

A NEW PARADIGM FOR HOME ECONOMICS IN JAPAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY — ISSUES THAT THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF HOME ECONOMICS SHOULD RESOLVE, AS WE ENTER THE 21ST CENTURY-
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In this presentation, I would like to introduce the issues which I feel the Japan Society of Home Economics should solve, as we enter the twenty-first century, in order to position the home economics profession, in a new paradigm in Japan.

The Society was founded in 1949, after the Second World War, and was influenced by the complete change in the educational system and the establishment of the field of home economics, at the university level. Since then, the members of each area of home economics have been respectively working hard to accumulate research relevant to home economics, in order to obtain recognition for home economics as a profession and field of knowledge. Meanwhile, the Society has been working hard for more than three decades, to acquire authorization as an Academic Foundation by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Japan, and for approval for affiliation with the Japan Science Council. This was finally achieved in 1982 for the former, and 1985 for the latter. In 1980 during the last stage of this struggle, the Society organized a task force with the responsibility of providing leadership in order to position the home economics profession. The Society subsequently approved the task force's proposals in 1984, which were published in the "1984 Report on Positioning the Home Economics Profession over the Next 10 Years". In this Report, the paradigm for the home economics profession was defined by a statement which included the philosophy, objectives, missions, methodology and the identity of the home economics profession as a field of knowledge.

At the close of this Report, the task force strongly recommended that further discussion and re-examination on positioning the home economics profession should be done again a decade later. Therefore, in

early 1991, the Society re-organized another task force, in order to re-consider the statement made in 1984 and search for ways to re-direct the home economics profession as we enter into the twenty-first century. The task force finalized the 1994 Report published in the Journal of Home Economics of Japan (Vol. 45, No. 5).

This Report is composed of five chapters, and its main chapters are as follows : 1) The transition of the membership, managerial system, projects and research trends. 2) The general analyses of socioeconomic conditions, the state of home economics in higher education programs and home economics education programs in primary and secondary education and, 3) A proposal for re-activating the Japan Society of Home Economics. During the three-year term, the task force concluded that the theoretical examination of the home economics profession, under its present objectives, methodology and identity, was discussed through and through by the 1984 task force, and that the 1984 research results delineate the breadth and scope of the home economics profession in terms of its knowledge base. However, the home economics profession is still not fully understood as a whole and the diffusion of the home economics profession is to depend on how the Japan Society of Home Economics will cope with the changes in our daily living conditions and environment. Further, a lot depends on the proposals which will lead the Japan Society of Home Economics in a new direction, as part of the new paradigm of Home Economics in Japan in the twenty-first century.

This presentation will focus on the proposal for re-activating the Society, in a new paradigm for the home economics profession in Japan for the twenty-first century, on the basis of my own perspective, while also referring to both the 1984 and 1994 Reports.

Reading the 1994 Report, the Society should deal with the following issues; 1) changing the present name which refers to home economics, 2) reorganizing the managerial system of the Society, 3) reforming publicity work and the publication of journals, 4) actively participating in home economics education program and home economics teacher education, and 5) positively involving in the community.

1) Changing the name of home economics

The 1984 task force discussed the issue of changing the name of home economics, concluding that the majority preferred keeping the present name rather than changing it. However, some admitted that the present term for home economics has an old-fashioned and backwards image and seems to attract very few people today. Therefore, it is favorable to change the name and perhaps important to re-challenge, but they considered that the name of home economics was to be held, unless a new, appropriate name could be devised.

Over these past 10 years, the number of faculty and home economics departments has hardly changed, while the names of home economics programs have been disappearing little by little. In addition, it is said that some members are willing to withdraw from the Society, if another relevant and/or daily living-related association is not established. Therefore, it is a crucial time now, in which the Society should decide whether to reaffirm home economics as the name of the profession or recommend a new name through a serious discussion among the Society members, even though there is still a very strong support for holding the name of home economics, as present.

Even though the current conceptual framework of the home economics profession and the present paradigm for the profession has been proposed, the significance of the profession has not been fully recognized among the general public, and the name of home economics surely conjures up an inaccurate and misleading image of the profession. The Society is eagerly expected to deliberate the issue of a name change, while re-examining its identity and the unity of the home economics profession as a field of knowledge.

2) Reorganization of the managerial system of the Society

The academic development of the home economics profession has caused a fragmentation in research, and many young professionals, graduating from home economics higher education programs, only identify with their own specialization and not with the larger profession. Therefore, the home economics profession has become characterized by a lack of clarity, and the profession seems to be dissolving or less academic, and the public image of home economics has not improved.

It is also clear that the home economics profession has two fateful and contradictory dimensions of trying to combine both specialization and synthesis. Individual researchers have greatly contributed to the improvement of daily living through their specialization, however, those contributions are not always considered the results of various aspects of the profession. Therefore, a new means or measure should be organized, in order to send out practical, effective, and useful, information. Also, data about daily living based on professional knowledge and research results of all areas of the home economics profession is made available to laymen or/and experts, individuals or/and organizations, the government or/and private sector.

The Society should take a leadership role in generating a means to restructure the managerial system, in order to keep improving the specialized research, and develop the methodology for the synthesis of various research areas. Further, there are other issues which need to be considered, such as the number of specialized divisions, the voting system for the Executive Board members, and the qualifications for membership.

3) Reform of publicity and the publication of Journals

The Society publishes 12 issues of the *Journal of Home Economics of Japan* per year, and every issue carries any paper regardless of specialization, with a few general articles, under the policy that the home economics profession is an academic field of the synthetic science. This causes some of the contents of each issue to be useless, or not beneficial to some members, because the profession is divided into too many various areas. Each paper is too specialized or too broad, and not all members can understand the contents of the issues. In addition, it is true that there are not many resources to give home economics professionals and other relevant researchers, much information on the most advanced research, nor issues related to daily living in the home economics profession at home, as well as abroad.

The Society should publish two editions of a journal and a periodical. As a rule, each journal should carry research papers with one specialization, and the number of journals should be the same as the divisions, while a periodical should carry articles with explanations for

high level research. The introduction of foreign home economics research, general remarks, hot topics, social issues, book reviews, committees and conferences reports, and so the periodicals provide a very important role in the widespread diffusion of information about the home economics profession, among the other relevant fields of knowledge to the general public.

4) Active participation in home economics education programs and home economics teacher education

It is true that home economics education programs and the home economics profession greatly influence each other, and that the image of the profession in Japan has been mainly generated by the home economics education program. Up to 1994, the home economics education program had been a required subject only for girls in secondary school, and so the profession had conjured up a less academic, less valued and more feminine image. In 1994, the home economics education program fully became a required subject for both boys and girls, from the fifth to the tenth grade., however, its image is still the same as before. This is the reason why the Society should also be involved in the home economics education program. In 1984, the Society organized the Ad Hoc Committee of "The Home Economics Profession and Home Economics Education Program", which submitted its report in 1986. This Report focused on the conceptual framework of the home economics education program, from the perspective of the home economics profession, and influenced the program in many ways.

Until then, the Society has barely been involved in the home economics education program, thinking that the home economics research is different from the home economics education program at the elementary and secondary school levels. However, the home economics profession is generally considered to be the same as the home economics education program, and so the Society should be equally involved in the home economics education programs, as well. In other words, the home economics education curriculum should be developed from the perspective of the home economics profession on the basis of all research results. In addition, the Society should take the home economics teacher education into consideration, organizing another Ad Hoc Committee for the home

economics profession, and the home economics education program.

The Committee should propose that the home economics education curricula, including school education, adult education and handicapped education, emphasizes that the home economics education program is to help all students develop their independence and competency to manage their own daily living, that not only female but male teachers are to be trained, and that the in-service training program is to be developed, and in addition, that various means should be adopted to send as many people as possible information related to home economics and daily living.

5) Active participation by the community

The Japan Society of Home Economics is now an Academic Foundation and a member of the Japan Science Council, which means the home economics profession is officially recognized as a field of knowledge. However, the general public does not seem to know of the Society as an Academic Foundation, and does not exactly understand the profession's goals, how the profession contributes to society, and how the profession helps humans function in daily living, for both the family and individual, directly and/or indirectly.

Therefore, something has to be done to grapple with this situation surrounding the profession, as we enter the twenty-first century. The most reasonable step the Society should take is increased responsibility for actively notifying the general public about the profession, such as its contribution to the community through proposals and activities for improving family and individual's real daily living. In return, the general public will feel a great appreciation toward the Society as it works for the community and the home economics profession will be able to acquire increased recognition from the public, and further its image.

There are some reasons why the Society seems not to be involved in the community, and why its contribution to improvement of family and individual's daily living does not seem to have been explicit. First, the Society has been busy in facilitating and publishing research, in order to get the recognition as a field of knowledge. Second, family and individual's daily living seems to have been made light of by national policy, while economics and industry has been considered the most important social

interest. Third, home economics research tends to be more specialized, which makes it difficult to distinguish home economics from other related sciences, such as agriculture, engineering, physiology, chemistry, biology, architecture, sociology, psychology, economics, social welfare, and education. Fourth, the Society has taken little leadership in synthesizing the profession, and has let each division, such as food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing and environment, child development and family relations, family resource management and family economics, have its own constitution, publication, meeting, membership fees, and secretariat respectively, like an independent association.

Considering the above, the Society should search for a means to unify the identity of the home economics profession, devise better measures for public relations, and be involved in actions related to daily living in the community, the nation, the region, and the world, in cooperation with other relevant organizations, such as ARAHE and IFHE.

I have presented the issues which the Japan Society of Home Economics should grapple with, as we enter the twenty-first century, and a new paradigm for the home economics profession in Japan. Over these past thirty years, I consider that individual research is very academic, valuable and original, and so its contribution to improve our daily living is very remarkable. However, the unity and identity of the home economics profession has not been clear among both the general public and home economics researchers and practitioner themselves.

Without the energetic leadership of the Society, I feel the home economics profession will be shrunk and so family and individual daily living will surely be spoiled.

I am confident that the Japan Society of Home Economics will take responsibility for re-establishing the home economics profession, in order to improve family and individual's daily living, as we enter the twenty-first century.

**IN SEARCH OF A NEW PARADIGM
-THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE-**

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Paradigm shifts always occur before you are ready. Such was the case for me. Like the loss of old friend, I grieved for my past work in home economics. However, the presence of a new career has caused me to seriously explore and question our discipline and professional practice.

This paper will review home economics from a personal perspective. We will discuss how basic home economics skills combined with courage and intuition will forge new futures and enrich our work.