

# DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JAPANESE WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

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*This broadsheet was one of thousands of printed statements circulated by individuals or groups at Forum '85 to increase the awareness of other participants about the conditions affecting women in their homelands. We publish it*

*here as one such example – and for the details it contains about the discriminatory treatment of women industrial workers in Japan.*

*Ce tract en était un parmi des milliers de déclarations circulées par des individus ou des groupes au Forum '85, pour augmenter la con-*

*science des autres participantes en ce qui concerne les conditions affectant les femmes dans leurs pays d'origine. Nous le publions ici comme exemple, et pour les détails qui s'y trouvent au sujet du traitement discriminatoire que subissent les femmes au Japon.*

## WE CANNOT TOLERATE THE POLICY OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN BEING CARRIED OUT BY NKK, A BIG BUSINESS IN JAPAN



To all participants in NGO Forum!

I pay my respects to, and give my address of solidarity with, all of you who are struggling against the discrimination of women everywhere in the world.

In Japan the struggle for eliminating the discrimination against women in employment has been making some progress due to our movement for this decade. Nevertheless, there has been continuing as yet an intolerable discrimination against women, being carried out by the stubborn and tricky Big Business of Japan with the cooperation of the labor union which has been obstructing our movement.

An obvious evidence for this will be given by the "case of discriminating discharge of female employees" in Nippon Kokan Co., Ltd. (NKK), one of the largest enterprises in the iron and steel industry of the world.

In NKK many female laborers were working in the production line for years after the World War II. The enterprisers, however, have driven the women out of the production line through the "rationalization" for consecutive 20 years, simply because under the Labor Standards Law they are prohibited to employ the female laborers in midnight or in dangerous and harmful works. The female laborers have been transferred to the auxiliary works with a lower rate of wages. At last, in 1972 all of 82 female laborers remaining in the production line at that time were discharged for the purpose of "rationalization".

At that time, NKK was carrying out the "rationalization" program, under which its Keihin Iron Works would be relocated to the neighboring site, all plants and shops thereof would be rebuilt with the aim of renovation and increased

efficiency, and, as the most important item of this program, the laborers totaling 20,000 at that time would be reduced about by half within several years. As dictated by this program the male laborers have been reduced by means of transferring to other works, retirement at the age of 55 as prescribed by the age limit regulation and urging premature retirement. In the case of the female laborers, however, all of them, totaling 82 persons as mentioned above, were compulsorily discharged. I myself was also discharged after 26 years of continuous service for NKK where I was first employed in 1946.

Since then, for 13 years I have been struggling against NKK by bringing the matter to the court with the claim that the policy of NKK constitutes an unlawful discrimination against women. And many organizations have also taken part in this struggle by carrying out their mass actions in support of me.

We can never pardon such a discriminating policy on the part of the Japanese big business, since the policy constitutes one of the reasons for the lower wages and longer working hours in Japan and consequently for the friction in the international trade.

In order to win early in this struggle, I herewith appeal to you, women of the world for your warm understandings and strong support.

MATSUSHIMA Chieko, 1-15-14 Oshima, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki-shi, Japan.

P.S. It is requested that you send your letter of protest against the discriminating policy to NKK, c/o YAMASHIRO Yoshinari, President of NKK, 1-1-2 Marunouchi Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.