
GENDER NORMS AND WOMEN'S DOUBLE BURDEN IN EAST ASIA

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South Korea, Japan, and China share similar issues with entrenched gender norms regarding childcare and employment, which are being reflected in their plunging birthrates.

In South Korea, over 40 percent of women experience a career break after marriage. They are commonly referred to as career-interrupted women (kyong-dan-nye), highlighting a trend in which women's professional development is interrupted by marriage and childrearing. In Japan, the phrase good wife, wise mother (ryosai kenbo) paints the image of how an ideal woman ought to behave. On the other end of the spectrum, Chinese media and the All-China Womens Federation have promulgated the idea that unmarried urban females over 27 are leftover women (sheng nu), worth less and less as they get older despite having successful careers.

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