

NWEC

NEWSLETTER

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

NEW WOMEN'S INFORMATION SYSTEM <WinetCASS>

I WinetCASS as a Portal Site

In recent years there has been a breathtaking development where access to information on women and the family is concerned, as women's facilities, research institutes for women's studies affiliated to universities and NGO organisations throughout Japan have made it available to the public via their own homepages and created their own databases. The information is accurate and extremely valuable, but because of its scattered nature, it is often necessary to search many sites in order to find useful information. As a result, the process can be both tediously time consuming and psychologically and financially taxing, particularly for the novice.

In resolving this problem, collation of women's information and establishment of an access point to this information has become an urgent matter in terms of responding to the needs of anticipated increases in the number of internet users, and activating women's information.

For this reason, NWEC, which has from its inception been committed to the collection and provision of information relating to women and the family, has designed an entirely new search system, WinetCASS*, capable of making information on women and the family available real time. We hope this will become a useful portal site for information relating to women

and the family.

- * URL : URL:http://www.nwec.go.jp
- * Abbreviation for Women's Information Network System and Cross Access Search System

II The Three WinetCASS Functions

1. HP-CASS

HP-CASS is a system that performs cross access searches of homepages carrying information pertaining to women, both in Japan and overseas.

An automatic collection robot gathers written information from the homepages of pre-selected



Figure 1: The HP-Cass search screen

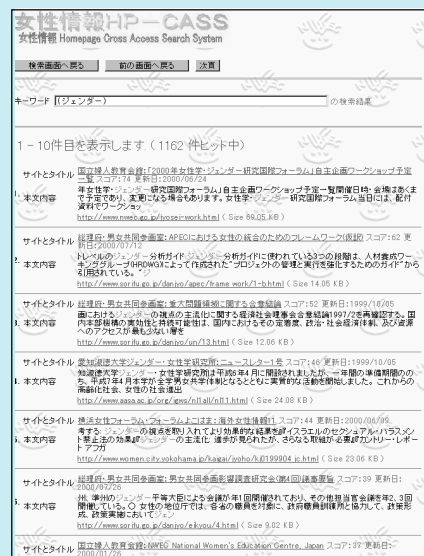


Figure 2: Sample results of a HP-CASS search

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women's facilities. This information is then indexed within the NWEC server. To request a search, users input search conditions via the search screen (Figure 1). Links are listed in the search result (Figure 2) enabling relevant sections of homepages to be directly accessed.

Currently, seventy-four homepages have been registered and divided into eight groups: women's facilities, research institutes concerned with women's studies, national (government) institutions, lifelong learning centres, Japanese women's sites, women's sites overseas, UN-related and NWEC Only. Not only does this facilitate simultaneous searches of all groups, but also single-and multi-group searches. Categorisation of institutions providing homepages further enhances searches for specific information.

By making searches within a specified range in this way, required sites can be found easily without making hits on unrelated matters, and research results are reliable as search areas have been segmented beforehand. As search methods are comparatively easy, it is of particular value for novices and in preliminary gathering of broad based information.

Our intention is to continue adding homepages for women's NGOs, both in Japan and overseas, in particular, and cordially welcome the participation of sites overseas.

2. Women's Information CASS

As a system that performs cross access searches of a number of databases pertaining to women, Women's Information CASS provides serves as an access point.

Women's Information CASS facilitates searching with a single stroke as many as ten databases. These include NWEC compiled Winet-DB, comprising a

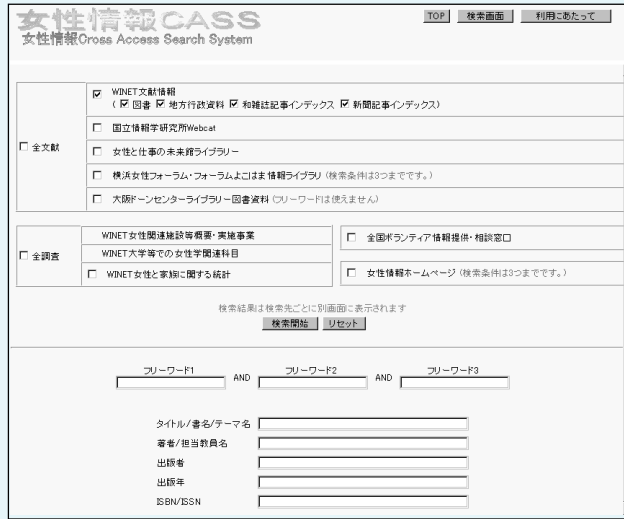


Figure 3: The Women's Information CASS search screen

database of literature databases stored at the NWEC Information Centre for Women's Education, a database of statistics on women and the family currently being compiled by NWEC, a database on women's facilities and a database of courses relating to women's studies offered at institutions of higher education; databases compiled by other institutions that have been made publicly accessible via the Web, including the National Institute of Informatics's Webcat; the Centre for the Advancement of Working Women's Library; the Yokohama Women's Forum's Forum Yokohama Information Library; and the Done Centre's Women's Information Library; and others such as HP-CASS.

In building a cross access search system, it is normal to establish a common format, and most systems use uniform search conditions, and a uniform method for inputting search conditions and displaying search results.

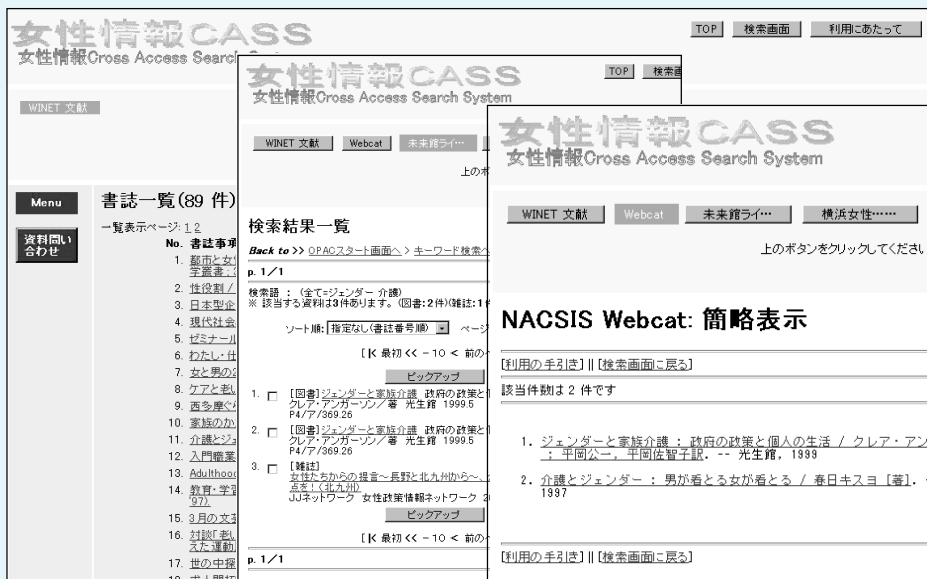


Figure 4: Sample results of a Women's Information CASS search

This is effective for university libraries, museums, and art galleries, which use the same rules to classify a diverse range of original documents. However, many documents pertaining to women's information cannot be properly classified using a decimal classification system. As a result many women's centres around the country have devised systems for classifying information and compiling databases which reflect the characteristics of their own facilities, and there is a strong desire to preserve their uniqueness and independence.

Women's Information CASS, therefore, utilises a system that facilitates search to be made from its search screen (Figure 3) by changing search conditions to match the other party's search format and sending them to the other party's database to perform the search task. This enables users to search a number of databases simply by executing a single search.

However, as the search is actually carried out on the other party's database, the research results of each database differ and are not displayed on a common format. This is why we decided to bring up the screens for each database in order to facilitate mutual comparison (Figure 4).

3. Winet-DB

Winet-DB refers to the collection of databases compiled by NWEC, and comprises the NWEC Literature Database, Statistics on Women and the Family Database, Women's Facilities Database and Higher Education Courses in Women's Studies Database (provisional name).

The Statistics on Women and the Family Database (Figure 5) comprises a database of tables compiled by NWEC in the course of statistical surveys it conducted on women and the family from 1992-1996. At present, it facilitates search of more than 500 items of data taken from reports containing relevant government statistics published up to 1999.

Furthermore, posting of this database on the Web in 1999 has enabled users to download Excel files for use in creation of their own charts and figures.

At present, two databases pertaining to women's facilities have been made accessible to the public: Women's Facilities 1997 and Case Studies of Study and Training Programmes at Women's Facilities. These comprise the results of surveys of women's facilities commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture and conducted by the Japan Council of Women's Centers in 1997 and 1998, that NWEC has put into a database format.

The Women's Facilities 1997 Database outlines equipment and facilities available at each facility, whether or not they publish a bulletin, and a guide to usage of the facility. The Database on Case Studies of

Figure 5: The Statistics Database search screen

Study and Training Programmes at Women's Facilities allows users to check what kinds of programmes are being conducted at any given facility. However, when information about a given facility is required, it was frequently necessary to conduct searches on both databases.

As a consequence, we have now unified these two databases to facilitate search for all kinds of information about a facility in a single search (Figure 6).

These databases comprised the results of surveys conducted by NWEC that were put into database format after completion of the survey. As a result, data was almost always out-of-date by the time it was made accessible to the public. To overcome this, we have added a function that facilitates real-time data updates.

In the past if a given women's facility wished to update data it had to wait for the next survey. The update function now enables it to add a new set of data whenever it wishes to do so. By revising data on the web and clicking the send button, the updated data will be mailed to NWEC where it is immediately incorporated into the database.

The use of this update function will enable us to continuously update data on programme schedules for each facility. Users can now learn, with a single search, new information regarding future programmes to be conducted at each facility.

It also enables facilities that do not have their own homepage to post information about their facilities on the Net. Also for those who already have their own homepages, this pre-empts the need to maintain a separate

search system as the database comprises a variety of categories and facilitates search of three years' worth of information.

The Higher Education Courses in Women's Studies Database (provisional name) currently provides data on courses conducted in FY 1996. Data for 1999 and 2000 is currently being compiled. The surveys themselves were reviewed. The number of responses requiring free answers, which the original survey sheet required many of, was reduced. Reviewing the question and answer format reduced the burden of filling in the survey sheet and facilitated quantitative data analysis.

Improvement of the search system and a function that would allow facilities to update their own data via the Web are currently under discussion.

III Future Issues

A new search system has been built to share women's information real time, but it will take more than NWEC to make full use of its potential. It is essential that information providers, such as women's facilities, research institutes concerned with women's studies, and NGO organisations both in Japan and overseas, participate actively. The key issue for the future is to decide how we should go about building networks with these information providers and develop WinetCASS.

As of this writing, it is only the Winet-DB literature database that has an English version. Creation of an English version of WinetCASS is a topic for future discussion.

(Kimi MIYAZAWA, Specialist, Information and International Exchange Division, NWEC)

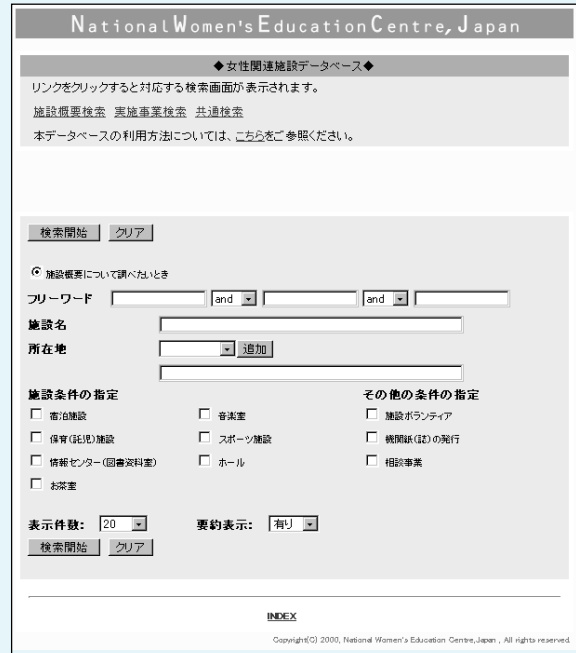


Figure 6: The Women's Facilities Database search screen

INFORMATION SERVICE AND CONSULTATION OFFICE ON NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

1. Programme Outline

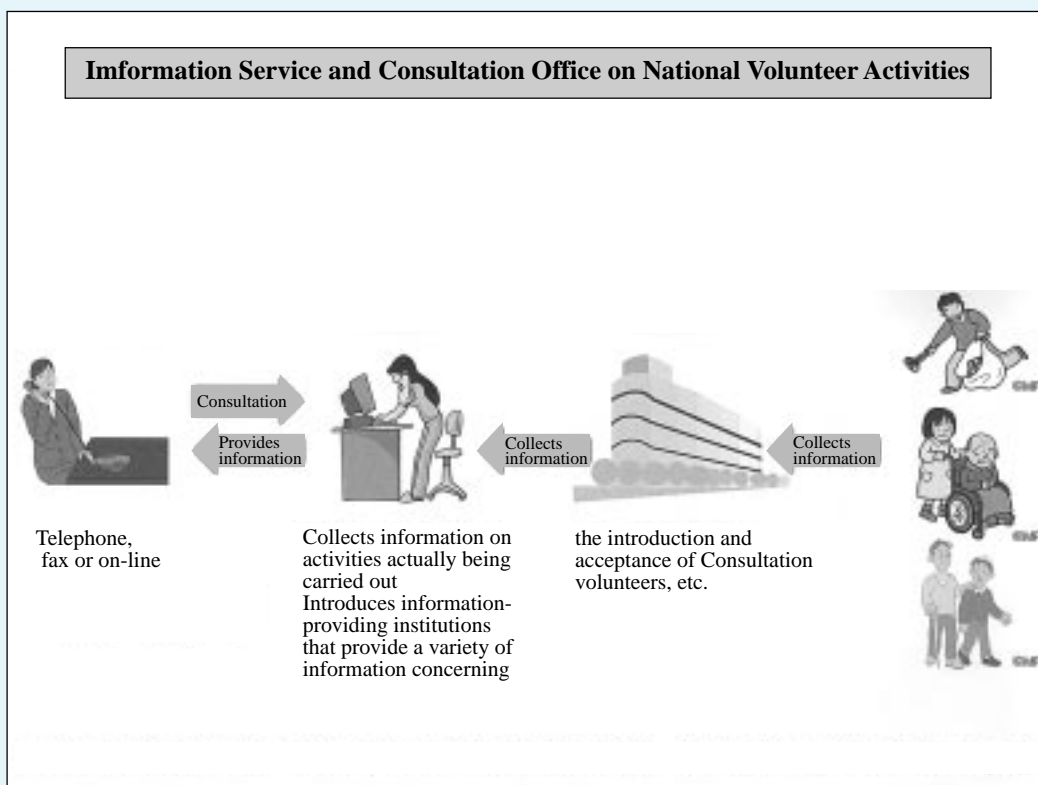
As a programme commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, the National Volunteer Information and Counselling Programme introduced a telephone counselling service on 22 February 2000.

The aim of this programme from a promotion of lifelong learning perspective, is to stimulate the motivation of people wanting to become involved in volunteer activities by providing them with opportunities to become involved in activities of their choice. This round-the clock service involves introducing institutions that provide information on volunteer activities in response to telephone, fax, and on-line inquiries, that may come in at any time of day or night, concerning where one should make inquiries about a particular kind of volunteer activity.

2. Introducing Information-providing Institutions

- ① Lifelong learning centres, lifelong learning volunteer centres, counselling offices for volunteer activities
- ② Institutions promoting volunteer activities within the jurisdiction of local government departments
- ③ Social welfare conference volunteer centres in the Prefectural governments and ordinance-designated cities
- ④ Citizens' organisation promoting volunteer activities
- ⑤ Participatory organisations of the liaison conference "Expanding Volunteers' Circle"
- ⑥ Participatory organisations of the National Council of Youth Organizations in Japan
- ⑦ Others

Information Service and Consultation Office on National Volunteer Activities



3. Introducing Fields of Volunteer Activities

- ① Education (child-raising, activities of social education facilities, youth guidance, study guidance, bullying, schools, human rights, etc)
- ② Welfare (care for the disabled, care for the elderly, Braille, sign language, hospitals, patient and family support, mutual aid, etc)
- ③ Sports, recreation and hobbies (outdoor activities, calligraphy, painting, gardening, cooking, music, singing, etc)
- ④ Nature protection and environmental conservation (protection of the ecosystem, protection of wild animals, ecology clean-up activities, etc)
- ⑤ Regional activities (festivals, disaster prevention, regional enhancement, traffic safety, disaster relief, etc)
- ⑥ International co-operation (overseas aid, disaster relief, support for foreigners in Japan, support for returnees, support for refugees, translation, etc)
- ⑦ Medical service and mental health (blood donation, eye bank, kidney bank, marrow bank, life lines, etc)
- ⑧ Collections (fund-raising, donations, postcards, stamps, telephone cards, coins, bell marks, green stamps, etc)
- ⑨ Recycling (old paper, garbage, clothes, bottles, cans, soap, flea markets, etc)
- ⑩ Others

4. Posting of Supervisors and Advisors

With the aim of facilitating the smooth operation of the Programme, four supervisors and one advisor have been appointed to provide assistance and advice on the selection and training of counsellors and other specialised matters, as well as to help and advise on the implementation of other programmes.

5. Implementation Status of the Programme (Status for the 129 days from its introduction on 22/2/2000 through 30/6)

(1) Number of consultations

Telephone: 647

Fax : 81

Email : 157

Postal : 1

Total : 886

Homepage Access : 44,370 hits

(2) Areas of consultation

A: Education 85

B: Welfare 210

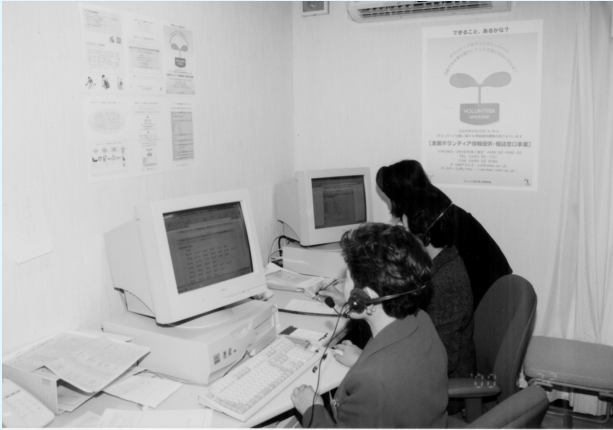
C: Sports, recreation and hobbies 47

D: Nature protection and environmental conservation 37

E: Regional activities 22

F: International co-operation 71

G: Medical service and mental health 25



(Counsellors receiving calls)

- H: Collections 33
- I : Recycling 35
- J : Others (volunteering in general, programme inquiries, homepage address confirmations, etc) 383

- (3) Information-providing institutions introduced
 - Councils of social welfare : 658
 - Volunteer centres : 83
 - Volunteer associations and conferences : 78
 - Lifelong learning centres : 78
 - YMCA & YWCA : 26
 - Others : 180

- (4) Database registration requests
 - No. of requests : 11

6. Future Discussions and Issues

- (1) A liaison conference will be established in the future as implementation and promotion of this programme requires the co-operation and collaboration of the institutions that provide information on volunteer work that the Programme introduces, and periodic contact and adjustments will be required.
- (2) In terms of the database, there is a need to carry out a new survey to facilitate registration on a broader basis such as cities, wards, towns and villages, of databases belonging to institutions that provide information on volunteer work that is more closely rooted in the community.
- (3) Applications were publicly invited for the position of counsellor. Sixteen people (14 women and 2 men) were selected and appointed with the help of the supervisor(s). Before taking up their duties counsellors underwent a variety of training, encompassing an understanding of the role and knowledge of counsellors, computer training,

training in the provision of information as a counsellor, on-site training at Prefectural citizen support centres, etc, and participation in national volunteer study meetings.

It is essential for Counsellors to build up their knowledge and skills on a daily basis in order to respond to the extremely diverse scope of information concerning volunteer activities. As a result, practical training programmes will need to be planned and implemented on a continuous basis.

7. Others

Posters and pamphlets were made and distributed to approximately 23,000 locations including cities, towns and villages in the administrative divisions of Japan, social education facilities, lifelong learning centres, institutions and organisations involved in promoting volunteer activities and women's facilities.

(Muneoki SEKI, Chief, General Affairs Unit, Administration Division, NWEC)



(Poster)

SURVEY REPORT

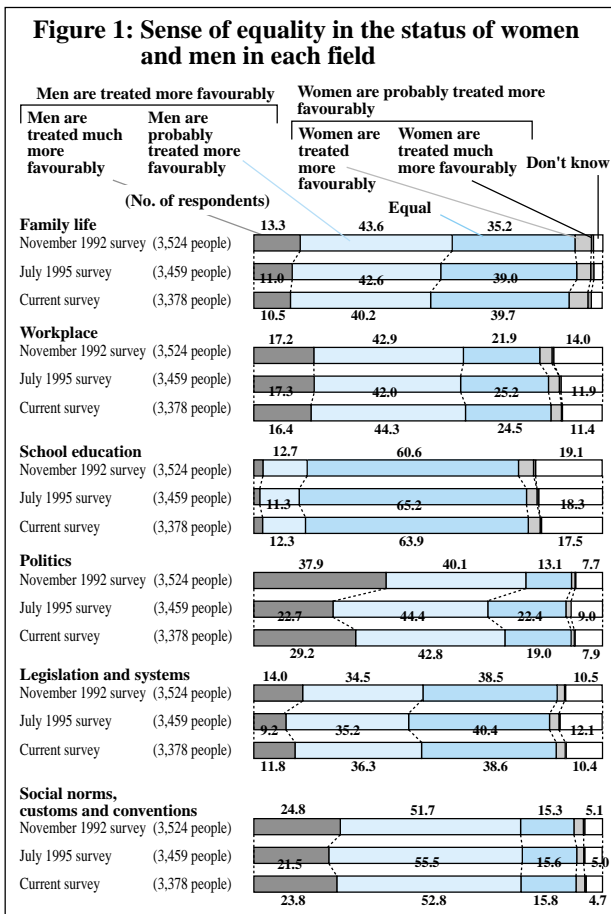
PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON A GENDER-EQUAL SOCIETY

This poll was conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in January and February 2000 to survey citizens' opinions on a gender-equal society as a reference for future measures. The poll, which surveyed 5,000 people around the country aged twenty or over, received valid responses from 3,378 people, a valid response rate of 67.6%. (1,868 women: 73.6% response rate; 2,461 men, 61.4% response rate) An outline of the results is described below.

1. Opinions on the Status of Women and Men

(1) Sense of equality in the status of women and men in each field (Refer to Figure 1)

When asked whether or not they felt women and men had equal status, the field in which the largest percentage of people responded "feel equal" was "school education" 63.9%, followed by "family life" 39.7%,



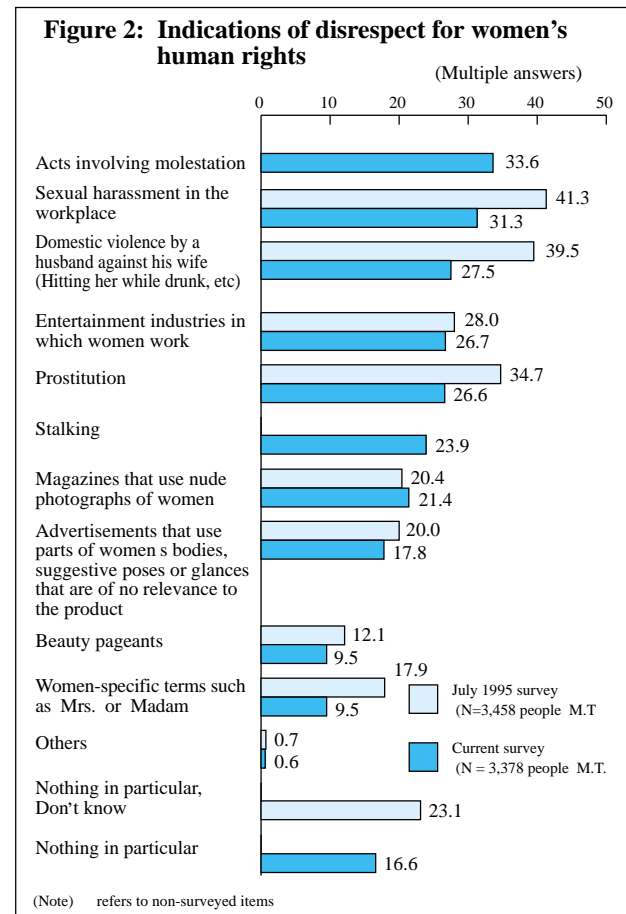
"legislation and systems" 38.6%, "workplace" 24.5%, "politics" 19.0%, and "social norms, customs and conventions" 15.8%

(2) Sense of equality in the status of women and men in society in general

Respondents (2,592 people) who indicated "men are treated more favourably" were asked the reasons for this. Many responded "the notion that work must take priority and company-centred views are firmly rooted in Japanese society, and it is men who support this" (62.1%), and "many Japanese norms and conventions result in male predominance" (60.7%). (Multiple answers)

(3) What makes one feel women's human rights are not being respected (Refer to Figure 2)

When asked what made respondents feel women's human rights were not respected, many responded "acts involving molestation" (33.6%) and "sexual harassment



at work” (31.3%), followed by “domestic violence committed by husband against wife” (27.5%), “entertainment establishments involving women” (26.7%), “prostitution” (26.6%). (Multiple answers) Looking at these responses by gender, we see that the percentage of women respondents in each of the five categories was higher.

2. Opinions on Women’s Participation in Social Activities

(1) On the notion of “men work, women stay home”

When asked whether or not they agree with the notion “men work, women stay home”, 25.0% responded “I agree”, while 48.3% “I disagree” and 25.6% “I cannot really say which”. Age-wise, nearly half the women and men who responded “I agree” were seventy years of age or older. According to marital status, a high percentage of unmarried women and men disagreed with the concept, in particular, the majority of women disagreed (61.3%).

(2) Working women

When asked their opinions on women working in general, 4.1% responded “it is better for women not to work” while 7.8% said, “women should work until they marry”. 10.4% felt “women should work until they have children”, 37.6% “women should quit work when they have children and go back to work when their children have grown up”, and 33.1% said “women should continue working even after they have children”.

Compared to the survey results for FY1995, the percentage of people who responded “women should continue working even after they have children” increased from 30.2% to 33.1%.

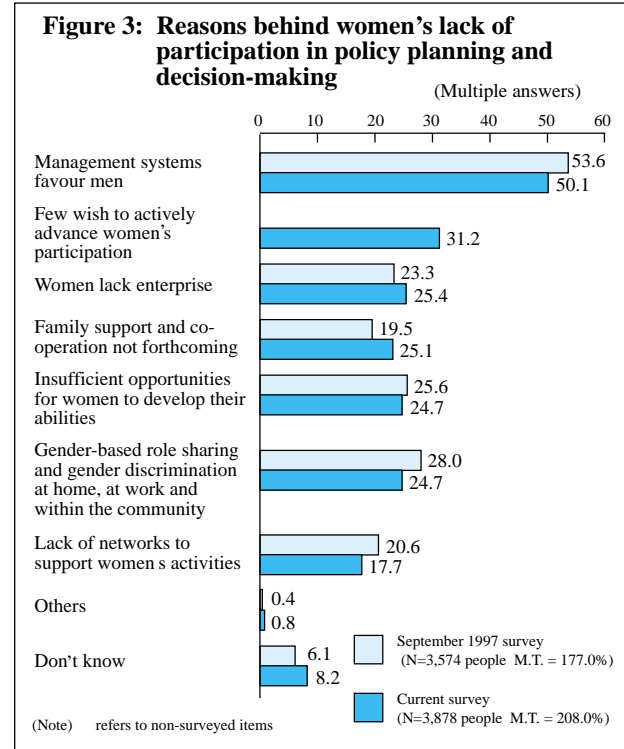
(3) Reflecting women’s opinions in policy formulation and decision-making

When asked whether they thought women should become members of the National Diet or Prefectural assemblies, or hold municipal public offices, to better reflect women’s opinions in policy formulation and decision-making, 74.3% agreed, 5.9% disagreed and 15.6% were non-committal.

(4) Reasons behind women’s lack of participation in policy planning and direction setting

When probed for reasons behind women’s lack of participation in policy and decision-making process, half the respondents (50.1%) answered “system favours men”. This was followed by “few actively promote women’s participation” (31.2%), “women lack enterprise” (25.4%), and “family support and co-operation are not forthcoming” (25.1%). (Multiple answers)

Compared to a survey conducted in September 1997, the percentage of respondents who said “system favours men” decreased while the percentage responding “women lack enterprise” or “family support and co-operation are not forthcoming” increased (Refer to Figure 3).



3. Opinions on Views on Family

(1) The role of the family

When asked what they thought about the role of the family, the majority responded, “it offers a place of psychological comfort”. This was followed by “raising a family gives more purpose to one’s life” (49.1%), “enables mutual enrichment and development as human beings” (38.0%), and “economic stability” (29.0%).

(2) Male participation in family and community activities

When asked whether or not they agree with the idea that “it is necessary for men to participate more in family and community activities”, 73.0% of respondents agreed. Then the 2,465 respondents who gave affirmative answers were asked what they believed was necessary to achieve this. The majority or 51.2% said “the establishment of systems that support the harmonisation of work and families for both women and men”, followed by “increasing local information on participation” (34.7%), “reducing work hours and increasing time for participation” (30.9%) and “increase learning opportunities that make it easy to participate” 25.1%. (Multiple answers)

(3) Social support for nursing

On social support for nursing of the elderly, 2.4% responded “basically, families should nurse the elderly and social support is not necessary”. In contrast 43.7% said “basically, families should nurse the elderly but there is a need for society to provide a certain amount of support”, and 12.2% said “nursing the elderly is too heavy a burden for the family to carry alone, society should bear it”.

(4) Role-sharing in family nursing

On role-sharing in family nursing, 13.3% responded “women should bear main responsibility”, while 83.4% felt “women and men should bear equal responsibility”. Some said “men should bear main responsibility” (0.7%).

(5) Opinions on outside sources of income

The question was asked what they thought about outside sources of income in households where both the husband and the wife do not have outside jobs, one of them works outside the home and the other takes responsibility for the household, including housework, child raising and nursing of the elderly. “The majority of income earned outside of the home belongs to the person working outside the home” was the response from a minority (3.9%). The majority (60.6%) said “half the income earned outside the home belongs to the person working outside the home and the other half belongs to the person maintaining the household” while 16.3% said “most of the income earned outside the home belongs to the person maintaining the household”.

4. Attitude concerning the Formation of a Gender-equal Society

(1) Level of awareness of terminology pertaining to women (Refer to Figure 4)

(2) Affirmative measures to encourage women’s participation in society

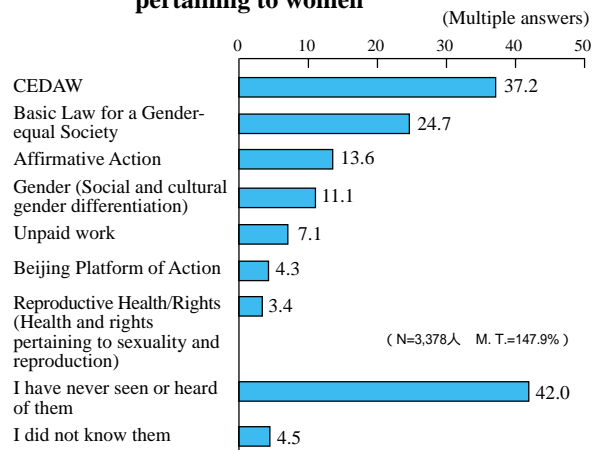
In response to questions asked about the kind of measures they considered appropriate to encourage women to enter fields in which not many women entered, 30.8% responded “companies should independently set targets for the number of women they will employ, promote, train, etc, and formulate plans to promote the advancement of female employees”. This was followed by “political parties should determine a certain percentage for women to be included as candidates” (23.0%), and “national and local government bodies should employ a quota system that determines the number or percentage of women employed, promoted to management positions, etc” (20.0%).

(3) Demands for the government in terms of formation of a gender-equal society

A “gender-equal society” can be defined as one in which both women and men, as equal members of society, have the opportunity to participate in any field of society they choose, to enjoy the same political, financial, social and cultural benefits, and to share in its responsibilities. Given this definition, respondents were asked what they thought the government should emphasise in regard to the formation of a “gender-equal society”. The response was as follows. Nearly half (48.1%) said “enhance childcare services and facilities and nursing services and facilities for the sick and elderly”, followed by “review laws and systems” (34.3%). “Increase women’s work opportunities and enhance work education and training to promote women’s entry into fields in which traditionally, few women have entered” (33.5%), “make gender-equal treatment in the workplace thoroughly and universally accepted” (33.0%), and “actively promote women into policy decision-making positions” (30.7%) were also pointed out.

(Kazue AOKI, Chief, International Exchange Unit, Information and International Exchange Division, NWEC)

Figure 4: Level of awareness of terminology pertaining to women



(Notes)
CEDAW
 Adopted in 1979 at the 34th Session of the General Assembly of the UN. Ratified by Japan in 1985. Its official name is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society
 The Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society was promulgated to promote formation of a gender-equal society in a comprehensive and systematic manner. It was to achieve the objective by determining basic policies pertaining to the formation of a gender-equal society, clarifying the responsibilities of the State, local government bodies and citizens to work towards this goal and by determining issues that would become the basis for measures towards this goal. (Enacted on 23 June 1999)
Affirmative Action
 The active provision of a necessary range of opportunities to either women or men to enable them to participate as equal members of society in any field of society they choose.
Gender
 Implies social and cultural discrimination of the sexes. Differs in meaning from the term sex, meaning biological gender differentiation.
Unpaid work
 Unpaid labour such as housework, child raising, nursing, etc, undertaken in the household, volunteer work in the community, etc.
Beijing Platform of Action
 An international document adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. It specifies actions and strategic targets national governments and international institutions should take to improve the status of women towards the twenty-first century.
Reproductive Health/Rights
 Health and rights pertaining to sexuality and reproduction

WOMEN'S CENTRE IN JAPAN

HYOGO-PREFECTURAL WOMEN'S CENTER (NICKNAMED EVEN)

Website URL <http://web.pref.hyogo.jp/even/>

Purpose

Established in October 1992 as a comprehensive administrative facility for executing policies for advancement of “gender-equal society”, which is the overall objective of the “New Plan for Women’s Happiness in Hyogo” (formulated in September 1990, up for revision in fiscal 2001).

Seven Pillars of Activities

- Enlightenment
Organizing seminars, symposiums and lectures, producing and distributing information magazines and handbooks.
- Information
Providing books and administrative data on women and men’s issues and also information on human resources, groups and education.
- Consultation
Offering consultation for various problems in life and relationship with others.
 (“Consultation on Women’s Issues” by counselors in this field and other special purpose consultations (legal, men’s affairs, and labour))
- Support for employment
Organizing skill lectures and seminars for reemployment.
- Support for activities and exchanges
Offering support for activities and exchanges among individuals and groups.



- Research and study
Conducting researches and studies on women and men’s issues.
- Training
Offering training sessions for those in charge of policies pertaining to women at city and town levels.

Outline of Facilities

- Address
8th floor Kobe Crystal Tower, 1-1-3 Higashi Kawasaki-cho, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0044
Phone: 078-360-8550 Fax: 078-360-8558
- Office hours
Monday through Friday 9:00a.m. to 7:00p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, holiday, end of year and New Year holidays: closed
- Outline of the facility (total floor area: 1,056.78m²)
1 Seminar Room, 1 Lecture Room, Information Library Room, 3 Consultation Rooms, Saloon, Child-care Room and Printing Room, etc.



[Note]

(Origin of the nickname)

It is originated in the English word “even” that means, “equal” and “same”. The word is selected to realize the gender-equal society where women and men share tasks of life in every field and live a happy and rewarding life in equal relationship.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Women living Zen : Japanese Sōtō Buddhist

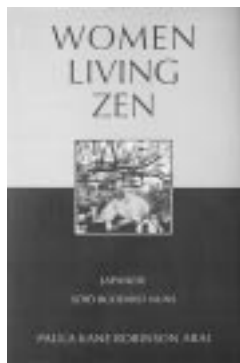
(Written by Paula Kane Robinson Arai. Published in 1999 by Oxford University Press. 233 pages. ISBN 019512393X.)

Although Buddhist nuns have made many important contributions to Japanese history and culture, they have received little scholarly attention. One reason for this relative neglect, Paula Arai argues, is that Zen studies have been strongly text-centered, lagging behind in ethnographic research. Because these nuns' activities rarely appear in the texts that have attracted scholarly attention, their role in the tradition has been largely overlooked. Moreover in Western scholarship, she notes, almost all non-gendered words in Japanese are translated into their male equivalents, rendering female participants invisible.

This groundbreaking study of the history, practices, and thoughts of Sōtō Zen nuns expands the purview of Zen studies, uncovering aspects of Zen not found in other sources. Arai demonstrates that many women in Japanese Buddhist history were not limited by a male-dominated institutional hierarchy. Their vision of Zen Buddhist teaching enabled them to navigate through oppressive institutional structures and regulations-testimony to their commitment and ingenuity. Although many Buddhist have made concessions during the twentieth century, these Zen nuns spent much of the century advancing their traditional monastic values by fighting for and winning reforms of the sect's misogynist regulations. Zen nuns' distinctive strategies establish their legitimacy, relevance, and power. Indeed in their fight for institutionalizing egalitarian regulations, Zen nuns in twentieth-century Japan became innovators for the sake of tradition.

With a rare combination of sensitivity and humor. Arai illustrates how the ideals of Zen are actually negotiated in cooking, cleaning, sleeping, and other details of daily monastic training first-hand, she lays to rest the common assumption that Zen monasteries are places for individuals to sit in deep meditation free from social concerns and constraints. This pioneering scholarship on Zen nuns' practices shows that at the core of their practice is a communal discipline of human relationships. They polish their hearts intense interaction. The monastic structure, regulations, curriculum, practices, and relationships serve as a crucible in which discipline melts down the façade of individuated selves to realize the beauty of harmonious relations. Gratitude is a key to their disciplined practices. Arai's accessibly written study will appeal to a wide range of scholars, students, and general readers.

The author, Paula K.R. Arai received a Ph.D. in religion from Harvard University. She is currently assistant professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies at Vanderbilt University. She conducted extensive field research on Sōtō Zen nuns in Japan while on a Fulbright Grant.



<Extract from Summary>

2. Gender and Japanese history

vol.1: Religion and customs
vol.2: The self and expression

(Editors, Wakita Haruko, Anne Bouchy, Ueno Chizuko ; translation editor, Gerry Yokota-Murakami. Published in 1999 by Osaka University Press Vol.1 419p. ISBN 4872590589 Vol.2 602p. ISBN 4872590597.)

The two-volume Japanese version of *Gender and Japanese history* was published in 1994 and 1995. Originally, there were plans to publish an English version along with the Japanese, but the logistics of realizing this proved too complex.

The intent was to focus on history without taking on a male-centered historical studies approach or being limited to the realm of women's history, an area that has developed in isolation from the rest of historical studies. One distinctive feature of this work is that it developed as a result of international cooperative research meetings held by scholars interested in gender studies. Another characteristic of the work is that its approach was interdisciplinary, based on bringing together scholars from related fields. Gender roles vary according to cultural and historical contexts. We viewed the modern period not simply in terms of liberation or oppression, but in terms of the variety of

changes in cultural and social gender roles within the particular social conditions of each historical period. In the field of Japanese studies, there is a recognizable difference in the approach undertaken by Japanese scholars and by scholars of other countries. One aim of this work was to increase opportunities for exchange among scholars of Japanese studies in order to question these differences.

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- * Gendering the concept of "Labor"

<...Extract from Introduction>



Introduction to NWEC

GENDER EQUALITY - STARTING WITH THE FAMILY

- THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PROMOTING HOME EDUCATION PROGRAMMES -

Home education is the starting point of education, a private education carried out by parents. Raising children who will take responsibility for the next generation is a matter of great significance to society, and the importance of supporting home education has increased with the changing times.

Under commission from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, NWEC has been conducting "Research on Policies to Promote Home Education from Gender Equality Perspective", a three-year programme initiated in FY1998. The aim of this programme is to study measures to promote home education that nurtures an awareness and appreciation of gender equality and respect for the individuality and human rights of each and every individual from infancy, irrespective of gender. Currently this plan is being executed with the goal of developing home education programmes that incorporate a gender-equal perspective and creating teaching materials among others.

During the first year, materials on home education compiled by the Prefectural boards of education and other similar institutions were collected and analysed, and the opinions of persons in charge of home education programmes were analysed with the help of a special questionnaire. As a result, it became clear that while persons in charge of home education programmes are aware of the importance of gender equality, exactly how they should incorporate this into their programmes remains a major issue. In order to resolve problems such as this, we believe it is necessary to provide information on content and methodology of home education programmes that incorporate a gender-equal perspective.

During the second year of the plan, we compiled a booklet entitled "Gender Equality, Starting with the Family - The theory and practice of promoting home education programmes -" for persons in charge of home education programmes and those involved in supporting child raising. The 56-page, A5-sized booklet uses a Q&A

format and comprises three sections: a theoretical section; a practical section and an information section. The practical section includes tips on planning home education programmes and management, suggested programmes, and tips on compiling literature on home education. The information section includes social trends and legislation pertaining to gender equality and a list of reference material.

Society of the future, a gender-equal society, is one in which each and every person is able to develop his or her individuality and abilities, irrespective of gender. Children are both obliged and expected to take responsibility for maintaining a society that does not say "he's a boy so..." or "she's a girl so...." The importance of home education cannot be overstated. We sincerely hope that this booklet will be used widely and that it marks a step towards the formation of a gender-equal society.

(Hiroe NAKANO, Senior Researcher, NWEC)



EDITOR'S NOTE

The NWEC Newsletter is published semi-annually with the aim of introducing NWEC study, exchange, research and information programmes, as well as information concerning women in Japan to overseas readers. It also aims to promote the formation of international information networks in the fields of women's education and home education.

As of January 2000, this newsletter is distributed free of charge to approximately 1,500 institutions (and individuals) in 178 countries throughout the world. However, as we wish to increase our distribution we would appreciate if you would contact us at the address below if you know of any institution that would be interested in receiving this newsletter.

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