

PAT'S 3000 YEARS OLD

listen to the boss and try to understand their role in the scheme. I can't just be docile. I have to understand. I was once told that a manager complained to their superior about me. They think that because I studied in the States for a year that I have been contaminated by the American way of thinking."

Hagiwara wants to stay in the workforce because she wants economic independence. She is doing well at Nissan, and is in line for promotion, but she says she

to claim any victory for the women's movement.

Naoe Wakita is Senior Vice President of Dentsu Eye Inc., an all-woman marketing company in Tokyo.

"I have never regarded myself as a feminist," says Wakita. "I have just been doing the best I can do with what I have. Other people consider me a feminist, but actually, I like men"

Dentsu Eye Inc. markets products used mainly by women. It was launched by its

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would prefer to be manager of a smaller company.

"I found it very difficult at first. I was seriously thinking of giving up after two years. The job is very hard, very demanding and you have to be feminine at the same time to get everybody's acceptance, and to make people comfortable."

"Women are not promoted at the same pace as men. We are not expected to follow a career path and unless you really show the boss you are interested, they don't take you seriously. You have to appear to be very dedicated and interested, even moreso than a man. I get very irritated when I see a dumb man who is not very interested, getting promoted just because he is a man."

Japanese attitudes toward working women are changing but traditional values are still holding women back, and are evident in attitudes toward women working outside the home. Thirty-six per cent of men and 45 per cent of women responding to a 1984 Prime Minister's Office survey said that women should work, but when they marry or have children they should stay at home until their children have grown up.

Women fill only 0.9 per cent of the managerial positions in Japan's workforce. And those who do advance to senior positions are reluctant

parent company Dentsu under the premise that women could better market certain products - cosmetics, toiletries, appliances - because women use them. Wakita says she enjoys working with other women and that her company is more successful than Dentsu's other marketing outfits, which employ mainly men.

"There is competition and we always beat the men's teams. Japanese women are very eager to work. Men are usually more satisfied with the status quo," she says.

In a society where motherhood and family are sacrosanct, where local women are ignored and foreign women revered, where the women speak in a different and humbler dialect than the men, the feminist movement is alive and growing.

The women's movement in Japan was spear-headed almost single-handedly by Fusae Ichikawa, a feminist and one of the most popular politicians in the history of Japan. Fusae lobbied for the right to vote for Japanese women, which they won in 1945. She was elected for five different terms to the Diet (Japanese parliament) and devoted her life to the political education of women.

Ichikawa founded a center for women's issues and activities in 1962 and today the Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association, so named af-

ter her death in 1983, conducts and publishes surveys and studies on the status of women, and sponsors workshops and seminars to educate women on political issues. Home base for the Association is Tokyo's Fusen Kaikan, a building which serves as a headquarters and meeting place for women's groups of every political bent and philosophy.

"There are two major tasks that the women's movement in Japan will have to be addressing now," said Mitsuko Yamaguchi, general secretary of the Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association. "First will be trying to get rid of the deeply rooted tradition in sex roles, and second will be the fact that we are living in an aging society."

Yamaguchi says that this second factor will mean women will take on a more powerful role in society because they live longer than men.

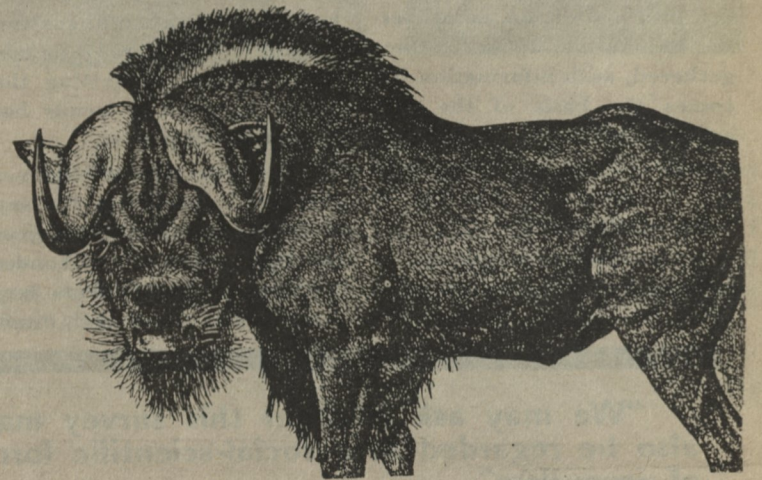
She says young Japanese women are reticent to take part in any women's movement.

"Young women are not so terribly interested in getting rid of sex role stereotyping. Part of the reason is that Japan has become an affluent country. Few people are really poor and this makes them individualistic. Women would rather enjoy their lives without feeling a need for solidarity with others. Also, they are still at school, and they don't feel discrimination because they can compete with and beat the boys (academically)."

"Once they leave there is so much discrimination in the workforce. Few see it

as a challenge. Instead they leave it, get married, retreat into their homes. They don't fight back against it."

When the meal is over, the three rise to leave. The Japanese women accompany the visitors to the door, help them on with their shoes, and hold a canape of umbrellas over the heads of the guests as they step out to their taxi. The women stand in the rain, and bow to the taxi, repeating, quietly, "Arigato go-zaimashita - Thank you very much. ■"



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