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This issue concentrates upon the Beijing Women's Conference. We have a contribution from Monika Bhatia from WINNER who attended the conference & two press releases from lobby groups at the forum. Our Postgraduate Profile is by Auckland Uni's Robyn Hamilton who is currently in Taiwan and we also include Jackie Godwin's review of an important book on women in China.

We would like to farewell Pamela Gutman who acted as the NSW rep for a number of years and who has recently begun work at Mandalay Films in NSW. We wish her well and would like to thank her for her past support. Replacing Pamela as NSW contact is Monika Bhatia who has also generously offered to begin organising the 5th Women in Asia conference. She would like to hear from people in Sydney who would be interested in joining the planning committee.
Louise Edwards (ACU-Qld)
Anne Cullen (Griffith)

Women in Asia 11 (1995)

We have found a potential

host for the

5th Women in Asia

Conference!

Sydney University

***All interested in helping
organise should contact***

***Monika Bhatia
(02) 692 4385***

monikab@pub.health.su.oz.au

NEXT ISSUE

Please feel free to contribute a short piece to *Women in Asia*—either reports on work in progress, miscellaneous jottings, cartoons, notes etc.

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**WOMEN'S CAUCUS EMAIL
NETWORK**

If you have email facilities and want to be on the list please send a message to Dr Mina Rocas at CQU or Dr Louise Edwards at ACU.

**m.rocas@janus.ucq.edu.au
or**

L.Edwards@mcauley.acu.edu.au

¶ The ASAA Women's Caucus would like to thank Australian Catholic University and Griffith University [FAIS] for their support in the publication of this bulletin. We would also like to thank Lyndsay Farrell of ACU's Visual Arts Program for designing the logo for *Women in Asia*

Women of privilege gathered in Beijing to create a "new world order: for the rights of women." The NGO Forum was held in Beijing from 30 August to 8 Sept., and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women from 4-15 Sept. Some 33,233 participants (with 18,400 from Global South and 14, 833 from the Global North) attended the NGO Forum including women from Africa 3,245; Europe and North America 14,833; Latin America & Caribbean 2,020; Asia & Pacific 12,336; Western Asia 819.

India was represented by a large and visible number of women but the official delegation was lead by a man—Madhavrao Scindia, Unions Minister of Human Resources and Development!

I felt privileged to attend the conference wearing three hats: speaker at the Australian NGO Panel on "Women and Migration", media reporter for non-English speaking (NES) women for Public Radio, and UN Observer for the South Asia Women's Group (Sydney chapter).

It is surprising (and also disappointing) to note that of the 813 women from Australia only four Indian women (three from Sydney and one from Melbourne) chose to join hands with "women of privilege" to become part of the political force for effective liberation of all people.

WOMEN OF PRIVILEGE

"Women of privilege" are defined as those who have had material and educational benefits and resources by virtue of the position or family they were born or married into. By definition, those benefits are denied the bulk of the population. Thus, women of privilege have a role in the international women's liberation movement. If they are to escape from the isolated lives they have been trapped into, women of privilege need to become an effective political force for the liberation of all people.

Before any woman can be made to play an oppressive role (as women of privilege generally do), she has to have been seriously mistreated and misinformed as a young person. Female children of wealth and privilege the world over have been forced into positions of isolation and kept ignorant of the realities of the world. They experience severe sexism, which confuses their sense of self-worth, goals, and ability to lead a significant life. Incidents of abuse, violence (physical and psychological) and alcoholism can occur, usually hidden and unadmitted. Most women of privilege have been trained into attitudes of superiority and complacency. They often do not realise that they act in ways that are thoughtless, unaware, self-centred, and arrogant. Women of privilege can change the modes of

GUEST COLUMNIST

Women of privilege gather in Beijing to create a "new world order" for the rights of women

MONIKA BHATIA

behaviour that they have been forced to adopt—behaviours that perpetuate inequality & oppression.

The role of women of privilege in an international women's liberation movement includes working to eliminate the effects of class oppression in the world. A woman of privilege can be most

effective when subject to the guidance of raised poor & working-class women. She is most effective in backing the leadership of such women and can draw on the advantages from her upbringing to do so. As a woman of privilege she received good health care and good education. She developed a sense of her own significance in the world and a readiness to take initiative and leadership. There was usually a very real and deliberate leadership training for women as well as men. Backing the leadership of working-class and raised poor women corrects a distorted sense of "responsibility" with which women of privilege are often raised. This sense has little connection with real liberation and is more like a condescending or patronising attitude of "charity". To be effective, women of privilege need, in every culture to be close to other women of every background.

Much can be gained if women raised with privilege use every advantage they have, including their wealth, to see that privilege and inequality are ended.

Despite the controversy surrounding the NGO Forum (The Chinese Organising Committee decided to move the forum site to Huairou, 55 km and a 2-hour drive out of Beijing) and the impoverishing effects of delinking the two conferences, women of privilege were determined to carry out strategies for lobbying and networking, by being visible, getting their issues voiced, influencing the government deliberations at the conference and sharing information, ideas and strategies among themselves.

WOMENSPEAK

Womenspeak—funded by Westpac—was an initiative of the Coalition of Australian Participating Organisations of Women (CAPOW). Womenspeak held open gatherings each night to encourage women from all over the world to lobby and network. The Australian government delegation, led by the Federal Minister Assisting the PM for the Status of Women, Dr Carmen Lawrence, was represented by members of other government departments and the Federal Attorney General, Michael Lavarsch. They were friendly, approachable, and provided ample opportunity for participants to lobby.

THE DRAFT PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Women at the grass roots level, community and state representatives were invited to contribute to the preparation of a draft Platform for Action. WINNER (Women Information National Network and Emergency Relief) did so. The 39th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at United Nations HQ (15 March-7 April 1995) incorporated these suggestions into a draft Platform for Action to be adopted by UN member states at the Beijing conference. This document then became the blueprint for action by governments at the national, regional and international levels to develop policies to advance the status of women.

In essence the conference, focussed on action for equality, development and peace. Its Mission Statement contained a global framework for strategic action in 12 critical areas of concern:

- violence (including psychological and physical human rights (including domestic violence) the situation of the girl child health impact on women of poverty armed conflict (including war crimes) economic structures power sharing and decision making mechanisms to promote the advancement of women media portrayal of women the environment

One would need a series of journals to go in depth into each of the issues raised at the conference. However, for this issue, I have selected the following:

1. The Public Hearing and the Tribunal Court

Women have not only begun to identify their injuries but have also begun to identify new ways these injuries can be rectified. One aspect of the existing tort (civil injuries) system which has come under fire from feminists is the reliance on monetary damages to compensate victims. In the past, some feminist scholars have argued more should be done to personalise the redress offered to victims. To some extent the *Public Hearing* and the *Tribunal Court* undertook this function.

Women from all over the world were given the opportunity to present issues at the Public Hearing and the Tribunal Court. Testimonials were heard from the survivors of crimes against women (e.g. service of comfort women by Japan; crimes against women in Bosnia; social crimes; Dalit women in India and Nepal; and women from violent and abusive families).

2. Asian Women's Human Rights Council

Women from India participated in weaving the *Quilt*—a conversation woven across cultures—to describe human rights abuses. Their sentiment is reflected in the verse they wrote to commemorate the occasion.

And so

to celebrate every woman who had the courage to speak
each testimony a triumph of truth
every truth a condemnation of unspeakable crimes
crimes against women in times of war
crimes against women in times of peace

And in speaking

they are naming, they are resisting, they are transforming
See them come from different cultures of Asia
See them bring their knowledge and wisdom to the fire
See them heal themselves and become whole again.

3. Australian NGO Panel: Women & Migration

The Australian NGO Panel "Women and Migration: Innovations and Possibilities Towards 2000," coordinated by Dr Renuka Sharma of the South Asian Women's Studies and Support Group, Melbourne University, was held at the Forum on 1 September. WINNER's contribution on Domestic Violence and a Bill of Rights was written and presented by myself. The six member panel covered the following subjects:

- Women refugees: preaching human rights, legislating human wrongs—Lynette Dumble, University of Melbourne
- Women's refugee groups in Australia—Jasmine Bajraktaravic, Australian Consultative Committee on Refugee Women
- Refugee issues facing women from East Timor—Milena Pires, East Timorese Women's Forum, Sydney
- Initiatives of Non-English Speaking Background Women's Advisory Groups in Australia—Raquel Carvajal, NESB Executive, Sydney
- The psychology of migration trauma—Sharon Horne, Monash University, Melbourne
- Domestic Violence and a Bill of Rights—Monika Bhatia, WINNER, Sydney

4. The Indian NGO Women's Delegation

The Indian NGO Women's delegation included a representative of 8 million women from 7 Indian National Women's Organisations—All India Women's Conference (AIWC), All India Democratic Women's Association, Centre for Women's Development Studies, Joint Women's Program, YWCA, National Federation of Indian Women and Mahila Dakshata Samiti.

The Indian NGO Women's Delegation, led by Shobhana Ranade (President, AIWC) submitted 14 resolutions to the UN conference. In this it endorsed WINNER's request for a comprehensive Bill of Rights in domestic violence.

So what did the conference mean to us in practical terms?

FOR US IN AUSTRALIA

1. Amendment of the Family Law Reform Act

It is approved that the Family Law Reform Act be amended with a Bill of Rights on Domestic Violence which states that:

- Domestic violence is a human rights crime
- appropriate compensation must be paid to the survivor of domestic violence and

- a criminal conviction must be recorded against the perpetrator(s) and his/her accomplices (family members, solicitors, etc)

The expression of domestic violence includes the use of force or power or blackmail to make one submit to the wishes/desires of another. It includes:

- *physical abuse* causing pain & injury; denial of sleep, warmth or nutrition; denial of needed medical care; sexual assault; violence to property or animals; disablement & murder;
- *verbal abuse* in private or in public, designed to humiliate, degrade, demean, intimidate & subjugate, denigrate & vilify a person so as to create dislike or hatred; & including the threat of physical violence;
- *economic abuse* including deprivation of basic necessities, seizure of income or assets, unreasonable denial of the means necessary for participation in social life; &
- *social abuse* through isolation, denial of access to children, control or sabotage of social activity, deprivation of liberty or the deliberate creation of unreasonable dependence and;
- *spiritual abuse* through demand, coercion or blackmail of a person to conform to another person's religion, value & belief system.

2. Migration Regulations Reform Act

Following recommendations made by the Domestic Violence Monitoring Committee, new provisions have been introduced in Australia's Migration Reform Act. These provisions apply with immediate effect. Consequently, if a new migrant applicant can show that their partner has been violent towards them then the domestic violence provision of the Migration Regulations Reform Act will allow applications for permanent residence in Australia to be considered even though the relationship on which the application is based has broken down. The forms of evidence of domestic violence for this purpose must include:

- a certified copy of a court-recognised undertaking that there is allegation of domestic violence
- a statutory declaration from the applicant
- two statutory declarations from any range of "competent persons" stating that, in their opinion, the applicant has suffered from domestic violence.

FOR US IN INDIA

In declaring the statement of commitments of the Government of India, Madhavrao Scindia, Union's Minister of Human Resources and Development of India said,

Over 5,000 years ago, during the Vedic age, women participated on equal terms in the spiritual dialogues known as *Upanishads*. Deeply embedded in India's tradition is the concept of the Goddess as Shakti, the feminine energy that pervades the universe. The concept of complementarity between sexes, rather than conflict or dominance, inspires and guides India's actions today. During the freedom movement, millions of women plunged into the campaign by Mahatma Gandhi, and when India became independent, its constitution gave equal rights to both sexes. However, it is not enough that there are laws on the statute books to punish those who discriminate. Equality without empowerment is an empty and hollow concept. Women must have access to educational opportunities—and India has made significant advances in this

area, including universalisation of primary education, and vocational education which focuses on girls and female literacy. Affirmative action will ensure that women get positions, resources and respect. Economic empowerment is as important as poverty eradication and various schemes have been implemented to encourage women to take control of their own finances and join the banking system...India has committed itself to advance women, including a national policy on women to inform and guide action at every sector; a Commissioner for Women's Rights to act as a public defender of women's human rights; and a national mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Conference's Platform of Action.

1. The case of Dowry deaths

Dr Nina Puri, Vice President of the Family Planning Association of India, gave a presentation to describe the excellent program of Haryana State to overcome female infanticide. Drawing on the report of Dr Meera Kosambi, Dept. of Women's Studies, SNDT University, Bombay, Dr Puri described how dowry deaths are linked to female infanticide...that obtaining dowry has "made an appearance in areas even where it was not earlier present .. that it has become an accepted way to get money."

Asian Studies Association of Australia 20th Anniversary Conference

COMMUNICATIONS WITH/IN ASIA

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The theme is COMMUNICATIONS with/in ASIA
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To register your interest contact the conference
administrators:

ASAA 1996, Waldron Smith Management
93 Victoria ave
Albert Park Vic 3206

2. The case of the missing 'girl child'

On 2 October 1994, the Haryana Government launched a state-wide campaign called *Apni Beti Apna Dhan* (your girl child is your wealth). This scheme owes its genesis to the responsive environment created by the National Plan of Action for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child 1991-2000. The plan outlined three major goals: the survival, protection and development of the girl child in India. In order to reduce existing disparities and ensure equality for the development of the girl child the plan stated that:

- i she has the right to survive
- ii she has the right to be free from poverty, hunger, ignorance and exploitation
- iii she has the right to equality, dignity, freedom, opportunity, care and development;
- iv she has the right to enjoy the above rights.

To enjoy these rights a climate has to be created in which she can exercise her rights freely and fearlessly. The Haryana government recognises that interventions can be favourable when women have access to credit and money in their own names. Within three months of the registration of the birth of a girl the Haryana government donates Rs 3,000 of which Rs 2,500 is deposited in the girl's name in Indira Vikas Patras (security bonds) until she reaches the age of 18 years. It is estimated that at current rates, the Rs 2,500 will have grown to Rs 25,000 which can be used for her further education, economic ventures, marriage or health expenses. The girl must be unmarried to access this money.

The girl's mother receives the remaining Rs 500 in cash, within 15 days of birth which she can spend on the daughter's nutrition. The rationale behind this is that when a mother gives birth to a daughter, she is not accorded as much respect and importance as she would be if she gave birth to a son. This token amount is a gift from the government to honour her.

Mrs Firoza Mehrotra, Director of Women's and Child Welfare, Haryana, said that since the launch of this program in Haryana, there has been a discernible attitudinal change in the family which now favours mothers who bear girls. The ultimate proof is that the birth of the girl child is now celebrated with rejoicing and the distribution of sweets—an honour formerly reserved for the birth of sons.

A direct corollary to this scheme is the increased education of girls. Haryana today provides free school education for all girls in that state. Even more striking is that Chief Ministers of other Indian States are emulating the program in their respective regions.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the efforts of the previous 3 UN conference were not in vain and Beijing was a great success. Women of privilege had travelled thousands of kilometres to voice issues for the rights of women. They strategised, they lobbied, and they succeeded. It was unfortunate that the media

focussed more on the bureaucratic bungles of the China Organising Committee rather than the real issues which women discussed.

Beijing is as well developed as any large city in a developing country. The dual pricing system for tourist exists in most countries around the world, although it tends to appear in the small businesses and shop-keepers who, in their attempt to "get rich quick", over-charge foreigners new to a country and not familiar with its language and customs. However, it was hard to digest that the dual pricing system operated in China within government channels and with the official approval of the China Organising Committee.

As far as the physical facilities at Huairou go, for those who were looking for cheaper accommodation at \$10-20 a night, the apartments were no different from those that may be found in other developing countries, including India.

Finally the China Organising Committee had well disguised the city's perceived social problems—beggars and prostitutes had been imprisoned for the duration of this conference!

[Monika Bhatia is President of WINNER (Women's Information National Network and Emergency Relief) a support group for women of Indian origin. She can be contacted at the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Sydney, NSW 2006]

GENDER STUDIES: NEWS AND VIEWS

A Bilingual English-Chinese Bulletin Published by
the Gender Research Programme of Chinese
University of Hong Kong

Chief Editor: Eva Hung

Editorial Board: Eleanor Holroyd, Eva Hung, Susan
Ma, Marie Wong, Yip Hon Ming

Their last issue (No. 9 September 1995) included articles on
Women and Literature, Women and Health, UN's Beijing
Conference on Women, and New Zealand Chinese Women.

Gender Studies: News and Views welcomes any essays,
reports, reviews as well as information on gender issues in
English and Chinese. Please send your contributions,
preferably in a form on files on diskette together
with a hard copy to:

Gender Research Program
Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
CUHK, Shatin, N.T. Hong Kong
Deadline for submission to the next issue is
1 February 1996

I began my research for a PhD in Chinese Studies in April this year with the Asian Languages and Literatures Dept. at the University of Auckland. My PhD built on research I carried out for my MA thesis which was an exploration of the life and

works of a late 18th century woman poet from Jiangnan, using literary and social texts to reconstruct her life. I drew on my background in social anthropology for my discussion.

My present project is also located in Jiangnan but moves forward in time to the middle of the 19th century. I am exploring the availability of material which deals with women from the Taiping period (1850-1864) and leading on to the activities of women up until the beginning of the 20th century when we know about their claiming of rights to education and free speech. I am looking at this seeming gap (in the West as least) in our knowledge about Chinese women.

As a first step in locating source material I arranged to come to Taiwan for 3-4 months research leave. My main objective was to browse the material and facilities in Taipei as a preliminary to going to the PRC in 1996. Some useful research aids/sources I have discovered in Taipei are noted below:

1. Fembooks, Nü shudian, is located in a small alley near Taiwan National University—Xinsheng South Rd, Sec. 3, Lane 56, No. 7, 2nd floor). A week after I visited the bookshop it was featured in an article on the front page of the English edition of *The China Post*, August 27, 1995. This article was helpful in providing some background to the establishment and philosophy of the shop. The owners were presenting the image of a progressive feminist bookshop and women's centre—tasteful music, art pieces for sale, a noticeboard jam-packed with news of coming events, films, books etc. I purchased several of Li Xiaojiang's works (Mainland China) as well as back copies of the annual journal *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History* published by The Women's Studies Centre at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

2. The Student Bookstore, Xuesheng shuju, Heping Road, E., Sec. 1, No. 198, near the intersection with Wenshou St. Everyone has their favourite bookshops and I mention this one because it stocked several books which were on my "most wanted" list. The shop also stocked a wonderful range of books for the serious researcher as well as reprints of Hummel & Needham. I noted that SMC Publishing, Nantian shuju (also worth a visit at Roosevelt Rd, Sec. 3, Lane 283, Alley 14, No. 14) are reprinting many major and important titles by Western scholars about China (Watson and Ebrey,

POSTGRADUATE PROFILE

RESEARCHING CHINESE WOMEN: FOUR MONTHS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA AUGUST-DECEMBER 1995

ROBYN HAMILTON

Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society; Bernhardt, *Rents, Taxes, and Peasant Resistance: The Lower Yangzi region, 1840-1950* to name a couple).

3. The Institute of Population Studies at National Taiwan University houses the Women's Studies Group, located on

the 4th floor of the building in the Yanjiuyuan (Research Institute). The reading room on the ground floor of the building has the journals *Funü yanjiu tongxun* (Bulletin of the Women's Research Program) and *Funü yu liangxing xuekan* (Journal of Women & Gender) published by the Institute of Population Studies. These journals deal mainly with issues such as women and work, politics, marriage or aspects of daily modern life. They also contain book reviews and items of interest to the researcher involved in women's studies—conferences, funding organisations etc. The Institute has also published a Directory of Gender Studies & Scholars in Taiwan (*Taiwan funü yu liangxing yanjiu xuezhe minglu*).

4. The National Central Library has some unexpected treasures other than its Chinese material. In the English language section there is a fine collection of journals. The China Materials Divisions within the library has collected China-related PhD theses published outside of China since 1949 providing researchers the opportunity to browse at leisure.

5. The Taipei English language newspaper *China News*, Sept. 14 1995 featured an article about a project organised by the Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights which was to publish the history of women in Taiwan from a woman's perspective. The organiser of the project hope to go some way towards filling the need for a recorded history of women in Taiwan prior to 1949. To this end, a collection of 40 stories from Taiwan grandmothers was published at the end of September: Jiang Wenyu (editor) 1995, *Ama de gushi, Grandmothers' Life Stories*. Taipei: Yushashe chubanshe. Readers interested in this project should also see "Future Directions" in Connie Orliski, "From the Sung to the PRC: A Introduction to Recent English-Language Scholarship on Women in Modern Chinese History," *Jindai zhongguo funü shi yanjiu, Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*, Vol. 3 1995, pp. 217-235. Orliski notes that scholarship on Taiwanese women (as a category of "Chinese women") has been neglected and makes some useful suggestions about the value of including it in future research.

[Robyn Hamilton is a PhD candidate in the Asian Languages and Literatures Department, University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her usual email address in Auckland is r.hamilton@auckland.ac.nz]

Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State. Edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel and Tyrene White. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Contemporary China Series No. 10, 1994.

The volume *Engendering China* is an interesting and diverse collection of essays which evolved from the "Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State" Conference held at

Harvard University in February 1992. This collection of essays has been decisively shaped by two dramatically changing contexts: that of the social, political and economic circumstances within China and that of feminist academic discourse and political practice. Since 1978, the massive reorganisation sweeping China's political-economy and society has radically altered the basis upon which earlier studies on gender in China were carried out. This changing environment has created new issues and produced a new body of women's studies research since the mid 1980's. The last two decades have also seen enormous shifts in feminist research. Perhaps the most significant being "the internal critique of hegemonic 'Western' feminisms, and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded concerns and strategies." (Mohanty, 51)

To the editors, engendering China is not simply a process of adding women to an incomplete sinological picture, but rather by perceiving and exploring the significance and centrality of gender our conceptions of the whole of Chinese cultural productions, social relations and institutions are fundamentally and sometimes dramatically changed. The editors define "gender" as signifying that "the categories female and male the meanings assigned to them, the behaviours expected of them, the sense of self associated with them, and the relations among and between those female and male selves are cultural constructions." (Gilmartin, 1)

Beyond Family, Household and Kinship

Research on gender in China has often privileged family and kinship structures as the most important context in which to study gender relations. While not ignoring the significance of these structures, this first chapter goes beyond the family, the household and kinship to explore gender in other fruitful locations and networks. The essays in this chapter are also evidence that "family and kinship networks do not move through history in a hermetically sealed social structure. They are profoundly intertwined with state policy, intellectual movements, economic trends and a variety of other factors." (Gilmartin, 13)

Susan Mann's essay "Learned Women in the Eighteenth Century" first describes the debate about "women's learning" (*fuxue*) between the iconoclastic poet, Yuan Mei, and the Confucian philosopher,

BOOK REVIEW BY JACKIE GODWIN

ENGENDERING CHINA: WOMEN, CULTURE AND THE STATE.

Edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel and Tyrene White.

Zhang Xuecheng. The essay then moves beyond the male gaze to reveal the multiplicity of voices reflected in the poetry of this group of gifted 18th century women writers.

In "From Daughter to Daughter-in-law in the Women's Script of Southern Hunan" Cathy Silber explores the social world and sworn sisterhood

relationships of girls and recently married women in the early part of this century through the medium of *nushu* "a writing system used exclusively by women. The essay also asks what *nushu* discourses reveal about practices of resistance and accommodation engendered by these non-kin female social networks within local systems of patriarchal power.

Chen Yiyun's essay "Out of the Traditional Halls of Academe: Exploring New Avenues for Research on Women", translated by S. Katherine Campbell, discusses problematic aspects of women's studies research in China. Her predominant concerns are flawed sociological methodologies and the impact of the reform policies on the lives of women. She also addresses "the increasing differentiation of Chinese society, the effects of the state sponsored women's movement, the particular characteristics of women's studies, and the importance of international academic exchange." (Gilmartin, 75)

Gao Xiaoxian's article "China's Modernisation and Changes in the Social Status of Women" also translated by S. Katherine Campbell, analyses the gendered effects of Chinese development policies, first reappraising the consequences of the cooperativization and collectivization policies for rural women, then examining in relative detail post 1978 rural reform policies.

Sex and the Social Order

The book's second section "explores the ways in which sexed bodies, usually but not always female, signified both desirable and despised social attributes." (Gilmartin, 16) Each of these essays examines historically specific meanings given to bodies and sexual acts and the social messages they embody. (Gilmartin, 16)

In "Desire, Danger and the Body: Stories of Women's Virtue in Late Ming China" Katherine Carlitz deconstructs the expression of Confucian moral values of chastity, loyalty etc... through the medium of women's mutilated and sacrificed bodies. Charlotte Furth confronts eurocentric and androcentric conceptions of sexuality in China in her essay "Rethinking Van Gulik: Sexuality and Reproduction in Traditional Chinese Medicine." Gail Hershatter's article "Modernising Sex, Sexing Modernity: Prostitution in Early Twentieth Century Shanghai" explores the shifting and multiple

meanings assigned to the prostitute, from sophisticated courtesan to dangerous streetwalker, as a metaphor for the articulation of identity and modernity during the first four decades of this century.

Zhong Xueping, in her essay "Male Suffering and Male Desire: the Politics of Reading *Half of Man is Woman* by Zhang Xianliang" interrogates the novel's central metaphor which equates the emasculation of a man with the state's suppression of the political autonomy of the individual. Zhang argues that by representing "human nature" as masculine sexual desire, woman becomes the object and site of conflict—with the implication being that the subject's desire for individual autonomy includes the reconstitution of individual patriarchal power relations.

Where Liberation Lies

This third section explores the interconnected construction of the nation-state and gender in twentieth century China. "How has the modern state constructed itself as an imagined vision through its representations of women? And how, conversely, have women's issues, womanhood, fertility, and feminism been established through the state?" (Gilmartin, 19)

Christina K. Gilmartin focuses on "Gender, Political Culture, and Women's Mobilisation in the Chinese Nationalist Revolution, 1924-1927," arguing that earlier genuine commitment to women's emancipation was ultimately undermined and compromised by the uninterrogated prejudices of male radical leaders.

"Liberation Nostalgia and a Yearning for Modernity," Lisa Rofel attempts to explode the unitary category "Chinese Women," by exploring the contrasting views of two very different generations of "Chinese Women" and the cultural and historical contexts in which each is deeply embedded. For the generation of women working in urban factories at the moment of revolution, Marxist ideology was an empowering and liberating force. But for the current generation of young factory women workers, in their search for modernity, Marxist ideology and state sponsored feminism have very different meanings.

Tyrene White's essay "The Origins of China's Birth Planning Policy" examines the complex historical process during the early 1950s, in which women first challenged state and social opposition to birth control and the subsequent development of socialist birth planning policies which paradoxically justified new forms of state control of women's bodies.

In "Chinese Women Workers: The Delicate Balance Between Protection and Equality" Margaret Y. K. Woo argues that pragmatic legal reforms since 1978 reflect a growing emphasis on concepts of women's biological difference and women's "natural roles" and that the ways in which these laws are implemented have enormous capacity to reinforce

discrimination against women in the hiring and promotion of workers.

Becoming Women in the Post-Mao Era

The book's last section explores the explosion of writings by and about women, which represent a creative attempt to wrest the power to define "woman" away from the state, and in the process expose the problems women face under the reforms. Li Ziyun's essay "Women's Consciousness and Women's Writing," translated by Zhu Hong, reviews women's writing since the May Fourth Movement. Her focus is on writing that confronts the "facade of sexual equality in contemporary Chinese society" (Gilmartin, 306) and gives representation to authentic female experience. "Women, Illness, and Hospitalisation: Images of Women in Contemporary Chinese Fiction" Zhu Hong interprets this perplexing imagery as, among other things, a way in which writers relieve their female protagonists of the necessity to be the good, self-sacrificing women others expect them to be. Thus allowing them to repossess their own bodies and create new voices for themselves, with which they may speak uncomfortable truths. (Gilmartin, 23)

Tani E. Barlow's essay "Politics and Protocols of *Funu*: (Un)Making National Woman" is a study of female subject positions in discourse, examining what each of the terms; *funü*, *nüxing* and *nüren* signifies and the context which created these significations. Women's Federation efforts to control the representation of women (as *funü*) are being increasingly challenged by oppositional discourses which use *nüxing* to posit essential differences between women and men, and *nüren* to develop a "women's theory" of women's oppression in society. (Gilmartin, 24)

Li Xiaojiang's article "Economic Reform and the Awakening of Chinese Women's Collective Consciousness," translated by S. Katherine Campbell provides a critique of the increasingly problematic and contradictory nature of China's post-Mao economic reforms and appeals for new academic theories and political practices which will create the collective consciousness necessary "to find a way out".

Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State embodies very significant new directions in feminist research. In giving voice to a diverse, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary group of women's studies scholars, it contributes to the decentring of hegemonic "western" feminisms and to the respecting of difference.

References:

- Gilmartin, Christina K., Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel and Tyrene White (eds). *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
 Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds). *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

[Jackie Godwin is a PhD candidate in the Department of Asian Languages and Studies at the University of Queensland]

The Women's Studies Graduate Programme at the University of Indonesia (Program Studi Kajian Wanita—PSKW), was established in 1990. This programme is interdisciplinary and functions under the Graduate Programmes at the University of Indonesia which focus their activities on seminars, discussion and research. PSKW is the only postgraduate programme on Women Studies in Indonesia at the moment. The main objective of PSKW is to produce graduates who understand women's issues both conceptual and practical, and are able to conduct research. In this regard, the programme pays special attention to Women's Studies groups and Women's Studies Centers all over Indonesia.

The first academic year of PSKW began in November 1990. Since then 4 batches of students have enrolled. The curriculum covers issues in the field of women's studies, psychology of women, women in development, women's problems in Indonesia, research methodology with women's perspective, sociology of women, development theories, women in politics, women in literature, women and health, and women and law, etc.

Activities:

Besides running the graduate programme, PSKW organises the following activities:

- Seminars, discussions and workshops:

During the period of 1994-1995 PSKW held the following sessions:

- Feminist pedagogy, 1-5 March 1994
- Research issues in women's health, 29 March 1994
- Violence against women, 5 and 15 April 1994
- Gender and AIDS, 14 May 1994
- Adolescent reproductive health, 14 July 1994
- Introduction to feminist/women's issues in America, 30 August 1994
- Family Planning and status of women, 16 September 1994
- Women's rights are human rights, 6 April 1995
- Feminist methodology workshop, 11-14 April 1995.

Projects:

*** Convention Watch**

Since 1993 PSKW has been involved in a project entitled Convention Watch. The objective of the project is to monitor and disseminate UN Conventions on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). To implement this project, a working group was formed. The first phase of the project took place in 1993-1994. During this period, the working group focused its activity on monitoring the application of the 11th section of the Convention.

Three activities have been carried out to achieve the objective.

1. research on people's knowledge, especially amongst the agents of innovation, about the conventions

WOMEN'S STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAMME

UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA

BY PROF. DR SAPARINAH SADLI

2. analysing the similarity and differences between the content of the 11th section and the labour laws and regulations

3. disseminating information about the convention through the mass media

At the second phase (1995), this working group focused its activities on labor agreements. A training manual to help people understand the convention

was also prepared.

***Joint Projects**

Linkage projects between PSKW-UI and the Women's Studies Programme at Memorial University of Newfoundland was established for the period 1992-1996. This project focuses on developing the curriculum of PSKW and within this context a library was also established.

PSKW library collection:

The development of library collection is aimed at supporting the needs of faculty members and the students of PSKW. In this regard, special attention is given to collecting information on issues relating to women in developing countries and Asian women. In-house computerised databases are available to provide access to the collection. The library also develops a special file containing records on Indonesian women. Effort is made to collect data on the history of the Indonesian Women's Movement.

Library Network:

The library maintains relationships with other libraries, such as The Clearinghouse for Information on Women in Development PDII-LIPI, Women Studies Group UI, The British Council Jakarta, LPPM (Institute of Management Education and Development), The Ford Foundation Jakarta, Pusat Studie Kependudukan UGM (Population Studies Center, University of Gadjah Mada), etc.

List of PSKW student theses:

1. Aspirasi dan aktualisasi aspirasi dari perempuan muda yang bekerja/E. Kristi Poerwandari [The Aspiration and actualisation of aspiration of young working women]
2. Wanita Islam dan pilihan kontrasepsi mantap: untuk menuju keluarga sakinah?/Anita Rahman [Moslem women and the choice of sterilisation: Toward a "sakinah" family?]
3. Wanita dalam perspektif hukum acara peradilan agama: kajian norma dan kasus-kasus hukum di Pengadilan Agama Jakarta Selatan/Masyithah Umar [Women and Islamic Law: A study on norms and cases at the religious court in South Jakarta]
4. Perbedaan prestasi belajar antara anak yang ibunya bekerja dan yang tidak bekerja di Kotamadya Bengkulu/Mulyaningrum [The different student achievement between a child of working and non-working women at Bengkulu]
5. Istri petani yang bekerja di pabrik kayu: Desa Kuala Dua, Kecamatan Sungai Raya, Kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II

Pontianak/Agus Sikwan [Farmer's wife working at wood factory: Kuala Dua, Sungai Raya District, Pontianak]

6. Wanita dan kejahatan: latar belakang wanita pelaku pembunuhan (Studi kasus di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan wanita Tangerang/Wahyu Ernaningsih [Women and crime: the background of women murderers (case study in women's prison of Tangerang)])

7. Perwira wanita di Angkatan Darat dalam fungsi ABRI sebagai kekuatan pertahanan keamanan: faktor penghambat dan peluang berkarir/Dina Nawangningrum [Women officers in the Indonesian Army: Obstacles and opportunities in their careers]

8. Sosok ibu dalam drama "Mega-mega" karya Arifin C. Noor/maria Josephine Mantik [Mother figures in the drama "Mega-Mega" by Arifin C. Noor]

Publications:

PSKW publishes a newsletter called *Buletin Kajian Wanita* every 4 months. This newsletter is in Indonesian and it covers PSKW activities, summary of students' theses and articles on women's issues. Please contact us to obtain the newsletter.

Prof. Dr. Saporinah Sadli
Chairperson
Women's Studies Graduate Programme
Ex Rectorat Building 4th Floor
Salemba Raya 4
Jakarta 10430
Indonesia
TEL 62-21-3907407
FAX 62-21-3907407

NOTE TO THE READER:

On behalf of the library at PSKW, we would like to request that readers of *Women in Asia* inform us about any information sources/publications on Indonesian women, especially issues concerning history. Your attention to this matter is deeply appreciated.

HECATE:

An Interdisciplinary Journal of Women's Liberation

HECATE is interested in publishing more work with an Asian focus.

It is an internationally circulated refereed journal.

They are particularly interested in contributions which employ a feminist, Marxist or other radical methodology and also prints creative work and graphics. Payment is made to contributors at the Literature Board of the Australia Council minimum rates for 1995 [\$40.00 poem; \$60.00 review/story; \$90 article] HECATE is published twice yearly.

Contact: Editor Carole Ferrier
PO Box 99
St Lucia, Brisbane
Queensland 4067
Australia

ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

Manila, May 28-30 1996 at Philippine Social Science Centre

A meeting held in Brisbane in October 1994 between sociologists representative of countries in the Asia Pacific Region and hosted by The Australian Sociological Association (TASA), affirmed the desirability of closer links between sociologists in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Sociology (APRCS) aims to provide a platform for the development of a forum between sociologists and social science practitioners in the Region.

The Steering Committee for the APRCS comprises representatives of TASA and other sociologists from the Asia Pacific Region including China, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore. The Chairperson of the Steering Committee is Professor John S. Western from The University of Queensland in Brisbane.

Two specialist meetings of Research Committees of the International Sociological Association (ISA) will be held at the conclusion of the APRCS. Registrants at the APRCS are invited to attend either of these meetings (for an additional fee). The two Committees staging these meetings are: Research Committee 05 on Race, Ethnicity and Minority Relations, & Research Committee 31 on Labour Migration in East and SE Asia.

4 plenary sessions & 10 thematic sessions are planned during the APRCS. Themes for the plenary sessions are as follows:

Asian Experiences and Sociological Thought;
Comparative Methodology and Transnational Collaboration;
Contribution of Sociology to Sustainable Development;
Future Regional Co-operation.

Within this framework thematic sessions will be scheduled:

Environment and Development
Gender Relations
The Growth of Cities
Modernity and Identity
International Migration
Ethnicity and Nationalism
Health, Education and Welfare
Class and Economic Restructuring
Theory Formation in Asian Sociology
Teaching Sociology.

Papers are invited from interested persons for all sessions, the deadline for receipt of abstracts being Mid November 1995.

The workshop programme to be run on 31 May, will provide short training programmes in applied research methods for dealing with sustainable development and a variety of other issues, and will focus upon such areas as qualitative evaluation, survey design and analysis, demography and social impact assessment. Field trips focusing on one or more themes of the conference, for example, the environment or the growth of cities, have also been proposed. In addition, a smorgasbord of sightseeing tours of the Philippines are being developed. The feasibility of staging such workshops, trips and tours will be contingent upon levels of demand.

Conference registration US\$100 (by 12 Dec 1995) or \$150 (after 12 Dec).

For further information about the conference, please contact Professor John S. Western or Andrea Lanyon:

Dept of Anthropology and Sociology
The University of Queensland, Brisbane 4072, Australia
Phone: (07) 3365 3152 or (07) 3365 3314
Fax: (07) 3365 1544
Email: j.western@mailbox.uq.oz.au
Email: a.lanyon@mailbox.uq.oz.au

PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES [PAWS]

ANNUAL REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES

BY AYESHA JAMIL

GENERAL SECRETARY PAWS

[Excerpts only-Contact me for full document-ed]

The Pakistan Association for Women's Studies was formed in the year 1992. It is a non-political, non-sectarian voluntary social welfare organisation. PAWS has the following aims and objectives:
To provide a forum for interaction and coordination for those engaged in teaching, research and action for women's development nationally and internationally

*To develop information centres for the promotion of Women's Studies

*To provide assistance to researchers of Women's Studies

*To network with individuals and groups working for the elimination of discrimination against women

*To assist women in their self-employment activities

*To develop documentation, publications, newsletters,

journals, bibliographies and other sources in women's studies

*To produce audio-visual cassettes on women's conditions to promote self-image of women

*To organise conferences, workshops, seminars and short courses.

ACTIVITIES

—1992—

Children's Painting Competition:

PAWS, since its inception, aims to create awareness about women's status and needs. Children who grow up with an understanding of women's status and rights and development issues and who learn about the importance of women's role in social growth become more responsible and informed adults. Acknowledging the fact that when both boys and girls are exposed to women and development issues, their knowledge, attitudes and decisions regarding women can be influenced and improved, PAWS organised a Painting Competition amongst school children between the age group of 8-14 years on the theme of female literacy. Some of the themes suggested by PAWS were:

—Little girls have a right to learn how to read and write

—Girls should go to school just as boys do

—More schools for girls

—Each one teach one

—Literate mothers have a more comfortable life than illiterate mothers

—Women in different professions

—Adult female literacy

The competition was organised in collaboration with the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi. The response of children from the schools of Karachi was very good. More than 600 extremely beautiful pieces of

original work depicting a child's impression of women's status and literacy were received by PAWS. The exhibition of these unique paintings was mounted in the hall of the Arts Council and was inaugurated by Hakim Muhammad Said, Chancellor Hamdard University. The exhibition was held on the occasion of the Regional Seminar on Female Literacy organised by the Centre for Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi in collaboration with UNICEF.

—1993—

Seminar on Women's Struggle for Survival

Pakistani women are fighting two battles simultaneously. First, for the recognition of their struggles and the second for contributing in the national development. "Women's Struggles for Survival" was the theme of our seminar held on May 5 1993 at the Avari Hotel, Karachi. Mr Justice Wajihuddin Ahmed of Sindh High Court was the Chief Guest of the Day. Papers were presented by Ms Zahida Hina, renowned journalist and writer, Dr Unaiza Niaz Anwar, Consultant Psychiatrist for Pakistan International Airlines and Mr Yamin Khan, ADIG Police, Karachi.

The seminar was well attended by sociologists, journalist, psychologists, social workers, jurists, medical experts and members of the Pakistan Association for Women's Studies.

Affiliation with SAARC Countries

One very important achievement of our association is its affiliation with SAARC countries. In November 1993, the first conference was held at Khatmandu, Nepal. Women's Studies Associations of the SAARC countries met and formed the South Asian Association for Women's Studies (SAAWS) and PAWS is one of its founding members. On this occasion a Souvenir was brought out with the name "Voices" in which there was a brief description of the status of women in SAARC countries.

Dr. Sabeeha Hafeez, Director Research, Ministry of Women Development was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of SAAWS as the representative of PAWS.

—1994—

Book on Self-Employed Women

The Self-Employed Woman in Pakistan is a study conducted on 265 self employed women engaged in various types of women within their own small

homes. This survey based study with detailed tables describes the contribution of women to subsistence activities in low income families. The book has been jointly published by Pakistan Association for Women's Studies and Nur Jehan Memorial Educational and Welfare Society.

Newsletter

The ratio of literacy in Pakistan is alarming compared to other underdeveloped countries. These statistics are worse as far as female literacy is concerned. Lack of knowledge creates unawareness about their status and about their contribution in national development. PAWS, realising this need, has started bringing out a newsletter *Panghat*. This quarterly newsletter is bilingual (Urdu/Sindhi) carrying information about women and development.

Journal

PAWS publishes a biannual Journal entitled *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan*. The journal aims to create, strengthen and disseminate information and knowledge about and for women globally. The journal publishes research papers, reports, course outlines, reviews of books, films, theatrical performances and proceedings of conferences, workshops and seminars. The journal has an international editorial board and welcomes contributions from readers of *Women in Asia*.

Contact address:

Ayesha Jamil
PAWS
C-12, Staff Town, University of Karachi
Karachi-75270, Pakistan
TEL 4981929 res or 479001/2441 wk.

International Conference on China and the Asia Pacific Economy

The University of Queensland
Brisbane 14-16 July 1996

A venue for scholars, business executives and public policy-makers in Australia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as other Asia-Pacific countries to deliberate on China-Asia Pacific economic relations and means for enhancing trade, investment and technological co-operation within the region. Co-sponsors include AusAID; Centre for Asian Pacific Studies, Lingnan College, Hong Kong; Australian Embassy of PRC; Hong Kong Society of Asia Pacific 21; NCDS, Australian National University; and the Economics Society of Australia (Queensland) Inc.

A range of distinguished international speakers are invited. For details about topics please contact Professor Tisdell or Dr Chai as below:

CAPE Conference Organisers
Dept. of Economics
University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072
TEL: 61 7 3365 6600 FAX: 61 7 3365 7299
Email: Chai@valinor.commerce.uq.edu.au

RESEARCHER PROFILE

Rosemary M. Haddon

Rosemary was appointed Lecturer in Chinese in the Department of East Asian Studies, Massey University, New Zealand, in January 1995. She moved to New Zealand after spending one and one-half years at the Australian National University as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

Rosemary is from Canada. After completing her PhD at UBC, Vancouver, on the nativist fiction (*xiangtu wenxue*) of China and Taiwan, she came to Australia in August, 1993, to participate in ANU's first Taiwan Area Studies project. There she and three social/cultural anthropologists working on Taiwan conducted informal discussion groups and a seminar series in which they presented their research. Rosemary's first book, *Oxcart: Nativist Stories from Taiwan, 1926-1978*, has been accepted for publication in Helmut Martin's Taiwan literature series and will appear in print soon!

While she was in Australia, Rosemary made a research trip to Taiwan in order to gather more material for her current research project. This project concerns a book on Taiwan's literary culture from the 1920s to the 1990s. The project has three components: colonialism and its impact on the configuration of Taiwan's literary culture under the Japanese; the postcolonial discourse of Taiwan's writers of the 1960s and 1970s; and gender. In the section on gender, Rosemary focuses on the construct of gender in writing by men and the gendered values in writings by contemporary women writers.

A second interest of Rosemary's is contemporary writing by Chinese women writers. In June, 1995, Rosemary attended the First International Symposium on Women and Literature sponsored by Beijing University. The highlight of the symposium was a panel of women writers who talked about their experiences as women and as writers both now and during China's Cultural Revolution.

Rosemary finds her new job at Massey quite hectic! She misses her friends and colleagues in Australia and hopes to be able to attend conferences in Australia next year in order to renew friendships! In the meantime, if anyone is passing through New Zealand, please drop in and visit our Chinese program!

Contact:
Rosemary Haddon,
East Asian Studies, Massey University,
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

*Fourth World Conference on
Women: Action for Equality,
Development and Peace
Beijing 1995*

preceded by three previous World Conferences—Mexico City (International Women's Year 1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). The accompanying NGO Forum provided for input from a wide variety of women activists around the world. Access to official documents, public statements, press releases, pictures etc. are available on the World Wide Web. URL include:
<http://www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/beijing/forum/forum.html>
<http://www.undp.org/fwcw/daw1.htm>

Ms Gertrude Mongella (Tanzania) was the Secretary General of the World Conference. She heads the UN's World Conference Secretariat/Division for the Advancement of Women which is responsible for organising the conference and preparing the documents. *Women in Asia* readers who attended the Melbourne Fourth Women in Asia Conference in 1993 may remember Ms Mongella's lively presentation at our forum. The *Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, Sept. 4-15, 1995 was

STATEMENT FROM THE SOUTH ASIAN LOBBYING GROUP

Whereas the women of the South Asia Caucus are concerned about the poor status of women throughout the region, we urge the General Assembly of the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women to specifically address the following areas if the situation is to be corrected by the end of the century:

(1) **POVERTY** needs to be further addressed by correcting the economic discrimination against South Asian women from [a] structural adjustment programme [SAP], [b] trade imbalances, [c] unregulated operations of transnational corporations and [d] multilateral and bilateral debt [e] a commitment for new and additional resources from the international community.

(2) **VIOLENCE** in all its forms needs to be recognised, condemned and acted upon including,

[a] population control programmes, specifically with respect to long-acting contraceptives, anti-fertility vaccines, sterilisation trials, female infanticide, & parental sex selection [b] trafficking and sexual exploitation of both women and girls in sex industries such as prostitution, pornography and sex tourism

[c] domestic violence; related killings, including marital rape, sexual abuse within the family and drug and alcohol related assaults on women;

[d] military violence against women, including rape and genocide;

[e] community violence against women as a result of all forms of fundamentalism including religious, casteist and ethnic; and

[f] violence as a consequence of anti-women, anti-people and environmentally degrading development policies.

(3) **EQUALITY BEFORE LAW** must be given to women where personal and customary laws discriminate against them in order to create social and political environments conducive to change.

(4) **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT** must be granted to women through the acknowledgment of their [a] unremunerated work both inside and outside the home through accounting mechanisms [b] inheritance and property rights [c] equal entitlement to credit, and [d] equal access to all forms of professional and non-professional employment.

(5) **EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM** must be given to women from accessible and affordable primary and advanced education to university level, so that women are appropriately and equally qualified for every profession including positions in public office. Educational systems should be restructured so that it reflects, creates, sustains, values relationships based on gender equality. A commitment must be made by the national and international community for giving new and additional resources for girls and women.

(6) **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION & DECISION MAKING** must be seen as women's equal entitlement at every level and women must be assured of an equal share of public appointments to achieve an egalitarian society. Creation of an environment free from corruption and criminalisation must be ensured.

(7) **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** for women must be inclusive of [a] the stringent enforcement of equal wages, [b] freedom from sexual harassment, [c] access and equity to promotion and work benefits such as sick pay, injury compensation, and retirement settlements and [d] women-specific needs such as child-care and maternity leave, in both the organised and unorganised sector.

(8) **HEALTH CARE** must include [a] the provision of primary and secondary health services in areas ranging from physical and mental health for all women from birth to old age, [b] education of both women and health providers to ensure that women are able to give their informed consent to medical interventions throughout their life span.

STATEMENT BY COMMITTEE OF ASIAN WOMEN [CAW] ON WOMEN WORKERS

Presented by Ms Shum Yun Shan

[excerpts]

CAW wants to draw your attention to the present situation of women workers in Asia and we strongly urge the UN and all governments to take immediate action.

BACKGROUND

Today, the global economy and the new world order, dominated by the Multi-national Corporations in First World countries like US, Britain and Japan, are exploiting the poor. In many Third World countries the living standards of the poor have become worse. When we speak of the "poorest of the poor", we are speaking about women. Poor men in the developing world have even poorer wives and children. There is no doubt that recession, the debt crisis and structural adjustment policies have placed the heaviest burden on poor women, who earn less, own less and control less. In societies all over the world, women bear double responsibility as both producers and carers.

In the past two decades, the Asian economy has gone through economic restructuring....

IMPACT ON WOMEN WORKERS

The present economic and industrial restructuring has affected negatively the nature and conditions of women's work. In fact this happens not only in the Third World, but also in the Asian NICs and the First World. CAW's research project and the "Workshop on Industrial Restructuring" held in March 1995 synthesises the Asian women workers reality as follows:

—*Increase in Poverty*: In South Asian countries, there is an increase in inflation and poverty. More women workers are working in the informal sector or as home based workers. They have lower wages, less workers' benefits and protection. As they are unorganised, their bargaining power with the employers is low. Due to industrial restructuring and the decline of the workers' conditions, the migration of workers increases.

—*Unemployment & Underemployment*: In East Asia, industrial restructuring has led to the decline of manufacturing industries, many factory women workers become unemployed or underemployed as casual workers. These retrenched middle age women worker are facing many difficulties in searching for jobs, and are discriminated against because of their age and sex. Some of them find jobs in the service sector but there are few laws protecting workers in the service sector, including the lack of limits on working hours. There are migrant workers in East Asia but they are exploited.

—*Casualisation of Female Labour Force*: Women are regarded as the secondary labour force.

Women's work is increasingly organised on casual basis and the work pattern is similar to part-time, temporary contract and self-employed work. These casual workers have lower pay and few benefits. They are usually classified as unskilled and have little chance of promotion. There is little protection of these workers in the local labour laws. So, the company bears little responsibility for their rights including health and safety benefits, retirement pension and maternity benefits. So casualisation of work is not only a strategy for cheapening the cost of production but a trend for reconstructing the labour process in a more hierarchical and flexible form which women workers have little control over production and little bargaining power. This phenomenon is not just common in the service sector in East Asia, but also in the formal and informal sectors in South and Southeast Asia.

—*Deterioration of the Situation and Status of Women Workers*: This is especially obvious in the Free Trade Zones in which 80-90% of workers are young women who are either low skilled or unskilled. Their living and working conditions are very poor and their wages are extremely low. The workers' and trade unions' rights are deprived by governments to attract foreign investment.

—*Feminisation of the Labor Force*: These include the segregation of jobs by sex, and discrimination on the basis of age and marital status. This is a common phenomenon in Asian context as the majority of women workers occupy low paid and unskilled work while the supervisory and managerial positions are occupied by men.

—*Violation of ILO Convention on Trade Unions and Workers' Rights*: There are many violations of workers' rights by the state, especially against the rights of trade unions and freedom of association.

The workshop participants synthesise the common cause of industrial restructuring as the global trend of capitalist free market development. This development model adopted by Asian Governments allows the extraction of super-profit by the MNCs, an unequal trading environment and a maximisation of profits by capital diversification.

Under increasing pressure from the IMF and World Bank's international policies for liberalisation of economic development, implemented through GATT and WTO, the grassroots people, especially women, suffer the most. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening. The environmental and social costs of the present development model of free market economy are paid by the poor countries and people.

INDEX 1995

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- Bhatia, Monika. "Women of privilege gather in Beijing to create a 'new world order' for women," November, pp. 2-5.
 —Hunter, Cynthia L. "Posyandu: Disjunctions Between Policy and Practice in Lombok," March, pp. 4-5.
 —Kemp, Melody. "Sexual Harassment in the Indonesian Workplace: A Call for Action," July, pp. 2-3.
 —Smith, Sheree. "Social Policy and Program Planning: Health—A Brief Review of Gender Sensitive Approaches to Health," March, pp. 6-8.
 —Whittaker, Andrea. "State Control and Personal Control: Abortion, Thailand and the ICPD," March, pp. 2-3.
 —Ye Xiaoping. "The Case of Yang Yuelou and Wei Abao," July, pp. 4-5.

POSTGRADUATE PROFILES

- Hamilton, Robyn, "Researching Chinese Women: Four Months in the Republic of China August-December 1995," November, p.6.
 —Mishra, Radha. "The Impact of Indian Forest Policy on the Forest Communities of India," July, pp. 6-7.
 —Woelz, Nicole. "Family Planning in China," March, pp. 9-10.

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE

- "Clearinghouse for Information on Women in Development—Indonesia," July, p.14.
 —"International Conference on Population and Development"—Cairo 1994, March, pp. 10-17.
 —Jamil, Ayesha. "Pakistan Association for Women's Studies," November, pp. 11-12.
 —Sadli, Saporinah. "Women's Studies Graduate Programme—University of Indonesia," November, pp. 9-10.
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 —"What is Australia Doing About Trafficking in Women?" March, p. 19.

BOOK REVIEWS

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 —Yorke, Amanda, "Review of James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China*," March, p. 18

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- Cullen, Anne. "ARTTAIWAN," July, pp. 10-11.
 —Hamilton, Robyn. "NZAsia Conference," July, p. 9.
 —Weeks, Donna. "Volatile Fictions: The Strengths and Diversities of Women at the Japanese Studies Association of Australia," July, p. 8.

6th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women

The Sixth International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women is to be held in Adelaide, South Australia, 21-26 April 1996. These Congresses have been held every three years since 1981, in different parts of the world. They aim to bring together scholars and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and areas of expertise, to share insights, experiences and research, and to explore issues of importance to women throughout the world. They provide a setting in which participants from developing and developed countries can exchange information, ideas and experiences, promoting long-standing networks related to such topics as Ecology and the Environment, Work, Human Rights, Health, Peace, Education and Politics. The themes for the 1996 Congress are:

Global Restructuring
 work
 population movements
 refugees
 sex tourism
 technologies
 markets and states
 growing food
 trade
 aid
 Women's Studies
 Making Feminist Politics
 Health and Sexuality
 AIDS
 New reproductive technologies
 Bodies and markets
 Bodily alteration
 After Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing
 Sustainable Development
 Community Education
 Indigenous Peoples
 Cultural Representations

The Sixth Congress is supported by the three South Australian Universities, and its Executive Committee is drawn from the academic staff concerned with teaching and research in Women's Studies.

It's going to be great! Do come and join us.

Conference Secretariat:

Festival City Conventions
 P.O. Box 986 Kent Town, South Australia 5071
 Telephone: 61-8-363-1307 (international)
 08-363-1307 (within Australia)
 Facsimile: 61-8-363-1604 (international)
 08-363-1604 (within Australia)

Margaret Allen

WOMEN'S CAUCUS STATE CONTACTS

Please send information for the newsletter to the state contact or directly to the Queensland Editor.

Western Australia

Tamara Jacka, Humanities,
Murdoch University, Murdoch, 6150
Tel (09) 360 2993

Victoria

Barbara Hatley, Asian Languages,
Monash University, Clayton, 3168

New South Wales

Monika Bhatia,
Dept. of Public Health
University of Sydney, 2006
Tel (02) 692 4385
Fax (02) 692 4179

South Australia

Lesley Potter, Geography Dept.,
University of Adelaide, SA 5005
Tel (08) 303 5647

Tasmania

Nerida Cook, Asian Studies,
University of Tasmania, GPO Box 2520 Hobart, 7001
Tel (002) 202914

Northern Territory

Amanda Yorke, 1/14 Tang St.
Coconut Grove, NT 0810

Australian Capital Territory

Helen Creese, Pacific and Asian History, RSPacS, ANU,
Canberra, ACT 0200
Tel (06) 249 3169
Fax (06) 249 5525

Queensland

Louise Edwards, Humanities,
Australian Catholic University,
PO Box 247, Everton Park, Qld 4053
Tel (07) 3855 7252
Fax (07) 3855 7245
email L.Edwards@mcauley.acu.edu.au

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Anne Cullen
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