


Asian Breeze



SHIBIKISE FESTIVAL
At the Harvesting Ceremony Festival, after the shinto priest gives honor to the shrine's god,
he playfully covers the children with rice straw.

SYMPOSIUM
WOMEN TODAY
SEMINAR
STUDENTS' STUDY TOUR
DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS INFORMATION
THE FORUM WINDOW


KFAW

NOVEMBER 1991 No. **3**
MEMORIAL ISSUE OF THE 1st ANNIVERSARY

SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING THE 1st ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION



The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women hailed the 1st anniversary of its foundation in October. To celebrate the anniversary, a symposium was held with the theme "WID (Women in Development)," one of the Forum's major areas of concern, inviting celebrities from various fields as panelists. (coordinated by the Secretariat)

Panelists

Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi: Cabinet Councillor and Director, Office for Women's Affairs, Prime Minister's Office

Ms. Yoriko Meguro: Professor, Sophia University

Mr. Hatsuhsa Takashima: Director General, NHK News, Japan Broadcasting Corporation

Mr. Koichi Sueyoshi: Mayor, City of Kitakyushu

Ms. Hisako Takahashi: President, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (presided the panel)

Background of Establishment

<Sueyoshi> Women's affairs should be viewed by society in a way which respects individual identities and allows individual talents to be fully exhibited so that social stability and development can be achieved in the 21st century.



▲Mr. Koichi Sueyoshi

Women, as a crossroads, wishes to simultaneously conduct and correlate exchange and research.

What is Development ?

<Horiuchi> Development is a process through which individuals and the community where they live improve continuously. The word "development" means the advancement of all aspects of the society including economy, people's living standards, culture, etc.

<Meguro> In short, development is change. What is essential is what changes are made. Since changes are linked globally, we see the impacts of these changes in the social system. Thinking about development of Asian countries, we must respect the variety of Asian societies. And we should cooperate with each other in such way to allow each nation to develop independently.



▲Ms. Yoriko Meguro

<Takahashi> I feel as we face the 21st century, we should consider now how the world should become and what roles individuals, particularly women, should play. Everyone should be able to follow their own path towards happiness and a fulfilling life.

Women's Participation in Development

<Horiuchi> The ultimate purpose of every change in a society is to achieve the happiness of the people. Women should also participate in the pursuit of happiness. The issues concerning "Women in Development" can be summarized by the phrases - "efficiency" and "fairness." The word "fairness" implies that all people are granted equal opportunities to participate and equal benefits. It is important to fully recognize the large unsung contributions women have made in social development.



▲Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi

<Meguro> Development was previously defined as a nation's prosperity. In 1970s, it was decided that development should not only benefit particular sectors of societies. As this redefinition of development was still gender-blind, women were left outside of the development process. Consequently there has been an increasing number of poverty-stricken women. It is important to establish a system through which women's views are reflected in development programs and women can help themselves get out of poverty.

<Takahashi> Women need to participate aggressively in developmental processes in all fields and open up for themselves a way towards independence, instead of simply settling for the status of beneficiaries.



▲Mr. Hatsuhsa Takashima

<Takahima> Education is one of the essential factors in helping women become more independent and developing society further. It is essential for people not only in developing countries but those in advanced countries as well. In developing countries it is necessary to improve education for women and increase their literacy rate, various kinds of information. People in advanced countries must realize the current problems of developing countries and regard them as their own problems.

Expectations Placed on the Forum

<Meguro> I wish that exchange activities be promoted not only at the official but also at the grass-roots level. I hope that the Forum will do its best to carry out this endeavor.

<Takahima> I hope the Forum will do its best and take advantage of the benefits a small organization can offer to deepen relationships with people in Asian countries.

<Horiuchi> I ask the Forum to do its best to conduct steady and persistent research on Asian women and promote projects focused on women's independence.



▲Kitakyushu International Conference Center

<Takahashi> I think that it is important for us to deeply study the various problems affecting Asian women. Our constant efforts will achieve great gains. I wish to work with Asian people to further promote women in development.



▲Ms. Hisako Takahashi

WOMEN TODAY



Ms. Hiroko Hara

Professor
Institute for Women's Studies,
Ochanomizu University

It may be said that after the Meiji Restoration, catching up with USA and Europe became the concern of the entire Japanese society, and also the goal in life for most Japanese individuals. Such a tendency was not, however, particular only to Japan. Most societies throughout the world also interpreted it as just and good to develop scientific technology, increase industrial productivity and raise the standard of people's living. For them, the word "progress" was synonymous with "westernization." To speak in a western language, to be familiar with western arts, literature, music and painting and to live in a western style house came to symbolize good living. However, many people from different societies during the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, in their eagerness to westernize themselves, forgot the value of the diversity of human potential which makes human lives so rich and meaningful. They were inclined to consider cultures, including their own traditional ones, other than western cultures as being backward.

Perhaps because of its geographical status as an island nation, Japanese people quickly took up the slogan "to unite the country to overtake and outpace western societies." As a result, the variety in races and cultures found in Japan were glossed over and the people tended to perceive Japanese society as monoracial, monolingualistic and monocultural. At the same time, the Japanese began to measure the Japan's progress in terms of how much they could imitate the west as they considered non-western countries to be backward. This resulted in less Japanese interest in and ignorance about Asian neighbors and African countries.

In the 18th and 19th centuries and the first half of the 20th century, in the wake of the Industrial

Revolution, western countries were interested in competing with each other to expand their global political influence by raising their industrial productivity and reinforcing their military power. They also held the ethnocentric view that societies other than their own were backward. This ethnocentric view, in the second half of the 20th century, is changing.

In Japan, however, when people talk of "international exchange," it often means exchanges with western countries. Consequently, Kitakyushu citizen's progressive and creative efforts to encourage people to direct their eyes toward Asian countries are indeed worth praising. Also commendable is their respect for resident foreigners coming from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Due mainly to westernization or so called "modernization," job discrimination by gender, i.e., that "man is outside, woman is inside" has now been firmly rooted in many societies. In other words, before western cultures were encountered, both the man and woman in family would share with each other information and know-how of the things inside and outside of their household in a flexible way. As modernization advanced, however, it became the man's duty to earn the daily bread for his family and the woman's duty to organize their household affairs. This led to the biased notion that men have superior abilities to women. Particularly, in societies where the gap in the literacy rate between men and women is large, men often emerge as the key figures in technical fields because of their capability to read the instruction manuals accompanying chemicals or machines, whereas women are merely given chores like sweeping or cleaning, if they are not completely excluded from certain fields. It is time that this situation be addressed in terms of social fairness.

There are many women who are gifted in collecting information, expressing themselves and coordinating human relations in international settings. The time has come for men and women of the world, whose cultural backgrounds are varied and diversified, to help each other in enlightening ourselves.

Ms. KUDAT WORLD BANK REP. SPEAKS OUT

In June, 1991, the Forum held a seminar under the theme "Thinking About Women and Environment," to which Ms. Ayse Kudat, a staff member of the World Bank, was invited as a lecturer. At the United Nations, Ms. Ayse Kudat was responsible for the "Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" aimed at elevating women's social status towards the year 2000 as well as dealing with problems such as "Women in Development" and "Environmental Problems" at the World Bank. Currently, she holds the post of Senior Program Officer in the Infrastructure and Urban Development Department of the World Bank.

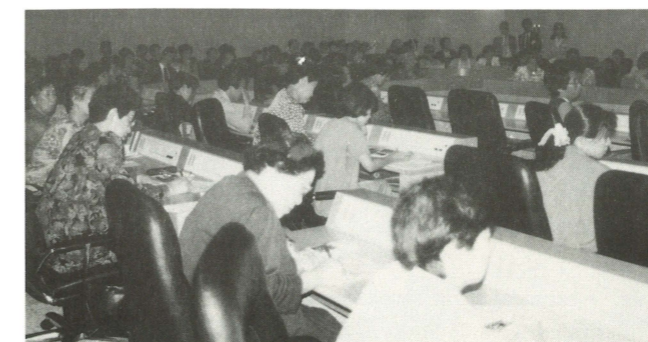
Development is a process of sustained improvement of the individual and the society, a process of effective utilization of human and other resources and of distribution to all of benefits that result from such a process. No development of the poor is accomplished when the rich only extend monetary aid to the poor. Since problems are rooted in the social structure, we must bring them to the surface and, at the same time, assist women in the Third World in a way which encourages them to find out for themselves what the real problems are.

In order to accomplish the above stated goals, it is considered necessary:

1. To find out whether governmental aid activities to the Third World are focused on women or not.
2. To work together with organizations who engage in women- and environment-related activities.
3. To effectively harness mass media on an international level.
4. To extend a helping hand to women in the Third World. Supporting women as mothers, nurturers and educators in their efforts to avoid environmental degradation will help bring up a generation of young adults with a keen sense of environmental awareness and responsibility.

Note: The World Bank

The World Bank consists of two institutions - the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, both of which aim to improve the living standards of developing countries by providing them with development funds from developed countries.



JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' STUDY TOUR

In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of its foundation, the Kitakyushu Branch of Japan Committee for UNICEF organized a study tour of junior and senior high school students to Southeast Asian countries. The Japan Committee for UNICEF is a foundation with a nationwide network, established with the aim of disseminating UNICEF's ideals to protect and help children of developing countries as well as staging fund-raising activities throughout Japan.

The tour group consisted of 6 junior high school students, 10 senior high school students and staff from the Kitakyushu Branch of Japan Committee for UNICEF. The participants were selected from candidates who responded to a public invitation. While visiting Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, from August 22nd (Thu.) to the 28th (Wed.), 1991, the students studied at length the international cooperation activities as well as the histories, cultures and lifestyles of the people in these countries.

In this report, their experiences at OISCA is reported.

OISCA (Organization Industrial Spiritual Cultural Advancement) provides study and training to support development and promotion of Asian and Pacific nations through their own efforts. OISCA Training Center in Bogor provides agricultural technology training. The members of a visiting tour pruned watermelon sprouts and plowed other fields for pea planting with native trainees.

On that day, they participated in an exchange party hosted by OISCA's supervisors and native trainees later that evening. At the party, they ate goat roasted whole and Indonesian dishes, and danced Bon Odori dances (Summer Festival dances), such as "Tankobushi," around a campfire.



▲At OISCA Training Center

Throughout this trip, I felt that Indonesian people live each day to the fullest. I felt as if I really learned "what living is about." Before traveling to Indonesia, I was determined to learn more about foreign people and their cultures. Like a new star in the wide cosmos, I wished to discover the fullness of life and the richness of its adventures.

By Akira Fukami, representative of members (Kokura High School, 3rd grade)

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS

GRANNIES' SILKS

By Ms. Mariko Kato <Thailand>

I am doing graduate work in developmental sociology at a local university in Isan, northeastern Thailand. Last year, I was instructed to visit country villages to interview villagers and write reports on these visits.

Visiting the villages, I first got to know the grannies. While most of the young folks are away from home, working in Bangkok and other large cities, the grannies manage the household, take care of farm crops and grandchildren, as well as visit nearby Buddhist temples. In the villages, rice is the only farm crop. Together with their family members, the grannies plant rice seedlings in the rainy season (May thru Sep.) and reap the crop in the harvesting season (Dec. thru Jan.). When they are free from farm work, the grannies rear silkworms and weave silks.

For women in Isan, silk means not only extra income when they are free from farmwork, but also represents tradition within their daily lives. The women jealously guard silk loincloths they have woven themselves until the time comes to present them to their daughters who will marry. Likewise, the women present the yellow cloths they have woven to their sons who have become Buddhist monks. By this act, the women believe they will have happiness after death and go to heaven. They take out a fancy silk loincloth from their closets and put it on when they visit a Buddhist temple or take a ceremonious outing. They never allow men to meddle in their silk production, from rearing silkworms to weaving, with the exception of caring for the mulberry fields. In this way, mothers hand down the legacy of their ancestors' tradition to their daughters. While working, the women noisily criticize "so and so is good and so and so is bad at weaving."

However, these days, the life cycle the grannies have been maintaining so far is undergoing a gradual change. In the past, woven silks used to be kept by the weavers and seldom sold except in extreme emergency. Unfortunately today, they are forced for economic reasons to sell their silks for a cash income. Government or non-government offices have adopted a silk promotion policy as a way to increase the income of farmers who are suffering from a meager harvest. This situation was caused by the shortage of water triggered by recent irregular climatic conditions in the Isan district. Silks woven for their daughters and other family members are now being sold. Today, the grannies having no silks to use for themselves wear factory made printed cotton loincloths.

Now that silks are valued only for their economic value as merchandise, for whom are the grannies weaving their silk cloths?

PIGLET IN SAN MIGUEL

By Ms. Elena L. Samonte <Philippines>

Aling Maria wakes up at 4:00 in the morning and starts her long day visiting various barangays in San Miguel, Bulacan. When you ask her why she does this work, she replies she can help others. She is one of the volunteers of the Kababaihang Barangay ng Bulacan (KBB), a women's organization involved in livelihood projects.

Any woman above 22 years of age, whether single or married, can become a member. KBB's various activities are basically livelihood projects, some of which are swine-breeding and fattening, duck raising, planting trees in the community, knitting, as well as making garments or stuffed toys.

For the swine breeding/fattening project, the KBB chapter (there are 56 of them in 47 barangays) raffles off one piglet. The winner then raises the pig and has it mated. After the pig gives birth, one offspring is given back to the organization. Another piglet is given to another member in the barangay. The piglet which is given to the organization is, in turn, given to another barangay. In this manner, the benefits are multiplied.

Those who engage in knitting sweaters, sewing children's clothes and adult's dresses, or making stuffed toys are assured of a market since these goods are exported. Even the knitting needles are made locally, out of bamboo, enabling them to cut production costs. It is interesting to note that in some barangays, not only the women knit but their children, and sometimes, even the men, as well.

More and more women from the lower socio-economic class are joining the KBB since they use their earnings as supplementary income. Given an average household size of 6-7, with an annual income equivalent to 4-10 cavans of rice, engaging in a livelihood project can be a big boost to a member's economic status.

How have these livelihood projects affected the lives of the women? From being shy and isolated, they have become more outgoing. They exhibit greater self-efficiency, i.e., have greater belief in their ability to effect a change and accomplish what they set out to do.

As for husband-wife relationships, they have also improved because of the mutual assistance and support they give each other. Although initially the men complained about this change in their lives, they began to understand their wives' situation better. Consequently, they took on household responsibilities such as caring for the children, cleaning the house, etc. Income generation and household maintenance are now shared activities and are not role-circumscribed.

Note: * barangay is the smallest political unit in the community

**1 cavan = 75 liters of rice

ASIAN AND PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

The Women in Development (WID) Program is part of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC), which is a key regional inter-governmental development center of 20 member governments including Japan. While WID Program functions within the framework of APDC's overall program, it continues to have an organizational identity that is distinct. The APDC itself tries to respond to the developmental needs faced by countries in this region. It does this through the study and analysis of development options and through the formulation of appropriate development strategies, policies and programs to be adopted by member governments. The WID Program seeks to respond to the urgent need for new policy initiatives and actions that ensure that women become both the beneficiaries and participants of development, rather than become marginalized by the development process as often happens.

Our research projects therefore are geared toward uncovering and analyzing the effects of development processes on women, in particular poor and disenfranchised women. Although the areas of research correspond at some levels with the mainstream development issues identified by APDC, much of our research impetus also comes from needs identified by women's organizations in the region.

We believe WID Program must be rooted in the women's movement of the region. In this way we can better research and transmit these women's perspectives from the grass-roots level to the national policy level.

While our research projects are geared towards the information needs of state planners and other development agents, our publications on our research projects have proved useful to many grass-roots organization interested in women's issues as well.

Besides research, there are three other components that are of equal importance in the functioning of WID Program. They are:

1. Dissemination of information gathered through research.
2. Training of women leaders and extension workers to design and implement more effective programs for women.
3. Networking with women's groups in the region to maintain contact with the women's movement as a whole.



▲Members of the Women Development Program Team

THE FORUM WINDOW

WOMEN'S STUDIES NETWORKS

The Forum recruited speakers who can present their opinions, studies and research results about Asian women at the 2nd Kitakyushu Conference on December 1-2, 1991. It was our pleasure to have received far more applications than we expected from different parts of Japan and from many professional as well as non-professional women including foreign students and visitors concerned with Asian women's issues.

For a long time research has been accomplished mainly by men, who can spend their time freely, because the responsibility for housekeeping, child rearing or caring for the old parents and patients and so on has been laid on women. As a result, the content and focus of these studies have largely been dominated by men's views.

Since 1960's feminist studies have insisted that the methodology and results of knowledge systems and expression systems should be re-examined from the standpoint of women. And in order to do this, more and more ordinary women should be given opportunities to speak out their thoughts and experiences. The recently published UN report titled "The World's Women 1970-90" tells us why this is particularly important among Asian women. For example, more than two thirds of Asian and African women are illiterate. And in some countries, young girls spend many hours carrying water from the river to their homes instead of attending schools.

It is our hope that speakers participating in the Kitakyushu Conference will recommend how to improve Asian women's situations and further develop Asian women's hidden potential.

The Forum's study and research activities have created a new network—"The Japan Society of East Asian Studies (JSEAS)" in Kyushu. With the movement toward EC integration, as well as the break down of Soviet Union and the East European socialistic system, a new world order is growing which is also affecting Asia. JSEAS's 1st assembly emphasized that regional exchange should be accomplished through equal partnerships, as well as the mutual understanding of each culture, and not through Japan's economic dominance.

One of the JSEAS's three opening memorial symposiums dealt with "The Situation of Asian Women Workers and Japan." Ms. Misumi, the Forum's managing director, and I joined as coordinator and panelist respectively. Our symposium concluded with reports and discussions on Asian women's work; the promotion of equality and the preservation of human rights among all countries, regions, ethnicities and sexes. We also stated that efforts should be made to do away with the large economic gaps among Asian countries.

Masami Shinozaki

Chief Researcher, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

INFORMATION

●THE 2nd KITAKYUSHU CONFERENCE ON ASIAN WOMEN

The 2nd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women will be held at Kitakyushu International Conference Center, December 1 (Sun.) - 2 (Mon.), 1991.

This Conference is sponsored by the Forum as one of its major programs aimed at linking its activities of "exchange" and "research."

At the 2nd Conference, the theme will be "Women in Decision Making." Measures to solve problems obstructing the full participation by both Asian men and women in joint decision making will be discussed.

The theme of "Women in Development" will be also be covered.

You are cordially invited to participate in the symposium.

December 1 (Sun.)

14:00~16:00 Workshop

16:00~17:30 Citizens' exchange meeting, Bazaar, Asian photo exhibition

17:30~21:00 Reporting of Japan-Korea joint research International symposium

Panelists:

Ms. Leticia Ramos Shahani: Senator in the Philippines

Ms. Supatra Masdit: Former Minister in Thailand

Ms. Mayumi Moriyama: A Member, the House of Councillors in Japan

Ms. Manae Kubota: A Member, the House of Councillors in Japan

Mr. Koichi Sueyoshi: Mayor, City of Kitakyushu

Coordinator:

Ms. Tomoyo Nonaka: Journalist

December 2 (Mon.)

9:30~15:30 Research and Discussion (free presentation and forum)

Please feel free to contact the Forum at (093) 551-1220 for participation procedures and any other information.

●THE 2nd ASIAN SEMINAR

The Forum held "The 2nd Asian Seminar" in 6 sessions, every Saturday from August 10 - September 21, 1991.

The purpose of this Seminar was to make citizens more aware of Asia. 97 people participated.

The theme of this Seminar was "Women in Development." It was approached from many points of view, such as economy, education and environment.

●SEMINAR ON WOMEN'S ISSUES IN NATIONAL MACHINERIES

The President of the Forum, Hisako Takahashi, gave a lecture for senior managers in charge of women's problems in Asian countries at the Seminar on Women's Issues in National Machineries on October 9, 1991. The Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Ministry held this seminar with JICA to discuss the current situation and common issues of National Machineries. There were 13 participants from various Asian countries. Last year, the participants of the 1st Seminar visited Kitakyushu City as a part of local programs.

The President, Ms. Takahashi, appealed to the participants for establishment of an informational network among countries.

●"Asian Breeze" SUBSCRIBERS' DRIVE

The "Asian Breeze" is published every four months. It is distributed free at the Public Relations Section of the City Hall of Kitakyushu and Citizens' Consultation Room in every ward. If you would like us to send you a copy, please contact us. Our telephone No. : 093-551-1220

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

The Asian Breeze embraces the golden autumn as it celebrates its 1st anniversary. While enjoying roasted chestnuts, brilliant orange persimmons and sun ripened grapes, we are thinking about all our Asian friends; rejoicing in old and new encounters; and sailing forth on hopes for the future.



Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

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