

WNAJ



巻頭言 一 儿

## RISING SUN RISING DAUGHTER

Adjunct Professor of Biomedical Engineering  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery  
Duke University Medical Center  
Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Consultant in Kinston, North Carolina

Dr. Ed Cooper, MD



Greetings to the Women's Neurosurgical Association of Japan. On Thanksgiving Day in the United States, I am thankful for the growing number of women in medicine. When I was a medical student at Duke University in the Class of 1966, there were only 5 women compared to 78 of us men, an incidence of only 6%. Now 40 years later the Duke Medical School Class of 2006 has 54 women and 51 men, so 51% of the total are women. This half and half combination is similar to Japan and Canada, and a little less than in England. Now in the United States, 25% of the physicians in practice are female.

But what about neurosurgery (in which I started my residency) and orthopaedic surgery where I completed my training in 1975? Of the 3500 certified neurosurgeons in the U.S., less than 100 are women, just over 2%. When I started in practice in the mid seventies, female neurosurgeons were rare.

A similar situation exists in orthopaedic surgery. More doctors are in that speciality than neurosurgery, but the U.S. percentage of females remains low at 2.5%. As recently as 2001, Dr. Allison Toth was the first female orthopaedic surgeon to join the teaching staff at Duke University Medical Center.

The first woman to become a medical student in the United States was Elizabeth Blackwell. She received her MD at Geneva Medical College in New York in 1849. But it was not until the nineteen sixties and seventies that there were female neurosurgeons. Among the first women in U.S. neurosurgery were Dr. Ruth Jakoby (George Washington University), Dr. Merylee Werthan (Temple), Dr. Carole Miller (University of Michigan), Dr. Joan Venes (Yale) and Dr. Frances Conley (Stanford University). Around the world there was similar timing for Dr. Betty MacRae in Canada, and Dr. Camellia Posoncuy in the Philippines.

As a young teenager in the 1950's, when I thought of such occupations as policemen, soldiers, business executives, politicians, doctors, engineers and lawyers, I thought men. Men dominated society in those decades. In 1980, the national legislative members in many nations were almost all male:

Canada 90% male, United Kingdom 95%, United States 96% and Japan 97%.

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加藤庸子

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