

Italo-Japanese Symposium “Women and Society: Japan and Italy”

KOTANI, Masao

The Italo-Japanese Symposium “Women and Society: Japan and Italy”, co-organized by Italian Women’s Association in Tokyo, Ochanomizu University, and the Italian Institute of Culture (IIC, Tokyo), was held from November 23 to 26, 2006, at the IIC.

Understanding the comparative reviews on the situations relating to women in both countries, the symposium was the first step toward the deeper mutual socio-cultural understanding between Italy and Japan.

From Ochanomizu University, five professors participated in the sessions: Sawako Hanyu, Masao Kotani, Masako Ishii-Kuntz, Eiko Shinotsuka, and Satoko Kan.

On the first day of the symposium, November 23, the showing of the Italian film “Mi piace lavorare” (*I like working*) (2004), directed by F. Comencini, was followed by a cross-cultural panel discussion on labour problems of women.

On the second day, November 25, in the opening session, the Italian ambassadress A. Cenerini Bova and Prof. S. Hanyu, the vice-president of Ochanomizu University, gave the statistical presentations on the general situations relating to women in Italy and Japan.

In the first session, “sociological-historical views”, with Kotani as moderator, Prof. C. Saraceno (Torino Univ.) and Prof. M. Ishii-Kuntz (Ochanomizu Univ.) presented the detailed analyses on the women’s lives in both countries from the viewpoint of family sociology, followed by the historical discourses by Hon. Y. Madoka, a member of the House of Councilors. Both the policy implications and attitudinal changes especially of men were discussed.

In the second session, “encounter to entrepreneurs”, coordinated by Prof. E. Shinotsuka (Ochanomizu Univ.), Ms. R. Missoni and Ms. H. Mori talked about their own professional lives as designers with many photos.

In the afternoon session, “legal issues”, organized by Ms. C. Iori (Italian Women’s Association in Tokyo), four Italian and Japanese experts of law exchanged their opinions on family law, labour law, and social policy.

Finally, the “round-table discussion” was held with all the panelists, involving the audience. To improve women’s status in Japan and Italy, the importance of considering both policies and individual attitudes was confirmed as well as the realization of the problems in democratic societies.

On the final day, November 26, the intensive dialogue on “OUT” was held between Ms. N. Kirino, the author of “OUT”, and Ms. E. Gianini Belotti, the famous Italian writer, moderated by Prof. S. Kan (Ochanomizu Univ.) and Ms. L. Testaverde (Italian Women’s Association in Tokyo). Ms. Kirino discussed the possibilities of mutual understanding between women and men which summarized the entire conference theme.