

NWEC

NEWSLETTER

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

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN COMES OF AGE

The National Women's Education Centre (NWEC) of Japan is pleased to introduce this newsletter to women's group leaders, researchers, and government officials in countries around the world — all people who care about furthering women's education.

NWEC was founded in 1977 by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture to provide practical training for women's education leaders and to conduct research on related issues.

To date, some 700,000 people have taken advantage of NWEC's facilities, including 3,300 from 92 foreign countries.

The Centre was founded for three compelling reasons. 1975 was designated International Women's Year and the beginning of International Women's Decade, and was thus a propitious time to forge a women's policy for Japan; NWEC represented a major thrust of that policy. The Japanese government was also seeking to create a national organisation linking all women's groups and others involved in women's education; the Centre fit the bill. And finally, it was a time when women's education was starting to come of age. NWEC helped to speed the maturation process and today, adult education for women is reaching full



flower in prefectures and communities spanning Japan.

This "new age" of women's education was decreed by the character of the Japanese people and by Japan's changing demographics and industries. First of all, the Japanese people are renowned for their love of learning...and of hard work. Self-development of its citizens is in fact the major asset of a small island nation with few natural resources. And it's a credo which provides fertile soil for the growth of lifelong education programmes.

Then, Japan's birthrate has declined steadily since 1950, and Japanese women today have the longest life expectancy in the world (79.78 years). That means their lives no longer begin and end with childrearing and housework. Working women have multiplied since 1975, and the convention of "men in the world, women in the home" is showing signs of breaking down as modern Japa-

nese women become increasingly active in business, volunteer work, and policy-making.

Further, modern Japan is an ever-changing high tech society, and Japanese women often need further training to brief them on what they've missed since the end of their formal schooling.

And they are getting it. A recent survey by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture revealed that of the 43 million women in Japan, more than 25% are involved in continuing education: 9.1 million are members of women's groups, 1.6 million attend women's education programmes, and 1.8 million participate in parent education classes.

Since our inception, the National Women's Education Centre has tackled issues and designed programmes that affect not just women in Japan, but women all over the world.

As we enter our eighth year, NWEC is directing our efforts toward becoming a major world source for information on women's and family education, and cultural exchange. We're working hard to expand our network of international information and understanding, promote new women's education programmes throughout the world and, ultimately, help shape the future of society. We hope this newsletter is a step in the right direction.

Atsuko Shikuma
Atsuko Shikuma
Director General
NWEC

NWEC ACTIVITIES

CURRENT NWEC PROJECTS

NWEC sponsored a broad variety of projects in 1984, all of which addressed, in one way or another, the central theme of women's work, education, and learning.

ANNUAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

The Seminar for Staff of Japan's Women's Centres provides necessary information on the best uses of educational resources for women's re-education.

The Seminar for Leaders of Women's Organisations focuses on the role of women's organisations in achieving the goals of the UN Decade for Women.

The Advanced Course for Women's Education Leaders provides professional leadership training for women's leaders.

The Seminar for Leaders of Parent Education Classes aims to exchange information and experiences in parent education among leaders of parent education classes, women's education classes, PTAs, and others, with special emphasis placed on the problems and needs of working mothers.

The Women's Studies Course draws men and women who are interested in women's education to interdisciplinary discussions of how sex roles are formed and how they are changing.

Public lectures present information on women's issues to the general public, five times a year.



EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

Exchange Programmes for Women's Study Tour Groups provide women with opportunities to get together at the Centre to exchange information on common problems and experiences. For example, on October 3, NWEC played host to foreign women living in Japan as they shared their perceptions of Japanese women's lives and lifestyles with 150 Japanese women's study group members.

International Exchange Programmes for Women invite international women's leaders to the Centre for seminars, meetings, and study tours of Japan.

RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

The International Seminar on Family Education researches changing family structures in developed countries, focusing on the educational needs of working mothers, the creation of new kinds of role models for children, etc. The

NWEC's facilities include a lovely Japanese teahouse where women may learn traditional skills.

next seminar will be held at NWEC from March 19-22, 1985.

NWEC's **Survey of College-level Women's Studies Courses** is conducted annually to assess how Japan's institutions of higher learning are presenting women's studies courses.

INFORMATION SERVICES

NWEC's specialized library on women's issues was established in 1979 to collect and disseminate information and materials concerning women's education, women's studies, family education, parent education, and related topics. The library holds approximately 35,000 books, including 9,400 foreign titles, 4,700 local government publications, 800 Japanese and foreign periodicals, and 75 newspapers oriented to women's issues.

Reference and photocopy ser-

vices are offered to users both in Japan and overseas.

The Advisory Committee on Information evaluates information resources on women's and family issues in Japan, and makes recommendations to fill in the gaps in the Centre's own library. **NWEC publications*** include the bi-annual **Journal of Education for Women (Fujin Kyoiku Joho)**, Japan's foremost women's information journal, which celebrated its 10th issue this fall by taking a good look at the problems facing women as they return to the workplace. The Centre also publishes **Library Catalogue** of books and periodicals, **Bibliography of Bibliographies on Women's Issues**, and **NWEC Newsletter** (you're reading it now), our new English-language introduction to NWEC news and activities.

* All NWEC publications are in Japanese, unless otherwise indicated.

Family education study groups like this one convene regularly at the Centre.



NWEC NEWS

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AT NWEC



August 20-27, 1984: NWEC hosted the **16th Triennial Conference of Pan-Pacific and South East Asian Women's Associations**, which took a close-up look at family and health issues. Of 350 participants, 180 hailed from foreign countries, including the U.S., Samoa, Australia, Fiji, India, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Tonga.

September 29-30: The **Germany/Japan Symposium on Continuing Education in Highly Industrialized Society** was held at NWEC, attracting over 100 participants. The function of continuing education in rapidly changing societies was discussed by specialists and administrators from both countries.

October 23-25: The NWEC-organised **International Seminar on Women's Education** had as its themes women's integration in

society and lifelong education, emphasizing the aims and contents of re-education programmes. Four foreign experts and six Japanese served as panelists before an audience of 82 participants.

November 1: The **16th Seminar for Public Administration Officers Dealing with Women's Problems**, sponsored by the Ministry of Labour and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, was held at NWEC. Ten young women officers from eight developing countries participated.

VIPS VISITING NWEC

April 24: **Nancy Viviani** of ESCAP's social development division.

May 24: Editor **Pintong Nilawan** of **Satri Sarn**, a Thai women's magazine.

June 28: **Helen Wheeler**, lecturer at the University of California.

August 22: **Dr. Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali**, wife of the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

October 23-25: Visiting NWEC to attend The International Conference were **Ms. Chiara Saraceno**, Associate Professor, Trento, Italy; **Ms. Jamillah Ariffin**, Lecturer, Rural Development Division, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia; **Ms. Gertrude Mongella**, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, The United Republic of Tanzania; and **Ms. Carol M. Chattaway**, Assistant Secretary in charge of International Relations Division, Department of Education and Science, The United Kingdom.

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

ADMINISTRATIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

The 1947 Fundamental Law of Education stipulates encouragement of "social education" by national and local public bodies. The Social Education Law enacted in 1949 stipulates that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture and the local Boards of Education promote and assist in such matters as installation of educational facilities, training and placement of social education leaders, development of teaching materials and devices, and expansion of learning opportunities.

Major projects undertaken by

the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture include:

- A. Research, data collection, and publication of information on women's education.
- B. Administration of the National Women's Education Centre.
- C. Subsidisation of women's classes, promoting programmes for women's voluntary activities, and leadership programmes for women.
- D. Governmental assistance to educational associations undertaking programmes for women's and parent education.



Opportunities for exchange are casual as a picnic.



Visitors from around the world practice - and enjoy! - Japanese cuisine.

VITAL STATISTICS

Demographics

- As of October 1983, Japanese females numbered 60.7 million, or 50.8% of the total population.
- The Japanese have the longest life expectancy in the world: Japanese women's average lifespan is 79.78 years, and Japanese men's is 74.20 years.
- Japan's birth rate decreased after World War II. In 1983, Japan had 14.9 births per 1,000 persons, or 1.79 births per couple.

Marriage and divorce

- The average age for first marriages in Japan is 25.1 years for women, 27.6 for men. The marriage rate has fallen since 1973; in 1983 it dropped to 6.9 marriages per

1,000 persons.

- Japan's 1983 divorce rate rose to 1.51 divorces per 1,000 persons in 1983. Divorced women aged 25-34 and over 60 were on the rise. Couples with children accounted for 69% of all divorces.

Education

- 95% of Japanese girls and 93% of boys attend high school. Four-year and two-year college attendance figures are, respectively, 12.2% and 20.9% for girls, 39.3% and 2.1% for boys.

Employment

- The employment rate for women two-year college graduates is 78.1%, while the rate for four-year university graduates is 69.2%.
- Japan's female workforce totalled 23.24 million in 1983.



□ 1984 statistics reveal that 50.3% of Japan's married women — or 15.31 million of 30.42 million wives — are employed. This is the first time employed married women have become the majority. 35-and-older women comprised nearly 60% of this group.

□ Women part-time workers totalled 3 million, or 21.1% of all women workers.

□ Women's starting monthly salaries averaged ¥105,600, or 93% of men's.

Public service

□ Twenty six of Japan's 759 legislators are women. Eight women serve in the House of Representatives, 18 in the House of Councilors.

□ Out of Japan's 4,642 national committee members, 242 are women. One hundred twelve of Japan's 204 committees include women members.

WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN

The great social revolution that swept through Japan after World War II helped women to greatly improve their lot through new legislation and educational and political opportunities. The many women's groups that have arisen in the decades since have been a driving force in modernising Japanese family life and society.

Women's groups in Japan are extremely diverse, themed around citizen action, social education, professional concerns, religion, environmental protection, the arts, labour, politics, international relations, and many other issues. Besides providing personal benefits to

members, the groups work to consolidate opinion, creating voices strong enough to be heard on the issues that matter to women.

Associations dealing with women's and family issues can be found in various guises and sizes in every prefecture in Japan. As of March 1983, Japanese women's groups numbered 38,000, with a total membership of 9.11 million — or 21% of adult women in Japan.

Many of these groups trace their roots back to pre-war campaigns for women's suffrage or better social conditions. The relaxation of government controls post-war helped advance those platforms.

Today, these groups have evolved into national organisations dedicated to the gamut of women's concerns. About 80% of the 327 prefectural women's groups in Japan are affiliated with one of these nationwide organisations.

Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture plays an important role by providing consulting and financial assistance to such national groups as the International Women's Education Association of Japan, the Japan Housewives Association, and 25 other organisations.

As of March 1983, there were 36 prefectural and city liaison associations linking the major women's groups in Japan.

In addition, there are federations and liaison committees for international associations that conduct programmes nationwide. These include:

1. The Federation of Japanese Women's Organisations, which works to further women's and children's rights and status; to foster public welfare; and to communicate with the women of the world.



Leaders of parent education classes receive in-depth training at the Centre each year.

2. **The Japan Women's Committee for UN Non-governmental Organisation**, an association of ten Japanese women's groups federated with NGO, the liaison arm of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

3. **The Liaison Group for the Implementation of Resolutions of the International Women's Year Conference**, which put together the executive committee for a 1980 conference celebrating the halfway point of the International Women's Decade. This committee is also working to push through resolutions signed at the Copenhagen Conference of 1980 which would halt discrimination against women and promote revisions in the civil code.

MANY "FIRSTS" FOR JAPANESE WOMEN

□ Journalist **Reiko Masuda**, recent recipient of a Japan Press Club Award, was the first woman so honored. When she joined the **Mainichi Shimbun**, one of Japan's largest daily papers, after World War II, Ms. Masuda was Japan's first college-educated woman journalist. Today, she is the sole woman editorial writer for **Mainichi** and is editor in chief of **Onna no Shimbun** ("Women's Newspaper").

□ **Dr. Emiko Adachi**, Professor of Clinical Medicine at Chiba University, is the first woman to win a

coveted professorial post at a Japanese national university.

□ The American Academy of Arts and Sciences recently honored **Ms. Tomoko Ohta** of the National Institute of Genetics of Japan, for her work in the evolution process. Ms. Ohta is the first woman to be designated an honored member of the Academy.

□ **Ms. Mariko Terado** became the first woman director in the Secretariat of Japan's House of Representatives.

□ For the first time, the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), which aids U.S. companies in importing their products to Japan, put together an all-woman team for an extended buying mission overseas. The team is headed by **Ms. Ichiko Ishihara**, executive director of Takashimaya Department Store.

□ **Dr. Rinko Yamazaki**, Doctor of Medicine and President of the PPSEAWA International Council, served as a delegate to the 39th General Assembly of the UN in 1984. She attended the Third Committee meeting on social, cultural, and humanist issues.

□ **Ms. Tetsuko Kuroyanagi** visited the United Republic of Tanzania as a Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF in order to observe the situation of that country's starving children. Her well-publicised visit contributed to fund-raising efforts for the children in Japan.

NWEC is well equipped for the instruction of ceramics and many other crafts and arts.



PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH OFFERINGS ON JAPANESE WOMEN



The Women of Japan, Prime Minister's Office, 1984, 64 pages. This report, compiled by the Headquarters for the Planning and Promotion of Policies Relating to Women, offers current findings on the status of, and legislation concerning, the women of Japan.

Numerous charts and graphs detail the progress Japanese women have made since the turn of the century. Part I of the report discusses women's current status in Japan, while Part II focuses on the policies and legislation relating to women that have been enacted since International Women's Year.

Women and Education in Japan, Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, Social Education Bureau, 1983, 34 pages. This report charts the course of women's formal education in Japan, with additional discussion of Japan's policies on women's life-long learning.

The Status of Women in Japan, Ministry of Labour, Women and Children's Bureau, 1983, 42 pages.

This report, published at irregular intervals since 1962, concentrates on women and labour, revealing such statistics as:

- Women specialists and technicians are on the rise.
- Although women teachers are increasing in number, Japan's female principals are still very few.
- Women's average monthly salary is just 53% of men's, which is attributed mainly to women's shorter careers and relative youth.

The report also addresses the status and achievement of women in terms of politics, education, family life, rural life, social welfare, and women's groups.

Stride by Stride: Women's Issues in Tokyo; the Current Situation, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1983, 63 pages.

Published to promote international understanding and exchange, this report depicts the women of Tokyo, one of the world's biggest cities. Women's status and problems in such areas as education, labour, health, family, and social welfare are discussed in detail.

INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1977 as a subsidiary of Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. Its purpose is to further women's education through research into women's education and practical training for leaders in the field. The Centre's areas of activity are fourfold, including:

TRAINING for women in the form of seminars, lectures, group discussions, individual study projects, and other educational programmes. The Centre offers comprehensive training facilities — from small seminar rooms to a multi-purpose hall accommodating 600 people. They are available to any group whose subject matter relates to women's education — including family problems, the arts, vocational topics, sports, traditional areas of study, and myriad other issues.

EXCHANGE of information among women's education leaders from Japan and overseas, as well as others who are interested in women's issues. Opportunities for exchange range from the formality of conferences to spontaneous conversations in the lounge.

INFORMATION gathered and disseminated by NWEC's extensive libraries of printed and audio/visual materials.

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

Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are

available to women's groups and individuals for their own study, cultural exchange, and research. To use NWEC's facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form no more than six months nor less than two weeks in advance.

Use of NWEC's facilities is free. Hotel accommodations cost ¥1,200 and meals ¥2,500-3,000 per person per day.

NWEC is closed the first and third Mondays of each month and from December 28 to January 4.

ORGANISATION OF NWEC

NWEC consists of three divisions: the Administration Division, the Programme Division, and the Information and International Exchange Division. A Steering Committee comprised of 15 members reviews issues pertaining to Centre operations. The divisions' three chiefs are under the direction of NWEC's Director General and Deputy Director. The Centre's staff of 33 includes eight research and planning specialists.

WHO USES NWEC?

Of some 310 individuals visiting the Centre each day, 83% are women — from all over Japan and the world — while the rest are men working in fields related to women's education. As of September 1984, a grand total of 10,424 groups had taken advantage of NWEC's facilities — 24% for one-day seminars.

Housewives use NWEC's facilities most frequently, followed by employed women and students. More than half of all Centre visitors are aged 40 or older, but the number of younger (20s and 30s) users is on the rise.

NWEC welcomes your questions and comments.

NWEC Newsletter®

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