

Anthropological Perspectives on Women's Junior College Education in Japan

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要 約

日本における女子短期大学教育の果たす役割に関して多様な意見がある。その中で短期大学の高等教育機関としての機能に疑問を投げかける意見が1970年代に聞かれはじめた。さらに最近になり英文で出版された Fujimura-Fasenlow と Kameda による論文の中で、女子短期大学は性差別を助長する機関であるという見解が示されている。筆者はこの見解に対し、Fujimura-Fasenlow と Kameda が女子短期大学教育の特殊性と歴史的な理解が充分ではない点を指摘して反論する。短期大学が地域に根ざした特色を持っている事により教育機会の均等に貢献してきた事、また女子教育に関する教育理念が歴史的に変化し、その結果として現在、女子高等教育において教育理念の混乱が見られる事を文献調査を基に議論する。さらに人類学的視点から日本の女子短期大学の変化を見ることにより、今後の聞き取り調査への導入を試みる。

I. Introduction

Are women's junior colleges "a bride-training school"? The answer to this question varies among different age groups in Japan. It is likely that many elderly people would say "yes" and that many younger people would answer with a definite "no". This difference reflects both the changing role of women's junior colleges in Japan over the years, and a shift of the expectations toward women in Japanese society. While the term "a bride-training school" was often used to describe women's junior colleges a few decades ago, it is no longer a useful term because young women graduating from junior colleges do not necessarily get married soon after their graduation from junior colleges. Rather, it is usually the case that they spend a few years, if not longer, in the productive sphere of the society, providing a necessary labour force, before they enter into a reproductive and domestic sphere predominantly through marriages.

The present and future role of women's junior colleges has been recently questioned as the student enrolment in these colleges has decreased (Ikechi 1995). This decrease in enrolment is mainly due to a reduction in the numbers of students graduating from high schools resulting from natural demographic changes and to an increasing preference toward four-year colleges. Furthermore, the increased number of women entering co-educational colleges in recent years shows an apparent shift away from women's colleges. While the term "a bride-training school" is no longer sufficient as a description of wom-

en's junior colleges, the role of women's junior colleges today and in the future remains unclear.

In this paper, an attempt will be made to develop a preliminary discussion of the role of women's junior colleges from anthropological perspectives. The gender inequality theory as it relates to the state of women's junior colleges will be introduced and criticized from an anthropological perspective as a way of focusing the issues relating to women's junior colleges. In the gender inequality theory, women's junior colleges are viewed as having been legitimately providing a system in which women are encouraged to take an unequal educational opportunity (Fujii 1971, 1975, Fujii et. al 1973, Kadowaki 1975, Amano 1986, Kameda 1986, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda 1995). A general literature review of the areas which relate to various aspects of the women's junior colleges in Japan is also provided. Finally, future research questions concerning the role of women's colleges today are developed.

II. The gender inequality theory: Are women's junior colleges sexually discriminating institutions?

Women's education in Japan has been examined by scholars of the various disciplines such as education, sociology and anthropology (Shiga 1960, Takeuchi 1985, Ogō 1995). More recently, scholars in women's studies have been providing their perspectives in an examination of women's education (Amano 1986, Kameda 1986, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda 1994).

The issues relating to women's junior colleges in Japan, in particular, have been a subject of various research (Nakahara 1969, Koshihara 1969, Honda 1983, Ito 1991, Kaneko et al. 1994). Most recently, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (1994) published their analysis of women's postsecondary educational institutions and sex-based educational discrimination. They develop a reasonable argument that the principle of equal opportunity for men and women have not been implemented within and outside of the educational system and that the recent changes indicate a shift away from the sex-based imbalanced education toward the coeducational equal education in the postsecondary schools in Japan.

Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (1994) refer to women's junior colleges as one of the ways in which the gender-based imbalance is evident. Firstly, they review the development of educational participation of women since World War II and point out that gender differences are apparent in the ratio of male and female student enrolment in four-year universities and junior colleges. While almost all male students in postsecondary education go to four-year universities, about 60% of females go to junior colleges and 40% go to four-year colleges. They further examine the programs of study in post secondary schools and state that a larger proportion of female students enrolled in tra-

ditionally-female fields of humanities, education and home economics, while a larger proportion of men enrolled in science and engineering. They also examine various aspects of the high school level education institution and point out that young women tend to prepare themselves for the humanities or social faculties at universities rather than engineering and science. Furthermore, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda state;

... or they (women) decide to forego the rigorous and competitive preparation for university admission altogether and instead aim for a junior college. (1994 : 50)

Thus, their review of male/female student enrolment and the content of their study in postsecondary schools led them to conclude that the sex-based disparity exists in Japanese higher education.

Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda further argue that such gender-based educational disparity has roots in dominant cultural norms and attitude regarding the role of women. More specifically, Japanese parents place a higher priority on education for their male children. The common attitudes that "men should work and women should stay at home" (1994 : 51) influence parents' view towards their daughter's choice of postsecondary schools.

Thus, the general cultural-enrichment type of education that junior colleges provide is considered sufficient. (ibid. : 51)

An examination of gender stereotyping in school textbooks, curriculum, classroom practices and gender-based tracking further reveals how sexism has been enforced within the school system. Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda end their discussion by describing the recent decline of women's universities and junior colleges and the shift toward coeducational postsecondary education. They examine the survival strategies that various women's universities and junior colleges have developed in response to an overall decline in enrolment and state;

Similarly, junior colleges, which have until now functioned mainly as the "women's track" in higher education, might become more like American community colleges. (ibid. : 64)

In conclusion, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda emphasize that in spite of the legalized principle of equal educational opportunities for men and women, gender equality in education has not yet been realized.

Kameda (1986) presents the same view toward women's junior colleges in her exam-

ination of the issues relating to gender and education. She urges that those involved in women's junior colleges re-examine the nature of the single-gender short-term educational institution and that they seek a way to break out from the inferior educational structure, rather than trying to survive by producing young short-term workers in response to the needs of industry.

Critical views toward women's junior colleges have been expressed by other researchers. Fujii (1971, 1975, Fujii et al. 1973) presents her view that the reason for the increasing number of women's junior colleges is that the low cost of junior college facilities and the high economic gain has been attracting school administrators to run two-year junior colleges rather than four-year universities which require greater capital investment to administer. She promotes expansion of coeducational four-year universities for two reasons; 1) that two years in college is not long enough to provide a sufficient level of education and, 2) that separate education for men and women is not necessary because both men and women are expected to play the same kind of role as professionals and good citizens. The same argument is raised by other researchers (Amano 1986, Kadowaki 1975), who point out that the financial benefit of running women's junior college caused an expansion of the schools, resulting in promotion of inadequate higher educational institutions.

Nihon Joshi Daigaku (Japan Women's University) abolished its two-year junior college program in 1988 for two reasons; 1) since the educational goal of Japan Women's University is to provide advanced academic education, rather than vocation-oriented education, the duration of two years is not long enough, and 2) since the founding spirit of Japan Women's University is to provide an equal level of higher education to women as men receive, it is consistent with the original purpose to concentrate on the four-year university program (Sumiya 1988).

In short, in the inequality theory, three characteristics of women's junior colleges are pointed out as a major source of sex discrimination; 1) they are single-sex institutions, 2) the fields of study that are taught in women's junior colleges are "the traditionally female subjects" and 3) two-years of postsecondary education provides an inferior education.

III. Questions arising from the review of the inequality theory.

The author finds the gender inequality theory inadequate to explain women's junior colleges, as it fails to account for the social and cultural complexity involved in the development of women's education in Japan. This short-come is evident mainly in the insufficient examination of three aspects of women's junior colleges; 1) the close connection between the historical development of women's status and the role that women's junior

colleges have played, 2) the social context in which women's junior colleges serve various functions, and 3) the regionality of postsecondary education.

Although the statistical data that Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda presented in their analysis of gender-based inequality in postsecondary education in Japan would appear to support their conclusions, they did not sufficiently examine numerous factors involved in the historical development of women's education in Japan and the context in which this development took place. This insufficient interpretation of the data fails to provide understanding of the complexity that it represents. While they highlight the influence of the Western feminist movement and state that changes in postsecondary education have been occurring since the 1970's, (Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda 1994) it is the indigenous development of ideology relating to the women's social roles and the Christian ideology brought by the missionaries in the Meiji era that had a greater influence on women's higher education from which women's junior colleges evolved. Furthermore, it is an ideological conflict that has a close connection with the issues concerning women's higher education, particularly women's junior colleges. This current ideological conflict is evident in the results of the survey that Itō conducted (1991). He presents the feelings expressed by students attending junior colleges, women's junior college in particular. The results of the questionnaire survey concerning the view toward junior colleges by the students indicates complex feelings that the students themselves have. Itō summarizes that many of the students expressed negative feelings toward junior colleges as being "the bride training school-like" and "junior colleges are viewed unimportant". However, a similar percentage of the students evaluated their schools positively, and stated that junior colleges provide a better opportunity for future jobs and that they give a higher education in a short term. Itō concludes that the students have complex opinions about the junior colleges. The simplified statement made by Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda therefore requires re-examination, with some understanding of the complexity caused by this ideological conflict.

While Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda stress that the existence of women's junior colleges is a reflection of educational inequality between men and women, Itō (1991) and Honda (1983) view the function of junior colleges as promoting equality of access to education. They point out that the existence of junior colleges has been enhancing equal access to higher education. The short-term nature of junior colleges made it possible for those people who are under economic and social constraints to receive postsecondary education. While four-year universities entail both higher cost and a longer-term commitment, junior colleges provide a compromised way to seek an advanced education after graduating from high schools for those people who can not afford the time and money to go to four-year universities. Thus, equality of postsecondary education is further enhanced by the regional nature of junior colleges.

The function as a local educational institution that junior colleges have been serving is also argued by Honda (1983). He presents the statistical data, indicating a higher percentage of local students attending junior colleges than is the case for four-year universities.

Table 1

Local students in junior college and four-year universities

	Local students(%)		Students from outside(%)	
	4-year	Junior	4-year	Junior
Hokkaido	64.9	91.5	20.7	6.5
Tōhoku	46.6	63.3	30.6	4.3
Kantōkōshinetsu	93.9	96.6	32.0	15.4
Tōkai	53.0	84.1	23.2	19.3
Hokurikukinki	78.5	94.0	24.3	15.0
Chūgoku	37.4	65.1	34.7	12.9
Shikoku	28.6	64.1	32.6	6.1
Kyūshū	64.5	80.9	16.6	4.7

Average	72.0%	86.6%	28.0%	13.4%

Source : Honda 1983 : 170

Apparently, the enrolment of local students is much higher in junior colleges than in four-year colleges. For example, in Hokkaido, 91.5% of the students in junior colleges are the local students, while 64.9% of the students in four-year colleges are local. Six point five percent of the junior college students are from outside of Hokkaido while 20.7 % of the four-year university students come from outside of Hokkaido. Kaneko, et al. (1994) also stresses the importance of regionality of junior colleges and concludes that an examination of the data in the past 10 years indicates junior colleges will continue to serve as a higher educational institution with roots in the region. The same point is reiterated by Abe (1991) and those involved in teaching at junior colleges (Nakahara 1969, Itō 1991).

Itō (1991) further argues that the regional nature of junior colleges do not only benefit students, but the community in two ways. Firstly, attending the local schools enhances the possibility of the students future settlement in the local community. This contributes to population stability of the community, which has been a major social problem in many rural communities. The regional nature of junior colleges is also evident

in the various educational programs which junior colleges make available to the community. Thus, participation of local people in educational programs is encouraged by the service of local junior colleges.

In conclusion, the inequality theory as applied to women's junior colleges fails to consider social and cultural factors, involved in development of women's junior colleges. The ideological conflict which closely relates to the changing social norms of women is apparently reflected in the complexity concerning women's higher education in general, and an indispensable aspect in understanding women's junior colleges in Japan. Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda also failed to consider the regional nature of junior colleges and the fact that people from the urban areas have options different from those in rural area. The regional nature of junior colleges serves to equalize educational opportunities, rather than promoting inequality.

IV. Historical development of women's junior colleges in Japan

Movement toward the establishment of a formal education system for women in Japan was apparent in the early Meiji (Shiga 1960). The Meiji Restoration and the break-down of the feudal system caused serious social changes in various spheres of the people's life. Women's status was one of the areas where drastic changes were apparent. Fukuzawa Yukichi and Mori Arinori are known for their contribution to the analysis of issues concerning women's social status and the need for formal education for women (Shiga 1960, Kiyooka 1988). It is noteworthy that the Japanese mission to the United States lead by Iwakura Tomomi in 1871 included five young women, one of whom, Tsuda Umeko, later founded the first women's college in Tokyo (Ogō 1995).

The later half of the Meiji era was marked by monumental work for the advancement of women's education by numerous Japanese and foreign women. The Japanese educators such as Ogino Ginko, Atomi Kakei, and Naruse Nizō made a substantial effort in making the public and the government aware of the need for education for women. When the prohibition of Christianity in Japan was lifted, Christian missionaries from England, the Netherlands, and the United States, many of whom were women, were sent to Japan. The main task for women missionaries of that time was the introduction of Christianity through women's education, thus contributing to a betterment of life among the Japanese women. Women's schools were initially built in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kobe, and eventually in other parts of Japan. It was 1887 when Sara Smith moved to Sapporo and founded a women's school, later known as Hokusei Gakusen (Hokusei Gakuen 1990).

As the country moved through a rapid modernization following the re-establishment of diplomatic relationships with the Western countries, this drastic change created a situation where women moved into the labour force to supply mainly manual labour. This

was the time when modernization caused serious stress among many people in Japan (Shiga 1960). The women in rural communities, especially, were subject to such stress, as they became a source of cheap labour. Such social changes and the resulting problems, needless to say, increased the needs for further effort to improve women's lives. More than 500 women's schools were established during the period of Taishō (ibid.).

As Japan entered into war with the United States, the Japanese education system as a whole had to make sacrifices. Since many of the women's schools had been founded by the Christian missionaries, the adverse effect of the war on the management of many of the women's schools was greater (Hokusei Gakuen 1990).

Following World War II, the Ministry of Education implemented major education reforms, under the guidance of the United States Occupation Army. Various types of existing educational institutions were formally organized into the six-three-three-four system (six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, three years of senior high school and four years of college and university). The "Fundamental Law of Education" and the "School Education Law" were passed which legalized this new education system (Monbushō 1964). Women's education was not neglected in the new system. There were two national women's universities established under the new system (ibid.).

Under the new university system, the schools which were not categorized as colleges or universities were given a tentative status as junior colleges (originally adopting the American junior college system). In 1949, the "School Education Law" was amended to legally recognize junior colleges which specialized in providing practical and vocational education. In the first year after the formal establishment of junior colleges, there were 132 private junior colleges and 17 public junior colleges which offered variety of courses such as literature, law and commerce, science, home economics and education (See Table 2). About 60% of the students were male and 40% were female (See Table 3).

Table 2 : Number of junior colleges

1950	149	1958	269
1951	180	1959	272
1952	205	1960	280
1953	228	1961	290
1954	251	1962	305
1955	264	1963	321
1956	268		
1957	269		

Source : Monbushō 1964 : 256-7

Table 3 : Female students in junior colleges (1950-1982)

Female students (%)							
1950	38.9	1960	67.5	1970	82.7	1980	89.0
1951	43.5	1961	68.2	1971	83.1	1981	89.6
1952	45.5	1962	69.3	1972	84.1	1982	89.8
1953	48.9	1963	70.5	1973	84.5		
1954	50.6	1964	71.2	1974	85.5		
1955	54.0	1965	74.8	1975	86.2		
1956	57.7	1966	78.9	1976	87.0		
1957	60.8	1967	81.3	1977	87.7		
1958	62.9	1968	82.0	1978	88.1		
1959	65.0	1969	82.2	1979	88.5		

Source : Honda 1983 : 7

Student enrolment in junior colleges increased drastically in the next 13 years, as the number of junior colleges doubled (see Table 2). By 1954, furthermore, male/female ratio of the students also changed (See Table 3). The number of female students entering junior colleges increased further and in 1963, 70% of the junior college students were female.

In 1964, an amendment was made to the "School Education Law" such that junior colleges became a recognized institution of higher education. Junior colleges continued to grow until present. According to the recent report by the Japan Junior College Association, there are total of 501 junior colleges (1994). The record of student enrolment clearly shows both an increase in the total number of female students and in the ratio of female to male students, illustrating that junior colleges have been providing educational opportunities mainly for women through out the history (See Table 3).

Presently, junior colleges are at a critical turning point where their future survival is seriously questioned, because of the possible future reduction in number of students, due to a natural decline in the number of students graduating from high schools and because of their preference for four-year universities.

V. Social and cultural analysis of the historical development of women's junior colleges in Japan

The historical development of women's junior colleges illustrates how this educational institution has evolved, responding to the social changes throughout its history.

Comprehensive reviews of the history of women's education by Shiga (1960), Fujii

(1971 and 1975) and Ogō (1995) note several ideologies which have influenced the foundation and development of women's education in Japan.

In the early Meiji, when the feudal system had been keeping women in a socially insignificant class, Fukuzawa Yukichi advocated the necessity of improving women's status and considered formal education as a way to achieve that goal. He believed that women's education should be different from that of men, while achieving equality between men and women, and that women should be educated in the way that their biological and mental characteristics were respected. In short, while his main concern was to free women from men's dominance over their lives, he viewed women's education as a way to enhance the performance of their domestic duties (Shiga 1960, Kiyooka 1988).

Christian ideology had a significant influence over early women's education. Christian missionaries who came to Japan in the Meiji period became deeply involved in women's education. They were motivated by their conviction that formal education should improve life of the Japanese women (Kohiyama 1992). Furthermore, Christian ideology was adopted into government policy when an American Christian educator, David Murray, was invited to *serve as an advisor to the Ministry of Education*. The Christian ideology inevitably served to promote the general understanding of women's needs for education. Needless to say, it also formed a spiritual foundation for numerous women's junior colleges, most of which have continued to operate until now.

Another view of women's education advocated by Naruse Nizō (1858-1919) should be noted. Naruse believed that women's education should fulfill three purposes; educating women as a person, as woman and, as a citizen. He practiced his ideology by providing academic education to women and founded the first women's school, which later became Nihon Joshi Daigaku (Japan Women's University).

While the women's education in the early Meiji period can be characterized as a movement toward equalizing educational opportunities for men and women, women's education became more restricted toward the end of the Meiji (Fujii 1971). According to Fujii (ibid.), Japan began to take its own course of development in which the Emperor-center-nationalism was emphasized. Many social institutions began to be affected as a result. Separation of men and women in high schools was imposed by the Ministry of Education in 1879. In 1898, the "Civil Law" was passed to re-organize the Japanese families in the "ie" system, thus the women's domestic role became dominant. The attitude toward women's education drastically changed when the Government issued Kyōiku Chokugo (The Imperial Rescript of Educational) in 1890.

"The good wife-wise mother" ideology became the bases for the formal education system at the end of Meiji through Taishō and the early Shōwa period. "The good wife-wise mother" ideology is the moral teaching that emphasized the women's role as a wife and a mother (Kiyonaga 1995, Fujii 1971). Roles of men and women were defined, in

that men took the exclusive responsibility as the wage earner and women as the house keeper. There was inevitably a strong resistance to imposition of this ideology among some Japanese women such as Hiratsuka Raichō and Yosano Akiko. Although implementation of the new school system in the post World War II period caused this ideology to fade away as an educational principle, "the good wife-wise mother" ideology persists as one of the views of women's social norms.

In a major reform of the education system, the Ministry of Education adopted the principle of an equal education for men and women in the "New School Education Law". The equal education ideology provided both men and women with an equal opportunity for education throughout the school system. This drastic change inevitably caused confusion, which was further promoted by the drastic social and cultural changes that occurred in the post-war period. In 1985, the concept of equal opportunity for employment was legally established, resulting in further changes in the expected role of women in the society (Ueno 1994).

The historical development of women's education is inseparable from the changes of women's social norms, which are reflected in the ideology of women's education of each historical period. The most influential ideologies on the development of women's education have been the Christian ideology, "the good wife-wise mother" ideology and the equal education of men and women. These ideologies, in varying degree, persist in the present day women's education, causing the ideological conflict, which was discussed above. It is important to understand the historical context of this present ideological conflict so that the current situation of women's junior colleges can be sufficiently understood.

VI. Future research

Anthropologists have long questioned "the universality of gender asymmetry" (Mukhopadhyay and Higgins 1988 : 461). Why do men and women in every human society have unequal social status? It is the ultimate goal for anthropologists with an interest in the gender issues to reveal the dynamics of gender asymmetry in various societies. Some anthropologists have examined the economic sphere of human life in search for the answer (Lee 1979, Ember 1983, Bjorkman 1986). Others focus on the aspect of reproduction which biologically and socially distinguish men from women (MacCormack and Strathern 1980, Laderman 1983). The symbolic nature of gender and gender-related ideologies in various societies has also been considered as a way to understand the dynamics of gender asymmetry (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974, Ortner and Whitehead 1981).

Similarly, an effort to understand the issues relating to gender inequality has been made by the anthropologists whose interest lies in Japanese studies. Tamanoi (1990) presents a comprehensive review of the sociological and anthropological works in this area.

The earlier kinship studies of the Japanese family (Befu 1962, 1963, 1971, Nakane 1967) set a stage for the gender studies of the later period, in which social and cultural dynamics of gender relations became the focus of the research. More recently, numerous work on the urban female population provided material, to examine the current situation of the Japanese women (Libra 1984, Bestor 1985, Ueno 1987a,b). It is apparent that substantial effort has been made to understand "a universal gender asymmetry", but that reasonable answers to this question have not been acquired.

A review of the historical development and the present situation of women's education in Japan may present a key to this question. The social and cultural context of women's education has created an ideological conflict, in that women's education in Japan is built upon a complex mixture of conflictive social norms for women. As an example of the role of ideological conflicts in the establishment of social norms related to gender equality, it is useful to further investigate the phenomenon of this ideological conflict in search of the answer to the more general question of "a universal gender asymmetry". The importance of consideration of the social and cultural context of education for understanding of the inequality between men and women is stressed by Coleman (1990) who points out that:

... I believe that the concept of 'equality of educational opportunity' is a mistaken and misleading concept. It is mistaken because it locates the 'equality of opportunity' within the educational institutions, and thus focuses attention on education as an end in itself rather than as properly it is, a means to ends achieved in adulthood (ibid : 65).

In the recent Anthropology, there has been an increasing recognition that further examination of gender issues requires ethnographic research from a native perspective (Mukhopadhyay and Higgins 1988). The call for research by native anthropologists is more intense among the scholars of Japanese studies (Tamanoi 1990). Hara (1987) strongly advocates that the work on the Japanese women by Western researchers be re-examined by the native researchers. The new perspectives that native anthropologist introduce through intensive ethnographic research on the issue of gender inequality will provide valuable information toward the study of gender asymmetry.

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