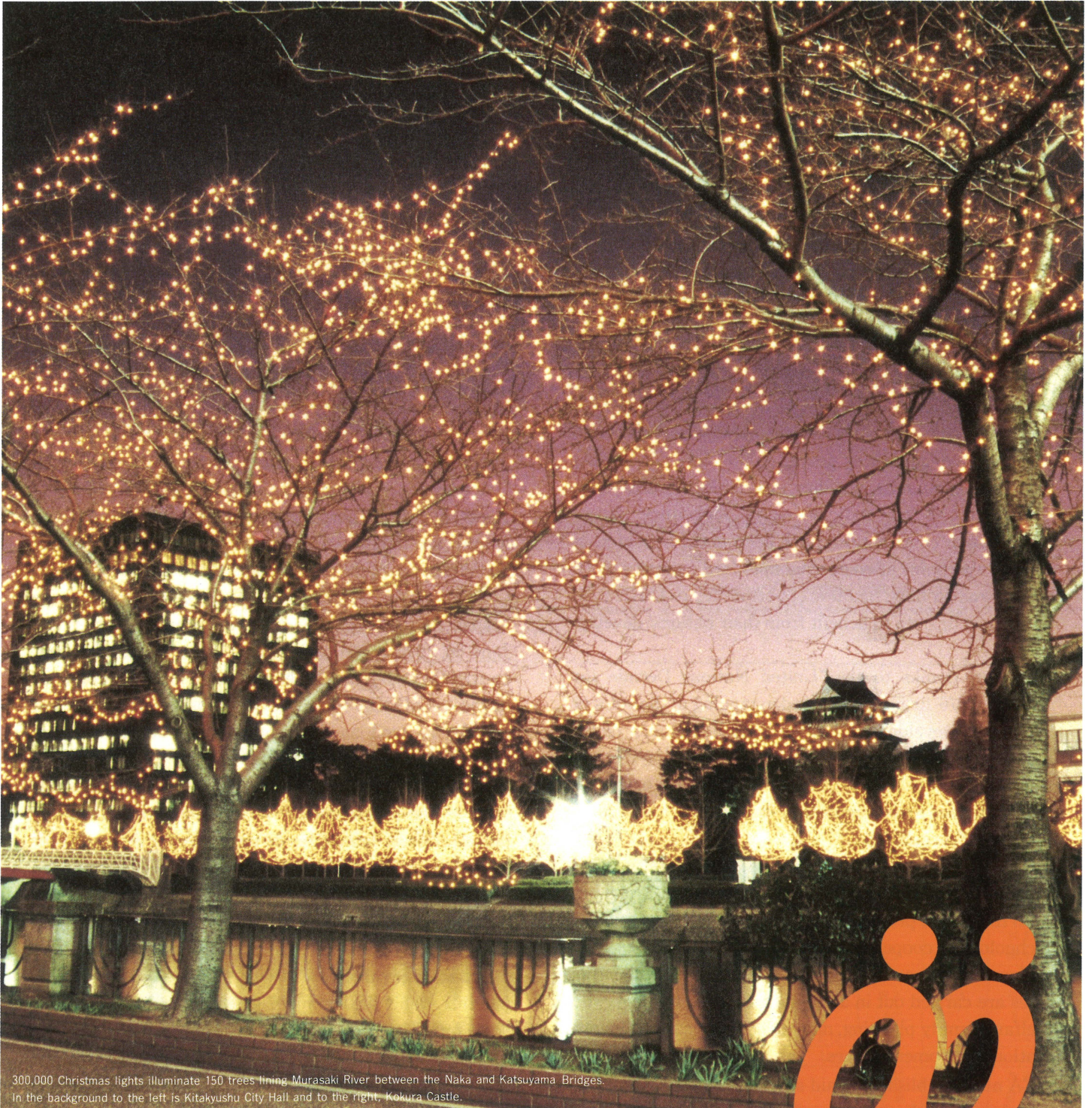


Asian Breeze



300,000 Christmas lights illuminate 150 trees lining Murasaki River between the Naka and Katsuyama Bridges.
In the background to the left is Kitakyushu City Hall and to the right, Kokura Castle.

WOMEN TODAY.....	2
JAPANESE AND KOREAN FAMILIES.....	3
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.....	8
FORUM ACTIVITIES.....	10
THE FORUM WINDOW.....	11



K F A W

NOVEMBER 1992 **No. 6**

WOMEN TODAY



Mr. Kensuke Yanagiya
President
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

On behalf of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the celebration of the Forum's 2nd anniversary and to pay respect for your steadfast efforts in improving the status of women.

Women in developing countries play a vital role in their societies. Not only do they have the primary responsibility for their families' basic sustenance by making meals, gathering fuel and water, providing childcare and helping with family finances, but they also make a tremendous contribution to their nations' overall economies. Nonetheless, such contributions have been underestimated in former viewpoint of socioeconomic development. As a result, women have had few opportunities to participate actively in or even to benefit from their nations' development.

However, thanks to the "United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985)," proper understanding of the roles of Women in Development has been reached among developing and developed countries as well as among international organizations, and the need to encourage participation by women and promote benefits for them has become commonly recognized.

With this background in mind, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has implemented a number of WID-related programs; for example, training courses, technological cooperation projects as well as the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. These initiatives are carried out in areas such as maternal and child welfare, family planning, nursing education and administration for women's issues.

JICA also established an aid study group on "Women in Development" from February 1990 to February 1991, which studied basic approaches of Japan's ODA to Women in Development and how to incorporate the standpoint of women into each field of cooperation. The group's goal is to have women take part in development much more thoroughly. The study group analyzed the present conditions surrounding women in developing countries and the various problems confronting them in

terms of major fields such as health, education, employment, agriculture and environment. It investigated solutions to these problems and how the standpoint of women is reflected in development and development assistance, and drew up proposals including measures to be taken for promoting WID activities.

In response to these proposals, JICA established the Environment, WID and Global Issues Division in May 1991 to embark on planning and coordination covering WID activities.

According to the provisional report of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued at the end of June this year, Japan's ODA reached a total of 10.951 billion US\$ for 1991. This amount was again the largest amount of ODA extended out of 20 DAC member nations after 1989. Such a record performance is the fruit of the Japanese people's understanding and support of "international cooperation through ODA."

Today in order to obtain even wider support in Japan and abroad for Japan's ODA, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of international assistance, the Cabinet Council of the Japanese Government established the "Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter" on June 30, 1992. The basic principles stress development coexistent with a healthy environment and the avoidance of the use of ODA for military purposes or international conflict as well as the promotion of democracy and respect for fundamental human rights. Priority will be given to the Asian region and approaches to global issues such as the environment, world population, and assistance for basic human needs through emergency aid for starvation and poverty. The Assistance Charter also stresses WID as one of the most effective ways to implement ODA.

Guided by the Assistance Charter, JICA will make every effort to help solve the various problems of developing nations, while paying more attention to security measures for all our aid personnel working abroad. To carry out our work, we would like to ask for the advice and cooperation of all relevant institutions, local organizations and administrations. We would also like to promote closer ties with non-governmental organizations. The promotion of the WID project is an important opportunity for us to cooperate with institutions such as the Forum. Finally I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Forum for its cooperation. I would also like to express my sincere hope for the future prosperity and success of the Forum and its staff.

JAPANESE AND KOREAN FAMILIES

Summary of "A Comparative Study on Family Consciousness between Japan and Korea" Based on Investigations Done in Fukuoka, Japan and Seoul, Korea



▲ Japan, Typical Wedding Reception



▲ Korea, Meeting the Groom's Parents

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women has been studying and comparing perceptions on family in Asia as part of a study on changes in families and women during the course of economic development.

In 1991, people were interviewed in Seoul, Korea for their ideas concerning the family. Their responses were compared with those from similar participants in Fukuoka prefecture, Japan. The survey in Seoul was conducted as a joint study with the Korean Women's Development Institute. The full text of the report on the comparative study has been published both in Japanese and English, and this presentation outlines the main points of the report.

1. Economic Development and Family Change in Both Countries

Although it is said that in Japan, the industrial revolution took place in the 1890s, it was after World War II that Japan's industrialization began on a full scale. In Korea, a similar period occurred in the 1960s. In their quest to catch up with the then advanced western countries, and with the resultant rapid increases in industrialization and urbanization that ensued, the structure and function of families in both countries underwent important changes as marked by the increase in the number of small-size families, nuclear families, working-class families and double-income families, the decrease in the birth rate and the lengthening of the average life span.

In Korea, the decline in the birth rate was more drastic and happened at an even faster pace than in Japan. In Korea the number of two-generation families (most of them are nuclear families) in the 1960s had already reached today's rate for the same families.

(Table) Indicators related to Family Change in Japan and Korea after the Growing Economic Development

		1965	1970	1975	1985	1990	
GNP per capita(\$)	Japan		1,950	4,480	11,240	23,810*5	
	Korea		252	584	2,194	4,963	
Average number of a household	Japan	3.75	3.45	3.35	3.22	3.10	
	Korea	5.6	5.2	5.1	4.1	3.8	
Ratio of 3 and more generation household	Japan*1	27.3	19.2	16.9	15.2	14.0	
	Korea	25.8	23.3		17.0	14.8	
Two generation household (nuclear family)	Japan	54.9	56.0	58.7	61.1	60.9	
	Korea	65.6	70.1	71.9		67.0	
One person household	Japan	17.8	18.5	18.2	18.4	19.5*4	
	Korea			4.2		6.9	
Total fertility rate	Japan	2.00	2.13	1.91	1.75	1.57	
	Korea	4.5	3.5	2.6	1.7	1.6	
Average life expectancy	J	male	67.74		71.73	74.78	75.91
		female	72.94		76.89	80.48	81.77
	K	male	(51.1)*2	59.8		64.9	67.4
		female	(53.7)	66.7		71.3	75.4
Ratio of married among the whole female labor force (%)	Japan*3		41.4	51.3	59.2	58.7*4	
	Korea		36.9	43.1	41.1	46.8	

1990 is abbreviated because of unregular economic situation after the second oil shock.
 *1 extended family type household
 *2 data of 1980
 *3 the ratio of married among the employed female labor
 *4 data of 1988
 *5 data of 1989

Resource : Korea : Social Indicators of Korea, 1990
 Japan : Statistics on Japanese Women, 1991

2. Characteristics of Respondents

The number of people surveyed in Seoul was 1,608; in Fukuoka 2,283. The ages of all participants ranged from 20 to 69.

Their occupational backgrounds are shown in Table 3. In both countries more men generally have higher education, and the number of full time housewives is much higher in Seoul than in Fukuoka.

(Table2) Education by sex (%)

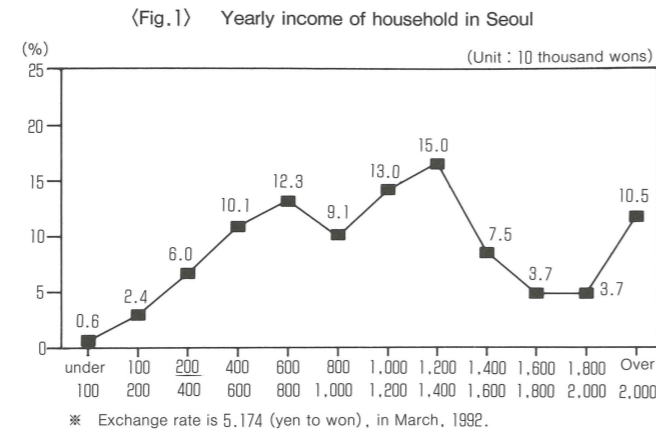
Degree of Education	Seoul		Fukuoka	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under elementary school	11.5	18.1	20.9	24.2
Middle school	13.4	19.6		
High school	38.7	43.2	46.9	54.9
Over junior college	36.3	18.9	31.5	20.2
Not clear	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.7

As for yearly household income, the concentration towards the middle income strata is apparent in Fukuoka, while 3 different mountains can be seen in Seoul's income distribution. Concerning household income, Fukuoka is less stratified than Seoul.

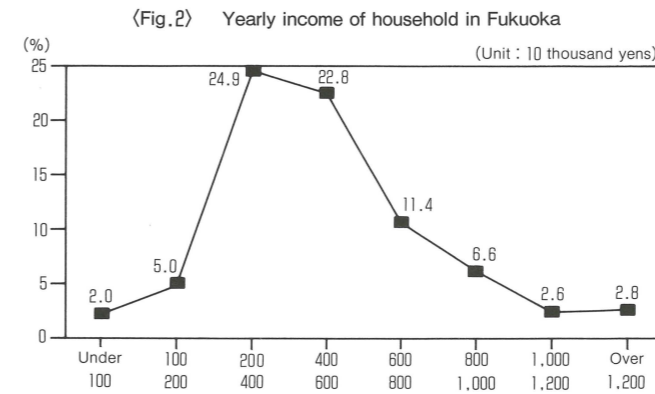
In the industrial societies, the dominant form of household is characterized by the nuclear family. The ratio of the families that husband and wife live with their unmarried children or only the husband and wife live together is 71.3% in Seoul and 59.5% in Fukuoka. If we add the number of one parent families with unmarried children, the ratio is almost 3/4 in Seoul and 2/3 in Fukuoka.

This study is quite timely and particularly significant for me as both research data for my own work, and interest in both countries on that issue. I visited Korea for 2 weeks last July, and stayed with Korean families in Seoul, Pusan and Koje Island. While there, I was able to make my own observations on the same areas the study approaches. In each home where I stayed, both the husband and wife had college backgrounds, and generally lived at a level somewhat above the average Korean family.

Based on these experiences, I feel that the predominance of large paternal families in Korea has given way to more nuclear families. In addition, the female influence on and participation in Korean society has increased sharply in the past 7 or 8 years. Nonetheless, while the physical form of the nuclear family is similar to that in Fukuoka,



* Exchange rate is 5.174 (yen to won), in March, 1992.



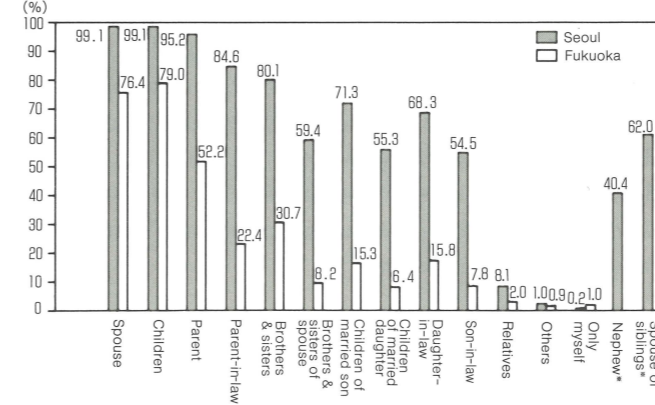
(Table3) Occupation by sex (%)

Occupation	Fukuoka			Seoul		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Professional/administrative/governmental	15.6	22.6	9.1	7.7	12.4	3.5
Clerical work	8.8	9.5	8.1	7.9	11.9	4.5
Sales	8.7	13.2	4.5	14.5	22.9	7.5
Service work	14.7	17.4	12.1	8.1	11.0	5.8
Agriculture/forestry/fishery	5.2	6.0	4.5	0.1	0.3	0
Factory/transportation	10.8	18.8	3.3	12.4	21.5	4.7
Housewives (home work/part timer)	6.8	0	13.2	5.9	0	11.0
Housewives (husbands)	17.3	0	33.5	30.8	0.3	56.9
Students	11.0	11.8	10.2	4.8	6.8	3.1
No job/unemployed/etc				7.4	12.7	3.0

3. Range of Family

According to the majority of nuclear families in Seoul, most people see living in an extended family as ideal. In Fukuoka, however, there are an increasing number of people who prefer a family consisting of husband, wife and their children.

(Fig.3) Range of family (Korea-Japan)

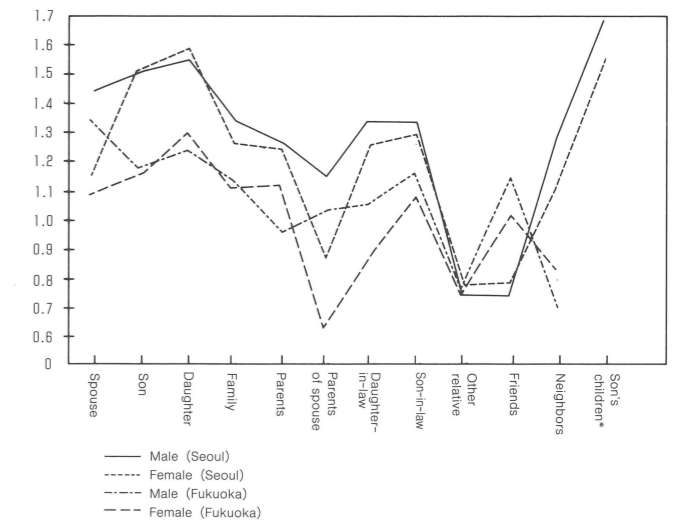


* This category was prepared only in Seoul

wives to the discrimination they were forced to endure throughout their families' lives in which the authority of fathers was dominant and imperative.

One of the notable differences between Fukuoka and Seoul is the degree of satisfaction parents have with their sons. In Fukuoka, both mothers and fathers are generally less satisfied with their sons. In Seoul, however, parents are highly satisfied with both their sons and daughters. The other difference is that in Fukuoka people have a relatively high degree of satisfaction with their friends. Unlike relations with family members and relatives, the relation with friends is highly selective. The higher degree of satisfaction with friends in Fukuoka probably indicates a weakening of "familism." They are also selectively developing relationships with the rest of the world.

(Fig.4) Satisfaction towards family (Average Score*)



* We gave 2 points for 'strong', 1 point for 'rather strong', -1 point for 'rather weak' -2 points for 'weak' for each answer.
* This category was prepared only in Seoul.

4. Satisfaction towards the Family and Other Relations

The bonds family members feel, and their satisfaction towards each other, seem in general higher in Seoul than in Fukuoka. We only show "satisfaction" here. One strong finding common to both Fukuoka and Seoul is that wives generally feel quite unsatisfied about their relationships with their parents-in-law. In addition, the degree of satisfaction wives have with their husbands is considerably lower than the level of satisfaction husbands have with their wives. It could be said that this phenomenon is perhaps the reaction of contemporary

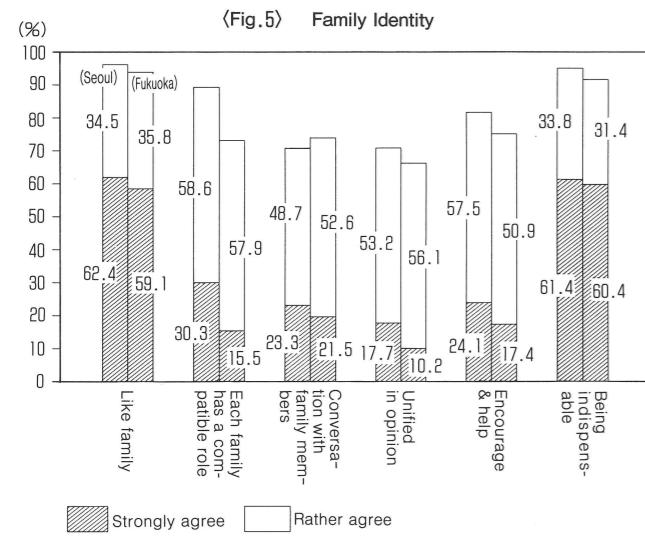
5. Family Identity

Concerning the family identity, we asked 6 items.

- I like my family very much.
- Each member of my family has a role of his/her own and acts accordingly.
- Members of my family often converse with each other.
- My family is very unified in its opinions.
- Every member of my family encourages and helps me to achieve my goals.
- I myself am an indispensable member of my family.

By Ms. Kazue Morisaki

Poet



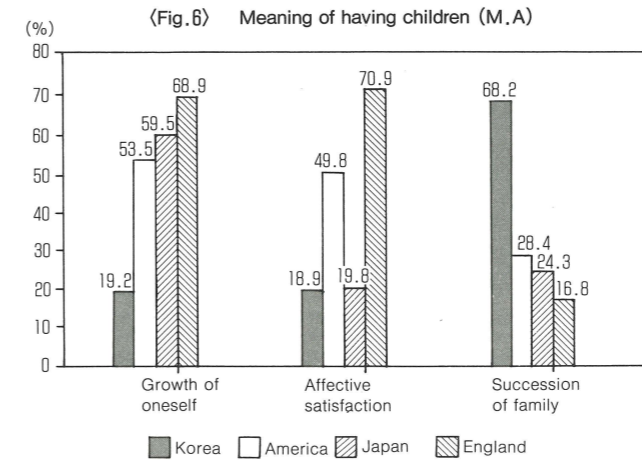
show that individuals in Seoul identify themselves more closely with their families than do individuals in Fukuoka.

6. Meaning of Having Children

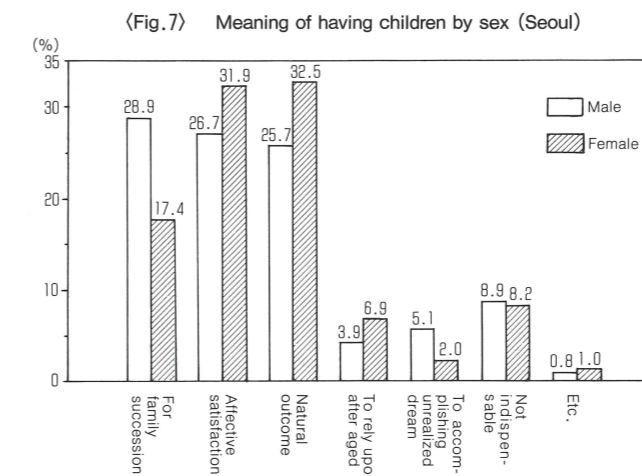
According to the "International Comparative Study" conducted by the Japanese Prime Minister's Office in 1982, more than 60% of Korean people replied that the meaning of having children is "for the family's succession." This perception might be defined by the family law in Korea that prescribes the continuity of the family and its headship.

The study also revealed that more than half of Japanese respondents replied that they raised children for "their own self-growth." This finding indicates that at the time of the study, the Japanese have become less concerned about the succession of their family lines. This may reflect the working-class' idea that succession of the family line is less meaningful than the feeling of self-growth by having children.

Our study in Seoul has shown a marked decline in a modern Korean individual's sense of obligation towards maintaining their family lineage. Instead an emphasis on affective satisfaction has increased. Further analysis of the results by sex and age categories, however, reveals that men and all those in the age bracket over 50 have a strong attachment to the succession of their family as a reason for having children.



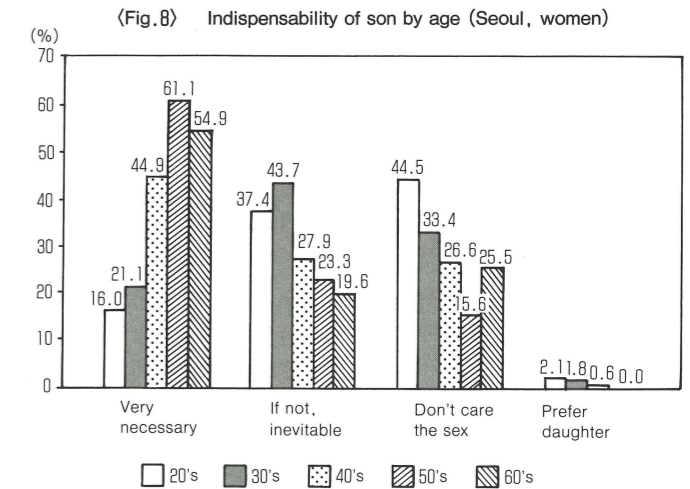
Source : Prime Ministers office (1982). (Children and Youth in the Family)



7. Indispensability of Son

The question "What do you think about having a son?" was only given to the Seoul respondents. Their opinions were almost equally divided. 31.8% replied that it is very necessary. 36.1% said if they did not have a son, this was inevitable. 31% did not care about the sex. On the whole, however, those who believe "a son is very necessary" no longer constitute the majority. Fig. 10 shows the replies as classified by age. More than half of those in their 50s and 60s insist that a son is essential.

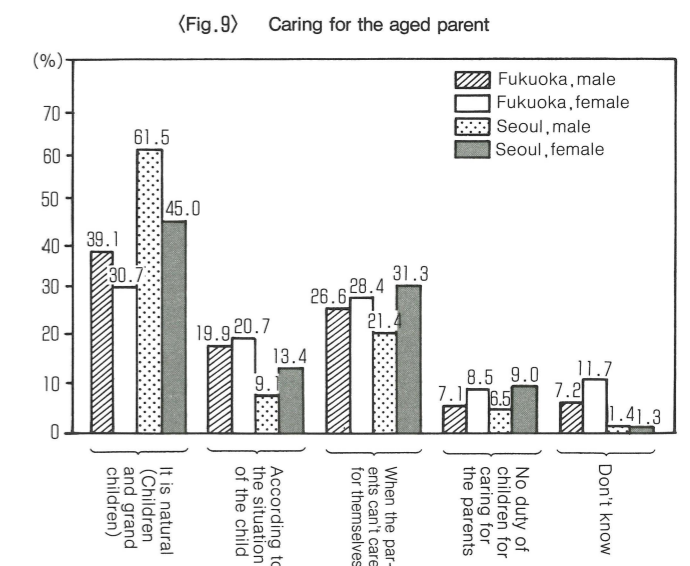
The revised family law provides that either a son or daughter can inherit his or her "CHIBU." Nonetheless, looking at birth rates over the past 10 years, we find a tendency for 2nd and 3rd children in a family to be born as males. This imbalance in numbers between males and females in later years will result in some difficulties for matching up women and men.



8. Caring for Aged Parents

In the Confucian culture, the devotion of children to their parents is of the utmost importance. Especially in Korea, the concept of filial piety is considered to be even more important than loyalty to the nation.

This fact is well reflected in the perceptions of those who care for their aged parents. 61.5% of males in Seoul think that it is natural for children to take care of old parents. Women in Seoul, however, do not absolutely agree with this idea. The number of women who say that they will take care of their parents only if they have the time and money, or when their parents have become unable to care for themselves, is almost equal to the number of those who say they are unconditionally duty-bound to take care of their parents. Although they are in the minority, there are much more women than men in both Fukuoka and Seoul who believe one is not obligated to look after one's parents if it incurs a sacrifice.



For each of the above items the participants were requested to select one of 4 answers from ① "strongly agree," ② "rather agree," ③ "rather disagree" and ④ "strongly disagree."

To the items (a) and (f) which concern their affection towards their families, about 90% of the respondents chose the affirmative answers ① or ②, indicating that they place great importance on their families as the center of emotional focus.

For items (b), (c), (d) and (e) concerning unity in the family and assistance to and from the family, the predominance of affirmative answers diminishes slightly.

Finally, referring to the identity score summarizing answers from the respondents on the 6 items, the data

This report was issued as part of an ongoing 5-year project for the "Women in Development" Study.

Any comparative study of the various phenomena between different societies and cultures is bound to be of importance and value as an aid to mutual understanding. Yet to execute a report that can achieve its maximum potential for reliable data and academic value requires a great deal of care and discipline in all of its stages. The planning, preparation, implementation, analysis and completion of this project demanded the best from its creators, and they succeeded admirably.

This study attempts to shed light on both the differences and similarities between the Korea and Japanese cultures. It looks at the family as the basic unit of society, comparing perceptions of family consciousness at the level of the individual in his or her daily life, filtered through Confucian values, and affected over time by economic development and changes in family structure.

Survey results were taken from the 2 sites: Seoul and Fukuoka Prefecture, and then brought together to undergo collation and study by the researchers. In Fukuoka, a local survey was done in 1989 and was called "Research Report on the People's Consciousness: Changing family consciousness." In Seoul, a separate pretest and then real survey were held in 1991. Both were based on the original and a modified version of the questionnaire used in the Fukuoka survey.

Although these surveys could not give a full profile of comparative family consciousness between the 2 respective countries, they still provide significant indicators of social perceptions between the 2 survey areas.

I look forward to seeing the next set of results from the project.

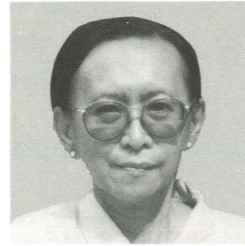
By Ms. Masa Hirata

Professor Emeritus, Fukuoka University of Education

OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS NETWORK (1992-1993)

In order to promote an information network to embrace all of Asia, the Forum instituted a foreign correspondents program. Last year, there were 6 correspondents in 6 countries. This year we increased the number of correspondents to 19, covering 13 countries, due to the popularity of these unique reports. In this issue of "Asian Breeze" we will present this year's correspondents whose activities began in May of 1992.

The theme of the 1992-1993 program is "Home Education." Education is a key element in human and social development; particularly, "Home Education." This year we especially would like to see how family values are transferred from parents to their children, how regional customs influence a mother's home discipline as well as what kind of home education is given to girls versus boys. It is our sincere hope that while learning about the everyday correspondents' experiences readers will be able to relate them to their own family settings.



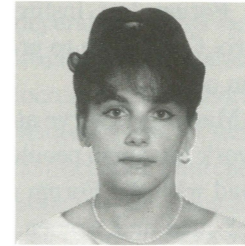
Ms. Luwarsih Pringgoadisurjo from Indonesia, formerly the head of the Indonesian National Scientific Institute, is now the editor of a magazine on women's studies. She has participated in many Women in Development projects.



Ms. Endang Mugiarti Suwondo from Indonesia is a housewife whose husband is in Holland for his doctoral studies. She is also active in church activities including volunteer work to help uneducated women prepare for a better life.



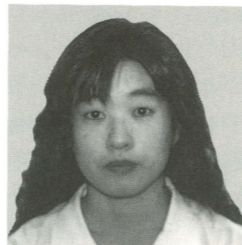
Ms. Elena L. Samonte from Philippines is an associate professor at the University of the Philippines in social psychology. She is presently researching Japan and Philippines relations such as Japayuki and Philippine brides in Japan etc.



Ms. Shkuropat Anna Vladimirovna from Russia is the director of the Pacific Center on Economic and International Studies. Last year she came to Japan to participate in an economic conference and visited the Forum.



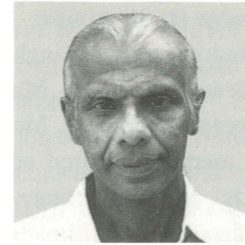
Ms. Lee Gye Ok from Korea during her high school years spent 6 months in Tokyo and learned some Japanese. Presently, she is an associate professor of language studies at a women's university.



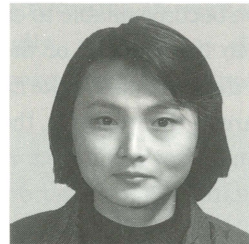
Ms. Machiko Nakama from Japan is a housewife married to a Malaysian businessman. Interested in the theme "Home Education," she is participating in our foreign correspondent program for the second time.



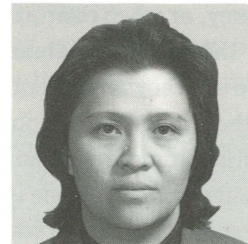
Ms. Noriko Yamaguchi from Japan presently resides in Singapore and is a member of AWARE, a women's organization. She is interested in sexual harassment and has conducted a survey on this problem there.



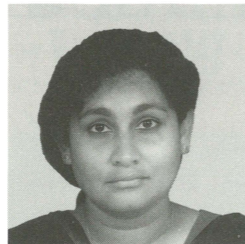
Mr. Oliver Gamunu Dias Wickramanayaka Jayasinha from Sri Lanka retired from the River Valleys Development Board. He leads a healthy life free from tobacco and alcohol and is an active sportsman.



Ms. Wang Jing from China is a textile dyer at a textile factory in Shanghai. She likes to watch movies and was a member of a movie club. Her husband is now in Japan to study international commerce.



Ms. Zhao Hu, presently residing in China, was born and lived in India for 14 years. After working for a travel agency in China, she became the editor and deputy chief of the "Women of China" magazine.



Ms. Khadeeja Ibrahim from Maldives is a deputy director of the Women's Affairs Department. She is also a president of a regional women's committee involved in activities to improve women's status in society.



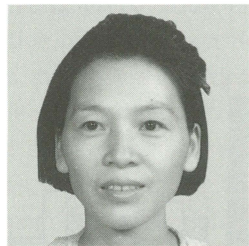
Ms. Yam Kumari Gurung from Nepal is a volunteer for development of rural areas. From 1985 for 5 years, she helped with a project backed by Swiss financing for public sanitation including the distribution of clean water.



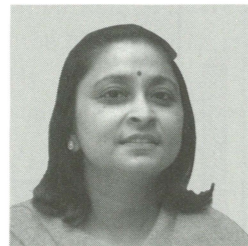
Ms. Keerthy Sironmany Rajaratnam from Sri Lanka is an instructor in education training in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. She has held various seminars on primary and pre-primary education.



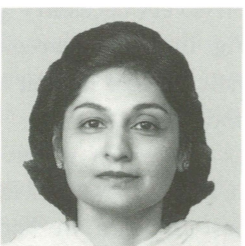
Ms. Indrani Sugathadasa from Sri Lanka, formerly an assistant secretary at the Ministry of Plan Implementation, is presently the director of the Women's Bureau and is involved in various projects related to Women in Development.



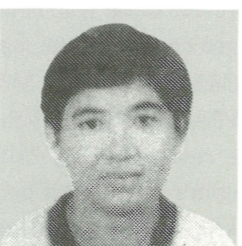
Ms. Zhu Yaoxian from China works at the Party School's Women Research Institute in Henan Province. Yaoxian, a lecturer and a researcher in sociology and women's studies, is writing a thesis on these fields and is also involved in translation work.



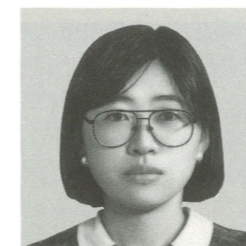
Ms. Kumud Mohan from India is a free-lance writer for India Times and other publications. She writes especially about culture, the arts, social welfare and health. She has also conducted interviews on All India Radio and Doordarshan TV.



Ms. Fareeha Zafar from Pakistan is an associate professor at Punjab University in the field of regional planning & development and socio-economic geography. She attended the Asian Women's Conference in Saitama, Japan April 2-4, 1992.



Ms. Aurora Castro Habaña from Philippines is a specialist on social welfare and women's problems at the Department of Social Welfare Development. She is very enthusiastic and earnest about her work for women's issues.



Ms. Miwa Takahashi from Japan, presently a graduate student at the Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, is majoring in cultural anthropology. She is presently conducting a survey on gender and Thai Buddhism.

Foreign Correspondent's Report

Girls' Home Education in Pakistan

By Ms. Fareeha Zafar (Pakistan)

From the moment of birth, the girl child is enveloped in gender-specific layers of conformity. Her arrival in a male dominated society is usually greeted with expressions of dismay. Her role in life is predetermined and her education in the house is part of the socialization process whereby she will continue to practice and transmit to her children the cultural norms, values and traditions of Pakistani society.

Parents transmit very different sets of qualities and values to their male and female offspring. Whereas boys are trained to be aggressive, enterprising, independent and outgoing, for girls submissiveness, patience, dependence and obedience as well as love of the home and children are considered desirable qualities. Daughters are taught to be hardworking and to sacrifice for the family. This pattern of male dominance in the home is imprinted on the minds of girls who carry this impression throughout life. The patriarchal value system inhibits them from visualizing themselves as individuals with separate identities. They are trained to think of themselves only in reference with their relationships to the men of the family; i.e. as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers.

This concept is ingrained in them from childhood. Later, it translates into a preference for sons on whom they can depend in later life. Since parents educate their daughters to be subservient wives and daughters-in-law, it is only when a woman becomes the mother of a son that she acquires status in society.

Another aspect of home education relates to the concept of honor and chastity prevalent in societies where Islamic traditions and culture have been imposed on existing social systems. In Pakistan, where over 95% of the population is Muslim, boys are brought up to protect the women of the household. Since there is a high premium on chastity and virginity, girls are educated to protect these virtues at all cost. The onus for remaining pure rests on the girl who is prohibited from any communication with members of the opposite sex other than close relatives.

In Pakistan, there seems little hope of altering the content of home education. Some change is taking place, however, in families where the mother has some years of schooling, is a working mother or is the head of the household. Women's organizations are also active in disseminating material and information aimed at holding gender specific and dependent role images of women in the family.

THE 3rd ASIAN SEMINAR

The Forum held "The 3rd Asian Seminar" from June 27-August 8, 1992. About 70 people participated in 8 Saturday sessions held to help citizens' understanding of the difficulties facing Asian women.

Similar to the 2nd Asian Seminar, this year's theme centered on "Women in Development." Such global issues as family, education, environment, the world economy and politics were addressed.

Ms. Dorota Gierycz, Social Affairs Officer, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Office at Vienna spoke at a special open seminar on July 25th. Ms. Gierycz was received by an audience of approx. 170 including Asian seminar participants and other guests.



▲ Ms. Dorota Gierycz' Presentation

Ms. Yoriko Meguro, a professor at Sophia University, gave a lecture entitled "The Present Situation and Subject of Women in Development," at the seminar. The following is a summary of her speech.



In June of this year, the Earth Summit with the theme "Environment and Development" was held in Rio de Janeiro. At this Summit of world politics the present global situation was discussed. No matter the region, it was found that environmental problems are in fact generally related to all other problem including the issues of poverty, population and human rights. Third World countries are experiencing recurrent development problems which also affect the North-South relationship and cause damage in advanced countries as well. The way these problems arise are different, and the priority placed on dealing with these problems also differ. Although the order of priorities today are still greatly influenced by the choices of the world's elites, this situation has increasingly come under attack.

"Women in Development" is generally regarded as an independent subject. However, it should be realized that the concept of "Women in Development" is connected to other world problems. This should be our starting point.

WOMEN'S INFORMATION MATRIX COMMITTEE

The Forum has instituted the Women's Information Matrix Committee to promote mutual awareness among Asian people.

The Matrix will serve as a foundation for an information network for Asian people, reaching all parts of Japan and abroad with the Forum as its central base.

The 8 men and women who form the Committee bring with them experiences from the various areas of teaching, business, and broadcasting and PTA leadership, etc. The Committee made learning more about Asian people its 1st step towards mutual understanding with its Asian neighbors. With "Home Education" as the theme for the Committee's activities, members were divided into 3 overseas study groups:

1st team: China (Shanghai, Dalian), August 16-22, 1992

2nd team: Sri Lanka, Maldives, August 20-27, 1992

3rd team: Singapore, Malaysia, September 13-20, 1992

The members visited educational research institutions, NGOs and government organizations such as the Women's Affairs Ministry and the Educational Ministry to determine the educational situation in each country. At the same time, field investigation concerning family education was carried out through home visits. Talking with mothers in their homes, the Committee members learned about differences and similarities among various regions in parents' roles regarding their children's education in a family setting.

The Committee also invites lecturers to speak about their research at study meetings, and will compile the results of this year's activities by February of 1993.

The Women's Information Matrix Committee serves to promote from various perspectives an exchange of cultural information. To further that purpose, contact with foreign correspondents of the Forum and the exchange of opinions between Japan and abroad are fostered. Through the tightly woven structure of the Matrix, the Forum's activities and the result of studies on Asia's characteristics are presented to the community in schools and in workplaces.



▲ A Meeting of the Women's Information Matrix Committee

SHAPLA NEER

— The Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support

Although Bangladesh gained independence from eastern Pakistan in 1971, the domestic situation grew chaotic as the populace struggled with an increasing food shortage. NGOs in the West extended emergency aid to combat this predicament. And in 1972 Christian churches in Japan encouraged the organization of the Bangladesh Reconstruction Agriculture Service Group. A delegation of 50 young Japanese people were sent to the area. When they returned, they established the Help Bangladesh Committee (HBC) to ensure continued support for the new nation. In 1983, the Committee changed its title to "Shapla Neer - The Association for Overseas Cooperation by Citizens."

At first HBC with support from charity, welfare and external aid concentrated on childrens activities like "Let's present the children with stationery goods." Some Committee members sent from Japan were stationed in Bangladesh villages. Through constant trial and error, their relief activities continued, until an unfortunate incident occurred in Poila in 1977. 2 group members in Bangladesh were attacked by villagers, causing HBC to create a new policy of cooperation. In 1980, the Committee adopted the "Shamity" (mutual aid union) system, the same plan assumed by the major NGOs in Bangladesh through the 1980's.

Shapla Neer was educated on the Shamity system mainly through the work of the NGO - "PROSHIKA." The new Shamity unions each include about 20 members and are aimed towards the cultivation of self-awareness and motivation among the landless class and the poorer peasants. Today Shamity covers 4 villages with 320 unions consisting of 6,300 members. The numbers have increased to as much as 1,200 unions, or 24,000 members with the addition of "Unnayan Sangha," a sister development group derived from Shapla Neer.

In Bangladesh men and women each form separate Shamity, and the number of women's Shamity is slightly larger than that of the men's. Recently literacy classes organized for women by Shapla Neer have been achieving remarkable success. The number of Shapla Neer staff members and workers total as many as 50 or more than 100 if Unnayan Sangha is included.

Although Shapla Neer is only a small group in Japan, when I think of our responsibilities to aid the people of Bangladesh, my feeling of determination is renewed. We are also involved in various activities in Japan, and are recruiting members. Please call (03)3202-7863 for more information.

(By Mr. Kazunori Akaishi Vice Chairperson)

THE FORUM WINDOW

Networks and Information

On July 21, 1992 I went to Bangkok, my 3rd visit to this city. After the joint research with the Korean Women's Development Institute was completed, the Forum could start a joint effort for comparative research in Thailand with the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI). With the preparatory research completed, I had a discussion with Dr. Amara Pongsapich, director of CUSRI, and Ms. Naruemol Bunjongjit, researcher of the Institute. In mid-May of this year the democratic movement in Thailand was struck by a bloody suppression which made world headlines.

This event made us worry greatly about the people's fate as well as make us wonder if we could continue our joint study. Being able to contact Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto of ESCAP in Bangkok was a great help and comfort. This experience made me realize the importance of receiving information from a reliable human network.

Ms. Prateep Ungsongtham was another person with whom I wanted to meet during this visit. Of the 7 democracy movement leaders, she was the only woman. Although she was pregnant at that time, her commitment to her beliefs led her to join a hunger strike. Our Forum had invited Ms. Ungsongtham to Kitakyushu last year. Since that time I have been impressed with her devotion to the people in Bangkok slums. Unfortunately, this time I could not meet her in Bangkok. (I heard recently she bore a healthy baby in October. Congratulations!) Instead, I was invited by her husband, Mr. Hata, to hear his lecture on the relationship between the democratic movement and slum inhabitants at a meeting held by the members of the Japanese Association in Thailand.

During his speech, Mr. Hata advised that after the political coup a lot of video tapes, photographs and pamphlets featuring foreign news coverage of the event were eagerly purchased on Bangkok streets by the Thai middle class and the Japanese community living in Thailand. Even some women living in slums began to attend political lectures held around Bangkok, to seek for reliable information.

By attending this meeting, I could establish yet another network between the Japanese society in Thailand and the Forum. This too will serve as another reliable resource on women.

Masami Shinozaki

Chief Researcher, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

INFORMATION

● The 3rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

The 3rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women will be held for 3 days from November 13 (Fri.)-15 (Sun.), 1992 in the Kitakyushu International Conference Center.

This year's conference, "Women in Environment and Development" considers the role of women in environmental conservation and sustainable development from a global viewpoint. The conference is also aimed at developing women's participation in environmental policies.

The following is an overview of the program for this year's conference:

November 13(Fri.)

- 14:00 ~ 16:45 The Kitakyushu Forum on Women in the Environment
17:30 ~ 21:15 Asian Cinema

November 14(Sat.)

14:00 ~ 17:30 International Symposium

Panelists:

- Ms. Bella Abzug (Co-chair, Women's Environment and Development Organization)
Ms. Erna Witoelar (President, International Organization of Consumers Union)
Ms. Vandana Shiva (Coordinator, The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy)
Ms. Miwako Kurosaka (Senior Associate, World Resources Institute)
Mr. Shigeyuki Okajima (Deputy Editor, Commentary Department, The Yomiuri Shimbun)

Coordinator:

Ms. Mitsuko Shimomura (Senior staff writer, Asahi Shimbun Newspaper Co.)

- 13:00 ~ 18:30 Asian Bazaar
17:30 ~ 18:30 Tea Party
19:00 ~ 21:00 Workshop

November 15(sun.)

- 9:30 ~ 10:00 Japan-Thailand Joint Research Interim Report
10:00 ~ 16:00 Research and Discussion

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

● Forum Publications Available

Foreign Correspondents' Report Vol. 1, 1991-1992

Correspondents from 6 different countries provide informative accounts about such topics as post-childbirth customs in Malaysia, Japayuki, motorbike women in Shanghai, etc.

(¥500 postage not included)

Journal of Asian Women's Studies, 1st Edition

This publication provides a forum for the exchange of information and discussion concerning women's issues in Asia. From various perspectives, women and Asia are examined in this edition's featured article — "Women in Development in Asia."

(¥800, postage not included)

Also available is "A Comparative Study on the Family Consciousness between Korea and Japan."

(¥2,000, postage not included)

For further information regarding these publications or general inquiries, please contact the Forum at (093)551-1220.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Summer is over but the refreshing breeze of autumn brings us vitality and new energy.... The Asian Breeze staff last August/September embarked on a special adventure. We visited our foreign correspondents in 4 countries—Sri Lanka, China, Singapore and Malaysia. We are grateful to those correspondents who travelled from far and near to embrace us with their warm hospitality. It was as if we had been friends for such a long time. Our new friends gave us inspiration and support for the Asian Breeze network. And we feel that the Asian Breeze will continue to blow strongly on and warmly in the hearts of all for some time to come.



Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

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