

# Asian Breeze



Kitakyushu's monorail system covers 8.4 kilometers from downtown Kokura to Kikugaoka in the city's suburbs. Travellers can make the trip in no less than 18 minutes. The monorail which avoids traffic congestion offers the rider wonderful views in a luxurious, safe and modern means of transportation.

3rd KITAKYUSHU CONFERENCE ON ASIAN WOMEN.....	2
WOMEN TODAY.....	6
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS.....	8
UNIFEM NATIONAL COMMITTEE JAPAN.....	14
THE FORUM WINDOW.....	15



**KFAW**

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## 3rd KITAKYUSHU CONFERENCE ON ASIAN WOMEN



The 3rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women was held by the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women, November 13-15, 1992, as one of its major programs aimed at linking its activities of exchange and research.

These conferences are held annually to discuss the problems facing Asian women, and to advance women's status through mutual understanding and international exchange among Asian countries. About 1,500 people from the city of Kitakyushu and other districts participated in this year's conference.

The main theme of the 3rd conference was "Women in Environment and Development." Activities included an international symposium and a forum on women and environment; a citizens' exchange meeting; workshops; study/discussion sessions as well as an Asian bazaar and movies.

### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Theme : Women in Environment and Development

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 Shim-bun)

Coordinator:

Ms. Mitsuko Shimomura	(Senior staff writer, Asahi Shim-bun Newspaper Co.)
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### From Housekeepers to Policy-makers

Ms. Bella Abzug delivered the keynote address. She opened by saying "Recently, global environmental destruction is creeping along. One third of the world's forests have already disappeared, fertile lands are becoming desert, and the earth's average temperature is rising." "Women have always been the bellwethers of environmental movements, spending much of their efforts to preserve a clean earth."... "In spite of this fact, politicians have continually ignored women's roles in decision-making on critical issues concerning the future of the earth. The earth will be doomed to demise unless drastic changes are made in environmental policies, changes that can only be effected by women, who account for half of the world population. By shedding their past of 'global housekeepers' and assuming a new role of 'global policy-makers' in the arena of politics, they must discuss global issues equally with men," she appealed.

### Global Environmental Issues - The Status Quo

At the panel discussion, each of the four panelists, except Ms. Abzug, gave a short speech on the environmental problem of his or her concern.

Ms. Kurosaka explained the status quo of global environmental issues, saying that the Earth Summit did not completely establish clear-cut solutions to global environmental issues. However it provided a place where people all over the world realized that environmental issues are problems not restricted to particular countries or regions, but involving all of them.

Ms. Erna Witoelar, referring to a real case in Indonesia, proffered that those who are the most vulnerable to environmental destruction are women in impoverished communities. These women do not know the plight they are put in because they do not have enough information. The most urgent thing to be done is to foster solidarity among them.

Ms. Vandana Shiva was so critical of the progressivism on which advanced countries heavily rely for science and development, that she argued, "what development has brought in the past 40 years is destruction, not progress. For poor women in India, nature is indeed a source of life."

The last speaker, Mr. Okajima, referring to the North-South problem, insisted on the necessity of redistribution of natural resources. He said, "In view of the fact that a mere 20% of the world population is consuming 80% of world resources, the advanced industrial nations' rhetoric; i.e., that the global environment be protected without lowering the existing level of their living standard, will no longer do."

### The Global Environmental Boom

To summarize what was stated in the keynote address and the speeches by the panelists, Ms. Mitsuko Shimomura, a coordinator, asked why there were no remarkable achievements in environment conservation despite the worldwide cry of environmental crisis. Mr. Okajima stated that world leaders viewed the nuclear threat as a realistic issue, but lacked sincerity in dealing with environmental affairs. Ms. Kurosaka warned that current environmental movements are only a boom or in other words that concern about the environment has become fashionable. There are also many people who only appear to have become more aware of environmental problems but actually are not concerned about them.

### Is Development Necessary?

Successive discussions lead to questions; "not only about the North-South problem, but also about whether the increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots in developing countries is contributing to environmental destruction?", and "whether it is true that what development produces is only destruction?" Ms. Witoelar refuted saying that her consumer organization is raising environmental awareness by having the wealthy and the middle class make more of a concerted effort towards preserving the environment. The organization, she says, is also directing them not to consume products leading to environmental destruction. Furthermore, Ms. Shiva pointed out that "as long as development projects remain in the present form, no balance will be achievable between development and environment. For sustainable development, the current decision-making structure for development programs must be changed to make it democratic."

### Can Women Solve Environmental Issues?

They then discussed "the importance of women's participation in decision-making, and whether their participation can really solve global environmental problems?" "I think it does not mean that a woman is superior to a man," stated Ms. Abzug. "It is important that women are not only admitted into the existing decision-making structure, but that their viewpoints are also reflected in the process of decision-making that leads towards an international society characterized by peaceful coexistence, economic cooperation and non-violent competition."

### Women's Roles in the 21st Century

Ms. Shimomura, wrapping up opinions expressed during the panel discussion, gave a clear picture of women's role in the 21st century. She said, "It is a fact that women have been excluded from the process of policy-making of political landmarks during the 20th century. This, however, fortunately served as a windfall to keep women immune from corruption in the power struggle. In addition, women, less attached to old policies than men who are rather conservative, are aggressive in bringing about changes in the status quo." In this sense, she proposed, it is necessary for women to take the initiative in global environment conservation movements, although the issues are common to all humankind.

## STUDY/DISCUSSION SESSIONS

In various study/discussion sessions, reports on the Japan-Thailand Joint Research, general women's issues, WID and the environment were presented and discussed.



The Interim Report on The Japan-Thailand Joint Research

The joint research is one of the Forum's study series on the main theme of "Women in Development," with a special focus on family. After the joint research with the Korean Women's Development Institute was completed last year, research was conducted in Thailand this fiscal year.

With the attendance of the two Thai partners, Dr. Amara Pongsapich, Director of Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI), and Ms. Naruemol Bunjongjit, a CUSRI researcher, Ms. Masami Shinozaki, Chief Researcher of KFAW gave an interim report on The Japan-Thailand Joint Research. This research was performed in Bangkok from July to August 1992, by visiting and interviewing 1,570 citizens who were selected by random sampling methods.

In Bangkok, the following trends have come to the attention of the researchers: rapid industrialization and urbanization which is causing increasing centralization; extremely large differences in income; the increasing number of younger people in their 20s and 30s; the growing number of women who are working and earning as much as or more than men which accounts for one fourth of the subject interviewees; and the extremely high rates of nuclear families as well as the increasing number of divorces.

### General Discussions on Women's Issues in Asia

Studies on Asia and women were solicited from all over Japan by advertising widely. Ten people were then selected to present their reports which reflected the citizen's expanding interests in Asia.

Session No.1-Presentations (Coordinator: Ms. Shoko Akie) "About the Sex-Discriminatory Customs in Asia" by Mr. Tada'akira Jou; "Family Planning Programs and Basic Human Rights of Women with Examples in Indonesia and in East Timor" by Ms. Kiyoko Furusawa; "On the Prostitution of Asian Women" by Ms. Masako Yasutaka; "War and Asian Women in Prostitution" by Ms. Akiko Ikeda; "A Futuristic View on Health with Traditional Chinese Medicine" by Ms. Sandra Sun.

Session No.2-Presentations (Coordinator: Ms. Katae Terasaka) "Home Education Creates Women" by Ms. Hiroko Eguchi; "The Importance of Information Exchanges to International Cooperation" by Ms. Noriko Takashima; "Citizens' Participation in 'Women in Development'" by Ms. Kazuko Tanaka; "An Analysis of Changing Conditions for Marriage in China" by Ms. Rumi Shiromoto; "Community Center Should Foster Internationalization Courses" by Ms. Kumi Nakashima.

### Report and Discussion on "Women's Participation in Development and Environmental Issues"

In the beginning, the coordinator, Ms. Shinozaki, Chief Researcher of KFAW, furnished information on economic exchanges between Japan and developing countries in Asia. She discussed the Japanese ODA program with its consideration of environment and WID, using the data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Based on this, Professor Kazuo Sumi of Niigata University, under the title of "ODA and the Environment and Women," seriously questioned: "Who profits by ODA development?" Using the examples of the dam construction projects along Narmada Valley in India, Mr. Sumi pointed out the danger of aid which, contrary to its intentions, creates refugees, and risks forcing development programs and developing technology on local people without adopting their ideas about the local areas. Then Ms. Naoko Shimomura, a former member of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and currently a staff member of the Corporation for Supporting JOCV, pointed out that based on her experiences of farm life in Bangladesh, the notion of people from developed industrial nations that developing countries are only poverty-stricken, is based on misunderstandings. She further reported that there is more of a need for people from developed industrial nations to learn from than to teach the people of developing nations, who have learned how to survive without wasting natural resources. Mr. Satoru Nishimura, a research assistant in the Department of Economics at Kyushu University who was engaged in research of the

development of farm villages in the Philippines, reported on conditions where villagers were so poor that they had no other choice but to disrupt the environment by illegal deforestation. Mr. Nishimura also reported on cases where investment by multinational business enterprises promoted farming and resulted in the development of women's capabilities and economic capacities. Ms. Abzug, Ms. Shiva and Ms. Witoelar also joined the discussion as they had done the day before. Everyone then actively discussed the ways of development which would respect the human rights of people in countries receiving aid and guarantee their participation; especially, women's in decision-making. They also discussed the proper technology for WID.

## KITAKYUSHU FORUM ON WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT

Kitakyushu city was awarded the UNCED<sup>1</sup> Local Government Honours Programme for its approach to environmental conservation which has been praised highly internationally. This forum on women and environment was held to look back on the pollution prevention campaign "We Want Blue Skies" conducted by women from Tobata Ward of Kitakyushu in the 1960s and to review the meaning of environmental problems to women.

To open the forum, representatives from the Council of Tobata Women's Associations, the principal promoter of this environmental movement, and Mr. Eidai Hayashi, a non-fiction writer who participated in the movement, a former advisor of the Social Education Section of the City's Board of Education, made respective keynote reports. Also, an 8-mm movie "We Want Blue Skies" produced by members of the Council as part of the movement was shown.

In the keynote reports, the history of the Tobata women's movement which originated in 1950 and developed into the "We Want Blue Skies" campaign involving 13 women's associations in Tobata Ward in 1975 was highlighted. Stories of how pieces of wet cloth were hung under eaves of their houses to check air pollution, and of opinion polls conducted among residents in polluted areas, etc. were also told. The results of those investigations by women as housewives were reported to companies in the region and the city assembly for their action. One representative especially emphasized the story of women caught in the dilemma of fighting against the very companies for which their husbands worked, although they wished to protect the health of their family. Next, Mr. Ryota Shinohara, Director of the KITA<sup>2</sup>'s Environmental Cooperation Center talked about the his-

tory of citizens' fight against pollution in Kitakyushu. A dialogue was then held between Ms. Ikuko Morishita, Managing Director of Institute of Freshwater Biology and Mr. Eidai Hayashi. Ms. Morishita said, "Love for the environment is good, but we can not live by this love alone." She went on to say, "we will have to sprinkle agricultural chemicals to some extent, otherwise, we will have bad crops. Humans and insects can not always coexist. Science and technology are indispensable for better human living" . . . "On the other hand, humans are creatures of fathomless compassion. In the age of environmental conservation, women must use their inherent tenderness to take care of the ailing earth," she appealed. Mr. Hayashi insisted that "we must really recognize the fact that conservation of the global environment will ensue only from our efforts in preserving our regional environment, and now is the time to examine deeply whether or not our lives are really abundant?"

1 UNCED: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

2 KITA: Kitakyushu International Techno-cooperative Association

## WORKSHOPS



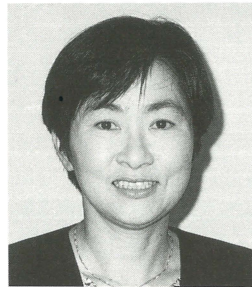
## ASIAN BAZAAR



## WOMEN TODAY

### FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD-CARE LEAVE LAW

— At the 1st Anniversary of the Law's Enactment —



**Ms. Nobuko Matsubara**  
Director-General  
Women's Bureau  
Ministry of Labour

#### 1. Preface

It is almost one year since the Child-care Leave Law was enacted on April 1, 1992.

This law which aims to improve the welfare of employees was enacted to prevent employees, who are raising infants, from giving up their employment. Thus, the law ensures a social environment in which workers will retain their employment without sacrificing their family life.

Since the law was approved by the Diet on May 8, 1991, the Ministry of Labour has addressed publicizing and implementing the law nationwide.

Looking back at the history of the law, the nascent movement for Child-care Leave started with the Working Women Welfare Law, enacted in 1972. This law recommended that employers, as one of their duties, make efforts to allow their employees to take child-care leave. The recommendation then was intended for female employees only. Afterwards, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law which succeeded the Working Women Welfare Law in 1985 maintained the provision on child-care leave. During the deliberation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Bill in the Diet, some insisted that all workers should be given the right to claim child-care leave. The proposition, however, was shelved because of a premature social environment in which few businesses had adopted the child-care leave system. It was also difficult to achieve public consensus. Now, the Child-care Leave Law has been enacted and the new system finally has a legal form after about 20 years. It is significant and laudable that the long-

standing dream of workers-working women above all, has come into being.

#### 2. Overview and Implementation of the Child-care Leave Law

The main contents of the Child-care Leave Law are: (1) to grant both male and female employees' the right to take leave until their babies become one year old; (2) to ban employers from dismissing their employees who claim the right to child-care leave; and (3) to compel employers to give preferential consideration, including shorter working hours, to their employees who want to keep working without taking a child-care leave but still want to find time for taking care of their babies.

However, businesses with regular employees numbering 30 or less are allowed a postponement until March 31, 1995 to comply with the requirements. In its efforts to encourage the implementation of the law, the Ministry of Labour has been conducting the following campaigns through its Women's and Young Worker's Offices across the country: (1) Seminars are held occasionally throughout the year to make sure employers understand fully the purpose and requirements of the law. The month of October every year is designated as the "Month to Ponder on Work and Child-care," during which intensive publicity campaigns including the "Symposium to Ponder on Work and Child-care" are held.

(2) Detailed advice or guidance is given to both employers and employees in formulating new employment regulations and collective agreements in compliance with the law.

(3) As an instrument to streamline the return of workers to their former workplaces after child-care leave, an "incentive subsidy of up to ¥180,000

and ¥130,000 per returnee in small/medium enterprises and large enterprises respectively to encourage employers to accept returnees after child-care leave" is granted to an employer who has devised and implemented systematic measures to prevent his employee from losing adaptability to the workplace or work ability while on a child-care leave and to facilitate the returnee's return to the normal work routine.

(4) As a measure to accelerate the implementation of the law, an "incentive subsidy (¥700,000 per enterprise) to encourage employers of specific small and medium enterprises to adopt the Child-care Leave System" is granted to an employer of 30 or less workers who has adopted the Child-care Leave System, and applied it to any of their employees during the moratorium period.

#### 3. Current Development

As nationwide statistics available on enterprises which adopted the Child-care Leave System were collected before the law was enacted, they do not adequately explain the current status.

After the law was enacted and those promotional campaigns, as mentioned in the preceding section were held, our bureau learned from its Women's and Young Worker's Offices throughout the country that many enterprises have been consulting them about the provisions of the law, how to prepare the rules of employment and information on incentive instruments. This affirms our assumption that many enterprises have introduced the Child-care Leave System into their operations. At the same time, there are many cases of female employees who were or are on child-care leave. There are also similar male cases, although their number is still limited. Some of these reports appeared in newspapers.

According to the Child-care Leave Law, both women and men are legally allowed to take a child-care leave and resume their former work after their child-care leave is over. They also have the option of shorter working hours to facilitate child-care. The wise combination of these two benefits will create a program of child raising best suited to their individual needs and ways of thinking. I think it is very important that the law allows them diversified options in regards to child raising

and maintaining a balance with their work.

However, there are problems to be solved before the law is made really instrumental. One is the fact that the number of men taking child-care leave is still small. Another problem is that the social environment has not been fully capable of accommodating the diversified child raising needs of working parents.

In addition, there is a problem of how to financially support workers who are on child-care leave. As for this problem, we think it is necessary to allow a reasonable amount time to find the best solution.

Finally in our efforts to get the Child-care Leave Law firmly settled, we think it necessary to conduct fact-finding missions, including a statistical investigation, to clarify how the law is being implemented among the public in general and to consider a financial instrument to encourage employers to set up infant nurseries attached to their respective companies for their employees' use.

#### 4. Conclusion

As the service sector grows bigger in the current Japanese economy and more women have a higher educational background and are more and more willing to work outside the home, the number of working women has grown as much as 40% of the total working population in Japan. It is now customary for women to work as men do.

On the other hand, Japanese people are more concerned with how the average citizen can enjoy Japan's affluence more. The realization of such a society is a top priority of Japan's economic policy. At the same time, the general public is becoming more enthusiastic about emphasizing their family and individual lives over their work.

We, the staff of the Labour Ministry Women's Bureau, hope to further contribute to the realization of a society where there is harmony between business life and home life, where people can enjoy affluence and comfort and contribute to the raising of women's social status not only in Japan but also in Asian and other countries.

I hope that the activities of the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women continue to be dynamic and successful.

## 1992-1993 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS Part 1

Theme : Women in Home Education

## Mother's Day

By Ms. Miwa Takahashi &lt;Thailand&gt;

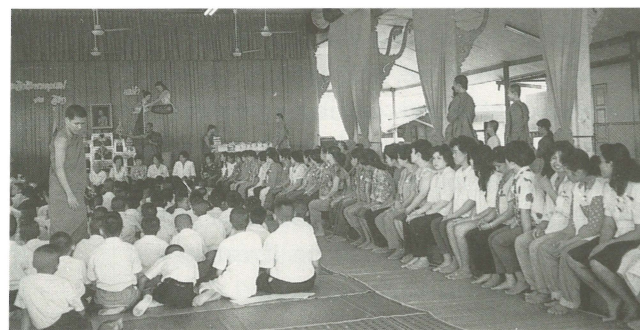
In Thailand, August 12th is called "Mother's Day" as it is Queen Sirikit's birthday. Every year, Thai people hold various kinds of functions all over the country on that day. As it was the Queen's 60th birthday this year, they had a particularly magnificent ceremony in Bangkok. Local people in each district also had a celebration for the Queen.

On August 12th, K Temple in Lop Buri district, located southeast of Bangkok, invited the students and their mothers to a special program for Mother's Day, which included a sermon, a dramatic sketch by the children, speech presentations by the children and the mothers, and flower presentations from the children to their mothers. The day was full of special events. In each event, they placed great emphasis on a mother's "devoted love."

In Thailand, a mother's love is often called the "cost of mother's milk." Many stories about a mother's love (sometimes self-sacrificing) have been told by children; such as, giving birth to them; feeding them; preparing meals for them; and nursing them when they are sick.

There were lots of children's paintings, displayed in a lecture hall at the temple that day, entitled "mother's favor." Many of them were pictures of houses surrounded by woods, or flowering plants.

There were also many photographs introducing the merciful Queen; for instance, the Queen paying a visit to lepers and people in a disaster stricken district with King Bhumibol. the Queen was also shown as the happy "mother" of the Prince and the Princesses. In Thailand, the Queen is the symbol of "mother" just like the King is the symbol of the merciful "father" to the people. On the Queen's birthday, many women visit the local temple to especially pray for their "mother."



▲K Temple's Sunday school

## Raising International Children

By Ms. Machiko Nakama &lt;Malaysia&gt;

There are over 50 Japanese women, like myself, who have married non-Japanese men and are now living in Malaysia. While our husbands are Malaysian, Chinese-Malaysian, Indian-Malaysian, American and European, most of us are married to Malaysian and Chinese-Malaysians.

Resigned to living away from Japan, we; nevertheless, get homesick. When we argue with our husbands, we talk with each other on the phone and try to comfort one another. When our children reach school age, we consult with each other on their schools and get excellent advice from those whose children have previously attended them.

Malaysian schools are divided according to the language of instruction—Malay, Chinese or English. Schools offering instruction in English are the so-called "international schools," distinct from Malaysian schools. Even their curriculum differ. One major difference between international and Malaysian schools is that Malay is not a mandatory subject at international schools. As parents, we naturally want to educate our children in the best way for the future. We want our children to know the languages of both parents because we believe this to be necessary. For this reason, each international couple sends their children to the type of school they prefer, be it Japanese, local or international. Parents teach languages not taught at school (mostly Japanese) at home. Of course, children's abilities differ. Some are completely unable to learn Japanese at the home while others have no language problem at all.

Directly after birth, humans are defined by a nationality. Armed with a language, children learn the customs and culture felt in daily life. As they grow up, they go on to school where they gradually figure out how to shape themselves through language and culture. I often wonder how these children of international marriages understand themselves, how they perceive life when their nationalities, the country they live in and the language they speak match up, or when they do not.

Each child is different, so each child's education is unique. As parents, we express our love for our children by teaching them both of our languages and cultures. We believe that this will help them discover who they are.

## The Future of Child Education

By Ms. Aurora Castro Habaña &lt;Philippines&gt;

For the Filipinos, the educational system is the greatest legacy afforded to them by American colonizers.

As a parent, I believe that through education a person can acquire the basic knowledge and skills to enable him to engage in activities required for effective functioning in society.

Education starts at home and the parents are the first teachers. It is at home where values are developed and attitudes are molded. It is where parents play a very vital role.

Presently, parents send their very young children to school and rely upon the teachers to educate them. Parents expect so much from the teachers with respect to training and developing their children into well rounded individuals. While it is true that teachers are committed to developing children from mere human being to citizens of the highest order, the realization of this depends upon the parents' support.

Teachers and parents should be partners in educating children. What is being taught in school should also be followed up and practiced at home to avoid confusion on the part of the children.

Having recognized the great role of parents in home education and the importance of early childhood education, several agencies in the Philippines have developed a program entitled Early Childhood Enrichment Program (ECEP). Through ECEP, parents and day-care workers are trained how to effectively meet the developmental needs of children aging 0-6 years old, the most crucial ages for growing children. The program has both home-based and center-based components. In home-based ECEP, parents of children aging 0-6 years old are taught about the basic concepts of child growth and development. They are also shown how to facilitate the child's emotional, mental, spiritual, physical and value development by using different stimulating activities; such as, games, songs, recitation, stories, and indigenous play materials produced by parents.

On the other hand, in the center-based ECEP, the trained day-care worker attends to the developmental needs of children in day-care centers by exposing them to different stimulating activities.

As a parent, I believe that the realization of education's objectives not only depends on the teachers but greatly depends upon the good quality of home education that we provide to our children.

## Early Childhood Education

By Ms. Lee Gye Ok &lt;Korea&gt;

I will write as a mother about the present state of early childhood education in Korea by looking at some examples from the increasing numbers of young nuclear families.

The most important role of a mother is bringing up her children. Education for her child begins during pregnancy. Her grandparents, parents, and all of her in-laws will advise her; for example, to speak politely, maintain a healthy mental environment, eat fresh and good food, sit properly, all for her baby's sake. These days most women give birth at hospitals. People will avoid visiting the home of a mother for three weeks after her baby's birth in consideration of the mother and child's health.

A child will be taught the proper way of speaking, greeting, eating and dressing. The child will also be toilet-trained by the time he/she becomes two years old. A working mother can take her baby to a nursery and leave him/her there if he/she has learned enough about daily manners. There are not enough nurseries yet, so most young couples with small children live with or close to their parents so that they can get their parents' help in looking after the children. With the decreasing number of children, the economic growth of the country and society's increasing interest in education, many children have now started taking piano, painting or swimming lessons around the age of five.

In most families, a mother takes responsibility for her child's home education. In the old days a child learned how to speak properly and how to communicate with people naturally through contact with his/her relatives—grandparents, uncles and aunts. In the past, these relatives would visit quite often, and would act as the child's strict teachers by teaching him/her proper manners. These days there's a strong tendency for early childhood education to depend not only on his/her parents and relatives but also on others in society.



▲A Korean girl's first birthday

## Don't Spoil The Children

By Ms. Wang Jing <China>

I recently heard a song lyric that went, "The world is as small as a home." But it could also go the other way, "A home is as small as the world." Today's overprotected children are beginning to control their parents. Once only dear cute babies, now they are becoming little dictators at home.

Let me give you a few examples. A young couple has a son. Although the child is already in 2nd grade, his mother must hand feed him. If she does not, he refuses to eat anything. If his mother is busy preparing for her workday, then the grandmother must do it, sometimes having to chase after her grandson to do so.

A co-worker recently told me that, "I'm afraid of letting my daughter come home alone from school so I pick her up every day." I wonder if it is such a good idea for parents to do everything for their children, or to always worry about them so, constantly following their children around. Perhaps these parents in their own youth experienced poverty. Consequently, they wish too strongly to

see their children grow up happily.

Still, if this situation does not change, it will be impossible for parents to raise their children firmly yet, at the same time, in a honorable way. Life is not easy, and like a symphony it will have its moments of light and darkness, highs and lows. It is unrealistic to expect children to live an easy life without any trouble. Overprotection may even have an opposite effect on these children.

A recent survey conducted by a Japanese research institute on several thousands of junior high school students from Japan, China and the United States asked whom they respect most. The Japanese responded most often with, "father and mother." In America, the top answers were "father and mother" or the name of a sports figure. Yet in China, "father or mother" was not even among the top ten answers. After learning such a shocking fact, isn't it necessary for parents to think more seriously about how to raise their children? I truly hope that parents remember not to "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

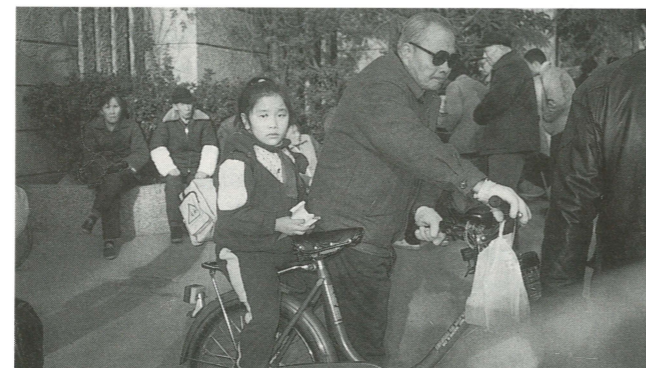
## One Child for One Couple

By Ms. Zhu Yaoxian <China>

In China, we have been performing the policy of family planning, advocating only one child for one couple, so the vast majority of couples in Chinese cities have only one child.

Parents, mothers in particular, of only child families in cities have shown two harmful trends in their attitudes towards their children and home education. Materially, parents; especially, mothers pamper their children by responding to their children's every plea and meeting their needs as much as they can. For example, concerning clothes, they buy the most beautiful and expensive ones for their children and always dress them up as spring flowers. The only child has too many new clothes to wear them all. In addition, the parents buy the best, most expensive and high-quality food for their children. A too ample material life has created an only child's selfishness, self-centeredness, self-arrogance and narrow-mindedness. Consequently, there are so many "little fatties" and "little emperors" throughout China.

On the other hand, in their children's studies, parents place high hopes on their children. They expect their sons to become "dragons" and their daughters "phoenixes." In order that their children become more useful, many mothers coach their children on their homework, helping them with their reading and writing until late at night every evening. In order that their children become versatile and stand out in the future, many mothers buy



▲ Grandchild rides home with grandfather

pianos, electronic organs, and drawing boards for them. They also invite private teachers to train their children in various classes. The excessive dotages and expectations with which a mother treats her only child are showed in daily life. Many mothers can be seen meeting their children after schools and sending them to schools on bicycles everyday all the year round. Owing to excessive high expectations for their children, some parents have exhibited an abnormal psychology towards their children. They often make large demands on their children in the hope that they will improve. They punish, beat, and scold children who do not study well. Some parents even violate criminal law.

These problems of home education are being brought to the attention of many experts and learned men as well as parents of the only child. In short, how will the quality of home education for the only child influence the growth of China's future new generation?

## Future Priests of Buddha's Dharma

By Mr. O. G. D. W. Jayashinha <Sri Lanka>

The majority of Sri Lankans are Buddhist and many Buddhist parents are religious minded. In a few cases some boys ages 8 to 16 of these parents are enthusiastic about becoming monks. With this in mind, they obtain the consent of their parents to embrace priesthood. At the time of ordination they are known as novice monks. A magnitude of 2,300 such boys were ordained in Sri Lanka on Poson Poya Day June 14, 1992. This mass ordination was the brainchild of the President of Sri Lanka to mark the 2,300 years of the advent of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. During the entire training period, these novice monks have to undergo a simple and arduous life. They reside in the temple and have to follow certain principles, carrying them out earnestly. As a part of their training, most of their time is devoted to reading and learning the scriptures of the Lord Buddha's Dharma. In this way, in later years they will be able to deliver sermons to large gatherings on various occasions. They are discouraged from eating meals served to them at the

temple by Buddhist devotees. For this reason, the novice priests have to go from house to house with a bowl to seek their food and the people willingly respond expecting merit. According to Lord Buddha's doctrines, all Buddhist priests have to find their own food but many priests now do not abide by these rules. These novice priests after many years of learning and acquiring the knowledge of the Dharma receive the "Higher Ordinance". At this stage, they are proficient in delivering sermons and carry out their duties independently. Arrangements have been made by a well known vocational training center in Sri Lanka to conduct a special course in English to train these priests to propagate the Buddha's Dharma abroad. The preaching of Buddhist priests in Sri Lanka, will hopefully help the people of Sri Lanka live in mutual co-existence, harmony, unity and peace as well as help them to lead disciplined lives.

## Home Education and Women Entrepreneurs

By Ms. Indrani Sugathadasa <Sri Lanka>

The 18% high unemployment rate in Sri Lanka is presently a very significant problem. A vast number of women; especially, young educated women, are engaging more and more in self-employment or micro enterprises. The variety of activities they chose are limited and are mostly in the agriculture and service sectors. The success of these activities rely on many factors such as access to credit, skills, training, market and information, etc.

Most of the women who are engaged in small business activities obtain skills and training at home rather than from institutions. There are various types of training institutions in Sri Lanka organised both by the government and NGOs. However, the number of trainees that can be accommodated in those institutions is very limited, compared to the high demand which is growing annually. Hence the women, especially in the rural sector, have no other choice but to participate in training programs at the village level. In most places, this kind of training is conducted by women leaders who have received their skills from formal institutions and then train others in the village. These leaders are playing the role of "Change Agents."

Apart from this, some women inherit entrepreneurial skills from their parents and other family members. They learn parental skills from childhood and develop them by engaging in related work.

In farming families, children help their parents whenever



▲ The harvesting of rice by all family members

possible and they learn the job by doing it. In the end, they too become farmers except those who successfully continue their education and then seek government jobs. It has been revealed that most of the women who choose some area in the agriculture field for their self employment have learned everything about it at home and not from formal institutions.

In Sri Lanka, the areas in which women are most commonly self-employed are agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, sewing, food preparation and preservation and cottage industries. While very few women engaged in these activities get formal training, the majority rely on the knowledge they learn at home. However, there are a large number of successful women entrepreneurs who earn considerable incomes and can also transmit their knowledge to others, thanks to their home education.

## A Young Girl's Fate

By Ms. Yam Kumari Gurung <Nepal>

In Nepal, the major part of the population is Hindu. The non Hindu are also dominated by this religion, practicing many things according to Hinduism. Another name for Hinduism in Nepal is male domination.

Thus in a country like ours, the females have been robbed of their freedom and equality for centuries. And for centuries this system has been rooted deeply in the society. It is very difficult to think how long it will take to change all of this.

A girl child's fate is decided at the very moment she comes into this world. From the time of birth, the mother of a female child is given less care and less nutrition unless the family already has two or three male children. In that case, a girl child may be acceptable. When the mother gets less care and less nutrition, it means the child will get less nutrition. As a female child grows, she is strictly taught to accept that her brothers are to get better things in life. When she is already five or six years of age she has to help her mother with daily chores. She has to fetch water as well as look after her younger brother or sister while her mother cooks or goes out to collect firewood or fodder for the domestic animals.

Sometimes a young girl has to take the animals such as sheep or goats to graze or collect firewood to take home in the evening when she brings back the animals. On the other hand, her brothers go to school or enjoy playing games. In the villages, we see very few girls going to school. In the remote areas, we seldom find female students. In those schools, at the beginning there are few female students but after they reach class 5 most of them drop out because they are old enough to do full time housework. Those very few who manage to stay in school up to class 7 usually attend class irregularly which leads to weakness in their studies.

When the brothers come from school or the playground, the sisters have to give them food and wash their clothes. The women folk usually wake up at 3:00 a.m. and work until late at night so they have very little time to take a bath or relax.

By the age of 16 the girls are old enough to get married, so by that time they have to know how to do all the household work. On one hand, sons are regarded as one of the gods' blessings and the bearers of the family name in the future. A single daughter however is a burden for

the parents and that is why they want to marry her off as soon as possible. Males are regarded as bread earners even though females have the greater share of the work.



▲Nepal women give birth on an average to six children

## The Wind

By Ms. Endang Mugiarti Suwondo <Indonesia>

I blew gently and happily that morning. What a happy day it was! I blew and entered a beautiful nice looking house. That house was good and well equipped, and the atmosphere was nice. I watched things that was going on in the house and I noticed that all the people were very busy. The father and the mother were preparing themselves for the office. Two children were also preparing themselves for school.

In the afternoon, I blew and I entered that house again. First I saw that the two kids were sitting while listening to a story on a cassette player. I saw their parents come home from work. They greeted each other. But then I saw the mother just go straight to the kitchen to prepare their dinner. And the father got busy with his newspaper. And then they had dinner together, exchanged small talk and advice. I guess there was also a disagreement by the parents on how to pay attention to their kids. They were tired and they were in a hurry to go on to the next schedule. The dinner ended very quickly because the parents needed to attend a meeting. They left the house, leaving lots of orders for the kids to obey. I looked at the children's eyes and saw they were upset. They went into their room and banged the door.

They turned on their cassette player and listened again to a story. I read what was on their minds. There were some objections they did not express. "Mom and Dad, are you so busy that you will not listen to me? At school today, a friend cried. He had to postpone paying his school fee for three months. His mother is a poor widow who is now ill and cannot go to work. That friend cried since he was so confused how he could get medicine to cure his mother. He has no money. I am his close friend. I gave him my watch to sell to get some money. I am curious if I did wrong. However, Mom and Dad, I have not told you anything. You were so busy that you left without giving me a glance." I slipped into his younger brother's mind. He was asking Mom and Dad. "Are you very busy? Won't you tell me a story? All the stories I have heard are not from your mouth but from the cassette player. If the story is frightening I cannot hide because you are not here with me. I can only press my face on the pillow. I cannot feel you wipe my head to help me sleep and dream a wonderful dream."

After seeing these two kids, I have some questions as well to ask. Will progress sacrifice relationships between parents and their children? Can sophisticated products replace the good effect of the stories children used to hear from their parents? Will other business stop parents from developing a good relationship with their children?

## Kanchan's Destiny

By Ms. Kumud Mohan <India>

6:00 a.m. Thump.....THUMP!

You hear the sound of wood. A few more steps and you see a slight figure bent in concentration over a heavy coal iron moving rhythmically up and down a wooden table. Kanchan is a washerwoman by profession. You might say she was born into it. Since childhood she can remember watching her parents soak, boil, rinse and dry out bales of cloth for a dyeing unit in Jamrudpur. It was a messy and back-breaking job, the only one known to Kanchan, her two brothers and a sister.

By 14, Kanchan had passed the 7th class and started helping her mother with housework and the professional washing as well. She was 17 when an aunt from Jodhpur wrote to say that she had found the perfect groom for Kanchan. It did not matter that Kanchan never met the groom before marriage. Her parents had tried their best for her, she was sure. And the idea of setting up her own home excited her.

Roop Ram, four years older than Kanchan, was tall, dark and handsome. He was not educated, but was simple, understanding and amenable to Kanchan's ways. He did not object to Kanchan riding a bicycle.

Together Roop Ram and Kanchan broke fresh ground at Anand Lok, a new colony just a few kilometers from Jamrudpur. They set up a mobile ironing box under a tree and also took up washing clothes in the houses nearby. By saving hard, they were able to build a small hut and also buy a dog.

Kanchan became pregnant within a year of her marriage. In fact she bore five children—four girls and a boy—within a span of eight years. Then she got herself steril-



▲Kanchan's family

ized.

The girls and the boy were admitted to separate government schools as is the practice. The fees were nominal and the books free.

In the mornings while their parents were away, the children picked up their first few lessons in life—fending for yourself, working together, helping each other out—be it queueing up for water at the hand pump, buying bread at the grocer's or cleaning up the hut.

"Mummy, please tell me what is a meter," asked 10-year-old Sonia while Kanchan was ironing. "Here," said Kanchan, measuring a meter on the box. "A thousand of these will make a kilometer. That is two rounds of the colony."

She turned to me. "None of the children is really interested in studies, and both of us do not have the time to coax or help them. The eldest girl is busy with the housework. The younger ones help her and also distribute ironed clothes and bring back fresh ones for ironing." "God gave them to us. He will take care of them," says Roop Ram with the unswerving faith typical of rural folk in India.

## INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE JAPAN FOR UNIFEM (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN)



The UNIFEM National Committee Japan (Chairperson: Ms. Mitchiko Nakamura, Coordinator of the Liaison Group for the Implementation of Resolution from the International Women's Year Conference of Japan) was inaugurated at a ceremony held on November 24th last year at the United Nations University in Tokyo. The National Committee Japan, the 12th UNIFEM National Committee ever established worldwide, was established with the Liaison Group for International Women's Year, the Yokohama Women's Association for Communicating and Networking, and Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women as its central members.

In 1976, the United Nations Decade for Women's Fund was started with the aim of supporting worldwide projects designed for the welfare and financial independence of women in developing countries, and promoting women's participation in decision-making in development projects. It was in 1985 that the organization was renamed UNIFEM.

During the 14 year period from 1978 to 1991, UNIFEM supported the activities of more than 750 working teams in more than 100 countries in Africa, the Asia and Pacific region, Latin America, the Caribbean and the West Asian region.

The most important activities of the National Committee Japan are carrying out publicity campaigns to have Japanese people understand UNIFEM; fund-raising to support UNIFEM's activities; as well as seeking the cooperation of Japanese government offices and others for UNIFEM's activities. The National Committee consists of official members and supporting members.

Many guests and supporting members including UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Ms. Julie Andrews,

UNIFEM representative Ms. Irene Santiago, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Koji Kakizawa and playwright Ms. Mieko Osanai attended the inauguration ceremony to celebrate the founding of the committee.

Ms. Andrews in her address stated "I was born in a safe and friendly place. I have the right to vote, to travel, to be free, to fulfil my ambitions, to explore my own potential and many other things some of which I think I sometimes take for granted. I feel this is an opportunity in my life for me to help others less fortunate. I am proud to be a part of this effort to improve the lives of women in developing countries. And I am delighted to welcome the National Committee of Japan to our team."

The Committee plans soon to launch fund-raising, newsletter publication, and organization seminars activities. Furthermore, the Committee is addressing the building of a nationwide activities network by organizing local committees which will assist the central committee.

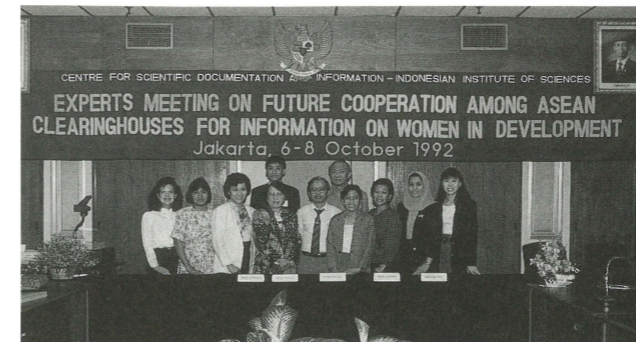


▲Notables at the inauguration ceremony



▲Donations to UNIFEM at the inauguration of National Committee Japan

## COOPERATION AMONG ASEAN CLEARINGHOUSES ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT



▲Participants at the meeting

By Ms. Luwarsih Pringgoadisurjo <Indonesia>

Consultative meetings among ASEAN Clearinghouses on WID are regularly taking place. The site of the meetings are rotating among the clearinghouses. The first meeting took place in Jakarta, in November 1982 while the latest one hosted by the Indonesian Clearinghouse was also held in Jakarta between October 6-8, 1992. Each meeting was attended by two delegates from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. Observers also attended including a representative from the Social Development Division of ESCAP in Bangkok.

Various cooperative programs were launched during these meetings; such as, the compilation of bibliographies, abstracts and the like. One important effort is the joint program for the compilation of the Thesaurus on WID started in 1985. The objective of the Thesaurus is to provide standard keywords to be used in the information storage and retrieval system among the ASEAN Clearinghouses. At present around 3,000 terms of WID are included in the Thesaurus. But like all kinds of thesauri, the WID Thesaurus needs constant updating and maintenance.

The meeting in Jakarta also agreed on a joint publication to report on the activities of the WID clearinghouses to be published in time for the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on WID in May 1994.

The development of a common database on WID which can be exchanged in machine readable form was also discussed. And a proposal for conducting a regional training on the use of CDS/ISIS (Computerized Data System/Integrated Set of Information System) for information storage and retrieval system was also accepted. Training for trainers for the dissemination of information on WID to the general public including the grassroots level also came under discussion during the meeting in Jakarta.

## THE FORUM WINDOW

### LEARNING FROM TRAGEDY IN SOMALIA

With extreme hunger and malnutrition these children cannot stand up but are just squatting. Their faces are wrinkled to make them look like old people. Their limbs resemble thin branches of dead trees, and with deep-set eyes that look large they stare at us from the TV screen.

They say the inter-tribal civil war is the cause of the starvation in Somalia. In order to put an end to it, the UN coalition forces began "Operation Recovering Hope." Indeed, it seems that the piping of aid is functioning anyhow and the starvation is decreasing. But should we not make a much greater effort to bring peace not through military force but through some other means; to have the children's eyes shine with hope instead of desperation, hatred and madness which drives people to violence? Last year the impact of the children's conditions in Somalia gave us cause for serious self reflection.

According to "Jane's Defence Weekly," a British magazine on military information, the number of places where such conflicts are going on or are possible totals 73. For us women, who nurture life in our wombs and give our children loving care in cooperation with men, this is something we cannot allow. The list includes many Asian places: Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the disputed Northern Territories of Japan is also among them.

It is true that there was a giant step towards detente last year. The tension that had existed between China and the Republic of Korea since the Korean War came to an end with the establishment of their diplomatic relations. In Cambodia, a tentative cease-fire has been attained, and there is movement towards peace. However, many of us are doubtful about the justice in repeating the Gulf War pattern of sending powerful troops to bring about a cease-fire, be it in Cambodia, Somalia or any in other place where there are hostilities.

The only way for us to make sure that military power does not represent justice would be to advance disarmament on a global scale. It is desirable that women with wishes for peace send more of their representatives into the arena of politics. Also such tasks should be a part of women's NGO activities. I would also like to remind us all of Mother Teresa who at 82 is actively helping the injured citizens in India, and those women, who in the place of men killed in the war, are the main force for Cambodian reconstruction.

Masami Shinozaki

Chief Researcher, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

# INFORMATION

## ● FORUM 1993-1994 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WANTED!

Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women is pleased to announce its 1993-1994 recruitment of foreign correspondents. By collecting general information on Asian women's issues as well as publishing correspondents' articles in our journal, we are promoting an information network to cover all Asian countries.

For our 1993-1994 program, the theme of correspondents' reports is "Women in Education", a key element in human as well as social development.

We look forward to receiving many applications.

Number of recruits: 15

Duration: May, 1993-March, 1994

Qualifications:

- ① Residence in an Asian country other than Japan.  
(However, there is no limitation as to one's nationality or sex)
- ② Participation for one year including three reports written either in Japanese or English due July 20, October 20 and December 20, 1993 respectively.

Application:

Applicants must prepare the following items and submit them to the Forum.

- ① Application Report—up to 1,200 Japanese letters or up to 700 English words  
Theme: Women in Education
- ② Curriculum Vitae
- ③ Photographs: Personal photo and one photo related to the report with an explanation.

Deadline date: April 8, 1993 (Thu.)

For more information, please contact:

Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

Kitakyushu International Conference Center 8F

3-9-30 Asano, Kokura-Kita, Kitakyushu, 802 JAPAN

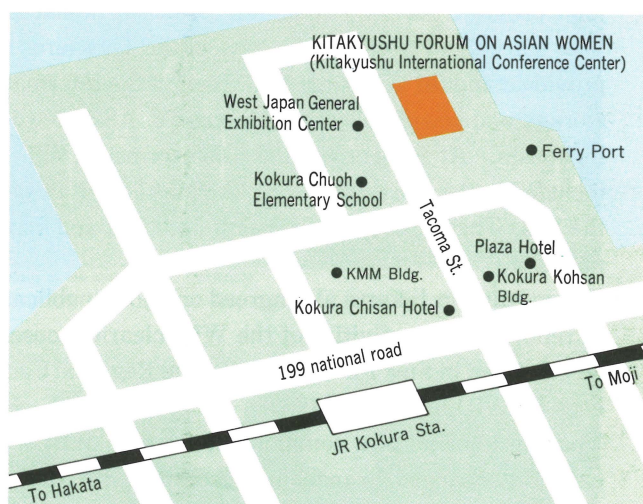
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## ● "Asian Breeze" SUBSCRIBERS' DRIVE

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

We received many reports from our Foreign Correspondents. From their impressions, no matter how fleeting or unaffected, we are given vivid images—images of Asian people whom we do not know yet whose lives are now closer to ours and touch us in many ways. I want to learn, hear and see more about Asia—an evolving kaleidoscope of colors, ambitions and hope.



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