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Navigating the Shifting Winds of Activism: The Woman's Reform Society's Movement

Jier Yang

Connecticut College, xuehong1025@qq.com

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Navigating the Shifting Winds of Activism: the Woman's Reform Society's Movement

An Honor's Thesis presented by
Jier Yang
to The East Asian Studies Department in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for Honors in the
Major Field

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Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to show my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Ann Marie Davis, who has provided me with valuable guidance in every stage of the writing process. Thank you so much for all your detailed comments and suggestions. I learned so much more than writing a thesis through working with you. I would also like to extend my thanks to Professor Hisae Kobayashi and Professor Ariella R. Rotramel as my major advisor and second reader, who always supported me both academically and emotionally beyond their duties. Thank you for all your kindness and help. I would also thank Professor Marc Forster and Professor Takeshi Watanabe, who provided recommendations and suggestions for me often at very short notice. My sincere appreciation also goes to Professor Frederick Paxton and my classmates in his history honors studies seminar. It was a great class and I gained so much from working with all of you. Thank you Mary Devins for a wonderful CISLA summer internship in Japan, I do not think I would have finished this thesis without it and thank you to Ashley Hanson who helped me with the complicated bibliography. And thank you to my friend Jared for all your encouragement and support.

Finally, a huge thank you goes to the incredible and dedicated members of the Woman's Reform Society with whom I interned over the summer. I will never forget my time with you.

Introduction

“Since its establishment in 1886, Kyofukai has endeavored to fulfill its goals of both protecting women’s and children’s human rights and contributing to an improvement of their welfare based on the Christian Spirit.”
—A statement from the Japan Christian Woman’s Reform Society’s website.

The Japan Christian Woman’s Reform Society (*Nihon kirisutokyō fujin kyōfūkai*; 日本キリスト教婦人矯風会) is one of the oldest women’s organizations in Japan that has survived up to today.¹ In the past 128 years, this organization has overcome difficulties and evolved into a modern Public Interest Incorporated Foundation (an organization that gives out money for certain special purposes). I had the honor to work with this organization as an intern in the summer of 2014. During my stay there, I witnessed many conversations about changing the name of the organization. The Japanese name of the Woman’s Reform Society is *fujin kyōfūkai* (婦人矯風会). In present-day Japan, young women consider *fujin* (lady; 婦人) a word for older women hence they do not identify themselves as *fujin* (lady; 婦人). Therefore, some members believe the current name does not fit contemporary Japan and that it may even hinder the development of the organization. At first I was shocked that this conversation would happen in an organization with over one hundred years of history, but later I realized that one of the most important legacies that the organization has carried forward is the debates between members regarding the language that they utilize to represent the organization. These kinds of conversations are important parts of the decision-making process and consensus building. Hence, they are a necessary component to ensure the progress of the organization. As I will go on to show, these debates have been a continuous part of this organization. Indeed, I will argue that

¹ Translation is from Rumi Yasutake, *Transnational Women’s Activism: The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 44.

they have come to define it in terms of how they survived through a tumultuous time of Japanese history, as well as in its evolving values.

This honors study will analyze the history of the Woman's Reform Society (*Kyōfukai*) vis-a-vis local and global economic and political events from its founding in 1886 to 1986 after Japan had already become a global economic power. The development of the Woman's Reform Society within the context of global imperialism, international war, post-war Occupation, and Japan's economic revival inspires many questions regarding its relationship with the government and other women's activist groups since the late nineteenth century. For example, to what extent has the Woman's Reform Society adopted the ideology of the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WWCTU) in their activities? How did the Woman's Reform Society deal with the ideological conflict between the WWCTU and the Japanese government? In what way did Japan's political climate threaten the existence of the organization and how did it adapt to survive? This thesis will explore the Woman's Reform Society's relationships with the Japanese government and international women's organizations to analyze how these relationships have affected its own identity. Due to the need to balance between the Western ideology and Japanese politics, over the course of these tumultuous one hundred years, the Women's Reform Society has carefully manipulated its language and self-presentation, at times to ensure survival and at times to advocate for its own agenda, both domestically and internationally. Its long history of careful language choice and use of specific terminology to achieve its goals, its ability to adapt to new times, and its fluctuating identity of being a domestic and transnational organization demonstrate the Woman's Reform Society's ability to survive and evolve during its first hundred years. The manipulation of language is significant in understanding this organization because it demonstrates its desire to be affiliated with the Western women's organization but kept its own

independent identity at the same time. The relationship between the Woman's Reform Society and the WWCTU may help us interpret Japan's relationship with the international community from a fresh perspective. The interaction between the organization and the Japanese government illustrates the complexity of Japanese society beyond the stereotypical oppression and pacification of Japanese women.

Literature Review

The history of the Woman's Reform Society is largely intertwined with the evolution of Japanese women's movements. Historian Taeko Shibahara asserts that middle class Japanese women's feminist consciousness was created with the aid of the Western feminist movement in the late 19th century despite the "increasing pressure from nationalism and militarism."² The 1870s and early 1880s were more liberal compared to the late 1880s and 1890s, since these latter years were largely characterized by increased nationalistic sentiment. The Woman's Reform Society was formed in 1886, inspired by the American missionary women from the WWCTU. As historian Rumi Yasutake notes in her work, the Woman's Reform Society adopted ideologies such as promoting monogamy, anti-prostitution and temperance to promote social reform in Japan.³ The Woman's Reform Society's ideas were well-received in the liberal, early-Meiji atmosphere during which it was founded in 1886 up until the early 1890s. With the rise of imperialism and nationalism in the 1890s, the Woman's Reform Society's political advocacy struggled in an increasingly conservative society.

Building on Yasutake's analysis, this study suggests that as a result, the organization began to focus more and more on the language that it used to describe itself in order to gain

² Taeko Shibahara, *Japanese Women and the Transnational Feminist Movement before World War II* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2014), 1.

³ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 2.

tolerance from the government and general public during its earliest years. The Woman's Reform Society had many debates over the nomenclature of the organization due to its need to survive as a Christian women's organization in an increasingly autocratic and militarized Japanese society as a Christian women's organization. These changes within the organization regarding language and identity demonstrate its effort to negotiate a space between the WCTU's Western Christian organization structure and ideology and the nationalist and militarist Japanese society. Hence, studying the changing language that the Woman's Reform Society utilized allows us to explore how middle class Japanese Christian women engaged in and responded to Japan's tremendous changes during the process of modernization and militarization.

In order to survive during the period of militarism and nationalism, the Woman's Reform Society demonstrated its patriotism by sending comfort bags to soldiers during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). As Yasutake suggests, by working with the government, the mission of the Woman's Reform Society transformed from reforming Japanese society according to an American Protestant vision of women's reform, to one of increasing the influence of the Woman's Reform Society both in Japanese society and in Japan's colonies. For example, after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, The Woman's Reform Society led a campaign against the restoration of licensed brothels destroyed in the earthquake. Other activists and groups joined the anti-licensed prostitution campaign and made it into a nationwide movement. As scholar Sunyoung Yang states, the public awareness surrounding prostitution even spread to Japanese colonies including Korea as both Korean newspapers and Korean Christian magazines followed in the footsteps of Japanese activists, largely influencing the anti-prostitution movement in Korea.⁴ The Woman's Reform Society was also affected by women activists from the West.

⁴ Sunyoung Yang, "The Movement for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution : The Activities of the Japan Woman's Christian Temperance Union" (PhD diss., Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2005).

Takeo Shibahara discusses how Tsune Gauntlett, one of the leaders in the Woman's Reform Society, began to organize women's suffrage movements in Japan after meeting the suffragists from the West.⁵ The Woman's Reform Society also sought to promote its agenda through participating in international meetings such as the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference. By discussing issues such as licensed prostitution and human trafficking in international conferences, the Woman's Reform society even embarrassed the government in front of an international audience, which sometimes fostered changes in Japan.

After WWII, the Woman's Reform Society did not face the same kind of survival threat from the government, but it still strived to alter its image in order to catch up to the more economically developed Western society and gain respect both domestically and internationally. For example, as Japanese scholar Mineyama Atsuko points out, the president of the Woman's Reform Society, Ochimi Kubushiro, strived to redefine the word "purity" (純潔) in order to make it fit the ideology of democracy in Japanese society in the 1950s. However, this organization's recent history has not attracted attention from scholars. Scholars in the U.S. and Japan, such as Yasutake and Lublin, have discussed the movement of the Woman's Reform Society in the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, including their relationship with women activists from the West and their participation in international women's movements. In addition, there are books such as *Kibō No Hikari O Itsumo Kakagete Josei No Ie HELP 20 Nen* (希望の光をいづもかかげて女性の家HELP20年), about the organization's emergency shelter created in 1986, but the organization's other works are not being widely studied. Therefore, this thesis intends to bring attention to the Woman's Reform Society's activities in the post-war era as well as pre-war period and discover the ways it continues its legacy in post-war Japan and the age of

⁵ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 39.

globalization. Rumi Yasutake and Taeko Shibahara's discussion of the Woman's Reform Society's involvement in the transnational women's movement in late 19th century and early 20th century inspired me to analyze the organization's participation in the transnational women's movement after WWII.

Throughout the 20th century, the Woman's Reform Society's efforts in achieving international recognition often paralleled Japan's historic endeavors to be a world power. After the Pacific War, the Woman's Reform Society had recognized that they needed to evolve as society developed. Over time new social issues such as immigration appeared, and new discourses like human rights became more prominent, which meant some of this old organization's ideologies were longer relevant to Japanese society anymore. Hence, the organization continuously modified its own language to accord to the trends of society.

Methodology

During my internship with the Woman's Reform Society, I translated its website from Japanese to English, which was a great opportunity to familiarize myself with the words it uses to express its own identity in both Japanese and English. I was also fortunate enough to access its past publications, including its monthly magazine. This thesis involves analyzing the language that the Woman's Reform Society employs to discuss its own activities and identities, which will be based on the articles from the organization's monthly magazine and self-documented history book. The organization's publication shows that debates regarding the use of language between members repeatedly occurred in different time periods. Hence, this thesis will elaborate on the debate over language and the significance of these debates.

This thesis will discuss events chronologically because it can better demonstrate gradual change and a sense of continuity as the organization developed from its birth to 1986. 1868 was

the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, which marked the end of the shogunate in Japan. By the 1880s, a number of reforms had already been in place as a result of the Meiji Restoration. A century later, Japan's bubble economy era began in 1986, when stock prices and asset prices inflated greatly. A major component of this thesis will focus on the interactions between the Woman's Reform Society and women's activists from the West. Therefore, this thesis will not include the events in the Pacific War, since the contact between Japanese women and the outside world was limited during that period.

The term, "transnational women's movement," was created to define a phenomenon in the contemporary world as well as the past. Therefore, although the Woman's Reform Society did not use these words to describe its activism, it is still valid to use the concept of the transnational women's movement to understand its achievements, because their activities demonstrate women's efforts to work together beyond the boundary of a nation state.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One will outline founding of the Woman's Reform Society and its relationship with the WWCTU, other activists groups, and the Meiji government in its early stage of the activism. This chapter will focus on the change in the organization's name and its magazine's name, as well as the debate over nomenclature within the organization from late 19th century to early 20th century. These changes in naming were the organization's responses to events such as the government's censorship ban and visits from the WWCTU. Hence, this chapter analyses the Woman's Reform Society's political identity in the Meiji Era by tracing changes in the language that the organization used.

Chapter Two will explore the Woman's Reform Society's involvement in the transnational women's movement and the nationwide movement from Taisho Period to the

beginning of WWII. The chapter analyses the influence of the Western women activists on the Woman's Reform Society's activism regarding issues of suffrage and social purity. During the prewar period, the organization continued to change the names of its various departments or affiliated organizations in order to achieve its goals.

Chapter Three will analyze the Woman's Reform Society's adaptation of the human rights concept in post-war Japan and how it affected its activism. Although the organization intended to embrace this concept since 1960s, the organization's definition of human rights was not consistent. This inconsistency of important terminology once again demonstrates the fluidity of the organization's goals and identities. By tracing the six year long debate on incorporating human rights into its departmental name, this paper will highlight how the organization's concept of human rights evolved in tandem with its conceptualization of its own place in domestic and international women's movements.

Chapter 1

The Early Days: The Founding and Naming of the Woman's Reform Society (1886-1910s)

Historical Background

Organizations are formed by a group of people that support a common cause. However, organizations are rarely completely unified. Competing ideologies often arise which lead to different discourse debates reflected in the form of the changes in its name or publications. The discourse debates within the Woman's Reform Society reveal its relationship with the Japanese government, other Japanese organizations and the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Therefore, analyzing discourse debates by tracing the evolution of its organizational name and other changes in the core vocabulary used to describe itself provides a new direction in understanding of its political position from 1886 to the present day. More importantly, this analysis increases our knowledge on the different degrees of agency that a civil society like the Japan Christian Woman's Reform Society can exercise in various political environments.

The founding of the Japan Christian Woman's Reform Society was inspired by the speech of Mary C. Leavitt, a missionary from the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1886. This is a trivial event that may only be worth at most one line in an encyclopedia; however, it is not a coincidence that this event happened at 1886 as opposed 1876 or 1896. 1886 is thirteen years after the Meiji government lifted the ban on Christianity, eighteen years after the Meiji Restoration, and twenty-one years after the end American Civil War. All these events contributed to Leavitt's visit to Japan in 1886 and continued to affect the Woman's Reform Society's fate in the future. After the Reconstruction Era following the American Civil War, activists realized that the federal power should be able to banish all immorality since the federal

government had recently stopped the sin of slavery.⁶ Therefore, moral reformers began to organize and lobby the government in order to achieve their goals. One of the most influential of these early organizations was the Woman Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which was founded during the second wave of temperance in 1874.⁷ In 1883, the president of the WCTU, Frances Willard founded the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WWCTU). Willard's "do everything" policy helped to expand the WCTU's movement by including women's suffrage as well as prison, education, and labor reform.⁸

Even though churchwomen's activism was impressive, the WWCTU round-the-world-missionary Mary C. Leavitt would not have been able to travel to Japan and deliver her speech in front of Japanese churchmen and churchwomen were it not for the liberal environment and passion of studying Western ideas triggered by the Meiji Restoration (1868). During the Edo Period (1603-1868), the Tokugawa government implemented a seclusion policy that limited Japan's contact with the West for two hundred years.⁹ Portuguese and Spanish traders were banished and Christianity was banned, though the Dutch remained in Nagasaki because they did not intend to spread their religion and only focused solely trade.¹⁰ Japan's closed country policy remained active until Commodore Perry arrived with his black ships in 1853, marking the beginning of western imperial power's intrusion in Japan. The Tokugawa government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties with different western countries. These unequal treaties

⁶ Gaines M. Forster, *Moral Reconstruction: Christian Lobbyists and the Federal Legislation of Morality, 1865-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 3.

⁷ Forster, *Moral Reconstruction*, 2.

⁸ "Temperance as a "Maternal Struggle": How the Women's Christian Temperance Union Reflected and Defined Women's Roles in the Public Sphere" Accessed November 5, 2014
<http://www.ushistoryscene.com/uncategorized/temperanceasmaternalstruggle/>.

⁹ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (New York: Oxford, 2009),19.

¹⁰ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 19.

revealed the weaknesses of the Tokugawa government and brought into question the Tokugawa government's legitimacy to act as the protector of Japan.¹¹ Japan was thus thrown into turmoil and in 1868 when anti-Tokugawa forces eventually succeeded in abolishing the Tokugawa government and restored the power to the Meiji emperor.¹²

In the ensuing Meiji Period (1868-1912), society saw the West as “a source of danger as well as opportunity” because when the Meiji government tried to renegotiate the unequal treaties with Western powers, they were told that they could not revise the treaties unless Japan developed its “legal and political system [according] to European standards.”¹³ The Western power's demands required Japan to westernize if it wanted to be able to sit at the negotiating tables. However, even though Japanese intellectuals in the 1850s and 1860s generally saw learning from the western barbarians as a method to defeat them, Meiji leaders actually grew a deeper appreciation towards western culture and technologies.¹⁴ The Meiji government even sent out students to study in Europe and these study abroad experiences largely influenced Japan's modernization process through the establishment of universities and police forces.¹⁵ As part of the process of adopting western ideologies and becoming a modern nation, Japanese leaders lifted ban on Christianity in 1873. Even though the Christian population was very low, Christian activists in the late nineteenth and twentieth century played important roles in social reforms.¹⁶ Thus, the initial contact between the WWCTU and Japan was the result of a series of major socio-political changes in the late 19th century.

¹¹ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 51.

¹² Gordon, *History of Japan*, 59.

¹³ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 73.

¹⁴ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 73.

¹⁵ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 73.

¹⁶ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 108.

The naming of the Japan Christian Woman's Reform Society

After Mary C. Leavitt from the WWCTU gave her speech to Japanese churchgoers on June 17th, 1886, about thirty Japanese women stayed after the talk to discuss forming a Japanese woman's temperance union.¹⁷ On July 24th, fourteen women gathered and discussed the regulations and membership procedures. In the Women's Studies Journal (*Jogaku Zasshi*; 女学雑誌) published in August 1886, they also announced the organization's name to be the Woman's Reform Society (*Fujin Kyōfukai*; 婦人矯風会).¹⁸ In Japanese *fujin* means woman, *kyōfu* means to change the wind, and *kai* means club or a group. Changing the wind is a metaphor for reform. The churchwomen's project fell in abeyance due to the sudden death of one of the central figures of the organization, Kimura Tōko.¹⁹ Later, in the Women's Studies Journal published in October 1886, an article called for the establishment of the new name for the organization: Tokyo Woman's Temperance Society (*Tokyō Fujin Kinshu Kai*, *kinshu* means the forbidding of alcohol) was published.²⁰ On November 9th, 41 women gathered and elected the founders and regulation committee members for the organization.²¹ Given the new decision to focus on temperance, the members had to hold a discussion on the subject of how to translate the organization's name, "temperance union."²² Even though members such as Shiseko Shiota and Kajiko Yajima wanted to use *kinshu* (alcohol prohibition) to translate "temperance," in the end the majority agreed that using *kinshu* to translate the word "temperance" limited the organization's activities to just the forbidding of alcohol.²³ This back and forth about using

¹⁷ Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai, *Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai Hyakunenshi* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1986), 36.

¹⁸ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 36.

¹⁹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 36.

²⁰ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 36.

²¹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 36.

²² Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 36.

²³ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 37.

Temperance Society or Reform Society in public announcements shows that there was a discussion among Japanese temperance women about the identity of the group and an attempt to explain the temperance movement in a Japanese context. This also suggests that the organization was able to take a measure of liberty in choosing a name that was different from model organizations in North America.

An organization's name usually reflects its main objectives. In this case, using the name Woman's Reform Society was a declaration that the organization hoped to change Japan's overall wind, which is a metaphor for changing the society's overall behavior.²⁴ The organization's choice of this terminology implied that there were several morally unacceptable tendencies within Japanese society, and the organization would tackle each and every one of them. On the other hand, had the organization chosen to use the name Tokyo Woman's Temperance Society, it would have been announcing that the organization operated solely on issues of alcohol, a danger to society that the organization believed it could realistically handle. Those who favored the name, Woman's Reform Society, had more progressive goals in mind by questioning the entire structure of society, whereas those who favored Tokyo Woman's Temperance society was more conservative in nature, only concentrating on one specific ailment. Therefore, the different opinions on naming the organization shows that even within this relatively homogenous organization of middle to upper middle class Christian women, there were differences in the women's visions towards the operation of the organization as well as their understanding of Meiji social problems.

²⁴ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 37.

Although the majority of the women in the Woman's Reform Society were well educated middle-class women, diverse personal backgrounds resulted in vast differences in its members' ideologies.²⁵ For example, Toyoju Sasaki was fortunate enough to have been allowed by her father to pursue her studies as much as she desired and developed a liberal mindset which led her to support the name "Woman's Reform Society."²⁶ Alternatively, Kajiko Yajima, who grew up with a conservative education that would have prepared her to be a model Japanese wife, advocated for including "temperance" in the name.²⁷ In fact, Sasaki envisioned members of the Woman's Reform Society as independent reformers whereas Yajima believed that members of the Woman's Reform Society were helpers that supported their husbands in the home and as male reformers in society.²⁸ It is probably not a coincidence that Sasaki and Yajima had debates over the organization's name, since "Reform Society" and "Temperance Society" reflect their different upbringings and stances toward female reform.

When the organization was established on December 6th, 1886, the official name was Tokyo Woman's Reform Society (*Tōkyō Fujin Kyōfukai*). The emphasis on translating the temperance union as the Reform Society reveals a multitude of objectives among the members. In addition to temperance, anti-polygamy and anti-prostitution were the main focuses in the early years of the Woman's Reform Society's activism.²⁹

The translation choice with regards to the name created distance between the Woman's Reform Society and the global umbrella organization, the WWCTU, thus allowing the Woman's

²⁵ Elizabeth Dorn Lublin, *Reforming Japan: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in the Meiji Period* (Vancouver: UBC, 2010), 48.

²⁶ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 48; Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 51.

²⁷ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 48.

²⁸ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 52.

²⁹ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 62-66.

Reform Society to assert its own independent identity. By contrast, in 1890, the male reform group that was also influenced by the WWCTU missionary's speech translated the word "temperance" as "kinshu," and named their organization the Tokyo Temperance Society (*Tōkyō Kinshukai*; 東京禁酒会).³⁰ Eventually, a woman's division of this male organization later reorganized itself as an independent group and named itself the Tokyo Woman's Temperance Society (*Tōkyō Fujin Kinshukai*; 東京婦人禁酒会, TWTS).³¹ Given that the TWTS's name was a literal translation of the WWCTU, its existence threatened to widen the gap between the Woman's Reform Society and the WWCTU.³² Therefore, in 1892 the WWCTU missionaries eventually requested that the two groups merge in order to establish a unified national temperance organization in Japan.³³ Even though Japanese church women had different goals in reform, they eventually complied with the request.

Compared with other temperance groups in Japan such as the Tokyo Temperance Society and the TWTS, the Women's Reform Society was more distant from the WWCTU even though it had been in contact with the WWCTU since 1886. When Mary Allen West from the WWCTU arrived in Japan in 1892, she found out that the Woman's Reform Society was not aware of the WWCTU's work and it did not even require the total abstinence of its members.³⁴ West made several amendments to the Woman's Reform Society, including establishing regular contact with the WWCTU, integrating temperance components into their structure and reorganizing their activities into well-defined departments, just like other temperance unions in the world.³⁵ Besides

³⁰ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 61.

³¹ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 62.

³² Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 62; Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 73.

³³ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 73.

³⁴ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 68.

³⁵ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 68.

restructuring the Woman's Reform Society, West had another major goal which was to unify the existing woman's temperance groups in Japan. Unfortunately, West died during her stay in Japan before she could accomplish her mission.³⁶ Due to West's efforts, the Woman's Reform Society and the TWTS realized WWCTU's desire to see a national women's temperance union, and decided to merge later in 1892.³⁷ The process of the unification of the Japanese woman's temperance groups is significant because it sheds light on the degree of influence the WWCTU missionaries (American women) had on Japanese temperance women as well as the Japanese temperance women's degree of compliance.

With the additional members brought in by the TWTS, the Woman's Reform Society had the foundation necessary to evolve into a national organization. In order to organize a national woman's temperance organization, Kajiko Yajima, Shiota Shiseko, Toyoju Sasaki, and Takeyo Takekoshi gathered at Hatuko Tsuda's house in February, 1893.³⁸ After the meeting in February, Takekoshi announced the Woman's Reform Society's plan to form a national union and argued that the existence of the American Woman's Temperance Union in the U.S. and the British Women's Temperance Association in Britain was evidence that Japan needed to have a national woman's temperance union that consolidated all the efforts of the temperance groups operating in different parts of Japan.³⁹

On April 3rd, 1893, the Woman's Reform Society was reorganized as a national organization when the woman's temperance unions in Kōbe and Okayama joined with it. The organization magazine *Tokyo Woman's Reform Magazine (Tokyō fujin kyōfu zasshi)*, also

³⁶ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 74.

³⁷ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 74.

³⁸ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 93.

³⁹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 93.

changed to *Woman's Reform Magazine (Fujin kyōfu zasshi)* in November 1893, as the Woman's Reform Society became a national organization. The change of the name did not simply mark the Woman's Reform Society's development from a local organization into a national union, but it was also a significant indication of the reunification between the Woman's Reform Society and the WWCTU because a Japan WCTU is exactly what the WWCTU wanted to see. After all, a unified WCTU could focus more on promoting the cause of temperance rather than waste time competing amongst one another. The process of creating a national organization shows the complicated relationship between the WWCTU and the Woman's Reform Society. Lublin and Yasutake both mention that it was West's death that eventually brought the Woman's Reform Society and the TWTS together since they felt that they should at least fulfill her last wish.⁴⁰ This implies that these Japanese temperance women would not have agreed to merge and give up all their ideological differences just for the desires of a WWCTU missionary. It took more than instructions for them to collaborate with the WWCTU. It is undeniable that the WWCTU had a strong influence on the Woman's Reform Society, since they competed with the TWTS to make connections with the WWCTU.⁴¹ However, the fact that the Woman's Reform Society and other Japanese woman's temperance organizations still held conversations on these issues over a long period of time instead of agreeing with the WWCTU missionary immediately demonstrates that there was still some degree of independence among the Japanese temperance women.

The Rise of Imperialism in the 1890s

The Woman's Reform Society evolved from a local organization located in Tokyo to a national organization with various local branches in about seven years. In the first few years of

⁴⁰ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 69.

⁴¹ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 73.

its movement, it enjoyed the Meiji liberal atmosphere and its movement was able to mobilize a target audience, middle class Japanese women.⁴² However, even though Japanese society was very accepting towards Western technology and ideology, by the time of the 1890s, many people began to reflect on their previous craze of all things Western after the government had failed to revise the unequal treaties between Japan and Western Imperial powers. Therefore, with the rise of imperialism and militarism, society switched into a more conservative mode that made it difficult for the Woman's Reform Society's activism to flourish.⁴³ In addition to the competition between the Woman's Reform Society and the TWTS, the broader Japanese political environment was also making the Woman's Reform Society struggle to expand its influence.

Among all the socio-political changes that took place in the 1890s, there are several that were particularly detrimental to the campaign for higher women's status and rights in society such as the Assembly and Political Organization Law (*Shūkai oyobi sheishahō*) and the government's support for the "good wife and wise mother" (*ryosai kenbō*) ideology. The Assembly and Political Organization Law (*Shūkai oyobi sheishahō*) issued in 1890 forbade women from participating in political gatherings or joining political associations.⁴⁴ In October 1890, the Regulations of the House of Representatives banned women from sitting in its galleries, which even denied women the right to listen in on political discussions.⁴⁵ Members of the Woman's Reform Society and the TWTS believed women should have the right to listen to the political debates, so they petitioned against the Regulations of the House of Representatives. Their petition was supported by male reformers because they believed that female presence in

⁴² Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 5.

⁴³ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 74.

⁴⁴ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 65.

⁴⁵ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 66.

the diet could “purify” the conference which would improve the behavior of male politicians and hence improve more quality political debates.⁴⁶ Although these women eventually successfully repealed the regulation in December 1890, they did not request women’s rights to participate in political debates.⁴⁷ The Woman’s Reform Society would not demand direct participation in political debates until the 1920s, during the women’s suffrage movement in Japan.

The idea of “good wife and wise mother” (*ryosai kenbō*) existed in the early Meiji Period, but it was not until the end of Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) that the Education Ministry began to publicly support “good wife and wise mother.”⁴⁸ Politicians realized that war required the participation of its entire population, and by educating women to be “good wives and wise mothers” they sought to increase Japan’s national strength.⁴⁹ The definition of “good wife and wise mother” is vague, because on one hand it fit the Japanese samurai family’s expectations for wives who managed the household and on the other hand, it fit western expectations for women as mothers capable of raising future citizens. This meant it easily gained support from both conservatives and liberals.⁵⁰ However, even though people could possible insert their own definition to “good wife and wise mother” the national emphasis on the term still reflected the state’s effort to define womanhood and women’s responsibilities as the emperor’s subjects.

Along with the laws that forbade women’s participation in politics, the “good wife and wise mother” ideology once again restricted the women’s sphere of influence to family matters. It was difficult for women’s organizations to expand their influence since women were not

⁴⁶ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 67.

⁴⁷ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 68.

⁴⁸ Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of “Good Wife, Wise Mother” before 1931,” in *Gendering modern Japanese history*, ed. Barbara Molony et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 500.

⁴⁹ Uno, “Good Wife, Wise Mother,” 500-501.

⁵⁰ Uno, “Good Wife, Wise Mother,” 502.

welcome in the public space. At the same time, resisting influence from the government was difficult for the Women's Reform Society as well. Concentrating on anti-polygamy, anti-prostitution and temperance movements was a way of avoiding politics, since these issues were considered social issues.⁵¹ By the end of the decade, the Public Order and Police Law of 1900 prohibited women from participating in political activities in all forms.

Issues regarding the word “Christian” in organization name

Another issue concerning the name of the Woman's Reform Society that also reflects the degree of agency the Woman's Reform Society had in terms of their relationship with the WWCTU is history of the word “Christian” in the Japanese name. Even though people were having debates on the name of the new organization, there was one thing that all of them seemed to agree on: the word “Christian” should not appear in the organization title. Based on the fact that the word “Christian” was not present in the first attempted name “the Woman's Reform Society” (*Fujin Kyōfukai*) or the second attempted name “Tokyo Woman's Temperance Society” (*Tōkyō Fujin Kinshukai*), it stands to reason that all the participants share the belief that “Christian” should be excluded from the name. Lublin points out that the exclusion of “Christian” in the name was not a sign of removing religious components from the organization, since the Woman's Reform Society had pledged to create a Christian society with God's assistance.⁵² The member of the Woman's Reform Society did not intend to hide the Christian identity of the WWCTU either. In an article about the first president of the WWCTU Margaret Bright Lucas in the first issue of organizational magazine, the translation of the WWCTU, *Manko Fujin Kirisutokyōto Kyōfūkai*, had include the word “Christian” (*Kirisutokyōto*).⁵³ Why

⁵¹ Barbara Molony, “The Quest for Women's Rights in Turn-of-the-Century Japan,” in *Gendering modern Japanese history*, ed. Barbara Molony et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 482.

⁵² Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 31.

⁵³ Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai. *Tōkyō fujin kyōfū zasshi*, vol.1 (Tōkyō: Fuji Shuppan, 1895), 6.

then would these Japanese church women decide to remove “Christian” from the title when what they had organized was a Christian temperance union?

The complicated relationship between Christianity and Japanese society may provide some critical insights. Before the Meiji Restoration, the Tokugawa Shogunate had viewed Christianity as a potential threat to their rule and banned it during the Edo Period (1603-1868). Even though the Meiji government lifted the ban on Christianity in 1873 and foreign missionaries returned to Japan in the 1870s, Christians comprised less than one percent of Japan’s total population.⁵⁴ Meiji Japan was characterized largely by a fervent pursuit of modernization. While some people accepted Christianity in their journey of seeking modernity, other people denounced Christianity for “betraying the rational spirit of modernity.”⁵⁵ In the 1870s, before the rise of nationalist sentiment in Japan, Christianity was relatively safe. By the early 1890s, growing nationalism made Christian worship an increasingly difficult practice for most Japanese. Yasutake points out that “claiming to be ‘Christian’ invited criticism rather than support in the socio-historical context of Japan during the early Meiji era.”⁵⁶ The Meiji government required all of its subjects to demonstrate their loyalty in all circumstances, but the principles that Christians obey sometimes oppose the state’s principles. This made Christian identity extremely sensitive.⁵⁷ Therefore, it may safely be said that these Japanese churchwomen intentionally left out the word “Christian” to avoid being criticized by the non-Christian activists and the Meiji government.

⁵⁴ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (New York: Oxford, 2009), 108.

⁵⁵ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 109.

⁵⁶ Rumi Yasutake, "Men, Women, and Temperance in Meiji Japan: Engendering WCTU Activism from a Transnational Perspective," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 17 (2006): 103.

⁵⁷ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 109.

Years later (in 1897), a WWCTU missionary, Clara Parish, lacking a solid understanding of Japanese resentment towards Christianity, arrived in Japan and requested that members of the Woman's Reform Society include "Christianity" (*Kirisutokyō*) in the Woman's Reform Society's Japanese name during the Woman's Reform Society's national convention.⁵⁸ However, the Woman's Reform Society members rejected Parish's suggestion and argued that the organization would not be successful with the label of being a Christian group.⁵⁹ It was not until 1904, when another WWCTU missionary, Kara Smart, proposed the change of name at the Woman's Reform Society's national convention, the word "Christianity" was inserted into the Woman's Reform Society's formal Japanese name.⁶⁰ The official name, the Japan Christian Woman's Reform Society (*Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin kyōfukai*), first appeared in the organizational magazine in 1905.⁶¹

The Woman's Reform Society finally agreed to change its name because it had transformed itself into a patriotic organization. During the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), the Woman's Reform Society demonstrated Christians' patriotism by sending comfort bags to soldiers successfully countering the perception of Christians as traitors, which then put it in a position to confidently assert itself as a Christian organization without facing criticism.⁶² Therefore, the absence of the word "Christian" can be interpreted as a tactic to make the organization more appealing to general audiences instead of the limited Christian population in Japan. Given the fact that the Woman's Reform Society rejected the WWCTU missionary's suggestion on inserting "Christian" in its name at first and only agreed when they felt they had

⁵⁸ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 85.

⁵⁹ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 85.

⁶⁰ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 85.

⁶¹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 214.

⁶² Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 98.

the approval of the Japanese society, it is safe to claim that the Woman's Reform Society still maintained its agency while it was establishing contacts with the WWCTU. The Woman's Reform Society had adopted an American style of organizing under Parish's advice, but it had not heeded her advice on the name change when they believed that it would be harmful to the organization. It shows that the relationship between WWCTU and the Woman's Reform Society was not a top-down relationship where the Japanese women from the Woman's Reform Society passively received orders from the American women from the WWCTU, and the Woman's Reform Society could still make its own judgment on important issues.

The ban on the organizational magazine

In the 1890s, the Woman's Reform Society was operating within a highly conservative environment ripe with state censorship. The Woman's Reform Society's organizational magazine was banned by the government twice during the 1890s for mentioning political issues. However, the Woman's Reform Society did not give up on using its organizational magazine as a channel to publicize their voices. It responded to the government's ban without violating the law and kept publishing their magazines. The organization had always tried to avoid direct confrontation with the government. It engaged in activism within a safe boundary, even when government policy was in conflict with its Western influenced values.

The fifteenth issue of *Woman's Reform Magazine (Tokyō fujin kyōfu zasshi)* was banned by the Japanese government in 1895 because the editorial told the audience to focus on temperance and anti-prostitution movements in Japan instead of the Sino-Japanese war. The next issue of the magazine thus changed its name to *Women's News (Fujin shimpō)*.⁶³ Two years later, in April 1897, the 27th issue of *Women's News* was banned by the government. The

⁶³ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 113.

hundred year history published by the Woman's Reform Society listed two theories as to why the magazine was banned, but crucial point of both reasons concerns *Women's News* containing articles that offended the government by commenting on political matters.⁶⁴ After the 27th issue of *Women's News* was banned in April, the Woman's Reform Society discontinued the publication of *Women's News* and began to publish a new magazine in May.⁶⁵ The editor and the issuer of the new magazine were different from those of the previous magazine. The new magazine's name, however, was still *Women's News*, despite the previous *Women's News* being banned by the government.

It is interesting that when the magazine was banned for the first time in 1895, the Woman's Reform Society chose to publish their magazine in a new name, but then in 1897 decided to use the same name, *Women's News*, for when it was banned for the second time. The choice in names reflects the Woman's Reform Society's attitude towards the government. The president of the Woman's Reform Society at that time was Yajima, who was responsible for both decisions on addressing the magazine name after both bans.⁶⁶ As mentioned before, Japan in the 1890s was more conservative than the previous two decades and the state basically defined a woman's role as a "good wife and wise mother" (*ryosai kenbō*) which led to the content of *Women's Reform Magazine* in 1895 to concentrate more on articles that taught women to manage their households, cook, and raise their children.⁶⁷ Yajima was relatively conservative compared to other Japanese church women such as Sasaki. The government's ideal women image did not challenge her perception of womanhood. Therefore, it was not a surprise that she

⁶⁴ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 117-120.

⁶⁵ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 92.

⁶⁶ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 91.

⁶⁷ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 74.

did not resist the government's ideology by including the articles that taught women housework and reducing the amount of articles that featured the Woman's Reform Society's movement.⁶⁸

In the banned issue, the editor tried to draw its members' attention away from the battlefield and back to temperance and anti-prostitution. The enthusiasm towards the Sino-Japanese War that the editor was criticizing demonstrates the state's success in implanting imperialistic ideology. Although the fervently imperialistic government did not envision a space for women in public outside of mothers sending their sons to war, the Woman's Reform Society still managed to deliver its demand for monogamy and prostitution abolition to the government in the 1890s. The government did not forbid its activities because these demands did not violate the state's imperial expansion plan. However, the banning of *Women's Reform Magazine* showed that the state would not tolerate any voice that challenged its imperialistic success narrative. Aware the state's censorship policy, even though the Woman's Reform Society had experience in petitioning, it did not even attempt to argue with the government to lift the ban on the magazine.

Lublin suggests that Yajima could have used the "stoppage as an opportunity to revamp the periodical as means to energize the WCTU," but the new magazine, *Women's News*, contained even less materials on the Woman's Reform Society's activities than before.⁶⁹ All these reactions reflect the Woman's Reform Society's efforts to appear as good, patriotic, women and avoid direct confrontation with the Meiji government. Indeed, the Woman's Reform Society was not in a position to bargain with the government. After all, even though the Woman's Reform Society had already become a national organization, it still lacked the structure

⁶⁸ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 74.

⁶⁹ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 80.

that would ensure the organization's continued operation and the relationship between the Woman's Reform Society and its local branches in other parts of Japan was weak.⁷⁰ In other words, as an organization that was not yet very influential, complying with the government was their best choice to ensure their continued survival.

However, two years later, the Woman's Reform Society chose to deal with the ban on *Women's News* with a different approach. According to Lublin, the president of the Woman's Reform Society, Yajima, received a postcard sent by a bureaucrat from the Communications Ministry and decided to take the advice on said postcard to keep the old magazine name when publishing the new magazine.⁷¹ The Woman's Reform Society describes this bureaucrat from the Communications Ministry as a cordial, young officer.⁷² His notes came alongside the notice of the banning of the magazine. Even though this was not a direct violation of the law, publishing the new magazine with a previously banned magazine name can be seen as the Woman's Reform Society's way of asserting its agency against the government's intervention. In the first issue of this new *Women's News*, the members of the organization claimed that they wanted to use *Women's News* as a medium to address women's rights problems and advocate for anti-polygamy and anti-licensed prostitution movements. In 1895, the Woman's Reform society "had no choice but to conform to press rules."⁷³ By contrast, it seems that in 1897, even though the Woman's Reform Society still complied with the government, they acknowledged that there were problems concerning legality, whereas in 1895, they acted as if they believed they had violated the law and deserved to be punished. This change in their attitude toward the law and

⁷⁰ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 80.

⁷¹ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 91.

⁷² Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 127.

⁷³ Lublin, *Reforming Japan*, 91.

the government could be a result of the maturation of the Woman's Reform Society. The first long-term onsite WWCTU missionary, Clara Parrish, was then working in Japan, a residency that lasted from 1896 to 1898.⁷⁴ With Parrish's assistance, the Woman's Reform Society's paid members quadrupled to almost 1100 and evolved into a true national organization.⁷⁵ As a national organization, the Woman's Reform Society needed to create a sense of camaraderie among its members and provide advice on temperance and anti-prostitution through their organizational magazine. However, changing the organization name would constitute to a loss of morale. This may be the reason the Woman's Reform Society ultimately kept the same journal name they continue to use today.

Conclusion

The Woman's Reform Society's choice of its organization name, translating the term temperance and incorporating the word Christianity, its evolution from an urban movement in the capital to a national organization and its reaction to government censorship bans, all demonstrate the nature of its relationship with the WWCTU and the Japanese government. The founders of the Woman's Reform Society were inspired by Western women from the WWCTU, but they never obeyed the words of the WWCTU without considering the political environment in Japan. Valuing the anti-licensed prostitution movement as highly as temperance work and temporarily not publicizing its Christian identity were all choices based on its knowledge of how Japanese society would react if they acted otherwise. Although the organization eventually fulfilled some requests by the WWCTU, such as reorganizing itself into a national organization and inserting "Christian" to its name, it only complied only when it felt comfortable enough to

⁷⁴ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 83.

⁷⁵ Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 85.

do so. This independence that the Woman's Reform Society enjoyed also ensured its survival, since it understood Japanese society better than Western women from the WWCTU.

The name change during the Woman's Reform Society's early years reflects its efforts to survive in an increasingly nationalistic environment while maintaining regular contact with the West. The relationship between the organization's name change and the desire to balance the organization's Western inspired goals with Japanese government's continued to play out well into the 20th century.

Chapter 2

Pre-War Years: Continuities in the Suffrage and Purity Movements (1910-1930s)

The two most important developments in the first forty years of the twentieth century for the Woman's Reform Society, its participation in the suffrage movement and its switch from the anti-licensed prostitution movement to the purity movement, were both results of influence from the West. The Woman's Reform Society had gradually increased its influence as a national organization through anti-licensed prostitution activities in Tokyo and other regions. In the 1920s and 1930s, the organization faced less of a survival threat compared to in the 1890s as it became more influential. The organization continued carefully deciding on its department and sub organization names in order to promote its agenda.

In the first few decades of the 20th century the Woman's Reform Society continued to grow as a national organization with various local branches. The organization not only established a women's shelter, Benevolence Dormitory, (*Jairyō*; 慈愛寮) in Tokyo, but also the Osaka Women's Home (*Ōsaka Fujin Homu*; 大阪婦人ホーム) in Kansai region.⁷⁶ During this decade, the relocation of old licensed brothels and the establishment of new licensed brothels became a social problem and the center of the anti-licensed prostitution movement. Local branches in Gunma, Ashiikawa, Wakayama and Osaka were especially active in the anti-licensed brothel movement. Since the location of the licensed brothel was important for local residents, many non-activists also participated in the anti-licensed brothel movements.⁷⁷ The Woman's Reform Society utilized newspaper articles to attract society's attention towards the anti-brothel issues. Through the anti-brothel movement and its appearance in the media, the Woman's

⁷⁶Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 255.

⁷⁷ Yang, "The Movement for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution."

Reform Society built its group solidarity and established its leading position in the anti-licensed prostitution movement.

The Woman's Reform Society's abolitionist work continued into the second decade of the 20th century. In this decade, the Woman's Reform Society started to include education programs in its anti-licensed prostitution framework and emphasized establishing a national moral standard based on a single standard of chastity for both men and women. In addition to attracting new members through public speaking tours around the country, the organization also facilitated good relationships with other women's groups such as the YWCA and the Women Reporters Club (*Josei Kisha Kurabu*; 女性記者倶楽部). It also looked into abolishing Japanese prostitution in Japanese controlled regions in Siberia and generated a movement to support the instatement of a law which would prevent forced prostitution and human trafficking. Another important development during this decade was their failure to preventing the establishment of a new brothel district in Tobita, Osaka in 1916. This was important because it led the members of the Woman's Reform Society to realize the importance of suffrage rights. After spending a year and half trying to stop the government from establishing the new brothel district, the Woman's Reform Society came to believe that they could not influence the government unless they had the right to vote. However, this realization alone did not mark the beginning of the Woman's Reform Society's participation in the women's suffrage movement. In fact, the Woman's Reform Society did not join the women's suffrage movement until after its members had spoken with Western women suffrage activists in 1920. Direct contact with Western women suffragists led the Woman's Reform Society to form its own suffrage group, the Japan Woman Suffrage Council (*Nihon Fujin Sanseiken Kyōkai*; 日本婦人参政権協会) in 1921.

Western Influence in the Suffrage Movement

Although the WCTU in the United States had been promoting women's suffrage since the late 19th century, the Woman's Reform Society did not fully participate in the suffrage movement until 1921.⁷⁸ Shibahara stated that the Woman's Reform Society did not promote women's suffrage prior to the encounter with women from the International Women Suffrage Association (IWSA) in 1920.⁷⁹ The Woman's Reform Organization acknowledged the need for suffrage in the women's movement in its national annual conference after being unable to prevent the establishment of the Tobita Brothel district in 1917 despite actively campaigning in both Tokyo and Osaka for a year and a half. At the conference, Ochimi Kubushiro stated that "living in a country ruled by law without suffrage rights, is just like fighting a war without weapons...from now on, getting suffrage rights will be one of my goals as well."⁸⁰ Kubushiro's speech shows that some members of the Woman's Reform Society noticed the difficulties in demanding policy without being able to vote, but why did the organization still not participate in the suffrage movement? In Japan, universal suffrage for men over the age of twenty-five was introduced in 1925. Thus, in 1917, universal suffrage right for both men and women would be challenging society's beliefs. This was especially true given that the Japanese media reported on the British Women's Suffrage movement in a negative tone.⁸¹ The Woman's Reform Society usually chose to promote its agenda in ways that were acceptable for mainstream Japanese society.⁸² For example, it did not advertise its sensitive Christian component until it established its patriotic image in the eyes of the public. The Woman's Reform Society would rather promote women's status non-aggressively. It had petitioned against the Police Security Regulation that

⁷⁸ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

⁷⁹ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

⁸⁰ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 513.

⁸¹ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

⁸² Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

prevented women from participating in political activities in 1904 and supported Japanese woman suffragist, Fusae Ichikawa, and the New Women's Association (*Shin Fujin Kyōkai* 新婦人協会) in the campaign to repeal the Police Security Regulation in political activities in 1919.⁸³ The Woman's Reform Society's decision not to directly participate in the suffrage movement reveals one of its most important decision-making mechanisms to navigating a balance between the developments of Western women's movements and the realities of the political environment of Japanese society.

Due to the media portrayal of the women's suffrage campaigns as acts of vandalism, Tsune Gauntlett, one of the leaders of the Woman's Reform Society, was deterred from joining the suffrage movement because she heard of the chaotic "doings of the militant suffragists."⁸⁴ However, after meeting the suffrage activists in the Eighth IWSA Congress in Geneva, she changed her mind.⁸⁵ The IWSA president, Carrie Chapman Catt, said that "all women in the world absolutely dislike war, we hope all the women in the world can gain suffrage rights and put effort in achieving world peace."⁸⁶ Gauntlett was so deeply moved by the speech delivered by Catt that she determined that she would not rest until she saw an organized women's suffrage movement started in Japan.⁸⁷ After coming back to Japan, Gauntlett and her colleague, Kubushiro, decided to raise the topic of joining the IWSA and forming a suffrage organization within the Woman's Reform Society.

⁸³ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 513.

⁸⁴ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

⁸⁵ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 513.

⁸⁶ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 514.

⁸⁷ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 38.

In April 1921, the Woman's Reform Society held a conference titled "How should we, the Woman's Reform Society, contact the IWSA?" The members complained about the ambiguity of the conference title, but in the end, they agreed that the organization should keep contacting the IWSA. The members also put Kubushiro in charge in contacting the IWSA.⁸⁸ From July 21st to 22nd, the Woman's Reform Society held its first National Permanent Members Conference. During the conference, Gauntlett argued that it was necessary to organize the women's suffrage movement. The members decided to form the Japan Woman Suffrage Society as an organization affiliated with the Legal (*Hōritsu*; 法律) Department of the Society while reserving the power to turn it into an independent organization one day if needed.⁸⁹

In order to promote the suffrage movement in Japan, Kubushiro even toured around Europe to study how to educate women about the suffrage movement in 1922.⁹⁰ After returning from the tour, Kubushiro published a series of articles advocating for suffrage movement. Meeting the women from the IWSA made Gauntlett realize the importance of suffrage and a sense of unity among women activists for world peace, which directly influenced the Woman's Reform Society's decision to participate in the suffrage movement. Kubushiro's tour in Europe also laid the framework for how the suffrage movement would be carried out in Japan. Interaction with Western feminists shaped the Woman's Reform Society's suffrage movement. However, it is also important to note that Japanese society in the early 1920s was accepting enough for the Woman's Reform Society to begin its suffrage movement. Other Japanese women suffragists such as Fusae Ichikawa, began her activism in 1919 when she founded the New Women's

⁸⁸ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 517

⁸⁹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 517

⁹⁰ Atuko Mineyama, "Ochimi Kubushiro and the Women's Suffrage Movement: Archival Research Focusing on Her Essays from the 1920s," *Human Welfare* 3, no. 1 (2009): 57.

Association with Raichō Hiratuka and Mumeo Oku.⁹¹ It is possible that the New Women's Association's campaign for the amendment of the Public Order and Police Law of 1900 made the Women's Reform Society believe that the political environment at that time could tolerate a request for women's suffrage.

***Fusen* (Women's Suffrage 婦選) and *Fusen* (Universal Suffrage 普選)**

The Woman's Reform Society was criticized by other women's group for making connections with the IWSA and establishing the Japan Woman Suffrage Society as representative of Japanese women suffragists without a national consensus.⁹² Therefore, although the New Women's Association was also active in the suffrage movement, it did not recognize the Woman's Reform Society's leadership in the women's suffrage movement. However, these suffrage women eventually worked together and formed a nationwide suffrage movement. After the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, the Woman's Reform Society called for other women's organizations to join the relief work. Thirteen organizations joined the relief work immediately and they founded the Tokyo Federation of Women's Organization (*Tōkyō Rengō fujin-kai*; 東京連合婦人会).⁹³ One hundred and thirty women from different women's groups joined the organization.⁹⁴ As Shibahara argued, this unified relief work women's movement allowed women activists to bridge their differences and "develop insight into women's universally oppressed status across society."⁹⁵ This experience of working together united different women's groups and thus made the establishment of a national women's suffrage federation possible. In December 1924, the Association for Promoting the Winning of Women's Suffrage (*Fujin Sansei-*

⁹¹ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 37.

⁹² Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 39.

⁹³ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 42.

⁹⁴ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 424.

⁹⁵ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 45.

ken Kakutoku Kisei Dōmei-kai; 婦人參政權獲得期成同盟会) was formed. Along with the leaders from the Woman's Reform Society, one of the leaders of the New Women's Association, Ichikawa, also became one the members of the board of the directors.

In April 1925, during the first meeting of the Association for Promoting the Winning of Women's Suffrage, the organization decided to shorten its name to the Women's Suffrage League (*Fu-sen Kakutoku Dōmei*; 婦選獲得同盟).⁹⁶ In Japanese, women's suffrage can be written as *fujin sansei-ken* (婦人參政權) or a shortened version, *fusen* (婦選). The League decided to change the "women's suffrage" in their name into the shortened form *fusen*, because the homonym of this word *fusen* (普選) means universal suffrage, a concept that was a more familiar to society in 1925 due to the male suffragists' campaign.⁹⁷ The Meiji constitution only allowed men over the age of twenty five who paid more than fifteen yen in annual taxes to vote. Therefore, ever since the late 19th century, men suffragists had tried to eliminate the tax-paying requirement. Men suffragists in Japan had been using the word *fusen* in their speeches to advocate for universal suffrage for men. In 1925, universal male suffrage passed the diet, which suggests that *fusen* was accepted by the majority of Japanese society.

In 1924, legal expert, Shigeto Hozumi, was the first to use the word *fusen* in the context of women's suffrage.⁹⁸ Adopting the term, *fusen*, led to the creation of a convincing and catchy slogan "what kind of *fusen* (universal suffrage) is it when *fusen* (women's suffrage) is not included?" for the federation's suffrage campaign.⁹⁹ As historian Molony argued, the organization "made a tactical decision to buy into the acceptable discourse on male rights by

⁹⁶ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 529.

⁹⁷ Barbara Molony, "Women's Rights, Feminism, and Suffragism in Japan, 1870-1925," *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000): 659.

⁹⁸ Molony, "Women's Rights," 659.

⁹⁹ Mineyama, "Ochimi Kubushiro and the Women's Suffrage Movement," 59.

taking advantage of the homonym.”¹⁰⁰ In 1925, newspapers still reported women suffragist’s activism with a mocking tone.¹⁰¹ The media’s attitude shows society’s disapproval towards the idea of granting women the right to vote. Using an already accepted term would help to change the image of the organization’s goal, since it could potentially help people find its agenda more familiar.

In 1925, among the two hundred and seventy members of the Women’s Suffrage League, two hundred were also members of the Woman’s Reform Society. It stands to reason that these members brought the practices of the Woman’s Reform Society to the Women’s Suffrage League. Hence, although this name change occurred in the Women’s Suffrage League, it still demonstrated the Woman’s Reform Society’s tradition of utilizing specific terminology to promote its agenda, even when it had to frame its arguments within the framework of patriarchy.

The Pan-Pacific Women’s Conference

In attending the Pan-Pacific Women’s Conference, the Woman’s Reform Society not only gained experience from meeting its Western counterparts, but was also able to promote its agenda to international audiences. Shibahara believed that presenting the problems of licensed prostitution and human trafficking at international conferences embarrassed the Japanese government and facilitated international pressure to demand action from the government.¹⁰² In 1928, Gauntlett participated in the very first Pan-Pacific Women’s Conference that was being held in Honolulu, Hawaii. Although she successfully delivered a speech, she still expressed the feeling of experiencing failure and dissatisfaction and claimed that she wanted to be more

¹⁰⁰ Molony, “Women’s Rights,” 659.

¹⁰¹ Molony, “Women’s Rights,” 659.

¹⁰² Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 59.

prepared for future international conferences.¹⁰³ The Pan-Pacific Women's Conference was organized by the Pan Pacific Women's Association, a branch organization of the Pan-Pacific Union, an organization established by elite white men in Hawaii.¹⁰⁴ English language ability thus became an important factor that determined the experiences of the participants. The Japan delegation consisted of 25 members, and, as Ichikawa Fusae noted, the "tension of status and language ability" made the delegation quite contentious.¹⁰⁵

Gauntlett was able to successfully deliver a speech on the work of the Woman's Reform Society due to her English skills. The Woman's Reform Society had been engaged in the anti-prostitution movement in Japanese colonies and America. Gauntlett presented her paper, "Anti-Vice Movement in Japan: An Examination of the Position of Japan in Relation to the League of Nations Treaty," and requested to discuss the issue of human trafficking at the conferences.¹⁰⁶ International organizations, including the IWSA, had pressured the League of Nation to include the suppression of trafficking in women and children as a theme at its convention. The league also conducted a survey on trafficking in women and published a report on the issue. However, the League of Nations only focused on the trafficking of white Caucasian women (the so-called "White Slave Traffic") and left Asia out of the investigation.¹⁰⁷ Gauntlett's request brought international attention to the issue of human trafficking in Asia. The conference program secretary Eleanor M Hinder contacted the chief of the Department of Opium Traffic and Social Issues Section of the League of Nations, Rachel E. Crowdy, to notify her of the human

¹⁰³ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 584.

¹⁰⁴ Mina Rocas and Louise Edwards, eds. *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 103.

¹⁰⁵ Rocas and Edwards, *Movement's in Asia*, 103.

¹⁰⁶ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 54.

¹⁰⁷ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 54.

trafficking issues in the Pacific.¹⁰⁸ Due to international pressure, the Japanese government eventually allowed the League of Nations to investigate the trafficking of Asian women and children in 1931. Through participation in international events, the Woman's Reform Society made its own domestic agenda an international issue, and the international attention in turn aided its movement in Japan.

When the investigation team from the League of Nations visited Japan, it visited various government branches such as the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Metropolitan Police Department as well as the Yoshiwara brothel district.¹⁰⁹ The members of the Woman's Reform Society welcomed the team in their headquarters and accompanied the team to investigate the situation in the Kansai region. The Woman's Reform Society's local branch also prepared a reception for the investigation team. After investigating the situation in Osaka and Kobe, the team left from Nagasaki after a little over a month's tour in Japan. In 1933, the report of the investigation was published. The report stated that "the brothels were the market for the women who were being trafficked, so the brothels needed to be shut down in order to help the women."¹¹⁰ It supported the anti-licensed prostitution movement in telling the government to abolish the brothel district. Since the anti-licensed prostitution movement gained international recognition, the Woman's Reform Society and other abolitionists felt that "the days when people need to discuss the pros and cons of anti-licensed prostitution had passed."¹¹¹ The reactions of the Woman's Reform Society members show that they believed that the government would compromise under the pressure from the League of Nations. Their confidence in the League of

¹⁰⁸ Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 54.

¹⁰⁹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 615.

¹¹⁰ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 617.

¹¹¹ Yang, "The Movement for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution."

Nations and international intervention also demonstrates that during the early 1930s, the organization recognized the West's dominant position over Japan.

From Anti-Licensed Prostitution Movement to Purity Movement

After the League of Nation's investigation of human trafficking in Japan, the members of the Woman's Reform Society began to believe that the "abolishment of licensed prostitution was just a matter of time"¹¹² The Woman's Reform Society began to discuss its movement after abolishing licensed prostitution despite the fact that the government did not change its law. Nevertheless, the investigation team from the League of Nations gave Kubushiro and the Woman's Reform Group confidence that licensed prostitution would be abolished. The three principles of the Woman's Reform Society were temperance, peace and purity. Anti-licensed prostitution was only the first step to achieve the goal of creating a pure family and society. Therefore, while stating that the anti-prostitution movement was almost achieved, the organization began to transform the anti-licensed prostitution movement into the purity movement (Junketsu undō; 純潔運動). In *Fujin Shimpō* published in June 1932, Kubushiro stated that "purity movement fight against the ugliest system," it is natural to transform the name of the anti-licensed prostitution movement to purity movement "once the realization of the abolishing licensed prostitution is approached."¹¹³ For Kubushiro, anti-licensed prostitution was a component of the purity movement. The purity movement challenged an even broader evil in society.

The WWCTU's social purity movement also began with anti-prostitution. The WCTU had a Committee for Work with Fallen Women and changed that to the Department for Social

¹¹² Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 617.

¹¹³ Yang, "The Movement for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution."

Purity in 1885.¹¹⁴ The work of the department included providing shelters for fleeing prostitutes and young girls who were new to the city, creating sex education programs for mothers to teach their children, opposing pornography, and strengthening rape laws.¹¹⁵ Once again, the Woman's Reform Society incorporated some of the activities into its activism in Japan but hesitated to use the name "purity" until it felt confident that the government would change the law. Although the organization was influenced by WWCTU, it never became an exact duplication of the WCTU in the West. Instead, it always carefully chooses its vocabulary based on the circumstances in Japan.

In January 1935, Kubushiro published an article in *Fujin Shimpō* to discuss the "purity issues" with examples regarding purity movement in Britain and United States. She also explained her goal of initiating the purity movement in the same issue of the magazine, including cultivating of purity ideology, preventing of sexually transmitted diseases, protecting women from selling their bodies and eliminating private prostitution.¹¹⁶ In 1926, the Woman's Reform Society formed the Federation for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution (Haishō renmei; 廃娼連盟) along with the Purity Society (*Kakusei-kai*; 廓清会). With support from local churches and associations, activist groups against licensed prostitution had formed in forty-one prefectures. Under the influence of Kubushiro, in February 1935, the Federation for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution evolved into a new group, the Federation for Purity (*Junketsu dōmei*; 純潔同盟).

In May 1935, Kubushiro went to New York to study sex education and methods to prevent women from entering prostitution. After returning, Kubushiro began to publish a series of articles on the topic of "Establishing Pure Japan" in 1936. In Kubushiro's Pure Japan Establishment Movement System (*Junketsu Nihon Kensetsu Undō Taikei*; 純潔日本建設運動体系),

¹¹⁴ Erin Masson, "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union 1874-1898: Combating Domestic Violence," *William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law*, 3, no.1 (1997):185.

¹¹⁵ Masson, "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union 1874-1898," 185.

¹¹⁶ Yang, "The Movement for Abolishing Licensed Prostitution."

the movement was divided into four sections: Education (*kyōka*; 教化), Prevention (*yobō*; 予防), Purification (*kakusei*; 廓青) and Organization (*soshiki*; 組織). The Purification section was divided to two sections: Public morals (*fūki*; 風紀) and Hygiene (*eisei*; 衛生). The anti-licensed prostitution was only one of the subsections of the Public morals sections. The Pure Japan Establishment Movement System illustrates the scope of the purity movement that the Woman's Reform Society envisioned. It was as broad as the WWCTU's social purity movement, if not broader.

In 1937's national annual convention, the Sex Industry (*fūzoku* 風俗) Department in the Woman's Reform Society, a department responsible for anti-prostitution activism, also changed into the Purity (*junketu* 純潔) Department.¹¹⁷ In March 1998, Kikue Takahashi stated that the name Purity Department was proposed in the national annual convention in 1936 and officially used in 1937's national annual convention.¹¹⁸ There was no evidence of debate over the renaming of the department in the organizational magazine or further explanation for the name change. At that time, Kubushiro had been regularly writing articles on "Establishing Pure Japan" for over a year. The organization had participated in purity movement with the Federation for Purity since 1935 as well. Perhaps the Woman's Reform Society's involvement in the purity movement made it believe that there was no reason to explain the change as changing the Sex Industry Department to the Purity Department should be an obvious next step. Regardless of the lack of evidence of debate or an explanation for the change, the change in name itself demonstrates the organization's determination to continue to evolve and remain relevant.

¹¹⁷ Atuko Mineyama, "Kubushiroochimi no kenkyū: Haishōundō to sono shūhen" (PhD diss., Kwansai Gakuin University. 2013).

¹¹⁸ Kikue Takahashi, "Jinken o shuchō shita kyōfū-kai" *Fujin Shimpō*, March, 1998, 2. Sources photocopied in Japan.

Conclusion

Since the founding of the organization, women in the Woman's Reform Society adopted ideologies from Western women activists and modified them in their own movement in order to fit Japanese society. As the organization evolved, members of the organization actively participated in international women's conferences to study new theories from the West and apply them to their activism in Japan under pressure from the international conferences.¹¹⁹ Another tradition that continued in the Woman's Reform Society was the emphasis on names. The change from the Association for Promoting the Winning of Women's Suffrage to the League for the Winning of Women's Suffrage was an effort to promote its agenda with a more acceptable name. The organization changed its department name from Sex-Industry Department to Purity Department when it decided to move beyond the anti-prostitution movement, reflecting the organization's desire to get involved in broader activism.

¹¹⁹Shibahara, *Japanese Women Movement*, 55.

Chapter 3

The Postwar Times: The Incorporation of Human Rights (1958-1986)

Although the Woman's Reform Society had participated in international women's movements since the 1920s, its contact with the Western women activists ceased by WWII. After the American Occupation, (1945-1952) as Japan gradually rebuild itself economically and join the international world, the Woman's Reform Society also tried to connect itself with international women's movements through the WWCTU international convention and the UN Women's Conference. The adaptation of the "human rights" discourse allowed the Woman's Reform Society to gain international recognition and take a leadership role in East Asia. The "human rights" discourse was also leverage to wage broad activism domestically, and embrace new platforms such activism against Japanese sex tourism and the establishment of a women's shelter.

The Woman's Reform Society continued to choose its language carefully during the process of incorporating "human rights" into the organization's vocabulary and department name since the organization had to define itself in a way that did not conflict with pre-existing concepts. At first, the organization tried to interpret "human rights" in a way that best justified its other activism, such as temperance. As the human rights became more relevant to Japan due to increasing international contact between Japan and the rest of the world, the Women's Reform Society eventually redefined its other ideals, like purity, in order to make its activism fall under the human rights framework.

The Dream story of WWCTU World Convention

Since the end of the WWII, the Woman's Reform Society actively participated in all of the WWCTU World Conventions. Hosting the WWCTU World Convention became a goal for

the Woman's reform Society. In 1958, Japan hosted several world conventions, including The 14th World Convention on Christian Education and the 4th World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. In an article published in September 1958 in *Women's News*, Ochimi Kubushiro lauded these world conventions and expressed her desire to have the Woman's Reform Society to host a WWCTU world convention.¹²⁰ Ochimi Kubushiro later wrote that an idea came to her one day while she was looking at the pictures of all the past presidents of the Woman's Reform Society. Although in the past most of the WWCTU World Conventions had been hosted in North America and Europe, the WWCTU might consider eventually holding the conference in Asia because the Asian-African countries were on the road of development at that time.¹²¹

Kubushiro was correct in believing the WWCTU would consider having its world convention in an Asian country. India hosted the 22nd WWCTU world convention in November 1962, only four years after she made her predication. India's success gave Kubushiro hope. She published an article titled "World Convention Dream Story" (*sekai taikai yumemonogatari*), in March, 1962, stating that she hoped the members attending the world convention could bring the 23rd World Convention to Japan.¹²² Why was WWCTU convention so significant for Kubushiro? Kubushiro's article published in November, 1962 provides insights.

*"Right now international affairs have been shifting to the East. South East Asia is underdeveloped while Africa still remains the same. I think it is not impossible (for the world convention) to come to Japan after India. The convention hall is good; the earphones are good; accommodations are good; the tourist spots are also almost prepared. Friends from the entire country open up their hands waiting for friends from across the world. Most importantly, Japan is the land that suffered the most from the war due to the atomic bomb. Having friends from the both the West and the East to hold hands (having a WWCTU world convention) in this place is truly a chance to strive to achieve world peace."*¹²³

¹²⁰ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai būmu no Nihon," *Fujin Shimpō*, September, 1958, 5.

¹²¹ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai būmu no Nihon," 5.

¹²² Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai yumemonogatari," *Fujin Shimpō*, March, 1962, 5.

¹²³ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Warera no sekai taikai," *Fujin Shimpō*, November, 1962, 5.

The text above shows that Kubushiro believed that Japan and the Woman's Reform Society had recovered sufficiently since WWII so they would be able to host a WWCTU World Convention that could contribute to world peace. World peace became one of the most important goals for the Woman's Reform Society after WWII and it was eager to have its voice heard on the matter. In July 25, 1963, the Woman's Reform Society even delivered a message to the WWCTU, stating that in order to achieve world peace, all members "must communicate with other sections in other parts of the world more regularly than in the past."¹²⁴ However, while world peace was important for the Woman's Reform Society, the primary reason to host a world convention was to demonstrate the accomplishments of the Woman's Reform Society. Kubushiro's positive affirmation of the quality of the accommodations and facilities shows that she thought the Woman's Reform Society had the economic means to host an event that used to be hosted in more economically developed countries. Also, her belief that Japan had symbolic power in the process of achieving world peace also reflects her confidence in Japan's position in the world and that of the Woman's Reform Society's in the eyes of the members of the WWCTU. However, Kubushiro's eagerness to organize the convention also shows that she was seeking the approval from the WWCTU because they were the ones who would have had the power to authorize the Women's Reform Society to hold the conference. Should they consent, it would have meant that the WWCTU believed that the Woman's Reform Society in Japan held an equally important position as similar Societies in developed countries where the conference had been previously held.

Hosting a WWCTU World Convention was not Kubushiro's own idea. One of the vice presidents of the Woman's Reform Society, Takegami Masako, died in 1962. She was so intent

¹²⁴ Ochimi Kubushiro and Kuni Sawato, "Nihon shibu kara sekai shibu e no tayori," *Fujin Shimpō*, November, 1962, 11.

on having the Woman's Reform Society to host a WWCTU World Convention that she left 200,000 yen to the organization as money for hosting the convention.¹²⁵ In 1962, 10 kg of rice cost 972 yen.¹²⁶ In 2015, 10 kg of rice cost 3800 yen in online store.¹²⁷ Using 2015's yen to dollar exchange rate, Takegami's gift was worth about 7800 dollars. Takegami's generous act demonstrates her willingness to have the world convention in Japan.

Despite the Woman's Reform Society's eagerness, the WCTU in Switzerland hosted the 23rd WWCTU World Convention in 1965. The Woman's Reform Society then waited until 1968 to host the 24th WWCTU World Convention. According to Kubushiro, from 1965 to 1968, "all the members of the Woman's Reform Society had "one thing in mind for three years."¹²⁸ Six hundred members from more than twenty countries were present at the conference.¹²⁹ After the successful world convention, Kubushiro expressed her sense of accomplishment through her article "Beyond the World Convention" (*Sekai taikai o oete*). She felt that the Woman's Reform Society had finally made progress with the "pace of the world."¹³⁰ Her words show that she was satisfied with the organization's development and there was no more need to try to "catch up" to the world standard. It stands to reason that Kubushiro saw hosting a WWCTU World Convention as a sign of the Woman's Reform Society entering the international world as a successful woman's organization. Kubushiro also stated that the international conventions that were hosted in Japan were of higher quality compared to the previous ones, and these improvements

¹²⁵ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Warera no sekai taikai," 11.

¹²⁶ "400 nen no beika" accessed February 10, 2014, http://www4.airnet.ne.jp/sakura/beika/beika_syowa.html.

¹²⁷ "search in 10kg of rice" accessed April 19th, 2015, <http://search.rakuten.co.jp/search/mall/10+kg+米/-/st.A?x=0>.

¹²⁸ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai o oete," *Fujin Shimpō*, July, 1968, 50.

¹²⁹ Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfukai, *The Chronological Record of Japan Woman's Christian Temperance Union*, (Tōkyō:Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfukai, 1986), 11.

¹³⁰ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai o oete," 50.

demonstrate the power of the Japanese people.¹³¹ Hosting the world convention brought the Woman's Reform Society a sense of self accomplishment and power.

These women not only proved themselves in front of women from seventy nine countries but also gained confidence in participating in international conventions. In the report on the WWCTU World Conference in 1971, a member of the Woman's Reform Society suggested that it was a special organization because although the missions of the WWCTU had always been opposing alcohol and tobacco use, the Woman's Reform Society's goals were temperance, purity and peace.¹³² This is an example of how the Woman's Reform Society felt confident enough to distinguish itself from the WWCTU. Instead of seeing the difference between the Woman's Reform Society and the WWCTU as something that needed to be corrected according to the WWCTU's standards, the Woman's Reform Society saw the difference as a quality that defined the significance of its organization. At the same time, one of the Woman's Reform Society's members who attended the convention also suggested that all the members should put in more efforts in studying English in order to have the ability to take more initiative in the WWCTU events.¹³³ This suggestion on one hand shows that Japanese women believed that they could not see themselves as leaders until they spoke English better, and on the other hand shows that the organization's desire to take initiative and participating international events.

Human rights discourse in 1968

The WWCTU World Convention in 1968 is significant to the development of the Woman's Reform Society because it changed the organization's self-image and boosted its self-confidence. It is also important in that it made human rights a more central concept in the

¹³¹ Ochimi Kubushiro, "Sekai taikai o oete," 51.

¹³² Masako Satō, "Kodomo-tachi o kyōiku seyo," *Fujin Shimpō*, October, 1968, 10.

¹³³ Masako Satō, "Kodomo-tachi o kyōiku seyo," 10.

Woman's Reform Society, which is also an indicator of the group's development as a participant of both international women's movements and domestic political movements. The theme of the WWCTU World Conference in 1968 was "Humanity's Rights and Needs," which inspired members of the Woman's Reform Society to talk about their understanding on human rights in *Women's News*. The members of the Woman's Reform Society actively discussed and adopted the concept of the human rights, a concept introduced by the WWCTU, when engaging in the organization's activities both internationally and domestically.

In 1968, the administration party at that time, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP), had been discussing the possibility of nationalizing the Yasukuni Shrine. Like other Christian groups, the Woman's Reform Society saw the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto Shrine, as a violation to Japanese people's freedom of religion. Therefore, the right to religion was mentioned and explained in all the articles that discussed human rights issues published in 1968's *Women's News*. In "Human's Rights and Freedom" (*Ningen no kenri to jiyū*), the author argues that the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine "becomes something that threatens the freedom of religion."¹³⁴ In these articles, human rights and freedom were almost interchangeable terms. Women's rights groups tended to "frame their demands in terms of universal human rights or the particular traits or concerns of women."¹³⁵ Likewise the Woman's Reform Society chose to address the concerns of women in its activism against alcoholism, prostitution and later nuclear weapons in the post-war era. For example, when addressing anti-war issues in the latter part of the Vietnam War to women in the United States, the Woman's Reform Society referred to women in the United States as mothers and wives. The

¹³⁴ Jun'ichirō Sako, "Ningen no kenri to jiyū," *Fujin Shimpō*, October, 1968, 7.

¹³⁵ Gordon, *History of Japan*, 272.

nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine, however, was not an issue that could be defined as a violation to women's rights. Hence, the group recognized that the human rights discourse would offer a broader platform for protesting against the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine. Thus, by embracing the broader issue of "human rights" instead of "women's rights" the organization recognized that it could broaden its activism. Later, the human rights discourse also proved to be a helpful ideology in lobbying the government for other issues.

In 1968, for the Woman's Reform Society, human rights was still a relatively unfamiliar term that came from the WWCTU. While introducing this new term, the authors of essays on this subject often had to justify the introduction of human rights to the Woman's Reform Society. An article called "Let's Think About the Deep Meaning of Human Rights" was published in April 1968. The author, Hatsue Nonomiya, mentioned that the three goals of the Woman's Reform Society, temperance, purity and peace, had always based on the notion of protecting human rights.¹³⁶ This was an obvious attempt to connect the organization's past activities with the new idea of human rights.

However, not all of the past activities of the organization fit into the human rights discourse. In fact, some people may even be able to argue that temperance movement neglects human rights because they tried to prevent people from consuming alcohol. Nonomiya did not leave her argument unsupported; she tried to argue that temperance was protecting human rights by defining human rights as freedom. Since alcohol can make people drunk, it "takes away their soul and body, and leaves them without human rights and freedom."¹³⁷ In addition, she argued that alcohol consumption not only hurt the drinker but even "broke other people's freedom and

¹³⁶ Nonomiya Hatsue, "Jinken no fukai imi o kagae yori," *Fujin Shimpō*, April, 1968, 7

¹³⁷ Nonomiya Hatsue, "Jinken no fukai imi o kagae yori," 7.

human rights.”¹³⁸ The author had to include these explanations because in 1968, the Woman’s Reform Society was still supporting the anti-alcohol agenda. Later, in 1971, when the organization shifted their goals from anti-alcohol, to the prevention of harm due to alcohol abuse, the effort to unite temperance and human rights disappeared.

In 1968, human rights was just a new framework that was adopted along the way of moving towards the WWCTU World Convention. Therefore, when certain activism did not necessarily fall under the domain of a human rights issue, the Woman’s Reform Society chose to interpret human rights in its own ways in order to rationalize its actions. However, the concept of human rights became more and more important as time passed, especially as the Woman’s Reform Society began to take more initiatives in international events in the next decades.

Sex Tourism

One of the new phenomena in the 1970s that affected the Woman’s Reform Society was the overseas sex tourism that was increasingly observed among Japanese men. Before the liberalization of overseas traveling in 1965, only a few Japanese had the privilege to travel. For example, in 1964 the number of Japanese visitors to Korea was limited to 1,864.¹³⁹ However, with the liberalization of overseas traveling and Japan’s economic success, the number of Japanese people visiting Korea in 1973 exceeded 411,000, and by the end of the decade, Japanese tourists numbered over 526,000.¹⁴⁰ Among these travelers, most of them were Japanese businessmen who decided to combine business travel and sex tourism. In 1973, Korean women’s groups protested against the sex tourism and wrote letters to complain about this issue to Japanese church women. The Woman’s Reform Society then investigated the issue of sex

¹³⁸ Nonomiya Hatsue, “Jinken no fukai imi o kagae yori,” 7.

¹³⁹ Sylvie Guichard-Anguis and Okpyo Moon, *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), 152.

¹⁴⁰ Guichard-Anguis and Moon, *Japanese Tourism*, 152.

tourism and decided to hang flyers in the airport in order to stop Japanese men from participating in the sex tourism in Korea and other Asian countries. They claimed that Japanese men who engaged in sex tourism were “irresponsible, lacking concept of human rights and failed to reflect on Japan’s history of invading other nations.”¹⁴¹ The Woman’s Reform Society was able to use the discourse of human rights to promote its anti-sex tourism activities. When the organization engaged in anti-prostitution movements in Japan, its argument was based on the concept that prostitution was a form of discrimination against women. However, the sex tourism industry in the 1970s also contained elements of racism and power dynamics between countries, and the gender equality framework could no longer cover all the issues involved, the human rights discourse could be used to tackle sex tourism much more effectively than arguing solely from a women’s rights perspective.

1975 was the UN International Woman’s Year. The Woman’s Reform Society participated in the NGO forum of the UN Women’s Convention. In honor of the UN International Woman’s Year, *Fujin shimpō* published several articles in relation to the UN Woman’s year and human rights. These articles featured the history of human rights and the relationship between human rights and women in Japan, which provided the vocabulary that was needed for the members to talk about anti-prostitution movement in relation to human rights. More importantly, the organization managed to quote the UN and use these quotes to give credibility to itself. For example, in “International Women’s Year and the Woman’s Reform Society” (*Kokusai fujin nen to kyōfūkai*), an article published in 1975, the author stated that “the slogan of the International Women’s Year was equality, development and peace,” which is what

¹⁴¹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 809.

the “seniors of the Woman’s Reform Society had fought for since the Meiji Period.”¹⁴² By saying the organization had believed in the values of the UN, the author imminently raised the ideology of the Woman’s Reform Society to the same level as the UN, if not higher. Another article published in 1976 called “Basic Human Rights and Prostitution” (*Kihontekijinken to baishun*) included a quote from the “Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace.” The quote is from the 28th principle, “women all over the world should unite to eliminate violations of human rights committed against women and girls such as: rape, prostitution...”¹⁴³ The author chose to include this quote because it recognizes prostitution as a violation of human rights committed against women and girls, which was the basis of the Woman’s Reform Society’s argument on anti-prostitution. At first, human rights was just an idea that came from the WWCTU that could be utilized to continue pushing the organization’s goals with more validity because attaching human rights to an issue would make the Woman’s Reform Society’s position seem more legitimate. At the same time, the human rights discourse also enabled the Woman’s Reform Society to engage in more international issues including the sex tourism.

In 1978, after conducting research on sex tourism in Korea and Thailand, the Woman’s Reform Society made a slide show called “Do You Know the Word Shame?” to oppose the sex tourism. The slide show was viewed and purchased by others NGOs, schools and labor unions. The Woman’s Reform Society viewed its effort in sex tourism issues as an act of defending human rights, a remarkable achievement that represented its work in the past few years. When members of the Woman’s Reform Society got the chances to present in international events, such

¹⁴² Matsumoto Seiko, “Kokusai fujin nen to kyōfūkai,” *Fujin Shimpō*, June, 1975, 3.

¹⁴³ Naoko Sugaya, “Kihontekijinken to baishun,” *Fujin Shimpō*, April, 1976, 4.

as the WWCTU World Convention and the NGO forum of UN Women's Conference, they always chose to present the organization's contribution in anti-sex tourism movements. In 1980, the Woman's Reform Society created the English version of "Do You Know the Word Shame?" intending to use it during international events. The organization's engagement in sex tourism, however, was seen as offensive by Korean women activists.

At the WWCTU World Conference in Britain in July 1980, the Woman's Reform Society planned to exhibit the slide show "Do you know the word shame? –Prostitution Tourism," but faced strong opposition from the Korean WCTU.¹⁴⁴ Despite the head of the WWCTU's effort in mediating between the Woman's Reform Society and the Korean WCTU, the Woman's Reform Society ultimately chose to sing a song called "Sakura Sakura" and report on its activities in English instead of showing the slide show.¹⁴⁵ The reason for the Korean WCTU's opposition was not stated in the report on the WWCTU World Convention. However, from another documented incident between the Woman's Reform Society and Korean women activists in the same year, one can ascertain the likely cause for the problem at the WWCTU. In a report on the NGO forum of the UN Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, Kikue Takahashi mentioned that when she was setting up the machine for the slide show, five or six Korean women began to speak poorly of Japan for the biased reporting on the Gwangju Uprising and express their belief that sex tourism is Korea's problem that that Japanese should not "make noise" about.¹⁴⁶ People were worried about the screening of the slide show, but Takahashi still showed the slide show in front of some women activists from Canada.¹⁴⁷ The Korean women

¹⁴⁴ Eiko Nagano, "Dai 28 Kai Kyofukai Seikai Taikai Houkoku," *Fujin Shimpō*, September, 1980, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Nagano, "Dai 28 Kai Kyofukai Seikai Taikai Houkoku," 15.

¹⁴⁶ Kikue Takahashi, "NGO Forum Ni Shushitu Site," *Fujin Shimpō*, September, 1980, 9.

¹⁴⁷ Takahashi, "NGO Forum Ni Shushitu Site," 9.

activists' attitude towards the slide show on sex tourism was negative because they did not want Japanese women, some outsiders, to talk about the sex tourism happening in Korea. What this reveals is that these Korean women viewed the Woman's Reform Society as having enough influence to actually impact the beliefs of women who participated in international events on this issue, which demonstrates recognition for the Woman's Reform Society's authority and power among women's organizations.

Although Korean women activists did not want to see the sex tourism issues being defined by the Woman's Reform Society, not all Asian countries that were involved in the sex tourism opposed the work of the Women's Reform Society. In fact, Philippine women's group even used the "Do you know the word shame? –Prostitution Tourism" slide show in their protest against sex-tourism when Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki visited the Philippines on January 8th, 1981.¹⁴⁸ In 1982, the members of the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism visited Japan and bought a copy of "Do you know the word shame? –Prostitution Tourism" and stated that "this slide show is contributing to the movement."¹⁴⁹ The effort of the anti-sex tourism movement in Japan also led to the revision of the Travel Agency Law in 1982. Travel agents were "prohibited from soliciting and providing services for the performance of acts prohibited by the laws in the places visited."¹⁵⁰

As the Woman's Reform Society gradually gained their influence among Asian countries, its perception of human rights changed. It began to embrace human rights after using the framework many times for both dealing with internal issues such as the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine, and international events including the sex tourism. In the 1980s, the process of

¹⁴⁸ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 812.

¹⁴⁹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 815.

¹⁵⁰ "VIII. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURE," The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human/child/initialreport/protection.html>.

changing the Purity Department into the Sex & Human Rights Department also shows how the concept of human rights was defined and accepted by the Woman's Reform Society. The increased contact between the Woman's Reform Society and women from other countries triggered the change within the organization and eventually boosted the organization's influence both in Japan and other Asian countries.

From Purity Department to Sex & Human Rights Department

At the Woman's Reform Society's National Convention in 1981, the head of the Purity Department, Shizuko Ōshima, proposed to establish a short-term emergency shelter for women regardless of race and visa status.¹⁵¹ The proposed name for the shelter was *Kakekomidera*, which literally means "temple to run into for refuge".¹⁵² In Edo Period (1603-1868), troubled wives sought refuge in places called *kakekomidera* until they were granted a divorce.¹⁵³ The shelter that Ōshima envisioned would provide services to both Japanese and foreign women. In the 1980s, the sex industry that targeted Japanese men shifted its focus from bringing Japanese men on sex tours abroad, to trafficking women from other Asian countries into Japan to work in the sex industry. At the same time, a large number of Asian women married Japanese men in the 1980s.¹⁵⁴ These new immigrant women often faced violence from their partners among other difficulties. Seeing the number of immigrant women increasing in Japan, Ōshima proposed to provide shelter for both Japanese women and immigrant women alike.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 793.

¹⁵² Yumi Wigers-Hasegawa, "Experts Cast Light on Female Empowerment in Edo Period," *The Japan Times*, accessed December 2, 2014 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/2004/06/19/announcements/experts-cast-light-on-female-empowerment-in-edo-period/#.VIUvv77ZpBU>.

¹⁵³ Wigers-Hasegawa, "Experts Cast Light on Female Empowerment in Edo Period."

¹⁵⁴ Melody Lu and Wen-shan Yang, *Asian cross-border marriage migration: demographic patterns and social issues*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010),157.

¹⁵⁵ Kyōfūkai, *Hyakunenshi*, 793.

Providing shelter for women is common throughout the history of the Woman's Reform Society. For example, The Jiai-Kan (Mercy Home) established in 1894, acted as lodging for working women and a place to educate prostitutes. Therefore, it did not face too many obstructions. The unconventional part of this year's National Convention was that Ōshima also proposed to change the name of the Purity Department because the word "purity" could cause feelings of uneasiness to women staying in the shelter. The Purity Department was previously named the *Fūzoku* Department. The term literally means "customs," which is a metaphor for sex service. In 1937, during the wartime purity movement, the *Fūzoku* Department was renamed as the Purity Department.¹⁵⁶ Since the day of the rename, the name Purity Department was never challenged for forty five years. Therefore, Ōshima's proposal to change the name was quite a surprise at that time. The members of the Woman's Reform Society could not make a decision regarding Ōshima's proposal to change the name of the Purity Department, so they continued to deliberate over the subject until finally approving a name change to Sex & Human Rights Department in 1985.

As the five year long debate within the organization suggests, this was not an easy decision to make for many members. The articles in the organization's magazine, *Fujin Shimpō*, show how the members of the Woman's Reform Society debated over the name change. Naming has always held a special place in the Woman's Reform Society, because a name can indicate a quintessential value of an organization. The switch from "purity" to "human rights" reflects the ideological change within the organization, hence demonstrating that the focus of the organization shifted from advocating for a specific group of women to protecting all women's human rights. Although the concept of human rights had been introduced to the Woman's

¹⁵⁶ Shizuko Ōshima, "'Junketu bu' no kaishō ni tuite," *Fujin Shimpō*, May, 1982, 19.

Reform Society in the 1960s, this was the first proposal to use the term “human rights” to name a department in the organization. Changing a department’s name in order to avoid discrimination against the women seeking help also demonstrates the organization’s respect for human rights, for it is an act that came out of seeing things from the women’s perspective not from the organization’s.

In 1982, the Purity Department proposed to change the department name into “Human Rights Department” at the annual national convention. In the *Fujin Shimpō* released in May 1982, the head of the Purity Department, Shizuko Ōshima, wrote an article explaining their proposal to change the name of the department. In the article, Ōshima stated that she wanted a new name that represented their willingness to support each other for the purpose of protecting people’s bodies, individuality, and life, and fully respected people’s right to live.¹⁵⁷ Another proposed name in 1982 was “Gender Discrimination Measure Department” and Ōshima claimed that she respected both names and eagerly awaited the final decision that people would make in the national convention.¹⁵⁸ Ōshima’s article demonstrates the attempt to incorporate human rights, a relatively modern idea, into the spirit of the organization. On the other hand, the proposed name “Gender Discrimination Measure Department” shows that the organization had not yet developed a standard in dealing with the overlapping parts between the women’s rights discourse and the human rights discourse. After all, Asian immigrant women in Japan were enduring gender based discrimination and deprivation of rights that are inherent to all human beings. Both “Human Rights Department” and “Gender Discrimination Measure Department” accurately describe the work that the department wanted to undertake.

¹⁵⁷ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” no kaishō ni tuite,” 19.

¹⁵⁸ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” no kaishō ni tuite,” 19.

The members of the Woman's Reform Society could not reach a conclusion in 1982, so they decided to continue deliberating over the issue. The same situation happened in 1983 when the Purity Department brought up the name change topic. Therefore, having failed to make a decision in two years, the Woman's Reform Society surveyed the members who participated in the national convention on this issue. Among the forty nine women who answered the survey, ten people rejected the name change, twenty people said they didn't mind the change as long as the name was suitable, and nineteen people provided the new name that they preferred.¹⁵⁹ The survey suggests that in 1983 there were two main factors that hindered the renaming, difficulty in creating a name that is universally acceptable and convincing people to give up what they believed to be tradition.

The report on the survey was published in the edition of *Fujin Shimpō* published in October 1983. It included people's definitions for "purity" and "human rights," and reasons to support or reject the proposed renaming of the Purity Department. This information is important because it not only shows how people understood the term "purity" but also how people envisioned the future of the Woman's Reform Society. The people who refused to change the name gave several reasons to keep the name Purity Department, including:

*"The center of the teaching that the Woman's Reform Society spread has to be purity."*¹⁶⁰

*"Purity is a tradition of the Woman's Reform Society. The current world situation's pollution resulted in the losing of the Purity Department and getting rid of the Purity Department is to affirm the corruption in society."*¹⁶¹

*"Purity is not only important to women but also important to men."*¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Shizuko Ōshima, "'Junketu bu' kaishō ankeito ni tuite," *Fujin Shimpō*, October, 1983, 22.

¹⁶⁰ Ōshima, "'Junketu bu' kaishō ankeito ni tuite," 23.

¹⁶¹ Ōshima, "'Junketu bu' kaishō ankeito ni tuite," 23.

¹⁶² Ōshima, "'Junketu bu' kaishō ankeito ni tuite," 23.

“I absolutely reject to the proposal because changing the name Purity Department is to pander to the current trend of the world.”¹⁶³

“According to most people’s understanding, “Human Rights Department” is too strong (hard).”¹⁶⁴

“Because it has been a familiar name for many years.”¹⁶⁵

These answers show that among the people who were against the renaming, the common belief was that the Woman’s Reform Society’s mission was to create a pure Japan. When the name, “Purity Department,” was created in 1937, purifying Japan was the mission of the Woman’s Reform Society. Japanese society in 1983 had changed drastically since 1937, but the changes may not have been perceived as positive for people who still believed in the ideology of creating a pure Japan. For example, although licensed prostitution was abolished shortly after WWII, the sex industry in Japan still continued to develop. For the people who disapproved of the changes in society, holding on to a familiar name could be their effort to resist the changes in Japan. These people did not see the need to change their organization in order to conform to the trend of the times because they thought the overall trend of society in 1983 was wrong.

On the other hand, the people who supported the name change were people who accepted the changes in the society. One reader once said that the world has changed to recognize that people can have serious relationships without getting married; therefore, it was best to change the name.¹⁶⁶ People believed that the meaning of purity in the 1980s was too narrow and biased; therefore, it was better to use a new name that conformed to the time.¹⁶⁷ This argument echoed to the debates between the Reform society and the Temperance Society in the sense that using a name that is not focused on one specific issue opens the organization to more potential

¹⁶³ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

¹⁶⁴ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

¹⁶⁵ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

¹⁶⁶ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

¹⁶⁷ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

challenges. The name, “Purity Department,” restricted the department’s activity with anti-prostitution and sex education. People who did not like the name “Purity Department” wanted to engage in different gender based discrimination and reproductive rights related issues.

A name that suggests a narrow focus was not considered ideal, but a name that carried too many meanings and responsibilities such as “Human Rights Department” was also being questioned. For example, some people wondered if “human rights” covered too many problems that were not previously dealt with in the Purity Department.¹⁶⁸ People also proposed names such as the “Women’s Welfare Department,” “Gender Consideration Department,” and “Purity Human Rights Department.” The most popular name was still “Human Rights Department” since eight people proposed this name in the survey. The differences in the answers show that there was no universal understanding on the word “purity” or “human rights” among the members of the Woman’s Reform Society.

Another issue related to this survey was Ōshima’s was surprise at finding out that more than half of the participants saw the name change as a positive event.¹⁶⁹ Ōshima’s reaction to the results indicates that she was prepared to see more rejection from the members. Why was Ōshima’s predication different from the actual results of the survey? The majority of people who participated were positive about the change, but then why did people not decide to make changes at the convention? One possible explanation is that members who participated in the survey were more inclined to change than the average member of the Woman’s Reform Society. The members that participated in the annual National Convention were elected from each local branch as outstanding members. It is possible that these members felt the need to change when

¹⁶⁸ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

¹⁶⁹ Ōshima, ““Junketu bu” kaishō ankeito ni tuite,” 23.

they participated in the Woman's Reform Society's activities, but other members who were not as active in that period did not feel the pressure that the society had placed on their organization. When the members participated in the convention, they had to honestly deliver the opinions of their branch, so the voices that Ōshima heard in convention was not as positive. The survey they conducted, however, was asking for their personal opinion, so they could express their support for change though it may differ from the general opinion of their home branch.

Although the survey only represented some members' ideas, it still helped Ōshima to figure out methods to convince the members of the Woman's Reform Society that the title, "Purity Department," was out of date and even detrimental to the organization in 1980s Japan. At the annual National Convention in 1984, Ōshima stated that the Purity Department had worked on creating a pure Japan for forty seven years, but now they wanted to create a Human Rights Department with the intention to make Japan a society where the happiness and human rights of prostitutes and Asian women who married into Japanese families could be ensured.¹⁷⁰ Ōshima's statement demonstrates the Woman's Reform Society's efforts to adapt to Japan in the 1980s. Human trafficking and international marriage increased and as the world became increasingly globalized, the Woman's Reform Society realized that they should support these migrant women the same way they supported Japanese women. Ōshima also addressed prostitutes' human rights in her statement, which shows that the organization had been reflecting on its past activism. The Woman's Reform Society had been providing shelter for prostitutes since before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, therefore, the language they used to address the prostitutes in the past did not show respect for their human rights. Ōshima's words suggest that

¹⁷⁰ Keiko Koide, "Watashi Ga Sei Jinkenbu Ni Haitta Goro," *Fujin Shimpō*, March, 1998, 1.

the organization was aware that the name “Purity Department” might cause uneasy feelings for the prostitutes that the organization intended to help.

Ōshima’s words convinced many people to believe that the change was necessary, but people were still not content with the name “Human Rights Department.” Some people argued that human rights were the focus of the entire organization and different departments had already engaged in activism regarding human rights issues. Therefore, calling one particular department the “Human Rights Department” would stop other departments from participating in human rights related events.¹⁷¹ For instance, the Peace Department had always been involved in Anti-Nuclear movements and Anti-War movements, which both address human rights issues in certain aspects. In addition, there were also voices calling for the inclusion of “gender discrimination” in the name.¹⁷² These opinions clearly suggest that by this point, the concept of human rights was already seen as one of the key values of the Woman’s Reform Society.

In February 1985, three months before the annual convention, Ōshima proposed another name “Sex & Human Rights Department” in *Fujin Shimpō*. She stated that the “purity” that was advocated for by the Woman’s Reform Society was rooted in respect for human rights.¹⁷³ The name “Human Rights Department,” however, did not correctly represent the activism of the Woman’s Reform Society. Therefore, the name that the department proposed in 1985 was “Sex & Human Rights Department.”¹⁷⁴ This name represented both the focus on human rights and gender related issues, and it was finally agreed upon by the Woman’s Reform Society during the national convention in 1985. Ōshima’s statement in February 1985 was intended to convince

¹⁷¹ Koide, “Watashi Ga Sei Jinkenbu Ni Haitta Goro,” 1.

¹⁷² Koide, “Watashi Ga Sei Jinkenbu Ni Haitta Goro,” 1.

¹⁷³ Shizuko Ōshima, “Shin Meishō Wa ‘Sei Jinkenbu’ Ni,” *Fujin Shimpō*, February, 1985, 29.

¹⁷⁴ Ōshima, “Shin Meishō Wa ‘Sei Jinkenbu’ Ni,” 29.

people to accept the Human Rights Department by claiming that human rights were the root of purity. This is the statement that the Woman's Reform Organization had always used when they needed to justify their implementation of the human rights concept. In 1968, Hatsue Nonomiya mentioned in an article that the Woman's Reform Organization's goals were always based on the notion of human rights.¹⁷⁵ It was a powerful statement that successfully convinced people to support the name "Sex & Human Rights Department." The name change from the Purity Department to the Sex & Human Rights Department marked the time when human rights was seen as one of the three main goals of the Woman's Reform Society.

Conclusion

The Shelter that Ōshima proposed to established triggered a change within the organization. In 1986, the shelter, House in Emergency of Love and Peace (HELP), was officially established. HELP was one of the first women's shelters in Japan that supported women from foreign countries. Since it provided services for women from different countries, HELP also gained international recognition. It is listed on the website of the Embassy of the United States, as one of the resources for victims of Domestic Violence.¹⁷⁶ English website [humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org) also listed HELP as a Non-governmental organization that combats human trafficking.¹⁷⁷ HELP's success increased the Woman's Reform Society's international influence.

The founding of HELP and the change in department name marked the organization's embrace of human rights. More importantly, it shows the organization's initiatives in participating in an international women's movement. Although in the 1960s the organization

¹⁷⁵ Nonomiya Hatsue, "Jinken no fukai imi o kagae yori," 7.

¹⁷⁶ "Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence," Embassy of the United States in Japan, accessed February 28, 2015, <http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/acs/tacs-resources-domestic.html>.

¹⁷⁷ "Non-governmental Organizations in Japan," accessed February 28, 2015, <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/japan/ngos>.

intended to redefine the meaning of human rights to avoid inconsistency in its activism and promote its own domestic political agenda, as it began to recognize the importance of human rights in international movements, it gradually changed the meaning of other important concepts and adapted them to the original meaning of human rights. The changing definition of human rights and the six years long process of debating the department name reflect the organization's maintained practice of careful language choice since its earliest time.

Epilogue

In its first one hundred years, the Woman's Reform Society remained relevant due to its careful choice of language, its ability to adapt to new times, and its balance between its international and domestic identity. It certainly kept these characteristics into the 21st century. In September 2000, it broke away from the WWCTU when the head of the WWCTU requested its members to take the temperance pledge. Today's Woman's Reform Society no longer promotes temperance and instead focuses on helping those who are affected by substance abuse. Leaving the WWCTU didn't stop the organization's connection with other women activities across the world. It is still active in participating in international conferences. Human rights issues and peace are still the main focuses of the organization. In fact, the members of the organization even co-founded ECPAT, an international organization that aims to end commercial sexual exploitation of children in 1990. It seems obvious that the organization has changed since its founding in 1886, but, the members of the organization would not describe their history with the word, "change." They prefer to use the word "evolve" to describe their relationship to the past of the Woman's Reform Society.

Since the Woman's Reform Society had always been a group that focused on words, it is interesting to look at the words that they prefer to use. The word "change" means becoming different, and it can become better or worse. On the other hand, "evolve" has the meaning of adapting to an environment, which usually means a positive change. Since the organization was able to make adjustments to itself based on different domestic and international political environments, the word "evolve" does capture its characteristic the best. However, it would be erroneous to believe that this evolution was merely a reactionary stance to global, or rather, western developments. Western ideas served as its tool to promote its own ideals within Japan

and in the Pacific. Once certain western ideas lost relevance in Japan, it modified or discarded these ideas to better fit a new purpose. Such was the case with temperance which it recently abandoned, and purity which it replaced with human rights in the 1980s.

Although it managed to survive as one of the oldest women's organizations until today, the Woman's Reform Society is facing new problems. As its members are getting older, it cannot attract younger members like it used to. Young women in Japan have formed their own organizations. In order to appeal to younger audiences, the Woman's Reform Society began to talk about the potential of switching to a new name. At the same time, it has begun to use cartoon figures in its brochure and on its official website. A recent popular TV series featured the story of a Japanese writer and translator, Muraoka Hanako, who was an active member of the Woman's Reform Society. Afterwards, the organization immediately organized events and featured magazines on the story of Muraoka Hanako and her involvement in the Woman's Reform Society. On an international scale, the members of the Woman's Reform Society continue to participate in international Christian conferences which at times may mean working with groups less inclined to vie for women's rights. Navigating cross-cultural relationships with such groups through its Christian identity will be an important task of the organization in the coming century. As an organization which will soon celebrate its 130th birthday, the Woman's Reform Society is still determined to evolve and remain relevant both domestically and abroad.

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