

# Asian Breeze

KITAKYUSHU FORUM ON ASIAN WOMEN MARCH 2008

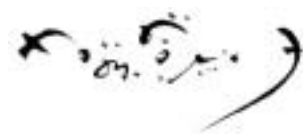
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# Women Today



Tokiko Kato  
Singer



## I. Don't Take Water from Us

We often hear, "Let us build a water service pipeline so that everyone can access tap water." During the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002 in Johannesburg, water was a main topic of discussion. At an NGO conference held concurrently with the Summit, I heard an African woman pleading: "For heaven's sake, please don't take water for the pipeline from the water source we've been carefully managing. By piping water from the source, you are taking water from us, poor people who cannot pay the water bill. Who on earth has decided to pipe water from the source? It is we women who draw water. We use water for cultivating, cooking and washing. We gather firewood, do housework and take care of children. Yet men hold meetings to discuss these important issues that affect our daily lives, without inviting women to the discussion table. Why don't they ask for women's opinions? Men, who know nothing about actual daily life, decide everything, and so they are destroying our lives."

I was surprised to hear her statement, since I had thought that women who carry heavy water jars on their heads would be pleased to have a water pipeline and to be relieved from the heavy burden of drawing and carrying water. I had never realized that these people had maintained water sources.

In the autumn of 2000, I was appointed a goodwill ambassador of the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). The following year I went to Kenya, home of the UNEP Headquarters, to visit Lake Nakuru, a well-known habitat for pink flamingos, and inspect water and sewerage systems that had been completed near the lake. The sewerage system was designed to feed treated wastewater into Lake Nakuru, whose water volume was decreasing. At the treatment plant, however, I was surprised to see only a little water. I learned that few local residents could afford to pay the water bill. Due partly to the insufficient number of water service users and partly to a chronic water shortage caused by abnormal weather, the water service business did not work. Subsequently, I heard that a

German company that had invested in the water project decided to withdraw from the project.

This is only one example of how infrastructure, designed to improve local residents' standard of living, eventually devastated their daily lives. Such failed projects clearly exhibit the importance of traditional ways of using limited natural resources. However humble those ways appear to be, they contain essential wisdom for long sustaining vital resources for residents in respective localities.

In the context of predictions on global water shortages, I am truly concerned about a dark business that is planning to make a profit from water transactions.

## II. Call from Gaia

In urban areas, we see less and less greenery. Yet, an increasing number of residents in large cities are eager to develop a closer relationship with nature. People have an inherent desire to see, touch and smell the soil.

Five years ago, I inherited a farm from my late husband. We receive many visitors who wish to experience farm life: middle-aged businesspersons who are considering their life after retirement, young students who are struggling to find their way, and many others who are disappointed in their present situation and who have found hope in country life. Increasing numbers of people in their thirties and forties are also giving up their careers for an agricultural lifestyle.

Indeed, many people are wandering here and there searching for the right direction. I believe that in a sense, such "wanderers" are pioneering a new age and a new society. I truly hope that their energy will be converted into a driving force for creating activities, and that their dissatisfaction with today's society will be transformed into the aspiration to create a new society. To convert their energy, however, they need self-esteem and confidence to lead their own lives.

If we continue covering the ground with concrete and contaminating the land, there will be no future for human beings. We all need contact with the soil and with nature.

### Profile of Tokiko Kato

Tokiko Kato made her debut as a professional singer in 1965, when she was a student at the University of Tokyo. She is known for such blockbuster hits as "Lullaby for a Lonely Night," "Millions of Roses" and "Travel Weary in Shiretoko." Presently, she serves as a board member of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Japan and as a goodwill ambassador of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition, she is committed to a campaign to realize a Sound Material-Cycle Society.

※This is an excerpt from Tokiko Kato's book, *Tsuchi ni inochi no hana sakaso* (Sunmark Publishing, Inc. 2008).

## Sports and Gender Part 1

### *Sports Culture and its Influence on Gender*



**Keiko Itani**  
Professor, Department of Health  
and Physical Education,  
Kyoto University of Education

#### Profile

Keiko Itani is a specialist in the pedagogy of physical education. She also serves as the director of the Japan Society for Sport and Gender Studies (established in 2002). Currently, she is committed to studies of physical education curricula in the U.S. and gender issues in sports and physical education.

Today, we are witness to many women athletes and their striking achievements. Along with the rapid increase in the number of women participating in sports activities, women's performance levels have improved radically. Moreover, women have begun to participate in a wider variety of sports events. Women of all generations take pleasure in sports, many continuing to take part in sports throughout their lives. In this environment, it is almost unbelievable that only a century ago women were not allowed to take part in sports activities.

In the modern Olympic Games, which began in 1896, women were not admitted to the first Games, held in Athens. At that time women's roles were to pay homage to male winners. In 2004, over one century later, Athens was again the venue of the Olympic Games. On that occasion, women comprised some 40% of the athletes participating in the Games. On the Japanese team, women comprised around 55%, outnumbering their male counterparts for the first time in the team's history.

The fact that there were no women runners admitted to marathon races until 1978 is another example of women's exclusion from sports competition. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) first admitted women to marathon races in 1978. Later, the women's marathon first became an official Olympic event at the Los Angeles Games, held in 1984. In the past quarter century, the women's marathon has seen great progress. Apart from the fact that the number of female runners has increased sharply, their performance levels have also improved dramatically.

In this series of lectures, I would like to discuss the culture of sports and physical education from a gender-sensitive perspective. Most of the sports events held at the Olympic Games and other athletic meets have been developed since the latter half of the 19th century. Underlying these modern sports are male-oriented principles, which have guided men's educational programs and supported the progress of the modern industrial society. In modern sports, you can easily recognize a strong tendency toward competition, internationalism, organizational structure, quantification and a quest to establish new records. All of these emphases

have been effective in supporting the development of a male-oriented modern industrial society. In other words, sports have helped to domesticate people by controlling their hostility and aggressiveness, even training them to obey authority.

Modern sports, originating in Great Britain during the 19th century, developed as an educational tool for men, whose roles became increasingly important in modern society. In British public schools—establishments for elite education—rugby and other sports were adopted in school curricula as effective means of developing “gentlemen.” Through sports, students were trained to develop good health, courage, respect for discipline, and the spirit of teamwork.

Since modern sports have been developed based on male-oriented principles, athletes are generally encouraged to gain more muscle and reduce body fat. Apart from modern sports, we enjoy a wide variety of exercise activities, including 1) hiking and bathing in the sea to enjoy leisure time, 2) aerobics, walking and yoga for health, 3) dancing as an art of self-expression and 4) tag and various other games as pastimes. These activities are non-competitive and difficult to quantify in terms of individual players' performance levels. In contrast, modern sports feature competitive events in which athletes with well-built physiques and greater muscle weight generally win. In the majority of such modern sports events, body fat is regarded as a negative element. Athletes are therefore encouraged to reduce extra body fat, in order to achieve higher performance levels. Since muscles and body fat are controlled by sex hormones, from a gender-sensitive perspective, we could even say that muscles and body fat represent male and female bodies respectively. Moreover, in modern sports culture which places priority on masculine muscles rather than on feminine body fat, women are considered inferior to men.

The dramatic activities of many sportswomen demonstrate not only the high potential of women, but also differences between men's and women's physical abilities. They also demonstrate the differences in their performance levels. Both gaps often seem impossible for women to overcome.

The 18<sup>th</sup>

# Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

Let's Link Together and Create a More Sustainable Future

From November 10 (Sat.) to 11 (Sun.) 2007, the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) held the 18<sup>th</sup> Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women with the theme: Let's Link Together and Create a More Sustainable Future.

## Program

### November 10 (Sat.)

13:15-13:55 Keynote Speech

“Words into Action: Education for Sustainable Development to Secure Our Common Future”

14:00-14:30 Special Program: Interview with Deputy Mayor of Kitakyushu

14:40-17:00 Session Meetings: 1. Gender/Human Rights Education

2. Environment/Development Education

3. Declining Birthrate/Aging Population and Welfare Education

### November 11 (Sun.)

10:00-12:30 Reports on KFAW's Research Projects

13:00-16:30 Symposium organized by TAKAMIYA MARIVER Environmental Protection Foundation

## Keynote Speech

### Words into Action: Education for Sustainable Development to Secure Our Common Future

Dr. Hans van Ginkel (Former Rector, United Nations University)

As the keynote speaker, Dr. Hans van Ginkel (Former Rector, United Nations University) gave a presentation on the theme of Education for Sustainable Development: ESD. He discussed the current situation of ESD around the world and what we can do to promote ESD.



▲ Dr. Hans van Ginkel

### Keynote Speech (Excerpt)

Until recently, people understood that the world was like a map indicating national borders with many countries, all painted in different colors within the contours of national borders. Today, however, we know that the world is best represented in a photograph of the globe, taken at night from outer space. Such a photograph shows bright areas and dark areas. The bright areas represent regions where many people dwell and engage in economic activities. They also represent where greater amounts of energy are consumed than are actually needed.

We can also say that the present-day world comprises many nodes and channels. Tokyo, Kitakyushu, New York and the Netherlands, for instance, are nodes, where people gather and engage in economic activities. Between nodes run channels, such as the *shinkansen*. As you see, we are now living in a world that is closely

linked, where people can never isolate what is happening to them from what is happening to other people living in other regions. In other words, we all have a common future as inhabitants on the earth, and must all work together to resolve various problems by cooperating with one another on local, national and international levels.

What is the most effective way to promote this fact to as many people as possible? ESD is one way. ESD is “education for all.” It involves not only gender education and human rights education, but also education regarding all issues essential to sustainable development for future generations.

When we talk about “sustainable development,” we must realize that underlying this concept is the human arrogance that people can control nature. We must always remember, however, that nature is powerful. We humans must try to live in harmony with nature, since we can never live in opposition. To live in harmony with nature, we must have proper knowledge. Since human life has become increasingly complex, we now need innovation to address various problems comprehensively by seeking an optimal balance between different demands, in addition to knowledge.

The term “innovation” is often interpreted as referring to technological innovation or invention. Technological innovation, however, entails social innovation. Social innovation, on the other hand, can take place without advanced technological innovation, if education and knowledge are available in various academic fields. Advanced educational facilities, such as universities, play essential roles in imparting knowledge. In addition,

tion to imparting existing knowledge, universities should fulfill their roles in facilitating innovation. Universities are responsible for developing professionals, such as teachers and physicians, and must be open to many people, including both students and practitioners, to whom they offer training. At the same time, universities must work to retain the cultural identities of their respective societies, since that is essential for developing sustainable societies.

In addition to universities, it is important to build platforms where people of diverse backgrounds can gather and work together to address various problems, including those related to gender equality and environmental degradation. Such platforms should be formed at regional organizations, including schools, universities, NGOs, municipal governments, media, museums of natural sciences and museums of fine arts. By using such existing organizations and facilities, we can introduce ESD not as a new subject to learn or teach, but as a program common to all existing subjects. The aim of ESD is not to introduce sustainable development education as an additional subject in existing curricula, but to transform present education into a new form whose focus is to promote sustainable development. Since education is something that must be available to people throughout their life stages, it is important to provide such opportunities to people long after they graduate from school. To that end, we deem it important to establish regional centers, or what we call Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs). In the beginning of 2007, United Nations University certified 35 RCEs worldwide. We have set the target of establishing a total of 400 RCEs by 2015.

To promote ESD at individual RCEs, we must consider various aspects of ESD, including environmental/ecological, economical and social aspects. Moreover, we must study these aspects on the conceptual, practical and individual case levels. Although what we must do differs according to respective levels, we must combine the results of studies conducted on all these levels to implement actual programs. To realize sustainable development, we must begin with what we can do in our day-to-day life, while at the same time developing systematic solutions applicable on a global basis. It is important that we act both locally and globally.

## Special Program

### Interview with Deputy Mayor of Kitakyushu

Ms. Chihoko Asada, the first female Deputy Mayor of Kitakyushu, who assumed office on October 9, 2007, was on hand to give an interview to the audience.

When Ms. Asada joined the former Ministry of Labour (now the Ministry of Health, Labour



▲Ms. Chihoko Asada

and Welfare), her first job was to prepare the draft of the Equal Opportunity Employment Law. Just before her transfer to Kitakyushu, she was committed to programs for helping workers achieve an optimal work-life balance, so she was questioned about this issue.

### Work-Life Balance (Excerpt from Ms. Asada's Remarks)

Immediately after World War II, Japan established a social system based on the presumption that men work outside the home as full-time workers and their wives stay home to do housework, with a few workers doing some auxiliary tasks, basically as part-timers. This system has changed little even today, even though an increasing number of women now work full-time outside the home. Today, women workers comprise 40% of Japan's labor force. Along with such dramatic changes, workers' attitudes toward their occupations and life have also changed. Men, as well as women, embrace diverse desires: in addition to their jobs, more and more people want to use their time and energy in learning and community activities. Despite such social changes and changes in attitudes, working systems in Japan remain as uniform and inflexible as ever. This gap between the system and workers' minds causes various problems. Women workers, for instance, feel it is a considerable burden to do housework and raise children. Men who desire to engage in childcare, on the other hand, find it difficult to do so, if they hope to be promoted or sometimes even to maintain their present positions or jobs.

Seeking an optimal work-life balance is important not only for working mothers struggling to fulfill both occupational and family responsibilities, but also for men and women of all generations who aspire to lead a fulfilled life. To ensure that workers can realize their goals, we must establish a new system for providing workers with diverse options. In the keynote speech, Dr. Hans Van Ginkel mentioned "social sustainability." I believe that "work-life balance" is one key concept for making our future society sustainable.

Ms. Asada also said, "As the Deputy Mayor of Kitakyushu, I advocate developing a city that is friendly to residents, developing social systems that encourage women's activities, and city planning involving citizens. In relation to developing social systems that encourage women's activities, my impression of women in Kitakyushu is that they are a little too modest and do not fully exhibit their abilities and vitality. They always stand one step behind men. I want women to step forward. I want to encourage them to assume responsible positions in companies or governmental bodies, and to exert their power and leadership."

## Session Meetings

On the basis of the keynote speech by Dr. Hans van Ginkel, three session meetings were held on the following themes: Gender/Human Rights Education; Environment/Development Education; and Declining Birth-rate/Aging Population and Welfare Education.

Panelists in the session meetings included specialists from diverse fields and backgrounds. After presentations on the panelists' respective activities, audience members also introduced their activities. All participants engaged in a spirited discussion about ESD.

### Session 1

**Theme:** Gender/Human Rights Education

**Panelist:** Ms. Shouko Nishimoto (Executive Director, Department of Child and Domestic Affairs, Child and Domestic Affairs Bureau, City of Kitakyushu)  
 Mr. Shun-ei Kawauchi (Associate Professor, School of Medicine, Kurume University)  
 Ms. Lowie Rosales (Gender Specialist, UN-HABITAT Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific- Fukuoka)



Ms. Nishimoto reported on Kitakyushu City's commitment to achieving a gender-equal society. After introducing data

showing that over 50% of both men and women in Kitakyushu support the stereotypical concept that the husband should work outside the home while the wife should stay home and take care of the family, Ms. Nishimoto discussed the need to promote gender equality awareness among young people. She suggested that men should be more aware of the merits of gender-equal societies, and ponder their roles in achieving such a society.

Mr. Kawauchi suggested that in environmental education it is essential to provide first-hand experience, rather than simply provide knowledge. As an example, he introduced model classes at a certain elementary school. In the classes, students voluntarily study insects or other interests, visit natural habitats and report on what they have discovered. Mr. Kawauchi said that through the experience of organizing the classes, he confirmed the importance of having firsthand experience, saying, "It's easy to forget what you hear from others, but if you actually see something, you begin to think about it. And, if you experience something firsthand, you begin to understand it, and you never forget what you have discovered."

Ms. Rosales introduced UN-HABITAT programs and women's roles in various post-disaster reconstruction programs. UN-HABITAT is a UN agency for promoting regional development and for addressing problems relating to urbanization and human settlement. Its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Fukuoka is committed to various projects for improving hygienic conditions and for promoting post-disaster/post-conflict reconstruction in many countries. The Office incorporates gender analysis, in preparing, implementing and monitoring these projects. According to Ms. Rosales, many women play essential roles in preparing reconstruction plans. Since gender policies are closely rela-

ted to governance and other issues of democracy, Ms. Rosales said that UN-HABITAT is committed to developing policies that promote and respect public participation in decision-making.

### Session 2

**Theme:** Environment/Development Education

**Panelist:** Ms. Yoshiko Tomiyasu (Representative, Kitakyushu Women's Association for a Better Aging Society)  
 Ms. Hiroko Morooka (Lecturer, Faculty of Food Culture, Kurashiki Sakuyo University)  
 Mr. Sven Holst (Associate Professor, Faculty of Literature, Fukuoka Women's University)

Ms. Tomiyasu is committed to various activities for addressing the issue of aging societies. The Association's programs include meal delivery, elderly care, and childcare services, as well as network projects and academic activities.



The meal delivery service is based on the Association's policy: meals for local residents, cooked by local residents using locally-produced foods. The Association members believe that people are deeply connected to the locale where they have grown up. By revaluing the traditional Japanese dietary culture in the context of present-day environmental challenges, and thereby reviving a traditional culture that is at peril of being forgotten, the Association is simultaneously addressing the challenges of the aging society and environmental degradation.

Ms. Morooka introduced the activities of RCE Okayama, which comprises the ESD Promotion Council, and is dedicated to the operation, support and evaluation of ESD activities; and the ESD Research Department, which carries out survey programs. According to Ms. Morooka, RCE Okayama still finds it difficult to promote ESD activities at the grassroots level. Accordingly, the RCE is considering the use of community halls as platforms that link ESD organizations and grassroots residents. Ms. Morooka stated that in communities where community halls do not hold many programs that involve local residents, the RCE must find other existing facilities that may serve as platforms, and that if there is no such existing facility, the RCE must build it.

Mr. Holst introduced volunteer activities by the elderly in Germany. According to him, many retired people in Germany provide volunteer services when municipalities cease providing public services for financial reasons. Since a wide variety of services are provided by senior citizens, they also hold various meetings to exchange information. Universities provide senior citizens with educational programs, so that citizens who have studied at universities can exert leadership in grassroots activities as "senior trainers." Many senior

trainers have formed “senior talent teams,” to develop their own projects and share their experiences with other members.

### Session 3

**Theme:** Declining Birthrate/Aging Population and Welfare Education

**Panelist:** Ms. Yumiko Ehara (Professor, Faculty of Urban Liberal Arts, Tokyo Metropolitan University)  
Mr. Noriaki Seki (Representative, NPO *Satoyama* Active Viewers of Eco-society)  
Ms. Sakiko Fujioka (Chairperson, Association of Nursery Schools, City of Kitakyushu)  
Ms. Fan Xiaoying (RCE Beijing/Beijing Normal University)



Ms. Ehara gave a presentation titled “The Vicious Cycle of Blaming the Declining Birthrate on Family Orientation: How to educate the younger generation about the problem of the declining birthrate.” By “family orientation,” Ms. Ehara means family-oriented policies, or policies that advocate welfare systems in which family members, particularly women, bear the burden of childcare and care of the elderly. Ms. Ehara suggested that the major cause of the present extremely low birthrate in Japan is this family-oriented welfare system. She explained that unless people understand that parenting is the responsibility of both men and women, the birthrate in Japan will continue to decline. Referring to her student’s views about the declining birthrates, she described the difficulty of liberating students from the deeply embedded family orientation.

Mr. Seki, whose NPO is committed to promoting sustainable lifestyles developed in traditional villages, introduced “The Forest Forum,” a program for providing patients with dementia and their families with opportunities to visit forests. This program is based on a network of NPOs, volunteers, enterprises and the municipal government. Before the Forest Forum, facilitator development seminars were held to provide NPO members and volunteers active in environmental programs with opportunities to learn optimal ways to respond to patients with dementia. In addition, since volunteers committed to environmental campaigns and welfare activities usually work separately, the event provided both groups with a rare opportunity to work together. Mr. Seki also mentioned that as a result of the Forest Forum, his NPO members discovered the optimal use of parks and forests to help the elderly truly relax and enjoy themselves.

Ms. Fujioka made a presentation on the results of the survey regarding child development and associated problems. In this aging society with the number of children decreasing rapidly, nationwide discussions are focused on who will support the aging population. Ms. Fujioka, however, pointed out that such discussions often lack the perspective of developing children’s sound bodies and minds. She also stated that, rather than talking about future generations yet to be born, we should focus our attention more on children who are living now, and work to make their lives healthier and happier.

Ms. Fan reported on the activities of RCE Beijing, which was founded in 2005 by Beijing Normal University. According to Ms. Fan, RCE Beijing is promoting ESD on the basis of extensive networks linking municipalities, schools, communities and universities. She also stated that RCE Beijing is promoting its activities on the following three levels: school education, community education and education on broader regional levels. To address problems involved in balancing both environmental preservation and regional development, the RCE is currently building a region-wide network involving municipalities, military forces, police, agricultural organizations, regional hospitals and community committees. In addition, the RCE offers seminars on ESD to teachers, school principals and government staff members, in order to develop specialists proficient in developing more advanced ESD programs.

### Reports on KFAW’s Research Projects

KFAW researchers and visiting researchers gave presentations on the following themes:

“Gender and Transportation: Approaches to global warming”

Ms. Yukiko Oda (KFAW Chief Researcher/ Professor, The Japan Red Cross Kyushu International College of Nursing)

“Environmental Education from the Gender Perspective: A case of Nepal”

Ms. Masako Ota (KFAW Senior Researcher)

### KFAW Visiting Researchers

“Budgeting for Gender Equality in Japan and Republic of Korea: An analysis of current gender budgeting practices and frameworks in two asian countries”

Ms. Reina Ichii (Full-time Lecturer, Institute for Gender Studies, Ochanomizu University)

Co-researcher: Ms. Yasuko Muramatsu (Professor Emeritus, Tokyo Woman’s Christian University)

“Community in Central Asia with Gender Perspectives”

Ms. Junko Otani (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Kyushu University)

Co-researcher: Mr. Takuzo Osugi (Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Kyushu University)

Ms. Asuka Kawano (Graduate School of Human-Environment Studies, Kyushu University)

“Current Status of Municipalities Positive Action”

Mr. Harumichi Yuasa (Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Kyushu International University)



# Republic of Korea-Study Tour

## Tongyeong City

Tongyeong, located in South Gyeongsang Province (Gyeongsangnam-do), covers Goseong Peninsula and 140 islands. The City has a population of 130,000. Tongyeong is a tourist resort and is home to various industries, including shipbuilding, fisheries and various traditional crafts, such as mother-of-pearl inlay.

## Incheon Metropolitan City

Incheon Metropolitan City, located close to Seoul and the third largest city in the Republic of Korea, has a population of 2.64 million. In 2003, the national government designated the City, with both an international airport and seaport, as the first free economic zone in the Republic of Korea. Since Incheon Metropolitan City and the City of Kitakyushu established sister-city relations in 1988, this year the two cities will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their relationship.

Pyongyang

Seoul

Incheon

Busan

Tongyeong

Kitakyushu

## ■ Purpose of study tour

To study various programs in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) selected the Republic of Korea as the destination of its most recent study tour. We planned to study advanced initiatives taken in the Republic of Korea for promoting ESD, so as to initiate innovative programs in the Kitakyushu region.

In Kitakyushu, our commitment to ESD has just begun. In December 2006, the United Nations University accredited Kitakyushu as the fourth Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE, designed to promote the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development) in Japan. The Kitakyushu ESD Council (formed in September 2006), currently consisting of 51 organizations including educational institutions, civil groups, enterprises and governmental bodies, has formed three teams in order to promote ESD activities in the region: public relations, project formation, and research.

In November 2006, the KFAW held the 17<sup>th</sup> Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women on the theme of ESD. At that time, KFAW had the pleasure of hearing a presentation by Ms. Park Eun-kyung, Chair of Tongyeong RCE. Impressed by her presentation, many audience members wanted to visit the RCE in the Republic of Korea to learn about the advanced initiatives being taken there. During the study tour (from October 12 to 16), tour members visited Tongyeong and Incheon Metropolitan City, home to the two RCEs in the Republic of Korea, to study their ESD activities and hold discussions with representatives of local educational institutes, civil groups and governmental bodies.

## ● Tongyeong RCE

Upon our arrival in Tongyeong, we took part in a meeting held at City Hall to promote friendship with members of the Tongyeong RCE. About 20 member organizations of the Tongyeong RCE participated. After the welcome address by Mayor Jin Euy-Jang, presenta-

tions were given on some initiatives taken by the Tongyeong RCE, followed by a Q&A session and free discussions.



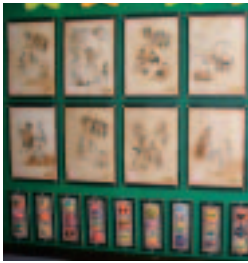
▲ Informal discussion with Tongyeong RCE

We learned that the City of Tongyeong, which was accredited as an RCE in October 2005, enacted a related ordinance in May 2006, in compliance with which the city established the RCE Board, Organizing Committee and six subcommittees all dedicated to various educational programs. A subcommittee, "ESD for citizens," involving around 80% of the NGOs and NPOs members within the city, organizes seminars and workshops for leaders of such organizations. Another subcommittee, "ESD for schools" is dedicated to ESD model school projects at one elementary school and one senior high school, as well as to organizing seminars and workshops for schoolteachers. The Seminar Subcommittee organizes RCE forums for ESD leaders, as well as educational programs for staff members of the city government. The Research and Evaluation Subcommittee prepares the 10-year RCE program. The Public Relations Subcommittee prepares pamphlets and web pages. The Infrastructure Subcommittee is dedicated to the ESD Educational Center project and Ecological Park project. In both projects, the Tongyeong RCE will construct the facilities concerned by 2014, with funding of KRW 150 billion (approx. USD 160 million) from the Ministry of Environment and the government of South Gyeongsang Province.

## ● Inpyeong Elementary School

In Tongyeong, we visited Inpyeong Elementary School, the first ESD model school in the Republic of Korea. After visiting the school facilities, we attended a presentation and discussion meeting. The teachers were organizing school curricula in line with ESD to develop educational programs focusing on issues familiar to





▲ Drawings by Inpyeong Elementary School students

students. Moreover, such programs are designed to promote students' understanding of a sustainable society, and to train students to practice sustainable lifestyles. The teachers introduced several original programs that they had prepared in a joint effort with civil groups and local communities through ESD networks. These original programs include special classes on traditional cultures and industries, such as mother-of-pearl inlay and lacquer ware production, as well as mask plays; and environmental education in which schoolchildren engage in pearl oyster cultivation and collecting and recycling beach litter. To reduce food waste, cafeteria style lunches have been introduced and students are instructed to take only the amount of food they can eat and "to empty their plate." This initiative, called the "Empty Plate Campaign," has been introduced in other schools in Tongyeong. At the discussion meeting, representatives of Tongyeong showed a keen interest in the City of Kitakyushu's initiative to sort household waste and its Eco-Town project.

### ● Incheon Guworlseo Elementary School

In Incheon Metropolitan City, we first visited Incheon Guworlseo Elementary School, where we attended a discussion meeting with schoolteachers. Located in the central part of the City, the school was once surrounded by grey



▲ "Hill of sharing," Guworlseo Elementary School

concrete buildings. To create an ideal environment in which children could envisage the future, in 2004 the school began greening its premises under the slogan: Let's turn the school into a forest with magical power. As a result of this greening program, the school now has a "hill of dream and growth", which exhibits plant transition in forests; the "hill of sharing", with a pond visited by insects and wild birds; an organic vegetable garden called the "farm of life", a crop farm called the "field of happiness", and a roof garden called the "hill of breezes". These various types of natural environments are designed to enable children to learn about ecology while playing. The school also observes traditional seasonal events, such as flower planting, iris festivals, star festivals and harvest festivals. For such events, parents and community residents are invited to the schoolyard.

### ● Friendly Exchange with Women's Groups in Incheon

At Incheon Women's Culture Center, we took part in a discussion meeting with the following women's groups: Incheon Women Workers' Association, Incheon YWCA, Incheon Womenlink, Incheon Women's Hotline and Incheon Women's Association. At the meeting, women introduced various topics, such as abolition of the household system. Following the meeting, we visited the

Women's Hotline Center, a shelter for women and a facility supporting women's independence. The Incheon Women's Hotline Center currently has a membership of 400. To support women's economic independence, the organization is committed to campaigns to promote property registration in the names of both husband and wife, protect human rights, and eradicate DV and the sex trade.



▲ Exchange with women's groups in Incheon

Next, we visited a municipal women's facility called Incheon Women's Plaza, which opened in 2004. There we participated in a traditional Korean tea ceremony, and observed a cooking class. Among the various classes held at the Women's Plaza, particular priority was placed on IT and language courses. The Plaza also had programs to support women entrepreneurs.

### ● Incheon Citizens' Day Event

We participated in an Incheon Citizens' Day event, held at Incheon Samsan World Gymnasium. Representatives of all of Incheon Metropolitan City's sister cities around the world were invited. Among those attending were Mr. Kitahashi, Mayor of Kitakyushu, and the Mayor of Honolulu. The event featured an award ceremony for distinguished citizens and various performances. Incheon is currently committed to a bidding campaign for the Asian Games 2014.

### ■ Impressions of the Tour

In Tongyeong, we were deeply impressed by the people's strong will and efforts to pass on to future generations their traditional cultures and industries, such as the production of mother-of-pearl inlay and lacquer ware. In Incheon, we were moved by the people's enthusiasm and commitment to restoring the natural environment amid the urban area, so as to give children contact with the natural environment.

Since the 2002 FIFA World Cup hosted by Japan and Korea, an increasing number of people in both countries have shown interest in their respective neighbor countries. During this study tour, we were deeply impressed by the enthusiasm of the South Korean people for ESD. Our contact with the Korean people was extremely inspiring and helpful for initiating various ESD programs in the Kitakyushu region. Although over the years, relations have had rocky periods, we felt that Japanese and Korean people are gradually developing equal partnerships between individuals. It is essential that individual citizens of both countries together consider global environmental degradation and other important challenges that face both countries. We strongly believe that such friendly ties between individuals can help form a sustainable global society.

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

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# Women and Community Activities

## Using the Stick for Development

Swapna Majumdar (India)

At first glance, Geeta Rathaur seems just like another housewife. But the demure housewife gave a wife-beater in her village a dose of his own medicine. It is this bold and innovative approach to problems that has won her the Outstanding Woman Panchayat Leader award presented annually by the Delhi-based Institute of Social Sciences (ISS). The ISS, which honours women in local self governments, chose Geeta from among 300 applicants in recognition of her work as *sarpanch* (head of a cluster of villages).

Geeta contends that if she had not beaten the man, his wife would have never had the courage to return to her maternal home with her children and file a case against him. "The husband came to his senses after he had to travel from our village to his wife's village to attend court hearings. It took four years for him to accept his mistake but once he returned with his wife, he has never beaten her again," she states proudly. In fact, according to Geeta, no man in her village has dared to beat his wife since then.

Geeta, however, was not always so bold. She was unwilling to run for *panchayat* or local government elections, content to carry out her duties as a housewife and mother. But after her family supported her, she agreed. After taming husbands who beat their wives, Geeta hit upon a novel idea to resolve disputes between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law. She imposed a monetary fine of Rs 500 on the person found guilty by the *panchayat* members. Expectedly, the number of disputes came down drastically.

What really endeared Geeta to the women in the village was her decision to empower them with land rights. She distributed land rights to 95 couples under the housing scheme but ensured that the document was in the woman's name. This was done to ensure that the land could not be sold surreptitiously without the woman's consent.

So does the firebrand wife rule the roost at home as well? No, says husband Champa Lal. There is no dispute about who the boss is at home. "I can't cook or clean. She has to do all the housework," he states. While Geeta nods in agreement, she is quick to point out that he has no objections to her being out of the house at odd hours and is supportive of her work. So, if she has to go to another village for work, he accompanies her.

Alternatively, Geeta has no qualms interfering in his work. Since her husband is also a member of the Janpad (next administrative tier above village) *panchayat*, she believes she has the right to voice her opinion in her capacity as his wife and a member of the village. When her husband was unable to attend a meeting, she went in his place. "It was to decide on an important development project. So I represented him. After all, it was for the benefit of the village," says Geeta, smilingly.



◀ Geeta Rathaur receives an award for her good work

## Women and Community Development: Some Prospects and Challenges

Bharati Pokhare (Nepal)

Community activities launched with women as target beneficiaries have notably been successful in villages of Nepal. Women are accordingly being targeted by numerous non-government organizations. This is primarily due to their immense interest in community activities as exhibited in these successful projects. And secondarily, it is because they are socially and economically marginalized.

Women's responses to interventions in community activities have been very positive. For example, this correspondent could easily note the change in sanitation behaviors of a woman-headed household in the remote Jumla district in the mid western region of Nepal. There I visited Maili, a local resident. She enthusiastically explained about joining a local community group a couple of years ago to discuss not only personal problems, but also a variety of issues related to community development.

She explained that a local NGO helped them to organize themselves into a group. Once the group was formed, the NGO offered adult literacy classes and orientations on health and sanitation. They were also taken on a visit to Butwal to observe the healthy behavior of people. Maili said that the first few things she did after getting back to the village was: (a) construct a toilet with financial support to eliminate open defecation; (b) relocate her pigshed from her backyard to a distant field to minimize infestation mosquito, flies and other insects and to avoid bad smells and an unsanitary environment; (c) focus on personal hygiene and strictly monitor children's sanitary behavior, (d) visit local health posts instead of traditional healers during illness; and, (e) communicate to others what she learned.

Based on my meeting with several stakeholders, such as economically active women, economically inactive housewives, NGO staff, key informants, husbands of both types of women, community health workers, and extension agents in the community, I feel that women's proactive participation in community activities in remote rural parts of Nepal is constrained mainly by factors such as their existing work burden, lack of recognition and support from male counterparts, lack of education, and limited productive opportunities.

Women in Nepal's rural areas face additional hardships due to the remoteness of their location in terms of accessibility. For example, Maili has to walk over difficult hilly terrain for 40 minutes one way to fetch drinking water. This means that those 80 minutes—which would have otherwise been contributed to meaningful community activity—are lost.

Lack of educational and productive opportunities severely hamper women's efforts towards their own capacity building and income generation. The majority lack a basic educational foundation. Limited economic potential exists in these communities due to geographical remoteness and the resultant lack of access to basic infrastructure and facilities. If serious efforts towards removing these barriers are made, we can expect women to leave a huge mark in community activities in Nepal.

## Experiences of Rights Based Approach in Kenya: Challenges and Prospects

Justus Mutie (Kenya)

During a nationwide dissemination of the popular version of the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) among stakeholders, new perspectives, hitherto unacknowledged, emerged concerning deeply-rooted underlying causes of inequalities and discrimination in Kenya. The Dissemination Strategy was developed to meet the challenge associated with the implementation of a right based approach. This approach is to meet the basic needs of individuals, namely, food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, clean water and a safe environment. It also involves the right to participate in making and implementing decisions which affect ones own development.

Among the deeply rooted challenges are relics of seventy years of colonialism that brought about distortions in social relations. The most notable of these is the exporting of male labor to the urban sector, leaving women in the rural economy without supporting social and physical infrastructure. This aspect, which continues to affect rural development, is further complicated by post colonial governance practices. These practices are associated with command-based resource allocation from the central government where the neediest, including women in rural sectors and urban informal settlements, are by-passed by budgeting arrangements.

Coupled with the problems of distortion, another challenge affecting the rights based approach is the pursuit of market-oriented policies. These have, since the 1980s, stipulated cost-sharing and cost-recovery mechanisms of debt financing, which has in turn affected basic services delivery.

Other supplementary determinations of inequalities and discrimination include rural-urban equality concerns, non-performing governance structures, gender relations and social exclusion, and lack of a citizens' charter to enforce accountability by leaders and government officials.

The suggestions on the way forward include the need for fundamental shifts in changing beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. For example, women's rights are not purely a feminine issue but a development challenge to be integrated into all levels of decision making, ranging from the household and family levels to the national agenda. It is merely not a domain of activists as has often been perceived but a dynamic human rights issue.

There is also a need to promote activities through a citizens' charter which identifies regional based development and governance priorities towards achieving sustainable development. Also, it is necessary to enhance the accountability of leaders to promote leadership by objectives rather than the exception, and capacity building of grassroots level institutional frameworks to development governance structures for easy service delivery. All stakeholders, especially civil society and faith based organizations, should advance the best management practices to ensure that citizens take their rightful position in championing their basic needs as basic rights.



▲Basic rights necessitate women putting more time and energy into community work

## THE FORUM WINDOW

### The Rise and Fall of the Australian Femocrat

In 1984, the Australian Government became the first in the world to introduce Gender Budget Analysis (GBA). This involved the analysis of government budgeting from a gender-sensitive perspective. This action was principally driven by the female bureaucrats of the time, otherwise known as *femocrats*.

In Australia during the 1970s, the women's movement mainly focused on incorporating feminists' perspectives into government policy by increasing the number of feminists in Parliament and the government. At that time, the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), a non-party women's lobby group founded in 1973, was leading the Australian women's movement. Promoting six objectives, including equal employment opportunities for men and women and more childcare services, the WEL worked to increase the number of female members in the Australian Parliament, as well as the number of female bureaucrats.

Until 1996, *femocrats* worked in all federal departments and agencies to advise on women related policies. Here, they cooperated with the Office of the Status of Women (OSW) to undertake GBA. The findings of GBA in all federal departments and agencies were announced in the annual Women's Budget Statement, after it had been examined by the Women's Advisor, who was appointed by the Prime Minister. In this way, GBA in Australia was carried out by *femocrats* who utilized networks across many federal departments and agencies.

In 1996 however, the role of *femocrats* diminished due to the change in government. The new Liberal Coalition Government abolished Women's Units in federal departments and agencies and cut the budget and personnel of the OSW. Also, the new government downgraded the status of the OSW by transferring it from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Department of Families and Community Services (now the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs). As a result, the power of the OSW declined remarkably. The government also discouraged *femocrats* from including criticism of the government in the annual Women's Budget Statement. Moreover, urged by the Department of Treasury, the Women's Budget Statement, which in its heyday totaled more than 200 pages, was reduced to only a few dozen pages in 1996, a change eventually leading to the demise of GBA in Australia.

After the federal election held at the end of November 2007, the Australian Labor Party won in a landslide victory and returned to power after ten years in opposition. The new cabinet now has seven female members including a female Deputy Prime Minister, a record in Australian history. It is yet to be seen however, if this will translate into a restoration of the power of the *femocrats* and resurrect GBA to better promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Reina Ichii

Full-time Lecturer, Institute for Gender Studies, Ochanomizu University  
KFAW Visiting Researcher

# INFORMATION

## Q&A Corner

### Question

Compulsory education in Japan is nine years – six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school. The new school year starts in April. How about in your country?

Naomi Sasaki, Kitakyushu, Japan



Namande Grace,  
Uganda

Elementary education (seven years) is free in Uganda. At the end of the seventh year, we sit examinations held by the Examination Board. Once we pass, we qualify for secondary education.

Secondary education is divided into ordinary (four years) and advanced levels (two years). In the fourth year of the ordinary level, we sit examinations. If we pass, we can move ahead to the advanced level. After we complete the advanced level, we can enter university or technical schools by taking examinations.

Each year has three terms. The new school year starts in February.

### Answer



Jocelyne Vokouma,  
Burkina Faso

In the educational system of Burkina Faso, there are six years in elementary school and seven years in secondary school. The secondary school, which includes junior (four years) and senior high schools (three years), is the preparation stage for college. The new school year starts in October and ends in June.

Although elementary school is free, not all children can go to school. As many families in Burkina Faso are economically poor and have a lot of children, some parents occasionally have their children abandon studying to help at home. The number of schoolhouses and textbooks are insufficient. Therefore, Burkina Faso's literacy rate is low—31.4% for men and 16.6% for women (*Data Book of The World 2008: Ninomiya Shoten*)—and is among the lowest ranking countries in the world.

## COVER PROFILE



Ms. Emi Kotoge  
Policewoman

Ms. Kotoge, originally from Fukuoka Prefecture, became a policewoman because she wanted to work for local citizens. Police officers learn *kendo* or *judo* as a part of their training because it is useful in the arrests of criminals and defense. Ms. Kotoge chose *kendo* because she started learning *kendo* as an extracurricular activity when she was a junior high school student. *Kendo*, like other Japanese martial arts, is a sport that emphasizes tradition and etiquette. In *kendo*, it is important to learn not only sword usage but also the samurai spirit. It is also essential to form one's character through hard practice. Ms. Kotoge thinks that she was able to endure the hard training of police training school because of her prior *kendo* experience. Moreover, she acquired proper etiquette and strength not only physically, but also mentally. These are very useful traits for work as a policewoman.

### Location of Kitakyushu



## Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

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### KFAW

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) was established in October of 1990 with a special government fund for revitalization projects. Subsequently, in 1993, the KFAW was recognized as a foundation by the Ministry of Labor. The purpose of the KFAW, through various projects, is to promote the improvement of women's status as well as their mutual understanding and cooperation in Asia.



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