

NWEC

N E W S L E T T E R

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES SPREAD THE WORD



Women from around the world have joined NWEC events.

The National Women's Education Centre (NWEC) was founded in 1977 in response to domestic needs, but our impact has been international. November 14, 1987 marks the Centre's tenth anniversary, and sometime in May, the one millionth visitor should walk through our doors. This includes 4,751 foreign visitors, from 104 countries (as of March 1987), who have enjoyed NWEC's programmes and facilities. The bulk of the visitors have come from the U.S., South Korea, and other parts of Asia and North America.

From 1981 to 1984, NWEC sponsored an annual international or regional seminar or exchange forum, with the theme of "Women's Lifelong Education and Participation in Society" and various subthemes. Joining the meetings were leaders in women's education from 20 industrialized and developing nations.

Since 1985, NWEC's global exchange activities have fallen in two categories: tightly focused international seminars and international women's exchange meetings. The seminar themes have varied: Working Mothers and the Educational Role of the Family; A Comparative Study of the U.S.

and Japan (1984); The Educational Role of Fathers and the Community (continuing the main theme of the previous seminar), with experts from the U.S., Europe, and Japan (1986); International Information Networks for Women (1985, 1987--planned); and Women's Studies (1989--planned).

The goal of the twice-yearly international exchange meetings, held in Japanese, has been to provide opportunities for Japanese women to communicate with foreign residents or visitors. Each year, the first of these gatherings brings together overseas Japanese language teachers and Japanese women, while the other hosts Japanese women leaders and resident foreigners who wish to further international understanding. An example of the latter was held this February; it focused on women's lives in five major world regions.

International organisations have often cosponsored events, along with NWEC. A 1980 international seminar on women's education, training, and employment, cosponsored with UNESCO, drew 14 foreign participants from 12 countries. In 1983, NWEC and OECD/CERI jointly hosted a seminar concerning the educational role of the family. An ESCAP seminar in 1986 examined the development of women's information networks in the Asia/Pacific region. These gatherings have helped NWEC enhance both services and information capabilities.

The NWEC Newsletter plays an important role in supporting our international links. Our first issue was in 1984, and some 700 organisations and individuals now receive the publication.

NWEC will continue to expand our exchange activities, in order to strengthen international networks dedicated to raising the status of women around the world.

NWEC ACTIVITIES**FISCAL 1987 PROGRAMMES
OFF TO FLYING START**

Past international seminars have covered women's information networks.



NWEC marks our tenth anniversary in fiscal 1987, and the year will be highlighted by several newsworthy events. One is the establishment of the Information Centre for Women's Education, for which we remodelled our former library. The Centre's new computers will enable

us to develop a data base on women and the family.

In the autumn, NWEC will sponsor an international seminar entitled "Women's Information Networks: Towards the Year 2000." We will hold a symposium on November 14, followed by an international seminar on November 16-17 which will bring together women's information experts from Asia/Pacific, Europe, and the U.S. The seminar participants will discuss future activities, based on the results of earlier NWEC and ESCAP seminars on women's information networks. We will emphasize NWEC's role as a clearinghouse for information on women and the family in Japan.

A third focus of NWEC's energy this year is our *Cumulative Periodical Index on Women and the Family (1978-1986)*, covering all relevant articles in 110 women's periodicals which the Centre has been collecting since 1979. Using the categories of NWEC's *Thesaurus on Women and the Family* as a guide, the computer-accessible index should be ready when the Information Centre opens in November.

**TENTH ANNIVERSARY AND
FUTURE PLANS**

In our first ten years, NWEC has made great strides towards encouraging life-long learning by women in Japan, but we're not content to rest on our laurels. Four principal objectives will motivate our future work: the training of national leaders and upgrading of the quality of women's education, the strengthening of our activities through greater cooperation, the establishment

of our Information Centre for Women's Education, and the implementation of the future strategies agreed upon at the Nairobi World Conference in 1985.

To do this, the coming fiscal year includes plans for NWEC to conduct further research on women and family issues through seminars, lectures, and study groups, and to increase training and exchange programmes. We will also encourage more international exchanges.

We can raise awareness of NWEC activities through tenth anniversary events, improved facilities for Centre visitors, and a wider distribution of publications such as this.

**ADVANCED COURSE TEACHES
EDUCATORS ABOUT LEARNING**

"Creating Learning Programmes for Women" was the title of a recent course for 117 women's education officers and lead-

ers from around Japan. The course, held on January 27-30, introduced the participants to NWEC's activities and research topics and probed current issues in women's education: individual identity, women's employment and skills development, new roles for fathers, women's organisations, and improvement of women's studies programmes.

**NATURE AND WOMEN
TO BE COURSE TOPIC**

Up to 300 men and women will be admitted to a summer women's

studies course which will look at nature and gender and ask: "What is woman?" The course will include a symposium on "Nature and Women" and a review of trends in overseas women's studies. The students will divide into small

groups to tackle such topics as motherhood; science, technology, and women; and research on sexual discrimination. NWEC is now accepting applications for the course, which will be held on August 28-30.

MEN, WOMEN, AND WORK: CHANGING FOR THE BETTER?

Visiting scholars Illich (left) and Duden (right) provide their views.



The evolving state of men's and women's work was the topic of a provocative study meeting held at the Centre on October 27, 1986. Addressing some fifty researchers and journalists were two visiting experts: cultural critic Dr. I. Illich from the Berlin Scientific Research Centre, and Dr. B. Duden, a women's studies specialist at Pitzer College in California.

Dr. Duden's talk reviewed the transition in the past 150 years from a situation in which men and women laboured side-by-side, symbiotically, to the present-day "sexual division of labour," in which the economy is supported by women's household or "shadow" work. The existence of the latter, she contended, is a reason for women's secondary status in capitalist societies.

According to Dr. Illich, contemporary capitalist economies rely heavily on vast amounts of unpaid shadow labour by both men and women. He noted that the view that both sexes should be engaged in secondary industry is fading, and that new values are replacing the view of work as being central to one's being.

ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS

In April 1987, Ms. Mizue Maeda became the new Director-General of NWEC. Maeda was Director of the Women's Divi-

sion in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture from 1982 to 1987 and Programme Specialist on Women's Issues for the OECD from 1981 to 1982. Her inaugural address will appear on the front page of our next issue.

NWEC THESAURUS BREAKS NEW GROUND

Researchers, specialists, and women's leaders are applauding NWEC's recent publication, *Thesaurus on Women and the Family* (fiscal 1986 edition), which is the first comprehensive thesaurus in this field. The 3,874-word thesaurus organises its contents into eight categories, which are explained in the accompanying chart.

This is essentially a first draft; after extensive revisions, we plan to publish a fiscal 1987 edition by March 1988. Through ongoing cooperation with women's organisations in the U.S. and ASEAN region which are preparing similar works, NWEC hopes to further the development of thesauri on women and the family.

CONTENTS OF THESAURUS ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

- (1) Thought, theory, history, movements—
Women's liberation, feminist theory, women's studies, women's issues, women's movement, history, religion
- (2) Sex and health—
Health, fitness, emotions, the body, abortion, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, reproductive science, reproduction, medical science
- (3) Family—
The family, marriage, divorce, inheritance, daily life, household affairs
- (4) Society and welfare—
Society, community, folklore, welfare
- (5) Labour, economy, industry—
Labour, employment, economy, industry
- (6) Politics and law—
Politics, human rights, law, justice
- (7) Education and research—
Education, learning, human development, parent and family education, home education, school education, social education, youth education, adult education, education of the aged, women's education, science, research
- (8) Culture, arts, sport—
Culture, communication, visual arts, language, literature, fashion, sport

JAPANESE WOMEN TODAY

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Japan's Equal Opportunity Law was officially implemented in April 1, 1986, and now, one year later, it seems appropriate to explore the changes the law has wrought in the workplace. Two recent surveys--one by the Ministry of Labour and the other by a labour union--have attempted to do just that.

The Ministry of Labour conducted their "Survey on Employment Plans for College Students Graduating on March 1987" in December 1986. Their findings suggest that since the new law has gone into effect, companies have expanded their career opportunities for women.

The companies in the survey were asked about their recruitment practices. Over half of the firms had reclassified their listed positions from "males only" to "both males and females," and 85% of the reclassifying companies said they had first done this for the Spring 1987 graduating class. Nearly eight out of ten firms had at least a few positions which they advertised to both male and female graduates.

While nearly 80% of the responding companies now hire female graduates of four-year universities, many of them will increase the number hired, starting this spring. Thirty-four percent of those not yet employing women university graduates plan to start recruiting them immediately, while another 48% will "consider such a move in the future."

Another survey, conducted by the Japanese Private Sector Trade Union Council, canvassed 1,500 member unions in November 1986 concerning corporate implementation of the Equal Employment Law. They found that an increasing number of companies are reconsidering their current separate treatment of men and women in terms of recruitment, hiring, and starting salaries. However, little progress appears to have been made in improving things for other women workers: Nearly 64% of the companies have no plans to reemploy women who are returning to the work force or institute childcare leave in any form.

The union council concluded that the business world is just beginning to improve women's labour conditions; whether the impact of the new law will extend beyond new recruits to better conditions for all women employees remains to be seen.

GOVERNMENT LOOKS TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000

A governmental task force engaged in planning and promoting women's issues met on March 30 to unveil an ambitious strategy paper. The report, which deals with the recommendations that arose at the end of the UN's Decade for Women, outlines five basic governmental objectives and 17 corresponding tasks to

carry out in the next 15 years to improve the position of women. The report's four chapters detail the government's basic approach, the present condition of women in Japan, measures to take through this century, and efforts for reaching set goals. The overall aim is to "form a social system with joint participation by men and women." On May 7, the government formally accepted these proposals, announcing a *New National Action Programme Towards the Year 2000*.

WOMEN'S BOOKS FILL BOOKSHOP SHELVES



Tokyo now has a bookshop devoted wholly to women's publications, the "Livre de Femme." This shop follows on the heels of Kyoto's Shokado, the first women's bookshop in Japan.

Livre de Femme carries over 4,500 books by female authors or about women's issues, and the intention is to stock all books on women which are available in Japan. The shop is run by a women's group, who would like the outlet to become the core of a women's network and a centre for women's activities. To that end, the shop also carries about 500 women's newsletters from around the country.

The bookshop is located at #410 Toto Residence, 4-28-5 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo. The telephone number is 03-370-8440.

NEWSMAKERS

The following articles focus on women in the news and events which have broken new ground for women in Japan.

JAPANESE WOMEN DON JUDICIAL ROBES



Aiko Noda

The position of courtroom judge has largely been a male domain in Japan, but more and more women are now taking up the gavel. In the last ten years alone, 48 women were appointed to the judgeship, and at present 108 of Japan's 2,800 judges are women. One recent appointment was especially encouraging, that of Aiko Noda, who became the first woman high court judge in Japan. Noda, a former director of the Tokyo Family Court, was chosen as president of the Sapporo High Court, one of eight high courts in Japan. She began her career as only the third female assistant judge in 1950, and served in judicial capacities in District Courts and Family Courts in many parts of the country.

This trend looks likely to accelerate, judging from recent events. Among the 61 students of the Legal Training and Research Institute who were appointed assistant judges this spring, ten were women. This was the greatest number of women appointed at one time in Japan's history. The highly competitive two-year course at the Legal Training and Research Institute is the only route to becoming a judge or public prosecutor. Six of the 38 students appointed as public prosecutors were women, the highest number in the Institute's history.

DOI AND OTHER JAPANESE WOMEN ARE CAMPAIGN TRAILBLAZERS

It started with Takako Doi, the energetic, pinball-playing head of the Socialist Party and the first female leader of a major political party in Japan. Now the campaign bug has bitten many more wom-

en than ever before, and many of these women recorded their first victories in Japan's recent unified local elections.

A total of 52 female candidates were successful in polling for prefectural assemblies, 1.6 times more than the 30 women elected in the previous election. That amounts to 2% of all the seats. In addition, a 26-year-old female candidate became the youngest prefectural assembly member in the nation.

Their role model, Doi, is currently serving her seventh term as a member of the House of Representatives. After the Japan Socialist Party suffered a crushing defeat in the July 1986 general election, many party members called for fresh leadership, and Doi's election as Chairperson in September 1986 responded to this mood. Her election received tremendous media coverage, and a newspaper survey just a month later revealed a 4% increase in Socialist Party support, with popularity especially strong among women. Since Doi's rise, many major political parties have encouraged women to become candidates.



Takako Doi is leading a new wave of women in politics.

JWCTU IS CENTURY OLD

Japan's oldest women's organisation, the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union (JWCTU), marked its 100th birthday with celebrations last December. The history of this group is the history of women's liberation in Japan: The JWCTU began with abstinence campaigns in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and was later a driving force behind enactment of an anti-prostitution law and women's suffrage achievements.

Their social activism continues today. To mark their centennial, the JWCTU opened a Tokyo shelter for troubled Asian women working in Japan last spring. They published *A Hundred Years' History of the Japan Women's Temperance Union* at the end of 1986.

WOMEN'S GROUPS IN JAPAN



League volunteers encourage women voters to be active in safeguarding their democratic and human rights.

This continuing series introduces some of Japan's most influential women's organisations.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF JAPAN

The League of Women Voters was established in 1945, in response to the early postwar yearnings for women's rights and democracy. The founder and first president was Fusae Ichikawa, a famous women's suffrage activist. The League's activities in its first decade focused on promotion of legal and administrative reform in order to protect women and youths, while during its second ten years the group turned its attention to local politics. The League led a sweeping drive to revise election laws and reform local campaign practices. Members were encouraged to attend assembly sessions and monitor the activities of their elected representatives.

In the late '60s and early '70s, the League worked to revise political funding laws and supported successful measures to more equally apportion seats in the Diet. More recently, members have been very active in organizing rallies to mark the UN Decade for Women and to push the Japanese government to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The group also promotes the cause of peace, by

participating in international congresses and rallies supporting world disarmament.

The current president of the League is Michiko Matsuura, and there are 5,000 members in 57 chapters nationwide. The aim of the organisation is to educate the public on political issues and their political responsibilities in order to uphold parliamentary democracy. Every women of voting age can join, and while the League is strictly non-partisan, all eligible voters are encouraged to closely monitor the activities of public office holders, political parties, and the government. A primary goal is enhancement of the status of women to secure constitutionally mandated equal rights in all fields. The League is also active internationally and is affiliated with the International Alliance of Women.

JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

This is another organisation established right after WWII, with the objectives of promoting higher education for women and enhancing their social status, while fostering international understanding and friendship. The group grants academic and research scholarships to Japanese and foreign women students (22 domestic awards were given this year, including seven to handi-



capped students and one to a non-Japanese scholar), and recommends deserving students for overseas study fellowships. They also have a proud record of social activism, taking part in research and action programmes that will better women's career and social opportunities, so as to carry out the goals of the UN Decade for Women.

The JAUW has conducted extensive research on eliminating the barriers to women's progress in employment, nationality, and education. This year it is preparing a report entitled *Nairobi's Forward-looking Strategies and Us*, for discussion at a seminar that will be held at NWECC on September 26-27. The JAUW is a member of the International Federation of University Women, and sends delegates to international conferences and other meetings.

Any woman graduate of a four-year college is welcome to join the Association. Its current chairperson is Sumiko Ito, and there are 2,626 members in 31 chapters nationwide. Members are kept informed of the latest activities by the *JAUW Quarterly*, a regular publication. Write to JAUW at their Central Office, 241 Toyama Mansion 7-17-18, Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160. Or call (03) 202-0572.



FOCUS ON ASIA/PACIFIC NETWORK



A "Regional Seminar on Development of a Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific," sponsored by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), brought 35 participants from 16 countries to the Centre last December. The seminar, held from December 1-5, also attracted six representatives of international organisations.

One of the issues highlighted was the present state of information systems in the region. Participants divided into discussion groups and came to four conclusions: although women-related information is abundant, it's not reaching women at the grass roots level; there should be an increased flow of information on relevant issues, both to and from the average woman; mass media coverage of women should

change from its distinctly male bias; and more research is needed to accurately assess regional women's conditions.

Seminar participants also emphasized the need to reassess the official statistical data on Asia/Pacific women. To this end, a set of criteria was prepared, based on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Next, a model of ESCAP's Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (WINAP) was unveiled, along with an explanation of the roles played by participating organisations.

The seminar's final day saw the draughting of recommendations which included a list of indicators for monitoring women's status; suggested ways to improve the socio-economic indicators for women in the region; and proposed objectives, functions, and an organisational structure for WINAP. The participants agreed that rather than merely disseminating official policies and data, the network should promote the flow of accurate information to and from government, international, voluntary, and educational organisations, as well as women on the grass roots level. This network must serve the needs of women first and foremost.

MOTHERS AT WORK: THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN (Part II)

More than half of Tokyo children whose mothers work attend lessons or study courses outside of school. That's one of the interesting findings from a recently completed NWECS-sponsored survey of 1,500 Tokyo area families with children aged 10-15. This issue presents the second of a two-part report on 817 families from whom full sets of replies from mothers, fathers, and children were received.

While a high 48% of housewives' children attended extracurricular lessons or preparatory schools, the percentage among children with working mothers was even higher: 55% among those whose mothers were self-employed and 51% among children with mothers working outside the home. Primary school children attended lessons most frequently, while preparatory or "cram" schools were most popular with middle school students.

The children seemed to spend much of their free time in front of a television set. Children of working mothers averaged 145 minutes of television-viewing per day, compared to 121 minutes for children of women describing them-

selves as housewives. Overall, children helped with housework an average of 23.1 minutes per day, although girls helped their mothers considerably more than boys.

Childcare for preschoolers (aged 3-6) was almost exclusively handled by nursery schools, and there were relatively few women who relied on friends or acquaintances to care for their kids. Seventy percent of the parents knew someone in their neighbourhood to whom they could entrust their children, but fully half of these were relatives. The remaining 30% had no help in looking after their children. This percentage rose in single-parent households and families with mothers working full-time outside the home.

Non-working mothers tended to participate much more in the PTA, hobbies and sports, adult education, and other community activities. Fathers were less active than mothers, and men with non-working wives participated less than men whose wives worked.

In 116 cases, only mothers and children in two-parent families responded to the surveys. Thirty-seven of the households were without a father, and five households were without a mother. Ongoing study of these phenomena are expected to reveal a fresher picture of the issues facing families in Tokyo.

INTRODUCING NWEC

The National Women's Education Centre was founded in 1977 by Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. The Centre's activities include:

Training for women in the form of seminars, lectures, group discussions, individual study projects, and other educational programmes. The Centre's comprehensive training facilities are available to any group whose subject matter relates to women's education.

Exchange of information among women's education leaders from Japan and overseas, as well as others who are interested in women's issues.

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

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



Since 1980, the Centre has drawn 4,751 visitors from 104 countries.

Apart from NWEC-sponsored programmes, our facilities are available to women's groups and individuals for study programmes and cultural exchange free of charge (excluding meals and accommodation). To use our facilities, please complete and submit a NWEC application form no more than six months and no less than two weeks in advance.

NWEC welcomes your questions and comments.

NWEC Newsletter
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PUBLICATIONS

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE OFFERINGS ON JAPANESE WOMEN

The Story of Yamada Waka: From Prostitute to Feminist Pioneer by Tomoko Yamazaki, translated by Wakako Hironaka and Ann Kostant (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985, 159 pages, \$16.95).

Waka Yamada (the author uses the Japanese convention of writing the family name first) was an extraordinary woman, whose tragedies and triumphs in the late 1800s and early 1900s make for compelling reading. At various times of her life, she was a teenaged bride, prostitute, translator, social critic, and activist for women's rights. Her history mirrors that of a tumultuous era, in which Japan underwent considerable social dislocation and imported many new "foreign" ideas in its quest to become a modern, industrialized power.

Yamada journeyed to the U.S. at the turn of the century. At that time, for lower-class Japanese women without legal passports, prostitution was the only way to earn one's keep. Yamada was able to eventually escape from this humiliating lifestyle, and she married Kakichi Yamada,

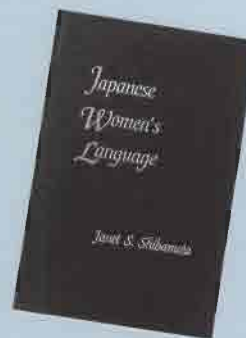


the man who would educate her and support her social activism. Together they returned to Japan.

A charter member of Japan's first women's emancipation group, Yamada published her own journal, *Women and the New Society*. Later she wrote ten books in Japanese and gained renown as a translator and social commentator in other publications. She established a school in Tokyo to help reformed prostitutes. Perhaps most surprisingly, Yamada later became a strident supporter of traditional ideals of family and motherhood, accepting the position of chairman of the Motherhood Protection League. This biography will appeal equally to anyone interested in the past 100 years of Japanese history, seen through a woman's eyes--and the reader seeking a good read.

Japanese Women's Language by Janet Shibamoto (US: Academic Press, 1985, 190 pages, \$32). Japanese women speak a different language from men: The nuances of a more flowery vocabulary and a softer tone are subtle, but they help determine women's social status. This book starts by determining what the syntactic differences are, then examines in depth their distribution throughout the language as it is actually spoken. Finally, it probes the cultural implications of these differences, and delves into such topics as the evolution of "women's speech" over time and whether women's language is more emotional than that of men. The book's findings are based on the

author's interviews of men and women living in a suburb of Tokyo, where standard Japanese is spoken, over an 18-month period in the late 1970s.



This is one of the first linguistic studies which looks specifically at the manner in which Japanese women speak, and is thus a pioneering work that should be of considerable interest to women's studies scholars and linguists alike.