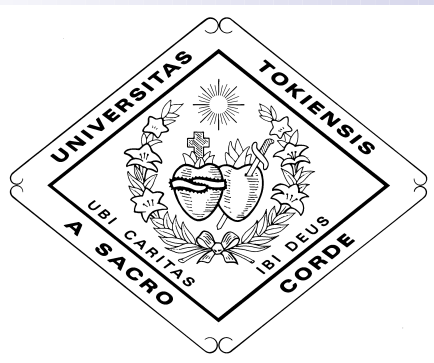



“The cultivation of young women leaders”

“Feminism of the now generation” At the 2009 Asia Pacific NGO Forum




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☐☐☐ My name is Satsuki Murase, Nice to meet you. I am a junior at the University of the Sacred Heart Tokyo. I study Sociology of Work, in particular career formation and gender in the workplace.







Thank you very much for this opportunity to talk about the “Feminism of the new generation”. I am not fluent in English but I will do my best. Today, I would like to talk about my interest in controversial work issues and the cultivation of young women leaders.




Nowadays, women who have advanced educational backgrounds have increased in number. This has widened their opportunities for work. However, there are many working women in big companies who leave at marriage or childbirth. It is difficult to balance child care with work without being affected in the work hierarchy. □




In addition, a woman with an advanced educational background has a high probability of marrying a person at the same level in the hierarchy. Therefore, there may be no reason for a woman to continue working judging from an economic aspect.




In other words, educational background and the work that a woman achieves at first are not tied to the woman's later career. Yet I think that it is a social loss if a woman with an advanced educational background cannot show her ability in a company.



Next, I would like to introduce working women and the cultivation of women leaders in the younger generation in Japan.




Recently, the working environment of women has been improving rapidly from the perspective of the social structure, owing mainly to the implementation of the Law concerning Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment, April 1986, and the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society, 1999.




However, a big problem in Japan is that there are very few opportunities for women, even when they have good leadership capabilities. Women in managerial posts in companies are few.


□




In 2006, women held 6.9% of all managerial posts at or above the equivalent of kakaricho (assistant manager), with the breakdown by rank as follows: 2.0% of the equivalent of bucho (department chiefs), 3.6% of kacho (section chiefs), and 10.5% of kakaricho.




One reason cited for the scarcity of women in managerial posts is that few women continue to work for extended periods. Examining data from 2000 to 2004, we find that nearly 70% of working women had left their jobs by the time of the birth of their first child. Approximately 25% resigned at the time of marriage, and approximately 40% at the time of childbirth.




Only 14% continued to work, taking childcare leaves. While 11% continue to work without taking childcare leaves. However, some women go back to their job as part time once their child is old enough. A second reason is that many companies have multiple human resource tracks, dividing employees into those on the “general track” and the “clerical track.” Nearly all men are employed in the general track, whereas many women are placed in the clerical track.




Employees in the clerical track, which is made up nearly entirely of women, cannot be promoted to managerial posts. And third, women are often offered marginal and auxiliary jobs in comparison to men, preventing them from learning the leadership required for managerial positions.





Next, I would like to consider the continuation of work by women. As I stated above, nearly 70% of working women quit their jobs by the time of the birth of their first child. One of the reasons that Japanese women stop working at the time of marriage or childbirth is that the current work style in Japan was created with men as the standard.




The tendency toward long working hours in Japan has become even stronger, and there has been a recent increase in people reporting long working hours of more than 60 hours per week. In 2004, one-fifth of workers aged from the late twenties to early forties reported working more than 60 hours a week.




Given this situation, long working hours by men is the standard, and women, who are expected to bear the primary family responsibilities when they get married or have a child, cannot continue to work.




Furthermore, It's difficult for all working women to balance the demands of work, pregnancy, maternity leave, and childcare. □ Yet women are still generally expected to assume home and family responsibilities.




Although women can take maternity leave and child care leave, sometimes it is difficult to actually use the system. Especially, in small companies, women don't get much understanding or support from coworkers and colleagues who have to accept an increase in their workloads while the women are away from work.





As a result, women often choose to resign from their jobs because of pregnancy and child care. Once a woman resigns, it is hard for her to go back to her previous work, especially in managerial positions. It is very difficult to reclaim the same position as a woman had prior to resignation.




In addition, there are many apprehensions among the general population concerning women becoming leaders. Although some women want to become a leader, the majority are still hesitant to take managerial posts even in their own workplaces. I think that the reason for this is that there are few opportunities where a woman can become a leader.





As a result, women themselves tend to be somehow convinced that they are not suitable for leadership. In addition, companies have a general principle that women are not supposed to become leaders and the future of the company should not be entrusted to women. This means that expectations from men and women are different.



As a result of these two factors, opportunities for women to become leaders are few, and women themselves often have negative impressions about women being leaders which also negatively affects the prospects of women to become leaders.




As you know, the Human Development Index rank of Japan is tenth place, but the Gender Empowerment Measure rank of Japan is low, 57th in the world. Although the Law for Equal Employment Opportunity and the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society have come into force, Japan is a society in which there is still much gender inequality.




That is, Japan can become stronger and better, if we make better use of women's abilities.


I propose a new style of new women's leader to change the traditional system and consciousness.





Systemic-Positive Action and Affirmative action are necessary. Private enterprises should establish the achievement rate of women administrators. Opportunities for women to become leaders must be increased in order to raise the interests of women to be leaders. It is important to increase the role models of women leaders in the workplace to interest more women in becoming leaders.




Also, mentors in the workplace are extremely important. A woman who wants to become a leader can be supported by a mentor. Once this female managerial class that has been the minority becomes the majority, women will be convinced that they can become leaders.




The society should change consciousness based on Diversity and Work-Life Balance. The diversity of the better society which includes gender equality must be realized. Within this I include a range of various categories such as not only gender but also nationality and race. According to workers, companies which are more diverse are more attractive. As a result, such companies can secure well-qualified human resources.




Furthermore, we must change the gender division of labor where women depend on the income of men, as does the employment system, and social security system. We need to create a society in which both women and men feel that working both outside as well as at home is rewarding and fun.




In conclusion, the most important thing is to create a society in which not only women but also men take action to cultivate women leaders. Just as in this forum, the youth of a new generation will learn the ideal method for women's leadership from other Asian countries and the rest of the world. I believe that this will be necessary in the future when we think about the future of our country.




Personally, I want to be a local public service employee, and take the managerial post examination some day. I have had a variety of experiences demonstrating my leadership capabilities since I was young. For example, I was the captain of a basketball team, and chairperson of the student body in the middle school, a leader and organizer at music festivals, and head of a music club.



I think I would like to be a leader and I believe I am an effective leader. I want to make use of these experiences and abilities after graduating from university. This is also the reason why I want to become a local public service employee in an area which particularly deals with welfare, support programs, and personnel management.



If my wish comes true, I want to work for gender equality. I would like to support working women in ordinary companies. I hope to be a respectable leader in the future and I hope that I could inspire other women to become interested to be leaders.



The most important thing is for women to have confidence in themselves, because they have the power to become splendid leaders.

I thank Miriam Courage and the University of the Sacred Heart which gave me the opportunity for this presentation on this international stage.

Thank you for listening.