

SOCIETY OF YIN-YANG

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Dark and bright, earth and heaven, passive and active. These are some of the pairs of notions focused upon in the Chinese philosophy of Yin-Yang. They are a wide variety of dualistic phenomena in which two elements support each other, and one cannot exist if the other is missing. This Chinese concept of Yin-Yang is never absolute or antagonistic, but rather, relativistic and complementary. It provides a good illustration of the ideal men and women in this society. But can the present Japanese society properly manifest Yin-Yang?

After the Equal Job Opportunities Act was carried into effect in 1986, the complaints about sexual harassment have increased in number dramatically. That is, more and more women have begun to speak out. Women say that men are building up barriers to exclude women, making it difficult for them to enjoy the Yin-Yang coexistence. However, making commotions blindly, and being drowned in the whirlpool of sexual harassment hysteria, is resulting in negative consequences. Aren't women creating even more antagonism by yelling out 'SEKUHARA', 'SEKUHARA' too much?

In Japan, the term sexual harassment can be applied to anytime and anywhere, whenever an unpleasant environment is created for women directly or indirectly. It has become a kind of a boom, and is now something that is trendy to talk about, since we are driven by a strong image-consciousness. To build up and give the image of a strong, independent career woman has become the trend. On the other hand, it has become the trend for men to accept strong women or at least show a capacity for acceptance. This means that the society has started moving in a totally new direction away from the male dominated social structure, which has a long history. This is causing confusion.

Since I went to a Girls' High School, I was constantly reminded that, 'Girls can do anything!'. But after attending a university where there are more men than women, I have come to feel comfortable in the society of coexistence.

Talking about this relationship, Kazuko Watanabe, an instructor at Kyoto Sangyo University stated that the age of so-called 'Radical

Feminism' is over, but the problem is far from being over. We have entered a new age where the issue in equal partnership, is not in demanding equal rights, since we have been already given them lawfully. It is not in accusing men, which only seems to aggravate the present situation. Women are not the people who have fallen behind men in progress any more. They have progressed, and live freely as well as independently.

Before going any further, we must clarify that sexual harassment is not something trendy. This is not something that should disappear after some time. It is an important theme for men and women in order to take firm steps forward in our changing times.

Sadly, some misunderstandings still exist, and as for this, women cannot keep quiet. Women must lead in clarifying and recognizing discriminations to protect their rights. However, this does not mean women should act like men. Neither does this mean women should pressure men about sexual harassments. Although it is a rather slow process, women are gradually being given their basic rights, such as the right to vote, equal job opportunities, and signs of acceptance from men. To exercise this right or not, is another matter and is up to each individual. Since physical and mental differences exist between the sexes, some women prefer to stand back and remain as traditional women, compared to some active women. This is perfectly acceptable, since equal rights does not mean all women should participate in feminism movements, and it can be exercised this way, too. A calm, mature discussion about the Yin-Yang relationship is needed, so that women can keep their own good qualities, and men can keep theirs.

Since it has been a Japanese tradition for women to walk three steps behind men, the society slowly becoming conscious of equality is a good tendency. Using Japanese cultural backgrounds as a justification for unequal partnership should not be allowed any more. Because we are swallowed in this wave of arguments on this topic quite often these days, now is the right time to consider and create a good balance between Yin and Yang.

It may sound too idealistic, but the territorial fence between men and women, should be removed. Without the stereotypes of the sexes, but as individuals, one should provide a plus for the partner's minus. If my partner was a good cook, maybe he could do the cooking, since I am not so good at it. By complementing each other like this, we will realize that men and women are equal as individuals, but they are

different. And being different does not mean one is superior or inferior to the other.

Men and women in society are complementary figures that support each other. It becomes difficult for one of them to exist if the counterpart is missing. Let men be dark, when women are bright. Let men be the earth, when women are the heaven. The philosophy of complementary relationship should not be forgotten, to welcome the society of Yin-Yang.