathing. The son was taken to the hospital, and a doctor of that hospital exclaimed, 'I can't conduct an operation on him, for he is my son! How was the doctor related to the son?' The answer was that the doctor was his mother. This story has a clear message that we need to reconsider our deep-rooted stereotyped sex roles and pre-conceptions.

After that, all the invited experts spontaneously acted in a role play entitled "WID". The story featured castaways on an uninhabited island who came across a can of food and were at a loss to open it without a can-opener. A political scientist, an engineer, an economist and an anthropologist gathered and came up with various hypotheses and theories on how to open the can. An expert in "Women in Development" suggested that they should look for native women on the island for help. They found two women, yet they could not manage to open the can, either. Then came an NGO activist. She/he simply pulled the ring on top of the can and opened it. It was the sort of a can that did not need a can-opener. Participants learned from this play that it is neither scientists nor experts but NGOs that actually act out.

In the subsequent discussion session, participants exchanged views with experts on the need to increase men's participation and involvement, and to advance the notion of the indispensable nature of women's perspective in building a world oriented more towards humanity dedicated to enhancing quality of life.

In order to meet the rising expectations of participants, an international forum on the theme of "Women in Development" will be held from 17 to 19 November 1993.

We hope that as many people as possible will attend these international forums to discuss how women can be more visible in development, to enhance our sense of solidarity, and to expand our network of contacts through grass roots discussions.

(Yuko Yuhara, Specialist, Information and International Exchange Division, NWEC)

AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN'S SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

"Are you hoping to play a more active role in society once your children are a little older? Do you feel concerned or dissatisfied at the prospect of your present lifestyle going on and on unchanged in the future? If so, here's the course for you." This was how Nagoya Women's Centre advertised the experimental programme "Re-discover How To Live Your Life" which they carried out at the request of the NWEC.

In order to develop training and education programmes for women organized by women's education centres throughout Japan, NWEC set up a committee of experienced scholars for four years (from 1988 to 1991) to study "programme-development to promote greater women's participation in society." The objective was to develop practical programmes to enable women wishing to participate more actively in society to re-examine their own lifestyles and develop their skills.

During the first year (1988) the committee analyzed past programmes of this type both in Japan and overseas and visited 13 women's education centres to study how they were offering their own programmes.

For the second and third years (1989, 1990), results of the previous year were analyzed and guidelines were drawn up for an effective training programme. These guidelines were tested by four different women's education centres — two in urban areas (Tokyo, Nagoya), and two in rural areas (Shiga, Yamaguchi). They implemented their own programmes on an experimental basis.

The programmes by these four organizations were all quite long for programmes of this type, involving between 17 and 21 meetings (usually two-hour meetings twice a week). Each programme was made to be suited to local circumstances. However in all four cases, most of the participants remained enthusiastic throughout the course, and in some cases they went on to set up their own groups after the course had finished. According to questionnaires and evaluation essays submitted by the participants, they did not accomplish to "re-discover how to live their lives," but some could overcome doubt about their ways of life, some became aware of the restraints of women or housewives which had been imposed on them, and some discovered new facets of themselves which had not been known to them. Others actually took a step forward into the world of work or other forms of social participation.

As one part of the research and development for this programme, NWEC organized a training session for staff of women's organizations responsible for planning projects to support women's social participation. At this training session the method of "learning through practice" was used, and the staff members, who are usually in charge of project planning, became participants this time, participating in exercises to re-discover themselves by means of counselling one another. In this way, participants gave valuable hints in a friendly atmosphere for planning and running courses in the future.

During the fourth year, the committee evaluated and analyzed the experimental programmes of NWEC and the four women's education centres. Then they compiled a report summarizing their research for the past four years and presented Guidelines (final version) which is shown below.

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES:

1. Objective

Programmes are intended to help women to learn about themselves and deepen their understanding of themselves and their position in society, and to upgrade the basic skills necessary for women to participate in society by looking at the diversified activities of women in society and building up the personal qualities women need to work in society.

Employment was taken as a standard form of social participation, but women should be encouraged to think about all aspects of their lives, including family life, professional life and community activities, and to consider volunteer and other non-professional activities from a life-long perspective.

2. Participants

24 women between the ages 25 and 39

3. Schedule/time-allocation

Two two-hour sessions per week, for a total of at least 40 hours within a three-month period

4. Detailed content

Courses should be built around the following three basic cornerstones:

1) Learning about oneself

Recognizing one's self image by means of counselling, and deepening one's understanding of oneself through comparisons and cross-references with others in the group. Enhancing one's skills in social relationships by means of practical exercises.

2) Learning about one's relationship with society

Recovering self-confidence by learning how one's attitudes - such as on gender roles and the division of labour - and one's situation are formed and regulated by society. Learning about inter-relationships among the family, community, society and oneself. Building up personal qualities needed to participate actively in society.

3) Learning about work

Through practical training, study visits, etc. learning the difference between professional and non-professional activities, and understanding contracts and current employment situation for women. Acquiring skills for work (law, work conditions, clerical and other skills for office work), learning about problems related to employment for housewives and how to deal with them (learning from experienced women in handling both job and housework), job-seeking activities (getting information, and developing one's own job).
(Chikako Uemura, Senior Researcher, NWEC)

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

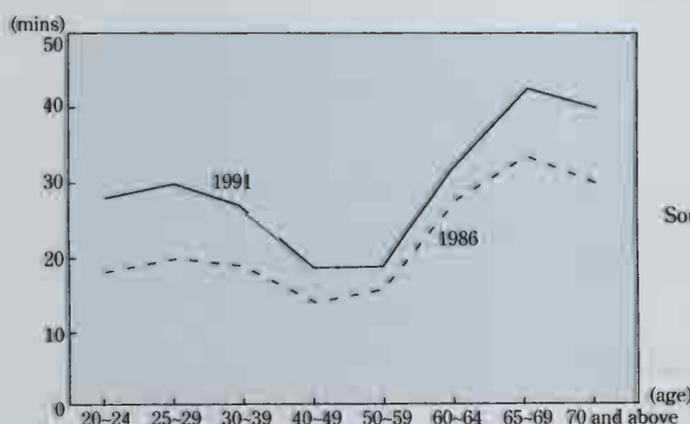
CURRENT SITUATIONS OF WOMEN IN JAPAN
(from "Present Condition of Women, and Policies concerning Women - New National Plan of Action, 2nd Report")

This report was published in December 1992 by the Planning and Promotion Centre for Women's Issues, a governmental organ dedicated to the overall promotion of policies benefiting Japanese women. It contains various statistics about women's lives in modern Japan. Some are worth mentioning.

Today's women are able to choose their own lifestyles more freely and accordingly, women's life-course patterns have become more diverse. Women feel more free to hold their own opinions about marriage and having children, and it is apparent in the trend towards later marriages.

Women now spend, on average, 2 hours and 59 minutes on housework and child care, 8 minutes less than 5 years ago. On the other hand, men spend 24 minutes on average, a 6-minute increase

Fig. 1 Minutes per day devoted to home-related activities by different age-groups of men living with a spouse



Source: Survey on Time Use & Leisure Activities, Management & Coordination Agency

from 5 years ago. The increase is more marked in the case of men under 40 or over 65 years of age, living with a spouse (Fig.1). Single working women spend 3 hours 1 minute on household work on average, as against 21 minutes for men. In households where both partners work, the wife spends 4 hours 17 minutes on household work, as against only 19 minutes for their husbands, showing that women continue to bear most of the burden of housework and child care.

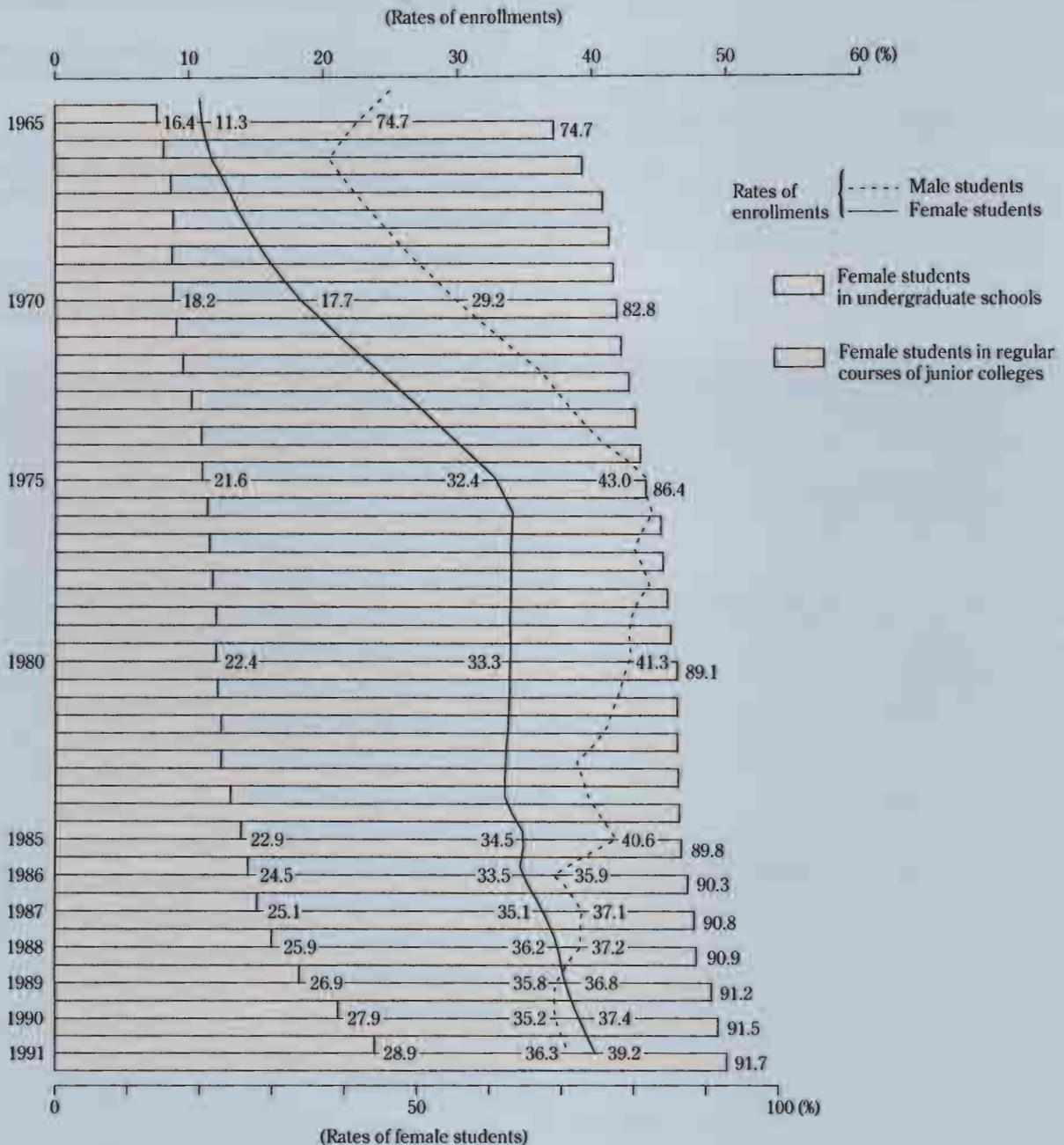
More and more female students enter schools of higher educational institutions such as universities and junior colleges. Since FY 1989, the rate of these female students has been higher than that of

male students. The number of women with academic background has rapidly increased. In 1991, 39.2% of female high school students entered higher educational institutions while 36.3% of male students did (Fig.2).

Regarding the people's will to lifelong learning, a survey shows that 69.8% of women want to take part in lifelong learning activities while 61.1% of men want to (Fig.3).

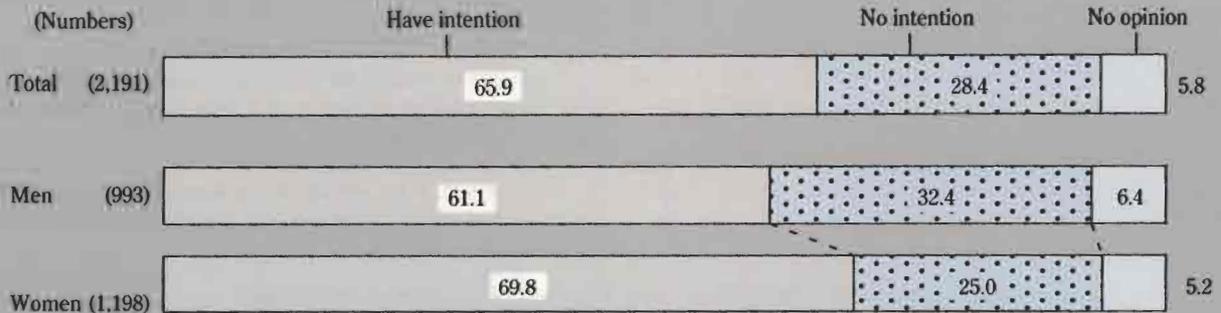
43.0% of women are participating in learning activities, and the expectation of self-realization and a life worth living has been rising.

Fig. 2 Changes of rates of enrollments in universities and junior colleges and rates of female students in universities and junior colleges



Source: School Basic Survey, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

Fig. 3 Intention of lifelong learning in the future



Source : *Survey on Lifelong Learning (1992)*, Prime Minister's Office

A survey on people's perceptions of gender equality indicates that equality between men and women is steadily gaining ground. An increasing number of people believe that there is equality between men and women 'in the home,' 'in the workplace' and in terms of social customs and ideologies. At the same time, however, the number of people who feel that there is no equality in law or in the social system has risen, although slightly. There is also a disparity between views of men and women, as women have a stronger sense of inequality. In terms of age, younger people have a stronger sense of inequality than their seniors.

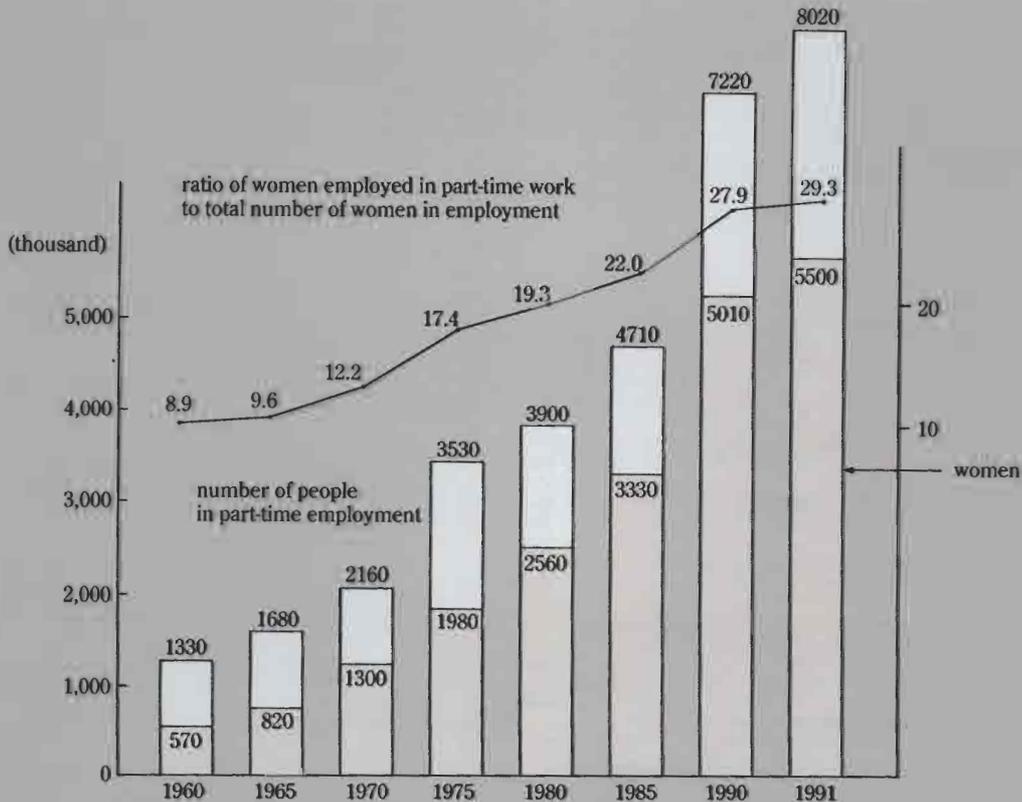
In Japan there continues to be a deeply-rooted belief in the tradi-

tional gender roles. This is exemplified in parental attitudes towards upbringing of children or their future lives, depending on whether the child is a boy or girl.

Women have continued to make a steady progress in their advancement in the workplace. In 1990, over 50% of the total female population aged 15 and above were registered as either working or unemployed.

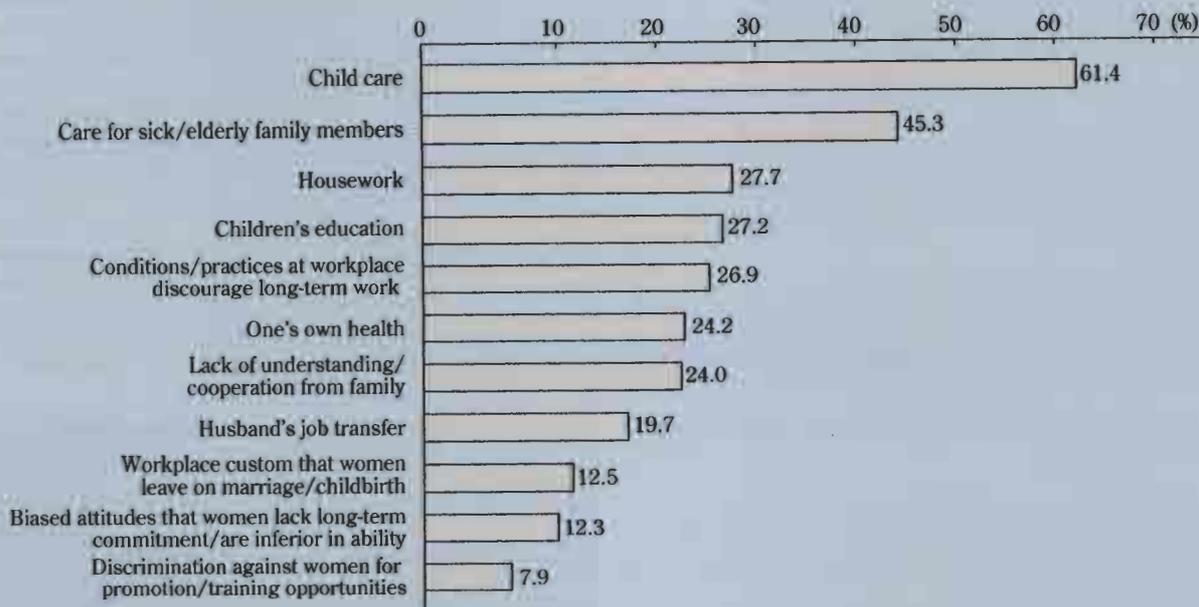
In private enterprises the number of married working women has increased, as has the average length of women's working careers in enterprises. Women today have higher academic qualifications and

Fig. 4 Growth in numbers of people employed in part-time work



Source : *Annual Report on the Labour Force Survey*, Management & Coordination Agency

Fig. 5 Impediments Hindering Long-term Working Careers for Women (multiple responses)



Source: *Labour Condition of Women*, Prime Minister's Office (1989)

work in a wider range of employment, including professional or technical fields and construction-related jobs.

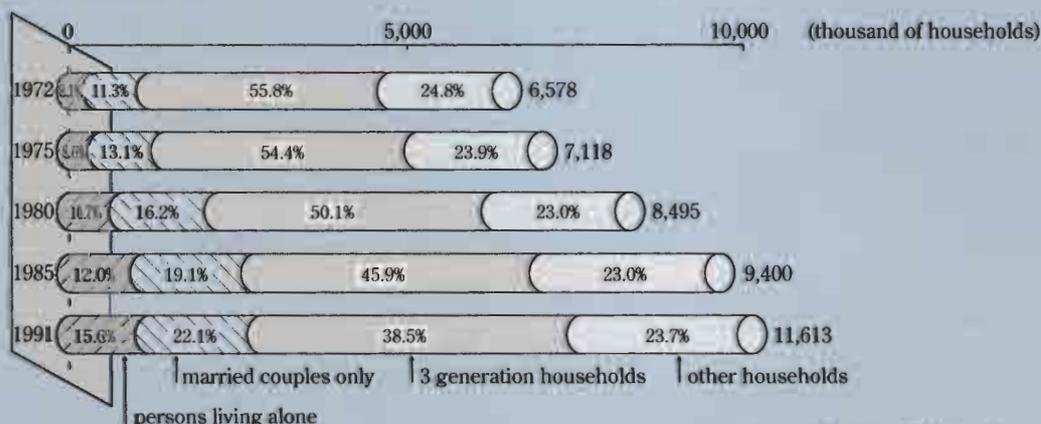
However, the number of part-time workers continues to increase, accounting for 30% of all employed women (Fig.4).

In terms of attitudes towards work, many women express the intention to stop working temporarily when they marry or have children, but then resume working. Child care and care for the elderly are shown to be obstacles for women who wish to continue their work careers (Fig.5).

The Japanese population is ageing rapidly. The 1990 census found that 14.2% of the female population were 65 and above, a figure that is expected to rise to 19.2% by the year 2000. (In 2000, the percentage of the total population of 65 and above is expected to be 16.9%)

A look at the household composition indicates that while the proportion of three-generation households is falling slightly, that of households consisting only of couples 65 years and above is growing (Fig.6). The number of the elderly living alone is also growing each year, and of these, elderly women account for more than 80% (Fig.7).

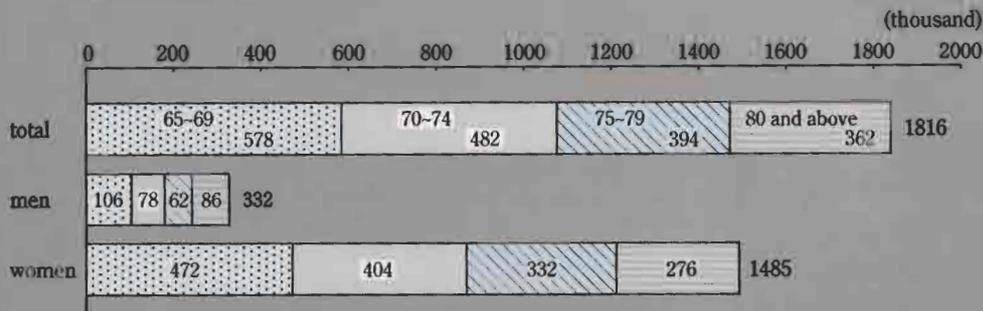
Fig. 6 Changes in composition of households with one or more members 65yrs or above



Source: *Report on Basic Survey of Health and Welfare Administration*, Ministry of Health & Welfare (to 1985); *Comprehensive Survey of Living Condition of People on Health and Welfare*, Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1991

Note: The category "other households" includes households consisting of couples and their unmarried child/children, and households of one parent and his or her unmarried child/children.

Fig. 7 Numbers of people 65 years of age and above living alone, by age group (1991)



Source: *Comprehensive Survey of Living Condition of People on Health and Welfare*, Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1991

It is predicted that the aging society will be accompanied by an increase in the numbers of bedridden and senile elderly people, and it is almost exclusively women who bear the burden of their care. However, more and more people think that "men should involve themselves more in the care of the elderly."

INAUGURATION OF THE JAPANESE COMMITTEE FOR UNIFEM

The inaugural ceremony of the Japanese Committee for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was held on 24 November 1992 at the United Nations University in the presence of 300 people.

UNIFEM grew out of the United Nations Decade for Women Fund, which was set up in 1976 to support programmes assisting women in developing countries to become more self-reliant. The organization's name changed to UNIFEM in 1985. Women in developing countries often have no alternative to unremitting hard work throughout their lives, combining household chores and child care with agricultural or other productive activities. Their contribution, however, receives insufficient recognition, and development aid in the form of financial and technical assistance rarely reaches women. UNIFEM therefore supports initiatives leading to women's greater self-reliance. Over the 14 years from 1978 to 1991, UNIFEM supported the work of more than 750 teams operating in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean (region), and western Asia.



Japan is the 13th country to set up a national committee for UNIFEM, joining Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden and the US.

Prior to the inauguration, a preparatory group spent one year studying articles of agreement and a protocol for the Japanese Committee and collecting members.

The Japanese Committee for UNIFEM is made up of full members drawn from private organizations, and supporting members drawn from private or governmental organizations and individuals. At the time of its inauguration, seven organizations were listed as full members, and 11 organizations and 250 individuals as supporting members. A drive was launched to increase membership in both categories, with an ultimate target of 10,000 individuals as supporting members.

The main activities of the Japanese Committee for UNIFEM will be to encourage publicity, fund-raising and soliciting government funds. Specific publicity programmes and fund-raising campaigns appropriate to their particular locality will be organized by regional subcommittees formed by full members, acting in cooperation with the National Committee and in line with their individual charters.



A PORTFOLIO OF 'MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS' IS CREATED

In his cabinet reshuffle of December 1992, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa created a new portfolio of 'Minister for Women's Affairs' and appointed Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono to hold the post concurrently. An editorial in a national newspaper commented that "Women continue to move into more and more functions in society, and are becoming increasingly active in the international arena. Policy affecting women is also a major component of the government's five-year plan to bring quality of life in line with Japan's leading nation

status. In such circumstances the creation of this post is entirely appropriate - indeed, it is long overdue." The post is said to have been created as a result of zealous lobbying on the part of the 52 women's groups belonging to the Liaison Group for the Implementation of Resolutions from the International Women's Year Conference of Japan. On taking office, the Minister indicated that he would encourage the appointment of more women in the government and other public offices. He deplored the very small number of women in such positions and stated his intention to give women much more opportunities to demonstrate their abilities.

The new Minister's first appearance in this role was at the National Conference for Women Leaders related to Women's Issues, which was held in January 1993, a month or so after his appointment. The Minister himself initiated the Conference, with the purpose of listening to women's views on a wide range of topics to get a grounding on an appropriate approach to women's affairs. Well over 100 informed women, mostly working as teachers, representatives of women's organizations, etc., were nominated to attend from every prefecture and metropolitan area in the country. Previous women's conferences sponsored by the government, such as the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women (chaired by Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa) and the Advisory Council to the President of the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies Relating to Women (chaired by Ms. Yoko Nuita, of the Ichikawa Fusae Memorial Council) have never before brought together representatives from every administrative region of the country.

In his address at the Conference, the Minister made clear his intention to promote the appointment of more women to government

committees of inquiry, and to recruit women for the top layer of national civil servants from which senior bureaucratic officials are drawn. Requests from the floor included such issues as the opening of the publicly-run agricultural pension scheme to women, who are currently largely excluded by the qualifying condition that members must be legal owners of land. This has produced a situation where women make up only 4% of the members of the scheme, although they represent 60% of the agricultural labour force. In response to this situation, the Minister expressed his intention to study the issue with a view to relaxing the qualifications for the scheme.

Prime Minister Miyazawa stressed the promotion of women in his cabinet reshuffle, appointing Ms. Mayumi Moriyama to the post of Minister of Education, Science and Culture, and Ms. Kayoko Shimizu as Parliamentary Vice Minister of Labour. The new Minister for Women's Affairs expressed the intention to arrange further conferences to ensure that women's voices continue to be heard in the future. Wincing from a serious loss of public support, the Cabinet appears to be hoping to stay afloat by appealing to women.

ECONOMIC RECESSION MEANS FEWER JOBS FOR WOMEN GRADUATES

The ongoing recession following the bursting of the so-called economic bubble is taking its toll in various areas of our social and economic life. As a case in point, newspapers have recently highlighted how difficult it has suddenly become for women graduates to find jobs.

Results of a private sector survey indicate that in the spring of 1991, when the economy was still expanding, there were 1.98 jobs available for every woman graduate seeking one. By the spring of 1993, however, this figure fell to 0.93, meaning that there were more women job-seekers than jobs available. While it is undoubtedly true that the recession has forced large enterprises to cut back on their new intake of employees, the number of jobs available for each male graduate is a healthy 2.22, indicating that the cutback has hit women particularly hard. Yet, the figures do not reveal the full extent of the problem. In the actual recruiting process, women are feeling the cold draught of discriminatory recruiting policies. In some cases the graduates awarded jobs are all male even though the job advertisements indicate no gender preference. In others, the recruitment system seeks first to employ male graduates, and only then makes up any shortfall with women.

One reason for the severity with which women have been hit is that the fields where women made the most significant advances during the boom years (retailing and distribution, computer software, finance, securities, real estate and the like) are the ones to be hardest hit by the effects of the recession.

But the biggest problem is private enterprises' lack of commitment to equality between the sexes which is demonstrated in their capricious treatment of female labour in accordance with ups and downs in the business cycle. The law guaranteeing equal opportunity in employment came into effect in 1986, and in December of the same year the long-lasting and large-scale economic boom began, bringing with it increased job opportunities for women graduates. It certainly appeared as if the law had the desired effect of opening the door for the employment of women graduates. But seeing how the employment of women has been cut as soon as the recession began to hit, we must conclude that women were employed only to make up for a labour shortage during the boom years, or were merely used to enhance corporate images. It proves that the equality of opportunity law has never, in fact, planted its roots in private enterprises.

Some companies have offered the explanation that cuts in numbers of staff are easier to make in administrative areas, where a disproportionate number of women are employed, rather than, say, among sales staff. Women in career-track jobs were the topic of a talk only two or three years ago. But cutbacks have also hit these women for their employers fear that women should tend to quit to get married or to have a baby. All this points clearly to intransigent attitudes towards women in work, and the unresolved problems of a system which is not prepared to accommodate women wishing to pursue their careers after marriage and childbirth. The recession is thus a convenient excuse for reducing women staff. Women, for their part, may not always be fully committed, or ready to take responsibility in their work, and they must be mature as members of their corporate teams. The companies, however, have cut women down before giving them the chance to show their ability.

As the Japanese population continues to age, a labour shortage is estimated to occur as early as the second half of this decade. Corporate management committed to lifelong employment for male staff will clearly no longer be maintained, and hiring women will again become an important issue for private enterprises. Treatment of women graduates during recessions demonstrates true corporate attitudes towards women. Thus private enterprises are also being tested by the public.

On the other hand, the difficulty in finding work may give women graduates a unique opportunity to think seriously about employment. During the boom years, it was easy to find a job and students could more easily choose a job without examining the contents of works and significance of the job. As a result, women tended to choose corporations that had an attractive image. In a situation where it is difficult to get a job, however, women should think carefully about the sort of work they want to take. Employers, too, should be more thorough about selecting the best applicants for the fewer openings they have. This would help women students develop a carefully thought out approach to employment.

Over the next few years, forecasts suggest that the employment situation for women graduates will worsen rather than improve. Employment seminars and symposia have been held in various parts of the country, but what is most important is for women graduates to have good understanding of the current situation and their own prospects, without being unduly discouraged by pessimists or dazzled by exaggerated job descriptions.

WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

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

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS NGO

After Japan's joining the United Nations in 1956, the National Women's Committee was formed in August 1957 by six women's groups affiliated to international organizations. Their aim was to encourage the involvement of women in achieving the United Nations' objectives of peace and human rights. The Committee's first activity was to press the government to accept Ms. Taki Fujita as a member of the Japanese delegation at the United Nations General Assembly. Since that time the Japanese delegation has always had at least one woman representative involved in UN activities. One recent example, Ms. Sadako Ogata, was the first woman Minister of the Japanese delegation, and is currently UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In 1975, International Women's Year, Ms. Fusae Ichikawa proposed to national women's groups to hold a non-governmental International Women's Year Conference of Japan. A Liaison Group for the Implementation of Resolutions of the Conference, with 52 affiliated national women's organizations, was formed. It worked together with other citizens' groups to organize a Liaison Conference for the Promotion of International Charter on Human Rights (17 women and civic organizations)

and succeeded in gaining Japan's early ratification.

Objectives and Main Activities:

To cooperate with the UN and its agencies, and to express views and make requests to the government when necessary, in order to implement the objectives of respect for peace and human rights as set out in the United Nations Charter.

To work for greater women's participation in the activities of the UN or other international forums.

To hold meetings to inform the general public about UN activities.

Qualifications for Membership:

- * Women's groups in Japan affiliated to international women's organizations with advisory status in the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- * Individuals involved in UN-related activities who are nominated by Members.

Present Organization:

Chairperson:
Mitchiko Nakamura
20 individual members
10 affiliated women's groups:

Japanese Association of University Women,
The Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association of Japan,
Japan Women's Bar Association,
Japan Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
The League of Women Voters of Japan,
Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union,
The Japan Young Women's Christian Association,
Japanese Nursing Association,
The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Japan,
Japanese Medical Women's Association

*For further information, please contact:
National Women's Committee of the United Nations NGO
(Kokuren NGO Kokunai Fujin Iinkai)
Fusen Kaikan, 2-21-11 Yoyogi,
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151
Tel: (03) 3370-0238*

JAPAN WOMEN'S FORUM

The Japan Women's Forum (JWF) was formally launched in April 1962, following several months of preparations by a committee headed by Ms. Kikue Yamakawa. The Forum has continued to undertake research on women's issues over the last thirty-one years.

The solution to women's issues comes through seeking wide-ranging cooperation among women with different backgrounds regardless of ideology. For this reason, the Forum was established as an opportunity for people interested in women's liberation to exchange views freely, and as a platform from which all types of surveys and studies could be pursued as needs arose. The original membership of around forty has steadily increased to the present membership of close to 300 full members and about 250 more subscribers to JWF's newsletter.

The membership is divided into small groups according to their interests, and the groups meet about once a month for discussions and research activities. In addition, public meetings and symposia are held three or four times a year in order to reach wider audience in the general

public for an exchange of views. Members' views, and records of research, seminars, symposia etc. are published in a biannual newsletter, whose current edition marks No. 53. Four books of Forum proceedings have also been published.

Each year the most critical subject for the year is selected for research, and meetings and symposia are held. The Forum thus acts as a meeting place of views on the women's issues of today. Prior to the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women, there were virtually no other groups conducting research on women's issues. Thus the Forum's activities could be described as the fount of inspiration in

Japan for Women's Studies, a subject which became so popular from the 70's on. Many of those currently researching women's issues, as well as commentators and activists in the field, started off as members of the Women's Forum.

A forum was held last year, 1992, to celebrate our 30th anniversary, and to commemorate the occasion we published a chronology and a listing of all the articles printed in our newsletters.

Chairperson: Sumiko Tanaka
Secretary General: Yoko Komano
The Forum is run by a secretariat of a dozen or so members.

*For further information, please contact:
Japan Women's Forum
(Nihon Fujin Mondai Konwa-kai)
1-47-4-302 Uehara, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151.
Tel: (03) 3466-8252*



PUBLICATION

ENGLISH BOOK ON JAPANESE WOMEN

THE JAPANESE WOMEN: TRADITIONAL IMAGE AND CHANGING REALITY

(by Dr. Sumiko Iwao. Published in 1993 by the Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022, U.S.A. 304 pages. ISBN 0-02-932325-0.)

The author, Dr. Sumiko Iwao, is a distinguished social psychologist and a professor of Keio University, one of the most prestigious private universities of Japan. After graduating from Keio University, she went to the United States to study at Yale University where she obtained Ph.D., and later she began teaching psychology and doing research at Harvard University. Moreover, she commuted to Washington, D.C. from Tokyo for years, and juggling a teaching load, research, child care, and community obligations, she has not only studied but also experienced in full measure the challenges, joys, difficulties, and anguishes of a modern career woman.

Internationally-active Japanese like herself often struggle with images of Japan and of the Japanese that are often outdated or mistaken. This book is her attempt to help fill in the wide gap in information available on Japanese women and to depict in depth the true

nature of their lives and roles.

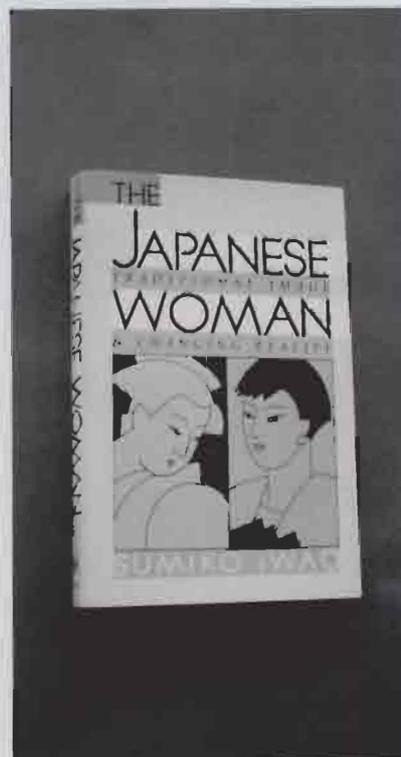
Table of Contents:

- Chapter 1 Myths and Realities
- Chapter 2 The Story of Akiko
- Chapter 3 Marriage and the Family
- Chapter 4 Communication and Crisis
- Chapter 5 Motherhood and the Home
- Chapter 6 Work as Option
- Chapter 7 Work as Profession
- Chapter 8 Politics and No Power
- Chapter 9 Fulfillment through Activism
- Chapter 10 Directions of Change

This book is based on up-to-date research data. Much of Dr. Iwao's work comes from her own surveys, interviews, and research conducted for this book.

Comparing Japanese women with American women, Dr. Iwao mentioned, it is found that both have numerous similarities and a number of distinct differences. By introducing the patterns of behaviour, thinking, and problem solving peculiar to Japanese women, Dr. Iwao unravels in this book some of the mysteries and provides a more vivid portrait of Japanese women.

It is hoped that this book will contribute to a better understanding of Japanese society and Japanese as a whole.



INFORMATIVE MATERIALS PUBLISHED BY NWEC

JAPANESE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

The National Women's Education Centre publishes a biannual "Japanese Journal of Education for Women" in Japanese to provide information from both Japan and overseas on current topics in the area of women's education and training. (See the photo: the left book.) The topics are related to specialized research and practical training courses in women's education, home education and other aspects affecting women. It is intended mainly for instructors in women's education (leaders of women's groups, leaders of courses for women, and related officials) and researchers involved in women's education.

The 27th edition, which was published in March 1993, featured "Lifelong Learning and Volunteer Activities - A Message from Women." Japanese people's consciousness of volunteer activities has been changing, and consequently the social circumstances have also been changing towards the society where

men and women can cooperate with each other. In lifelong learning, the focus now is on how to run volunteer activities effectively and how to make our participation in society more effective through volunteer activities.



WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE - A GUIDE TO ACTIVITY GROUPS

Using resources collected, the NWEC produced a list in Japanese of international exchange organizations that run activities by, and for, women. (See the photo: the right

book.) It is hoped that by supplying this list to various fields the NWEC will give support to women's ever greater participation in international cooperation and assistance. This list is a first attempt, and we plan to produce a new fuller version in the future by adding more information, data, and research results.

INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1977 by Japan's Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Its activities include training, exchange, information and research.



1. Open Lectures

- Dates: 1st Thur., 17 June 1993.
2nd Thur., 30 September 1993.
3rd Fri., 15 October 1993.
4th Thur., 11 November 1993.

Contents: Open lectures with the object of offering keys to consideration of women's issues from divergent points of view.



2. Workshop for Personnel in charge of Women's Information Activities

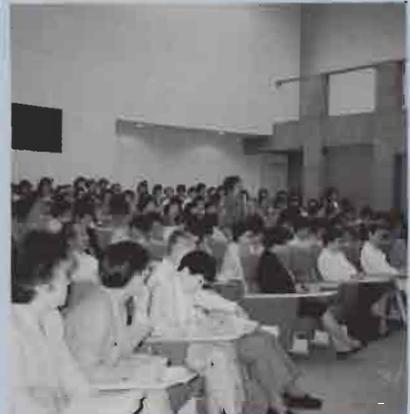
Dates: Mon., 25 - Fri., 29 October 1993.
Theme: Contents and methods of information activities on women's issues.
Contents: Practical training on information related to women through lectures and exercises using WINET (Women's Information Network System; on-line information retrieval service provided by NWEC); tours to latest information facilities.



3. Extension Programme by the NWEC

Dates and Places: One day programme is allotted for two regions.
1st Thur., 25 November 1993, Akita prefecture.
2nd Wed., 19 January 1994, Kagawa prefecture.

Contents: Lectures and discussions on women's issues and family education, focusing on the major points which have emerged through the NWEC activities. The programme will be held in collaboration with the boards of education of Akita prefecture and Kagawa prefecture etc. in FY 1993.



4. Advanced Course for Leaders of Women's Education

Dates: Tues., 25 - Fri., 28 January 1994.
Contents: Specialized training on issues related to women's education and family education centering on issues which have emerged through implementation of NWEC programmes.



FOREIGN VISITORS TO NWEC

As of 30 April 1993, the NWEC has received 9,640 visitors from 128 countries.

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture held "OECD/Japan Seminar" from Tues., 16 to Sat., 20 February 1993 at NWEC. Fifteen experts from 11 countries participated in this seminar.



Sixteen members of the Standing Committee on Women, Youth and Elder Affairs of the Senate of Thailand visited NWEC on Tues., 27 April 1993 for the purpose of comparing facilities in Japan and in Thailand.

NWEC Newsletter

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