

Women's *Jiritsu* and Christian Feminism in Japan

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RECENTLY I HAD THE privilege of studying at Harvard University as a visiting scholar, where I was able to sharpen my understanding of relations between Japan and the United States. Although certainly not without significant tensions, there is in place a more or less viable economic bridge across the Pacific. By contrast, however, information on current social and religious developments in Japan was conspicuously lacking. In particular, it seems that little is known about the contemporary church in Japan or matters concerning the status of women in church and society. In this respect, the transpacific bridge seems to carry primarily one-way traffic—with information and influence flowing from the U.S. to Japan. Perhaps the time has come for us Japanese Christians to make efforts to establish a genuinely two-way spiritual bridge across the Pacific.

While in the United States, I was impressed with the significant difference in the nature of the feminist movements in the U.S. and in Japan. For example, on one occasion I was given the opportunity of lecturing on Japanese feminism, and in the lecture I attempted to explain the notion of “women's *jiritsu* [independence]” in Japan. I discovered that there is no appropriate English word for *jiritsu*, in the sense in which I was using it. This brief essay is an attempt to explore some of the issues involved in the difficulty of conveying the sense of *jiritsu*.

I would like to explore this issue by considering five questions: First, what is the status of women in Japan in general? Second, why is it that in Japan feminism has developed, not as the women's liberation movement of the West, but as a movement of women's *jiritsu*? Third, what are some of the cultural and traditional barriers to women's realization of *jiritsu* in Japan? Fourth, what is the influence of Christian feminism upon the movement of *jiritsu*? And fifth, what is the status of Christian women in Japan today?

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN GENERAL

Many Westerners tend to stereotype Japanese women as highly submissive and deferential to men. However, the emergence of some women as prominent leaders—such as Doi Takako as a recent leader of the Japan Socialist Party, the major opposition party in Japan, and Ogata Sadako as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—suggests that there is more to the picture than this common stereotype would indicate.

Japanese society in general dictates that a husband spend very little time at home. Men characteristically face long working hours, a long commute to work, and the expectation that after work they will socialize with colleagues until late at night. Therefore, men tend to turn over most domestic matters as well as the children's education to their wives. Accordingly,

women make almost all of the major family and household decisions, and they exercise considerable power within the home.

Interestingly, a 1987 government survey indicated that one-third of all women and half of all men feel that a man's place is at work and that a woman should stay at home. Expectations are slowly changing, particularly among younger couples, but women who try to break out of the "housewife only" model in order to find employment outside the home face intimidating obstacles. It is almost impossible for a woman to work the long hours expected of a man and still fulfill the expectations placed upon mothers in Japan. Although an equal opportunity employment law was passed by the government in 1985, Japanese society is still considerably more conservative on such matters than is American society. As a whole, Japanese women are strong and have considerable self-confidence in their roles of wife and mother, but it must be admitted that they have great difficulty in establishing an independent identity for themselves apart from that of wife and/or mother.

WOMEN'S JIRITSU INSTEAD OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The feminist movement seems to have progressed more freely and rapidly in the new world of America than in Europe or Japan. Women's suffrage, the right to vote, was acquired first in the United States in 1920, in England in 1928, and in France in 1946. An equal opportunity employment law was passed by the government of the United States in 1966, and only in 1975 was a similar bill passed in France and England. In Japan, however, the right to vote was not granted to women until 1946, after World War II under the new Japanese constitution. This was twenty-six years later than in the U.S., and the equal opportunity employment law came thirty years later—in 1985.

In 1970 the more radical element of the women's liberation movement in the United States was introduced into Japan. At first, Japanese women were somewhat confused by the new and radical opinions, but they gradually began to sift through the views and formulate their own perspectives. A large number of books were translated into Japanese, and books dealing with women's issues were neatly arranged in a special section of the bookstores. In time, well educated and informed Japanese women also began to write about feminist issues from a Japanese perspective. Mizuta Tomae's *Josei kaihō shisō no ayumi* (The Thought of Women's Liberation), Shirai Takao's *Josei kaihō ronshū* (Women's Liberation), and Ehara Yumiko's *Feminism ronsō 1970 nen kara 1990 nen e* (Feminism Argument From 1970 to 1990) were primarily devoted to introducing the history of Western feminism and its chief characteristics.

The women's liberation movement in America was closely related to the broader social changes and the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Japan, however, had a quite different social structure and was not undergoing similar transformations, thus the more radical dimension of the American feminist movement was not widely accepted in Japan. By contrast, in Japan, the feminist movement developed along the lines of women's jiritsu. For example, Kōno Kiyomi wrote the book *Jiritsu no joseigaku* (Women's Independence) and Inoue Teruko wrote *Joseigaku* (Women's Studies). In 1984, I wrote *Josei no honto no hitoridachi* (The Christian View of True Women's Jiritsu [Independence] in Home, Church and Society.)

Since Japanese culture, which is heavily influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism, obscures the notion of individual personality and self, impersonality or the subservience of individual personality to the group is emphasized by society at large. Thus, when the women's liberation move-

ment was first introduced into Japan it was not readily understood by Japanese women.

Feminism in Japan has focused upon the concept of women's jiritsu. Two Chinese characters are used in Japanese to signify jiritsu: 自 (self) and 立 (to stand). The period from 1970 to 1990 saw Japanese women exert great efforts in attaining a measure of social and economic jiritsu. The results of their efforts can be seen in the establishment of laws granting equal employment opportunities and maternity leave. At the present time, Japanese women are struggling with what is perhaps the most difficult aspect of jiritsu—establishing their own spiritual and psychological identity.

In 1992, the Tokyo Women's Affairs Research Center completed a report on "The Japanese Women's Concept of Spiritual Jiritsu." I was privileged to participate for two years in the research with the Commission. After studying answers to questionnaires that had been sent out, the Commission summarized its findings as follows: "Jiritsu is to take action according to one's own decision, to be responsible for the action and yet to feel sufficiency for one's own behavior."¹ This kind of research and focus on jiritsu might appear somewhat strange to Westerners, who have a much longer history of an established sense of individuality, but its importance can be seen as we consider some obstacles to realizing jiritsu.

SOME TRADITIONAL CULTURAL HINDRANCES TO REALIZING JIRITSU

Social relationships

Social relationships make it very difficult to establish a strong sense of the individual self. "The most characteristic feature of human relationships in Japan is the inseparability of the individual self from its fellow humans and the resulting 'groupism'"², says Inagaki Hisakazu.

Japanese social relationships have been heavily influenced by Confucianism—particularly the ethical relationships of parent-child intimacy, correctness between lord and retainer, proper distinction between husband and wife, the seniority relationship between young and old, and the mutual trust between friends.

Bound within this complex web of relationships, Japanese women have experienced great difficulty in developing a strong sense of equality with men and independence. In spite of Japan's rapid modernization, traditional social values and mores remain strong. Thus a sense of "nonpersonality" or the subservience of the individual personality to the broader group is still emphasized in contemporary Japan.

Analyzing a woman's sense of self-identity in her book *Jiritsu no joseigaku* (Women's Independence), Kōno Kiyomi says, "We can establish our identity by 'playing catch' with our inner feelings with others, and thereby finding out who we are and what we are."³ Is it possible for Japanese women to realize their own personhood and identity through the established web of social relationships? Many Japanese women are still seeking an answer to the problem of spiritual jiritsu.

The concept of family

The concept of *ie* (family) presents obstacles for women establishing self-identity. The Japanese term *ie* can be translated into English in various ways, meaning a house in which people live, the home, the family, etc., but there is a further meaning which is very difficult to render in English. With reference to Takeda's view, Inagaki Hisakazu explains the meaning of *ie* as follows: "There is another meaning that is difficult to express in non-Japanese languages. *Ie* also refers to a direct lineage with unbroken continuity from the past, having the concept of

a kind of identity spanning every generation.”⁴

This system of family relationships has had profound influence upon various aspects of Japanese social order. A wide variety of human relationships were carefully distinguished and ordered. Within the *ie* system the father was the clear authority figure, and the husband had clear authority over the wife and children. The *ie* system has also had great impact upon the practice of ancestor worship. Although the *ie* system was officially abolished after World War II, its influence and legacy remain.

Although Japanese society is undergoing change in many respects, the movement to realize women’s *jiritsu* is still very much in process. It is perhaps notable that prominent women such as Doi Takako, former leader of the Japan Socialist Party, and Ogata Sadako, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, are each over sixty years of age, and although quite strong and independent they grew up under the *ie* system in Japan. It is not without significance that these women were reared in a Christian environment. I, too, am about the same age as they are, and I am a fifth generation Christian. There is a well-known Japanese proverb that says the nail that sticks out will be hammered down. However, on February 18, 1993 Ogata Sadako very courageously stood against the predominant mood of the United Nations and insisted upon a decision that was contrary to the popular consensus. The entire United Nations was unable to hammer her down. Throughout the history of Japan’s modernization we find significant women who have stood against the tide and tried to change the obstacles to women’s self-identity.

How is it that some women over sixty years of age and reared under the older system can be so independent? I had the privilege of participating in the Tokyo Women’s Research Center from 1991–1992, and I

concentrated my research upon factors affecting the spiritual *jiritsu* of professional women. It is noteworthy that those women who had been educated by an open-minded or liberal father had a more clearly established sense of self-identity. It might be interesting to make an autobiographical observation at this point. My background, which was analyzed and categorized for the Research Center as a liberal model, was summarized in the report as follows: “She grew up with three brothers and three sisters, but her father was a medical doctor and also a Christian who provided equal opportunity for education for men and women, even after the devastation of the war.”⁵ I recently discovered that Doi Takako and Ogata Sadako also had some Christian influence in their lives.

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE ON WOMEN’S *JIRITSU*

After Japan ended her long period of isolation from the outside world in 1854, many Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox missionaries entered the country, settling in Yokohama, Nagasaki, Sapporo, and elsewhere.

The early years for these missionaries were undoubtedly very difficult, as the edict against Japanese conversion was still in force. It was not until 1873 that the proscription was removed from public notice boards. Thus the average Japanese of the mid-1880’s harbored considerable suspicion towards the new faith, not on the basis of informed criticism but from the Tokugawa era’s depiction of Christianity as an alien religion that threatened Japanese values and culture.

Gradually, however, Christianity came to be more accepted. In 1884 Fukuzawa Yukichi, the founder of Japan’s prestigious Keio University and one of the leading intellectuals during the Meiji Era, commended Christianity because of its wealth, its moral virtue and its ability to attract

socially and intellectually distinguished persons. In this rather liberal and progressive atmosphere, a number of prominent Japanese Christian personalities proved to be very attractive to society at large. These included Nijima Jō (1843–1890), Ebina Danjō (1856–1939), Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930), Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933), and Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960).

As far as Japanese Christian feminism is concerned, the most influential personality was Nitobe Inazō. He became a Christian along with Uchimura Kanzō in 1877, in the Sapporo Agricultural School that was established by Dr. William Smith Clark. Nitobe was one of the first Japanese to try to realize the ideal of serving as a bridge between the West and Japan.

Nitobe often lectured in various parts of the United States, and was the first exchange professor between the two countries in 1911. These lectures were later published in 1912 as “The Japanese Nation.” In these lectures he speaks of a bridge across the Pacific, saying, “I wish to be a bridge across the Pacific in order to transmit the ideas of the West to the East, and of the East to the West, toward the fuller harmony of diverse nations or of discordant nations.”⁶

Nitobe attempted to introduce into Japan Western ideas on marriage, as well as on the relationships between men and women. His endeavors impacted such diverse fields as politics, education, and social patterns. In later years he also served as an undersecretary of the League of Nations. After Japan withdrew and the League faced collapse, Nitobe continued to struggle vigorously for world peace and understanding between nations. Within Japan he increasingly faced danger and opposition from emerging militarism. In spite of such attacks, however, Nitobe continued to prod Japanese society to open up its understanding to the broader international world. One can only speculate as to what might have happened to him had he lived through the war years.

In remembering the greatness of Nitobe, however, we must not overlook the important contribution to his work made by a most remarkable woman—Mary Elkington, a Philadelphia Quaker who became Nitobe’s wife. Mary was born in 1857, and when she was fourteen she entered Westtown School, a Quaker school in Philadelphia. Upon graduation she became a teacher of philosophy, world history, and English grammar. In her teaching she emphasized the importance of spiritual formation and intellectual training. Mary married Nitobe Inazō on January 1, 1891.

The Elkingtons were well known in Philadelphia, so her marriage to Nitobe caused quite a sensation. One newspaper reported, “The daughter of Elkington, who comes from a distinguished family, got married to a mere Japanese—although he too is outstanding.”⁷ Later, Nitobe’s only friend, Miyabe, after meeting Mary on one of his trips, wrote to Nitobe:

She is an unusually attentive and sufficient wife, and she looked after your health so carefully and sincerely. Without her assistance, you could not have contributed as greatly on an international scale as you have.”⁸

One month later, on February 9, 1891, the newly married international Christian couple returned to Japan and settled in Sapporo, Hokkaido.

Besides introducing biblical feminism into Japan, Nitobe Inazō and his wife Mary presented a genuinely equal relationship between men and women, based upon biblical teaching (Genesis 2:18), in which God from the beginning instituted equality as the foundation for marriage and social relationships. They further emphasized the fact that women, in addition to men, were also created in the image of God, that women too were redeemed through Jesus Christ, and that women were also heirs to all the riches of the kingdom of God.

This Christian idea of the basic equality between men and women was a radical challenge to the traditional family system in Japan at the time. The immediate reaction was a strong suspicion that the Christian teaching would disrupt the traditional order—breaking down traditional family relationships, promoting discord, and dissolving the unity of the family by attacking the practice of ancestor worship.

On the positive side, the values of Christian feminism strengthened women's sense of personal freedom and identity, and encouraged them to stand firmly in line with their conscience, assured that they too can stand responsibly before God and not merely find their place within the traditional family structure. In an effort to promote a sense of equality and the realization of the rights of women, Inazō and Mary stressed the importance of education for women. Nitobe established the Tokyo Women's Christian University, and Mary devoted her efforts to the Sapporo Enyu night school, for poor students unable to attend regular schools.

Nitobe wrote several significant articles as well. In the article "Recommending Women," he said, "Let women develop a sense of self-respect and self-esteem, and let women respect their own personalities. This is the first and last thing I wish to say."⁹ In the article "New Directions for Women's Careers" Nitobe asserted, "The Japanese objective of educating women only to be good wives and mothers forces every woman to conform to a stereotype. A woman is created as a person, so she has to be educated as a person. However, Japanese education tries to mold women to be wives or mothers or daughters, as an ornament of men. We have to educate women to be persons who have *jiritsu* [independence]."¹⁰

Without the influence and support of Mary, Nitobe could not have said those words. It is unfortunate that sufficient material dealing with the life and impact of Mary is not available in Japan. I am now in the

process of attempting to gather relevant historical data, including personal letters. The paucity of material on Mary shows how women were largely ignored prior to World War II. Although her husband Inazō is now justly famous, and his portrait appears on the 5,000 yen bill, very few Japanese are aware that his dear wife was a highly educated American Christian woman, who made outstanding contributions to the cause of women in Japan.

It was Christian feminism of this kind that challenged the many social problems afflicting women and strongly impacted the movement to abolish prostitution and to support monogamy. Therefore, it is important to stress that, in Japan, Christian faith and values were involved in the beginning of the feminist movement. Perhaps a contrast with the American situation is evident here, for feminism in the West seems to have developed from a more humanistic background than was the case in Japan. Such influence can be seen in such pioneering feminist figures as Mary Wollstonecraft in England, Simone de Beauvoir in France, Betty Friedan in the United States. Yet it is significant that in Japan it was the influence of Christian values that prompted the early feminist movement.¹¹

Under the influence of Christianity three single Japanese women devoted their lives to promoting the education of women. These women were Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), Kawai Michiko (1877–1953), and Yasui Tetsu (1870–1945). The story of the development of Christianity in Japan is incomplete without reference to these impressive women and their contribution to the improvement of the status of women in Japan.

Tsuda Umeko

Tsuda Umeko, who pioneered early higher education for women was the daughter of Tsuda Sen, the official interpreter for the Tokugawa Shogunate. She was sent to

America in 1871 when she was only seven years old. There she stayed with the Charles Lanman family, a childless couple living in Washington, D.C. She was treated as a daughter by the Lanmans; under the influence of this Christian family she came to know the Lord personally and was baptized when she was nine years old.

In 1882, at the age of eighteen, she returned to Japan where she worked as an English teacher and interpreter. She later continued her formal education in America, studying at Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia, which was Nitobe's wife Mary's home town. In 1900 she again returned to Japan, where she established the Joshi Eigaku Juku, a school of English studies for women, now known as Tsuda Joshi Daigaku. This school was founded with money she had collected from women in Philadelphia.

Tsuda's goal was to provide higher education for Japanese women so that they might have realistic career options and not be forced into prostitution as a means of self-support.

On the basis of the biblical teaching that women too are created in the image of God—created as persons and not merely as the tools of men—she was convinced that Christian education could give women a proper sense of identity and a legitimate sense of *jiritsu*. She believed that spiritual growth and education could improve the standing of women in Japan. Until her death she remained committed to both educational and more strictly Christian concerns.

Kawai Michiko

Kawai Michiko was an early Christian feminist who was deeply influenced by Inazō and Mary Nitobe. Her father, who had come from a long line of Shinto priests, was converted to the Christian faith and encouraged her to receive a Christian education.

Accordingly, she was educated at Hokusen Jogakkō, a girl's school in Sapporo, where she came under the influence of American Christian teachers. Kawai then became a Christian, and like Tsuda she went to Bryn Mawr College for further education.

Upon her return to Japan, Kawai worked as a teacher at Tsuda Joshi Daigaku and was active in the Young Women's Christian Association. In 1929 she founded the Keisen Jogakuen (Fountain of Blessing School) in order to provide a Christian education for young women. Throughout her life she remained active in writing and lecturing. She tirelessly stressed the importance of the Christian church and education in improving women's lives and social standing. She was not only an effective teacher but also an evangelist with a deep concern for each of her students. Her last words were, "Please lead students to Christ."

Yasui Tetsu

Although Yasui grew up in a feudal clan family, after graduating from Tokyo Christian High School, she went to England in 1890 to study education and home economics. She became a Christian while there and met Nitobe Inazō, who opened her eyes to the great need for Christian education among women in Japan. After returning to Japan, Yasui became the first academic dean of Tokyo Women's Christian College, where Nitobe served as the first president. She later succeeded him as president of the school, and her entire life was devoted to education and Christian ministry.

JAPANESE CHRISTIAN WOMEN TODAY AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Almost a hundred years have passed since the early days when pioneers such as Nitobe, Tsuda, Kawai, and Yasui struggled to establish a sense of *jiritsu* for Japanese

women. The Christian church in Japan is still struggling, as it constitutes no more than 1% of the population. In spite of the many obstacles and difficulties, we believe that God is still calling women to be His servants.

It is encouraging to remember that the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:18–20) was not given to an already perfect church in a perfect world. To the contrary, the first century Jerusalem Christians were in an environment of fear and failure. Judea was a place of religious bigotry and self-sufficiency. Samaria was a place of hatred and tension. Yet the early Christians were to be witnesses in precisely these places. According to Acts 1:8, we today are to be witnesses simultaneously in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria—and Japan. Such witness is to begin right where we are, in our present situation, and is to spread out from there. Therefore, no matter how difficult the current situation, women in Japan are to be God's servants and witnesses right where they are.

The status of women in the Japanese church

As noted earlier, given the great demands upon their time at work, it is very difficult for Japanese men to become actively involved in the life of the church. Consequently, roughly two-thirds of the Christians in Japan today are women. Furthermore, many women attend church alone, unaccompanied by their husbands or children, and thus they are torn between conflicting desires for greater involvement at church and the pressures and obligations of the home.

Women nevertheless are making great contributions to the work of the church in Japan. Without their dedicated service, such common activities as preparing "fellowship meals" after church (a common practice in many Japanese churches), preparing flower arrangements, visitation of

the sick, evangelism, music ministry, etc., would be impossible and the Japanese church could not survive. Frequently women function in positions of leadership as well, serving as officers in the church, although there are relatively few women actually engaged in pastoral or teaching roles within evangelical churches.

The need for true independence in the church

Due to the dominant social values and expectations, as exemplified in the *ie* system (the carefully defined web of social relationships), Japanese women have great difficulty in realizing a sense of independent identity, even within the church. Japanese women need the same kind of firm resolve found in the famous words of Martin Luther, "Here I stand. I can do no other." Luther's confidence and resolve came from the security of his own personal relationship with his Lord, the one and only Creator, and was not simply grounded in himself or in the prevailing views of the crowd. Similarly, Japanese Christian women must find their identity in their relationship to their Creator, and must not simply bring into the church the influence of groupism or horizontal relationships. As Christian women our first obligation is to honor our relationship with our Lord. When our security and true independence as persons before our Lord is established, we can follow with independence in partnership with others.

A proper sense of spiritual independence on the part of believers will help avoid the weaknesses of some churches, which are excessively organized and tightly controlled by one or more individuals—sometimes the pastor. When believers do not establish a proper sense of their own identity and independence, then pastors tend to rule with an authoritarian hand. However, when the two-thirds of Christians who are women become genuine coworkers

with the pastors, working smoothly as two wheels on a cart, then the Japanese church will grow and develop.

The need for men to understand and support women in evangelism and ministry

It is impossible for women to develop and exercise their gifts in evangelism and ministry apart from the understanding and cooperation of men. This is especially urgent in Asia where societies are strongly influenced by the model of the authoritarian patriarch.

Significantly, despite the low social position of women in the Mediterranean world of the first century, the apostle Paul recognized their high standing when he declared, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) Grounded in this high biblical view of women, Paul could appreciate Priscilla as his fellow worker, and we could even say that it was Paul's support that helped Priscilla in her mission work in the Mediterranean world. Furthermore, we could mention Luke also as a man who appreciated the biblical view of women, as evidenced in his mentioning Tabitha (Dorcas) as a significant early disciple (Acts 9:36f). In Japan today, as in other Asian countries, we need more Christian leaders with perspectives like those of Paul and Luke.

The need for appreciating the biblical view of family relationships

Given the contemporary stresses and the breakdown of the family unit, there is need today for understanding and adhering to biblical teaching on the family. The husband should be the head of the family, although not in the sense of an authoritarian patriarch as found in the earlier Roman world and as is found in many Asian societies today. The woman is to be a full part-

ner with her husband, while recognizing the husband as head, but we must emphasize that the Bible does not support the idea that the man is superior and the woman inferior.

As a Japanese woman who grew up in a feudalistic society that discriminated heavily against women, I am well aware of the many misunderstandings to which women have been subjected. Certainly we must work to correct such misunderstandings and discrimination. However, we must also recognize that in our current emphasis upon women's liberation from repression and inequality there is the danger of obscuring or minimizing the biblical teaching on the relationship between the husband and the wife. In a non-Christian country such as Japan, it is important that genuine independence for women be grounded in a truly Christian feminism. This is a special concern of mine, and I have written several books dealing with these themes, including *The Christian View of Jiritsu* and *True Partnership: Home, Church, and the World*.

The question of the proper relationship between husband and wife is especially relevant in Japan, where the traditional sense of *ie* is still strong. After my husband went to be with the Lord, leaving behind three children aged sixteen, fourteen and ten, I decided to make a "papa corner" for the children in a central room of our house. This was to be a memorial to their father. Although physically absent, their father was "present" in memory. These days many children have their fathers physically present with them, but they do not enjoy their father's emotional or spiritual presence. When I prepared this "papa corner" for the children I believed that I was following God's creation order for family relationships. Consequently, the Lord has led our family in overcoming many obstacles so that it has grown into a Christian home. With less than one percent Christian in

Japan, the significance of the biblical family relationships takes on special meaning.

The need for training Christian women as leaders

There is today a desperate need among evangelical churches for training Christian women to assume greater leadership responsibilities. Through interaction with other women at several conferences, such as the Asian Conference for Women in Singapore in 1989, and the Asia Missionary Conference in Korea in 1990, the Women's Commission was established in 1990 as an official Commission of the Japan Evangelical Association. I have the privilege of serving as chairperson of this Commission.

Three purposes for the Women's Commission can be distinguished. First, the Commission is to promote among women a spiritual zeal for evangelism, not only within Japan but also worldwide. Second, the Commission is to identify and make available resources for equipping women. Third, it is to establish a network for women beyond the local church, at a regional and national level. The Commission sponsors an annual women's leadership retreat; last year one hundred women leaders gathered for the first such retreat.

Japanese women over the age of fifty have largely completed the task of rearing children and thus they have more time available for other activities. They are eager to find something meaningful to do. Many of these women suffered greatly in their early years due to the war, and some never had the opportunity of education, therefore, they are very eager to study. Various kinds of seminars and classes for such women always find many participants. This also is indicative of the need in Japan today for broader education of the laity.

When I was a student at Tokyo Women's Christian University, which was founded by Nitobe Inazō, I was greatly inspired and

challenged by people I have mentioned, such as Nitobe Inazō and his wife Mary, Tsuda Umeko, Kawai Michiko, and Yasui Tetsu. In Japan today we need highly committed and gifted women Christian workers with a broad international perspective.

In order to reach the ninety-nine percent of Japanese who are not yet Christian, as well as the many others in Asia, the next generation of women Christian leaders must have an education that is not only solidly based upon biblical and theological studies but also is genuinely international, in preparation for ministering in a global context. It is my prayer that this kind of education will prepare humble and effective leaders—especially women—to serve others with God's love, regardless of where they might find themselves. Through working together in mobilizing, educating, and encouraging Japanese Christian women, and working to break down misunderstandings both inside and outside the church, let us continue to encourage women to be able to fulfill in their lives all that God has intended for them.

NOTES

¹ Reports of Tokyo Women's Research Center, *Nihon josei no jiritsu no kansuru kenkyū* [The Study of the Japanese Women's Jiritsu], (Tokyo: The Bureau of Living, April, 1992), p. 9.

² Inagaki Hisakazu, "A Philosophical Analysis of Traditional Japanese Culture", *Philosophia reformata* vol. 57 (1992), p. 47.

³ Kōno Kiyomi, *Jiritsu no joseigaku* [Women's Independence], (Tokyo: Gakuyoshobo, 1983), pp. 163–205.

⁴ Inagaki Hisakazu, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵ Reports of Tokyo Women's Research Center, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁶ Nitobe Inazō, "The Japanese Nation", *Nitobe zenshū* [The Complete Works of Nitobe Inazō], (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1969) vol. 13, p.9.

⁷ Sapporo Board of Education, ed., *Sapporo bunko* [Sapporo Series] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Newspaper Company., 1985) vol. 18, p. 132.

⁸ Sapporo Board of Education, ed., op. cit., p.130.

⁹ Nitobe Inazō, *Fujin ni susumete* [Recommending Women], *Nitobe zenshū* [The Complete Works of Nitobe Inazō] (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1969) vol. 11, p. 158.

¹⁰ Nitobe Inazō, *Hirakara beki josei no shinro* [Women's Career Which Should Be Opened],

Nitobe Zenshū vol. 11, p. 194.

¹¹ Minato Akiko, *Feminizum to shingaku no setten-beikokuryū kaihoron to nihonryū jiritsuron ni miru* [Women's Liberation in America and Women's Jiritsu in Japan: a Study in the Contrast from a Theological Perspective], *Ronshū* vol. 22 (Tokyo: Tokyo Christian College, 1992), pp. 25–33.