



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-eighth session

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives**

### **Statement submitted by International Shinto Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

Now is the time to re-evaluate the authentic and true nature of women, to take advantage of and to view their unique characteristics without a prejudicial or discriminative point of view, and to try to make the most of women's contributions to society. Women genetically have a gentle and maternal instinct to love, to empathize with others and to communicate and harmonize with others and their circumstances as an ingrained instinct, which men do not have.

There seems to be a misunderstanding that gender equality means not to allow the sharing of duties according to gender characteristics. Except for a very few women who are successful in their careers, most of the suffering of women seems to be bound by the wrong concept that they have to work in the same fields and in the same conditions as men. Companies have also forced women to work in the same jobs and in the same manner as men.

This may have unnecessarily prevented women from focusing on jobs in the fields more natural to them as women. Women who are forced to work under the same conditions as men seem to have become overly exhausted and deadlocked in their jobs, resulting in a great loss of productivity, which is reflected in the entire body of both industry and society.

It has been a long time since the Equal Employment Opportunity Law became a law and was enforced in Japan. However, most of the women are still suffering from not being able to pursue their desired careers and are in unsatisfying jobs with little to no possibility of change in their circumstances. One of the reasons can be attributed to the perfunctory principles of gender equality.

Men and women have very different physical body structures and characteristics, in addition to physical strengths; ways of feeling and thinking are also quite different from each other and based on gender. It is natural, therefore, that their abilities, characteristics and patterns of behaviour also differ. No one can deny that there are male-friendly jobs and female-friendly jobs, without the prejudice of the domination of men over women or any female discrimination whatsoever.

So long as any job has an ultimate purpose of producing some practical or needed value, it would then become indispensable to properly communicate and to relate as human beings with one another. Data, materials and logic, fields in which men generally dominate, are basic requirements for negotiation. However, they are not enough for human beings, who have extremely complicated emotions to understand, accept, be moved and be convinced by those conditions. Rather, it would be true that feminine insight and consideration, as well as words and viewpoints, play a critical role in the process.

Within the same fields and same kinds of professions, there would be "feminine jobs" and "masculine jobs". For example, in the field of medicine, men may be prone to become surgeons, who sometimes perform surgical operations for more than 10 hours without a break, while women may have an advantage in internal medicine or psychiatrics because of their propensity to listen to patients' complaints and give much-needed counsel.

Even in the field of politics, where men are still dominant throughout the world, feminine power has sometimes achieved unexpectedly great results. Ms. Kyoko Nakayama, the former Minister who handled the issue concerning the

people who were abducted by North Korea, made a remarkable contribution towards its resolution and called for the return of some of the abducted victims to their families in Japan when relations between the two countries were at the breaking point. She was very graceful, had a gentle presence, a humble and soft-spoken style and maintained calm. Relying on those feminine traits, she skilfully led a very tough negotiation with both a hard and soft approach. In the meantime, she demonstrated care and a warm attitude towards the victims' families through empathy. The families deeply trusted her, and many missed her when she resigned from her position. It is hard to imagine whether the results would have been nearly as fruitful if the negotiations had proceeded in a masculine style, which is logical and power based.

The delicate, caring attendance and the sensitivity of women have helped in difficult negotiations of billions of dollars in various industries; deadlocked issues have been resolved and unprecedented and complicated medical operations have ended successfully. But most of those undertakings are often not reported or recognized by people, companies or society. The precious and extraordinary value of feminine abilities should be re-evaluated. Women have a higher potential to psychologically satisfy customers. If this view was supported, women could be more naturally feminine and far happier in their jobs.

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