

The Powerful Women of Osaka

“Osaka women have guts!”

In the 1970s and 80s, when women around Japan joined around the worldwide women’s movement in speaking out, Osaka women were active in a range of ways. Women working in the area of Kita-ku, where trading companies and banks are clustered, were quick to form a Committee for the Elimination of Wage Discrimination. Another group compiled a “White Paper on Birth”, and promoted the reproductive health rights of women nationally. Seminars on “housewives issues” were also organized.

Driven not by ideology or theory, but by what was occurring in the everyday, the women acted in response to real conditions. Their movements seemed to surprise people in Tokyo, and led to the observation that “Osaka women have guts!”

From this background the Dawn Center was born. In 1986, with the proposal for “a women’s center with its stronghold in western Japan”, surveys were compiled and several forums were conducted, and the designs for the facilities, operations and management were refined. In November 1994 the Center was opened, and the Osaka Prefectural Gender Equality Foundation was established to manage the facilities.

While it is a prefectural government facility, there is a strong sense that the Dawn Center was made the women of Osaka.

It was precisely because of this that when the Dawn Center faced crisis – in the form of the 2008 Osaka Prefectural reconstruction—the women of Osaka rose swiftly in response. Early in spring they organized a protest march, and expanding on this unique activism, collected signatures in a nation-wide petition.

“The Dawn Center changed my life”

“I always come home braver”

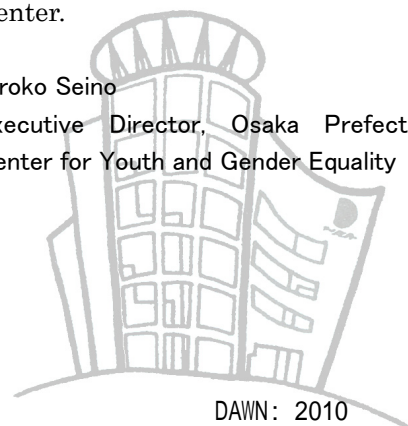
“Lately, work’s been hard and I’ve been struggling but through the Dawn Center I’ve been able to get back my enthusiasm”

“When I was stressed out with my child, going to the Dawn Center, putting my child in the daycare and spending some time in the library was my comfort”

This is what Center users tell us. The Dawn Center is not simply about empowering individual women or the creation of networks. It also fulfils the role of a training place for workers involved in the implementation of gender-equal policies, as well as educators and students.

It is imperative that we pass on to the next generation the wealth of women’s experiences accumulated by the Dawn Center.

Hiroko Seino
Executive Director, Osaka Prefectural
Center for Youth and Gender Equality



Data on Osaka and Women

1. Gender-equal society in Japan

According to the UNDP Human Rights Report, Japan's GEM is extremely low, and the imbalance between HDI and GDI striking. Socially, economically and politically, it can be said that Japanese women still occupy a lower position. Furthermore, the GEM ranking dropped even further in 2001, 2005 and 2009.

Source: UNDP 「Human Development Report」

· Graph: HDI(Human Development Index), GDI(Gender-Related Development Index), GEM (Gender Empowerment Measures)

	HDI	GDI	GEM
2001	9/162	11/146	31/64
2005	11/177	14/144	43/80
2009	10/182	14/155	57/109

2. Data on Osaka

◆The basic data of Osaka

- o Area: 1893.73 km² (2nd smallest of 47 prefectures)
- o Population: Approx. 8.81million - 4.53 million women, 4.28 million men
- o Unmarried women: 25.5% (5th nationally), Unmarried men: 32.3% (8th nationally)
- o Foreign residents 176,000 (Women:52.2%)
- o Number of households 3,591,000 (Nuclear Family 60.4%, Single person house holds 32.1%)
- o population over 65yrs who live alone (Women:236,000, Men104,000)

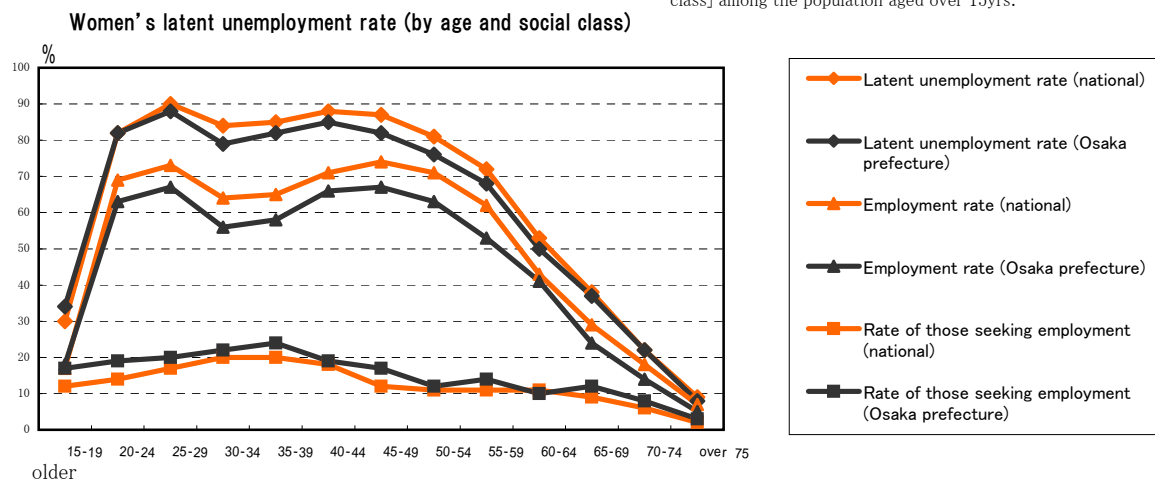
Source: 「Census」 2005



◆Current state of woman's labor

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, "Survey of fundamental structure of employment", 2007

Note: latent employment rate = (number of those employed [by age and social class] + rate of those seeking employment [by age and class] among the population aged over 15yrs.



Women and work

Separated by age and social class, women's labor participation rates show a characteristic M-pattern, peaking in the early twenties and late forties and dipping in the early thirties. This is thought to reflect the period of time women spend away from the labor market because of childbirth and childrearing. In Osaka, the dip is deep relative to the national pattern. If in calculating the workforce population we add those who wish to work, to those already working, we find that the dip in the M-curve both in Osaka prefecture and nationally, levels out. From this we can gauge that many women quit work not because they want to, but in order to give birth and raise children.

Labor continuation rate, wages

According to Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Bureau of Statistics, "Society and Lifestyle Statistical Markers 2008" in Osaka the labour participation rate of women is 44.8%, even lower than the national average, and women's average period of continuous employment is 8.2yrs, also shorter than the national average. The existing gender gap in wages meant that in 2007 women earned 67.1% of what men earned.

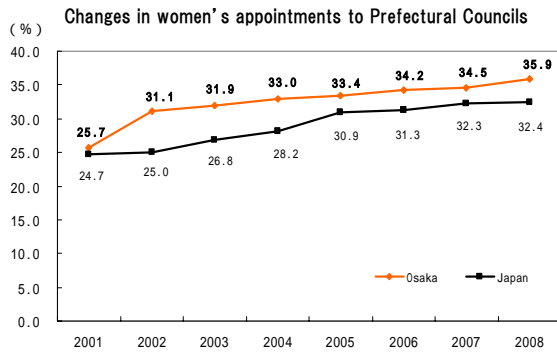
Unemployment rate

In 2005 the total unemployment rate of women was 7.2% in Osaka, the second highest nationally. Compared to the national average of 4.9% this figure is extremely high.

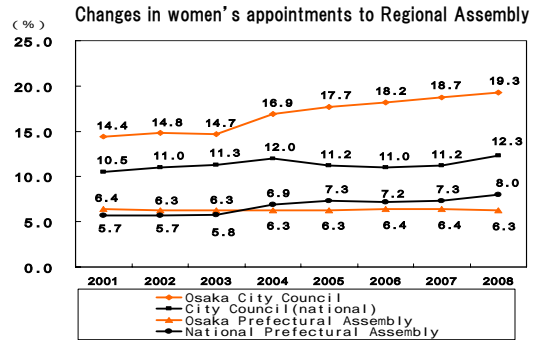
◆Women's participation in social decision making

Within councils in Osaka Prefecture, 679 of 1839 Council (35.9%) are women. This figure is higher than the national average of 32.4%

In April 1 2008, women made up 6.3% of the Osaka Prefectural Assembly, lower than the 8.0% of national level. By contrast, in the Osaka City Assembly women make up 19.3% compared to the national average of 12.3%, and fourth highest nationally.



Source: Cabinet Survey (conducted annually 30th August) Osaka Prefecture Gender Equality Survey (conducted annually 1st April)



Source: Data on Prefectural Assembly, cities within the prefecture taken from "Osaka Prefectural Bureau for Gender Equality Survey".

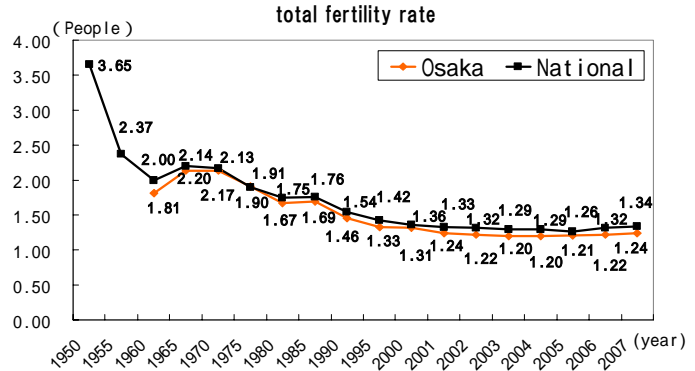
National data on municipal and town assemblies taken from 2001 Cabinet "Study on women's participation in policy and decision-making"; data from 2002 taken from "Creation of gender equal society and the promotion of women's policies in regional public organizations"

◆Fertility rate

In Osaka prefecture the total fertility rate viewed over several years shows little change. In 2007 the TFR was 1.24, a drop from the national rate of 1.34, and it is ranked 43 among the prefectures.

(*) TFR: Assuming that the fertility rate for women (separated by age) in a given year will not change, this marker is used to denote the average number of children a single woman will give birth to in her lifetime.

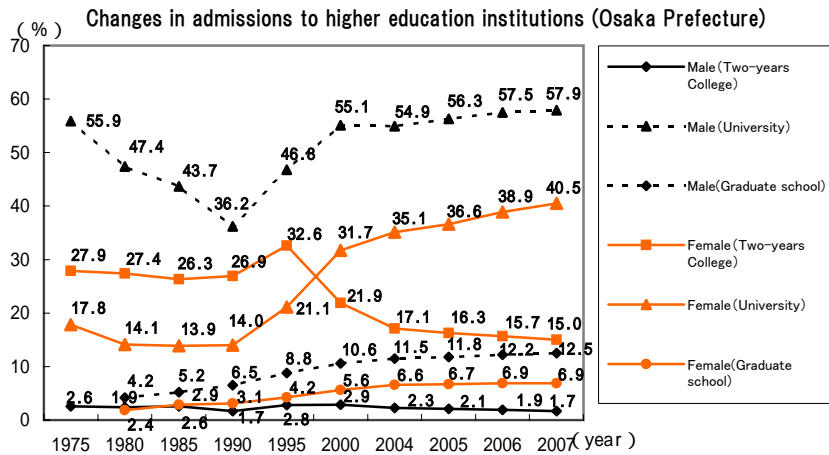
Source: Vital Statistics of Japan 2007



◆Education continuance rate

In Osaka, women's continuance to four-year university programs rate is 17.4% lower than men's.

Source: Created by Osaka Prefectural Gender Equality Bureau using data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology "Fundamental School Survey". Continuance to postgraduate education includes postgraduate studies as well as graduation from two-year colleges.

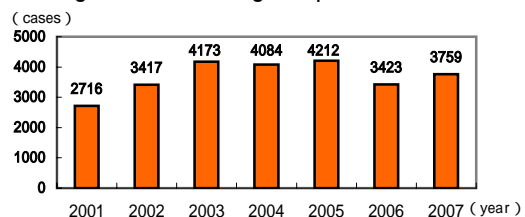


◆Violence from partners

Since the 2001 Prevention of Domestic Violence Law, Osaka Prefecture has established 8 support centers for counseling victims of spousal violence. From April 2007 - March 2008, there were 3,759 reports of violence, 4th nationally.

Source: 「Incidence of counselling regarding spousal violence sought from Counselling for Spousal Violence Support Centers」2007

Incidence of counselling regarding spousal violence sought from Counselling for Spousal Violence



The Formulation of Osaka Prefectural Gender Equality Administration

In Japan, respect for the individual is guaranteed under the Constitution. In 1999, in conjunction with international efforts toward gender equality, Japan implemented the Basic Law for a Gender Equal Society. A gender-equal society is defined as one in which women and men can participate equally and as they choose in all areas of society, enjoying political, economic, cultural benefits and sharing social responsibility. The Law renders the realization of a gender equal society a paramount task for Japanese society in the 21st century.

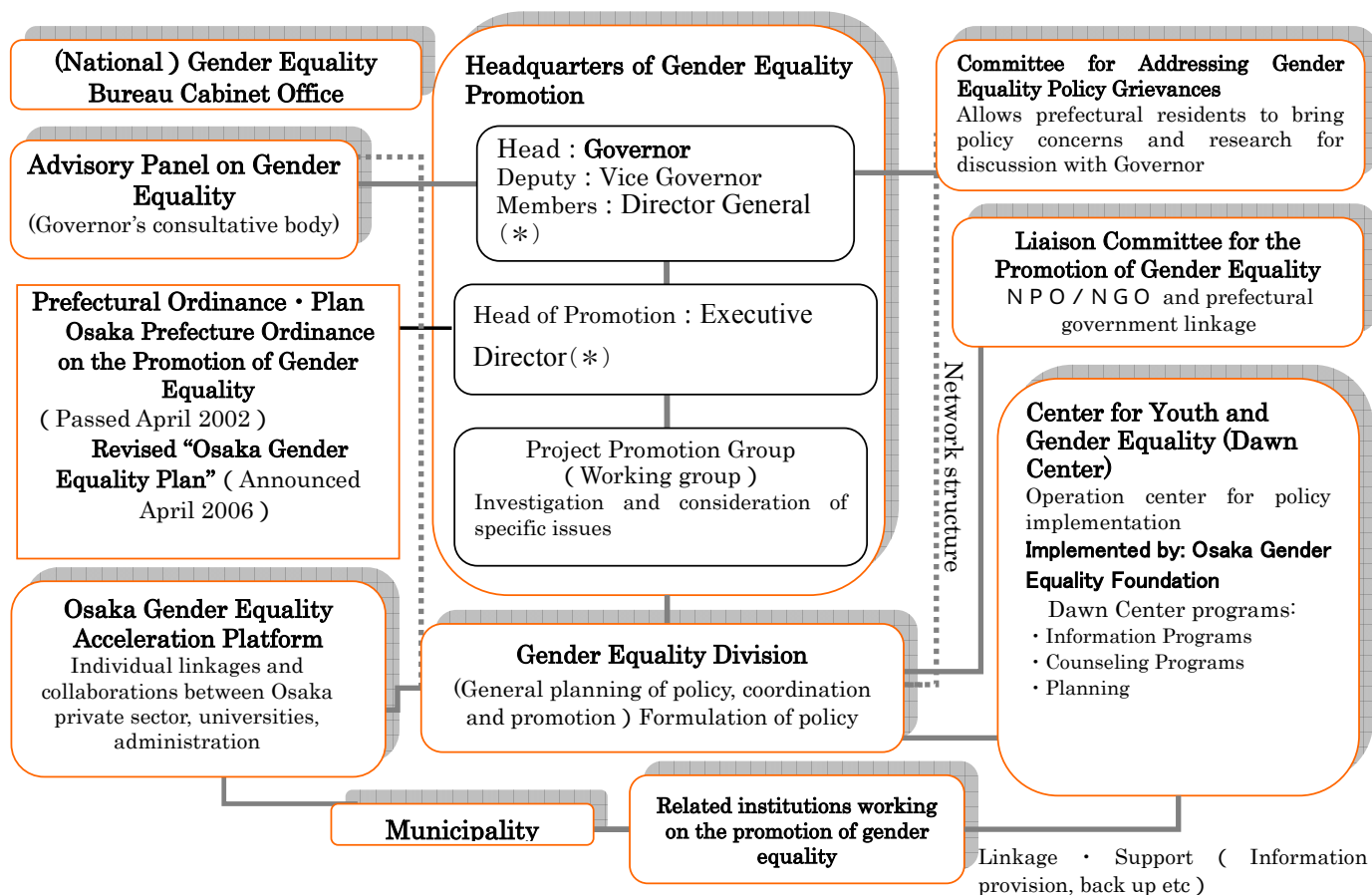
Osaka Prefecture led national efforts, in 1981 drawing up the “Osaka Prefectural Action Plan for the Promotion of Women’s Independence and Participation”, and recently formulated policies towards the promotion of a gender equal society. In 1986 the second phase action plan “Aiming for the 21st Century Osaka Prefecture Women’s Plan” was formulated. In 1991 the third-phase action plan

“Aiming for the Realization of a Gender-Equal Society in Osaka: Women and Men Jump Plan” was formulated. In 1997, anticipating the Beijing Platform for Action, the “New Women and Men’s Jump Plan” was formulated and was actively incorporated into Osaka prefectural policies on the promotion of gender equality.

In 2001 the Osaka Gender Equality Plan was formulated in accordance with principles of the Basic Law for a Gender Equal Society, and in 2002 Osaka Prefectural residents and businesses implemented the “Osaka Prefectural Promotion of Gender Equality Bylaw”, a guideline towards the realization of a gender equal society.

With the Basic Law as a foundation, the 2001 Basic Plan has two key foci: respect for women and men’s human rights and elimination of stereotypes regarding the gendered division of labor. Under these

Framework for the Promotion of Gender Equality Promotion in Osaka Prefecture



(*) Department of Policy and Planning, Department of General Affairs, Department of Civic and Cultural Affairs, Department of Welfare, Department of Health and Medical care, Department of Commerce , Industry and Labor, Department of Environment, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Department of Urban and Public Works, Department of Housing and City Development, Bureau of Accounting, Department of Waterworks, Board of Education, Auditors, Personnel Commission, Police Headquarters.

two points, the enlargement of women’s participation in social decision-making, creation of awareness of gender equality, and the promotion of equality in the workplace are among ten basic policies which comprehensively clarify the direction and policies towards the promotion of gender equality in Osaka Prefecture.

For example, as part of the plan to enlarge women’s participation in social decision-making, and in order to promote the active recruitment of women into prefectural policymaking and decisions, by the end of 2010 Osaka prefectural councils aim to have 40% female membership.

Furthermore, Osaka prefecture works proactively to eliminate violence against women. In 2001, the Domestic Violence Prevention Law was passed nationally, aiming to prevent spousal violence and to ensure the safety of domestic violence victims. In Osaka the Basic Plan for Domestic Violence Prevention in Osaka Prefecture was based on this plan and implemented in 2005, and counseling for victims, temporary shelter and assistance is offered. The prefecture also conducts public awareness-raising campaigns on domestic violence.

Osaka Prefecture will continue to work towards the realization of a gender equal society in which women and men can live active lives in all spheres in accordance with their individual aspirations.

Basic directions in gender equality policy implementation

- Expansion of women’s participation in social decision-making
- Consciousness-raising in relation to gender equality
- Promotion of gender equality in the workplace
- Maintenance of a holistic environment for child-rearing
- Maintenance of an environment allowing the elderly and disabled to live fulfilling and purposeful lives
- Elimination of violence against women
- Retention and protection of women’s lifelong mental and physical well-being
- Respect for women’s rights in the media
- Education to promote gender equality – enhancement of training
- Global focus on the promotion of gender equality

Focus of policy implementation measures
Eliciting proactive behaviour from prefectural residents

Women-focused approaches
 Men-focused approaches
 Next generation-focused approaches

Focus of policy implementation measures
Bolstering private sector engagement

- Rewarding businesses proactively engaged in promoting gender equality
- Consciousness-raising in workplaces
- Support for diverse working patterns

Osaka Gender Equality Foundation was established and funded 100% by the Osaka Prefectural Government in April 1994. The Dawn Center, opened in the same year, is the hub of its operations.

Aiming to contribute to the realization of a gender-equal society, the projects of the Foundation further the creation of a society where both men and women, as equal members, have the opportunity to participate in all kinds of social activities. The Foundation is expected, through its programs, to play a central role in the promotion of a range of activities, in the forging of alliances between prefectural government and residents, and above all between various groups in the private sector.

1) Programs relating to the collation and provision of information relating to women

The specialist women's library contains 40,000 volumes, including government resources, audio-visual material which can be viewed as well as borrowed. It provides information to address a range of inquiries, drawing on a created a database of experts and skilled professionals. Of the information-related enquiries fielded, approximately 32% come from government administrative staff, and approximately 17% are from individuals affiliated to schools.

2) Programs relating to counseling on issues affecting women

Dealing with issues that directly affect women, and drawing on women's perspectives, the Foundation looks to promote an independent and proactive way of living. To this end it offers phone and in-person counselling to provide psychological support, and also send counsellors to women's shelters to assist victims of domestic violence.

3) Education and training programs on gender equality

The Foundation conducts seminars specifically targeting working women, government-related individuals, human resource

managers, designed to deepen understanding and recognition of gender issues.

4) Other

In addition to these programs, the Foundation convenes culture programs supporting women's culture and expression. Accordingly, the Foundation presents works of performing arts – including film, theatre, and dance – which aim to challenge social consciousness and stereotypes relating to women.

One of the key features of the Foundation, with its core program of prefectural funding and in addition to its unique planned programs, is its provision of systematic and comprehensive programs through the hub that is the Dawn Center.

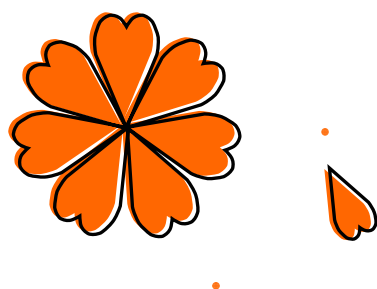
The programs above (1)–(4) are interconnected. For example, the counseling programs (2), offer services to individual clients, while also implementing education and training programs which grasp women's concerns and the information necessary to resolve these concerns. Furthermore, data relating to the nature and number of counseling enquiries is conveyed to the prefecture and the national government for consideration as a primary resource in policy development. Finally, the books, resources and personnel data collated are offered to counseling clients for their use.

Through the alignment of its activities, the Foundation thus supports the empowerment of the women and men who come to the Dawn Center in a range of ways.

A further key characteristic of the Foundation is its role in promoting the "architecture of networks". It collect information on groups and individuals promoting gender equality, whether they are government, NPOs or business sector actors, and provide this information as a social resource in our programs. It also endeavor to connect these actors in diverse ways, holding information exchange events and assisting in requests for co-funding.

Yasuko Sakata

Director, Osaka Gender Equality Foundation



It also fulfils an important role as an intermediary support institution within Osaka prefecture.

In Osaka Prefecture there are approximately 30 women's centers/ centers for gender equality, and in each region many of the municipal play an important role in addressing issues relating to gender equality.

Concretely, they provide a direct service in promoting public consciousness-raising regarding female/male equality, and supporting the creation of opportunities for a collaborative participatory society.

In contrast with this, much of the Dawn Center's assumed role as an intermediary agency is in addressing people and agencies with social influence, providing an indirect service to prefectural residents. However, its essential function is in widening the base of the principles of gender equality at the municipal level of administration, increasing capabilities to allow the city to directly address residents. It is this role that could be said to precisely encapsulate the function of a prefectural facility.

Below are the special features of the Dawn's intermediary support functions:

Training programs etc

1) For administrative staff

- Training seminars for employees involved in the implementation of policies relating to gender

equality, and those responsible for Projects relating to counseling services for women. Because of 2-3 yearly personnel rotations within the bureaucracy, supervisors change regularly. Training programs for these individuals do not exist at each facility, but rather are conducted entirely by the Osaka Prefectural Gender equality Foundation.

2) For school educators:

- Training seminars for educators

We conduct seminars in which to learn essential knowledge and ways of thinking which transcend differences in primary, junior and high school levels, as well as differences in teaching resources, and allow for the practice of gender-equal education.

3) For industry affiliates

- Training seminars designed for personnel and labour specialists

We conduct seminars targeting those responsible for personnel and labour, so that they can apply a gender perspective when formulating internal systems to create a work-friendly environment for female and male employees.

Miyuki Kinoshita

Assistant Director, Osaka Gender Equality Foundation Planning Promotion Group

Working with The Dawn Center

I remember being surprised the first time I visited the Dawn Center. At the time, I had come from Australia to Japan as a research student to study Japanese feminism. To an Australian, firstly it was impressive that the government would value women's needs so highly as to create such a building. It was afterwards that I discovered that it was the efforts of local women, rather than simply government, that had achieved this feat.

In my research to date, I have spoken with women who work at women's centers, and observed and participated in programs and seminars at women's centers myself. Consequently I see the significance of the role played by women's centers. There are many working at women's centers who value women's experiences and perspective. Some come already having developed this consciousness, while others develop an awareness of the role of women's centers through their work.

As an intern and then a researcher, I have worked with the Dawn Center now for a decade. In that time I have learned a lot, and have had countless wonderful experiences. More than just offering feminist counseling and providing women-related information and resources, the Dawn Center harnesses the power of those who use and work at the center, and it is this that represents its greatest effect.

Laura Dales

Visiting Researcher, Graduate School of Human Sciences Osaka University Assistant Professor,
Discipline of Asian Studies, School of Social and Cultural Studies University of Western Australia.

~Dr. Laura Dales translated this pamphlet into English~



Cultivated by History: Osaka's Spirit of Innovation

Osaka is one of Asia's foremost historical areas. In the mid 7th century, Japan's first full-scale palace Naniwanomiya was built in Osaka, and economic and cultural exchange with Asia followed. In the 16th century, warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi built the enormous Osaka Castle and ruled a unified Japan. Osaka became known as "the world's kitchen", and prospered as a hub of commerce and financial trading. When the central government moved to Edo (present-day Tokyo) in the 17th century, in contrast with that city's positioning of samurai as the peak of authority, Osaka came to cultivate an atmosphere as a merchant's city, free and creative.

This Osakan spirit of innovation is manifest in a range of fields, from food, clothing and housing through to culture and the arts. According to research conducted by a private firm, after the second World War, in the area encompassing Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe some 70 new industries, products and services were developed and spread nationally and overseas. The first commercial instant ramen was developed in Osaka in 1958 and became a worldwide gastronomic hit, today consumed annually in the tens of billions. Osaka led the way in the national distribution revolution, with the first supermarket opened in 1957. Prefabricated housing, removalist companies,

personal finance companies are some of the unique Osaka-developed industries that have impacted strongly on the Japanese lifestyle.

Reflecting the free atmosphere, the vibrance of women in Osaka is a key characteristic of the city. Osaka-born designer Yōko Kamo brought about a revolution in women's undergarments in 1955, when she defied common wisdom to develop colorful women's underwear. From Osaka these soon spread nationally, contributing to women's mental freedom and to the acquisition of self-assertiveness on par with men. In recent times, many Osaka-born women have appeared in the traditional Japanese arts of marionette performance and Bunraku. Although their status is low, they are strong characters who lead the men in the field.

The Dawn Center, through which our Foundation works, stands less than one kilometer from the Naniwanomiya Ruins and Osaka Castle. The nickname "Dawn" reflects two aspects of women's vibrance: in English the word "dawn" symbolizes the beginning of something, and in Osaka "*dōn to ikou*" means to be proactive, to give something a shot. We at the Foundation proudly recognize Osaka's culture and history, as we work towards the realization of gender equality.

Teiichirō Tokioka
Chair of Osaka Gender Equality Foundation

Osaka Gender Equality Foundation

In order to develop various projects for achieving a gender-equal society in which women and men can cooperate in every field to create a more humane life, this foundation was established in 1994 by the Osaka Prefectural Government, and it administers and operates the Dawn Center.

Osaka Gender Equality Foundation
3-49, 1-chome Otemae, Chuo-ku, Osaka, 540-0008 Japan
Phone +81-6-6910-8615 Fax -81-6-6910-8624
E-mail jigyo@dawncenter.or.jp
[URL] <http://www.ogef.jp/>
<http://www.dawncenter.or.jp/>