

Asian Breeze



At TOTO Headquarters in Kitakyushu, Japan, two workers assemble a state of the art toilet. This half finished toilet will later receive further processing before leaving the line.
TOTO is a world famous sanitation company known for its quality sanitation and household fixtures.



KFAW

WOMEN TODAY.....2
 SEMINAR FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS..... 3
 NEW PUBLICATIONS..... 5
 1992-1993 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS..... 6
 NEW FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.....10
 THE FORUM WINDOW..... 11

JULY 1993 No. **8**

WOMEN TODAY



Journalist
Ms. Yoshiko Sakurai

One of the best aspects of my college life was making friends with Asian students. At the State University of Hawaii, where I was studying, there were foreign students from more than 60 countries. Some of my friends from college days have kept in touch with me after graduation and others have not. The time I spent with each of them, however, opened a door for me to new viewpoints about Asia as I was non-political and not very socially conscious.

I was greatly impressed by one student whom I often remember. Her name was Kyu-kyu Mei from Burma. Her shining black hair, big eyes with crisp double eyelids on her tanned face and white clean teeth which showed when she smiled made her look like a calm and noble Buddhist saint that had been reincarnated. One day, she came to campus with her eyes swollen from crying. I could not resist asking her why she had been crying. She said she had received a letter from her father who was a high official in the Burmese government. He had heard a rumor that she was neglecting her studies and reproached her severely about this. When I suggested that she write and tell him the truth, she stared at me sorrowfully, and explained that personal freedom is more restricted in Burma than it is Japan. As a student studying abroad, she was responsible not only to her family but also to her country. Although she was a serious student, such a rumor in Burma about her was very dishonorable for her father as well as for her. It was feared this would also cause problems for her father's political position. She also said, "If something bad happens to my father, it would be my responsibility."

I then realized the responsibility she bore on her shoulders. Burma, as a socialist country which developed through a series of coups d'etat and fierce conflicts, is poor and the most isolated, insu-

lar country in the world. Being a Burmese student at an American university was a great responsibility for her, and one a present day Japanese student could never imagine.

After Kyu-kyu Mei graduated from the university, she returned to Burma. None of our classmates have heard from her since. Burma is now Myanmar, and has become more isolated than ever before.

Presently in Asia and other countries, a population's lifestyle is decisively conditioned by its country's structure. Japanese people seem to be thinking that it is good to forget the existence of theirs. For this reason, we cannot truly understand the Asian mind without understanding the influence a country has on an individual, regardless of it being right or wrong. If we broadened our thinking in this way, we would have a different view of foreign workers from other Asian countries.

One of my friends, Chen Jing Li, who came from China, acquired a master's degree from Tokyo University and was employed by the Tokyo head office of a leading Japanese company. Recently she said with a sigh, "Even if I continue to stay in Japan, the gap between Japan and myself is unlikely to change. Since I will always be a foreigner in Japanese society, I decided to go to the U.S.A."

In China, she was forced into the countryside during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Afterwards, she returned to Beijing to attend university, graduating with her friends who were much younger. After graduation, she realized that it was impossible to lead the life she wanted for herself in China. After much difficulty, she was finally able to study in Japan.

In Japan, however, she realized that Japan is like opaque plastic. On the surface, it looks very beautiful and smooth, but it is very difficult to see inside. She also felt that the Japanese are less interested in others, and would not try to get to know about the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, or the quality of freedom Chinese society presently has.

Asian workers in Japan, like Chen Jing Li, do not come to Japan only for economical reasons. If we can understand how their desire for freedom motivates them to settle here, Japanese society's view of them would become more tolerant. I feel deeply that there are important lessons to learn from Asian women who are living in difficulties.

SEMINAR ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

"The 2nd Seminar on Improvement of the Status of Women for Government Officers" was held by the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women from February 12 to March 2, 1993, under the auspices of the JICA Kyushu International Centre.

The general purpose of this seminar, started last year, is to improve the management skills of government personnel in charge of women's issues, as well as exchange general information among countries about the same. This seminar brought together six officers who are in charge of women's issues from six different Asian, Pacific and African countries.

The general theme of this annual seminar is Women in Development (WID). This seminar introduces the Japanese administrative system and promotes various measures for women in cooperation with central and local governments.

The 2nd Seminar expanded its range of topics and activities, based on last year's experience. New lecture programs were introduced; such as, measures for the improvement of living standards in rural life, school education and welfare for the disabled. Country reports



▲ Closing ceremony of the 2nd seminar held at JICA Kyushu International Centre

were presented publicly to contribute to international solidarity, which is indispensable to the solution of women's issues.

Participants also visited various facilities in Kitakyushu city, made study trips to the National Women's Education Centre in Saitama Prefecture and a village in Asakura County, Fukuoka Prefecture to observe efforts in the field to improve the status of women. The group observed farming techniques for growing and producing strawberries and orchids and participated in a discussion meeting with a local women's production group at the village.

The following are summaries of participant opinions at the Country Report Meeting which was held open to the public.

Sri Lanka

The constitution of Sri Lanka provides free education and assures equal access to education irrespective of sex, class or ethnicity. Sri Lanka is proud of its high literacy rate of over 80% for both sexes. However, due to poverty, 10% of the female and 9% of the male population fall into the category of no schooling.

The economically active population of Sri Lanka is comprised of 4,010,000 males and 1,960,000 females. The highest number of economically active women are concentrated in villages and estates. Although non governmental organizations supported by international and bilateral funding agencies are promoting the implementation of income generating projects for women, the majority of women still undertake such activities in agriculture, petty trade and household industry, etc. due to the lack of skills and training. Thus, the contributions from large number of women in the informal sector are not accounted for in official statistics. These women rarely see the benefits of development.

Thailand

In Thailand, half of the female population receives only primary education or less. The transition rate from primary to lower secondary school for females is only 38%, while it is 44% for males. The proportion of female to male students at lower secondary schools is 4 : 6. The difference is even wider in rural areas. Statistics also reveal that 87% of female illiterates and 86% of female primary school leavers live in rural areas. Traditionally speaking, the Thai women's place is usually at home, taking care of all household chores, while a men's place is in the paddy field. Women who can keep the house in order, take good care of the children and possess culinary skills are respected as the gems of the house. Such a tradition still persists today even though economic hardship has pressured women to leave the kitchen to join the labor force. Although the percentage of female participating in politics is rather low compared to most countries around the world, it is increasing yearly.

Pakistan

Although Pakistan had the fifth fastest growing economy in the world during the 1980s, its social infrastructure has improved slowly especially for women. This is due in part to the low allocation of resources to social services and the rapidly growing population overcrowds the available social services.

In Pakistan, there are over 5,000 NGOs from the national to the grassroots level, registered with the Social Welfare Department. To enable the NGOs to play a greater role for women in development, the government has financed their activities. The main activities of these NGOs are education, maternal and child health, vocational training, technological development, loans for income generating activities, savings plans and the spread of information related to women's issues, etc.



Malaysia

The Malaysian government has long recognized the role of women in national development. Labor laws in Malaysia ensure women's access to employment in all sectors of economic and social activity. Women are involved in the plantation industry, business, trading or even in manufacturing. Like their male counterparts, women enjoy equal freedom in a free enterprise economy. However, in the face of a rapidly tightening labor supply, the involvement of women in economic activities continues to be inhibited by a number of constraints. Dual responsibilities of family and career restrict the mobility and increased participation of women in the labor market. In addition, women are often perceived as secondary earners who only supplement family income rather than as co-earners. Thus, income generating programs targeted for women reinforce their homemaker roles, providing few opportunities for the acquisition of new and more marketable skills.

Kenya

Although the Kenyan government places a very high priority on women's issues as far as national development is concerned, obstacles still impede improvement of women's status. The majority of Kenyan women are still in micro-enterprises unlike their male counterparts who are in macro-enterprises. Also as small numbers of women are represented in decision-making bodies, they are left out when it comes to making policy. Traditional attitudes which fail to recognize women as equal partners in development with men is another problem. Women are always seen as bearers and rearers of children. Further barriers include the lack of women role models, gender-desegregated data, access to credit facilities due to lack of collateral, as well as adequate skills in particular fields, e.g., management and production.



Papua New Guinea

The population of Papua New Guinea (comprised of 1,600,000 females and 1,800,000 males), predominantly rural, depends on subsistence from gardening and fishing. Rural residents have no access to safe water supplies, basic education and health services. The lack of roads and the long distances women have to travel for medical services takes all the time they need for other development work. Estimates show that women make up 46% of this economically active group and are responsible for about 85% of food production and processing. Although more women are gradually assuming non-traditional positions, the number is still very low compared to that of men. Mr. Akoka Doi, the former Papua New Guinea Deputy Prime Minister, stated in his 1989 budget speech, "Women are the nation's most treasured resources but are still being underutilized. Only 20% of public officials are women and less than 3% are in middle or senior management positions."

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women issues various publications to provide more information on women in Asia. The following are the Forum's new releases.

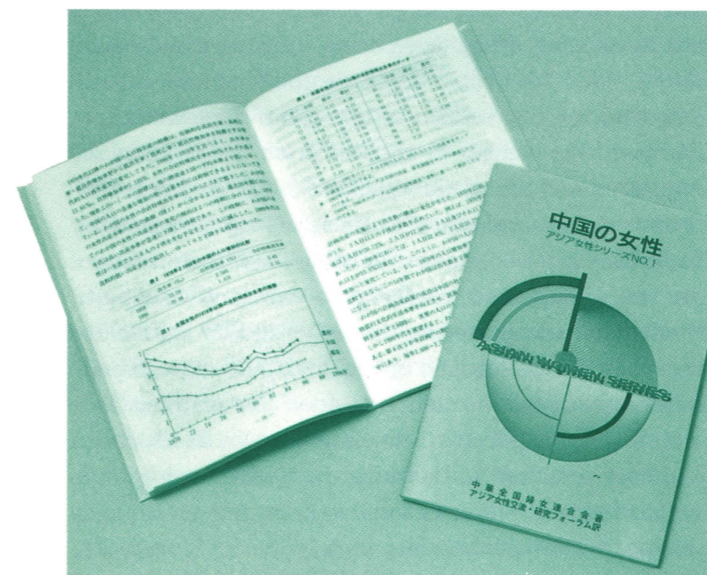
All of the Forum's new releases except for the Asian Women Series which is only in Japanese are available in Japanese and English.

Chinese Women — Asian Women Series No.1 —

Obtaining factual knowledge about each other's nations is important to develop mutual understanding in Asia and expanding international cooperation. As interest in "Women in Development" increases, the necessity of sharing information on women is also growing. Nonetheless, in the past, there have been few publications written on Asian women that were based on objective data and statistics.

The Forum therefore has responded to this rising demand by publishing the "Asian Women Series." This Series in cooperation with each country's "National Machinery" will introduce the conditions surrounding the life of Asian women.

The first of the Asian Women Series, "Chinese Women", was written by the All-China Women's Federation. It describes the general situation of women in issues; such as, population, families, health, education, labor, social participation, and provides information on laws to protect the rights and freedom of women.
(price: ¥1,000; \$10)



Any of these publications can be purchased directly from the Forum. If you would like us to send you a copy, please contact us. (See address on pg. 12)

'92 A Study of Family Consciousness in Contemporary Thailand —with Comparison among Bangkok, Seoul and Fukuoka—

The Forum's research section is principally researching how the consciousness of the family as a primary social unit is effected by economic development.

After research was conducted in Korea in 1991, a second research project was completed last year in Thailand. As a result of economic development, Thai families, whose system is traditionally based on matrilineal residence, care of and respect for elders mainly by daughters, have undergone major structural changes. This report analyzes that situation by comparing statistical data on Thai families with families in Seoul and Fukuoka.
(price: ¥2,000; \$20)

Journal of Asian Women's Studies Vol.2

Research on women is supported not only by the activities of experts in universities and institutes, but also by the various intellectual activities of women themselves, which are deeply rooted in their own personal experiences. The Journal of Asian Women's Studies provides an opportunity for discussion and information exchange on the lives and problems that face Asian women. Volume 2 covers the third Asian Women's Conference — "Women in Environment and Development." Included are reports on the opening symposium and the results of the study/discussion sessions. An article written by Dr. Qui Wen Ying, a professor at Beijing University, on the trends of women's studies in China since 1979 will be of special interest to our readers.
(price: ¥1,000; \$10)

Foreign Correspondents' Reports Vol.2 1992-1993

Our 1992-1993 Foreign Correspondents program featured in Vol.2 Reports from 19 correspondents of different background from 13 countries on the theme of "Women in Home Education." There were articles on education and the one child-policy in China, gender education for Singaporean children, religious and vocational education in Thai nunneries as well as the situation of Philippine women, who in their country's poetry and music are metaphorically described as "the light of the home", etc.
(price: ¥800; \$8)

1992-1993 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS Part 2

Theme : Women in Home Education

Snow Woman

Ms. Noriko Yamaguchi <Singapore>

In order to form a society in which women too can have both "job and family lives" instead of "men at work, and women at home", the methods of education at schools, in society and in families should be changed.

As part of Singapore's educational restructuring, home economics together with design techniques will be compulsory for all lower secondary school students starting from 1994. Studies will be expanded from conventional cooking and sewing to environmental protection in which students learn about resource savings and recycling.

As for social studies, the AWARE group on social education including women's issues began to carry out programs for children.

My daughter and son also joined the "Children's Adventures in Thinking" program or the reading of children's books from a feminist's point of view. The first book chosen was "Snowman." After a leader read the book, she said "If there is snow man, isn't it alright to have snow woman? What kind of snow women do you like? What kind of hair? Is she fat? Does she wear a tie? Ok, why don't we make our own favorite snow woman?"

Changing family education, which has the greatest impact on children, is the most difficult task. Children, one way or another, learn the ways of women and men through their parents' life styles. In Singapore, where women appear more active in the workplace than in Japan, once at home, gender roles are still persistently applied.

Since schools in Singapore follow the two courses per day system, children in the morning session come back in the afternoon, and those in the evening session stay home in morning, making it difficult for mothers to work outside.

Also due to a shortage of nursery schools, high nursery costs and a lack of part-time work, many mothers must either work full-time or not to work at all.

Full-time working women with high salaries are trying to manage their household responsibilities by hiring foreign maids. However, it is more important to work with men to change the way of working and lifestyles. Thus, in the future we can create a society in which we as individuals will be able to lead easier and happier lives.

One Ton of Grain per Mu

Ms. Zhao Hu <China>

In China, 80% of the population are farmers. In the past, the farming economy made men the principle force in agricultural production, determining their important status in society. Today history has entrusted women with this position. Rural women have displayed their social values through the drive for rural economic development. However, in rural areas the majority of illiterates are women, which seriously hinders women's emancipation, as well as keeping them away from learning new farming techniques.

The All-China Women's Federation which links rural women across the country, cooperated with twelve other departments in early 1989 to launch the cultural and technological projects/competitions among rural women in China. Throughout the three years of the program,

Orphans in Sri Lanka: A Selected Study

Ms. Keerthy Sironmany Rajaratnam <Sri Lanka>

Ethnic strife in northeast Sri Lanka has made it necessary to suddenly increase the number of children admitted to existing orphanages or to open new ones there during 1987 to 1992. Some of these homes are ill-prepared for this sudden influx of orphans which has increased the number of children from ages 6-12 in 200 registered and unregistered homes to 8,000. These children have been admitted to these homes because they have lost one or both parents and because their relatives are unable to provide custodial care or family support. Studies were conducted by the author in 1989 and 1990 to ascertain the quality and quantity of child care given in these institutions in relation to food and clothing; love and security; intellectual stimulation; moral development and inter-personal relationships; the world of work; forming lasting relationships as well as concerning training to integrate these children into society.

Six homes were selected for this study. All of these homes were located in quiet surroundings, but some of them have cramped quarters without adequate water facilities. The quality and quantity of food served to the



▲ A class on how to raise chickens scientifically

Women's Federations at all levels have responded. The program allows women to arm themselves with up-to-date production skills to become literate and increase their potential. About 120 million rural women have participated in these activities.

The Program has created a sensation among farmers. For example, women in the main production areas of grain cotton and oils created "one ton of grain per mu (1/15 of an hectare) of land" and participated in the "standard cotton" competitions, which has greatly increased the output of grain, cotton and oils. Women have also carried out other activities; such as, silkworm,

children seemed adequate in four homes; however, the food provided at two homes lacked quality and quantity. Children in the boys' homes were well clad while the children in the girls' home said that they would like better clothes. The boys' home made special efforts to identify the undernourished and gave them additional supplements in the form of milk, vegetables or eggs. 80% of the children in these homes said that they were well-looked after by the child care givers but even this 80% said that they would be happier if more time was devoted to them. 20% of the children needed the services of counselors. These were the "isolates" with whom others would not play or study with. Two homes had the services of trained volunteer counselors and incidence of "isolates" in this home was practically nil.

As the boys in two homes were introduced to the world of work, they had an idea of what jobs they wanted to do in the future. The girls wanted to be teachers, stenographers or nurses or get married once they entered society. All these children went to schools, but 60% of the children were overage for their class and 30% were below average or were weak in mathematics. Special efforts were made by some homes to provide remedial teaching in mathematics for boys and girls. In all these institu-

goose and duck, forestry and fruit projects, which have turned resources into commodity products. In mountainous regions, women are planting fruit trees which they call the "March 8th Green Project"; whereas, women living in poverty-stricken areas are improving their living standards through relevant activities and reforms.

A leader from the Zhejiang Provincial Women's Federation says that this program has enabled women to understand the close relationship between education and economic participation.

Han Yulan, 53 years old, lives in Daluzhuang Village, Tangshan, Hebei Province. For many years, she helped her husband grow vegetables. Since the program started, Han has learned new ways of growing vegetables which she introduced to her farm, fostering 14 new varieties of vegetables. Last year, Han accepted the task of seed-selection offered by the Tianjin Municipal Vegetable Research Institute. The four kinds of vegetables she selected have been approved by experts, and her experimental land was listed as a base for a scientific farming project during the state's Eighth Five-Year Plan.

These kinds of competitions and income generating program have achieved high results, Women's Federations at all levels, as well as local governments will continue its promotion.

tions, religious devotion was emphasized. Caretakers believe that religious worship and religious discourses will instill morals and discipline in the children, making them forget their bitter past.



▲ Awards ceremony to encourage Sri Lankan orphans



Mommy, My Shoes Please

Ms. Luwarsih
Pringoadisurjo
◁Indonesia▷

The following is an illustration of problems faced by working women, especially in big cities. I do not mean those economically well off women who can afford to hire household helpers to take care of the smooth functioning of the household, but those of ordinary citizens. Most of the latter have to take jobs for economic reasons. However, we also see young educated women entering the job market because of their ambitions and for self-satisfaction. Problems usually start when they get married and have children, then have to cope with careers. In order to pursue a career, they should become effective time managers, perhaps arranging their activities as follows.

Get up at 5:00 a.m., not later, or the whole day will turn topsy-turvy. Prepare breakfast for the family, and probably feed the baby in between. While feeding the baby, her guilty feelings grow, because in the course of the day the baby has to be bottle-fed instead of breast-fed.

Her job is probably full of challenges that she wants to meet. She probably has a toddler who is difficult to wake up early in the morning and prepare for nursery school. Her eldest is screaming for help because socks are missing, or homework is not entirely finished, and could mommy check, please. Meanwhile her husband gets up and asks for his coffee. Of course, he can make the coffee, but by tradition the wife has to take care of all the household chores and her family.

Meanwhile the time is passing and she can not afford to arrive late. She also needs time to make herself presentable for work. On her agenda, there is a staff meeting at 8:30 a.m. followed by an appointment at 10:00 a.m. and another one after office hours. Because of the distance, she can not possibly go home first to see how her children are doing. The family is lucky to have a relative taking care of the children, yet her guilty feeling always pop up whenever she works overtime. She knows very well that if something goes wrong with the children, it is always the mother's fault. Should she give up her career and be a full time mother? However, it would be a pity to give up a promising career. It makes her nervous that one of these days she will have to decide. Life is not easy.

Sex and Sexuality

Ms. Elena L. Samonte ◁Philippines▷

There is much concern about the population problem of the Philippines. In a country of 62 million people, with a birth rate of 2.3, demographers predict the population will just about double in just a few decades. Family planning programs, responsible parenthood programs and all sorts of other projects try to teach couples how to deal with such topics as sexuality, gender roles, family planning, etc. Unfortunately, these come rather late as these adults have already learned their roles, values and patterns of decision-making. A better strategy is to teach the children. But what are our parents teaching their children?

A study of two child psychologists (Dr. E. Ventura and L. Decentece) on adolescent sexuality shows that there are still a lot of things children are not learning from their parents. It also showed that myths passed on to them are the main source of misinformation.

Children picked up such misinformation from friends who probably do not know much more than they do. But where else can they turn to when they need information or a better understanding of their sexuality? There seem to be few options. Parents do not seem to assume this

responsibility. Some students say they get their information from their biology teachers who talk about boy-girl relationships.

They also watch betamax tapes but without proper guidance. This, however, can lead to things they are not prepared for. For example, a 15-year old girl was watching such a film with her boyfriend. They were alone in the house since their friends had gone out and her parents away. The young adolescents got carried away and copied what they watched on TV.

Another option is the media. There are talk shows which discuss topics; such as, abortion, male-female relationships, pre and extramarital relations, homosexuality, etc. There are also newspaper columnists who write on similar points of interest. Among them some psychologists caused much uneasiness among various sectors for their forthright manner in handling such subjects. Even parents have complained.

Given the results of this survey on adolescent sexuality, it can be seen that proper guidance of children regarding such sensitive topics is sorely lacking.

A Mother's Inspiration

Ms. Shkuropat Anna Vladimirovna ◁Russia▷

Cultural traditions are playing an important role in the dynamic opening of Russian society as well as for mutual prosperity and successful cooperation in Asia.

As I am not an educator, I will try, however, to discuss this problem by looking at my own limited experience and my mother's role in this process.

When I analyze my own experiences, I think I am the realization of my mother's dreams and love.

From early childhood I remember my mother playing piano and singing songs. She was fond of music and had very beautiful opera voice.

When I was six my mother trained me for the entrance examinations for a special music school. But I failed the third round of examinations. That was my first tragedy in the life. Later I entered an ordinary secondary music school not just because I was selected by a special commission, but first of all because my desire for music was inspired in me by my mother. Nowadays music is a great power which helps me through every hard situations.

My mother liked English. She took special foreign lan-

guages courses. She gathered the neighborhood children and tried to give me and them lessons in the form of games. She influenced my attitude towards languages and enrolled me to a special secondary school.

In general, the study of music and foreign languages from early childhood is a typical phenomenon for Russian families. All my friends teach their children foreign languages and music because they believe that in every way this will be helpful for their children.

Unfortunately, my mother like most Russian women was compelled to work outside the home. That is why she had very few opportunities to help me with homework. In spite of that, she played the main role in helping me make decisions. She always believed in my success.

I think that a mother's role is great in helping a child become confident as well as helping her/him achieve success. A mother can feel the inward world of a child's soul. A wise mother leads her child yet gives her/him some independence. She treats her child as if she/he is already grown-up.

Women as Home Educators

Ms. Khadeeja Ibrahim ◁Maldives▷

The Republic of Maldives located in the Indian Ocean is a very small island nation comprised of 1190 coral islands. These islands are divided into 19 administrative units for administrative and management purposes. The capital island Male is the main political, business and cultural center of the country. The population of Maldives is 213,215. 48.72% of this total are women. Maldives is 100% muslim with only one ethnic group. Historically, Maldivian women have played a vital role; particularly, in the field of educating their children. Being Muslims, parents believe that it is their duty to teach their children at a very early age how to recite Quran and how to perform their daily prayers. Very often it is the mother, grandmother or an elderly woman in the family who takes on this responsibility.

In the Maldives, as in other developing countries, the traditional division of labor possibly led to the strict binding of the mother to child care and education. In this seafaring island country, the men, traditionally fishermen, are forced to stay out at sea most of the time and have little opportunity to be involved with their children's care. The women on the other hand, although they are involved in agriculture and fire wood gathering, spend the greater part of the day at home and on child care duties. Even if the mother was involved in agriculture or the processing of fish, still another female member of the family, a grandmother or an aunt undertakes the responsibility of child care and home education.

Maldives was known to have a legacy of semi-formal, religious based education. The relatively high national literacy rate (95% in 1989) is possibly a result of this education system. With the onset of formal education, the role of women as home-educators has not declined. On the contrary, mothers have an additional burden of identifying tutors who can assist their children in academic subjects the mothers themselves have not studied. The mother, with her intuitive nurturing nature, is the best person to provide guidance and care for young children's needs during the early years of their life. She is the supportive role-model figure which will continue to inspire them for the rest of their lives.



▲ Maldivian elementary school children

OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS NETWORK (1993-1994)

The Foreign Correspondents Program, now in its third year, is establishing a network to link Asian countries. These correspondents' reports, which provide insights at the grassroots level, have now become one of the most popular sections in Asian Breeze for our readers.

This year 28 applicants from 15 countries applied to become foreign correspondents. Of the 28, 16 correspondents from 12 countries were selected, and we are very pleased to have their assistance in bringing you "Asian Breeze" for the next year.

This year's theme is "Women in Education." Education has immeasurable effects on the development of individuals and society. In order to understand both the people and the country itself, it is important to learn about each country's forms of education. It has been said that to educate women is to educate a nation. While the specific goals, contents, types and styles of education vary depending on regions and countries, there are nonetheless some surprising similarities.

Last year's theme focused on "Home Education", on which we received reports on children's upbringing, supplementary educational activities, technical training, etc. However, home education would be incomplete without also looking at other educational influences at work, such as those from religion, society and the school itself, which are all deeply related to each other.

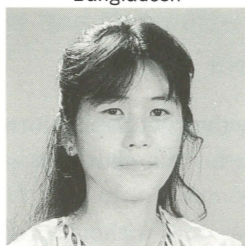
So this year our Foreign Correspondents will report on "Women in Education." As community members, leaders and or experts in their own respective fields, the correspondents will surely report vividly on society and women in various areas such as literacy training, vocational skills, ethnicity and culture, religion, and general education.

Last year, our newly formed Women Information Matrix Committee visited for the first time many of our correspondents in China, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia and discussed with them about home education. This year we will expand our studies, establish new relationships, and continue to exchange and share information with our foreign correspondents.



▲ Women Information Matrix Committee visits Sri Lanka's Women's Bureau

Bangladesh



Ms. Ayako Kunimoto (Ayesha) is married to a Bangladesh citizen. They have one daughter who is five years old and live with his parents, seven brothers and sisters.

China



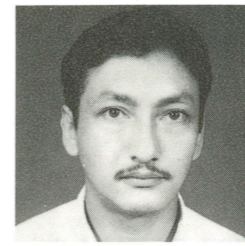
Ms. Zhou Jie, a free lance writer on women's issues in China, has attended women's training programs and conferences. Her articles focus on Chinese women's achievements, sorrows and joys.

Malaysia



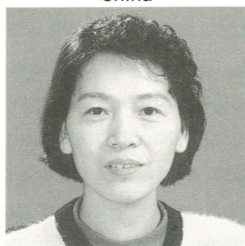
Ms. Machiko Nakama and her Malaysian husband have one son. She is enjoying her life and many friends in her newly adopted country.

Nepal



Mr. Sharad B. Shrestha has been involved in regional development projects for many years. His recent activities involve NGOs concerned with women and children.

China



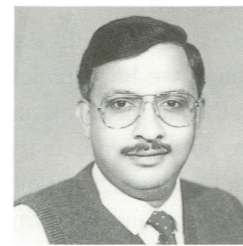
Ms. Yaoxian Zhu is Director of the Women's Research Institute of the Henan Research and Development Centre for Central China's Culture and Economy. This is her second time as the Forum's Correspondent.

India



Ms. Malavika Karlekar is a professor at the Delhi School of Economics. She is also a researcher at the Centre for Women's Development Studies in New Delhi. She is presently working on a violence against women project.

Pakistan



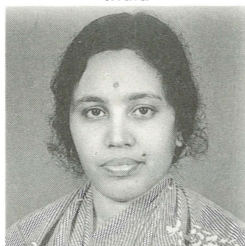
Mr. Khalid Hyder previously worked at Pakistan's National Press Trust in many capacities - correspondent, manager (syndicate service), cartoonist, photographer. Presently, he works in the information section of the Japanese Embassy (Islamabad).

Philippines



Ms. Estrella M. Maniquis, as editor of Depth News, an international news network in the Philippines, established the Depth News Women's Service. Through this service, she is spreading news about Asian women and their problems worldwide.

India



Ms. Akkamadathil K. Rajuladevi is a research officer at the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad, India. She is presently researching how development excludes women from agrarian and rural employment.

India



Ms. Swapna Majumdar was one of three journalists from the Third World to receive a Dag Hammarskjold fellowship in 1991. She has covered stories on women, politics, national and international events.

Singapore



Ms. Yoko Yamato was a high school teacher for six years in Japan before coming to Singapore with her husband and children. She is presently teaching Japanese at a local Singaporean vocational school.

Sri Lanka



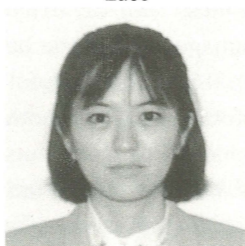
Ms. Kanthi H. Wijetunge was Assistant Commissioner for the Skills Development Department at the Sri Lankan Ministry of Labour. She then became Deputy Director of the Women's Bureau.

Indonesia



Ms. Luwarsih Pringgoadisurjo has continued to research Women in Development issues, especially on improving their education and literacy training. This is her third time as the Forum's Correspondent.

Laos



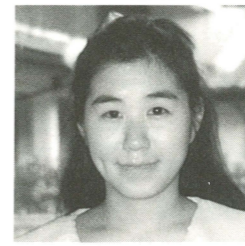
After visiting Nepal during high school, Ms. Mutsumi Akasaka strongly wished to become a volunteer. Presently, She is a volunteer in Laos for regional development including the preservation of local forests.

Sri Lanka



Ms. Kamala I. Wickremasinghe, a senior official at the Ministry of Education, previously served in the Ministry of Planning and Implementation as a Deputy Director to plan, implement and evaluate projects for women and children.

Thailand



Because of her own exchanges with Asia, Ms. Shiori Sato became very interested in Thailand. Presently, as a graduate student at Chulalongkorn University, she is studying Thailand's society, economy, culture and language.

THE FORUM WINDOW

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THAILAND

When I arrived in Bangkok sometime after 9 o'clock at night on April 12th, the city was unusually tranquil and traffic was quite smooth. I had no idea that it was Thailand's New Year until I experienced the "water celebration" the next day.

The next morning I walked through the street to the Chulalongkorn University's campus which was fresh and green after last night's rain. Although it was only 8 o'clock, I had already started to perspire. April is really midsummer here in Thailand.

I saw many children on sidewalks, splashing in water and soaking themselves to the skin. Suddenly, one of the children, a girl about 12 or 13 years old, threw a bucket of water at a "Tuku Tuku" (a public taxi with its regular door and window panels removed). Immediately after she started, all of the children started dousing the "Tuku Tuku", with water by using their hands, water-pistols, bowls and anything handy. How funny these children were! I stood still and waited to see what would happen next. Yet, none of the passengers showed any sign of anger even though they were all shouting as they pulled at their wet T-shirts. The "Tuku Tuku" left with the sounds of laughter in the air.

Then I saw a girl walking towards me with a bowl of water, and I couldn't help yelling "No, No!". When she realized that I was not Thai, she gestured that she only wanted to see my hands. Anxiously I stretched out my hands to her. She took them and gently poured some water on them, giving me a "Sawaddee ka", a Thai greeting made by pressing the palms together. She then left me with a lovely smile. After I returned to the Sasa, I read in a local newspaper that the children's actions were the traditional Thai New Year's greeting called the "Songkran."

My Thai friend told me how the Thai New Year is traditionally celebrated. Families come together, children say a few words to celebrate the New Year and they give gifts to their parents and elders. The gifts are traditionally for bathing such as towels, fragrant soaps and sarongs. The father will pour a bowl of water onto his children and his family members to wish for happiness and good health throughout the year, and then the family will go to the temple to worship.

In addition to this normally solemn tradition, children innocently enjoy day-long water games. They cost nothing and everyone has fun, their clothes soon drying in the hot sun. We can watch one aspect of social character of the Thai people.

Masami Shinozaki

Chief Researcher, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

*Country designation is each foreign correspondent's place of residence not nationality.

INFORMATION

● THE 4TH KITAKYUSHU CONFERENCE ON ASIAN WOMEN

The 4th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women will be held from November 19(Fri.) to November 21(Sun.), 1993 in the Kitakyushu International Conference Center. This event is held every year as one of the major projects to integrate the Forum's exchange activities and research. This conference's theme is "Population and our Earth's Future."

The world population was 2.2 billion in 1950, reached 5 billion in 1987 and will possibly exceed 8.5 billion in 2025. Such growth resulted from greatly increased populations in developing countries, which now suffer from many serious problems, including environmental deterioration, food crisis and the polarization of the population in metropolitan areas.

At the same time, the fertility rate in industrialized countries has generally dropped. In Japan, the total fertility rate went down to 1.5 births per woman in 1992, accelerating the advent of an aged society which has become a social problem.

This conference will pursue the structural causes of complex population issues from the standpoint of development and discuss women's rights, the dignity of life and the future of the earth. Also included are various programs; such as, an international symposium, study/discussion sessions, workshops and an Asian bazaar.

For more information, please call us at : 093-551-1220

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

I express hope and admiration for those actively challenging Asia's realities. Asian Breeze hopes to bring news of their important efforts to others in the region and around the world. If Asian Breeze can open hearts and mind, we have made one step forward.

● THE FORUM WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO A FOUNDATION

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women will become a foundation as of October of 1993. The Forum is undertaking fund raising for its endowment and any other procedures needed for this incorporation.

This process is vital to the implementation of its stable and continuing operations. Although we have received some funds for incorporation from the city of Kitakyushu and contributions from businesses and private individuals, the Forum will also need your continuing support in order to promote broad studies and exchange activities. We are planning a commemorative event in the fall, and look forward to everyone's attendance.



Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

KITAKYUSHU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
ASANO 3-9-30, KOKURA-KITA, KITAKYUSHU, 802 JAPAN
PHONE(093)551-1220 FAX(093)551-7535