

Emiko SUZUI : Abortion in Japanese Society — Coping and the Need for a Support System —

Married women account for the majority of legal abortion cases in Japan. A large proportion of these women had deep feelings of sadness, grief, and loneliness associated with their lost pregnancies. They did not receive counseling and advice from the medical staff. Moreover, they use some traditional birth control methods and do not use others. Only a small proportion of couples make use of post-World War II period innovations in contraceptive sterilization.

Although many couples do attempt to prevent conceptions, they rely mainly upon condoms and calculation of the rhythm method. There is a need for professional counseling and support to be routinely offered to all women who have or are considering an abortion.

Yoshihiro KANEMITSU : The Legal Process for Handicapped People — Psychological Considerations for Deaf-and-Dumb Defendants in Courts of Law —

The purpose of this study is to consider the validity of the legal process for deaf-and-dumb people from a psychological perspective. The main points at issue are as follows : (1) Validity of legal procedures against people who are unable to defend themselves, (2) Irrationality of indeterminate sentencing, which can be for as long as 17 years, (3) Lack of social support and education for disabled people, (4) Reliability and validity of judicial evidence prepared by psychological experts.

After a consideration of these problems, the following conclusions were drawn : (1) The Japanese judicial system has not been completely fair to disabled persons. Therefore, the present legal procedure should be reconsidered from the standpoint of human rights. (2) Psychological considerations should play a greater role in the question of human rights for handicapped people to promote normalization and provide social support.

Tomie NAGAKAWA : The Legal Status of The Unborn

Japanese civil law stipulates that “A person’s rights begin at birth” which implies that a fetus has therefore no such rights. Problems may arise if a mature fetus is deprived of its right merely because birth was delayed. In response to such a possibility there were some attempts to protect the fetus’ rights by establishing exceptions to the rule. However, it could be said that these exceptions were not aimed at protecting the fetus itself, but were an attempt to protect a born child.

As it is a fact that the fetus is an entity separate from the mother, even though it is still in