



al-raida

BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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Woman Between Reality and Illusion

Soon after her birth, they inculcated into her mind the idea that she was born for marriage; otherwise she would have to live like an outcast and to work as a servant in her brother's house or at some other relative's. They told her that it was the parents' duty to find for her a suitable husband because they knew better her own interest and, naturally, their own. Since she was unable to live alone and to earn her living by herself, she would have to submit to their will and seek to please them because "the parents' will is equally God's will."

By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, new ideas began to spread. Romantic love stories, translated from the West, taught the necessity of love as a basis for marriage, condemned "arranged marriages" which chained a young girl to the will of her parents and the interest of her family. Numerous were the novels which glorified love and proclaimed it as the main source of happiness and the only thing that makes life worth living.

Armed with this theory, young women started a struggle against their parents' domination and concentrated their efforts on realizing a love-marriage which would open to them the gates of paradise. To reach this aim, many women were ready to sacrifice wealth, comfort and parents' consent. This philosophy did not always prove successful. Love is not predestined or eternal as the romanticists pretend. To men particularly, realities count more than dreams; material ambitions are more important than love.

Romantic philosophy did not make women happier than did the formal traditional one. Both philosophies lacked realism because they neglected a woman's potential and confirmed her dependence and incompetence. In this connection, I would like to relate the opinions of two modern intellectual women who base their talk on actual experience. The first is May Jumblatt whose love-marriage to the late leader Kamal Jumblatt ended in divorce. In an interview with the **Monday Morning** delegate, (No. 56, June 1973), she says: "The whole trouble comes from the romantic orientation which makes love the pivot of a woman's life, leads her to neglect personal development and prevents her from acquiring a certain independence. She expects her husband to carry the whole burden, to worship her and give her eternal happiness. This attitude is not realistic because happiness, if it exists, should come from personal effort; it can not be the result of somebody else's achievement."

The other woman who speaks about her personal experience in this context is Ann Lindbergh, a gifted American woman who married the famous aviator Charles Lindbergh. In a book which tells about intimate reflections inspired by "solitude with the sea," she says that her life had been a successful adventure because, while she enjoyed the love of husband and children, she managed to have her own independent existence and realize her own creative activity. She rejects the mystic notion of complete union between lovers, and insists on self-realization, with or without marriage. Days of solitude with the self are necessary to establish a state of equilibrium between the outer and the inner man, as Plato says in *Phaedon*. "Love consists of two solitudes that meet, salute and encourage each other."

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HUDA SHA'ARAWI (1882-1947)



A born leader, she was the first Egyptian "lady" to tear up her veil in public and throw it into the sea. In 1919 she led a demonstration of "veiled women" against British occupation; in 1920, she claimed for women the right to vote.

In the time of Saad Zaghloul, Egyptian women enjoyed the sympathy and consideration of this militant leader, thanks to the influence of his wife Safyyiah, who, in 1919, succeeded in forming the "Wafd Women's Committee", presided by Shareefa Hanum Riyad, and including Huda Sha'arawi as a member.

In Zaghloul's time also, women were officially accepted as members in political parties. The Egyptian constitution did not differentiate between men and women concerning political rights. After him, they were deprived of membership in the Wafd and of other political rights. Yet the Egyptian women continued their struggle on both social and political levels. This double activity remains until now the distinguishing mark of active women, not only in Egypt but also in the whole Arab world.

Huda Sha'arawi was born in a privileged home. Her father was a pasha who presided the first parliament in Egypt. He also was at the time, the richest man in Egypt. An orphan at seven, she was married at 13 to her cousin and guardian Ali Sha'arawi, one of the three leaders who in 1919 claimed Egypt's independence from Great Britain.

Durriyah Shafeek, the Egyptian feminist, who wrote *The Egyptian Woman*, relates about Huda the following anecdote: When she was a child, no more than seven, her brother obtained, on medical advice, a pony on which he would practise riding. Huda insisted that she should have a pony to ride like her brother and a carriage which she would drive by herself. Finally she was led to accept a compromise. They bought her a piano on which she could practise playing and, at the same time, she would be allowed to ride her brother's pony.

In her memoirs, she complains of her husband's fanatical spirit. He objected against her opening the windows of her apartment, against her playing the piano, against her smoking a cigarette. In spite of that, Huda found opportunities for outside activities by encouraging and collaborating with women's social and charity organizations. She obtained recognition as a militant nationalist when in 1919 she led, in conjunction with three other women

leaders, a political demonstration against British occupation, grouping no less than 300 women. They were veiled; one of them fell dead from a policeman's bullet, but neither veil nor bullets prevented those women from carrying out their purpose.

In 1920, she presided a women's meeting in which were formulated the following claims:

Equality of the sexes in the right to education.

Women's right to vote.

Abolition of polygamy.

In 1923, when back from a women's conference attended in Rome, she arrived at the port of Alexandria, she declared to her daughter and son-in-law that she would never return to the veil which she forsook in Rome. Both she and her secretary, Seeza Nibrawi, tore up their veils in public, threw them off into the sea and, with unveiled faces, rode the open car which carried them home.

This was followed in 1923 by her founding the "Egyptian Women's Union", affiliated in the same year with the "International Women's Union," to which conferences she regularly sent delegates. Equally intensive were her efforts to consolidate cooperative relations with the women of other Arab countries.

Among her many achievements we may mention the following:

1. Fixing the minimum age of marriage for women at 16.
2. Obtaining for women the right to education at all levels, including the secondary and university levels.
3. Patronage of fine arts and providing artists with material and moral support.
4. Foundation of the feminist magazine: *The Egyptian Woman* in both Arabic and French.

5. Participation of the Women's Union in social and political activities like supporting "The Bank of Egypt" project; amendment of tax laws with the aim of protecting local industries; working for the improvement of prisoners' conditions and the abolition of prostitution.

Through her efforts also, Egyptian wives obtained in 1929 the right to divorce if they presented adequate evidence of their husbands' ill-treatment. The mothers' guardianship over their children was raised from nine to eleven years.

"Veil of Shame: Role of Women in the Contemporary Fiction of North Africa and the Arab World"*

by Evelynne Accad

This recent study (1976) attempts to analyse, by means of exposition and comparison, the image of woman in modern Arabic fiction. It is an ambitious project, because the author tries to cover in her study the Arabic and non-Arabic (French and English) fiction of North African countries which she calls "The Maghreb" as well as that of the other Arab countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, which she calls "The Mashreq." The task, however, is made easier by the fact that the author makes use of choice. She does not include in her study all the authors and their works but concentrates on a number of representative authors whose works she studies entirely or in part, emphasizing those which have received more recognition than others from critics and readers.

The introduction gives a dark image of women's condition in North Africa and the other Arab countries. Thus it prepares the way for the dramatic events which take the form of tragic or pathetic novels and stories. More rarely these works take the form of farces or tragic-comic stories. In this latter category, we may rank Najib Mahfouz's novel, "Zuqaq ul-Midaqq" which "selects a group of viragos or amazons, representing the over-development of one aspect of woman's condition and combines them into a comic-absurd structure."

Most of the stories and novels have a realistic tendency because they draw their material from the present, from real life, and disclose problems and complaints with little or no comment. Many of them are more akin to biography than to modern fiction. A comparison between the fiction of North Africa (Al-Maghreb) and that of other Arab countries reveals a good deal of similarity and also the following differences: 1) Most of the North African stories are written in French while those of the other Arab countries are written in Arabic. 2) Most of the North African novelists are women (five out of seven), and their works tend to be auto-biographical. 3) The dilemma of a woman caught between two cultures is more evident in North African works than in those of other Arab countries.

It seems impossible to give in a short article the contents of a 240 page study in which the writer analyzes each of the selected stories, draws comparisons and gives conclusions from the various analyses. Therefore, we have chosen to limit ourselves to the author's analysis of two novelists whose works aroused a good many comments and achieved a relatively large popularity in Lebanon and Syria: Laila Baalbaki and Colette Khuri.

The heroine of *I live*, a novel written by Laila Baalbaki and translated into French two years later (1960), is a modern young girl whose culture aroused her consciousness of the problems she had to face and the forms of injustice she had to meet because of her feminine condition. She felt different from her parents and sisters, free to scorn them and criticize their traditional conduct. By taking a secretarial job in an office, she tried to go against her parents' will and also to forget her dissatisfaction. But she was disappointed because society did not seem to take woman's work seriously. It is just a pastime, they say, a temporary interest which ceases as soon as an opportunity for marriage shows up. When Lina entered the university to take a few courses, she met with the same deception because she noticed the discrepancy between bookish knowledge and real life. While yet at the university, she met in a near-by restaurant a young, enthusiastic, Communist, whose ardent, vehement talk greatly impressed her and seemed to fill the void in her soul; but she soon discovered that his attitude toward woman was no different from that of other young men and no less domineering. Finally, after a confrontation with her boy friend, inflamed with rage and disappointment, she tried to commit suicide but was saved at the last minute.

Evelynne Accad comments this story by saying that Lina's revolt is of the negative type, involving no positive action. Her upbringing had shaped her into a selfish, stubborn, spoiled girl, unable to comprehend the realities of life or to grow emotionally and intellectually, unable to sympathize with others and to firmly confront her problems. The sight of wounds and blood filled her with terror; failure led her to despair and to attempt suicide.

We may assume that Baalbaki's novel enjoyed great popularity in the sixties because it was written in an original, feverish, direct style, free from traditional reserve. Moreover, it carried the influence of certain socio-political ideologies which were popular at the time: Freudianism and struggle against Communism and Zionism.

Her other story, *Monstrous Gods*, represents a vehement protest against the tradition which makes a woman's life revolve around her "honor" or chastity. The heroine is a young girl who married a university professor, whose wide culture did not free him from adhering to the above tradition. Having discovered that the girl he married was not a virgin, he refused to treat her as a wife, though he

(Continued on page 4)

LEBANESE WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Dr. RAFEEQA HAMMOUD

How much progress have the Lebanese women recently achieved in the field of education and public service?

Dr. Rafeeqa Hammoud, professor of education at the Lebanese University, tries to answer this question in a paper which has been abridged as follows:

In the field of education:

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of students at all levels in Lebanese schools, but the number of girls is still inferior to that of boys. Statistics given in 1970 show that Lebanese children between 6 and 14, who did not go to school, numbered 22,000 boys and 45,000 girls. Their number increased among the older groups, i.e. those between 15 and 19. Of those whose ages ranged between 20 and 24 and who sought university education, 26 percent were boys and 9 percent, girls.

Though we have no accurate statistics about illiteracy, we may deduce from various sources of information that the number of illiterates is higher among women than among men.

In normal training schools, the number of women students has lately exceeded that of men, while in vocational schools, it is just the opposite. As a matter of fact, vocational training in Lebanon is at the elementary stage, the number of vocations being highly limited, technological development very backward, especially for women, who number only 10 percent of the graduates of vocational schools.

In universities, the number of women students in 1973-74 did not exceed 30 percent. Their highest proportion was in pharmacy: 61 percent of the whole. Next came those majoring in art-literature: 40 percent. In science, 25 percent, in law and political science, 19 percent, in medicine, 12 percent, in engineering, 5 percent.

In the teaching profession:

At the elementary level, women teachers form an overwhelming majority as compared with men. Their number gradually diminishes at the upper secondary and university level.

The causes which lie behind women's low status in the educational field are various.

(Continued from page 3)

permitted himself sexual freedom. The story does not lead to a solution nor does it end in violence and crime to which many of our men resort in real life in order "to wash their shame away."

In Collette Khuri's novels, the characters are also rebels against their environment but, in a general way, more balanced and less desperate than those of Laila Baallaki's. Her first novel, *Days with Him*, tells about a young girl who refused the "arranged marriage" prepared for her by her parents. Like the heroine of *I Live*, she accepted a secretarial job to occupy her time. Meanwhile she met a young musician with whom she readily fell in love and strove to maintain the romantic character of her attachment. But her charming artist was fickle, more attached to his art than to his love. Moreover, he tried to impose on her his ideas on such questions as free love, freedom of western women, national freedom. Accepting some of his opinions, rejecting other ones, she finally discovered that he was starting an affair with another woman. Then she realized that she had made a mistake when she thought that she could reform that man and live in harmony with him. When

he asked her to marry him, she refused and left for a trip to Europe with her uncle. This story, says Evelyn Accad, reflects an attitude of rational optimism. The heroine practices self-judgement; her unsuccessful adventure leads her to acquire and develop a certain degree of independence.

In Colette Khuri's other novel, *A Single Night*, the tone is less optimistic. The heroine, Rasha, had been forced to marry a man whom she did not love. But then one thing preoccupied her: her sterility. In search of a cure, she took a trip to Paris, accompanied by her husband. There she met a young man of Syrian origin, with whom she had a conversation that changed her outlook on life. From the very start, she felt a strong attraction to him. A complete mutual understanding between them made them believe that they had been born for each other. When Rasha visited the doctor, he told her that her sterility had psychological, not physical, causes. Then a change occurred in her. She realized her error in following the tradition which obliged her to be a tool for bearing children. She was a human being with a personal identity, and it would be impossible for her to return to her husband and follow the same



In the first place, we may mention the parents' traditional attitude which leads them to think that women were born for housekeeping, so it would be a loss to let them study beyond the elementary stage. Some think that they do not need any school education. Such attitudes, imposed on girls in early life, help to create in them an inferiority complex and to prevent the development of their talents.

Second, unfair laws and regulations favor the application of the double standard in the family, in social groups, in

business and industry, where women are not treated on an equal footing with men. They are generally excluded from the higher echelons in the public and private sectors. Recently, they have been excluded from the judiciary school.

Third, the lack of planning projects and the absence of orientation based on local needs tend to create a surplus of trainees in one field and a shortage of them in another.

Fourth, the relatively low salaries allotted to women, the difficulty of reconciling outside work with home duties, the high cost of child care facilities in the absence of the mother, all these factors join to make working women give up their employment after marriage.

The reforms proposed by Dr Hammoud are those which can fill the needs already pointed out, namely:

Making use of all available media to spread an awareness and change public opinion.

Abolition of all laws which favor sexual discrimination and inequality in every field.

Providing working women with up-to-date nurseries and child care centers.

Establishing free compulsory education for both sexes at the elementary and intermediate levels.

Providing all the Lebanese districts, particularly those remote from the capital, with an adequate number of schools, adequate means of communication, board and lodging accommodations for students whose homes are far from school.

Co-education at all levels should be encouraged as a means of affirming sexual equality.

Eradication of illiteracy should be an object of general concern.

Finally, women themselves must be convinced of their ability to face new responsibilities. A change in mentality must go hand in hand with the change of laws and regulations.

traditional path. What would she do? Unable to start a new life because she had not been taught to stand on her own feet and make her own decision, she decided to commit suicide.

This story is modeled on western romantic novels which flourished in the 19th century. Love as described by the author is of the romantic type. The heroine is romantic in the sense that she is weak and unable to achieve her independence. The idea that life without romantic love is void and meaningless, has now become obsolete.

Modern Arabic fiction is still in the infant stage. A few other novelists have appeared since Laila Baalbaki, Colette Khuri and others wrote their novels. Yet the number of men and women novelists remains small. In comparing the two, Evelyne Accad says that men writers are sometimes bolder and more ready than women to point out the evils of the double standard, but they both have common defects which may be summarized as follows:

1. Many of these novels, except a few with a conservative tendency, seem to propound Western theories in a way which diminishes their realistic quality. Colette Khuri's novel, *A Single Night*, serves to glorify romantic love. Laila

Baalbaki's novels, particularly one short story entitled *A Spaceship to the Moon*, overemphasizes, in the manner of Freud, the role of sex in people's lives.

2. Though these stories reflect an awareness of the injustice imposed on woman, they give no solution to her problems except escape or suicide. This may be due to the fact that they have been influenced by similar Western models or that they represent the well-to-do or privileged classes in which women are not used to struggle. The toiling woman of the common people is rarely analyzed. Psychological novels which may compare with those written by Jane Austen and the Bronte Sisters are very few, even nonexistent.

3. In some novels and stories, the style occupies an exaggerated dimension which nearly eclipses the ideas. On the other hand, these stories, by concentrating on emotional and matrimonial problems, neglect other equally important ones, like those which the working woman has to encounter within her family and outside.

Finally, the new fiction we expect from the new generation should manifest more realism and wider horizons.

Middle East Regional Seminar for the Training and Education of the Rural Woman

CAIRO, 2-9 MAY, 1978

The Middle East "Regional Seminar for the Training and Education of the Rural Woman" met in Cairo, May 2-9, 1978, through the joint convocation of the Women's International Union, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Arab Egyptian Republic, Huda Shaarawi Association for Woman's Emancipation, Unesco, and the International Cooperative Union.

The seminar was attended by delegates from the following countries:

The United Arab Emirates State
The State of Kuwait
The Democratic Sudanese Republic
The Maghreb Monarchy
The Arab Yemenite Republic
Iran
Tunisia
The Lebanese Republic
The Arab Egyptian Republic

Five work sessions were held during which five main topics were discussed:

1. The role of the rural woman in agricultural production.
2. The role of cooperatives in connection with the rural woman's participation in rural production and in rural and local industries.
3. The importance of the rural woman's participation in the social activities of her environment.
4. The role of the rural woman as housekeeper.
5. The role of the rural woman in child rearing.

The discussions held by the delegates led to the formulation of certain important points which are:

1. Since rural communities form the larger basis of social structures in a state, no adequate national development is possible unless these communities recuperate their intrinsic developmental power, equally shared by both sexes.
2. The services performed by the rural and bedouin women are of such vital importance to the nation and to society in general that no real development can be accomplished unless these women receive the necessary

help to reduce their heavy burden and increase their productivity through training and implementation of self-help projects.

Recommendations:

1. It is of a prime importance to create cooperatives for women occupied in the production of dairy products and local crafts, with the purpose of encouraging the use of modern, mechanized methods, technical training, modernization of production and filling, marketing and granting loans to producers.
2. Increased efforts should be made for the rapid eradication of illiteracy among rural and bedouin women.
3. Creation of development projects for rural women, including: workshops for teaching dressmaking and needlework, adult education classes, units of training in housekeeping and child care, units of cultural and entertainment activities.
4. More frequent visits to households should be made by social workers, health counselors and volunteer women leaders.
5. Intensive information campaigns should be organized, inducing rural and bedouin men to accept the participation of women in decision-making and in social activity. The use of radio and television programs for this purpose is recommended.
6. Adequate provision of vital public facilities (pure drinking water, electricity, communications) would help rural women to better perform their tasks.
7. Training a sufficient number of leaders to plan and direct the development projects.
8. Making use of programs and projects that have proved successful and appropriate in the region.
9. Plans must be made for the production of teaching materials.
10. Revision and development of programs and materials already in use.
11. Research work must be carried out for the purpose of finding the best ways to develop rural women, more particularly in the field of modern technology and simple mechanization of productive activity.

women's concerns in the far east

Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr

Founded in 1975, the Asian Women's Institute represents a consortium of nine Asian Colleges and Universities concerned with women's education. Eight of the members have women students only while one is coeducational. These colleges and universities stretch from the Middle East to the Far East with three colleges in India, two in Korea, one in Japan, one in Pakistan, one in Iran and one in Lebanon.

The seed for the establishment of the Asian Women's Institute was planted in 1972 when the administrators of the above-mentioned colleges and universities met in Seoul, Korea, to discuss issues of concern. It was then decided that centers for women's studies would be established in their respective colleges and universities.

The first center to be established was the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at Beirut University College (BUC). This was made possible through a generous grant from the Ford Foundation in 1973. Following the initiative of IWSAW, the other colleges and universities, with assistance from the Association of North American Cooperating Agencies of Overseas Women's Christian Colleges, established their own individual centers between 1975-76. To coordinate the work of these nine centers, Dr. Eva Shipstone was appointed and her office located in Lucknow, India*.

In May of 1978 the AWI sponsored four different functions that took place in the Far East, namely, Japan, Korea, and India. A brief account of these activities follows.

The first meeting was the Triennial conference of the Presidents of the nine colleges, and the Directors of the respective centers were invited to attend this conference held in Tokyo. Tokyo Women's Christian University hosted all the delegates and made our stay there most enjoyable. The highlight of the conference was the keynote address given by Dr. Kiyoko Takeda Cho on "Women's Education in Asia in the next Twenty Five Years," and the role the university should play in bridging the cultural gap and promoting world peace. (A summary of this address is given on page 9 of this issue of *Al-Raida*.)



Mrs. Tahrim Dass, Executive Director, Centre for Women's Studies & Development in Lucknow, India and Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director, IWSAW.

DIRECTORS' WORKSHOP

From Tokyo to Seoul for a Directors' workshop and an Asian Women Scholars' Seminar. Ewha University hosted the delegates with the most gracious hospitality of the Orient. The workshop centered around possible joint projects that the nine centers may consider. The compilation of basic data on women, the introduction of women's studies to the college and university curriculum, the student travelling seminar, comparative research, and career counselling were the most important issues discussed. The next major issue to be considered is funding which would enable the centers to proceed with their plans.

ASIAN WOMEN SCHOLARS' SEMINARS

The Asian Women Scholars' Seminar attracted some 55 Asian scholars from Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Japan and Korea, the host country, in addition to the AWI family. The theme of this conference was "The Role of the University in Changing Women's Consciousness." The keynote address was given by Dr. Sang Chang of Ewha University who discussed the significance of the Women's movement and the role of the University in its enhancement. She singled out three of these roles for particular attention: "1) to raise women's consciousness, 2) to provide ideological bases or models for the women's movement, 3) to develop a feminist perspective in all areas of academic discipline."

Dr. Ruby Daniel of Madras Women's Christian University presented a detailed study on the historical perspective of the role of the University in the Women's movement. She pointed out that "women had been relegated to a very low status in the family and society, their primary fulfillment in life being that of wives and mothers. Century-long traditions and ingrained practices governed male/female relationship, i.e. male superiority and female inferiority."

"Throughout history we find that there has always been disparity between the life options of men and women, the former receiving the best religious, artistic, vocational scientific, technological and industrial

* For further information about the Institute and its work, write to Dr. Eva Shipstone, Asian Women's Institute, c/o Lucknow Publishing House, 37 Cantonment Road, Lucknow, India.



Directors of Women's Centers of the AWI from left to right: M. Phanuel, India; Ch. Kim, Korea; Daniel, India; Riahi, Iran; Y. Kim, Korea; Singha, Pakistan; Matsukawa, Japan.

education that provided them with more salable skills to meet the challenge outside their homes. As a neglected human resource, the women in the developing countries of Asia, started getting their education as late as the middle of nineteenth century through the Christian Missionaries who introduced modern (western) education, by establishing primary, secondary schools and later teachers' training colleges and other higher educational colleges in these countries. University education has been one of the most important means of transforming society."

Extension programs and adult education were two issues in the address of Dr. Mirabai Phanuel of St. Christian's Training College, Madras, India. Her focus was on the responsibility a university should assume in bridging the gap between the university graduates and illiterate women of their societies. She also discussed the significance of adult education and the retraining of married women to enable them to take an active role in the process of development.

The role of the university in planning concrete programs for the integration of women in national development was the theme discussed by Dr. Angelina C. Almanzor of the Philippines. The gist of her paper was "...that women's universities and colleges in Asia undertake research on the education of women and experiment on programs not exclusively on and for women, but preferably in terms of women in the context of the whole family. ... every country in Asia should now formulate and implement a national policy to promote the integrity and solidarity of the family." She claims that "the quality of relationship in the family can be predictive of the quality of community life."

To conclude her presentation, some considerations for research and implementation by the university were suggested. These included relevance of educational programs to national development policy, continuing education for women, collaboration with existing agencies

in economic projects, studying family relations and the developing role of men and women to ensure attitudes and practices indigenous to the Asian socio-cultural milieu.

Dr. Emerita S. Quito of Manila emphasized the importance of women's studies programs in universities for consciousness raising. She said, "Women's Studies in Asia must be faced without illusions. Our problems are different, our cultures, varied and complex. We could maintain a unity in diversity, based on mutual respect, but I doubt whether we can import the whole Western scheme and apply it to Asia even after making the necessary adjustments."

Supporting Dr. Quito's argument was the paper presented by Dr. Soon Young S. Yoon of Ewha University's Women's Institute. After giving a brief historical survey of the feminist movement, he went on to describe the experience of Ewha University in introducing a women's studies program into their curriculum and the questions raised in its implementation. A summary of the method used in teaching and evaluating was also presented. The Ewha experience is very challenging and worth exploring. We, at BUC, will be introducing a course in Women's studies, (on Arab women), in the coming academic year.

The recommendations that resulted from this conference may be summarized as follows:

The university has the major role in changing women's consciousness by sensitising them to the importance of their role, status, responsibilities, rights, and potentials, to laws affecting them, to social and religious taboos in the community that hinder their developing concept of themselves, to society concept of them as reflected in the mass media. This and a number of other related issues were brought up as topics of concern for the university to study with its male and female students.

One of the highlights of our visit in Korea was meeting Dr. Tai-Young Lee who is the first and only woman lawyer in Korea and the founder of the Legal Aid Center. (Read about it on page 10 of this issue.)

CAREER COUNSELLING

Our next and last stop was India. In New Delhi the Coordinator, Dr. E. Shipstone, Mrs. Phoebe Gregorian*, Mrs. M. Riahi, Director of the Center in Iran, Mrs. T. Dass, Director of the Center in Lucknow, Ms. Nance Tobin, Ms. Patricia Meaney of Wellesley College Career Service Office and myself met to plan for a career counselling conference to be held in 1979 in Asia. The aim of this conference will be to study ways through which women may be motivated to select new careers and to learn how to make choices and take decisions. Funds are now being solicited to make this conference a reality:

Taking part in these conferences was a very enriching experience. The challenge for Asian women is tremendous and the task ahead is tough. However, with perseverance, wisdom, faith and unity, mountains may be moved.

* Chairman of Committee of '75.

"Women's Education in Asia in the Next Twenty-five Years"

The above is the title of a keynote address given by Mrs. Kiyoko Takeda Cho at the Triennial Conference of the Presidents of nine Women's Christian Colleges in Asia, at Tokyo Woman's Christian University, May 1-5, 1978. The address brings out problems concerning all Asiatic women, and the following paragraphs give a condensation of it.

Mrs. Kiyoko Takeda begins with a glance at the Christian contributions to women's education in Asia during the past one hundred years, taking the case of Japan as an example.

Those western-modelled schools produced many career women who contributed to the education and liberation of women and to the development of general social welfare. Two outstanding women educators are here mentioned: 1) Dr. Inazo Nitobe, the first president of Tokyo Women's Christian University who pointed out the importance of women's professional training for social and economic independence, 2) Mrs. Motoko Hani, founder of the "School of Freedom" and a dedicated educator who initiated the successful housewives movement for the reorganization of families.

She goes on to say that the percentage of women who presently enter universities and colleges in Japan is 33.6% while that of men is 43.3%. In spite of this high proportion of university women, the opportunities for responsible jobs for them are not large. Though Japan is considered a progressive, modernized nation, it is still traditional in its concept of woman and of human relations in family life and society.

Concerning a new challenge for women's education in Asia in the next 25 years, she suggests:

1) A critical appraisal of the abilities useful for modern civilization and inquiry into potential abilities.

The speaker mentions the school and college programs with their uniquely intellectual orientation, the entrance examinations which require private preparation outside the ordinary school and the large number of candidates who are eliminated every year because they are not sufficiently equipped for entrance exams, thus depriving the country of creative potentialities, and leading many students to frustration and suicide. It is our task as mothers and educators, she adds, to question the validity of stereotyped criteria used to judge human ability. Do the educational programs and examination questions help dig out hidden potentialities and bring out creative abilities? Or do they serve to perpetuate out-of-date methods and encourage stereotyped thinking and activity?

2) Another question she proposes concerns the examination of (indigenous) Asiatic cultural roots which

function as a "Collective Unconscious" (Jung's archetypes) underneath modern life and ideologies.

In Eastern countries which won their independence after World War II, a strong wave of nationalism led (them) to absolute affirmation of traditional culture ending in cultural chauvinism, which is dangerous and unproductive.

The "ethos" or value concept, hidden in the depths of cultural roots, contains the possibility of both positive and negative elements. As an example, we may take Buddhism or Confucianism which contain some universal values like the humanitarian concept of man and the basic question of salvation of human beings. On the other hand, these systems contain a peculiar combination of Shamanism, emperor worship and religious-political concepts of traditional communal life and structure. In the radical student movements of a few years ago, there was hidden an element of this Shamanism which exploded in a display of quasi-religious ecstasy but without regard for individual freedom or responsibility. The family concept is of the same type because it requires unity and productivity from the group, and at the same time exclusive group egoism without regard for individual freedom. The indigenous concept of family as a basic ethos of communal relations may function with both negative and positive implications. It often functions as a "Collective unconscious" factor in our modern life, in individual or social behaviour. It is like the "archetypes" in Jung's terminology.

In modern education in Asia, careful examination of indigenous cultures would become more important, because modern social relations and institutions are so often determined by this invisible ethos, the "collective unconscious" in people's behaviour.

3) Comparative joint study of indigenous cultures in Asia and joint exploration for adventurous experiment of pluralistic and inter-cultural communities in Asia.

"For many nations which have acquired or which are acquiring political and economic independence, cultural independence is also an important concern. Every nation is claiming cultural identity and independence from the cultural imperialism of the West and of other nations."

The women's colleges and universities represented in this Conference are called to take up a comparative study of indigenous Asiatic cultures as a joint-study program which would give them creative insight in understanding each individual culture and deepening mutual understanding. The fellowship of these institutions in such joint comparative study would help produce a model of "mosaic" inter-cultural communities in Asia, during the next twenty-five years.

Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations



Presidents of the 9 participating colleges and universities from left to right: Harashima — Japan, Badre — Beirut, Koh — Korea, Balreddy — India, Kim — Korea, Somasekhar — India, Singh — India, Phailbus — Pakistan, Heisey — Iran.

Vision, activity and willingness to give, these qualities prepared Mrs. Tai-Young Lee for the creation of the Korean Legal Aid Center for Family Relations in 1956.

Seeing the need of Korean women for legal advice in their society which is predominantly male-oriented, she went back to school at the age of thirty or more, studied law and organized the Legal Aid Center, of which she was sole counselor, in a small office located in downtown Seoul. By 1976, the staff had grown to a total of 16, including 7 counselors who are law graduates, clerical workers, a librarian, a researcher and other support staff. At the end of 1976, the Center moved into its new 6-story building on Yoi-Island in Seoul. The building was made possible through the dedicated work and giving of many friends, and especially by 100 Korean women in

Korea and abroad, (each donor—\$ 1000), for whom the building is named.

Main Activities of the Center

1. Daily legal counseling service for women and men. Average number of cases per day (1976): 40—50. Most common civil case: divorce.
2. A mobile unit which can take the center facilities to villages and other areas where women would otherwise have no access to legal counseling.
3. A library which is rapidly growing into a repository of books, periodicals, newspapers related to women's rights and legal issues.
4. Clinical training for women college students from the Law School of Ewha Womans University.
5. Development of a research center of the women's movement in

Korea and around the world, with an effort made to collect information on the status and legal rights of women.

6. Special lectures, programs and provisions of various opportunities for continuing education for women of all ages.

7. Work toward amending present laws and initiating new laws which protect and improve the legal rights of Korean women.

8. Visitation to young women and young men juvenile delinquents in various centers in the Seoul area.

9. Use of the mass media more widely to provide counseling and to share issues related to the women's movement.

This center, the first and only such center in Korea, became a member of the Korea Association of Women's Organization in 1966, and of the International Legal Aid Association in 1970.

female circumcision and infibulation

According to WIN NEWS, "Women's International Network", Vol. 4, No. 2, 1978, p. 43-44, female circumcision in its various forms is traditionally practised on young girls in some 26 countries of Africa and Asia. "Besides its psychological aspects, the effects of this genital excision, except in its mildest form, result in severe health hazards, both at the time of the operation when the girl is young and later on during a woman's childbearing years. Infection, urinary retention, damage to the urethra, keloid form-

ation and cysts, are only a few of the documented dangers. Infertility can also result."

"Another form of oppression which women are subjected to, in Somalia, Kenya and Sudan is infibulation, which means the closing up of the labia (lips of the vaginal) of a girl, done to ensure her virginity. The labia are sewn shut at puberty and opened forcibly at marriage. A woman undergoes the risk and pain of the process whenever the husband goes

"A violation of human rights. Both have detrimental effects on the health of women and children."

away, to prevent her infidelity."

This custom reduces the woman to a mere tool for a man's pleasure, with no right over her body. The gynaecologist we spoke to, said that operations are often performed on infibulation cases and that further complications occur at childbirth. In some extreme cases, the women need caesarian operations because their birth canals are too constricted with scar tissue after infibulation and are beyond repair."

DECADE FOR WOMEN (1975 - 1985): A WORLD PLAN OF ACTION

Since 1945, the United Nations Organization has claimed the abolition of all discrimination between individuals based on race or sex. In 1975, Women's Year, the delegates of one hundred states assembled in Mexico, decided the adoption of a "World plan of action" which would be executed in the span of ten years, 1975-1985, and containing guidelines concerning the measures to be adopted by each state toward realising complete equality between the sexes.

WORLD PLAN OF ACTION

The following paragraphs summarize the main points included in the World Plan of Action, adopted in Mexico Conference 1975.

1 - Participation of all states in implementing world peace.

For this purpose, women should be encouraged to work for peace, as individuals or as groups; women volunteers who work to promote peace should be acknowledged. Other methods to be applied: intercommunication between continents and states, leading to intercultural exchange and further knowledge about women of the world; implanting in children principles of respect for the freedom of others and belief in racial and sexual equality.

2 - Political participation

Very few women hold leading government positions in their countries. Hence the women's problems have been neglected because men have monopolized the leadership of the world.

During the coming ten years, an orientation campaign should be organized to prepare women for active political participation.

3 - Education and training

In all countries, the percentage of illiteracy is higher among women than among men. Equal opportunities for education should be given to both sexes with equal programs of study. Campaigns must be organized for the abolition of female illiteracy in a given period of time, with adequate pamphlets and publications prepared for the purpose.

4 - Work and employment

According to statistics, the number of working women between 15 and 64, forms a third of the world's working population. This number does not include housekeepers who work in their own homes and who are neither remunerated for their work nor beneficiaries of social security. The World Plan of Action stipulates that women be encouraged to take further training preparing them to occupy more lucrative and responsible positions. To this effect, we should encourage "the development of co-operatives and small-scale industries to extend women's range of economic roles and to let them play an active part in these cooperatives, particularly in food production, marketing, housing, nutrition, health and child-care."

5 - Health and nutrition

Women have special health care needs during pregnancy, delivery and lactation which, if neglected, affect their children as well. "Improved access to health, nutrition and other social services is essential to the full participation of women in development activities and to the strengthening of family life."

6 - The Family in modern society

Marriage and family laws should conform to international standards.

The principle of equal rights and responsibilities means that during marriage, both partners should perform an active role in the home, taking into account the importance of combining home and work responsibilities and sharing jointly decision-making on matters affecting the family and children.

7 - Population

Women's status, their educational level, the nature of their employment and their position within the family, decisively influence family size. The right of women to decide on the number and spacing of their children, their access to the information and means needed to exercise that right, affect their ability to take advantage of educational and employment opportunities.

Individuals and couples should have access, through an institutionalized system, to the information and means that would enable them to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to overcome sterility.

8 - Housing and related facilities

The majority of women spend more time than men in and around the house. The improvement of the house, its related facilities and its neighborhood will, therefore, bring about a direct improvement in the daily lives of women.

Other social questions

Among other social questions that need consideration, the following are worth mentioning:

Provision for the need of migrant women, of elderly women who frequently receive less protection and assistance than men; taking special legislative and other measures to combat prostitution, female criminality and illicit traffic in women.

Women should no more be excluded from the economically active population in national statistics because they are home-makers only. Home-making should be considered an economic activity, especially when a woman takes care, unaided, of all the household activities which require more time and effort than an ordinary paid job. In this respect, women who devote their time to home-making should claim the right to social security and some other forms of remuneration.

**Women and National Development:
The Complexities of Change (Eng.)**

Edited by the Wellesley Editorial Committee

Based on a conference on women and development held June 2-6, 1976, sponsored by the Center for Research on Women in Higher Education and the Professions, Wellesley College; the African Studies Association; the Association for African Studies; and the Latin American Studies Association, this volume originally appeared as the Autumn 1977 issue of "Signs": journal of women in culture and society, vol: 3, No. 1.

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Seoul Korea 1976

"Development as if Women Mattered:

An Annotated Bibliography with a Third World Focus"

Prepared by May Rihani, formerly staff member of IWSAW, presently assistant director, Secretariat for Women in Development, New Trans-Century Foundation; with the help of Jody Joy, research assistant to the above-mentioned Secretariat.

"This new annotated bibliography on Third World women and development gathers a large number of documents with an action programming focus. The 287 studies annotated

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"Within each of these subject categories, documents are subdivided by their region of focus".

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