

Japan YWCA 100 Years

Striving for Women's Self-Reliance

1905 - 2005

Taken from

**日本YWCA
女性の自立をもとめて
1905-2005**

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Chapter I: YWCA Beginnings (1855 – 1909)	7
Chapter II: Awakening an Interest in the Society ((1910 – 1924)	8
Chapter III: Establishing an Organization (1925 – 1936)	9
Chapter IV: Under the War of Aggression and Colonization (1937-1941)	11
Chapter V: After the Beginning of the Japan/U.S. War (1942 – 1945)	12
Chapter VI: Making a Fresh Start after the War (1946 – 1949)	14
Chapter VII: Opposition to the Re-militarization of Japan (1950 – 1960)	15
Chapter VIII: Protest Against the Trends of the Times (1961 – 1970)	17
Chapter IX: Assuming an Anti-Nuclear Stance (1971 – 1984)	18
Chapter X: Choose Life – Deuteronomy 30:19 (1985 – 1994)	20
Chapter XI: Becoming Peacemakers (1995 – 2005)	21

PREFACE

One hundred years have now passed since the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), which had its birth in Great Britain in 1855, first raised its voice in the land of Japan. In this country where Christianity is not the predominant religion, women have borne witness to the fact that women and men are equal in the sight of God and have pursued self-reliance. To record this journey, a committee was organized to research and investigate surviving materials and first-hand accounts from senior Y members. After much discussion, the committee was able to bring together the Japan YWCA 100 Years: Striving for Women's Self-Reliance 1905 – 2005 for our 100th anniversary.

Carrying a number of issues that are present in today's society, the YWCA of Japan is charged with the responsibility of moving into our next 100 years as the "salt of the earth and light of the world". To enable as many people around the world as possible to be aware of this, we have translated the overviews and short historical background statements from each chapter of the book into English and present it here as a summary of the first 100 years of the YWCA of Japan. We are deeply grateful to Margaret Warren who has so graciously translated the material for us.

Mihoko Ejiri
Chair of Board of Trustees
Japan Young Women's Christian Association
July 2006

Chapter I: YWCA Beginnings (1855-1909)

In the mid-19th century and even before, women, especially those who were disenfranchised, were being tossed around by the winds of the times. Surprisingly, women themselves initiated the movement to support and aid their beleaguered sisters.

When the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) was founded, Great Britain was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and Japan was in the middle of the Meiji Restoration. These were both times of turbulent change.

In the mid-1800's when young women were fleeing to the cities from rural areas because of the Industrial Revolution, two groups with the name YWCA were formed to offer them assistance. The first was a prayer circle to offer spiritual support, and the second was a group to provide housing and activities for these women. In 1876, the leaders of these two groups joined together and decided to combine their efforts, thus creating the YWCA of Great Britain.

From its beginnings, the YWCA was a Christian, protestant, ecumenical organization based on volunteer leadership. Those special characteristics have continued through the years.

The World YWCA was founded in 1894, and its first Council meeting was held in 1898. Around this time, protestant missionaries living in Japan saw the need for a YWCA in Japan, and requested that the World YWCA send a staff person to begin preparations. They wanted to provide a program to help young women stand on their own two feet and also to help the women factory workers who were living and working in extremely grievous conditions.

In 1903, Teresa Morrison from the YWCA in North America came to Japan and soon after that the World YWCA sent Caroline McDonald of Canada. With the arrival of these two women, preparations for the establishment of the YWCA of Japan moved into full swing. The magazine, *Meiji no Joshi* (Meiji Girls), was published, and the women set forth the principle of Christian identity through harmony.

The National Board of the YWCA of Japan was established in October 1905. The first order of business was to hold an international week of prayer utilizing the same theme YWCA members around the world were using. On November 25th of that same year the opening ceremony for the Tokyo YWCA was held in grand fashion. Here also the purpose of the YWCA, which was "to work for the advancement of women, concentrating on their hearts, bodies, and spirits", was lifted up for all those who attended. With Umeko Tsuda as president, the Tokyo YWCA opened a dormitory for women.

The first big program was a spiritual retreat for students. Michiko Kawai, who had been greatly moved by a training event she attended in the United States, led the planning and implementation for the event. It was held in July 1906 at Aoyama Jogakuin (Aoyama Girls' School) with 165 young women students in attendance. Through encounters and study, these young women examined themselves and looked deeply into social issues of Japanese society. Michiko Kawai did an excellent job at the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) convention that was held in Tokyo in 1907, and attention was focused on the YWCA. As a result of lectures and Bible study sessions that were held in mission schools around the country, a number of school YWCAs were formed.

Local YWCAs in Japan were run by Japanese women, and soon Hanako Ibuka was elected National President. Michiko Kawai became the Japanese General Secretary. Since a majority of the Japanese members and staff members had very little if any experience with the movement, women staff from abroad, all who had received professional training, were sent out to guide the management and administration of the associations.

During this time:

With the promulgation of the Constitution for the Empire of Japan, Japan became the first constitutional nation in the "Orient", it moved into the modern world with industry moving forward at a fast pace using the slogans "Civilization and Enlightenment" and "Rich Country and Strong Army". However, as the description "Meiji Restoration" implies, revival of the Emperor System was at its axis. Westernization and Ultra nationalism were characteristics symbolic of "The Imperial Rescript on Education" of 1890.

As a result of Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1895), Korea became a Japanese protectorate and China ceded Taiwan to Japan. As it approached the 20th Century, Japan declared war against Russia, the giant to the north. It defeated Russia and the next year the two nations signed the Treaty of Portsmouth (Russo-Japanese Peace Treaty). In this treaty, Russia ceded the railway lines in southern Manchuria to Japan, and it also turned over the Liaodong Peninsula and the southern part of the island of Sakhalin to Japan. However, at an anti-pacification gathering at the Hibiya Central Hall, Japanese citizens rioted criticizing the treaty as weak-kneed.

The year after the Japan-Korea Amalgamation Treaty (1910) was signed, a Special High Division was established in the Metropolitan Police Department that dealt with labor strikes, explosives and the censorship of newspapers, magazines, publications and inscriptions. After the High Treason Incident involving Shusui Kotoku (a radical journalist turned anarchist), the Special High Police Division was established throughout all the prefectures.

Chapter II: Awakening an Interest in the Society (1910-1924)

About five years after its beginnings, the work of the YWCA of Japan took hold and rapidly expanded and developed.

Soon after its founding, the YWCA turned its attention to working women. The number of women who worked increased at a rapid pace, but the working environment was poor. This was especially true for women factory workers because as industrialization expanded, young women were being forced to live and work in miserable conditions. The main reason international staff members wanted to establish YWCAs in the first place was to help women working in factories. The YWCA was not permitted to go directly into the factories, but the Tokyo YWCA was able to hold lectures at a spinning factory in a working-class neighborhood. These lectures provided spiritual comfort for the young women workers through Bible study and hymn singing. Although the YWCA was unable to improve the women's working conditions, it helped the women workers feel a greater satisfaction in their work. Ironically, this proved to be to the profitable advantage of the factory owners.

In 1913, the Tokyo YWCA began its Traveler's Friend program where they cared for starving young women who were forced to come to Tokyo from the north for economic reasons. They also started groups for nurses and housemaids, offered childcare for laborers, and initiated a unique program for migrant women. The Yokohama YWCA started a study group for women in transit (going to work in the United States), providing precautions about life there and negotiating with shipping companies to employ a woman who would be in charge of the women passengers. This was an attempt to help women who had no knowledge of the different culture they were about to enter. The Japanese-American YWCA in San Francisco where the women would disembark received these travelers and taught them about American customs. A program similar to the one in

Yokohama led to the founding of a YWCA in Kobe, another busy port city in Japan.

Japan didn't suffer any direct damage from the First World War that started in 1914, but it was one of the conquering nations. Following the lead of her European sister associations, the YWCA of Japan became involved in providing aid for refugee children in Armenia and comfort for Japanese troops in Siberia. They also attempted unsuccessfully to give aid to refugees in Siberia. Margaret Marsh went to Siberia at the request of the American Red Cross and subsequently resigned as international general secretary.

A variety of activities were energized by staff training. The Tokyo YWCA completed the construction of its own building. It also promoted the building of a lounge for the Peace Exposition, and the establishment of Fujioka-so, a dormitory and training facility in Gotemba. The Great Kanto Earthquake did not stop this energy as YWCA members overcame the burning of their building and developed and expanded their relief activities, moving out farther into the Tsukishima area to provide assistance. However, they closed their eyes to the groundless massacre of a large number of Koreans living in Japan.

During this time:

The Emperor Meiji died in 1912, and the Taisho Era, which created a different atmosphere from the Meiji Era, began. Japan was the country that profited from the First World War (1914-1918). While European powers were engaged in the war, Japan built ships and exported various goods and munitions. By the end of the war, the Japanese economy was booming. It took the side of the Allied Forces (Great Britain and France) as it declared war against Germany. Japan conducted a token attack on Chingtao (property of Germany) and received a mandate from the League of Nations to take control of Micronesia, turning it into a military base.

The society entered the Taisho Democracy era with a constitutional protection movement. Beginning with the founding of Joshi Daigaku (Women's University) in 1918, citizens' movements including the suffrage movement and buraku kaiho (the liberation movement for discriminated communities) became very active. The rice riots that sprung up naturally spread throughout the entire country. As revolutionary movements sprang up and moves for national liberation advanced around the world, Japan experienced a racial movement for Korean independence (March 1, 1919), the May 4th Movement in China, and the spread of Anti-Japanese movements. While the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923) destroyed the old, it advanced the era of the commoner, but also caused great bloodshed among Koreans and Socialists.

Chapter III: Establishing an Organization (1925-1936)

As the YWCA of Japan grew, it began to take the shape of an organization. The first National Convention was held in 1925, and a constitution was adopted. The National Board was also established which organized specialized training for staff in local YWCAs. They also sent representatives to the World Council. The Tokyo YWCA founded Nojiri Camp.

When Michiko Kawai, the woman who had made such tremendous contributions during the founding period, resigned as General Secretary, the YWCA expected a great setback. However a small number of outstanding leaders used this opportunity to move toward leadership by consensus, and Koto Yamamoto became Kawai's successor. The name of the position changed from "general secretary" to "executive secretary".

The social situation precipitated by a big slump in business (the Great Depression) and the impoverishment of agriculture gave new energy to Marxism. As it became more active, Marxism made inroads into Student

YWCA circles. Its proponents raised questions about the way the society functions and fueled an air of crisis. In some cases, students were drawn into groups waving banners for “Socialized” Christianity. The YWCA lost its enthusiasm for the evangelical Gospel message. They questioned the way Christians ignored the poor, and charged them with negligence. At the same time, the YWCA indicated that Marxism was incompatible with Christianity. Socialized Christianity pointed out how vital it was to fight against evil, but in response to that, the YWCA took the stance that the saving power of the cross of Jesus Christ came first, and because of this belief, persons are permitted to love God and their neighbor.

Involvement with factory workers, a long-held desire for the YWCA, began with a survey of conditions in the factories and agricultural communities. Hoping to share in what was happening in these places, the Nagoya Industrial Center (Tomo no Ie – Friend’s Home) was established. As a counseling center for women with problems, the working women could study together and be nurtured by friendship and faith in this Friend’s Home. The Osaka YWCA established a night school for women opening up the possibility for working women to attend a higher-level school.

The Manchurian Incident in 1931 cast a dark shadow over the activities of the YWCA. The national organization did all it could to distance itself from the stance of the government and military, deciding to run very few articles about Japan’s war in the Joshi Seinenkai (Young Women’s World) magazine. At the same time, they clarified that their position was as an international organization seeking peace. At the National Convention that was held immediately after the Manchurian Incident, they issued a proclamation advocating world peace, thus proclaiming their anti-war stance. International groups, including the World YWCA, raised their voices in protest to the nationalistic actions of the Japanese government. While recognizing how hard it would be to oppose Japan’s tactics, the YWCA of Japan endeavored to continue as an international peace organization through a variety of programs including studying the relationship between Christianity and the nation, implementing a friendship program with China, and hosting an international celebration for working women.

During this time:

The death of Emperor Taisho (1925) brought the beginning of the Showa Era. The mood of peace and stability that had been brought on with the maturity of the Taisho Democracy was replaced by militarism. With the Manchurian Incident (1931), Japan took a new step in its war tactics in Asia. The Regular Election Law (where regularly employed men aged 25 and older could vote) was passed (1924). Two weeks later, the Maintenance of Public Order Law was passed, and leaders of political movements for reform in the nation were put to death. The proletarian author, Takiji Kobayashi was tortured to death under this law.

After the London Naval Conference (naval disarmament) in 1930, a sniper shot Prime Minister Hamaguchi and Prime Minister Inukai was assassinated (May 15). The era of government by party politics was over, and the military took prominence. Among the fourteen prime ministers who held office between 1932 and 1945, only four were civilians.

The Manchurian Incident began when Japanese extremists accused Chinese terrorists of bombing a railway bridge (Japanese-owned) in Manchuria and then ordered an all-out offensive in retaliation. The result was the creation of Manchukuo, a Japanese puppet state. This was followed by the withdrawal of the League of Nations in 1933 and the February 26th incident (this wiped out the pro-peace factions in Japan strengthening the militarist tendencies). The discrepancies and instability within Japan led to the deceptive move by Japan to “free Asia”, with the deification of the Emperor and a strengthening of thought control.

Chapter IV: Under the War of Aggression and Colonization (1937-1941)

On July 7, 1937 Chinese and Japanese forces clashed outside Beijing and the Sino-Japanese war began. The implementation of this war swept all of Japan under severe controls as the entire country was required to cooperate in the war effort. In order to pull the feelings of the people together, the government instituted State Shinto where the emperor was worshiped as a god. This was different from the regular Shinto religion already existing at the time. In addition, they enacted the Religious Organization Law in 1939, stipulating that all religious groups must devote themselves to the nation. The Ministry of Education called for Christian groups to be “spiritually cooperative”, and each group was under strict surveillance with “guidance” offered when deemed appropriate. To get a grip on people’s ways of thinking, the Special Police watched individuals, and Christians as well as the general society were forced to deal with the dilemma of “The Emperor or God” in daily life. This was the beginning of the period of suffering for the YWCA as a Christian organization.

The YWCA of Japan endeavored to maintain its international and Christian character clearly stating its message of international peace. However, in an attempt to change its identity as a group with ties to the U.S. and Europe, it decided to stop all exchange with the World YWCA and WSCF at a national YWCA extraordinary committee meeting in September 1940. It informed the world headquarters of this decision and at the same time, in Japan it announced that though it had a name similar to organizations in other countries, YWCAs in Japan were completely independent. It asked all foreign members and staff personnel to resign and return to their own countries. With these actions, all programs with international connections disappeared and in the end, the YWCA lost its essence as an international organization.

This national YWCA extraordinary committee continued to affirm its Christian beliefs until the end, and the YWCA did its best to carry out all of the Christian-related programs that it could, such as the Week of Prayer. However, it was forced to cancel all conferences and retreats in 1941. The YWCA’s transmission of the Christian message became obscure as it finally compromised with State Shinto, which held that the Emperor was god. In the end, bowing to the logic that national persons of merit should naturally be offered a sense of gratitude by the country’s citizens, the YWCA put together a pamphlet in favor of visits to the shrine.

While at the same time it shut down all international programs and conferences, the YWCA actively participated in the event celebrating the 2600th year of the Imperial Calendar sponsored by the Japan Christian Council. All physical education programs and working women’s programs, the YWCA’s traditional activities, were incorporated into the government’s agenda. Beginning with universities, the government established one patriotic group in each school into which the YWCAs were merged, and thus independent activities became non-existent.

The acts of aggression and colonization by Japan had an effect on the World YWCA Council. The YWCA of Korea became a part of the YWCA of Japan, and because of the establishment of Manchuria as a country, the Mukuden YWCA became directly related to the World YWCA.

In this way, the YWCA of Japan continued to be as active as possible as Japan moved toward the beginning of its war with the United States, although it lost its identity as an international organization and its character as a Christian organization became distorted.

During this time:

Outside Beijing stands the Lugou Stone Bridge, a beautiful bridge called “probably the most unique bridge in the world” by Marco Polo more than 600 years ago. Fighting between Chinese and Japanese armies started on July 7, 1937 across this bridge, thus beginning the all-out war between China and Japan that lasted for eight years. On December 13, Nanking fell, and for the first time Japan had conquered the capital of a nation. The Japanese people were swept up by the joy of such a victory. However, the Nanking Massacre that occurred in the shadows of this victory was not made known to anyone.

Slogans such as "New Order for East Asia", "Holy War for East Asia", "Imperial Rule Assistance", and "Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere" were issued to stimulate the stagnant spirit of the Japanese people. Japan had dispatched hundreds of thousands of troops to the Asian mainland, and though the people did not know it, the war was already in progress.

During the period between 1937 and 1941, more than 500,000 Japanese soldiers died and the military expense had climbed to 223,000,000 yen. Boggled down in the quagmire of the Sino-Japanese War and searching for its closure, Japan plunged into a gigantic war with the United States when it bombed the U.S. Fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941.

Chapter V: After the Beginning of the Japan/U.S. War (1942-1945)

Following the beginning of the Japan/U.S. War, even the YWCA’s Young Women’s World became drastically more supportive of Japan’s agenda. YWCA President Tamaki Uemura even showed support for the war in a sermon she preached. However, while urging service to the nation, she did not stop urging listeners to have faith in God. Even at YWCA committee meetings, they sang the national anthem, read the imperial rescript, and paid homage to the Emperor.

In the Christian sector, the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan) was born in June 1941. In September 1942, the YWCA was strongly urged by the Ministry of Education to become affiliated with the Kyodan. After that time, it pledged as one of its objectives to do its best to mobilize Christian young women to serve their country until the war was over. When the YWCA affiliated with the Kyodan, the Young Women’s Christian Association of Japan Foundation was dissolved, and it became a “maintenance foundation”.

All YWCA activities became incorporated as service to the nation, and physical education directors were sent to factories and companies as a part of the national citizens’ health movement. Every YWCA building became a workplace for patriotism, and staff members went out to factories and agricultural communities to do physical labor as a service.

In July 1943, at the joint request of the Ministry of Education and the Kyodan, the Tokyo YWCA held a staff-training event in which 54 members and staff personnel participated. The purpose of this event was the same for all Christian churches and organizations, that was to cooperate with the national agenda, but the YWCA showed a bit of resourcefulness in its training.

Going into 1944, bombs were being dropped on Tokyo and other localities, and any anti-war sentiment

was suppressed even more. Paper was rationed, and the Joshi Seinen Kai (Young Women's World) continued to be published only by omitting or combining issues. Its last issue came out in March 1944. In this issue, national president Tamaki Uemura wrote, "in answer to the demands of Japan's national policy, we should give our all – our facilities, supplies, time, and human resources – to our country". Around the same time, the national headquarters of the Japan Christian Council made the decision to set up a research room and begin study aimed at "preparing for the next era".

As the bombing became fiercer, it became extremely difficult to hold committee meetings, so that the executive committee meeting held on April 20, 1945 became the last. There were many who felt that the YWCA had no choice but to stop all of its activities, but they decided to continue to do what they could during the time they had left. What actually happened, however, was that they could do nothing and the offices of the Japan Christian Council in Shinanomachi were forcibly evacuated and demolished. The Tokyo YWCA Sekiguchi Dormitory to which they moved was burned to the ground on May 25th by an aerial attack. The Tokyo YWCA building was being used by the Japanese Navy, and as local YWCA buildings were also unusable, activities came to a complete halt.

During the time the Japan Christian Council and the Tokyo YWCA had their temporary offices in the home of General Secretary Shizue Hikaru, the war came to an end.

During this time:

The battlefield on the Pacific War spread endlessly. In February 1941, Japanese troops occupied Singapore and systematically massacred ethnic Chinese Singaporeans in the Sook Ching Massacre. In February 1943, they lost the island of Guadalcanal as they were forced to withdraw. However, the headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army did not call this a "back down" but rather "strategic anabasis" meaning a change in strategy to sidetrack the eyes of the people. Countries that had been European colonies such as Burma and Indonesia were forced to cooperate in the Japanese war effort under the slogan of "Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere".

In 1943, in order to hide the signs of impending defeat, Japan gathered stronger Asian puppet representatives for the "Great East Asia Conference". At the same time, Japanese people were forced to endure the oppressiveness and austerity of the militarized life in order to win the war. The economy was restructured onto a war footing, and the number of unemployed who had worked in non-war industries increased rapidly. Under the citizens' labor laws, women were also mobilized, but by this time even this was inadequate. Voices were heard advocating the decisive action of putting all unmarried women to work to bring about an end to the war.

Islands such as Attu and Saipan were surrendered one after the other, and as signs of Japan's impending defeat became stronger, the first kamikaze pilots were launched on Leyte (Philippines). In March 1945, intense air raids were launched on Tokyo by U.S. forces, and in April U.S. forces landed on Okinawa. After the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, Japan finally accepted the Potsdam Proclamation, which demanded unconditional surrender.

Chapter VI: Making a Fresh Start after the War (1946-1949)

The YWCA of Japan had lost its building and the whereabouts of many members were unknown, but its recovery after the war was rapid.

Members who could be contacted gathered in October 1945. They drew up a course of action to make a fresh start establishing their identity as Christian, international, and women-centered. They decided to engage themselves in a wide range of educational activities. As the country moved from a militaristic form of government to a democratic form, people needed basic education about what democracy was. They worked with elementary school teachers to help them understand this. They also published a paper, *Josei Shinbun* (Women's Paper) for general consumption. With the cooperation of the Occupation Forces, they began a number of exciting programs including international activities, radio messages, etc.

The first program after the war was to observe the revival of the World Week of Prayer. They prayed to God for forgiveness for their sins of cowardliness and lack of action, but at that point they were not yet aware of their abdication of responsibility as a Christian organization for cooperating in the war of aggression. Among the membership, however, some women questioned whether YWCA leaders who had cooperated with the military during the war could undertake leadership now, even psychologically. Another incentive was provided when YWCA President Tamaki Uemura was in the United States and met a Philippine victim of the Japanese aggression in that country and became aware of the sin for which she was implicated.

On their return trip home from the World YWCA Council meeting that had been held in China, many national YWCA leaders stopped off in Japan to attend a World Women's Roundtable Meeting, and it drew much attention as it was the first international meeting in Japan after the war. The fact that Ms. Uemura visited the United States so soon after the war also drew surprise and hope from the general public. Because of these international connections it exhibited, the YWCA drew the attention of the wider society and this became a great impetus as it moved forward. One after the other, YWCAs sprang up across the country, but different from the situation before the war, most of these YWCAs had neither buildings nor staff.

Beginning in 1948, a YWCA leadership-training program was initiated, participation in international meetings was once again possible, and the organization again entered a period of development and growth. Within this movement, students were drawn to Christianity with interest and anticipation. The Tokyo Christian Student Group that sprang up immediately after the war folded, but the YWCA with its organizational strength set up a Student Division in 1946. YWCAs were formed in each university and at the same time a bond among all of the YWCAs across the country was forged. Co-ed universities emerged, and a number of YMCA Student Groups held joint programs with the YWCA groups. Training sessions were held for the advisors of the women's student groups. In addition national training events and regional conferences were begun.

During this time:

Following Japan's surrender, U.S. military forces arrived on Japanese soil on August 26, 1945 to begin the occupation. In October, the disarmament of 7,400,000 Japanese troops was completed, and the occupation forces put forth a memorandum concerning the limitations of the freedom of government, human rights, and faith. They also ordered agricultural land reform and abolished the Maintenance of Public Order Law and also the Special High Police. On January 1, 1946, the emperor issued a proclamation stating that he was human and not a god. The New Constitution was promulgated on November 3. However, with the state of poverty that existed, the black market ran rampant. This was especially true in the cities where the shortage of food became extremely serious. 250,000 people attended the Food May Day celebrated in May 1946.

On the positive side, women were granted the right to vote for the first time in the first election of the post-war period (April, 1946). In that election, 39 women representatives were elected, and in 1947, coed education was begun in public schools. Truly this was a new era for women in Japan. Also in 1946, the Soviet forces began to pullout. In December 1948, Hideki Tojo and six others were found guilty of war crimes and hung.

Chapter VII: Opposition to the Re-militarization of Japan (1950-1960)

Japan's pacifism didn't last long after their defeat in the war. The YWCA greatly changed its character from "community service" before the war to "in search of peace" after the war as they worked to maintain peace.

The United States offered a Peace Treaty and the Japan/U.S. Security Treaty as a package. Because Japan was a nation at peace, the YWCA pushed for an overall peace treaty, and from 1951 when the Security Treaty was signed, they embraced a strong desire for peace. With the resolve that never again would they engage in the nightmare of war that had ended only five years ago before, the YWCA held a Youth Forum calling for peace, they worked to establish women's position in society, and they also held programs for female survivors of the war and also for the disabled. They exerted every effort to build a peaceful society. After the newspaper Women's Paper the YWCA had published for all women readers, not just for members was discontinued because of financial problems, a newspaper YWCA was published primarily for members in order to provide study materials for the anti-remilitarization movement.

In 1955 on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary, the YWCA made the decision to become financially independent, no longer requesting support from the World YWCA. Though their contributions were miniscule, they were able to participate in the World YWCA mutual assistance program. As a part of the 50th Anniversary celebration, they held an exhibition on Lifelong Health for Women. They also held the Asian Women's Conference and the YWCA National Convention.

Japanese society was greatly shocked in 1955 when the U.S. tested a hydrogen bomb in the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. The YWCA sent materials showing the horrors of nuclear warfare to the World YWCA along with a plea for "Banning the Bomb". These had a great effect on World YWCA-affiliated countries. Japan's Student YWCAs also sent out messages to Christian Student Movements around the world calling for a ban of the bomb. They received responses from Christian students in the U.S. expressing their support. The World YWCA Council meeting in 1955 adopted the Declaration for Peace in which they pledged to work for peace and world order as an indication of their obedience to God.

While the international society called for peace, Japan began to use the education system to gain popular

support of re-militarization. In 1954, two education laws were adopted for the purpose of controlling education. The revision of another law strengthened the authority of the police, thus awakening the fear of encroachment on human rights. At their National Convention, the YWCA opposed this legislation, and the local YWCAs across the country tirelessly mounted opposition for one month during its deliberation. The legislation subsequently was passed by Japan's Diet (Parliament).

1960 was the year of the revision of the Japan/U.S. Security Treaty. Proclaiming that the Security Treaty was in opposition to the Peace Constitution, voices in the National YWCA Executive Committee called for the YWCA to oppose the Security Treaty. However, because a few voices called for restraint, the Executive Committee refrained from publicizing a statement opposing the adoption of the Security Treaty. It asked the government for more adequate discussion before the adoption. They energetically engaged in a signature campaign against the ratification leaving it to the decision of individual members as to how to participate. Over 10,000 signatures were collected in a very short time. Although more than 200,000 people filled the area around the Diet Building in a massive public demonstration, on June 19 the Security Treaty was automatically ratified. In preparation for what was to come, the YWCA continued study programs to deepen its awareness of the social situation and decided to let the world know what was going on in Japan.

During this time:

The Korean War erupted in June 1950, and the U.S. Occupation Forces created the National Police Reserve thus pulling Japan into the U.S. anti-communist strategy. This meant that at the time when the Cold War between the U.S and the Soviet Union began, Japan became a part of the Western camp. As part of the U.S. Military Assistance Plan, Japan was given the responsibility of serving as the forward base for the U.S. military in the Far East. The San Francisco Peace Treaty (Treaty of Peace with Japan) and the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (U.S./Japan Security Treaty) were established, and the Occupation came to a close.

Under the Japan Peace Treaty, Korea gained its independence, and Japan surrendered its hold on Taiwan, the Northern Territories, and the Pacific Islands. Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands became trust territories of the United States. According to the U.S./Japan Security Treaty, Japan offered the U.S. military bases and the right to station troops on these bases, and Japan's kickback was that these would provide protection for Japan. However, citizen support for the Peace Constitution was strong, and the peace movement and the "ban the atomic bomb" movement emerged, and from these came the ideology of "unarmed neutrality" and a call for "all out peace". Japan joined the United Nations in 1956 and with the reestablishment of relations with the Soviet Union, it came back into the international society. On the domestic side, the Japan Socialist Party was formed, while the unification of the Conservative Coalition led to the creation of the Liberal Democratic Party. This new alignment of the parties became to known as the "1955 System."

The voices of "pro-Constitution" supporters were heard all across the country in opposition to the military bases and the Security Treaty in 1960, the year of the revision of that treaty. When in May, the New Security Treaty was railroaded through the Diet, the "Anti-Security Treaty" movement spread into "Protect our Democracy" and "Protect our Parliamentary System" movement.

Chapter VIII: Protest Against the Trends of the Times (1961-1970)

With the polarization of the Soviet Union and the United States in the beginning of the 1960's, nuclear testing started up again. The YWCA called for a ban on the testing and urged the YWCA of the U.S.A to join in this struggle. The World YWCA Council prepared anti-nuclear materials, but because a representative from the YWCA of Japan, Ayako Sekiya, called for the ban of all nuclear power including that used for peaceful purposes, this caused a debate with the people who saw the peaceful use as acceptable.

Calls for the revision of the Peace Constitution became stronger in Japan, and people realized that their silence could be taken as a vote for revision. The YWCA organized a seminar to study The Christian and the Constitution. This was the beginning of the Constitution Day Seminar, which has continued yearly for almost 40 years.

In 1966, February 11 was set apart as National Foundation Day (taken from the ancient mythical calendar) and beginning the next year, efforts multiplied to move toward nationalism and militarization, including bills being presented to the Diet to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine. Issues such as the Japan/U.S. Security Treaty, the Vietnam War, the Reversion of Okinawa, etc. were born out of the world military strategy of the U.S., and knowing that Japan was a part of this, the opposition movement grew. At the expanded National Board Meeting in 1970, for the first time the YWCA as an organization made the decision to oppose the Security Treaty.

The late 1960's were filled with student unrest, and this was a time when values of all sorts were reexamined. In the YWCA, the issue of membership qualifications was restudied. It was decided at the 1970 National Convention to abolish the difference between Christian (regular) and non-Christian (associate) membership, a difference that had existed since the inception of the YWCA in Japan. One reason for this was a new understanding of the church itself, but it was not easily understood, and many members expressed anxiety about the YWCA losing its identity as a Christian organization.

The Student YWCA went through major changes in the 1960's. During the first half of the decade, it had been extremely active with the study project The Life and Mission of the Church, a project of the World Student Christian Federation giving it new life and energy. Student programs jointly sponsored by the YWCA and the YMCA attracted crowds of students. Political relationships between Japan and Korea were not good, but Christian students in both countries strengthened their fellowship and exchange.

However, during the latter half of the 1960's, Japanese society was engulfed in change. Student YWCAs no longer attracted students. Turmoil erupted on the university campuses, and the university authorities introduced riot police to remove the students with no concern for the issues students were raising. Christian universities were no exception, neither were schools that had Student YWCAs. Some of these universities were severely influenced by the campus movements.

The YWCA Student Committee realized in 1968 that there was a huge gap between the goals of the national student committee and the programs in affiliated schools. In July 1970 an emergency national student committee reassessed the national movement, but came to the decision that the reason for existence no longer matched the YWCA goals, and so they voted unanimously to disband the Student YWCA as a national movement. The Student Division of the YWCA of Japan was also abolished, and the Student YWCA, which had been an important arm of the national organization since its inception, disappeared. However, the advisors

of the secondary school YWCAs persisted in continuing the Junior-Senior High YWCAs. Since that time, study seminars for these advisors and regional conferences for junior-senior high school YWCA members have continued to be held.

During this time:

In 1960, a plan for the doubling of personal income came out, and Japan entered a period of rapid economic growth. Ninety-four countries were represented at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, as Japan exhibited its postwar recovery and re-emerged as one of the major powers of Asia. By 1965, almost all households had black & white TVs, refrigerators, and washing machines. Next came the “three Cs” – cars, color TVs, and coolers. Though the acquisition of these things approached the saturation point, the myth of economic growth went unchallenged until 1968 because of an increase in governmental investment in the public sector and exports. That year, Japan’s GNP rose above Germany and the United Kingdom to become second only to the United States.

In the meantime, the U.S. began bombing North Vietnam (1965), and the military bases on Okinawa became the forward-most point for the assault. Earlier, a committee was formed in 1960 for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, an action that energized the Okinawa Reversion Struggle. In 1968 a B29 bomber crashed and burned in Okinawa, and this incident plus the protest against the signing of the Security Treaty in 1970 added more fuel to the struggle. The Japan/Korea Treaty and the Status of Forces Agreement related to Korean residents in Japan were signed in 1965. The 60’s and early 70’s were marked by radical elements of the society including student protests and a grassroots movement to “Bring Peace to Vietnam!” Four major environmental pollution cases (Kumamoto Minamata Disease [mercury poisoning], Niigata Minamata Disease, Toyama Itai Itai [cadmium poisoning] Disease, and the Yotsukaichi Pollution Lawsuit demonstrate the seriousness of environmental pollution in Japan at that time.

Chapter IX: Assuming an Anti-Nuclear Stance (1971-1984)

At the 17th National Convention in 1970, the YWCA of Japan marked a historic turning point. First, it eliminated the distinction between regular and associate members. Second, it raised Assuming an Anti-Nuclear Stance as a Program Emphasis. During the decade of the 70’s, the YWCA as a whole worked to deepen the understanding of these two new issues, and this strengthened the basic position of the YWCA movement.

The concept of “open membership” eliminated the inequality within the membership. It also enabled all members to read the Bible from a woman’s perspective. The World YWCA Bible Study materials were translated into Japanese and introduced within the context of Japanese society and culture. By doing this, the Christian Basis and the Program Emphases became inextricably linked together.

The real meaning of taking an anti-nuclear stance was not really clear in the beginning. Going to Hiroshima, learning the realities from the atomic bomb survivors, and observing first hand the tragic results led to a critical stance toward our contemporary society that has lost its humanness. Local YWCAs led protests against nuclear testing and also sponsored exhibits of pictures depicting the A-bomb blast in Hiroshima. They offered aid to resident Korean survivors and became involved in the establishment of a law for relief to A-bomb survivors.

The Program Emphasis Committee was established to prepare materials to be used in the study of anti-nuclear issues, the Vietnam War, and the reversion of Okinawa. This committee published Present-day Japan Issues, and continued to work to bring life to Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution in the annual Constitution

Day Seminar. It also worked to help the anti-nuclear concept take root. As part of the My History movement, members looked back over the time period they had been alive and studied that history. As they did this, they became aware that they were once again headed for war.

A number of things happened during the 1970's. Nationalization of and official visits (by government officials) to Yasukuni Shrine; memorializing the war dead; validating the Gengo (method of counting years according to the emperor system); nationalizing Hinomaru (Japanese flag) and Kimigayo (anthem) [This was a problem because these had been the flag and anthem of Imperial Japan before and during WWII]; and the textbook issues [related to an incorrect interpretation of Japanese history]. The YWCA carried out activities in opposition to each of these concerns, and offered support to lawsuits related to unconstitutional issues.

The YWCA learned from its Asian YWCA sisters of the atrocities committed by the Japanese military against the people of Asia and the Pacific. It heard that no apologies or restitution had been offered, and new discrimination and suffering were being inflicted. Its members became involved in the fingerprinting issue related to Koreans in Japan, opposed the revisions of the Immigration Law, and offered support to lawsuits and interviews of Koreans left behind in Sakhalin (an island off Russia). During a time when Japanese/Korean political relations were worsening, the YWCA of Korea invited the YWCA of Japan to participate in a Japan/Korea Consultation. The trust relationship between the two national YWCAs, nurtured over the years, made such an opportunity for mutual understanding and sharing of issues possible.

Great efforts were made to enable Y members to become international citizens. At the International Youth Program, where youth from seventeen different countries came together to study the horrors of nuclear weapons, participants discussed ways to bring about peace. Local YWCAs offered support programs for international students studying in Japan, and classes were begun in the Japanese language where both the past and the present relationship of respective countries were discussed.

To support the YWCA movement, emphasis was put on leadership development for younger members and promotion of financial fitness for the organization. A National Members Conference was finally held in 1980 to deepen the relationships among members.

During this time:

The world was entering the age of detente. President Nixon visited China, the Vietnam Peace Accord was signed, relations between Japan and China were renewed, and Okinawa reverted to Japan in 1972. However, with the return of Okinawa to Japan, according to the Japan/U.S. Security Treaty, 75% of U.S. military bases continued to be concentrated in Okinawa. In 1975, the first G7 Economic Summit was held in France, and the First World Conference on Women was held in Mexico City as a part of the United Nations International Women's Year. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and the Threshold Test Ban Treaty were signed, but in 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, conditions changed and two extremely powerful figures emerged on the world stage, President Ronald Reagan (U.S) and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (U.K.). Meanwhile in Japan, the administration of Yasuhiro Nakasone was born in 1982 with a focus on privatization of state-owned enterprises. The theories of Japan and the U.S. "having a common destiny" and "sharing responsibilities" were lifted up while Japan's defense budget was raised above 1% of the GNP (1987).

For about 15 years, from the mid-70's through the 80's, support for the Liberal Democratic Party was higher than any other time in history. Life in Japan was stable and people were in search of abundance (conservative life style). In the 60's economic growth averaged in the double-figures. However, it fell to the single-figures because of the appreciation of the yen (1971), the oil shocks (1973 and 1979) and another rapid appreciation of the yen (beginning in 1985).

Chapter X: Choose Life – Deuteronomy 30:19 (1985-1994)

For its 80th Anniversary, the YWCA of Japan selected the words Choose Life from Deuteronomy 30:19 for its theme. As they thought about the road they should travel, whether it be that of life or death, they made the decision to move forward with a strong resolve. First they delved into the meaning of the YWCA's Christian Basis as they read and studied the Bible from a woman's perspective. The women delighted in being able to read the Bible together and discuss it frankly.

Perhaps as a test of the YWCA's determination, this period of time brought a strengthening of nationalism and racial identity as the government assumed a more controlling role over the nation. This meant that the weak and disenfranchised continued to suffer. The YWCA of Japan established two specific committees: Human Rights and Nuclear Issues. These committees worked to promote a deeper understanding leading to action on these issues throughout all of Japan.

Two other critical issues concerned the YWCA: the Emperor System and the onset of the Gulf War. The death of the Showa Emperor (Hirohito) provided the nation with an opportunity to look back historically, to discover that the acceptance of the Emperor System was again becoming stronger. A new nationalism was also coming to the fore. The YWCA opposed this trend by speaking out against official visits to Yasukuni Shrine and calling for an apology and compensation to Comfort Women (women from Asian countries who had been forced to serve the Japanese military on the field) from the Japanese government. The YWCA also endeavored to create a society where Resident Korean and other foreign national laborers might enjoy equal rights. As in the preceding period, it continued to oppose nuclear power plants and the landing of nuclear-powered ships, while also concentrating on environmental issues. It created an environmental household account book to check daily electrical consumption and do what they could to eliminate the need for nuclear power in their immediate vicinity.

The Japanese government rescinded their long time policy of not sending Self-Defense Forces abroad when in 1991 they dispatched them to the Persian Gulf to do minesweeping during the Gulf War. In 1992 under the beautiful name of "peace-cooperation", they sent troops to Cambodia. Sensing the danger of these actions, the YWCA took a central role in the movement to preserve Article 9. It sponsored trips to China and Korea and studied history from an international perspective, as it worked to make certain Japan did not get off on the wrong track.

Developing leadership from the younger generation was a critical concern, which called for a new direction to recapture and rejuvenate a focus on youth participation. A new position of youth coordinator was established at the 1985 National Convention. Youth excursions to Okinawa (1987) and Thailand (1988) affirmed the international character of the organization, and this combined with program planning and management skills helped the younger membership to sponsor the International Youth Gathering in 1991.

The regular membership was not forgotten, however, and to energize their activities, a National Members Convention was held at a retreat center near Tokyo (Amagi) in 1993. Even though the YWCA's financial situation was very difficult, after serious discussion it was decided to rebuild the National YWCA building. The organizational structure was also reexamined, and a new election format, placing more emphasis on regional voices, was established.

The 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake (Kobe) showed the tremendous force of nature, but with the Kobe YWCA as a center, YWCAs across the country rose to provide relief to the victims. Especially crucial was the work of both the Osaka YWCA and the Kyoto YWCA, as they offered care for emotional and spiritual needs. They became pioneers in this field.

During this time:

The Showa Era ended in 1989 with the death of Emperor Hirohito. His son Akihito ascended the throne and the Heisei Era began. The Berlin Wall fell (1989), and as the communist system in Eastern Europe crumbled, the cold war came to an end. The Tiananmen Square incident occurred in Beijing, East and West Germany were united, and the European Union was established. During the same time, multinational forces (led by the U.S. military) began bombing Iraq and this was the start of the first Gulf War. In Japan, the PKO (Peacekeeping Operations) Cooperation Act was passed, and armed Self-Defense Forces were first dispatched to Cambodia.

In 1990, after the Japanese government's Land Policy Council pointed out that land prices had risen to an abnormal standard, the Economic Bubble broke, the economy took a downturn, and Japan entered a period of decelerating growth. Global environmental issues grabbed priority billing - the Chernobyl incident (1986) shook the world and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) was held. Whereas growth had been the focus until now, things changed and Japan moved into a post-growth period, with the promotion of energy and resource conservation, and recycling.

The information revolution of the 90's made everything "global" in scope. Between 1997 and 1999, a financial crisis of monumental scale struck Asia and other countries of the world. Until that time, a country's government had set its own rules and regulations, but now conferences and administrative bodies became international. The World Trade Organization was set up to promote globalization while at the same time the number and influence of international NGOs increased to counter the power of the major nations and multi-national corporations.

Chapter XI: Becoming Peacemakers (1995-2005)

The World YWCA celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1994. Using the theme of "Moving Forward with Vision", it stepped out into the next 100 years. As part of its 100th anniversary, the World YWCA sponsored an International Women's Summit prior to the World YWCA Council meeting in Seoul. The results of the Summit were presented at the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing).

The YWCA of Japan turned 90 years old in 1995, and to celebrate this along with the World YWCA's 100th anniversary, it sponsored the Asia Environmental Conference. The women who participated, including sisters from YWCAs across Asia, diligently discussed what must be done to insure that their children and grandchildren would be able to live safely. Joyce Seroke, General Secretary of the YWCA of South Africa, was invited to Japan's 90th Anniversary Celebration. She shared her experiences in the struggle for the abolishment of apartheid.

The militarization of Japan moved forward another step and in 1997 the New Guidelines for Japan/United States Cooperation were agreed on. The YWCA joined with other grassroots organizations to prevent the passage of the New Guidelines-related bills in the Diet. However in spite of large-scale protest rallies, the bills were passed in May 1999, and soon after, the Diet passed a law establishing Hinomaru as the national flag and Kimigayo as the national anthem.

The Japanese government officially supported the United States government in its actions after 9/11 when the U.S. attacked both Afghanistan and Iraq. The Diet passed the Emergency Preparedness Act, and created a structure whereby Japanese citizens would be required to cooperate in a war if an emergency arose. The government then passed another law to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq aiming to dispatch National Defense Forces to Iraq. The revision of the Japanese Constitution, feared by many people, emerged onto the docket of

the Diet.

In a call for militarization of the nation, some rightists established The Association to Rewrite History Textbooks to “beautify” Japan’s history. Because its new textbook was authorized by the Ministry of Education, local grassroots groups fought hard at the local level to keep this textbook from being chosen for their schools. The YWCA also issued statements to local school boards as they worked to stop the adoption of the books. The YWCA of Japan office received more than 100,000 signatures against the new textbook from the YWCA of Korea.

Okinawa was the most seriously affected by the increasing militarization of Japan. The National YWCA’s Solidarity with Okinawa Project continued to sponsor study tours and other programs to help people learn about mainland Japan’s sacrificial stone (Okinawa). It felt the need to correct the Japanese government’s stance. The Constitution Day Seminar was held in Okinawa to strengthen awareness. When a local YWCA was established in Okinawa, all YWCA members across the country rejoiced.

The YWCA’s path is a dangerous one but as was seen in the Hague International Peace Conference, international society seeks non-violence and the renunciation of war. While becoming involved in a new program of Violence against Women, the YWCA of Japan is moving toward a more flexible structure. It also has made changes that give young women more decision-making power.

As we move into the next 100 years, we strive to become an organization appropriate to our name.

