Ashio Coppermine Mineral Pollution Problem and Women’s Movement

—— Focusing on Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association ——

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1. Introduction

This article focuses on the influence of a women’s movement, whose name is Koudokuchi-Kyusai-Fujinkai (Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association) in the Ashio Copper Mine Mineral Pollution Problem (Ashio C.P.P.). This problem in the Meiji era is the most famous case in Japanese environmental pollution history. In addition to the typical social problems of that area, there were also issues of “excluded area poverty”, caused by the process of the Japanese industrialization. It is important for historical women’s studies to reveal the role and influence of the Japanese women’s movement concerning this issue. It is highly significant for historical environmental pollution studies worldwide to investigate this case.

2. What is the Ashio Copper Mine Mineral Pollution Problem?

1) The Ashio Copper Mine Played a Central Role in Economic Growth during Meiji Era

The Ashio Copper Mine was discovered in 1610. 1,300-1,500 tons of copper were produced annually until the beginning of the 1700s, with one fifth being exported from Nagasaki. However, production dropped to about 100 tons per year at the end of the Edo Period (1603-1868). When Ichibei Furukawa started to manage the mine with the help of Eiichi Shibusawa, who was the most famous industrialist of that period, the mine flourished again in 1877. Immense veins were discovered four years after Furukawa had launched his business. After that, the Ashio Copper Mine continued to play a central role in the rapid economic growth of Japan under capitalism. It was a driving force behind the New Industry Development (“Shokusan Kogyo”) promoted by the Meiji Government.

Production increased steadily and annual production reached more than 6,000 tons from 1887 onwards. In the 1890s, the copper which was produced in the Ashio Copper Mine (the top producer in the country) as well as the Besshi and Hitachi Copper Mines accounted for 5-7% of total world copper exports.

2) The Problem Viewed as a Turning Point in the Modern-History of World Environmental Pollution

This problem has some important aspects. First, it was the first-ever case of soil and water pollution in Japan.

Second, there was a social movement of resistance centered upon those people affected by the environmental pollution. This involved not only journalists and socialists but also ordinary men and women such as farmers and fishermen.

Third, as information about this movement spread throughout Japan, a new trend for creating relief and charity associations was established.

There are many fine historical studies concerning the Ashio C.P.P. For example Masanao Kano’s “A Study on the Ashio C.P.P.” is excellent. In addition to this, the general catalogue by Shobee Shiota is evaluated as the most eminent study. Concerning the study of Shozo Tanaka, who is the charismatic leader of the social resistance movement, there are an enormous number of historical documents and articles. Furthermore, there is Fumiko Ide’s work which is the most famous article focusing on the...
women’s movement: “Ashio Copper Mine Mineral Pollution Problem and Women”, 1982. “Oshidashi” is an article on the petition against the government to stop mining by Norio Tamura, which focuses on the original women’s movement without men, and which is very sharp and fascinating. We know that it is important for us to raise the social problem from the perspective of ordinary people.

Reiko Abe’s historical research describes the role of ‘Japan Christian Women’s Organization, the Ashio Copper Mine Mineral Pollution Problem and Chiseko Ushioda’. Ushioda was the leader of Koudokuchi-Kyusai- Fujinkai (Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association) and also the president of Japan Christian Women’s Organization in that period.

Why does this topic continue to interest researchers? Because it includes many hints and fundamental questions whenever we consider modern problems such as pollution and human rights.

3. Japan Christian Women’s Organization (JCWO)

KYOFUKAI, Japan Christian Women’s Organization, was established on December 6, 1886. It was started by 56 women in Tokyo and it is the oldest women’s organization active in Japan. In its first years, KYOFUKAI submitted yearly petitions calling for monogamy and an end to Japanese women being trafficked and prostituted overseas.

In 1894 it acquired land and established a refuge for the women upon their return to Japan. Social welfare and support activities are central to the principles of KYOFUKAI. There have been welfare projects in the various regional branches. KYOFUKAI has worked for women’s basic human rights, such as ending legalized prostitution, gaining the right to vote etc. and, at the same time, creating laws preventing minors from abusing alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

As they could not prevent World War II, KYOFUKAI is promoting world peace now. Their long-sought Prostitution Prevention Law was successfully passed in 1956 but now they can see some serious loopholes and are working to create new laws for the 21st century, while they also continue women’s welfare services.

It operates “Women’s Shelter HELP” (Housing in Emergency of Love and Peace), Asian Women’s Shelter in Tokyo and an institution whose name is “Charity Dormitory”, providing emergency housing relief and counseling support to approximately two hundred needy recipients annually.

Jiai-Ryo (Charity Dormitory) is a refuge for women and babies which is prescribed in the Prostitution Prevention Law. In the Meiji era its name was Jiaikan (Charity House), which supported women and children who were not only victims of prostitutions but who also lived in areas polluted by Ashio C.C.P.. The first president of JCWO was Kajiko Yajima, and the second was Chiseko Ushioda. They were also the top leaders of Koudokuchi-Kyusai- Fujinkai (Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association). JCWO has been publishing its monthly magazine called Fujin-Shinpou (Women’s current topics) since the organization was established.

4. The Outline of Ashio C.P.P. Caused by Furukawa Mining Co., Ltd

In this chapter a rough outline of Ashio C.P.P. caused by Furukawa mining company will be described.

- 1877 (M.10) Ichibei Furukawa, who is the founder of Furukawa mining company, started to mine the copper in Ashio Copper Mine (Ashio C.M.), located near the upper reaches of the Watarase River.
- 1879 (M.12) In summer a massive number of dead fish were floating on the Watarase River in Tochigi Prefecture. The Tochigi Prefectural Government declared a prohibition against fishing and eating fish from the river, because in the next summer the same phenomenon occurred again.
- 1885 (M.18) In the Prefectural Consultative Committee which deals with industry, the pollution of the Watarase River was discussed. In spite of a statement regarding the source of the river pollution, there was no concrete action taken to investigate the
cause of the pollution.

・1884~1885 (M.17-18) Furukawa mining company grew rapidly with a vast increase in manpower and materials, which were procured from the surrounding mountain woods. Large quantities of sulphur dioxide were released during the process of refining, with the result that crops were damaged extensively in the five villages near Ashio C.M. including Matsuki Village. Furukawa Mining Company paid compensation to the farmers who lived in the polluted area with the exception of Matsuki Village.

・1888 (M.21) In July, Shimotsuga, Aso and Ashikaga areas in Tochigi Prefecture were affected by flooding.

・1889 (M.22) In summer the same phenomenon occurred again and eight villages near the Watarase River were damaged by flooding.

・1890 (M.23) The greater part of the area was affected by a flood and the river banks collapsed in Tochigi and Gunma prefectures caused by a lack of planning of development in the mountain areas. After this, the flood and pollution victims rose up to stop Furukawa Co. from mining through the prefectural government.

・1891 (M.24) In December, Shozo Tanaka, who was a member of the House of Representatives elected in a district of Tochigi Prefecture, tabled some questions about Ashio C.P.P. in parliament.

The Meiji government answered that it was researching about the sources of pollution. Unfortunately it could not yet determine the sources of pollution and did not consider there to be any problem. Furthermore, the government stated that Furukawa Co. had already prevented any pollution by purchasing the new machinery from Germany and the USA.

・1892 (M.25) The mountains around the Ashio C.M. had been ravaged by reckless tree-cutting, and damaged by large quantities of sulphur dioxide and fires caused by the mine.

・1896 (M.29) The Ashio pollution victims set up their own office on the premises in Unryu-ji (Unryu temple), which was in the Hayakawada District in Watarase Village. Its name was the “Petition Office for Stopping Copper Mining Operations”.

・1897 (M.30) The first “Oshidashi”, which means the petition against the government to stop mining, was held on 2nd of March and the second was on 23rd of March. In order to suppress the disturbance, a Tokyo officer of the Meiji Government ordered Furukawa mining company to prevent the pollution. The officer already had close ties to Furukawa mining company. As a result, he was not strict in his supervision of the preventive measures taken by Furukawa. Afterwards he got a job in Furukawa mining company unfairly.

・1898 (M.31) on 3rd of September, the reservoir was broken by heavy rains in the Ashio area. The greater part of the area surrounding the Watarase River was affected by flooding. On 26th of September, the third “Oshidashi” was held.

On the other hand, at this time Furukawa’s smelting operations had been concentrated in the Matsuki area, which was near Ashio C.M. As a result, Matsuki Village suffered severe effect of air pollution caused by a large quantities of sulphur dioxide. As mentioned previously, Matsuki Village had refused the Furukawa Mining Company’s compensation. (→ Photo ①)

・1900 (M.33) On 8th of February, Ashio pollution victims made a petition to the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Agriculture, the House of Peers and Representatives to resolve the problems.

On 9th of February Shozo Tanaka, who was a member of the House of Representatives, criticized the fact that the Meiji government had no measures to deal with this problem in the parliament.

On 13th of February a fight between victims and armed police broke out in the Kawamata area of Sanuki Village in Gunma Prefecture, which is the most famous case of suppression in Japanese social history.

From 26th of Feb. to 17th of March, Naoe Kinoshita, who was a journalist of Mainichi Newspaper and also a campaigner, wrote about the Ashio C.P.P., identifying himself with victims and Shozo Tanaka.
5. How was Japan Christian Women’s Organization (JCWO) connected to the Ashio Coppermine Mineral Pollution Problem?

1) Young and Spirited Journalist Naoe Kinoshita as a Parameter

JCWO had been enlarging its movement base since 1886. From 26th of Feb. to 17th of March, Naoe Kinoshita, who was a journalist of Mainichi Newspaper and also a campaigner, wrote about the Ashio C.P.P., identifying himself with victims and Shozo Tanaka. His serial report whose title was “Ashio C.P.P.” in the Mainichi Daily News, was received favorably. Saburou Shimada, who was the president of Mainichi Newspaper at that time, made a decision to start a campaign concerning Ashio C.P.P. because he also identified himself with Ashio victims after visiting the polluted area, and he thought that the Ashio C.P.P. was a kind of human rights abuse.

The Ashio C.P.P. created a journalistic sensation. Many people, especially young students and women, were indignant at governmental oppression in The Kawamata- Conflict, and wanted to help victims at all costs by knowing the situation of misery in Matsuki village.

On 21st of July, the Free Will Research Organization which dealt with Ashio C.P.P. was set up in the Kanda YMCA Hall of Tokyo.

1901 (M.34), on 21st of May, the Free Will Research Organization decided to survey the number of mortalities in Ashio pollution area. Kanzo Uchimura, who was one of the most famous authors of that period, Christian evangelist and a central member of that organization, visited Ashio together with other members. On 20th of November, the first Ashio report was made public. On 23rd of October, Shozo Tanaka resigned his seat in the House of Representatives to protest against the government. He appealed to the Meiji Emperor directly for a resolution of the Ashio C.P.P., so-called “Jikiso”. As a result, many people learned of the serious social problems of the Ashio C.P.P. from the newspaper.

The main members of JCWO thought that it was their mission to pick up this social problem as their organization’s work and to help victims by supporting their life, which was badly affected by pollution. Especially Chiseko Ushioda sympathized with the Ashio C.P.P. strongly. She and other members of JCWO visited the polluted area in Tochigi Prefecture.

2) the Path from Charity to Social Movement of resistance

Naoe Kinoshita was the key person who was linked with JCWO and the Ashio C.P.P. He was interested in the work of JCWO from the beginning because he was a supporter of women’s human rights and thought that every Japanese woman should be independent and released from patriarchy. He appreciated JCWO’s work and always encouraged them. Later he married Misao Waga, who was a member of JCWO. Furthermore, Saburo Shimada also had a strong connection with JCWO because his wife was one of its main members. Shozo Tanaka had links with JCWO because they had petitioned him to enact monogamy laws in Parliament and abolish public prostitution.

When Tanaka discussed the strategies to spread information of the Ashio C.P.P., Shimada and Kinoshita recommended him to involve JCWO as part of the women’s movement.

There were some reasons why they choose JCWO. First, they had a strong connection with each other personally through their wives. Second, they thought that because JCWO was a women’s organization, it could make a good impression and provide possibilities for many people to feel strong sympathy towards the Ashio C.P.P. Third, JCWO already had numerous branches and members. It had increased its membership to almost 2000 in 1900, and most of them were based in Christian churches, which were widespread in all parts of the country. Fourth, JCWO had a monthly journal and picked up contemporary news topics. It was thus highly advantageous for Tanaka and others to promote their activities.
6. The Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association was Established on 29th November 1901.

1900 (M.33) On 1st of November, the great convention of speeches dealing with the Ashio C.P.P. was held in Kanda YMCA Hall. Kinoshita, Shimada, Uchimura, and Iso Abe, who was a Christian Socialist, and Zenji (Yoshiharu) Iwamoto, who was a journalist, educator and also principal of Meiji Girls’ High School, all took the platform. They were all leaders of opinion at that time.

Iwamoto was a top educator and a distinguished journalist in the field of women’s education. The great convention of speeches gathered a large audience. Each address aroused the audience to enthusiasm. Ushioda (vice president of JCWO) was in the audience and she immediately took action to organize a researching group in JCWO. On 16th of Nov., they visited the polluted area, Ebise and Yanaka Village, which were affected by flooding of polluted water. The following women visited that area: Kajiko Yajima, who was the president of JCWO, Ushioda, Shimada, who was a main member of JCWO and wife of Saburo Shimada, and Eiko Matsumoto, who was a journalist of Mainichi Newspaper. They were guided by Shozo Tanaka and Naoe Kinoshita and learned that people in the village, especially women and children, were suffering from poverty and starvation in miserable conditions. Immediately they decided to organize a relief association for them on their way to Tokyo. Their religious vocation, charity or caritas, led them to such a quick reaction. (→ Photo ②)

7. What was the Role of JCWO for Shozo Tanaka and his Objectives?

1) Tanaka’s address in Kanda YMCA Hall

In this chapter, the role of JCWO for Shozo Tanaka and his objectives will be considered. It is useful to know Shozo Tanaka’s strategy when considering the relatively complex aspects of the role of women’s movement through JCWO and the Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association in the Meiji Era.

Through Kinoshita and Shimada, Tanaka had already learned that the main members of JCWO were interested in the Ashio C.P.P.. He already had links with them since their submission of petitions for monogamy and an end to prostitution. He was impressed by women’s sensibility, power to act and to communicate information, and thought that in order to spread knowledge of the Ashio C.P.P. it was suitable and useful to be in partnership with JCWO.

1901 (M.34) on 25th of November, the first article and the advertisement of the photographic collection which dealt with the Ashio C.P.P. appeared in the monthly journal of JCWO, Fujin-Shinpou. Tanaka’s address in Kanda YMCA Hall, whose title was “We have high expectations of JCWO” was published in this journal.

The summary of his address is as follow:

I have high expectations of JCWO. I implore you to carry out an investigation in the polluted area. I hope to help the victims in a suitable way. I think that only intelligent women such as you can provide relief for them. We wanted to make a petition to the government regarding the Ashio C.P.P. but it was blocked by the police force. There is a big contradiction that the company can gain from copper mining causing pollution, while on the other hand, the villages are polluted, resulting in suffering with poverty and hunger. Over 1,064 people died due to polluted water and soil and there is poverty and starvation in the villages. This is a serious affair for the Great Empire of Japan, don’t you think?

His address reveals that rather than being interested in JCWO’s work, Tanaka was actually attracted to tenacious solidarity based on religious thought, and in particular women’s characteristic sensibility. It was not the conventional social movement centered upon men, but new and alternative women based movement.

His strategy lived up to his expectations. What was the significance of a movement campaigning for an end to public prostitution becoming involved with the Ashio C.P.P.? First JCWO
was a national wide organization. Second, they had experience with petitions, showing that even women could operate in the political sphere. This was extremely rare at that time. Therefore JCWO was the most effective means for Shozo Tanaka to inform the nation of the miserable situation and to campaign for efforts to aid the victims. In this way, the private friendship between Shozo Tanaka, Naoe Kinoshita and Saburo Shimada took on a deeper social meaning and this was the real starting point for relief efforts to assist the Ashio C.P.P. victims.

2) Ushioda visit to the affected area

Chiseko Ushioda visited the affected area and completed the report “Experiences from the Polluted Area” which was published in two journals, Fujo-shinbun, and Fujin-shinpou in exactly the same context.

We visited about 20 households. Although each situation was slightly different, in all cases the people’s lives have become extremely difficult because of the C.P.P. There is no way to find food, people are close to death, and women suffer from eye and stomach ailments. The situation is far worse and far more wretched than that of the poor in Tokyo.

When I visited the school, I saw crumbling classrooms and broken walls, and one teacher for 80 students, of which there were only three girls. There are over 300 students, but as a result of the C.P.P. their parents have little interest in their education.

Ushioda’s point of view focused on women’s lives and their health, which was characteristic of a woman and a philanthropist. Furthermore, she had learned that prostitution is rooted in poverty and only poverty leads them to such an “ugly job”. It was very important for them to eliminate the source of poverty.

Focusing on the women and girls’ life situation which was serious and significant, members of JCWO, especially Ushioda and Yajima through their life experiences, could identify with Ashio’s women and children. Ushioda, who was widowed early in life, had struggled to bring up her children. On the other hand, Yajima, who was physically abused by her husband and got divorced. Later having a child with a married man, although this fact was kept strictly secret. They were also highly educated women belonging to the sophisticated class; they learned painfully that women were at a fundamental disadvantage in our conservative and patriarchal society.

Their work was not only for relief of the polluted area, but also the struggle with poverty and protection of women’s human rights. It was the critical moment when they could discover their exact vocation.

The Fujo-shinbun (Women’s Newspaper), a weekly newspaper, vol.82, reported about the wretched situation of the people in the area polluted by the Ashio C.P.P. The Fujo-shinbun was a kind of women’s magazine which was first published in 1900 by Shiro Fukushima. He was a teacher of languages in a junior high school. It contributed by encouraging women to express themselves through literary works focusing on social topics published in the magazine. Furthermore, the young editors, who were male, had a deep understanding of the problems of women, and supported freedom on choice for women concerning politics, profession and marriage. It had as many as 1000 readers at that time.

A report named “The Ashio C.P.P. and Women” in Fujo-shinbun vol.82 inspired many women to wake up to the true facts by learning of the situation of the Ashio C.P.P.

The Ashio C.P.P. is a pressing matter which needs help with women’s relief. This matter is not only a local problem but also a worldwide issue. 300,000 people are suffering from starvation and polluted soil; 500 cho-bu has been completely changed by the pollution to naked land. Though they deal with victims with pity, philanthropists are definitely superficial and try to settle everything with money. We wonder why they do not think about the miserable situation and research this serious pollution as a social problem.

It revealed that society had high expectations of the women’s activities, in spite of there being a stereotyped gender role, which suggest philanthropy itself is a women’s work. This should be simply
viewed as a historical limitation of the period. At any rate, the news of the Ashio C.P.P. encouraged women to rise up with their husbands and brothers and let them establish a new trend.

In *Fujo-shinbun*, vol. 83, the news which dealt with setting up the Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association (PARWA) was reported. Furthermore, it appealed to the readers for financial and material support for PARWA.

*They brought 14 children from the polluted area to JCWO’s Charity Dormitory. But it was in poor condition because of a lack of funds and materials. There were still many children who were struggling with poverty and starvation in that area. Anyway, please donate funds and materials to them. We need as much money as possible to accomplish our work.*

On 29th of November, the harangue meeting of relief for miserable victims of Ashio was held in YMCA Hall in Kanda, organized by JCWO. The Chair was Yajima, and speakers were Iwamoto, Abe, Kinoshita, Shimada, and Ushioda. They appealed in each address that it was important for Japanese to help and support those who were affected by pollution and announced the setting up of the Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association. This meeting was a success beyond their expectation, because the audience was highly enthusiastic and gathered a large donation of ¥100 (equivalent to ¥400,000 in 2012).

Kinoshita later recollected that this harangue meeting was over flowing with an enthusiastic and fanatical atmosphere. It was so spiritual that he himself was stupefied and he didn’t understand why the audience was driven to frenzy.

On 30th of November, one day after that spiritual meeting, a woman who was the wife of Ichibe Furukawa, committed suicide by throwing herself into Kanda river which was near Kanda YMCA Hall. She had been suffering due to her husband’s immoral behavior, as he had had many mistresses since they got married. She was also interested in the women’s movement of monogamy of JCWO, so she gathered the information of their activities from her servant. The public was filled with pity for Mrs. Furukawa. Although it was not abnormal for men who were affluent to have many mistresses at that time, the public severely criticized his behavior and his company, which was the cause of the Ashio C.P.P.. This affair created a sensation, so that the Ashio C.P.P. was in the spotlight of public opinion.

At the same time Eiko Matsumoto, who was a journalist of Mainichi Newspaper, serialized reports from 23rd of November 1901 to 23rd of March 1902, whose title was “The Sight of Misery in the Ashio C.P.P.”. Her pen name was “Infant” and as such she belonged to the Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association (PARWA). This series was a kind of field report with numerous sketches. It was very effective to awaken the public interest by including sketches which had great reality. At once, the readers reacted strongly to her report. This report was later published as a book whose title was “The Sight of Misery in the Ashio C.P.P.”, in April 1902.

8. **PARWA was established**

On the 6th of December 1901 (M.34), the Polluted Area Relief Women’s Association (PARWA) was established. Its promoters were the following:

Chiseko Ushioda (President)
Yoshiko Kuchiki, Fusako Yamawaki, Kajiko Yajima, Eiko Matsumoto, Sonoko Kiwaki, Souko Kinoshita, Masako Miwata, and Nobuko Shimada.

Ushioda was also president of JCWO, and so she assumed a heavy responsibility. It seemed that she was engaged in two jobs at the same time. But her two jobs had a common factor: preventing women from falling into extreme suffering caused by being forced into poverty. She was 56 years old at that time. She was not young considering that the average life expectancy was 45 years in the Meiji era. Her health was occasionally undermined by the hard work.

On the 10th of December 1901, Shozo Tanaka made a petition to Meiji Emperor, which was called “Jiki-so”. It was a historic event, as this was the first petition made directly to the Emperor in Japanese history,
although it failed due to intervention by the security guards. Shozo was arrested but released immediately because he was branded a “madman”. Only a crazy man could have considered making a direct petition to the Emperor, it was thought. “Jiki-so” created a big sensation which was linked to the establishment of PARWA.

These events led Ashio from being a small countryside area topic in Tochigi Prefecture to becoming a serious and historical issue. Many new people who became interested in Ashio emerged after these two events, “Jiki-so” and PARWA.

Many young students were moved by the outdoor speeches by PARWA. For example, Hajime Kawakami, who was later a very famous economist, and a student of Tokyo Imperial University, was moved by a speech in front of Hongo Central Church. Furthermore, Takuboku Ishikawa, who became a great and popular poet in Japan, and was a high school student at that time, was also impressed after reading the news of “Jiki-so”. He wrote and printed handouts by himself and gave them to his high school friends. (→ Photo ③④)

Thus, the media and PARWA’s work pushed the Ashio C.P.P. to the front of the stage of history as the most noted public nuisance, in spite of not being in a developed IT society. Especially PARWA’s big contribution, based on the churches which had spread over many parts of the country, was remarkable. Those two factors triggered a growing tendency to establish a large movement of relief for the Ashio. Through the women’s work the public was stimulated towards the charitable emotions. Many people, even those in poverty, donated money and materials to the Ashio’s victims by living more frugally.

As a consequence of this, these factors began to be collections of donations, relief efforts, and treatment of very sick victims in Tokyo and the education of female children in the polluted area. Some girls were brought to Tokyo for schooling and accommodated in the Charity Dormitory run by JCWO.

Competing with the activities of PARWA, the Buddhist Association also started a relief movement for Ashio victims at the same time. Rinzai-shu, Shingon-shu, and Soto-shu are three of the major denominations within the Buddhist Association of Japan. In November, they visited the polluted area to organize the relief. The Kencho-ji sect of Rinzai-shu announced that it was permitted for temples which were in the polluted area to carry out relief efforts with their temples used as a base. In December, the Hongan-ji sect of Jodo shinshu dispatched medical doctors and nurses there. In January 1902, the Nishi Hongan-ji sect of Jodo shinshu started the relief which took the styles of meetings, so-called Howa-Kai. Those were effective because the Japanese temples were more deeply rooted in the local community than Christian churches. Each relief group was organized and regulated strictly, in a top-down manner. It was the typical Japanese system to control all level of society, namely it was the conservative male-centered governance system which was based on abundant finance and materials.

On the other hand, Europeanized students with leanings towards socialism, who were inspired by the strategies of PARWA, visited the polluted area in strength. On 27th of December 1901, 1104 students gathered in Ueno station in order to visit the affected area. On 30th of December, the report meeting held in Kanda YMCA Hall, was in a state of excitement, filled with many students and the public. Since the Outdoor speeches by students had started on 1st of January 1902, these had been a great success. (→ Photo ⑤)

9. Impact of the Campaign in the Kansai- area by PARWA

PARWA campaigned in the Kansai-area for spreading information of the Ashio C.P.P. Ushioda visited the Kansai stronghold with Naomi Tamura and Naoe Kinoshita, who started the campaign on 5th of February 1902 and returned to Tokyo on 15th of February.

Their campaigns were the following:
- On 6th of February, in Ohtsu Sakamoto-cho, Koudou-kan, Audience: 500, Donations: Just over 10 Yen
- On 8th, in Kyoto, Shijo-Church, Donations: Just over 70 Yen and, an enormous
amount of materials
Some Doshisha Christians Senior High School girls proposed going to the polluted area, as they wanted to work as volunteers there.

- On 10th, in Kobe, Kobe-Church
  Audience: Just over 600, Donations: Just over 60 Yen and other materials
- On 11th, in Osaka, Tosabori YMCA Hall
  Audience: Just over 700, Donations: Just over 50 Yen and other materials
- On 11th, in Kyoto, Rakuyo Church
  Audience: Just over 600, the majority were students.
  Donations: Just over 20 Yen and other materials

PARWA confronted Ichibe Furukawa and the representatives of both Houses in the form of an open letter of questions printed in the Daily Mainichi. This was the turning point of change for PARWA from only being a women’s personal movement to becoming a political one.

“Rise up our friends!
If you don’t know the misery of the polluted area, you must go there to see the situation with your own eyes.” (from Inspirational Statement in Fujin-shinpou)
It revealed that their basic stance was based on the pragmatism and ethics of social work. Exactly this kind of practical field work leads to the creation of new polices, connected to the way forward to social reforms - as it were, a modern social security system.

10. Conclusions

The following four conclusions can be drawn from the analyses included in this study:

Through the activities of PARWA, JCWO entered a new pioneering phase of movement for social reforms. Close links to the male-centered movement at that time allowed JCWO to move beyond its role as merely women’s personal movement and to become a major player on the political stage.

PARWA, especially Ushioda, was indispensable for the Ashio C.P.P., which became one of the greatest incidents in Japanese industrial history. Not only protecting the women’s human rights but also helping the victims who lived in a polluted and excluded area, this allowed PARWA to advance towards starting a new phase of their movement. The change from working just as a charity to having the viewpoint of social reform is highly evaluated among the historical studies on social welfare. Furthermore, their movement linked with the male-centered movements deserves special mention. It can therefore be stated that PARWA’s movement had a social view, which led to criticism of the male-centered social system. There was a problem that they did not all necessarily hold liberal views. However, it was certain that Ushioda and Yajima, who had been struggling with patriarchy, had an advanced social view and a firm resolve to resist the pre-modern system.

The social view led them to awareness of poverty in the polluted area and to learn that the poverty led women to fall into the “ugly job”: prostitution. According to their magazine Fujin-shinpou of June, 1902, it was revealed that only girls under 14 years old lived in the polluted area because girls over 14 years old had been sold off for prostitution in order to support their families who were struggling with starvation. Through their movement they learned to select the best way forward as women’s liberationists.

Finally this article’s argument can be reduced to five points.

1) Although PARWA started their movement by the strategy of Shozo Tanaka and some journalists, that movement created a sensation in all parts of the country, and many women and young students sympathized with the Ashio C.P.P. through their campaigns. It had the strong advantage of a mild and moderate image because it was a women’s organization.

2) As PARWA had numerous branches and members based in Christian churches, which were widespread over all parts of the country, which let the Ashio C.P.P.
become a widely-known historical social problem.

3) PARWA as a Christian organization inspired the rising up of other religious movements, for example, the Buddhists’ movement. Competing with Christian movements, they started their own donations and other activities.

4) JCWO could have a social view through PARWA. Particularly the social view led them to awareness of poverty in the polluted area and the miserable situation concerning prostitution. They made a decision to choose the right way as women’s liberationists.

5) Adding the viewpoint of social reform to the base of a charity organization is considered a great achievement by historical studies on social welfare.

There are some issues for the next article.
First, it is the study of the social class of PARWA’s members and the limitation caused by that. This is because their relief efforts were criticized by some male journalists and socialists at that time as giving the impression of looking down on the victims.

Second, it is necessary to study PARWA from the point of view of ecofeminism.
③④ Hongo central church in Bunkyo ward in Tokyo, which was established in 1890.
   Photo by Tomoko Yamada, 2012

⑤ Memorial of Ushioda stands beside the Watarase River in Tochigi Prefecture.
   Many Victims mourned over her death. They collected money, although they were poor.
   Photo by Tomoko Yamada, 2012

References
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   • *Fujo-shinbun* (Magazine for Women), No.81-166, published by The Womens Newspapers


ii) http://www18.ocn.ne.jp/~kyofukai/10English.htm

iii) 500cho-bu: about 500ha