

NEWS Letter

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“An Evening with Our Female Cabinet Ministers” was held

“An Evening with Our Female Cabinet Ministers” was held at the Tokyo American Club on February 18, 2015. Thanks to the kind efforts of Ms. Masako Mori, a member of the House of Councillors, we had three female Cabinet ministers as our guest speakers at the seminar, which was also attended by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy, Ms. Tomomi Inada, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)’s Policy Research Council, Mr. Sadayuki Sakakibara, chairman of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), and Mr. Yasuchika Hasegawa, chairman of Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives). They expressed their expectations for the Japan Association for Female Executives (JAFE) and gave us strong encouragement.



Address by Guest of Honor, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe



One year has passed since I was invited to attend the new start of the Japan Association for Female Executives (JAFE) where I delivered an address. In order to ensure the continuous growth of the Japanese economy, it is essential that women demonstrate their full potential and play an active role in the society. I have consistently been advocating this idea. Creating a “society in which women shine” is a top priority issue for my administration. We will further accelerate our efforts to create an environment where women have an active role in all aspects of society, for instance, by eliminating childcare waiting lists and reforming relevant systems and services. Over the past two years, we have seen positive steps taken by private-sector companies with the three major economic organizations taking the lead. Effective from April 2016, all major Japanese companies are to set their action plans for the promotion of women’s participation. I believe that the waves of changes are now reaching each and every corner of Japanese society. We have duly secured financial resources to achieve this. In this big picture of reform, members of the JAFE can serve as excellent role models as all of you have rich experiences to share with those who follow in your footsteps. I count on you to play a leading role in fostering the next generation of female leaders. We must restore the glory of our country

as a central player in the world and we must create a society where women glow with brilliance so that they can serve as guiding light in the international community that continues to be plagued with confusion. In order to achieve those goals, now is the time for us to join forces and act together.



Opening remarks by the Initiator of the Seminar, Ms. Masako Mori, Member of the House of Councillors

Ms. Noriko Nakamura and I happened to sit next to each other on the Shinkansen bullet train and we hit it off and said to each other: "Let's make people see how hard and well female Cabinet ministers are working and let the ministers give courage to Japanese women." That was how we initiated our plan to hold today's seminar.

Under the leadership of Ms. Haruko Arimura, minister in charge of women's empowerment, a bill designed to promote active participation of women was submitted to the Diet. In April 2015, a new child-rearing support system will be launched. The number of women in management positions in central government agencies is now increasing at a pace three times faster than used to be. More than 30% of the new recruits employed by central government agencies this year were women. Since the launch of the Abe administration, the number of working mother aged between 25 and 40 has increased by more than 800,000. We want to accelerate those emerging trends. Within the LDP, Policy Research Council Chairman Inada is serving as the chairperson of the party's Headquarters for the Promotion of Women in Society and I am her deputy, whereas the Cabinet has four female ministers. All of us are working hard. We want people to see how we work, and we want them to join us so that we can together change Japan with our female power.



Ms. Yuriko Koike, Member of the House of Representatives (Honorary Member of JAFE)

Women are very talented. They are just as talented as men. So, I have been saying repeatedly that it is a waste to not take the full advantage of the power of women. At the same time, however, we, women, must continue to improve the quality of ourselves. We should listen to those who have made continuous efforts and garnered experience to become what they are today, and we must continue this initiative of sharing experiences in the future.

For that, I count on the JAFE to play an active role and become a driving force for Japanese women's success. Let's work together to bring out the full potential of Japan by activating the sleeping half of our ability.



Address by Guest of Honor, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Bouvier Kennedy

Since my arrival in Japan, I met so many dynamic, talented working women who are struggling with their work-life balance; and young women who are looking for their role models to show them their dreams can come true. Also, I met women who are local officials or Diet members, describing the difficulties of being women in politics, but are yet determined to recruit the next generation. And I met many young men who want to succeed in business but also succeed as husbands and fathers. Those require solving a childcare crisis, which is a challenge in the United States as it is here in Japan.

I deeply admire Prime Minister Abe's administrative policy speech in which he said, "we the national government, private enterprises, and local governments will work together to create an environment where it is easy for women to be dynamically engaged, to press ahead with the reform of the consciousness of our entire society, to do the best we can to eliminate childcare waiting lists, and to meet every need in raising our children." President Obama is also committed to this issue. "It is time" he said, "we stop treating childcare as a side issue, and start treating it like a national economic priority."

Today's event is important because the issue of women's economic empowerment is closely connected to the issue of women's political participation. And women's political participation is critical in addressing the challenges of childcare and eldercare; which will determine the future of our families, economy, and society. I know that the people gathered here today have the ideas, energy and commitment in addressing the issues. I look forward to working with all of you in the months to come.



Tomomi Inada, Member of the House of Representatives, Chairman of the LDP's Policy Research Council

Thirty years ago when I became a lawyer, not a single law firm offered to hire me, while my husband, who also became a lawyer, received many offers. So frustrated, I gathered my courage and asked someone I knew to hire me, and I was told: "We will hire you if you promise to remain unmarried for five years." It was such a time. Today, however, we are in an era where the prime minister says that greater participation of women is the key to revive Japan. The other day, I had an opportunity to deliver a speech in Washington D.C. and many people asked me how much effect the empowerment of Japanese women will have on Japan's GDP. This made me realize that the United States and many countries around the world are taking strong interest in the empowerment and participation of Japanese women. I would like to continue to work with you to further accelerate those developments.



Interview

Minister of Justice Yoko Kamikawa

Among politicians in the world, whom do you admire most?

John F. Kennedy

What is your ultimate goal as a politician?

Passing on to the next generation the good traditions of Japan inherited from our parents' generation along with something of value created by our generation; Fostering tomorrow's leaders to whom we can trust our future

How do you spend your holidays?

Home-cooking with my mother and daughters

What is your message to women in management positions?

Don't run away from hardships. Looking back at the hardships I experienced in the past, what I really feel now is that none of them have been in vain. I would say that hardships you experience before you become 50 years old will definitely help you in the years ahead. As you go through

various hardships, there will be a moment at which you realize you have entered a new phase or a moment at which you suddenly get a clear view and see a new world right in front of you. Those are the rewards you earned through the hardships and unmistakable evidence of your growth. For that, it is important that you have willingness and spirit to look for take on challenges to test your limits.

Excerpt from the speech by Minister of Justice Yoko Kamikawa

Whatever hardships and obstacles you may encounter will become your treasure when you look back at them later in your life. When you are faced with a challenge, you may feel overwhelmed—or at least that was how I was. However, when the time comes for you to look back on the passage of your life years later, you will find all of the hardships have turned into treasures. I want all of you, young people, to always remember that the hardship right in front



of you will be a great asset to enable you to make your dreams come true in the future, and work hard where you are. As for myself, I will treasure each and every day. And as the minister of justice whose mission is to embody equality before the law and the rule of law, I take on the mantle of traditions established through the long history of the Ministry of Justice. At the same time, I will keep my senses sharp to always be aware of the changes of the times and work on new roles and challenges for the ministry. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to take interest in the Ministry of Justice and its work.

Eriko Yamatani, Chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission (NPSC)

Among politicians in the world whom do you admire most?

Shinzo Abe

What is your ultimate goal as a politician?

Making laws that would relieve people from suffering and grief; Revising or making laws to lay a foundation for society where people can live safely with peace of mind and filled with happiness.

What is the greatest hardship you have experienced to date and how did you overcome it?

I experienced the loss of my husband and defeat in election at the same time. I managed to go through the difficult time with the help of my family and friends.

What is your message to women in management positions?

When in difficulty, endure with grace.

Excerpt from the speech by NPSC Chairperson Eriko Yamatani

Our life span will become longer. We will be living to 90 years or even 100 years. In the case of women, as they go through different stages of life and changes in their personal environment, there may be times when they can dedicate themselves to work or times when they need to focus on family tasks. When such times come, don't be upset. I want you to accept the situation in which you find yourself gratefully as a family person and also as a good citizen, a good neighbor, and a



member of the local community, or as a member of the workplace if you have a job. Be patient, endure with grace, and remember that endurance makes you stronger. One day you will realize that by making people around you happy, you have been making yourself happy. It would be wonderful if you could spend your days feeling thankful for that.

Haruko Arimura, Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment

What is your ultimate goal as a politician?

I want Japanese people, who are the sovereign of our country, and those who have been supporting me to feel that it is good to have me as a member of the Diet. I want to make this happen as soon as possible.

What is the greatest hardship you have experienced to date and how did you overcome it?

I have experienced the "greatest hardship" several times. I keep detailed records of how I felt in my worst and best times in the "notebook of my mind" and recall them from time to time so as to maintain a steady level of my work performance and keep a peaceful state of mind.

As a mother, what message are you conveying or trying to convey to your children?

I say "I love you!" or "Hey, you are the rising star!" when I call out to small children. By doing so, I can often pick up my pace.

What is your message to women in management positions?

By the strong will of Prime Minister Abe, the post of minister in charge of women's empowerment was newly created with an eye to the future of Japan. While keeping to the principle of placing the right people in the right place for both men and women, those of you, who have built up your credibility in society, are now serving as role models for the next generation to follow. And then, members of that generation will strengthen their ability and lead younger women. I would like to work together with you to realize and expand such chains of credibility.

Excerpt from the speech by Haruko Arimura, Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment

I have two children, one in elementary and the other in nursery. As I wash their clothes in the middle of the night, I feel frustrated and often ask myself: "What on earth am I doing?" However, I have set



lofty goals for myself, and while setting goals high, I also pursue realistic operations in my day-to-day life. By so doing, I will make each and every day meaningful by working with you in such a way that we can live up to people's expectations and contribute to the future of Japan. I would like to express my respect for Ms. Nakamura who provided the starting point for this seminar, Policy Research Council Chairman Inada, and Ms. Masako Mori who has worked more than anyone to realize this seminar.

Address by Guest of Honor, Keidanren Chairman Sadayuki Sakakibara

Last year, we called on our member companies to make a voluntary action plan to promote the appointment of women to executive and management positions. So far, more than 400 companies have developed such a plan with very ambitious goals. We will further expand this initiative to include all of our 1,300 member companies. Last week, we decided on the appointment of a female executive for the first time in Keidanren's 70-year history. I hope and expect that more women will be appointed to executive and management positions in Japanese companies and I am looking forward to the day when we will see a woman serve as the chairman and/or a vice chairman of Keidanren.



Address by Guest of Honor, Keizai Doyukai Chairman Yasuchika Hasegawa

According to The Second Machine Age, the invention of the steam engine in 1775 replaced physical work, the oldest form of labor dating back to the dawn of humanity, with mechanical power and we are now entering an era where computers will take over mental work or the ability to use our brains. When highly-skilled labor, which is a typical form of mental work, is replaced by artificial brains, we will have no choice but to rely on our intelligence, sensibility, and sixth sense. Needless to say, women excel men in these abilities. According to the author of the book, computers will surpass the human brain in capacity by around 2045. When this happens, women will have an overwhelming advantage over men. I do sincerely hope that the advent of the era of brilliant women will make even more brilliant and glorious.



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Please join us at
“Special JAFE Seminar with Night Viewing of Cherry Blossoms”

Date and time: Wednesday, April 1, 2015, 6 p.m.

Place: Tsunamachi Mitsui Club

Guests: Ms. Haruno Yoshida (President, BT Japan)

Ms. Mitsue Kurihara (Audit & Supervisory Board Member, Development Bank of Japan)

Ms. Asako Hoshino (Senior Vice President, Nissan Motor Corporation; Effective April 1)

Moderator: Ms. Yuriko Koike (Member of the House of Representatives)

Theme: Women's Power will Change the Japanese Economy

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