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藤沢邦子 (Kuniko Fujisawa) *Yae Neesima and Her Accomplishments*

秦野康子 (Yasuko Hatano) *A Woman Scientist and the Daigo Fukuryū-maru Accident (1954)*

石河敦子 (Atsuko Ishikawa) *Young Rural Women Factory Workers in Early Twentieth Century Japan*

多田倫子 (Noriko Tada) *The Wartime School Lives of Three Girls' High School Students: 1938-1945 Japan*

高橋登紀恵 (Tokie Takahashi) *The Influence of Kyōiku-chokugo (the Imperial Rescript on Education)*

渡辺敬子 (Keiko Watanabe) *The Adolescence of Teruko of the Early Shōwa Era*

山本順子 (Junko Yamamoto) *A Woman's life in Wartime*

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## Contents

Yae Neesima and Her Accomplishments Kuniko Fujisawa .....	3
Katsuko Saruhashi (1920-2007): A Woman Scientist and the <i>Daigo Fukuryū-maru</i> Accident (1954) Yasuko Hatano .....	14
Young Rural Women Factory Workers in Early Twentieth Century Japan Atsuko Ishikawa .....	25
The Wartime School Lives of Three Girls' High School Students: 1938-1945 Japan Noriko Tada .....	38
The Influence of <i>Kyōiku-chokugo</i> (the Imperial Rescript on Education) Tokie Takahashi .....	48
The Adolescence of Teruko of the Early Shōwa Era Keiko Watanabe .....	59
A Woman's Life in Wartime Junko Yamamoto .....	70



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## Yae Neesima and Her Accomplishments

Kuniko Fujisawa

Yae Neesima<sup>1</sup> (1845-1932, nee Yamamoto) was born to a *samurai* family of the pro-shogunate Aizu Domain (now Fukushima) during the turbulent late Edo period, when Japan's national seclusion under the feudal Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867) was to lapse and imperial rule was to be restored on the cusp of national modernization. After losing her father and younger brother in the Boshin Civil War (1868-69), Yae accompanied her mother and niece to Kyōto to live with her elder brother Kakuma Yamamoto.<sup>2</sup> There she worked at Shin Ei-gakkō Nyokōba, a municipal school for girls built in 1872 which followed a new concept of education.<sup>3</sup> In 1876 she was baptized and married Jō Neesima (also known as Joseph Hardy Neesima),<sup>4</sup> a Congregational Church minister, who had founded a Christian school in Kyōto (now Dōshisha University) in 1875. He had aspired to cultivate moral character with free and independent spirit at his private school. In order to build a new Japan, his aim was to mentally modernize its citizens, as opposed to the institutional modernization pursued by the Meiji government.<sup>5</sup> In 1877, Yae began to teach at the affiliated girls' school administered by Jō with support from American missionaries. During their fourteen-year marriage, Yae assisted her husband in carrying out his missionary and educational work. After his untimely death, Yae gradually withdrew her involvement in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Nijjima' is a normal Romanization of her surname, but her husband himself signed his name as Jō Neesima.

<sup>2</sup> Kakuma Yamamoto (1828-92) studied Dutch studies and modern military science in Edo (now Tōkyō), and became a gunnery officer and teacher in Aizu. He was believed to have died in a battle as a retainer of Lord Aizu and Shogunate Military Governor of Kyōto, but actually had been captured by the pro-emperor Satsuma Domain. During his detention he lost his sight but dictated proposals on political, economic, and educational reforms to revitalize Kyōto. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, due to these progressive proposals, he was made an advisor to the new municipal government. He became a friend and supporter of Jō Neesima, believing that education and Christianity would open the eyes and mind of the Japanese. For more on his life, see Aoyama, Kason (1996) *Denki: Yamamoto Kakuma* (Biography: Kakuma Yamamoto), Tōkyō: Ōzora-sha, (Kyōto: 1926).

<sup>3</sup> The school had two courses: one which taught sewing, crafts, weaving, and manners to ordinary women and the other which offered classic studies and English to upper middle-class women. The students, who ranged from twelve-year-olds to older married women, came from Kyōto and other areas in Japan. The school aimed at cultivating enlightened, practical and independent women. With British teachers, Shin Ei-gakkō Nyokōba attracted various visitors including royal families and foreigners. Kyōto rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai (ed.) (2003) *Onna tachi no Kyōto: Shiseki o tazunete* (Women of Kyōto: visiting historical sites), pp. 96-98, Kyōto: Kamogawa shuppan.

<sup>4</sup> Jō Neesima (1843-90) was born to a *samurai* family, but in 1864 departed for America to study without permission from the shogunate. When the 1871 Iwakura Mission under the imperial government visited the US on its around-the-world study expedition, he assisted the party as its interpreter. He was the first Japanese to receive a degree from a Western college (1870) and to be ordained as a Protestant minister (1874). *Life of Joseph Hardy Neesima* was written by his colleague Jerome D. Davis in 1894.

<sup>5</sup> Dōshisha University (ed.) (2010) *Neesima Jō: Kyōiku shūkyō ron shū* (A Collection of Writings and Speeches on Education and Religion by Jō Neesima), pp. 4-5, Tōkyō: Iwanami bunko.

Dōshisha, except for appearances at honorary functions or festive gatherings, and led a quiet, independent life as a tea master. She became a member of the Japanese Red Cross Society in 1890 and served as a volunteer military nurse during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Upon her death at the age of 86, a school funeral was held for ‘the mother of Dōshisha’ or ‘Grandma Neesima.’

Although Yae led an active and varied life, researchers have paid little attention to her. Despite the scarcity of resources, this essay attempts to sketch the extent and nature of her achievements in the field of women’s education; the spreading of Christian culture in the home and in society; and social activities in the era where old values met new ones and accelerated intercultural contact. The strong influence of her husband and brother may have limited her role as a pioneer to a supportive one, but her diverse learning and efforts and energetic activity nevertheless suggest that she was interested in enlightening and modernizing Japanese women. Her lifetime coincided with the Protestant world mission movement in the West, particularly in America, which played a significant role in the first wave of feminism, where female missionaries were actively engaged in ‘Woman’s Work for Women.’<sup>6</sup> Whether or not she was aware of her place in this international milieu, Yae Neesima was certainly involved in the work of a progressive era and contributed to society.

### **An Aizu *Samurai* Woman**

Yae was educated according to the tenets of the *Dōshi-kun* (Ethical Code for Children) taught at the Aizu domain school; residual adherence to Confucianist morality, *samurai* principles and the Aizu spirit remained throughout her life, and may sometimes have invited conflicts with American missionaries and students whose domain loyalties were opposed to the Aizu.<sup>7</sup> A self-proclaimed tomboy with physical strength,<sup>8</sup> this daughter of a hereditary gunnery officer family was proud of her own skill in gunnery. Yet, her calligraphy and *waka* poems are evidence that she was well-educated in the literary and traditional arts, as well. In her teens, Yae heard about new thoughts and technology

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<sup>6</sup> Sakamoto, Kiyone (1999a), “Ūmanzu Bōdo to Nihon dendō” (The Woman’s Board and Japan mission), in *Amerikan Bōdo senkyō-shi shokan no kenkyū 1869-1890*, pp. 119-152, Tōkyō: Gendai shiryō shuppan.

<sup>7</sup> Motoi, Yasuhiro (2010) *Neesima Jō o kataru 7: Hansamu ni ikiru* (Speaking of Jō Neesima 7: Live handsomely), pp. 95 & 166, Kyōto: Shibunkaku shuppan.

<sup>8</sup> Twelve-year-old Yae could lift a 60kg rice-bag. She carried a heavy load of ammunition during the Boshin War. In later years she sometimes carried her sick brother Kakuma on her back when he went out on business. Yoshikai, Naoto (2000) “Neesima Yaeko toji kaikodan” (Memoir told by Yaeko Neesima), *Dōshisha Dansō*, no. 20, March 2000, pp. 105 & 113, (facsimile edition), (Kyōto: Yoshii shōbundō insatsu, 1932).

in the West through her elder brother and his acquaintances, including Shōnosuke Kawasaki, a visiting lecturer of Dutch studies and her future husband. She liked to study and hoped to use her learning for society as these men did.<sup>9</sup>

At the final stage of the civil war, with her hair cut and wearing the *kimono* of her dead younger brother, Yae took part in the desperate defense of Aizu Castle as a gunner and taught some 70 besieged women<sup>10</sup> how to prepare ammunition. Upon their surrender to the imperial troops, superior in number and firearms, her non-Aizu-clan husband was ordered to leave the domain. After a married life of just three years (1865-68), Yae never saw her husband again.

Many *samurai* class women were involved in the war in and outside of the castle.<sup>11</sup> Under the bombing, Princess Teru, the sister-in-law of Lord Aizu, encouraged women to serve meals and look after the wounded. Takeko Nakano, trained in the martial art of *naginata* (a Japanese polearm), led an ad hoc female contingent but was shot to death. Some women killed themselves with daggers at their houses rather than to surrender and lose honor. Iwako Uryū, a devoted Buddhist, rushed to the battlefield to care for the injured, regardless of their allegiances.<sup>12</sup>

### **A Teacher and then a Missionary Wife in Kyōto**

Defeat forced Aizu loyalists into exile and branded them as enemies of the throne, and its trauma lingered for many years.<sup>13</sup> Three years later, when it turned out that her brother Kakuma Yamamoto (see footnote 2) was alive and working for the Kyōto municipal government, Yae and her family went to join him; only his wife chose to remain in Aizu.<sup>14</sup> Yamamoto encouraged his sister to learn English and about

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<sup>9</sup> Fujimoto, Hitomi (2010) *Bakumatsu jūki-den: Kyō no kaze, Aizu no hana* (The story of a young lady with a gun in the closing days of the Tokugawa shogunate: Kyōto wind, Aizu flower), pp. 8-9, Tōkyō: Chuōkōron-shinsha.

<sup>10</sup> Among them was Sutehatsu Yamakawa (1860-1919), one of five Japanese girls who joined the 1871 Iwakura Mission to study in the US, who spoke of her war experiences to her American classmates. Kuno, Akiko (1993), *Unexpected Destininations: The Poignant Story of Japan's First Vassar Graduate*, Kirsten McIvor (trans.), pp. 27-48, New York: Kōdansha International. In 1882, right before returning home, Yamakawa attended the Connecticut Training School for Nurses for a few months. *Ibid.*, p. 107. In later years, she, then the Marquise Ōyama, was a director of the Japanese Red Cross Society in Tōkyō; with the support of the imperial family, she also organized the Ladies Volunteer Nursing Association in 1887. Kyōto-based Yae Neesima was an active member of both organizations.

<sup>11</sup> Read, for instance, Hiraishi, Benzō (1976), Hoshi, Ryōichi (2006) and Shiba, Keiko (1994) whose works are listed on bibliography.

<sup>12</sup> Later on, Uryū opened an orphanage and a training facility where jobless ex-*samurai* and war widows could seek a way of living.

<sup>13</sup> Hearing the news that Setsuko Matsudaira, granddaughter of Lord Aizu, was engaged to Prince Mikasa, eighty-year-old Yae went to Tōkyō to congratulate the engagement: she saw it as an imperial pardon of the Aizu. Motoi, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> Fukumoto, Takehisa (1983) *Neesima Jō to sono tsuma* (Jō Neesima and his wife), p. 40, Tōkyō: Shinchō-sha.

Christianity, both symbols of Western civilization. Initially, they may have been seen as the knowledge and weaponry necessary for the defeated Aizu to reposition themselves as cultural leaders in a new Japan.<sup>15</sup> Yamamoto was also an advocate of women's education, so that, with the Reverend Jerome D. Davis, he acted as an advisor to Jō Neesima concerning the founding of a Christian school for girls.<sup>16</sup>

Upon the recommendation of her brother, Yae became an assistant teacher of weaving and dormitory superintendent at Shin Ei-gakkō Nyokōba (see footnote 3), which, abreast with Kanritsu Tōkyō Jogakkō (also known as Takehashi Jogakkō), was the oldest public girls' school in modern Japan. Thus, Yae can be considered one of the first Japanese career women along with other teachers there. The school drew the attention of such educators as Jō Neesima, and Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of the school of Western studies in 1858 which is now Keiō University.<sup>17</sup> Yae herself drew attention, as well, for her boldness and willingness to make budget requests to the Kyōto Governor to increase the educational subsidy.<sup>18</sup>

Jō and Yae came to know each other during Bible study at Dr. M. L. Gordon's. Jō said later that their encounter was 'providential,'<sup>19</sup> though they were quite different in character and experiences. Yae was the first person baptized at a Protestant church in Kyōto:<sup>20</sup> with the passion of a new convert, she distributed religious pamphlets to the students of Nyokōba, but she lost her job when she became engaged to a Christian minister.<sup>21</sup> Jō must have found her courage vital to his challenging enterprise. He wrote to Mrs. Susan Hardy, his host mother in America, "[Yae] is not handsome at all. But I know of her as a person who behaves handsomely."<sup>22</sup> He also commented, "Mission work is still like a war," and he could not have found a better comrade-in-arms than Yae for his missionary campaign.<sup>23</sup> Although the ban against Christianity was officially lifted in 1873, Kyōto, which was no longer the capital, was

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<sup>15</sup> Fukumoto, Takehisa (1983) "Dōshisha jimbutsu-shi 57, Neesima Yae" (Portraits of Dōshisha people 57, Yae Neesima), *Dōshisha Jihō*, no. 80, p. 125. Rui Kohiyama also suggests that for *ex-samurai*, deprived of privilege, Western studies including Christianity provided both consolation and a chance to climb the ladder to social success. Furukawa, Terumi & Hiromi Chiba, (2010) *Misu daiamondo to sērā-fuku: Erizabesu Rī, sono hito to jidai* (Miss Diamond and sailor-style school uniform: Elizabeth Lee, the person and her time), p. 251, Tōkyō: Chuōkōron-shinsha.

<sup>16</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Kakuma, his mother Saku and his daughter Mine followed suit later.

<sup>21</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 97-99.

<sup>22</sup> Neesima Jō zenshū henshū iinkai (ed.) (1992) *Neesima Jō zenshū*, vol. 6 (A collection of all works of Jō Neesima, vol. 6), quoted in Motoi, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>23</sup> Neesima Jō zenshū henshū iinkai (ed.) (1992) *Neesima Jō zenshū*, vols. 3 & 4 (A collection of all works of Jō Neesima, vols. 3 & 4), *ibid.*, p. 75.

still the thousand-year-old center of Buddhist and Shintoist culture. The stigma carried by Christians is exemplified in a letter (J. D. Davis to N. G. Clark, 20 February 1877), which reports that no Japanese women nearby visited his house since he moved in there and that they ran away when they noticed Mrs. Neesima walking toward them.<sup>24</sup>

The Christian-style wedding, for which the bride donned a hand-sewn wedding dress, was the first of its kind in Kyōto. It was a simple celebration followed by tea and refreshments. Yae may not have been a perfect helpmeet in a Christian home at first, judging from letters where Jō asked her to become the modest, patient and broadminded wife of a minister with Christian love for all mankind, and forget about *samurai* class consciousness.<sup>25</sup> In 1878 the extended Neesima family, joined by his parents, sister and nephew, moved to a newly-built semi-Western house, which became a meeting place for students, ministers, and various guests. Fanny G. Bartlett, a missionary wife, wrote that visitors “enjoyed the hospitality of that home closely modeled after a New England which [Yae] has never visited.”<sup>26</sup> This comment suggests that Yae, the wife of the first Japanese Congregational Church minister, created a good atmosphere there in order to live up to the expectations of the Christian community. Jō was convinced of her faith<sup>27</sup> and she was encouraged to deepen it when the couple prayed together.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, though acknowledging her merits and efforts, the Reverends Davis and Dwight W. Learned remarked in their letters (J.D. Davis to N.G. Clark, 20 February 1877)<sup>29</sup> and (D. W. Learned to N.G. Clark, 1 July 1884)<sup>30</sup> that they felt Yae fell short in terms of commitment to ‘Woman’s Work for Women.’

For many students, who saw Jō Neesima as a saint, the Neesimas were an example of a modern, happy marriage.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, even ardent admirers of Jō expressed regret that the president of Dōshisha had lost some of his dignity by getting married. From his experiences in the US, he had learned how to prepare Western dishes,

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Motoi, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 40, 91 & 165-166.

<sup>26</sup> Dōshisha Archives Center (ed.) (1993) *Tsūitō-shū* VI (A collection of memorial writings of Dōshisha people), p. 391, Kyōto: Dōshisha Archives Center.

<sup>27</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 13 & 86.

<sup>28</sup> Nagasawa, Kamio (ed.) (1973) *Denki sōsho 238: Neesima Yaeko Kaisō-roku* (A Collection of biographies 238: Yaeko Neesima), (facsimile edition), p. 75, Tōkyō: Ōzora-sha. The original was serially published in the *Dōshisha Shimbun* in 1928.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Motoi, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Sakamoto, Kiyone (1999b) “Dōshisha Jogakkō shodai fujin senkyō-shi, A. J. Sutākuuezā no kutō” (Strenuous efforts of A. J. Starkweather, the first female missionary to Dōshisha Jogakkō), in *Amerikan Bōdo senkyō-shi shoka no kenkyū*, p. 322, Tōkyō: Gendai shiryō shuppan.

<sup>31</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

wash and iron his clothes, and polish his own shoes,<sup>32</sup> and as a liberal husband he continued these practices. Moreover, his ‘ladies first’ attitude was conspicuous: he helped his wife board rickshaws and they would sit together. He also used the honorific suffix *-san* to address his ‘dearest’ wife. He wanted his marriage to be a model of respect and equality, but Yae found herself criticized by conservative male students for being unabashedly spoiled, and too extravagant and fashion-minded to be the wife of minister and educator. Instead of being a modest Japanese wife, she wore *kimono* with shoes and Western hats<sup>33</sup> and liked to wear rare and expensive Western dress. Needless to say, she stunned the tradition-loving men and women of Kyōto.

### **Women’s Education at Dōshisha**

In 1876, following the advice of the Reverend Davis, Yae and Mrs. Edward T. Doane, a missionary wife, opened a class for three girls at her house in the hope of supporting Christian work in women’s education.<sup>34</sup> After the class moved to Davis’s house in order to accommodate more students, it was run by young and ardent Alice J. Starkweather from the American Woman’s Board of Missions, who worked in Japan from 1876 to 1883. When it grew further to become the girls’ school Dōshisha Bunkō Nyokōba, Jō Neesima assumed the office of school administrator, as required by Japanese law, although the school was largely financed by the American Board of Missions. Starkweather became an instructor, and Yae taught a class in Japanese etiquette. Unfortunately, due to language barriers, cultural differences, and personal friction, conflicts developed between Japanese and American sides, including clashes between Yae and Starkweather, over the leadership, educational objectives, and operation of the school.<sup>35</sup> The few accounts available from the Japanese side fail to provide details, but gradually, mutual understanding, trust and relationships improved.<sup>36</sup> After a few organizational changes, the school eventually developed into what is now Dōshisha Women’s College of Liberal Arts. Yae’s initial wish and effort were treated lightly, but it is clear that she was positive about women’s education.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-191.

<sup>33</sup> This was a provocative fashion, but in the mid-Meiji era, girls’ normal schools adopted a uniform of *kimono*, *hakama* (pleated skirt) and shoes. Zenkoku Gakkōfuku Rengōkai, “Gakusei-fuku no rekishi” <<http://www.tokyo-gakkofuku.or.jp/REKISI.HTM>> on Aug./15/2010. Girls’ schools including Dōshisha followed suit. Yae can be said to have been a pioneer of functional clothes for Japanese women.

<sup>34</sup> *Dōshisha Jogakkō Kihō*, no. 39, quoted in Dōshisha Alumni Association (ed.) (1965) *Dōshisha Commemorative Publication of the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>35</sup> Sakamoto (1999b), op. cit., pp. 303-326.

<sup>36</sup> Sakamoto, Kiyone (1996) “Meiji 18 nen jiken go no Dōshisha Jogakkō: Nihon-jin shudō-gata Kirisuto-kyō jogakkō e no yuruyakana ikō” (Dōshisha Girls’ School after the 1885 Incident: The gradual switch to Japanese leadership in women’s Christian education), *Bulletin of Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture*, no. 13, March 1996, pp. 75-85.



However, she worked according to the guidelines written by her husband,<sup>37</sup> so in the end, she played a supporting role in his pioneering enterprise.

In 1887 Jō Neesima founded Kyōto Kambyō-fu Gakkō (Kyōto Training School for Nurses) with the help of the missionary doctor John C. Berry (1847-1936), who would later become head of Dōshisha Mission Hospital.<sup>38</sup> The school was built with donations from Japanese supporters and financial aid from the American Woman's Board of Missions. The purpose was to cultivate trained nurses with the Christian spirit of love and charity.<sup>39</sup> Linda Richards (1841-1930), the first American trained nurse, who had helped to establish the modern nurse training program in Tōkyō, supervised Kambyō-fu Gakkō from 1886 to 1890.<sup>40</sup> It is puzzling that Yae was not positively involved in supporting this school for professional nurse training,<sup>41</sup> given its advanced educational and missionary objectives for women's empowerment. Her name is never mentioned by Richards, and Yae never mentions Richards, even though her husband was the founder of the school and Richards certainly needed help.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that Yae did not fully understand the significance of the pioneering work of Richards, or the need for women to support other women with aspirations. If Yae had used her influence, she likely could have contributed to the development of the nursing school; instead, within six years of Jō's death, Kambyō-fu Gakkō was no longer affiliated with Dōshisha, although it continued for 60 years as a school for training nurses and midwives.<sup>43</sup>

Yae Neesima became a volunteer military nurse in 1895. Having belatedly recognizing the importance of nursing skills, she advocated in *Jogaku Zasshi* (Women's Educational Journal) for girls' schools nationwide to include nursing education in their curriculum. She said that would-be wives and mothers should be prepared to maintain family health for generations for a strong nation and

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<sup>37</sup> Dōshisha University, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Berry pointed out three benefits of the nursing school: 1) Patients in the area would receive care by trained nurses; 2) trained nurses could help doctors to provide treatment efficiently and this would lead to the progress of medicine in general; and 3) nursing could become a profession which would help economic independence of women. Kyōto rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai, op. cit., pp. 104-107.

<sup>39</sup> Dōshisha University (ed.) (2010), op. cit., pp. 127-133.

<sup>40</sup> As a missionary nurse, she was committed to Christian work and introduced modern nursing service and nursing education. She followed the teachings of Florence Nightingale. Richards dispatched nurses to answer both the physical and spiritual needs in the local community. Her students wore uniforms (Western dress, apron and white cap) as a symbol of professionalism. Ono, Shōkō (1999) "Kyōto Kambyō-fu Gakkō to senkyō kangofu Rinda Richāzu" (Kyōto Nurse School and missionary nurse Linda Richards), in *Amerikan Bōdo senkyō-shi shokan no kenkyū 1869-1890*, pp. 327-353, Tōkyō: Gendai shiryō shuppan.

<sup>41</sup> Motoi, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>42</sup> Ono, op. cit., pp. 340-346.

<sup>43</sup> Kyōto rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai, op. cit., pp. 104-107.

recommended the building of a nursing school.<sup>44</sup> Motoi offers this as evidence that Yae was a pioneer in nursing education,<sup>45</sup> but this claim is undermined by the fact that her recommendation is belated; she mentions neither Richards nor Kambyō-fu Gakkō for training professional nurses in the article, suggesting that she still did not understand the significance of earlier pioneering efforts by women for women.

### **Life after the Death of Jō Neesima**

When the renowned Christian educator died, Yae was 45 years old; she no longer was weighed down by her responsibilities as his wife and left the family duties in the hands of Tokuo, the couple's adopted son. She continued to undertake a limited number of honorary duties for Dōshisha throughout her life, including hosting domestic and foreign dignitaries: at the age of 79, she greeted Empress Teimei; at the age of 81, she welcomed Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army. Yae also continued to invite students annually to her home for the New Year *uta-garuta*, a traditional card game of 100 *waka* poems. She applied the educational philosophy of Jō Neesima found in the maxim, "Think of Dōshisha as your home and the students as your children," and the notion of *isshi dōjin* (love everybody without discrimination). In the end, she really did not escape her role as "Mrs. Neesima."

In 1890, following her husband's death, Yae became a member of the Japanese Red Cross Society and later served as volunteer nurse during the two wars against Ch'ing China and Russian Empire. There is no record of what led her to join these social activities, but presumably interest grew out of the relationship between the Neesimas and Gumpei Yamamuro, the leader of the Salvation Army Japan. Or perhaps Yae was aware of the Progressive era (1890s-1920s) in America and Victorian Britain where charitable works were extensively conducted by women, which was quite a novel idea in Japan. As for her particular interest into volunteer nursing, some say that Yae's war memories at Aizu motivated her service; others say it was her own fighting spirit.<sup>46</sup> It is also likely that Yae was confident in her own ability to nurse after looking after Jō who had frequent health problems.

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<sup>44</sup> Awaya, Shichirō (1895) "Nihon no uguisu-jō" (Japanese Nightingales), *Jogaku Zasshi*, no. 407, February 1895, pp. 21 & 25, Tōkyō: Jogaku zasshi-sha.

<sup>45</sup> Motoi, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>46</sup> She nostalgically recalls her fights of her young days, showing the picture of her with a gun and two swords. Neesima, Yae (1909) "Dansō shite Aizu-jō ni iritaru tōji no kushin (Hard experiences when I entered Aizu Castle in man's attire)," *Fujin Sekai*, vol. 4, no. 14, November 1909, pp. 46-51. Tōkyō: Jitsugyō no Nihon-sha. She also said, "Fighting was fun." Yoshikai, op. cit., p. 107.

For her services under the Ladies Volunteer Nursing Association (see footnote 10), Yae was twice awarded the Order of the Sacred Crown, a rare honor for women. This recognition, as well as her active involvement, is said to have helped raising the image and status of nurses in general from unskilled laborer to trained professional.<sup>47</sup> In pre-modern Japan, nursing was largely carried out by males (*kambyō-nin*); when it was done by female carers (*kaihō-me*), their expertise was undervalued and underpaid, resulting in low morale.<sup>48</sup> Since volunteer nurses received training and moral education at modern military hospitals and were led by such celebrities as Yae Neesima, they were instilled pride and motivation. This had a favorable influence upon the ordinary nurses as well.

Yae's lifestyle changed with age: the semi-Western house was renovated to have more Japanese-style rooms, including one for tea ceremony.<sup>49</sup> She ate Japanese dishes and wore *kimono* more often than before. Yae found great pleasure in the tea ceremony as a hobby and social event and enjoyed popularizing it among women as a tea master. She rediscovered restfulness in traditional culture after her years as a single-minded missionary wife. She still had her critics, though, who thought she spent too much on tea ceremony utensils and *kimono*.<sup>50</sup>

Among her tea circle was the Zen monk Mokurai Takeda, with whom she studied Zen ardently.<sup>51</sup> This interest, however, invited a rumor that circulated in America as well as Japan that she had converted from Christianity to Buddhism.<sup>52</sup> Yae responded in the *Kyōto Nichinichi-shimbun* (7 December 1930), saying, "Just because I am a Christian, is it wrong for me to learn from someone who belongs to another religion?" Throughout her life, Yae was unafraid of gossip or critics, and as a mature woman with discretion, she called for broadmindedness.

## Conclusion

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<sup>47</sup> Dōshisha Archives Center (ed.) (2009) *Neesima Yae no shōgai: shinshu to kinji* (The Life History of Yae Neesima: Progressiveness and Pride), p. 8, Kyōto: Dōshisha Archives Center.

<sup>48</sup> Alarmed by this, Doctors Willis and Berry (see footnote 38) contributed to female nurse training. Kyōto rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai, op. cit., p. 104. Prior to Berry, during the Boshin War, British doctor William Willis set up a military hospital at the Shōkokuji Temple, next to Dōshisha. Aware of the achievements of Nightingale, he was the first Western physician in Japan to employ women carers and train them as nurses. Cortazzi Hugh (1985) *Aru eijin ishi no bakumatsu-ishin* (Dr. Willis in Japan), Tetsuo Nakasuka (trans.), pp. 245, 258-259 & 349, Tōkyō: Chuōkōron-sha.

<sup>49</sup> Motoi, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 61 & 63.

<sup>51</sup> Yoshikai, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>52</sup> Motoi, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

In tracing her life and activities, this essay has considered the extent to which Yae Neesima can be called a pioneer in the field of women's education and the spreading of Christian culture in the home and in society. As the wife of a pioneer Christian educator, Yae was inevitably a part of these burgeoning fields, but it seems that her contribution was a supportive one, rather than one shaped by her own vision and initiative. Born in an era of drastic changes, Yae experienced many things 'for the first time in Kyōto' and had chances to be a pioneer. Out of necessity and a will to be useful, she learned a variety of skills and made efforts in a number of different fields. Surrounded by thinkers and doers such as Jō Neesima, Kakuma Yamamoto, and Christian missionaries, she lived positively as a school teacher for girls; a devoted and loyal missionary wife; a social activist; and a volunteer nurse. Still, she failed to fully grasp or support the idea of women as independent leaders who should support each other. Although Yae cannot be called a pioneer in any strict sense, she played a part in the educational movement to provide models for enlightening and modernizing Japanese women.

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**Katsuko Saruhashi (1920-2007):  
A Woman Scientist and the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* Accident (1954)**

**Yasuko Hatano**

**Introduction**

Katsuko Saruhashi is well known as the founder of the Saruhashi Award for women scientists. Less recognized are her achievements as a geochemical scientist, namely making the first measurements of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels in seawater by developing the quality of analysis methods and getting the results precisely and thus predicting the global warming today. Further, she has been involved in research on radioactivity and oceans, analysing the *shi-no-hai* (ashes of death) that endangered the crew of the Japanese fishing trawler, the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* (Lucky Dragon). The ashes were brought to the Meteorological Research Institute in Japan where she was working, and her research team, led by Dr. Yasuo Miyake (1908-90), had been taking samples of ocean water from the Pacific Ocean and other waters off Japan to study how ocean and wind currents disperse radioactivity. Saruhashi and the rest of the research team kept warning the public about the consequences of contaminated air and oceans caused by nuclear bombs. Furthermore, they also predicted the possible danger of nuclear power plants built in 1960s and 70s in Japan with plans imported from overseas but without making concrete decisions about their future. This essay will explore Saruhashi's sense of duty and philosophy as a scientist and what her achievements tell us today in order to strive for a peaceful world for the coming generations.

**The *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* accident (also known as the Bikini Incident) (1954)**

In March 1954, the United States carried out a hydrogen bomb experiment on the Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>53</sup> The crew of the Japanese fishing trawler, the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru*, was exposed to radioactive fallout (small particles of coral reef containing highly radioactive materials) released by the test, while sailing east of the test zone, in an off-limit area, about 100 miles (161km) from the test site.<sup>54</sup> The 23 crewmembers were severely affected by radiation sickness. One of the crew, the chief radio operator Aikichi Kuboyama, died in September that year.<sup>55</sup> The *shi-no-hai*, or radioactive fallout, that had

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<sup>53</sup> From 1 March to 13 May, the United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) carried out a series of thermonuclear tests in the Pacific archipelago of Bikini. The hydrogen bomb is believed to have been up to thousand times more powerful than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. One of the atolls has been totally vaporized, disappearing into a gigantic mushroom cloud that spread at least 100 miles (161 km) wide and dropping back to the sea in the form of radioactive fallout. *BBC News*, on this day, 1 March 1954, "1954: US tests hydrogen bomb in Bikini" <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/1/newsid\\_2781000/2781419.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/1/newsid_2781000/2781419.stm)> on Mar./03/2011.

<sup>54</sup> BBC News claimed the Japanese fishing boat was within the 80 miles (129 km) of the test zone at the time, but according to Yasuo Miyake, it was outside the warning area. Miyake, Yasuo (1972) *Shi-no-hai to tatakau kagakusha* (The scientists who have fought against the ashes of death), pp. 1-7, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

<sup>55</sup> Ben Shahn (1898-1969), a Lithuanian-born American artist, is known for a series of paintings of "The

endangered the crew were taken to Japan and brought to the Meteorological Research Institute where Saruhashi was working.<sup>56</sup>

The sample of the *shi-no-hai* had first been brought to the Kimura and Minami research rooms at the University of Tōkyō.<sup>57</sup> The team found four fissile materials and then 27 fissile nuclides. Also found were uranium-237 and plutonium-239, used in hydrogen bombs. On 28 May 1954, Professor Minami visited Saruhashi and asked her to verify the quantity of carbonic acid contained in the *shi-no-hai*, although the weight of the ashes, less than 10 milligrams, was very light. She has confessed that she was so tense that she could not move her stiff fingers both because the ashes contained so much radioactive matter, and because Minami and his colleague were with her all the time.

The government of Japan decided to conduct research in the vicinity of Bikini, dispatching the *Shunkotsu-maru* on 15 May 1954, because the US adamantly refused to admit that there were any destructive effects from H-bombs testing and tried to cover up the incident.<sup>58</sup> The sailing laboratory team of 22 scientists proved that the sea even a thousand kilometers away from the Bikini Atoll was contaminated with radioactive fallout released from the bombs.<sup>59</sup>

Saruhashi has said that she became involved in doing research on the *shi-no-hai* from the perspective of geochemistry; what she and her team did was to trace and study how ocean and wind currents disperse radioactive materials caused by the ashes.

It has been proved by our research team that the effects of the hydrogen bomb test carried out in Nevada, US, would reach Japan in three weeks; the test conducted in China would arrive in a couple of days. It has also been proved that the contaminated water near the surface of the ocean would mix the sea water in the depth of 6,000 meters in only five or six years, much faster than expected.<sup>60</sup>

However, Saruhashi also became involved as a critic of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that killed thousands of citizens, and decried that, in less than a

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Saga of Lucky Dragon” (1960-62), including his ink painting, “Kuboyama” (1961). Arthur Binard (1967-), a poet, composed a picture book entitled *Koko ga ie da: Ben Shān no Daigo Fukuryū-maru* (Here is my house: Ben Shahn’s *Daigo Fukuryū-maru*), Tōkyō: Shūei-sha (2006).

<sup>56</sup> Miyake (1972), op. cit., pp. 29-35.

<sup>57</sup> Kenjirō Kimura (1896-1988), a professor of the University of Tōkyō, who was in charge of making an analysis of radioactive fallout of atomic bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, proved them to be caused by a newly man-made bomb. Eiichi Minami (1899-1977), also a professor of the University of Tōkyō was famous for his research on rare-earth elements.

<sup>58</sup> Miyake, Yasuo (1984) *Kaere Bikini e* (Return to Bikini), pp. 43-71, Tōkyō: Suiyō-sha.

<sup>59</sup> The United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) did not issue any statement about the effects of the test for about a year after Kuboyama’s death. Ralph Lapp, who was engaged in the Manhattan Project, first pointed out the hazardous nature of the radioactive fallout, based on data collected by the Japanese scientists. Takahashi, Hiroko, ““Hiroshima” and “Lucky Dragon””, *Hiroshima Research News*, vol. 6, no. 1, July 2003, p. 6, (PDF), <<http://serv.peace.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/English/dletter/ne1606.pdf>> on Mar./05/2011.

<sup>60</sup> Saruhashi, Katsuko (1983) *Manabu koto ikiru koto: jōsei to shite kangaeru* (Learning and living: a woman’s perspective), p. 160, Tōkyō: Fukutake shoten.

decade, the US was producing destructive thermonuclear weapons in preparation for a coming war.<sup>61</sup> She saw the victims of radiation, including the crewmembers as family; that is, she could not deny her connections to their plight.<sup>62</sup>

### **The early years of Saruhashi (1920-32)**

Katsuko Saruhashi was born in Tōkyō in 1920, the second child of Kuniharu, an electrical engineer and Kuno.<sup>63</sup> Rather frail as a child and often subject to medical examinations, she remembers being impressed by the brisk manner of women doctors at work.<sup>64</sup> Fumiko Yonezawa (1938-), a woman scientist and Saruhashi's biographer, states that every scientist should have memories of what led them along the path to science.<sup>65</sup> Rainfall interested her at elementary school as Saruhashi watched raindrops falling against the window and wondered what made it rain.

### **Secondary school and science college days (1932-44)**

Upon graduating from elementary school, Saruhashi passed the competitive entrance examination and entered Tōkyō Furitsu Dairoku Kōtō Jogakkō (currently Sanda High School), known for providing a liberal education. At school, she tried hard to catch up with other students fluent in English with the help of her brother, Eiichi, who had a good command of the language.<sup>66</sup>

After completing secondary school, she worked at a life insurance company to which one of her relatives had introduced her. Though satisfied with her work there, she strongly desired to study at school. Supported by her brother, she persuaded her parents to allow her to go to a college.<sup>67</sup>

In the spring of 1941, 21-year-old Saruhashi decided to become a doctor to contribute to society.<sup>68</sup> Her decision pleased her parents, especially Kuno, who were eager for their daughter to have a professional education and to lead an independent and fruitful life. Saruhashi has speculated that this desire stemmed largely from the observations of her mother of destitute war widows who had no specific skills to support themselves financially.<sup>69</sup> Her whole youth was spent during wartime, starting with the Manchurian Incident (1931), the Shino Incident (1937), and the Pacific War (1941-45). Although she passed the entrance

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<sup>61</sup> Saruhashi (1981) *Josei to shite kagakusha to shite* (As a woman and as a scientist), pp. 1-5, Tōkyō: Shin-nihon shuppan-sha.

<sup>62</sup> Saruhashi, Katsuko (1983), op. cit., pp. 67-70.

<sup>63</sup> Yonezawa, Fumiko (2009) *Saruhashi Katsuko to iu ikikata* (The way Katsuko Saruhashi lived), pp. 41-42, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

<sup>64</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 124-125.

<sup>65</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

<sup>66</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 138-140.

<sup>67</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

<sup>68</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., 147-148.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 36.



examination of Tōkyō Joshi Igaku Semmon Gakkō (Tōkyō Women's Medical College, currently Tōkyō Women's Medical University)<sup>70</sup>, in the bitter aftermath of a disappointing interview with the principal, Dr. Yayoi Yoshioka (1871-1959), whom she found very arrogant, Saruhashi rejected attending the college. Instead, she decided to enroll in Teikoku Joshi Rigaku Semmon Gakkō (Imperial Women's Science College, currently Tōhō University, Faculty of Sciences), which was about to set up in April of the same year at Ōmori in Tōkyō.<sup>71</sup> Her parents opposed her decision, but she was determined to enter the Science College and took the steps needed to enroll.

In April 1941, Saruhashi was one of the first students at Teikoku Joshi Rigaku Semmon Gakkō; she majored in physics. Set up during the wartime, the facilities were somewhat inadequate, and during the summer, students would be sent to work at other universities and laboratories to round out their education. In her third year, she encountered Dr. Yasuo Miyake, who became her mentor. Miyake, aged 34, was a graduate from the Department of Chemistry, School of Science at the Tōkyō Imperial University (currently the University of Tōkyō), a government meteorologist and the chief chemist of a research group situated in the Geochemical Laboratory at Chūō Kishōdai (the Central Meteorological Observatory, currently Japan Meteorological Agency). Physics professor Ichirō Hori, being in charge of her class, introduced Miyake to her, as he was aware of her deep interest in rainfall.<sup>72</sup>

Saruhashi has written that under Miyake's guidance she began doing research on the physicochemical properties of polonium, a radioactive substance discovered by Marie Curie, a Polish-born physicist and chemist.<sup>73</sup> This early study of radioactivity turned out to be of great help in her later laboratory work on geochemistry.<sup>74</sup> Working on her graduation thesis project on polonium, she made strenuous experiments using radon-tubes and measuring radiation levels.<sup>75</sup> As Marie Curie said, she embarked on a lifelong journey into the wonderland to explore and unlock the mysteries of nature.<sup>76</sup>

As the war intensified, the demand for researchers to work on military-related technology increased and most of the students at the science college were recruited by the

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<sup>70</sup> Tōkyō Women's Medical School, the predecessor of Tōkyō Joshi Ika Daigaku (Tōkyō Women's Medical University) was founded by Dr. Yayoi Yoshioka in 1900. Tokyo Women's Medical University, "From the founder" <[http://www.twmu.ac.jp/english/e01\\_founder.html](http://www.twmu.ac.jp/english/e01_founder.html)> on Feb./05/2011.

<sup>71</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 148-150.

<sup>72</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 57-59. Miyake played a leading role in geochemistry, which is a rather young science to study the chemical position of the entire earth. The origins of the elements, the cosmos and the earth shall be studied. See Miyake, Yasuo (1965) *Elements of Geochemistry*, p. 19, Tōkyō: Maruzen.

<sup>73</sup> Polonium is a chemical element with the symbol Po and atomic number 84, discovered in 1898 by Marie Skłodowska-Curie and Pierre Curie.

<sup>74</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 150-153.

<sup>75</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 60-61. Radon is a chemical element with the symbol Rn and atomic number 86, a rare radioactive gas belonging to the noble gas series.

<sup>76</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 167-173.

army and navy; more than eighty percent of Saruhashi's classmates were engaged in military work. Saruhashi herself detested any association with war activity and chose to join the Geochemical Laboratory at Chūō Kishōdai, headed by Miyake, where she could conduct research into the oceans and the atmosphere.<sup>77</sup> Her class was scheduled to graduate from the college in March 1944, but graduation was moved forward half a year because of the war, a policy which was applied to other professional colleges all over Japan at the time.<sup>78</sup>

### **Dedicated to science and her earlier achievements (1944-57)**

The day after her early graduation, 23-year-old Saruhashi started working as non-regular staff at the Geochemical Laboratory of Chūō Kishōdai. In the early summer of 1944, she joined a research project investigating how fog dispersed at airfields.<sup>79</sup> Alongside the male researchers, she attended field observations which were conducted under hard conditions and made every possible effort to complete her work in the field:

I was absorbed in my work. It was not because I was a woman scientist trying to catch up with male ones. When I studied seriously, the apparently complicated natural phenomenon hidden beyond the closely-veiled would be revealed one by one and the entangled structure of nature could be gradually uncovered. I would not exchange the great joy as a scientist for anything.<sup>80</sup>

She gradually built her skill and self-awareness as a researcher under Miyake's guidance, who told her that a researcher needed to be not just an engineer, but also a philosopher. The partial destruction of the Chūō Kishōdai building at Ōtemachi by fire following air raids in February 1945, made it inevitable for the rooms of the researchers to be moved to the suburbs of Suwa in Nagano Prefecture for the sake of safety.<sup>81</sup> Miyake told his workers to continue studying even in the wartime. Researchers stayed in the suburbs until after the war and then returned to Tōkyō in March of the following year. In 1947, the name of the laboratory was changed to Kishō Kenkyūjo (the Meteorological Research Institute) and 27-year-old Saruhashi was promoted to the position of a professional researcher.

Saruhashi started to make an analytical study of the ozone layer, calculating the thickness of the ozonosphere and completed two theses, one in Japanese and the other in English, which considered the photochemical reaction involved.<sup>82</sup> She savored the sense of satisfaction that accompanied the completion of her research papers. Just as she resumed studying advanced mathematics when she felt keenly the necessity of it in her middle twenties, she started off the theory of geochemistry with the basic study of chemistry, which was a new academic discipline dealing with the earth as a whole; she learned the methods of qualitative

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<sup>77</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

<sup>78</sup> After the war those colleges were upgraded to universities; previously very few women could study at university and become scientists. The Association for the Bright Future of Women Scientists (ed.) (2001) *My Life: Twenty Japanese Women Scientists*, pp. 306-307, Tōkyō: Uchida Rōkakuho.

<sup>79</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 63-65.

<sup>80</sup> Saruhashi (1981), op. cit., pp. 19-22.

<sup>81</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>82</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 156-157.

and quantitative analyses from Miyake, who told her how to conduct chemistry experiments thoroughly.<sup>83</sup> In 1950 she began research in geochemistry based on the analysis of water. Using Conway microdiffusion method to make measurements of carbon dioxide levels in seawater, she developed an accurate way of analysing the carbon monoxide involved in microdiffusion.<sup>84</sup> It is her essay on the apparatus of microdiffusion methods published in 1952 that has brought her such recognition as a “skilled analyst of microdiffusion methods”. Having applied Conway cell analysis, she quantified, or measured precisely, carbonic acid in water; she tabulated the results in a table which became known as the “Saruhashi no hyō”,<sup>85</sup> which tabular form was lauded internationally and has been utilized for more than a generation by oceanologists around the world. Her dissertation, “The Behavior of Carbonic Matter in Natural Water,” was submitted to the University of Tōkyō, where she earned her doctorate in science in 1957.<sup>86</sup> Her doctoral research focused on determining how ocean and wind currents transport carbon dioxide. The study of the earth’s carbon cycle is considered to be essential to understand the causes of the global warming.<sup>87</sup> By tracking the radioactive substances, the movement of the earth as a system has been gradually ascertained.

### **Scientists’ concerns**

The historical development of nuclear energy started with the experimental discovery of fission of uranium atomic nuclei in the late 1930s by the two German chemists, Otto Hahn (1879-1968) and Fritz Strassmann (1902-80). When they attempted to create transuranic elements by bombarding uranium with neutrons, rather than the heavy elements they expected, they got several unidentified products, one of which products was finally identified as barium-141. The results being published in 1939, they came to the attention of Liza Meitner (1878-1968), an Austrian-born physicist, who had worked with Hahn on his nuclear experiments and fled the Nazis to Stockholm, Sweden, in the same year, where she and Otto Frisch, her nephew, continued to work on the neutron bombardment problem. Meitner was the first to realize that Hahn’s barium and other lighter products from the neutron bombardment tests were coming from the fission of uranium-235, naming it nuclear fission.<sup>88</sup> Her physical

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-158.

<sup>84</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 70-81. Microdiffusion methods for determinations for minute amounts of ammonia, urea, carbon dioxide *etc.*, were produced by E. J. Conway (1894-1965), an Irish biochemist.

<sup>85</sup> To compose “Saruhashi no hyō”, she first calculated a mole percentage of free carbon dioxide/hydrogen carbonate ion/carbonate ion and put the results in tabulated form.

<sup>86</sup> Saruhashi became the first woman who received the doctorate at the chemistry school in the Department of Science at the University of Tōkyō, which might have gratified her pride; she had long been somewhat ambivalent about her academic career, for younger female students qualified so much more easily as university graduates following changes in the education system.

<sup>87</sup> “Katsuko Saruhashi” in “Advancing Frontiers: Achievements of Japanese Women Scientists” <[http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/hitech/scientists/saruhashi/1\\_profile.html](http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/hitech/scientists/saruhashi/1_profile.html)> on Mar./01/2011.

<sup>88</sup> Frisch and Meitner carried out further experiments, which showed that the U-235 fission yielded an enormous amount of energy and that the fission yielded at least two neutrons per neutron absorbed in the

insights were the main impetus behind the controversial Manhattan Project, which resulted in the US winning the nuclear race during the World War II.<sup>89</sup> Keiko Kawashima (1959-), a history of science researcher, claims that Hahn alone got the credit and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1945, though Meitner gave the first theoretical explanation of the nuclear fission process.<sup>90</sup> This incident severely damaged Meitner's trust in her co-researcher. Saruhashi also noted that Meitner expressed her regret that nuclear fission had been discovered during a time of war.<sup>91</sup> She respected her mentor Miyake and her relationship with him was arguably much better than that of Meitner and Hahn, but it seems that she remained an assistant rather than a partner.

Saruhashi has written that scientists should be concerned about nuclear energy, and aware of the history of nuclear fission.<sup>92</sup>

What has driven scientists to create atomic bombs in such a short time? As a scientist, I approve of the deep interest and curiosity scientists have for nature, which may inspire them to become involved in research and finally project work. However, strong doubts must be cast on those who not only created the atomic bombs, but also gave tacit consent to drop them. How could the scientists concerned defend their innocence? The scientists should have known how devastating their effects would be.

She posed further questions:

What was Einstein thinking about when he recommended the US development of atomic energy for military purposes? What were the true feelings of Robert Oppenheimer (1904-67), the scientific director of the project? Scientists should play an important role in society, and thus return to their roots and duties as scientists.<sup>93</sup>

In these passages above, Saruhashi wonders about what has driven the scientists to create atomic bombs in such a short time, stating that she fully understands the scientists' deep feelings towards nature, and that this curiosity might motivate them to engage in such research. However, she casts strong doubts on scientists who not only developed the weapon technology but tacitly supported their use: how could scientists aware of the destructive potential of atomic

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interaction. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) created a mathematical formula ( $E=mc^2$ ), which explains that matter can be changed into energy. Scientists used the equation to unlock atomic energy and create atomic bombs. Energy Quest, "Energy Story" <<http://www.energyquest.ca.gov/story/chapter13.html>> on Mar./08/2011.

<sup>89</sup> The Manhattan project led by the US, with participation from the UK and Canada was first launched in December 1941. It took only three and a half year to create new bombs. The San Diego Super Computer Center, "Lise Meitner: A Battle for Ultimate Truth" in "Women in Science" <<http://www.sdsc.edu/ScienceWomen/meitner.html>> on Mar./08/2011.

<sup>90</sup> Kawashima, Keiko (2010) *Marie Curie no chōsen: kagaku/jendā/sensō* (The challenge of Marie Curie: science/gender/war), pp. 136-141, Tōkyō: Toransubū.

<sup>91</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 187-189.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-66.

<sup>93</sup> The atomic project dated from 1939, when Einstein wrote a letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945), then president of the US, warning that Nazi Germany was trying to develop atomic weapons based on a uranium isotope, U-235. The nuclear program thus started, for the US feared that Germany would win the race to be the first atomic power. Germany being defeated, Einstein had grave doubts about using atomic bombs against Japan, though too late to prevent it. See Johnston, William (1984) "Introduction", included in Nagai, Takashi (1984) *The Bells of Nagasaki*, pp. v -vi, Tōkyō: Kōdansha International. Also see *Time*, "Crossing the Moral Threshold," August 1, 2005, vol. 166, no. 5, p. 45, Hong Kong: Time Asia.

bombs condone their use? Critical of Einstein's recommendation to the American government that atomic energy be developed for military purposes, she wonders about the position of Robert Oppenheimer and asks what role scientists should play in the society.

#### **After the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* accident**

Following the 1954 Bravo Shot, as the thermonuclear test at the Bikini Atoll was called, rain highly contaminated by radiation started falling all over Japan.<sup>94</sup> Fish, crops, and even drinking water, have been found to contain radioactive materials. Scientists at universities and research institutes immediately built their own nationwide observatory network and collected data which proved the subsequent radioactive contamination of the environment.<sup>95</sup> Saruhashi and other scientists did their best to warn the public about the terrible consequences of the contamination of the oceans and air from nuclear weapons.<sup>96</sup> In 1955 and 56, at the height of the Cold War, the atmospheric nuclear tests conducted by the Soviet Union resulted in significant radioactive fallout in Japan. Despite being castigated by people taking a pro-Soviet line, Dr. Miyake maintained that the Soviets should have exploded the bombs, a claim that Saruhashi has fully endorsed, stressing that under any circumstances should scientists follow the truth.<sup>97</sup>

In April 1962, with a recommendation by Dr. Miyake, 42-year-old Saruhashi went alone to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO), University of California and California Institute of technology to prove the accuracy of the results yielded by Japanese analytical techniques.<sup>98</sup> Dr. T. R. Folsom, a world authority of analytical chemistry at the SIO, gave her a wooden hut where she could conduct her research, telling her there was no need to commute to the institution daily. Saruhashi was to compete with Folsom in the accuracy of their respective measurements of cesium-137 in seawater.<sup>99</sup> In order to compare and decide which analytical

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<sup>94</sup> Miyake (1972), op. cit., pp. 2 & 95-98. After making atomic bombs, the US kept using nuclear energy for weapon use, aiming to produce hydrogen bombs. While atomic bombs are made based on the theory of nuclear fission, hydrogen bombs are made based on that of nuclear fusion. For more on theories of the "nuclear fusion", see Miyake, Yasuo (1984) *Sensō to heiwa to kagakusha to* (War/peace/ scientists), pp. 31-37, Tōkyō: Suiyō-sha.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp. 203-209. Yasuo Miyake has argued that it was the first time in history of Japanese science that the autonomy of scientists was greatly exercised, although gradually the network built independently was damaged by the administration. In March 1954 the budget intended for peaceful atomic energy was suddenly submitted to the Diet and passed in a few of days. Over several years the foundations of the atomic energy policy were laid: profoundly dependant on the US and stressing the industrial development.

<sup>96</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., p. 20. Anti-nuclear movement spread all over Japan and thus signature rally of abolishing hydrogen tests began. The treaty banning the nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, often shortened as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) was signed by the governments of the Soviet Union, the UK, and the US in 1957.

<sup>97</sup> Miyake (1984), op. cit., pp. 95-109.

<sup>98</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 28-39.

<sup>99</sup> Cesium-137 is one of the most dangerous radioisotopes to the environment in terms of their long-term effects.

method would be more precise getting the data, cesium-134, which was not basically contained in the seawater, was chosen. Having read and analyzed the data included in the Folsom-Saruhashi thesis, Yonezawa claims, however, that the sample given to Saruhashi did not have the same concentration of cesium-134; the sample given to Folsom had a twenty percent higher concentration of it, which made measurement much easier.<sup>100</sup> The SIO concentrated on samples for radio-caesium using the nickel ferrocyanide method (NIFER); the Meteorological Research Institute (MRT) brought cesium down with crystalline ammonium molybdophosphate (AMP). Saruhashi demonstrated that the technique used by the MRT (AMP) was much more precise than the NIFER method. This experience at the SIO was crucial to Saruhashi's development as a scientist.<sup>101</sup>

### **Encounter with Raichō Hiratsuka (1886-1971)**

The anti-nuclear movement spread rapidly in Japan, especially among mothers who wanted a return to a peaceful life. Thus a national signature rally for abolishing hydrogen tests began.<sup>102</sup> Raichō Hiratsuka, a social activist and woman writer, well known as the founding editor of *Seitō*, launched a public appeal to the Women International Democratic Federation (WIDF), an NGO, to protest against the US hydrogen tests in September 1954.<sup>103</sup> When the first Nihon Hahaoya Taikai (Japan Mothers' Convention) was held in June 1955, delegates declared their desire for "mothers of the world to join hands to prevent nuclear war and create a world where mothers and children can live without anxiety."<sup>104</sup> In August 1955 the First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima drew several scientists from abroad.<sup>105</sup>

Saruhashi has noted that she first met Hiratsuka in February 1958 when she was asked to attend the world conference of the WIDF held in Vienna in June of that year, in order to represent Japan and make an anti-nuclear statement based on scientific knowledge.<sup>106</sup> Hiratsuka's writing has revealed that during presentation preparation Saruhashi met with relentless interference from members of pro-Soviet labour unions, but that, as a woman and a

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<sup>100</sup> T. R. Folsom and K. Saruhashi, "A Comparison of Analytical Techniques Used for Determination of Fallout Cesium in Sea Water for Oceanographic Purpose", *Journal of the Japan Radiation Research*, 4-1 (1963), pp. 39-53, (PDF), <<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/nadid/>> on Mar./09/2011.

<sup>101</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 160.

<sup>102</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 83-85. Also see note no. 96.

<sup>103</sup> In 1953 Hiratsuka formed Nihon Fujin Dantai Rengō-kai (Japan Federation of women's Organization), who became a vice chairperson of the WIDF in June of the same year. Ōoka, Shōhei & Hideko Maruoka (1986) *Hiratsuka Raichō to nihon no kindai* (Raichō Hiratsuka and modern Japan), pp. 39-44, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

<sup>104</sup> Mackie, Vera (2003) *Feminism in Modern Japan*, pp. 134-135, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>105</sup> Saruhashi (1981), op. cit., pp. 84-85. In July 1955 the Russell-Einstein Manifesto was issued in London, highlighting the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and calling for the world leaders to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts. It developed into the historic 1957 gathering in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, which was attended by eminent figures of the international scientific community.

<sup>106</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 83-89.

scientist, she fulfilled her duties with serenity to assist Hiratsuka in making an appeal to abolish nuclear weapons.<sup>107</sup>

### **Her scientific duty**

Through her acquaintance with Hiratsuka, Saruhashi became profoundly aware of her duties as a woman scientist and urged other scientists to recognize their social responsibilities. In July and August 1977, she played an important role in organizing the NGO symposium of *hibakusha*, the victims of atomic bombing, held in Tōkyō, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, together with Miyake.<sup>108</sup> In August that year she presided over an international conference against A & H bombs; the organization, divided since 1963 because of the differences over policies, was finally reunited after 14 years.<sup>109</sup> Concerned by the anti-nuclear energy movement's lack of accurate scientific knowledge, she argued that the theory of nuclear energy required study. She also stressed that an understanding of natural phenomenon would lead to lay a foundation for a rational life and that younger generations should be educated in the ways of scientific thinking.<sup>110</sup> Her suspicions that American nuclear power plants were really intended for the welfare and happiness of human beings needs careful review; Saruhashi questioned their safety and the difficulty of disposing of radioactive waste in the 1970s:

The first problem for nuclear power plants is that they will ineluctably produce fission products, that is *shi-no-hai*, whenever being operated. Secondly, plutonium generated in the reactors might be diverted for weapons. Thirdly, Japan has not developed original technology of using atomic energy for peace, and is dependent on other nations. More significantly, the accumulated radioactive waste problem has not yet been solved.<sup>111</sup>

In the late 1960s, the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru*, renamed the *Hayabusa-maru*, was abandoned at Yume no shima, the disposal site of Tōkyō, but preserved.<sup>112</sup> As one of the board members of the Daigo Fukuryū-maru Heiwa Kyōkai (The Peace Society of the Lucky Dragon), chaired by Miyake at the time, Saruhashi has argued that the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* demonstrates the enormity of nuclear devastation.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Saruhashi stated resolutely that most of the radioactive contamination in Japan had come from the bombs released from the Soviet Union.

<sup>108</sup> Saruhashi (1981), op. cit., pp. 164-193. *Hibakusha*, originally referred to those who were affected by the atomic explosion, but recent times, it includes those who suffered from radiation exposure in nuclear tests. Even more recently it has come to mean the victims of accidents at nuclear power plants. Miyake (1984), op. cit., pp. 190-194.

<sup>109</sup> Saruhashi (1981), op. cit., pp. 171-176.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-108. The use of reactor-grade plutonium could be regarded as “peaceful”, but every civil plutonium utilization program is essentially vulnerable to diversion for military purposes. Takagi, Jinzaburō et al. (1997) “Comprehensive Social Impact Assessment of MOX Use in Light Water Reactors”, Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center, pp. 3-5, (PDF), <[http://cnic.jp/english/publications/pdf/files/ima\\_fin\\_e.pdf](http://cnic.jp/english/publications/pdf/files/ima_fin_e.pdf)> on Apr./02/2011.

<sup>112</sup> Miyake (1984), op. cit., pp. 180-184. It has been exhibited at the Tōkyō Metropolitan Daigo Fukuryū Maru Exhibition Hall since June 1976.

<sup>113</sup> Saruhashi (1983), op. cit., pp. 67-70. See Miyake’s obituary written in English by Saruhashi for the journal of The Japan Radiation Research Society in November 1990. “Obituary of Yasuo Miyake” <<http://>

Following her retirement in 1980, Saruhashi set up the Josei kagaku-sha ni akarui mirai o no kai (The Association for the Bright Future of Women Scientists) to improve the position of women researchers and founded the Saruhashi Award, urging young women scientists and researchers to “work as hard as you can. Achieve good results in your research.”<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

This essay explored Saruhashi and her achievements in order to reconsider their value for today. Her earnest work as a scientist and her untiring and devoted efforts were rewarded as the accuracy of her measurements and recognized internationally and her concern about seawater’s carbon dioxide levels preceded the worldwide interest in the global warming. Having been involved in doing research on the ashes that endangered the crew of the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru*, she studied determining the extent of radioactive contamination in the oceans. It is significant that she did not merely devote herself to laboratory work, but issued cautions to the public concerning the dangers of atomic weapons, clearly foregrounding her belief in the social responsibilities of the scientist. Theories and techniques developed in the laboratory have great and sometimes tragic consequences when they are applied in the real world. Throughout her career, Saruhashi maintained that scientists have to think not only about safety when they consider the possible effects of their research, but also about whether it will contribute to the future happiness of people all around the world.

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//ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110002337691/en/> on Feb./08/2011. Miyake has argued that the *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* represents not only a tragic story of the ship and its crew but a provocative symbol of the possible fate of all humans in an atomic age, and calls for the total abolishment of nuclear weapons and a world without war.

<sup>114</sup> Yonezawa, op. cit., pp. 109-111.



## **Young Rural Women Factory Workers in Early Twentieth Century Japan**

**Atsuko Ishikawa**

### **Introduction**

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War, and this victory invited interference from France, Germany and Russia. Nevertheless, Japan's presence became even more conspicuous in the northern part of China and the Korean peninsula. As soon as Japan welcomed the new century, it defeated a Russian fleet in the Russo-Japanese War, which ushered in the ascendancy of the country over Korea. As Japanese industries developed, the country became equal to Western powers as an exporter. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Japan had become a developed country militarily and materially. This macro-geopolitical view of Japanese history from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century does not exhibit how Japanese women lived. If one collects facts about women during this period, one finds that Japanese women made a great contribution to the development of the country. It would also evince the increasing mobility of women in response to the increasing demand for them to address labour shortages. Thus progress and war had an enormous effect on women's way of life and on where they chose to live, and this geographical mobility affected the culture of local communities.

This essay documents part of the quest of the author to learn about the life of her grandmother, Kimi Suzuki (née Kawai), with particular concern for the trajectory that her life took from the middle of Gifu Prefecture to Toyokawa in the most eastern part of Aichi Prefecture. This essay focuses on the mobility of this young rural woman, and compares it with that of Toshiwo Takai (née Hori), a contemporary who wrote of her experiences as a mobile factory worker, using oral history and personal accounts, as well as published materials. Compared to earlier factory workers, most of whom were the daughters of the former samurai class, these young women were not obliged to return to their hometown. Their major incentive to move was the chance to work, and therefore, they moved to bigger towns and cities where women workers were in demand and never returned to their ancestral homes. The formal education of the two women referred to in this essay was confined to elementary school but they learned a great deal from their practical education and experience.

### **The Nomugi Pass as a Prologue**

The Nomugi Pass evokes images of women who worked at spinning factories in the early Showa period (1926-89). The movie *Aa! Nomugi Tōge* (1979) shows young rural women workers enduring abuse and exploitation at a spinning factory in Nagano Prefecture. After watching this film, Kimi Suzuki, a former factory worker from Gifu told her daughter that she

worked exactly like these women from very early in the morning till late at night. The movie was based on a novel by Shigemi Yamamoto, who not only collected life stories from quondam factory workers who had crossed the pass to work in Nagano and their families but also interviewed the workers to discuss their experiences. The titular Nomugi Pass was a mountain pass between Gifu and Nagano, through which young factory workers passed on their way to or from work; most were from Hida in the northern part of Gifu Prefecture. From their homes to the factory was a long walk and they did not return home very often. At the end of the novel, the heroine catches a serious disease at the factory and her brother is asked to take her away. He picks her up and tries to carry her on his shoulders. The melodramatic ending displays the brother carrying her through the pass, unaware that she has quietly passed away after looking down on her hometown.

Wakizō Hosoi, an activist who took part in workers' activism, also argued that workers were exploited in his bestselling non-fiction titled *Jokōaishi* (A Sad History of Women Factory Workers). Both Yamamoto and Hosoi described the typical recruiter as a human trafficker, or at best, a swindler. Hosoi's typical factory recruiter visits families that have daughters in a village and tells the parents how well-prepared the factory's dormitory is or how attractive life is in the urban areas, and mentions that the parents will receive an advance and the possibility of a dowry for the daughter if she completes the terms of her contract. As Suzuki remembered her adolescence, she was a spinning hand who worked at a factory in Gifu, the capital of Gifu Prefecture. She had no idea about the Japanese silk-reeling industry per se as a worker there, nor about Japan's political ambition invading the Asian continent when she was a resident in Korea. All she knew was that a young woman who applied for a job at a factory could earn a living and would live wherever she might be in demand as a labourer.

### **The Tomioka Silk Mill**

This section looks at how Japanese spinning mills were established and how women factory workers increased in number. Early factory women were from relatively wealthy families and consciously recognized the importance of their contribution to Japan's prosperity. When the Meiji period begins in 1868, Japan had already been an exporter of silk thread, which was reeled from cocoons by hand. Toward the end of the century, the government promoted a policy of *fukoku kyōhei* (a rich country with a strong army), which prompted the innovation and development of both material and machinery industries. The silk thread industry introduced spinning machines. By the early twentieth century, the Japanese spinning and weaving industry had enjoyed its height of prosperity. The development of the industry started from Gumma Prefecture, 100 kilometers northwest of Tōkyō. The government built the flagship spinning factory Tomioka Silk Mill in Gumma; invested in state-of-the-art spinning

machines; invited technicians and trainers from France; and hired women trainee workers. Early women factory workers were expected to become trainers at factories that would be founded in other parts of the country and therefore the Mill was also known as a training factory. Spinning factories mushroomed in rural areas such as Nagano Prefecture and its environs where silkworms and factory workers were easier to find than in urban areas.

Before constructing the Mill, the government employed Paul Brunat, a French engineer, to choose the factory site and order silk-reeling machines from France, with adjustments made to the height of machines to fit Japanese women workers; guide the management of the factory; and set quotas for each factory worker to fulfill. French engineer and draftsman Auguste Basutien drew the blueprint of the factory and later was employed by the government.

In 1872, the government began to recruit young women to work at the Mill. While they had no difficulty in obtaining new silkworm cocoons as the sericultural industry grew, women were reluctant to work at the factory. Over 400 women were needed at the opening of the Mill, and even after it opened, the Mill was still short of the designated number of applicants. Women were afraid of meeting French technicians and trainers, misled by false rumors such as that Westerners were bloodsuckers. The government had to issue an official notification to silence the rumors, and the factory manager made his fourteen-year-old daughter enter the factory as one of the trailblazers so that other women would follow in her path.

Members of *shizoku*, the former samurai class, living in the provinces far from Gumma were the first to send their daughters to the Mill. A narrative left by Chika Kokushi who joined the factory in the spring of 1873 acknowledges the authority of the Mill.<sup>115</sup> Her starting monthly salary was one yen. She heard rumors that Brunat received 800 yen a month and that women trainers from Western countries were paid 50 yen per month. Thirty women, most of whom were from *shizoku*, sailed from Yamaguchi, at the western end of Honshū (the main island), to Yokohama via Kōbe. Each of them, accompanied by their chaperone, took a rickshaw from Yokohama to Tomioka. Kokushi, having a three-year contract, left in early September of her second year; two of her co-workers had died of disease and she was scared. She also stated that about 60 women joined the factory in the second year and that about one thousand women were working there in 1874.

Factories spread eastward from Gumma Prefecture, where the Mill was located, and the number of spinning mills in every prefecture increased between 1900 and 1921. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, and Aichi saw a significant increase

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<sup>115</sup> Tomiokashi kyōiku iinkai (1978) “Mōhitotsu no Tomioka nikki (Another diary of Tomioka)”, in *Onna no hataraki* (Women’s Work), Yōko Morosawa (ed.), Tōkyō: Heibonsha.

in the number of spinning mills.

Twenty-five women from the Izushi clan in Hyōgo Prefecture started working in order to become trainers in their hometown. All of them, completing their term of six years, returned home to start training women spinning hands at a factory funded by their clan. Other localities followed suit; young women were sent to the Mill and then expected to lead other factory women in their hometown. Local governments such as in Aichi Prefecture founded spinning factories and hired young women from the local area or nearby towns and villages. While the former group of women were highly motivated, the latter group of women were indifferent to the development of the Japanese spinning industry. Rural women were attracted by the idea of getting paid wages, an experience their mothers had never had.

### **The Sericultural Industry in Gifu Prefecture**

Suzuki (1903-1997), being born in Minami Village, Gujō County in Gifu Prefecture, adjacent to Nagano, received a six-year elementary school education, which was mandatory. From the first to the fourth grade, she went to the nearest elementary school. However, in the third and fourth grades, she brought her brother, who was eight years younger, to school, because their parents were too busy farming to look after him and therefore the boy was left to her care. The school she attended in the fifth and sixth grades was so far away from home that she had to walk 16 kilometers to school. After graduating from elementary school, she looked after children in the neighborhood, and then a year later she was sent to a spinning factory in Gifu.

In agrarian society in early twentieth-century Japan, the average married woman worked longer than her husband. While she regularly engaged in farming doing household chores, having small children added to an extremely heavy burden. A mother would expect her children, if any, to care for their younger siblings because farmers growing silkworms demanded women's manual labour at home and women such as Suzuki's mother shouldered a triple burden of farming, silkworm growing, and household chores.

The house of Suzuki's parents was a coarse hut, where the family also raised silkworms. She remembers the house filled with the smell of the mulberry leaves fed to the silkworms. Like other families in the village, they were impoverished farmers. It is a well-known fact that Japan was rapidly civilized after the Meiji Restoration. However, the rural areas were lagging behind while urban investors and inventors were thriving on capitalization. During the period between 1910 and 1915, owner farmers were 33.4 percent of all Japanese farmers; 27.4 percent did tenant farming; and the rest did both. Thirty-seven percent of farmhouses had less than fifty acres of farmland during the same period. In 1910, the harvest of rice per 10 acres was 288.6 liters, which was about 240 kilograms. With contemporary agricultural technology, the amount has been more than double. In 2010, for

example, the harvest of rice per 10 acres was 522 kilograms.<sup>116</sup>

As the number of sericultural factories increased to meet a substantial rise in the demand for silk, the proportion of women among farmers in Gifu exhibited a slight increase. Before silkworms were in great demand, most farmers had a side-business raising cattle, and now raising silkworms became another sideline. Most silkworm farmers were women.<sup>117</sup> The proportion of silkworm raisers to the agricultural population was about 40:100 as of 1930, the highest in history, according to a summary of statistics published by the government in 1955. A heritage house preserved in the suburb of Takayama in Gifu displays both a cowshed next to the house and a cocoonery in the attic. Hideko Maruoka, a historian who researched silkworm farmers in Gumma during the 1930s, has suggested that having a cocoonery inside the house allowed women to engage in sericulture alongside their expected household chores.<sup>118</sup> According to the 1920 census, in Gifu Prefecture 41 percent of the agricultural population were women. This statistic accounts for only those who were making a living as farmers. With the addition of those who were dependents or servants, the proportion of women farmers was probably 50 percent. The national census of 1930 also reveals that 45.2 percent of farmers were women while 72.1 percent of sericulturalists were women. A typical silk-raising family reared silkworms three times a year: spring, summer, and autumn. A report published in 1937 records women silk-raisers working for 15 to 16 hours a day in May, June, July, and September; about 10 hours in August; and for 11 to 12 hours in December. Work conditions grew harsher when rearing silkworms was alongside planting or harvest.

In 1873, to support the development of the sericultural industry, the prefectural government of Gifu established a renovation enterprise to control the quality of hand-reeled raw silk by sticking the “improved” seal on its product. In those days, factories began to install machines reeling silk. Reacting to the news that the French and Italian sericultural industry was thriving in recession, the prefectural government announced the promotion of the industry, encouraging sericulturalists to learn sericulture to meet the renovated standard of the quality in 1879.<sup>119</sup>

Increase in production, however, did not correspond to economic expansion in the industry. From 1921 to 1934, the volume of silk thread produced in Gifu Prefecture increased

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<sup>116</sup> *Nōrin suisan tōkei* (Statistics of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries) (2010) “Heisei 22 nensan suirikutō no shūkakuryō” (Paddy and upland rice production of 2010 in Japan), p. 1, (PDF), <[http://www.maff.go.jp/j/tokei/kouhyou/sakumotu/sakkyou\\_kome/pdf/syukaku\\_suiriku\\_10.pdf](http://www.maff.go.jp/j/tokei/kouhyou/sakumotu/sakkyou_kome/pdf/syukaku_suiriku_10.pdf)> on Mar. /21/2011.

<sup>117</sup> Gifuken joseishi henshūinkai (2000) *Manmannaka no onnatachi* (Women right in the middle), Gifu: Gifu Prefectural Government.

<sup>118</sup> Mitsuoka, Kōji (2001) *Nippon nōson no josei tachi: yokuatsu to sabetsu no rekishi* (Japanese agrarian women: A history of repression and discrimination), Tōkyō: Nippon keizai hyōronsha.

<sup>119</sup> Suzuki, Zensaku (1980) *Gifuken kyōdoshi* (A local history of Gifu Prefecture), Tōkyō: Rekishitoshosha.

by 50 percent, but the industry suffered a considerable reduction in the financial value of production. In 1921, a kilogram of silk thread was 25.95 yen; in 1934, it was 8.53 yen. Accordingly, one can imagine the efforts factories made to try to reduce labour costs.

### **Spinning Mills in Gifu**

Spinning mills were major work places for both women discussed in this essay. When a factory recruiter visited Suzuki's house, she became interested in working for the company. The night before she left for the factory, her mother washed and dried a short wadded cotton coat (*wataireno hanten*) for her to take to the factory dormitory. To dry it, her mother put the coat over an inverted bamboo basket hung over the fireplace.

As a young woman living in the first decade of the twentieth century, who wished to see the world outside, Suzuki would have been excited about working at the factory away from home. Born in 1902, Toshiwo Takai was about three months older than Suzuki. Like her, she was a factory worker in Gifu Prefecture, but her life was recorded in the book written by Wakizō Hosoi. Not only did Hosoi interview her for his book and describe her experience as a typical woman factory worker, she herself wrote an autobiography. Takai describes her feelings leaving her hometown, and arguably they reflect those of Suzuki. When Takai was 10 years old, a recruiter visited her house in Kuze, Ibi County in the northwestern part of Gifu Prefecture. The recruiter said to her father:

“Why don't you send your daughter to our company in Ōgaki?<sup>120</sup> We have a dormitory and it's an easy and enjoyable job. She's going to be spinning or weaving there, and will be paid as much as 13 *sen* a day so she can afford to support herself and help you.”<sup>121</sup>

Hearing this and being attracted to the factory wage, Takai decided to join the company, since she had been thinking about working in an urban area to help support her family. By the next day, Takai and nine girls in the village had decided to join the company. Takai writes that she put on the best kimono of the few she owned and her mother arranged her hair before she left home and that her elder sister and cousins walked about 16 kilometers together to Ibi Village.<sup>122</sup> From there they rode a coach for another 16 kilometers to Ōgaki.

Takai's disappointments began upon arrival. After food expenses were deducted, the wage came to four *sen*, and other daily necessities such as soap and toilet paper left them nothing. According to Takai, one piece of soap was nine *sen* and toilet paper cost three *sen*. A

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<sup>120</sup> Ōgaki is the second largest town in Gifu Prefecture.

<sup>121</sup> Takai, Toshiwo (1980) *Watashino jokōaishi* (The sad history of a woman factory worker), p.19, Tōkyō: Sōdobunka.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

twenty-mat tatami room accommodated twenty workers in the dormitory and poor foul-smelling meals were served in the dirty dining room. Takai worked from six in the morning to six in the evening, with a 30-minute break at noon and a 15-minute break at three in the afternoon. On the night shift, she worked from six in the evening to six in the morning with a short break for a late-night meal. In the first year, Takai was so young and small that she was not allowed to become a spinning hand; instead, she picked up lint.

Takai's work hours recorded in her book are much longer than the average ones of workers at the Mill. As this suggests, some records make it clear that work hours became longer over time. In the year the first spinning factory was established, the average workday was 7 hours 45 minutes. Within 11 years, it had increased by 55 minutes. Twenty years later, in 1892, it had become almost 10 hours.<sup>123</sup> Takai and Suzuki started working there a decade later. In spite of the shrinking silk thread market, factories did not reduce their work hours.

Workers had to follow strict rules both at the factory and at the dormitory. As was mentioned above, when the Mill was established, the French engineer Brunat set production quotas for each worker to heighten the efficiency of factory management. It is unclear who formulated the workers' codes of practice but there were guidelines at the factory. One of the most notorious concerned the workers' curfew. At Tomioka, workers could go out only on Sundays, and the curfew was ordered from six in the evening to six in the morning. Stricter rules were adopted by other factories that followed the Mill. At most factories, even in urban areas, factory workers were not allowed to go out, and only excellent workers could go out once a month. Such strict rules were imposed as the factory assumed the role of chaperone for its factory workers. As explained in the next section, factory managers were afraid that workers would flee from the factories.

Suzuki would have experienced disappointment similar to Takai's. Part of her wage was sent to her family directly from the factory. At the dormitory, Suzuki and her co-workers were in bed by nine at night and up at three in the morning. Somebody stood guard in front of the lavatory. A worker who spent too much time in the toilet was scolded. Being tired of working there, Suzuki took flight from the factory with one of her co-workers, climbing the wall of the factory, and went home. Remembering this, she would mention that they were mere children. Such recklessness might not have been unusual.

### **Takai Changes Factories**

Takai, spending her wages on herself only, did not think she made enough. She remembered that in the first year she asked a spinning hand about her wage. There was no increase in the

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<sup>123</sup> Imai, Mikio (2006) *Tomioka seishijō no rekishi to bunka* (The history and culture of the Tomioka Silk Mill), pp. 157-159, Tōkyō: Miyama bunko.

basic pay for spinning hands, but having fulfilled their quota, they were paid per piece. Piecework payment did not apply to lint pickers like Takai.

Takai was one of those who simply left the factory because she was consistently reprimanded for her behavior. As factories demanded more workers, other workers were lured away to other factories. Takai decided to join another factory at 14 and left without telling her employer. This anecdote suggests that factory workers could break a contract and leave the factory at any time. In fact, most factory workers did not stay. At the Mill, for example, among the 97 workers who started work in the year of establishment, 64 left within a year. Only four women continued working for more than four years.

Factories competed with each other for recruiting excellent workers. Since recruiters lured away workers from other factories, factories regarded recruiters working for other factories as cons. The amount and quality of production indicated a worker's skill, and factories recorded the weight of accepted thread each worker produced. The skill levels of factory workers fluctuated widely. At a factory in Okaya, Nagano Prefecture, the production ratio per worker between the least and the most was one to eight. On the other hand, quality was measured by a production-material ratio. The difference between the most excellent workers and the worst could be the average annual salary of a worker.<sup>124</sup> One's excellence in production would bring large changes in salary. If she was excellent, she would get bonus. Workers who produced less than the average would be fined. Since fines were deducted from their salary, some workers might have worked for nothing. Such exploitation of factory workers was practiced until Japan stipulated the Minimum Wage Law in 1959.

Takai wished that she would have been recruited by other factories. A man in the personnel department at the factory took away some thirty women workers to another factory in Yamato-kōriyama, Nara Prefecture. She traveled 150 kilometers westward by boat and steam train to follow them, and asked the man to employ her at the factory. He reluctantly accepted but she only found the working condition to be worse than the former factory. When she returned home several months later, her mother was pregnant, and died soon after giving birth, half a year later. Only about a month later, her father brought a new wife, which urged her to move out. This time, having read about a factory that installed automatic weaving machines, Toyota Jidōshokki, invented by Sakichi Toyoda, the direct ancestor of Toyota Motor Corporation, she determined to go to Nagoya, where she could work at the factory.

Takai went to Nagoya in autumn 1919. She writes that working conditions at the factory called Toyota Jidōshokki were much better than the factories that she previously worked for. Living in the dormitory was more comfortable and food was more tasty and

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<sup>124</sup> Yamamoto, Shigemi (1972) *Shimban aa nomugi tōge: aru seishikōjo aishi* (New edition Ah! The Nomugi Pass: A sad history of women factory workers), Tōkyō: Asahi shimbunsha.



nutritious than any other factory. On a spring day the next year, she went to the factory to find nobody was working. She was told not to work because the workers were on strike. One of the strike leaders gave her a flier, on which she found the message saying:

Nobody has realized that every human being is equal and each one has human rights. Work and study according to one's own personality. Live a happier life for the betterment of society and your life. Don't neglect yourself and respect others. Workers can improve their living status by discussing, studying, and uniting.

The message written by Sakuzo Yoshino (1878-1933), a political thinker, excited her so much that she sold all she owned to make money in the same afternoon and was in the train later that night.

During the first few days, Takai, staying at an inn, walked around the eastern part of Tokyo and found a job at a spinning factory in Fukagawa, but on the first day felt fearful that the brick factory building would collapse in the event of a big earthquake. Hence, two days later, she began to search for a job at another factory and visited a muslin manufacturer three times. Every morning she told a gatekeeper that she was looking for a place to work. He refused her twice until letting her through to meet an executive in the personnel department. Takai was told that she needed to have a guarantor to get a job there, and thus she asked the gatekeeper to vouch for her and started working at Tōkyō Mosurin, where she met Wakizō Hosoi and joined the worker activists.

### **Marrying Informally and Formally**

Once Suzuki went home, her brother, Entarō Kawai, arranged her marriage to a local man who by that time had emigrated to the United States. For them marrying somebody meant that the bride would become a housemaid and the woman's family would receive a dowry. She had never met the groom but did housework chores for his family. The history of Minami Village mentions that many people had immigrated overseas after the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>125</sup>

One of the major incentives to move out from the village was its impoverishment worsened by a series of disasters in the 1890s. The Mino-Owari Earthquake occurred in October 1891. Its estimated magnitude was 8.0 on the Richter Scale and the epicenter was Neo Village, in the western part of Gifu Prefecture, although it affected the entire Gifu Prefecture and adjacent northern Aichi Prefecture. In 1896 and 1897, several floods hit Gifu Prefecture: three big rivers called Kiso Sansen run through the prefecture and the area is vulnerable to flood disasters.

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<sup>125</sup> Minamimura kyōiku iinkai (ed.) (1984) *Minamimurashi: Tsūshihen gekan* (The history of Minami Village: A compilation of a complete history, vol. 2), Gujō: Minamimura.

While she was staying with her prospective husband's family, Suzuki's sister passed away after giving birth to her second child, leaving a daughter and a son. (It is not certain which one is her first child.) Immediately after her death, her husband began to visit and persuade Suzuki to come to Korea with him and his children. She later made excuses for accompanying him to Korea, saying that her nephew and niece were so miserable because they had lost their mother and that she went there to take care of the children. She ended her former engagement without ever meeting her husband-to-be. Suzuki's daughters suspect that she and her brother-in-law were married although the family register does not indicate this relationship.

In around 1920, Suzuki's brother-in-law convinced her to leave the village, and this time she did not tell her mother she was leaving. Suzuki cut her long hair by herself and put it on the family tombstone when leaving home. Later, finding the hair, her mother was so surprised that she started to serve meals for her absent daughter. This custom, called *kagezen* (a shadow meal), refers to serving a meal to a family member away from home.

Back in 1910, Japan defeated Russia and then annexed Korea. As part of Japan's imperial project, many Japanese emigrated to Korea and the northern part of China (then Manchuria). Suzuki lived in Pusan, a port city in the southeastern part of Korea for a short while. Her brother-in-law was a civil officer and the community did not like him. One day, one local approached Suzuki and told her to return home, saying that unless she went back to Japan he would stay there forever. Not having money to return, she pawned her sister's kimono and took a boat from Pusan to Nagasaki, where she took the train to Gifu. By chance, in the train, she met a pharmacist from Gifu who gave her enough money to pay for a night's lodging in Gifu, insisting that she did not have to repay him. After spending a night in Gifu, she went to Toyohashi, Aichi, where she worked at a spinning factory until she formally married Shunji Suzuki at the age of 21. Aichi is next to Gifu but Toyohashi is the easternmost city in Aichi and Toyohashi had already become a prosperous spinning centre. Her wage was five yen per month, about 25 *sen* a day, which was the wage of a skilled worker. Not returning home to Gifu, she felt obliged to send some money to her brother. By the time she started working at a factory in Toyohashi, she had become one of the exemplary factory workers and was earning more than he expected.

Women tended to have informal relationships with men and would not be included in the family registration unless they gave birth to a son. After the premature death of Hosoi in 1925, Takai gave birth to his son, but he died in 16 days. She had not married Hosoi and could not inherit any property even though his book sold well. She received some royalties but the publisher soon changed its mind and stopped giving her money insisting that she had no right to receive it. While traveling to find jobs in the Kansai region, she met another former co-activist and married him. In short, both Suzuki and Takai stopped working when they got

married.<sup>126</sup>

### **From Matrimony to Widowhood**

While Takai always regarded herself as a worker and formed a workers' union with her co-workers, Suzuki's attitude toward working outside is more ambiguous. Although activists in the workers' union taught Takai that every worker was equal and that women workers also had equal rights, most factory workers like Suzuki were hoping to find a good husband and get married. In spite of the differences between the attitudes of the two women toward working, it is doubtful that either of them questioned the gendered division of labour or the role of women in the household. Both lost their husbands just after World War II and were forced back into a changed labour market where their wages were extremely low. Having children, they could no longer move wherever they wanted. Even if their husbands had lived longer, they would have had to work to make a living, but without a pressing need to generate income, neither of them would have pursued economic independence.

Wakizō Hosoi argues that women factory workers did not intend to become fulltime housewives. When he wrote the book about women factory workers, middle class single women did not have to work at factories and hoped that they would marry a husband who earned enough to sustain his wife and family. Since he assumed that such an attitude was normative, Hosoi emphasized women factory workers' work ethic that living without working was blasphemy. Rural women who worked in factories were from families where women had worked hard at home. As in the case of Suzuki, their mothers' generation never thought of becoming fulltime "housewives." The generation of Suzuki and Takai had other options; a woman could become a housewife if she married a man who earned enough to support her.

At the Mill, most factory workers, who were supposed to become trainers, were daughters from the former samurai class. Being expected to work for Japanese industry, they also anticipated becoming fulltime housewives eventually. Working prior to marriage was known as *koshikake*, which literally means 'sitting on a chair'. This idea was supported in realistic terms by the expansion of the new middle class. Until the early twentieth century, male factory workers' wages were insufficient to independently support a family. As factory

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<sup>126</sup> Suzuki had five children who survived her. Two days before giving birth to her last children, who were twins, there was a large-scale air-raid during which the whole downtown of Toyohashi was burned, and they found a midwife in the ruins. One of the babies who survived was the mother of the author. Since everything was lost, the family moved to Toyokawa to look for work. Her husband worked for Toyokawa City Hospital as a handy man. The oldest daughter was sixteen years old. Before dying from cancer two years later, he suggested that Suzuki give the smaller children to foster parents but Suzuki did not want to do this. Knowing the family's situation, the hospital director employed Suzuki as a live-in janitor; they lived at the hospital until her oldest son could rent an apartment. Suzuki lived in Toyokawa until she passed away at the age of 92.

wages increased, however, there was also an increase in the number of fulltime housewives in the working class. Historian Akiko Chimoto has surveyed statistics published from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s and found that among working class families, the average income of the head of the household did not cover the whole of family expenses until 1931; thereafter, no other sources of income were necessary to make ends meet.<sup>127</sup> Chimoto argues that labour to support a family has been increasingly divided into distinct spheres, with husbands working outside for pay and wives doing household chores. This gendered division of labour has continued during the postwar years. Sociologist Emiko Ochiai has called the unified family system during this period *kazoku no sengo taisei* (post-war family system), which took shape as the number of housewives steadily increased between the years 1955 and 1975,<sup>128</sup> with the nuclear family with a fulltime housewife exemplary of the typical family.

Both Suzuki and Takai believed that a wife should follow her husband. They chose where to live and work by themselves but once they began co-habitation with a male partner they followed their partners. Losing their husbands amid the postwar confusion, they realized that the factories where they had worked, which had simultaneously supported them and the war effort, no longer were available to provide jobs. Takai found relief work for the unemployed and Suzuki became a janitor, and neither woman changed her occupation until they retired.

## Conclusion

When the Tomioka Silk Mill, the first government-funded factory in Gumma, started machine spinning in the late nineteenth century, Japanese agriculture was dependent on manual labour, including women peasant farmers. Farmers in Gifu were a significant source of factory workers and silkworms, and both farms and factories required women labour. Early factory workers hired at the Mill were from descendants of former feudal lords who recognized that they were expected to work for the development of Japan. Suzuki, Takai, and other rural women, who joined factories later, were not among this group of women. Rural young women like them contributed to the development of the sericultural industry in Japan and people's geographical mobility. Had they not gone out from Gifu Prefecture, they would have lived like their mothers who were tied to the silkworm growing industry or successive childbearing. As Japanese industry developed and there was a greater demand for women's labour, young girls were inspired to seek work to support themselves financially. Not only the opportunity of

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<sup>127</sup> Chimoto, Akiko (1992) "Nippon ni okeru seibetsu yakuwari bungyō no keisei (The establishment of the gendered division of labour in Japan)", in Ogino Miho et al. (eds.), p. 215, Tōkyō: Heibonsha.

<sup>128</sup> Ochiai, Emiko (2004) *Nijūisseiki kazoku e* (The Japanese family system in transition), p. 98, Tōkyō: Yūhikaku.

working but also informal relationships with men encouraged them to move. Even if they learned about equal rights from worker activism or how to survive difficulties through their own experience, women never seemed to question that their ultimate role was to be a wife and mother.

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## The Wartime School Lives of Three Girls' High School Students: 1938-1945 Japan

Noriko Tada

### Introduction

During the Fifteen-Year War (1931-45)<sup>129</sup> girls' high schools in Japan<sup>130</sup> shifted the emphasis of their educational policy from fostering *ryōsai kembo* (good wives and wise mothers) to *kōkoku fujin* (women dedicated to the Great Japanese Empire under the rule of the Emperor), in line with the demands of the government for devoted women who would assume to play, as Nira Yuval-Davis<sup>131</sup> has suggested, the role of reproduction, cultural guardian, symbol of the nation, and labour force. Although school documents and alumnae memoirs reveal fragments of the wartime school lives of female students, few historians have scrutinized the war from a student perspective. In this essay, the experiences of four former students at high schools for girls, consisting of relatives and Kansai-based acquaintances of the author, will be qualitatively examined through the lens of questionnaires<sup>132</sup> and brief interviews with three of them in order to collect firsthand details of the process of institutional indoctrination, particularly concerning the desired roles of wartime women. First, the essay will discuss changes in school policy, thought inculcation and intensified physical training that took place during wartime. Then will follow a consideration of how wartime labour mobilization encroached on school life. Finally, there will be a comparative analysis of the reactions of the interviewed students to the 15 August 1945 surrender broadcast made by Emperor Shōwa. The analysis of specific information gathered through the questionnaires and interviews will illustrate details of the process to instill in young women the spirit of *kōkoku fujin* and that of mobilization to produce a substitute workforce. The essay will suggest that the position of the students relative to these two ideological processes conceivably led to their different reactions to the announcement.

### Entrance examinations in 1938, 1939 and 1941

Three interviewees,<sup>133</sup> namely, Nobuko Shikutani (1938-43), Shimako Horii (1939-44), and Okiko Sakaguchi (1941-46) attended high school during the period of the Fifteen-Year War (1931-1945). In each case, the content of the entrance examinations was highly inflected by the wartime national ideology of *kōkoku shikan*, a *Shintō*-based, emperor-centered historiography

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<sup>129</sup> The *Jūgonen sensō*, or Fifteen-Year War, often refers to the series of wars which engaged Japan from the invasion of Manchuria until the end of the Pacific War.

<sup>130</sup> Secondary schools under the prewar education system. Usually girls aged 13-18 attended *jōgakkō*, while boys 13-18 went to *chūgakkō*.

<sup>131</sup> Yuval-Davis, Nina (2005) *Gender & Nation*, London: Sage, (1997).

<sup>132</sup> Around forty questions were asked to four former students and three of them were interviewed.

<sup>133</sup> Shikutani and Horii were born in January 1926, but Horii put off entering an elementary school one year due to physical frailty. Sakaguchi, born in 1928, also postponed taking the entrance examination of Shinna Kōjo a year due to a sudden illness. The school year in Japan begins in April.

that portrayed Japan as a divine country under the unbroken rule of the imperial family.

Shukutani entered Shiga<sup>134</sup> Kenritsu Hikone Kōtō Jogakkō (Shiga Prefectural Hikone Girls' High School, hereafter Hikone Kōjo) in 1938, one year after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that had triggered the Japanese-Chinese War (1937-45). She clearly remembers memorizing details of the Incident in preparation for the oral examination. Horii, who enrolled in Shiga Kenritsu Ōtsu Kōtō Jogakkō (Shiga Prefectural Ōtsu Girls' High School, hereafter Ōtsu Kōjo) in 1939, recalls a question about the grave of Masashige Kusunoki, a fourteenth-century vassal loyal to Emperor Godaigo. In January 1941, as Sakaguchi was preparing to enter Shinwa Jogakkō (Shinwa Girls' High School in Kōbe city, hereafter Shinna Kōjo), written entrance examinations for secondary schools for girls and boys were suspended<sup>135</sup>; the Pacific War began that same year in December.

All three of the interviewed women referred to their happiness and pride in being students of girls' high schools. Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo were considered prestigious schools in provincial Shiga Prefecture, granting admittance to 200 graduates from local elementary schools and requiring good grades and education-minded parents. Shinna Kōjo in urban Kōbe was a private school, acclaimed for raising "autonomous housewives" based on *ryōsai kembo* model. Basically, this case study focuses on the memories of four students of locally renowned girls' high schools. No generalizations can be made on the basis of this small sample, but it is nevertheless likely that the majority of the students at these schools were bright and serious young women, and proud of their education.

### **Changes in school precepts during the 1930s**

The national educational policy in the 1930s prioritized the inculcation of the spirit of *kōkoku fujin* in students at girls' high schools nationwide.<sup>136</sup> a self-sacrificing spirit, traditional culture, and religious rites were stressed to raise cultural guardians. The shift from *ryōsai kembo* to an accent on *kōkoku fujin* is evident in a speech delivered by Principal Sukezō Fujikawa at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Hikone Kōjo held in 1936. At least twenty-four events cultivating the spirit of "loyalty and patriotism" and "piety and ancestor worship" took place throughout the year.<sup>137</sup> Conditions were similar at Ōtsu Kōjo:<sup>138</sup> Horii recalls visiting local

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<sup>134</sup> Shiga Prefecture, a rice-growing area adjacent to Kyōto Prefecture, is located in the northeast part of the Kansai region. Japan's largest lake Biwa-ko covers one sixth of Shiga Prefecture.

<sup>135</sup> The name Shinwa Kōtō Jogakkō is commonly used; the school was known as Shinna Kōtō Jogakkō among students and citizens in prewar Kōbe. This essay uses the name of Shinna Kōjo, respecting the interviewee's usage.

<sup>136</sup> It is represented by a publication *Principles of the National Policy (Kokutai no hongī)* issued in 1937 by the Ministry of Education to indoctrinate people with the idea of the superiority of Japan to other countries and unconditional submission to the emperor.

<sup>137</sup> Traditional seasonal festivals such as moon-viewing, and memorial ceremonies based on imperial history were celebrated. *Gishi-sai* was a symbolic event of loyalty, which let students remember the spirit of fidelity shown by 47 loyal *samurai* who avenged the death of their lord in 1702. Frequent visit

*Shintō* shrines every Monday. The great esteem Ōtsu Kōjo placed on loyalty is observed in the use of four Chinese characters from Confucianism as class names: *jin* (perfect virtue), *gi* (justice), *chū* (loyalty) and *kō* (filial piety).<sup>139</sup>

### **Emphasis on physical education in the 1930s**

The physical improvement of students was another pillar of the educational policy of the 1930s. Daily jogging and frequent long-distance walking races (*kyōkō-gun*)<sup>140</sup> were mandatory for all students of Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo. Both schools were located in the waterfront area of Lake Biwa and zealous about swimming instruction. Ōtsu Kōjo offered a non-compulsory swimming camp, while Hikone Kōjo<sup>141</sup> set an intensive swimming week, which concluded with a non-compulsory long-distance swim. Shukutani remembers her satisfaction in completing the one-kilometer swim set for beginners. A photo of Shinna Kōjo of 1941 shows a swim class conducted at Suma Beach, which suggests the growing enthusiasm for swimming resulting from a national swimming campaign launched in 1938.

The results of prefectural championships suggest that there was a strong rivalry between the sports clubs<sup>142</sup> of Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo. Although the tennis, swimming, and archery teams of Hikone Kōjo advanced to the Meiji Shrine National Athletics Meet in 1939, and several teams from Ōtsu Kōjo did so in 1941 and 1942, neither Shukutani nor Horii remember the Meet as part of their school life. Different degrees of enthusiasm toward the national sports meet obviously existed. Sporting events were an effective means of implanting in an elite student a strong sense of being a Japanese national subject; player representatives of Ōtsu Kōjo at the 1941 Meet reported how impressed they were by the attendance of Prince and Princess Takamatsu, which made them feel that their arduous training had been rewarded and motivated them to work harder as ‘maidens of the Empire’.<sup>143</sup>

### **The celebration of the 2600th year of the imperial reign (*Kigen 2600 nen*)**

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to *Shintō* shrines and local regiments along with several imperial family related celebrations and commemorations consumed time to study.

<sup>138</sup> The new precepts were issued in 1942 to keep abreast with the *kōkoku fujin* model; no codified precepts except five school guidelines had existed until then. Shiga kenritsu Ōtsu kōtō jogakkō (1941-43) *Hira*, no.36.

<sup>139</sup> These names surprised a transferred student from Tōkyō. Naoki-kai (1985) *Tsuisō*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>140</sup> These long-distance (about 40 km / 25 miles) intergroup walking or running races often involved shouldering four-kilogram (8 lb) loads, as well. Ōtsu Kōjo often practiced walk to and from Wani, a town in the northern part of Ōtsu city.

<sup>141</sup> In 1936, a 50-meter pool was constructed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the school. Hikone is on the northeast coast of Lake Biwa, with Ōtsu to the south.

<sup>142</sup> There were many sports clubs, including volleyball, basketball, tennis, track and field, swimming, and table tennis.

<sup>143</sup> Reporters for *Hira*, the school newsletter, were Fumiko Masui (tennis), Masako Wakayama (basketball), Tomi Yamaguchi (swimming), and Kyōko Itō (track & field). Shiga Kenritsu Ōtsu Kōtō Jogakkō (1941-43), op. cit., no. 31.



In 1939, armed conflicts with Soviet Union intensified in northern China and the Second World War broke out in Europe, which accelerated the militaristic aspect of school education in Japan.

Following the retirement of Principal Fujikawa, his successor Kensei Jiku<sup>144</sup> steered Hikone Kōjo towards the model of military-minded girls (*gunkoku shōjo*), indoctrinating students with *kōkoku shikan*. He changed the school's precepts from “*shisei* (utmost sincerity), *keiai* (respectful affection), and *jiritsu* (autonomy),” to “*shisei*, *keiai*, *hōkō* (service), and *junkō* (warmheartedness),” omitting autonomy.<sup>145</sup> In 1940, Japan celebrated the 2600th anniversary of the accession of Emperor Jimmu, the legendary first emperor, which was designed to lift the morale of emperor worship nationwide. Ōtsu Kōjo celebrated it along with the belated fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.<sup>146</sup> In her interview, Shukutani recalled the words of the song “Kigen nisen-roppyaku-nen” that she sang on ceremonial occasions. However, the popularity of the parody of this song, which playfully protests against rising prices, gives an indication of the frustration of the Japanese people with their government at that time.

### Changes in curriculum and uniform (1941-42)

The year 1941 brought a great change to school curricula, along with growing anticipation of the Pacific War. Early in January 1941, the government released Hideki Tōjō's “Field service code”<sup>147</sup> to strengthen the wartime morale of both soldiers and civilians. Shukutani mentions Hikone Kōjo students writing lines from the code repeatedly in calligraphy classes; her well-formed calligraphy was often posted on the wall. Shukutani could still recite some parts of the code when interviewed, which implies the success of rote learning.

In April 1941, the Ministry of Education steered school curricula in the direction of war.<sup>148</sup> The July publication of *The Way of Subjects* (*Shimmin no michi*) further narrowed the focus of school and social education. Because of a tacit prohibition on cultural events, Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo suspended their longtime music festivals that were enjoyed with the local community.<sup>149</sup>

A national high school uniform was introduced in 1941; boys donned khaki civilian

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<sup>144</sup> In 1940 Kensei Jiku was transferred from Imazu Chūgakkō to Hikone Kōjo. He was promoted to the prestigious Hikone Chūgakkō in 1944, during a period of restructuring at high schools in Hikone.

<sup>145</sup> Hikone nishikō hyakunen-shi henshū iinkai (1987) *Hikone nishikō hyakunen-shi*, pp. 212-213.

<sup>146</sup> Shiga kenritsu Ōtsu kōtō jogakkō (1940) *Shiga kenritsu Ōtsu kōtō jogakkō gojūnen-shi*.

<sup>147</sup> *Senjin-kun*. The line, “Do not live and be put to shame as a prisoner, death will not incur the sin of dishonor” prevailed among Japanese people. Gibney, Frank (ed.) (2007) *Sensō: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, (1995), p. 152.

<sup>148</sup> The Ministry prioritized scientific subjects over the humanities and increased the nationalistic expressions in textbooks. Elementary school textbooks were revised, and English, then viewed as the language of the enemy, was removed from the list of compulsory subjects. The tonic sol-fa changed from do-re-mi to *i-ro-ha*, the traditional Japanese syllabary.

<sup>149</sup> The last music festival of Ōtsu Kōjo was held on December 7, the eve of the Pacific War.

wartime uniforms and field caps, and girls wore shawl collared blouses and skirts.<sup>150</sup> Shortage of materials forced many girls' high schools to adopt *geta*, a Japanese wooden clog, as the designated school footwear. Ōtsu Kōjo students went barefoot at school, even in winter.<sup>151</sup>

### **Female students' labour service (*kinrō hōshi*) begins**

In December 1941, a government ordinance<sup>152</sup> requiring contributions to the workforce imposed labour service on high school students. One month earlier, Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo had already dispatched students to harvest rice. Shikutani, in her fourth year, worked at the farming households of soldiers who had left for the front, and at a seasonal day nursery for farmers' infants. Ōtsu Kōjo students had also joined fieldwork in November. This labour for local communities seemed to provide students with joy and self-confidence; earning farmers' gratitude and attaining civilian duty to produce food allowed teenage girls to identify themselves as full-fledged workforce.<sup>153</sup> According to Horii, though, the chief delight of the one-week farming duty was the lunch of boiled white rice balls. Labour service in 1941 and 1942 remained mandatory to increase food production and support local communities.

On 8 December 1941, the Pacific War broke out. In January 1942, Hikone Kōjo students marched in the snow to Taga Shrine<sup>154</sup> to pray for a Japanese victory, while Ōtsu Kōjo students visited Hirano Shrine. The year 1942 was marked by early victories and then later in the year, disappointment, as Japan lost battles in China, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Pacific. The first Allied bombings of big cities such as Tōkyō, Nagoya and Kōbe in April that year convinced the government of the necessity of further national mobilization.

The Ministry of Education again issued guidelines to indoctrinate the students with Japanese spirit<sup>155</sup>; the ideology was based on *kōkoku shikan* portraying an invincible Imperial Japan that required loyal soldiers and a devoted home front (*jūgo*). Traditional Japanese social values were invoked to buttress the ideology, including group loyalty, solidarity, patience, and willingness to accept hardships in the hope of future gain.<sup>156</sup> Docile minors prepared themselves to be part of a selfless workforce, or positive civilians, to support Japan.

### **An emphasis on physical trainings in 1942**

The following two episodes illustrate how established educational principles and policy were

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<sup>150</sup> *Mompe*, baggy work pants gathered at the ankle, replaced skirts in 1942. A navy-blue school uniform with a sailor-collared blouse and pleated skirt was usually worn by girls' high school students until then.

<sup>151</sup> Naoki-kai (1985), op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>152</sup> *Kokumin kinrō hōkoku kyōryoku-rei*. All men 11-40 years of age and all unmarried women aged 14-25 were urged to work as "volunteer" workforce. See Note 166.

<sup>153</sup> Shiga kenritsu Ōtsu kōtō jogakkō (1941-43), op. cit., no. 34.

<sup>154</sup> Taga Shrine is about 6 km (3.7 miles) southeast of Hikone. It enshrines the parents of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, the symbol of emperor worship, who enshrined at Ise Jingu Shrine.

<sup>155</sup> Reishauwer, Edwin O (1993) *Japan: The History of a Nation*, Tōkyō: Tuttle, (1981), p. 201.

<sup>156</sup> Gibney (ed.) (2007), op. cit., p. 169.

compromised by the militaristic social atmosphere and thus deviated from traditional *ryōsai kembo* education.

Physical training at girls' high schools intensified in 1942 under the national campaign of cold weather endurance training for toughening both mind and body.<sup>157</sup> According to Shukutani, even before the initiation of the campaign, Principal Jiku had already introduced the “notorious” daily practice of rubbing oneself with a dry towel (*kampu masatsu*), after being inspired by his visit to the Naval Academy in Etajima, Hiroshima Prefecture. All students were required to perform the ritual daily before the first class. In 1942, the dry towel was replaced by a cold wet one (*reisui masatsu*), in tandem with the national campaign.<sup>158</sup>

Ōtsu Kōjo started the practice in September 1943.<sup>159</sup> Although it may have provoked anguish, students, and later even female teachers, had to strip to the waist and rub themselves, exposed to the eyes of male teachers. The graduates of Ōtsu Kōjo expressed their sympathy for friends and teachers with ample breasts who had to undergo this ordeal.<sup>160</sup> In her interview, Shukutani wryly remarked that male teachers must have been pleased with the sight.

Hikone Kōjo's compulsory 2000- and 3000-meter run before and after school respectively escalated to a six-kilometer run barefoot along the lakeside road, sometimes even during snowstorms. Shukutani expressed how piercing cold numbed her bare thighs and made her feet swell, blaming the run for her chronic neuralgia. These relentless runs were engraved in the memories of the students. *Kintei*, the newsletter of Hikone Kōjo, carried a proud report of the run, which can be compared below with descriptions of the run by the students themselves:<sup>161</sup>

The attempt of cold weather endurance running was accepted easily by assiduously trained students. They displayed the strength, running powerfully in the thickly falling snow and kicking up piled snow, which exhibited the spirit of the women of Imperial Japan. (*Kintei*, 1942)

When the war grew in intensity, we had to run to the bank of the Inukami River in the falling snow every day. Blown snow against us from Lake Biwa deprived our bare legs of body heat, and the violent snowstorm beating against our cheeks deafened us. (1944 graduate of Hikone Kōjo)

We ran in falling snow with bare knees shivering from the icy wind and bare feet stepping through the snow. The whole school ran, headed by Principal Jiku. He ordered us to run until He fell down. (1945 graduate of Hikone Kōjo)

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<sup>157</sup> *Taikan kokumin shinshin tanren undō*.

<sup>158</sup> Hikone nishikō hyakunen-shi henshū iinkai (1987), op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>159</sup> No trace of direct influence from Hikone Kōjo was found in any of the records examined, but the possibility of propagation cannot be denied.

<sup>160</sup> Naoki-kai (1985), op. cit., p. 168. Naoki-kai is the alumnae association of the 1945 graduates.

<sup>161</sup> Hikone nishikō hyakunen-shi henshū iinkai (1987), op. cit., pp. 222-223.

In her interview, Shukutani was critical of Principal Jiku as the inventor of such torturing winter trainings. Given that Ōtsu Kōjo also practiced frequent all-school walking drills year-round and one of which Horii remembered as a run from Hiyoshi Shrine to Ōmi Shrine, Jiku was not the only principal to take the wartime educational policy to an extreme, ostensibly to improve the students' physique to produce hardy mothers to bear sturdy children. Researcher Yoko Sasaki<sup>162</sup> has argued that the imposition of needless militaristic training is an example of how the wartime dynamism changed girls from passive subjects to positive nationals in support of the war, but the remarks of interviewees suggest the training was merely endured by obedient female students who were simply following the orders of their school principal.

### **Shinna Kōjo, 1941-42**

City-bred Okiko Sakaguchi, one of the three interviewees who inform this essay, entered Shinna Kōjo in 1941. Although the students in her year could study at school for only the first two years, in her interview, Sakaguchi stressed her pleasant memories of close relationship with friends and teachers.

Sakaguchi commuted by tram. Like other schools in Kōbe, Shinna Kōjo students alighting one stop early in order to get further exercise walking to school. Photos show Shinna Kōjo students enjoying Sports Day and working on the school farm in 1942.<sup>163</sup> Practices of bowing in the direction of the Imperial Palace at the morning meetings, jogging, swimming and *naginata* (Japanese halberd) practice, were common in other high schools in the Kansai district. Unique to Shinna Kōjo was saluting the monument of the school founder and the in-school *Shintō* shrine when passing through the school gate.

Sakaguchi recalled her classes with nostalgia, such as the English classes taught in early 1941 by an American woman and the Japanese language instruction of Ms. Yae Miwa,<sup>164</sup> who often read poems aloud to the class. Sakaguchi also expressed her respect for Europe-educated principal Yoshio Noda and the liberal school atmosphere he fostered; he was considered a liberal and scholarly principal and was lenient about such issues as students being allowed to bob their hair.<sup>165</sup>

### **Wartime ordinances ruined school life (1943-44)**

Shukutani graduated from high school in March 1943; Horii's graduation was in 1944. Both

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<sup>162</sup> Sasaki, Yōko (2002), "Jūgonen sensō-ka ni okeru kyōiku no henyō: kyōren o tsūjite no heishi-teki naru shinshin no juyō (Education transformed under the Fifteen Years War: the reception of military drills to strengthen soul and body of students), *Kyōiku to jendā*, no. 18, pp. 184-185. Her research focuses on geographical and institutional conditions of sampled schools.

<sup>163</sup> Shinwa gakuen sōritsu hyaku shūnen kinen jigyō iinkai (ed.) (1987) *Seiki*, Kōbe: Shinwa gakuen.

<sup>164</sup> Miwa, a graduate of Shinna Kōjo, and in charge of Sakaguchi's class, became its principal in 1986.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101. Generally, female students at the time had to bind or braid their hair.

women narrowly escaped being recruited for the wartime women's labourers corps (*Joshi teishin-tai*)<sup>166</sup> by securing employment at banks.<sup>167</sup> Shukutani mentioned in her interview that if she had been unemployed after graduation, she would have been assigned labour service at the Toyama arsenal with fellow graduates.

In April 1943, the years of schooling at the secondary schools for girls and boys were reduced from five to four. In September, the government decided to employ women for seventeen jobs with a traditionally male workforce. In March 1944, students were mobilized nationwide to work in the munitions industry. This was enforced in August 1944 by two mobilization ordinances, a women's labour service order (*Joshi teishin kinrō rei*) and a student mobilization order (*Gakuto dōin rei*), that ended student lives for many girls and boys.

In May 1944, third-, fourth-, and fifth-year Shinna Kōjo students were allocated to Kawasaki Aircraft and Kawanishi Machinery in Kōbe. Sakaguchi and her friend Yōko Narayama worked at the Kawanishi Machinery factories in Akashi and Kōbe, respectively, operating lathes in order to manufacture aircraft components.<sup>168</sup> Teachers of Shinna Kōjo circulated about the factories daily to provide students with encouragement. Students attended school on Saturdays, the factory holiday. Teenagers from different schools worked together, which sometimes led to romance. Despite the restrictions and limitations on school life in the wartime, Sakaguchi insisted that hers was not as miserable as people now believed it to be.

### **Compulsory labour service (*kinrō dōin*) for students**

Regardless of Sakaguchi's positive memories of being a student during the wartime, there exist accounts of the wretched circumstances in the workplace and horrific evacuation experiences,<sup>169</sup> some of which are detailed in the memoirs of students<sup>170</sup> who worked

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<sup>166</sup> The ordinance of 1941 (*Kokumin kinrō hōkoku kyōryoku rei*) ordered the graduates of girls' high school to work in designated munitions factories. No single women could stay home to assist with housework (*kaji-tetsudai*). See also Note 152.

<sup>167</sup> Shukutani started working at Nippon Kangyō Bank in Hikone in January 1943; Horii started working at Shiga Bank in Kyōto a year later, in January 1944.

<sup>168</sup> In 1944, all fourth- and fifth-year students of Hikone Kōjo and Ōtsu Kōjo were also mobilized for work in munitions factories in Nagoya. The buildings of Ōtsu Kōjo were converted into a factory. In 1945, juniors at Hikone Kōjo worked at Ōmi Aircraft located in Hikone; they also experienced air raids.

<sup>169</sup> Workers at factories and arsenals were exposed to the dangers of being caught in machines and in air raids. Some faced life-threatening experiences, such as being machine-gunned by a low-flying carrier-based aircraft Grumman while rushing to a nearby shelter. Naoki-kai (1985), op. cit.; Baba, Hajime (ed.) (1991) *Jogakusei no sensō taiken-ki*, Kyōto: Sojin-sha; Yamamuro, Shizuka (ed.) (1992) *Jūroku-sai no hēki kōjō*, Tōkyō: Taihei shuppan-sha. As for the Grumman's assault, other books and articles also mention; Senoo, Kappa (1997) *Shōnen H*, Tōkyō: Kōdan-sha; Gibney (2007), op. cit.; Fujimoto, Giichi, *Nikkei shimbun*, morning edition, 26 March 2011, "Hitori no tomo o mugon de kataru" (Silently telling the story of a friend).

<sup>170</sup> Baba (1991), op. cit. and Yamamuro (1992), op. cit. show the experiences of students from Neyagawa Kōjo (Ōsaka Prefecture) and Nozawa Kōjo (Nagano Prefecture) working at Hiratsuka Arsenal (*kōshō*) in Ōsaka Prefecture and Takaki Arsenal in Aichi Prefecture, respectively. Nozawa Kōjo students lived in a factory dormitory, and worked the night shift.

alongside factory workers, engaging in drudgery under the constant threat of injury from faulty machinery or shoddy, insufficient materials. Some female students fell ill, and others died of pneumonia and tuberculosis as a result of the long working hours, cold workplaces and malnutrition. An air raid targeting these factories in January 1945 took the lives of eleven female students from Wakayama Prefecture working at Kawanishi Machinery. Sakaguchi said in her interview that she had fled from the fire to a nearby park. Stress caused by repeated bombing raids led to the physical and nervous exhaustion of people nationwide; moreover, an increasing number of students, including Narayama, commuted from temporary shelters to designated factories even after their houses had been burned by incendiary bombs.

High school students continued working under deteriorating conditions, saying they could hardly leave when they considered the suffering and miseries of the soldiers at the fighting front. Although having been mobilized as a substitute workforce, students seemingly identified themselves as indispensable civilians on the home front and remained at their workplace, rationalizing that their dedication would contribute to a Japanese victory. A few, however, were suspicious of the victory due to the shortage of materials for production and repeated air raids.

### **Reactions to the surrender broadcast of August 1945<sup>171</sup>**

Student reaction to the surrender broadcast of August 1945 suggests differences in the degree of their indoctrination with *kōkoku fujin* spirit. Basically, students who survived life-threatening dangers at the workplace and home expressed wild feelings of vexation, irritation, despondency, bewilderment, relief, and happiness. The surrender broadcast was heard by all at Shinna Kōjo. Sakaguchi remembers her reaction at the time: a vague understanding of the termination of the war was followed by crying evoked by her belief in the invincibility of Japan; gradually, however, she grew happier once she realized the distinct possibility of studying at school again. Similarly, having sustained perilous times, the students of Neyagawa Kōjo and Nozawa Kōjo<sup>172</sup> described being initially assailed by a feeling of deep despondency and a terrible sense of emptiness, followed by a sudden outburst of tears.

Although both were convinced of a Japanese victory, neither Shukutani nor Horii remember their feelings at the time of the announcement. Given the fact that the announcement left no impression on them, presumably they did not internalize the spirit of *kōkoku fujin* as deeply as Sakaguchi. One might speculate on the reasons for their lack of response; perhaps because they faced no life-threatening crisis that might have required rationalization to

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<sup>171</sup> It was the very first time in Japanese history that the voice of the Emperor was heard on air. People had been educated to consecrate him as a living god and had not been allowed to look at him directly, let alone hear his voice, until the broadcast.

<sup>172</sup> See Note 170.

withstand, the announcement held no meaning. Consequently, they could remain as passive subjects, conforming to the *ryōsai kembo* model, rather than being transformed into *kōkoku fujin* model that might become “positive nationals” on the home front. Counter to Sasaki’s contention that this transformation arose from militaristic drills, the cause may have been the life-threatening danger felt by the female students during wartime.

## Conclusion

In this essay, the remembered experiences of three former students of girls’ high schools were examined in order to shed light on the process of institutional inculcation practiced at school; how young women were taught, exploited, and transformed into positive civilians as the war intensified. Although the data from interviews and questionnaires is too limited to represent general trends, it does suggest that Sakaguchi partly internalized the wartime educational ideology designed to make female minors aware of being “citizens,” while indicating, in the cases of Shukutani and Horii, that not all young Japanese women attending high schools developed this self-conscious sense of a national identity. It would be interesting to know whether these findings can be verified by enlarging the analysis of public records and personal memories of girls’ high school students in wartime Japan. This approach would lead to not only an understanding of the shift in educational goals for female students but also of the limited efficacy of wartime attempts at ideological indoctrination.

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## **The Influence of *Kyōiku-chokugo* (the Imperial Rescript on Education)**

**Tokie Takahashi**

### **Introduction**

Abandoning its 200-year policy of isolation after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan opened itself to the outside world, taking up imperialism with the ambition of expanding across Asia. Japan's military successes<sup>173</sup> were followed by complete defeat at the end of the Pacific War (1941-45). Japan then renounced war and was reborn as a democratic country, becoming one of the world's greatest economic powers in the late Shōwa (1926-89) era. This paper examines these turbulent times through the experiences of Seki Takahashi, the late grandmother-in-law of the author, whose life spanned the Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō (1912-26) and Shōwa eras, which were periods when Japan, as a nation, experienced drastic changes in its culture and social system.

Seki Takahashi (*née* Yoshikawa) was born in 1885 in Jimokuji Village on the outskirts of Nagoya. She was the first of three daughters born to the Yoshikawa family, who were propertied farmers. She was brought up as the heir of her family until her brother was born in 1897, as a son was the preferred heir in a Japanese family. Seki lived through turbulent times in relative anonymity: she was a wife and mother, obedient to both her husband and authorities. Drawing from a 17 March 2011 interview with her daughter-in-law, Misao Takahashi, aged 95 years, and her grandson, Hidenori Takahashi, aged 70 years, this essay examines the historical trends that took place in the lifetime of Seki Takahashi through the lens of her individual life story, and attempts to suggest how Seki's life was influenced by government policy by exploring her childhood and education. If people's lives reflect the age within which they live, this paper should tell us how Japanese authorities produced such subjects as Seki Takahashi, obedient to the sovereignty of the time.

### **Jimokuji**

Jimokuji-Kannon (the Bodhisattva of Compassion) Temple in Jimokuji has a long history; it is now designated as an important cultural treasure and continues to draw many visitors. There are several other temples located in the vicinity of the Kannon Temple.<sup>174</sup> Seki's house was located close to the temple, which suggests that she grew

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<sup>173</sup> Japan experienced the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), and the Japanese-Chinese War (1937-45).

<sup>174</sup> There are seven temples and shrines surrounding Jimokuji Kannon, one of the four most famous Kannon-temples in the area. The others are Kasadera-kannon, Arako-Kannon and Ōsu-Kannon in Nagoya.



up amid a religious atmosphere. The temple monks played an important role in the education of the village children, providing them with a basic education of the three R's: reading, writing and arithmetic. The *terakoya* (temple school) system, which offered schooling by monks, was the primary educational system for the masses at the end of the Edo era and into the early Meiji era. Japan's high literacy rate in those days can be attributed to the system of *terakoya*. Many temples in a village meant many *terakoya*, that is, it may be assumed that Jimokuji enjoyed a high literacy rate.

A variety of Buddhist rituals were held in these temples, and monks delivered a range of religious instructions. The lessons of these sermons were subconsciously instilled in people's minds. The temples were a kind of moral center for the community; they were a place where children could learn how to behave and what was right or wrong, and their precincts also were best places for children to play together.

In 1872, the Meiji government established the Education Order which resulted in the first compulsory school system, which required all children to acquire a basic education. The establishment of a modern compulsory education system was an urgent task for the government. The state aimed to modernize the nation and catch up with the more developed Western countries and thought that students should be educated according to state-approved standards. Although the government required all students to go to school, the enrollment rate was initially quite low: the school enrollment rate for boys was 39.9 percent, and that for girls, 15.1 percent. Overall, fewer than 30 percent of all Japanese children went to school.<sup>175</sup> The reason for the low enrollment for girls was the widespread idea that they did not need to be educated to help around the house, especially when they were commoners.

For the Meiji government, the school system was indispensable for successfully shaping Japan into a modern country. After a few amendments,<sup>176</sup> the public school system started to function well, and the old *terakoya* finally gave way to modern education around the middle of the Meiji era.

### **Modern Education and Nationalism**

The school system was still in its early stages when Seki entered a newly established elementary school in 1890. After she had finished her course, she entered a *kōtō-ka*,<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Shinotsuka, Eiko (1995) *Josei to kazoku: kindai no jitsuzō* (women and families: the reality of modernization), p. 83, Tōkyō: Yomiuri shimbun-sha.

<sup>176</sup> The government tried amendments in 1879, 1890, and 1900. In 1900, free tuition was offered, and at last about 90 percent children went to school. By 1912, school attendance had been established as a social standard.

<sup>177</sup> Elementary school consisted of two courses; *jinjō-ka*, four years of compulsory course, and *kōtō-ka*, two years of optional course at the initial stage.

a higher-level elementary school. She was one of only two girls who continued studying; the other girl was from a neighborhood temple. At that time, her parents had decided to further her education, as Seki was viewed as the heiress of the family property.

At the *kōtō-ka*, pupils learned basic arithmetic, reading and writing, composition, penmanship, Japanese history<sup>178</sup> and physical education. The school stressed such subjects as sewing and manners for girls. *Shūshin* (ethics class) was the most important subject in the curriculum; its main objective was “cultivating loyal subjects of the Emperor.” The Meiji government began to place the utmost priority on nationalistic moral education to teach subservience to the Emperor.

In 1890, the year Seki started school, *kyōiku-chokugo* was issued. Copies of the rescript were distributed to every school and Seki said that they were forced to recite it loudly in class every day. Seki’s grandson Hidenori said he often heard Seki boasting that she had memorized it before learning her multiplication tables. This is an indication of how early the indoctrination of children began to cultivate them as loyal subjects of the Emperor. A photograph of the Emperor was also enshrined at the school. Reciting *kyōiku-chokugo* and worshiping the Emperor’s image were common ritual practices at school ceremonies and daily gatherings all over Japan.

According to the interviewees, Seki learned English at school, as well. She would show off her English pronunciation by saying, “It is a cat.”<sup>179</sup> The Meiji elite sought to educate the common population about Western civilization in order to promote *bummei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment). The fact that English was taught in elementary classes during the Meiji era is perhaps an indication of how eager the government was to absorb and assimilate Western knowledge.

The government pursued two incompatible policies: Westernization, in order to become a major world power; and conservatism, in order to maintain virtues originating from the teachings of Shintoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. Both were considered essential for the construction of imperial Japan.

### ***Kyōiku-chokugo***

A comprehensive school system was established for both the purpose of modernization and the spiritual unification of the people. The *kyōiku-chokugo*, issued in the name of the Emperor Meiji, served as a powerful instrument of political indoctrination and

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<sup>178</sup> In history class, pupils were taught that, based on Shintō myth, members of the imperial family were the descendants of ancient Gods such as Jimmu and Amaterasu.

<sup>179</sup> The same episode was noted by Kotami Miyake. Ōtani, Kōichi (1972) *Onna no kindaishi* (Modern history of women), p. 15, Tōkyō: Kōdan-sha.

remained so until the end of the Pacific War. The text states that the fundamental principles of education are based upon the historical bonds that unite the country's benevolent rulers and their loyal subjects. It placed emphasis on the Confucian values of humanity, justice, loyalty, and filial piety as well as diligence, as well as spirit and obedience to the Emperor. Consider the following passage:<sup>180</sup>

Know ye, our subjects;

Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects, ever united in loyalty and filial piety, have, from generation to generation, illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education.

Ye, Our subjects, to be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So Shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendents and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places.

It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.

The 30<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of Meiji (1890)  
(Imperial Sign Manual. Imperial Seal)

The text rationalizes compliance as an ethical virtue, but it refers to neither human

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<sup>180</sup> In 1906 Japan government translated *kyōiku-chokugo* into foreign languages and delivered them to each country. This English version was translated by Kentarō Kaneko at the request of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Seikoku no kai, *Eigo de yomu kyōiku-chokugo* (*Kyōiku-chokugo* in English) <<http://s2.kch-tv.ne.jp/users/seigasai/eiyakutyokugo.htm>> on March/06/2011.

rights and equality nor the importance of life or freedom. Inazō Nitobe (1862-1933)<sup>181</sup> published an explanation in English of similar “Japanese” virtues, including justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, truthfulness, honor and loyalty inherited from the Edo era. He claimed that all Japanese had adopted these ideals as their own. Thus *kyōiku-chokugo* played a role in bolstering these traditional virtues.

### **How to Use *Kyōiku-chokugo*: the Case of the Military and the Great Kantō Earthquake**

The government used primary education in two ways to control ordinary people’s lives. First of all, as this essay has shown, it saw educated young males as a pool of potentially soldiers for the Imperial Government and doubted that they would be critical of national policy.<sup>182</sup> The government therefore insisted that its military forces required soldiers who had received elementary school education in order to quickly acquire modern military skills and remain loyal to their superiors and the Emperor. Furthermore, they should not be afraid to die for the Emperor.

Secondly, the government used knowledge of the *kyōiku-chokugo* as a litmus test of loyalty and Japanese identity. It was put to use, for example, after the great Kantō Earthquake, which struck Tōkyō and the surrounding regions in September 1923. Casualties and missing people are estimated to be between 100,000 and 200,000, and some 570,000 residences, roughly 75 percent of the city’s total, were destroyed either by the quake itself or the fires that followed. Within hours of the quake, rumors began to spread that Korean residents had started the fires and poisoned the drinking water. According to these rumors, the Koreans in Tōkyō were taking advantage of the chaos to start a rebellion. Local residents formed neighborhood groups to protect property from looters, and to prevent leftists and Koreans from rebelling. Police and army troops rounded up and murdered several hundred Koreans in at least two incidents. There are no exact figures of how many were actually massacred by the authorities and neighborhood groups, but estimates run between 3,000 and 6,000 were killed.<sup>183</sup> Misao, Seki’s daughter-in-law, remembered that both she and Seki believed the rumors and were afraid of Koreans. There were a few people, though, including Kikue Yamakawa (1890-1980),<sup>184</sup> who saw through the fabrications,<sup>185</sup> recognizing

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<sup>181</sup> Nitobe Inazō was a Christian scholar and educator. He introduced Japanese ethical teachings to the West in his book *Bushido; The soul of Japan* in English in 1899.

<sup>182</sup> Yoshida, Hiroshi (2005) *Nihon no guntai* (Japanese military), p. 118, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

<sup>183</sup> Komatsu, Hiroshi (2009) *Nihon no rekishi 14: inochi to teikoku Nippon* (Japanese history 14: Life and imperial Japan), pp. 308-309, Tōkyō: Shōgaku-kan.

<sup>184</sup> She is a highly educated woman, graduated from Eiwa-jogakuin, a socialist and a feminist.

<sup>185</sup> Yamakawa, Kikue (1972) *Onna nidai no ki* (The life history of two generations of women), pp.

that the authorities were using this story to crack down on Korean residents. Koreans and Japanese, however, look similar, and further, in those days, many Koreans spoke Japanese very fluently, making it difficult to distinguish between them and Japanese. In order to make the distinction, suspects were forced to recite the *kyōiku-chokugo* and name the Japanese Emperors in succession, an easy recital for students at Japanese schools. These examples show us how deeply the Emperor system and *kyōiku-chokugo* were incorporated into the reification of Japanese identity.<sup>186</sup>

### **Marriage and Her Husband's Business**

Seki married Teijirō Takahashi, who produced cotton socks, gloves and leggings for military supplies. It is uncertain how old she was when she married. According to her marriage registration, the date of marriage is the same day as the birth of their son, March 15, 1909, which makes Seki 24. In actuality, formal registration was commonly done after the birth of a baby,<sup>187</sup> while the average age for marriage was 18. It is speculated that Seki was probably married at around 22 or 23. She often mentioned two reasons for her late marriage: her plain looks, especially compared with her two beautiful younger sisters; and the fact that she was considered overeducated. Her class and community shunned young women whose education extended beyond rudimentary skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Seki's husband Teijirō, who was seven years older, ran a cotton fabric factory. When he was nine, his father, an oil merchant in Ōgaki<sup>188</sup> who had failed in rapeseed oil speculation, sent Teijirō to Nagoya to be looked after by his uncle, a cotton wholesaler. After a long and demanding apprenticeship, Teijirō finally opened his own factory. Although not very big, the factory did a brisk business, employing a few men and about two dozen women workers. Seki often said that she enjoyed not having any in-laws trying to supervise her. Her husband was competent, as well, and kind to her. It was far more relaxing living in a city than in village worrying about others all the time, and Teijirō often took Seki to downtown Ōsu.<sup>189</sup> The only thing she had to do was obey him. She was taught that a lady should be devoted to her husband and never complain. She said that she was taught that women were to behave like good wives during the day and like harlots at night.

As mentioned, at the age of 24, Seki gave birth to the couple's only child, a son

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355-356, Tōkyō: Heibon-sha.

<sup>186</sup> Komatsu, Hiroshi (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>187</sup> Ōtani, Koichi (1972), *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>188</sup> A big city located north of Nagoya.

<sup>189</sup> Ōsu is a busy shopping street and amusement area located in the center of Nagoya.

they named Kanematsu. The boy had a weak constitution, and was raised indulgently. Kanematsu loved to study but his parents did not think that it was good for his health so they did not allow him to go to middle school. It was no matter, because the family business was there for him to inherit. He was also exempted from military service due to his weak physical condition. This was generally considered a source of shame because death in battle was thought honorable in those days. Many mothers and wives accepted the deaths of their sons and husbands as glorious, enduring the grief. Later Seki confessed her true sentiments as a mother, saying that she regarded her son's exemption as a blessing rather than a problem; she did not have to concern herself with his safety as a soldier. Kanematsu married Misao Higuchi. The registration of their marriage also took place on the birthday of their first son, Hidenori, on 15 March 1940.

### **Through Wartime**

Japan plunged into war with ambitions of expanding its power through military means. People had no choice but to obey the country's extreme nationalist policy from Meiji through Shōwa. Seki lived through wartime, but she did not talk much about the hard times. She only said that all Japanese endured hardships together, as subjects of the Emperor. Like almost everyone else in Japan, Seki did not raise her voice in dissent against the authorities. Submission was the most valuable virtue taught in society and in school by the Confucian code of ethics; Buddhism; and the *kyōiku-chokugo*.

The situation during the Pacific War gradually worsened. Many big cities were bombed to destruction. In March 1945, Nagoya's bombed ruins extended as far as the eye could see. The Takahashi house and factory miraculously escaped the spreading fires, thanks to the desperate efforts of their neighbors to subdue the flames. Teijirō then accepted neighbor evacuees who had lost their houses.

According to the interviewees, in her later years, when she was asked whom she was most frightened at that time, Seki said that she was scared of the police, teachers and the military. When her great-granddaughters sang the children's song, "A Dog Police officer,"<sup>190</sup> she said that society had changed because policemen were no longer terrifying, adding that children of her generation used to stop crying when the police came. Neither interviewee recalled hearing her express any fear of the Emperor. In fact, she loved to hear the news about the royal family, even in her last years.

### **The Imperial Family and Renunciation of Dignity**

The Meiji government established the ideology of State Shintō, which revolved around

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<sup>190</sup> A children's song which was popular among children in the 1970s.

the veneration of the Emperor, as the basis for national unity. An extended discussion of Shintō is beyond the scope of this essay, but basically, the Emperor was considered a living god. He was, however, never a dictator but treated as the embodiment of the virtues of Japanese society. On 1 January 1946, “The Declaration of Humanity” was issued by the Emperor Shōwa, a document in which he stated that he was not the embodiment of “a living deity.” Within a short period of time, the Emperor began to change his image. He toured the entire country, recasting himself as a somewhat stiff, scholarly figure, who was concerned with the well-being of the common people. For Japanese, even though he was not God, he was revered and held in affection.

Ruth Benedict has detailed how the Emperor saw himself in her book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*:

It is said that when it was suggested to the Emperor that he disavow his dignity, he protested that it would be a personal embarrassment to strip himself of something he did not have. The Japanese, he said truthfully, did not consider him a god in the Western sense. MacArthur’s Headquarters, however, urged upon him that the Occidental idea of his claim to divinity was bad for Japan’s international repute, and the Emperor agreed to accept the embarrassment the disavowal would cost him.<sup>191</sup>

The Japanese postwar Constitution established the Emperor’s position as a symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom sovereign power resides. The emperor’s new post-war image as a symbol was accepted without any fuss. Seki had no hostility against the Emperor; on the contrary, she loved and respected him and appreciated his familiar behavior toward the masses.

### **A Destitute Time: Post-War**

The hardest time for Seki was the postwar period, when the whole nation was struggling to rebuild. Teijirō’s business had almost collapsed as no army meant no large orders. He managed a meager business with their son, spinning socks for daily use to try to make ends meet, but his earnings could not keep up with the rampant inflation.

During wartime, Japan lacked iron for arms; like others, Teijirō was forced to

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<sup>191</sup> Benedict, Ruth (1989) *Chrysanthemum and the sword*, pp. 309-310, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

make obligatory gifts of iron to the government, which amounted to almost all the spinning machines he owned. Later Teijirō said that he knew Japan would be defeated for certain. He had saved some money for emergencies, but after the war, the family was unable to use their savings due to government monetary control; soon the high inflation rendered their savings worthless. In addition, their third grandson caught pneumonia and the antibiotic Streptomycin had to be imported from the United States. The drug was very expensive, forcing the family to sell a piece of land to pay for it. To make matters worse, Nagoya's city government began to carry out an urban planning project and the Takahashi family was forced to sell half their land, further reducing their property holdings.

Seki's daughter-in-law Misao went to rural areas to trade stocks of cotton for rice and food to feed her family. Seki took care of the three grandsons and grew vegetables in the backyard. In short, the whole family worked together frantically to survive, but the state of their business remained precarious, and at last, in 1955, Seki's son decided to close it. He had no ambitions to develop the business further, but rather had decided to live frugally and made plans to build a small apartment on the remaining plot of land. Teijirō resisted his son's idea because he had set up the family business himself. Kanematsu and his wife desperately tried to persuade him, saying that they had neither the money to invest nor the tenacity to expand, and insisted the business was already outdated. Seki took her son's side, opposing her husband for the first time. She successfully persuaded him by using the saying, "The old should follow the young." Teijirō gave in to his son, and retired from business completely.

### **Twilight Years**

Seki spent her twilight years in peace and quiet with her beloved son's family. At the age of 87, she had cataract surgery; she was nearly blind at the time. This is a common procedure now, but not forty years ago. Seki eagerly wanted to have the operation, resolutely insisting that she wanted to see the world clearly once more, even if she died the next day. The operation was successful, and Seki could enjoy reading the newspaper and watching TV again.

Seki also loved to play with her great-granddaughters. They enjoyed the strange jargon that Seki knew. For them, *kyōiku-chokugo* and the names of successive Emperors were simply mysterious gibberish with no meaning. They would ask Seki to recite repeatedly and laugh at the strange sounds. It was a wonderful pastime for them; the little girls said that their great-grandmother's incantation was special, because she still had the marvelous ability to remember. She seemed to believe that reciting these



phrases would lead her the right way.

Living as a housewife without any economic strength, and seldom asserting herself, Seki abided by the guidance of such government ideology as *kyōiku-chokugo* and the religious teachings of Buddhism. She forced herself to chant a sutra many times each day. She was unafraid of solitude or being left alone at home. When other family members were going out, she would say that nobody needed worry about her; she understood that people are born alone and die alone, and that everybody has things to do. She did not want herself to be a nuisance to other family members even when she was in her late 90s. She adapted to the changing times, and although she was never the center of attention, she was mentally strong enough to look after herself up until her death at the great age of ninety-nine.

### **Conclusion**

In the early Meiji era, Seki Takahashi was one of just a few women from wealthy farming families who were able to attend to elementary school and take advanced courses. Though the daughters of the upper classes were already being more highly educated in private schools, farmers' daughters like Seki seldom had chances to go to school. The reciting of *kyōiku-chokugo* and the names of successive Emperors were imposed on the pupils, and Seki learned the *kyōiku-chokugo* thoroughly, as well as its message about how all Japanese should behave as loyal subjects of the Emperor.

If Seki's life is any indication, *kyōiku-chokugo* was an important instrument used by the government to control the masses in the name of the Emperor. It promoted moral standards and a variety of virtues similar to those taught by Confucianism and Buddhism, which were already embedded in people's daily lives. Nobody doubted the rightness of these teachings. *Kyōiku-chokugo* intensified the submissive trend in people in order to achieve national unity. It was an important measure for the imperial government, who intended to expand the nation's power to other countries. This system of education, adopted during the Meiji era, trained and guided Japanese to follow the national leaders.

Seki believed in the rightness of the teachings, and her life conformed to social expectations. She followed her husband and endured the difficulties of wartime, working hard and without complaint to rise again from the ruins in postwar Japan. As such she was a typical Japanese subject, who believed the government ideology that thinking should be left up to the authorities.

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## The Adolescence of Teruko of the Early Shōwa Era

Keiko Watanabe

### Introduction

This essay will examine the life of Teruko Kagai (hereafter Teruko), the author's mother, who was born in 1927 in the second year of the Shōwa period (1926-89). The purpose of this depiction of a woman likely to be overlooked in the historical record is to consider her story as an indicator of some of the thinking that characterized Japanese society in the early Shōwa era when filial piety and obedience were paramount demands made of women. This paper will focus on her family background, adolescence and the impact made on her school education by the Pacific War (1941-45) to search for clear and certain indication of Teruko's attitudes subconsciously shaped by the formative ideology.

Teruko, now 84, accepted the social script that cast woman as *ryōsai kembo* (good wife and wise mother). She seems to have embraced and performed a gender role for women prescribed and endorsed by the national ideology of the *ie* system (family system), which gave strong social approval to married women who gave birth to boys to continue the family name and assets. She acquired the received ideology that shaped her life without ever critically challenging it. While the *ie* system was officially abolished in the revised Civil Code of 1947, its legacy remained deeply in her, even in the 21st century.

This essay will employ the material of oral history to examine this ideology through the lens of Teruko's memory, based on interviews, totally three hours, which took place at her place in Kōbe on 7 and 8 December 2010. It will examine a decade of her personal history in order to consider how she became a submissive, self-sacrificing woman during the period from 15 to 25 years of age. Due to space constraints it will not be possible to look in any depth at her life following the age of 25, which was her turning point, as well as the birth of her only son born in 1959.

Questions asked during the interviews sought information about Teruko's childhood and her school life, and included queries about work; the mobilization of students for armaments production; marriage; and religious encounters. Albums were used as a visual source of material, as well.

Most of all, this paper is a record of a life and its experiences which would likely otherwise disappear with Teruko's death. Although intended as an indicator of broader social currents and certain gendered expectations, this single oral history cannot serve to ground a discussion of women of that time. Further, the issue of memory qualifies the accuracy of the narratives gathered in the interview, and reminds us that revisions and justifications form the account of any life. This is not at all to say, however, that the information in this essay is either

false or valueless; this particular life shows a woman of her times acquiesced to the constraints of gender expectations taught in school and powerfully reinforced within the family.

### **Teruko and Her Mother**

Teruko was born in 1927, the first daughter and second child of a rural family living on the north of Kōbe in the Western region of Japan. Eventually in addition to her elder brother, Hiroshi, she would have other five younger brothers and sisters, although two boys were drowned in a pond near the house during their elementary days and two others died prematurely. The neonatal mortality stood at 56.4 and 46.2 per 1,000 in 1927 and 1938, respectively.<sup>192</sup> At a time when she still wanted to nestle closely against her mother, Takie, (c 1906-78), another baby preoccupied her mother's attention. Teruko's grandmother (her father's stepmother) lived in a one-room building next to the main house, doting on Hiroshi as the future heir. In her interview, Teruko's memories of elementary school include those of siblings tightly tied to her back as she babysat for her hardworking mother; as in any large family, particularly in rural communities, older siblings were expected to look after the younger ones. In 1937, the year her youngest sister Tomoko was born, the birthrate was about 4.37, much higher than the current 1.37 in 2009. In the interview, Teruko remembers her paternal grandmother saying to her, half-jokingly:

Your mother spoke to Tomoko in a honey-sweet voice while her voice was strong and commanding when she spoke to you. (Interview 2010)

It was obviously a bitter memory to carry for 70 years for Teruko but her facial expression during the interview was calm when she spoke of her mother, and her voice did not change. An age gap between Teruko and Tomoko was ten years. The difference in tone suggests the different attitude of the mother toward her youngest and eldest daughters, and offers a good example of a traditional gender role being enforced within the family, namely that of the elder sister, who is expected to learn endurance and control her emotions. Even during the interview, this learned self-control was in evidence. According to Teruko's interview, one day her mother Takie told her the following story:

You are old enough to understand my story. After I gave birth to you, my mother repeatedly recommended me to divorce my hopeless husband and come home, bringing you, and leaving Hiroshi, as he was the first son and the family's heir. My father told me that it was up to me to decide, but he added that since he was afraid I wouldn't be able to sleep at night because of leaving my boy with my husband's family, I had to carefully consider. Eventually I made up my mind to devote my life to my children because I did not want Hiroshi to be

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<sup>192</sup> Demographics in public information personnel, a white paper issued by the Health and Welfare Ministry in 1974.

raised by a stepmother. I did not want my son to be like my irresponsible husband due to be raised by his stepmother. (Interview 2010)

Although the father said it was Takie's choice to make, she did not make a choice on the basis of either her own feelings, or those of her mother, who said leave the son and come home. Instead she chose to 'sacrifice' herself -- in accordance with the gender role of 'mother' that was praised socially. Her father applied soft pressure -- reminding her of the role she was supposed to play. In other words, he did not have to tell Takie what to do. That social role was important enough to Takie that she believed it overrode her own feelings of returning home. Yet, Takie's decision to devote her life to her children made a strong and lasting impression on Teruko that mother's love was self-sacrificing and respectable. At the same time the child raised by a stepmother would result in a man like her 'irresponsible' father.

### **Teruko's Youth in Miki Girls' High School**

In 1942, Teruko, aged 15, went to Hyōgo Kenritsu Miki Kōtō Jogakkō, (Hyōgo Prefectural Miki Girls' High School, hereafter Miki Jogakkō), which was built on the former site of Miki Castle in 1923.<sup>193</sup> Only three girls out of 47 elementary school graduates went to higher school. There were no entrance exams and the course of study lasted four years. Her family could afford to let her advance to girls' school due to a landed farmer, renting farmlands to tenant farmers.

Teruko and two of her classmates used to cycle through green rice fields to school every day. A bicycle was really the only means of transportation as even the closest bus stop was four kilometers away. A journey of 10.2 kilometers took about one hour each way. Teruko recalls gulping water at a waterfall on her way up a steep hill along the way. The cycling kept her fit and powerful; Teruko maintains that she was never absent from or late for school during her four years there.

Teruko liked to visit her maternal grandmother (c1887-c1951), who lived in Shinkaichi<sup>194</sup> in Minatogawa in Kōbe:

During the school holidays, I never failed to receive a postcard from my grandmother with a short and simple message written in *hiragana*,<sup>195</sup> saying, "Come and see me during the holidays." (Interview 2010)

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<sup>193</sup> A two-story wooden annex housing the music and sewing classrooms was built two years after Teruko entered Miki Girl's school. The School was demolished, but the annex was preserved and is currently part of the municipal government facilities. In 1966 Hyōgo Prefectural Miki High School was erected two kilometers north of Miki Girls' School.

<sup>194</sup> Shinkaichi, the biggest downtown district in Kōbe, was an entertainment center with movies theaters, restaurants and shopping centers. All of these were destroyed along with the rest of Kōbe during air raids in 1945.

<sup>195</sup> *Hiragana* is syllabic writing used in Japanese.

It must have taken a tremendous effort for her grandmother to write each word as she did not learn how to write at school. In 1873, in the early Meiji period, the rate of attendance at girls' school was 15.14 percent, compared with 39.90 percent of boys. Between 1890 and 1893, about 30 percent of girls went to elementary school to learn to read and write. The actual figure is probably closer to 20 percent as there were many who dropped out or were absent for long periods of times. Her story of grandmother suggested that she did not go to elementary school.

### **The Fourth Year at School and the Pacific War**

The Pacific War (1941-45) had a myriad of effects on many people in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. She herself experienced no air raids, although she frequently recalled seeing U.S. bombers flying over her head. As the national war effort intensified, some regular lessons at her school were superseded by volunteer work which was counted as part of the curriculum. In her fourth year at Miki Jogakkō, Teruko was dispatched along with 18 other students to help farming households in Miki town for rice planting and harvesting twice a year as there was an acute shortage of men since men were fighting at the front. The only males left in the area were very young or very old. Teruko and the other students, clad in baggy wartime *mompe* and sleeved white aprons, worked hard for about a week accompanied by Mr. Takamatsu, a young and energetic teacher. Teruko said that all the male teachers at her school were exempt from military service.

A simplified, functional uniform was adopted during the war. Teruko wore a sailor blouse and a box-pleated skirt when she started girls' school in 1940, whereas at the time of her graduation in 1944, she wore a shawl-collared blouse with a short belted dress and skirt with no pleats. For daily school activities, students wore *mompe* instead of skirts. Each student had different pattern *mompe* made of strong and durable cotton fabric.

Although Teruko grew up at a time when there was a scarcity of basic commodities due to war, one of her photographs managed to capture the excitement of eating sukiyaki with matsutake, an autumn delicacy. The photograph, taken after matsutake-gathering at a friend's invitation, shows four friends sitting around a small round table on which there is a sukiyaki pot. Nowadays it has become harder to find matsutake in groves of Japanese red pines (*akamatsu*), and the matsutake is now an expensive seasonal treat; Teruko recalls gathering an abundance of the delicacies to eat.

Other photographs taken while she was at Miki Jogakkō suggest that Teruko enjoyed a brilliant moment in her youth during the war. One photo displays Teruko with her brother, cousin and uncle, aged 17, 16, and 21, respectively, all sitting on a hillside with sunny smiles. Teruko is wearing her school uniform while the young men are in khaki civilian uniforms with lace-up shoes and gaiters. Teruko's Uncle Toyojirō, her mother's youngest brother, was just

six years older than Teruko. For that reason he often told Teruko to call him *oni-i-san*, brother, and not *oji-san*, uncle.

In 1943, as the war situation grew graver, Teruko's homeroom teacher Kinu Sasaki recommended her for further schooling:

Ms. Sasaki told me that no matter how hard I worked at a munitions factory, nothing could be altered under the present war conditions in Japan. If circumstances would permit, it would be better for me to go to higher school. After I consulted with my mother about it, she permitted me to continue my education. (Interview 2010)

### **Education Interrupted at Kyōto Seian Women's School**

In 1944 Teruko started attending Kyōto Seian Professional Women's School, a boarding school which had originally been built as a kimono sewing school in 1920. She majored in *wasai*, the special art of sewing kimono. That spring, Teruko made her first excursion to historic spots in Kyōto, such as Kiyomizu Temple and Heian Jingū Shrine, while in autumn, she went on for an enjoyable day trip to Oharano Shrine. There was a school dress code for both teachers and students; male teachers wore civilian uniforms with gaiters, while female teachers wore kimono and *mompe*; the students wore their uniform tops with *mompe*.

In her first year, Teruko acquired the fundamental techniques of *wasai*. She focused on sewing in class; students competed with one another to hone their skills. Kimono fabric was provided by specialty shops in Kyōto. In February 1945, during Teruko's second year, all lessons were interrupted as students were ordered to be mobilized due to the increasing gravity of the war situation. All students were required to follow to the order and move to Asago in the northern part of Hyōgo Prefecture to work in the third naval powder plant for armaments production. They were compelled to live in the factory dormitory on the premises; covering an area of 615 hectares, the Asago powder plant<sup>196</sup> was one of the nation's three biggest. Approximately 5,000 people worked at the factory, including a staff of 164, male and female workers of 2,515 and 1,076 respectively, and 1,209 mobilized students.<sup>197</sup> This is what Teruko remembers of the third naval powder plant in Asago:

There was no work for us to do as there was a scarcity of raw materials to make bombs. I wondered if Japan could really win under such insufficient, scarce conditions.

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<sup>196</sup> In 1939, sixty farming families were coerced into leaving their property in the country, and within a year, about 46 percent of the village was taken over by the military government. In 1941 the plant was completed.

<sup>197</sup> *Kaigun Dai 3 kayakushou Maizuru-shi Asago, Tango no Densetsu 32 shū*, (The Third Naval Powder Plant in Asago, Maizuru city, The Legend of Tango, the 32 collection) <[http://www.geocities.jp/k\\_saito\\_site/bunkn32.html](http://www.geocities.jp/k_saito_site/bunkn32.html)> on March/28/2011.

She continued:

The diet at the dormitory was by far better than that of the school dormitory. I came to look forward to mealtimes. (Interview 2010)

Teruko returned home for the first time in six months on 20 August 1945, following Japan's defeat. Initially she intended to return to school and helped her mother do farm work, while she waited for the school to re-open. One day she was surprised to hear that her father had received a notification about the resumption of the school but decided not to tell her because he preferred his daughter continue working on the farm. Because of this, Teruko was not able to finish school; recalling this during the interview, Teruko clearly showed contempt for her father:

Instead of working, he invited some of his colleagues to drink sake with him, even in the daytime. What a disgusting father he was! He was completely different from my mother, who was working hard for her children and family. (Interview 2010)

In spring of 1946 in the postwar days, Teruko took a one-year intensive dressmaking course at Yōsai Jogakuin, an advanced dressmaking girls' school, choosing to learn how to make Western clothing. Upon completion of her course, she successfully renovated her father's old Inverness cape into an overcoat for herself.

### **A Marriage Meeting**

After the war, marriage was the necessity to survive. Teruko had a strong social pressure to marry within the marriageable age. The average age of first marriage was 22.9 for women and 26.1 for men in 1947.<sup>198</sup> Although Teruko had neither romantic images nor subjective ideals on marriage, she deeply felt that a late marriage was a shameful thing.

In November 1947, Teruko's relatives organized a marriage meeting to introduce Teruko, aged 20, to her prospective husband, Yutaka Kagai (1921-), aged 26, who was coming from Kōbe with his father and a matchmaker to meet her. After taking trains and buses, the trio then walked a further four kilometers from the nearest bus stop to reach her house. After the meeting Teruko saw them off to the bus stop. This was the report she gave after the meeting:

Yutaka's father commented on my appearance, saying that I looked like a healthy young woman. As I had big hips, I was expected to have many children. (Interview 2010)

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<sup>198</sup> *Sengo shōwashi-heikin shokon nenrei to saikon sū*, (Postwar Shōwa history, the first marriage age and remarriage figures) <<http://shouwashi.com/transition-firstmarriage.html>> on April/25/2011.



In the *ie* system, sons have been prioritized in order to continue the family name. In fact, Yutaka had been adopted to do so, and had inherited the family property. Since there had been no children for two generations in his family, there were great expectations for Teruko to bear a son. It was her mission to produce a healthy boy.

Over the course of four months, the couple grew closer to each other through dates and correspondence. In March 1948 they were married at Nagata Shrine in Kōbe, and spent a modest two-night honeymoon at Arima Hot Springs, north of Kōbe, which ranked as one of the nation's top three spas, soaking in the hot spring bath at the company-owned dormitory instead of at an inn. Due to post-war food shortages, they brought their own rice with them and ate simple meals.

After a year of living at Fukuoka in Kyūshū, the couple moved to Toyonaka in Ōsaka, to a company-owned detached house of three rooms and a kitchen with a yard.

### **The Beginning of Their Married Life**

Teruko was a healthy country girl with a dark complexion and a good appetite while Yutaka was a fragile city boy, fair-skinned with a poor appetite. Teruko accepted the idea that a wife would not eat more than her husband, so when Yutaka said that he did not want to eat more, she refrained, as well, even though she was still hungry. She was so obsessed with following the fixed notion that women must eat less than their husband that she sacrificed her own physical condition.

Looking back to her newly married life sixty years earlier, Teruko remembered how she also acquiesced to her husband's volatile temper: "He was very selfish. Being the only son, he was indulged by his parents. Thus he had difficulty restraining himself. (Interview 2010)." She recalled an incident that had remained in her memory:

I answered back Yutaka about a trifle. I forgot what it was but very trivial. Surprisingly, he got furious. In a fit of anger, he broke the *shōji* paper screens of the sliding doors with his fists. Then he rushed out of the house without taking any money and did not return until late in the evening. Astonished by his short temper, I made up my mind that I would never complain no matter what he said. I would never oppose him. (Interview 2010)

After Teruko gave birth to a girl baby in October 1949, she was able to nurse the child for only the first three months. Around that time her husband had to take a six-month leave of absence, diagnosed with tuberculosis. She found herself unable to lactate, perhaps due to dietary inadequacies, and was then obliged to use baby formula, which strained the family budget. To make matters worse, his salary was reduced by 60 percent. Anxious for him to return to his role as a breadwinner, Teruko devoted herself to serving him nutritious food to speed his recovery.

Yutaka regained his health, but one day Teruko herself coughed up bloody phlegm the dreaded sign of tuberculosis. Following her husband's advice, she spent six months in bed at the National Sanatorium Toneyama Hospital in Ōsaka. Her baby was taken care of by Yutaka's parents in Kōbe. During her convalescence, she contemplated her life and mortality:

How fleeting life was! I am 25 years old. They say the average life expectancy is 50 years of age. I have already lived half of my life. I wonder if I have done any good deeds. I don't think I have. What would happen to me in the afterlife? The teaching of Zen Buddhism says that those who do good will go to Paradise, while those do bad things will go to hell. I stole a persimmon in my childhood. (Interview 2010)

Teruko became obsessed with guilt. A persimmon she had stolen in her childhood tormented her conscience.

On finding ripe persimmons in an orchard while I was roaming alone, I was carried away by the impulse to eat one of them. No one was looking and there was a persimmon within reach. Succumbing to temptation, I picked one and took a bite of it. (Interview 2010)

Contrary of Teruko's expectation, the persimmon was not sweet but bitter. The owner of the orchard had shrewdly surrounded trees of sweet persimmons with astringent ones as a strategy to deter potential thieves. This minor incident nevertheless bothered Teruko in her bed. After six months Teruko was discharged from the hospital, but she felt depressed; a moody mix of irritation and anxiety persisted. As she explained:

My neighbors' husbands went to work every day in good health while my husband was frequently off work due to his delicate health. Still worse, money was scarce. (Interview 2010)

Nevertheless, Yutaka was apparently thoughtful enough to look hard for a woman to take care of domestic affairs until Teruko fully recovered physically and emotionally, since he considered it necessary for her to refrain from daily chores until she was completely cured; if tubercular bacilli remained in her lungs, they might become active if there was any deterioration of her immune system.

### **An Encounter with Religion**

Teruko's life was changed by an encounter with Tsurue Maeda who was hired as a housekeeper. Maeda was a woman in her 40s who had lost both her husband and a daughter to sickness within the same year, the former dying of a gastric ulcer and the latter, of tuberculosis. After three years of mourning, Maeda decided to devote the rest of her life to helping others. After Yutaka asked her to come and help his family, she arrived from Sasayama, 40 kilometers north

of Kōbe, with Buddhist scriptures in one hand and her personal belongings in the other.

Maeda was a devotee of Shin Buddhism,<sup>199</sup> Japan's most popular Buddhist sect. Seeing Teruko in a state of profound depression, Maeda attempted to help her recover her health both spiritually and physically. In due course of time, mutual trust and respect developed between the two women. She was sympathetic to her, and started to explain the essence of *nembutsu*<sup>200</sup> through the chant of the *Shōshinge*<sup>201</sup> sutra:

Men with extremely heavy sins<sup>202</sup> should only utter the Buddha's Name.  
I, too, am in His embracement:  
Though I cannot see (His Light), my eye being obstructed by evil passions,  
The Great Mercy always shines upon me untiringly.<sup>203</sup>

Teruko felt herself relieved from anxiety and fear while she was listening to the teaching. In addition to the spiritual guidance, Maeda tilled the empty land around the house and grew vegetables that were good for both the diet and the family budget. She showed Teruko how to prepare *osechi ryōri* (traditional Japanese food prepared in advance for the first three days of the New Year), and when *ume* (plums) came into season, she demonstrated how to preserve them, and make *umeboshi* (pickled plums). Teruko remembers:

I gave Ms Maeda all the money that was needed to defray living expenses as well as her own wages. Presumably Ms Maeda decreased her own allowance to buy food for the family as the meals she prepared were more nourishing and tastier than my own, which implied she was spending her own money. (Interview 2010)

Maeda left after a year and three months, emphasizing that Teruko should go to temples to listen to monthly sermons as well as eat proper meals, regardless of her husband's appetites as she would stay healthy as long as she ate enough. Recovering from tuberculosis and encounter of a mentor, Teruko paved the way for her new life supported by a spiritual staff. In her own version of her life, Teruko took delight in remembering this period as transformative. Although serving her husband as an obedient wife; physically weakened by disease; and psychologically depressed by consciousness of the mutability of life, these led her to encounter Shin Buddhism for mental support. After giving birth to a boy, she became a determined and self-assured mother, devoting herself to raising him. She could settle into an established role, a bona fide

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<sup>199</sup> Known as Jōdo Shinshū, and founded by Shinran Shōnin (1173-1262).

<sup>200</sup> It refers to the practice of uttering Amida's Name, *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.

<sup>201</sup> Masuyama, Kenju (ed. & trans.) (1961) *Shōshinge* (The Gāthā of true faith in the *nembutsu*), Kyōto: Tsuchiyama.

<sup>202</sup> That is, all ordinary men, who have committed the five deadly sins and the ten evils.

<sup>203</sup> Masuyama (ed. & trans.) (1961), op. cit., p. 42.

‘mother of a son’ accepted by society.

### **Conclusion**

This essay presented information drawn from interviews with Teruko about her personal history, specifically concerning the decade after 1942, in order to indicate how socially sanctioned gender roles for women, such as *ryōsai kembo*, were rehearsed, accepted, and performed in her own life. Teruko was neither trained to be nor intuitively critical of the gender roles she enacted; like others living in the Shōwa era, she was absorbed into the mainstream of the nation’s *ie* system ideology, and neither questioned the conventional ideas nor countered their constraints.

Hearing Teruko voice her acceptance of such gender roles for women was regrettable but not surprising. Her interview suggested how powerfully the family nurtures and polices gender roles for women, making such notions as mother’s love for her birth children as superior to other forms of maternal love; the obligations of an obedient wife to her husband; and the behaviour expected of an enduring elder sister appear natural, rather than socially constructed. It seems clear that encouraging women to challenge to notions of gender roles should be a necessary part of a formal education so that there is awareness of how these roles are soft-peddled as inevitable via the mother in the home. Teruko’s story indicates how hard it is to question established roles when they are modeled and encouraged within the family.

As the daughter of the interviewee, I can see how the gender roles that Teruko accepted adversely affected her life and had consequences in mine. In my own life, I must be aware of subtle pressures to adhere to socially sanctioned gender roles, especially that of a good ‘elder sister’ and have the fortitude to challenge them in order to expand the possible range of roles for women.

## **Bibliography**

Kagai, Teruko. Personal interview with Keiko Watanabe, Kōbe, Hyōgo Prefecture, 7 and 8 December 2010.

## **Appendix**

### **Interview questions asked Teruko Kagai**

- I. Tell me about your life between the ages of 15 and 25.
  1. Where did you live at the age of 15?
  2. Tell me about your family.
  3. What school did you go to at the age of 15?
  4. When did you leave Miki Jogakkō and how long did you attend there?
  5. What was your school uniform?
  6. How did you go to school? Did you have any special memories during going to school?
  7. Did you remember your lunch box?
  
- II. Tell me about your experience of volunteer labor.
  8. How long did you work as volunteer labor?
  9. How was the volunteer labor group organized?
  10. Where did you go when students were mobilized for armament production?
  11. What kinds of work did you do at the munitions plant?
  12. Did you ever have any dangerous experiences during the war, such as air raids?
  13. Do you remember your homeroom teacher?
  14. Do you remember your classmates?
  15. Tell me about your arranged marriage and early married life.
  16. Tell me about your husband.
  17. Tell me about having tuberculosis.
  18. Tell me about Tsurue Maeda and your encounter with religion.

## A Woman's Life in Wartime

Junko Yamamoto

### Introduction

This essay will demonstrate how a mother's life influences her offspring, principally the females, molds the frame of their mind and heart, and orients how they will live in the future. Especially for children who went through a national crisis such as war, their mother's desperate attempts to prevent them from starving remains in their head for the rest of their life as if it happened yesterday. This essay will attempt to prove this hypothesis focusing on the life of one woman, Etsu Ono,<sup>204</sup> and her offspring. The details of Ono's life were gathered secondhand through interviews with Etsu's 88-year-old daughter. This woman's biography will be contextualized in terms of the Japanese-Chinese War (1937-45) and the Pacific War (1941-45), and how her instinctive mother love saved her family will be analyzed. Although the events narrated in the interview are based on the memories of the interviewee, some details have been verified by her siblings.

### Educational background

In 1895, the year the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) ended, Etsu was born in Minami-kuwada-gun, a rural area in Kyōto Prefecture as the first daughter of Namikawa Eisuke and Fumi, and the third of their eight children: five sons and three daughters. Etsu shared the housekeeping with her mother as a young girl just as other first daughters throughout the country at that time as well as *shibori* handwork in which her mother engaged at home. Etsu attended four-year elementary school, or *jinjō-shōgakkō*, which became compulsory in 1872 for children 6 to 10,<sup>205</sup> just as other children in the village. In 1902, when Etsu entered the school, the attendance rate was 91.58 percent: the rate for boys was 95.80 percent and that for girls 87.00 percent.<sup>206</sup> In *jinjō-shōgakkō*, the children received basic education in reading, writing, calculation, moral education and, in the case of girls, sewing as well.

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<sup>204</sup> Etsu Ono, henceforth referred to as Etsu in this essay, is the interviewee's mother. The interviewee, Fukuko, is Etsu's third daughter. The interview was conducted on 23 March 2011 at Fukuko's home in Sakai in Ōsaka Prefecture. Personal information about Etsu and other family members is drawn from the information recorded in the *koseki*, or family register.

<sup>205</sup> Gakusei (integrated educational system) was launched in 1872; four years of elementary education at a *jinjō-shōgakkō* became compulsory for all children, including girls over 6 years old. See Abe, Tsunehisa & Yoshimaru Satō (2000) *Nihon kingendai josei-shi* (Modern histories of Japanese women), p. 32, Tōkyō: Fuyōshobō shuppan.

<sup>206</sup> Okuda, Kyōko et al. (2000) *Otoko to onna no jikū 10* (Time and space for men and women 10), p. 437, Tōkyō: Fujiwara shoten.

Whereas some children went on to two-year *kōtō-shōgakkō* (higher elementary school) after finishing school, regardless of compulsory education policies, not every child could finish the four-year school because his/her family needed his/her help. In Etsu's case, following school, she helped her parents by looking after her younger siblings, doing household chores and *shibori* work at home. She was good at sewing and handwork. Her birthplace Minami-kuwada-gun was a major producer of *Kyō-kanoko-shibori*,<sup>207</sup> an expensive fabric used for kimonos. Etsu was a trained *shibori* worker as early as when she was a school pupil because she had done it from an early age, and continued to do *shibori* throughout her life.

### **Women's rights under the Meiji Constitution and laws**

In 1889, the Meiji Constitution, that is, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, was enacted, and in 1899 the *Nihon Kokuseki-hō* (Japanese Nationality Law) enacted. The Constitution prescribed that women were not eligible for employment in the public sector, and the *Nihon Kokuseki-hō* stipulated that Japanese women were not “Japanese *shimmin*,” or subjects. In a certain sense, the Japanese government did not acknowledge that women were full-fledged human beings. Women were prohibited from joining political meetings or parties by the *Shūkai Oyobi Kessha-hō* (Political Meeting and Party Act) enacted in 1890, but in 1922 when the *Chian Keisatsu-hō* (Peace Preservation Police Act) was partially changed as a result of persistent requests of women such as Raichō Hiratsuka, Fusae Ichikawa and Mumeo Oku, women were bestowed the right to attend political meetings. In April 1925, universal voting rights were granted for men over 25 years old but the *Chianiji-hō* (Public Peace Preservation Act) was legislated to further control political associations and thought. In order to improve the domestic and social conditions of women, women political activists worked hard to gain the right to join political parties before the end of the Pacific War, yet this proved to be in vain.

Under the Meiji Civil Law, a woman married into the husband's family and the wife was obliged to live with the husband (Code 788). The property of a woman was managed by her husband and any profit from the property would go to him (Code 801). A woman required her husband's permission to undertake any legal action. No right to demand property division was given to a woman in the case of divorce, and therefore it was very difficult for her to divorce her husband and become economically

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<sup>207</sup> Kanoko shibori is a traditional technique and it needs delicate and intricate handwork and is better suited for traditionally women's work. The work is backed up by common housewives doing housework and childcare. *Kyōkanoko shibori*, *Kyōkanoko shibori shinkō kumiai* <<http://www.kougei.or.jp/kyokanosibori/ct0207-a01.html>> on May/10/2011.

independent. The loss of her husband made a male, usually the first son, the family heir; a wife was not allowed to inherit any property if the husband had a direct descendant. The family members had to maintain the same surname of the head of the family (Code 746). The father also had sole parental authority. The mother was able to gain custody if the child lost his or her father but even then, she required the approval of the relatives of her husband (Code 886 & 887).<sup>208</sup>

Etsu had never thought about demanding her right to the property or economic status or parental power, and accepted her gender role as a matter of fact, because everybody else did so. Domesticity was rather comfortable to her under the financial protection of her husband. However, his death in 1944 changed her life greatly, which will be discussed later.

### **Married in 1914**

In the midst of World War I (1914-18), nineteen-year-old Etsu married Ryōkichi Ono, a 24-year-old pharmacist and an owner of a drugstore in Kyōto, who was wealthy enough to own three two-storey houses near his store. The couple had seven children: five daughters and two sons. In 1917, three years after their marriage, their first daughter, Shigeko, was born. She was an affectionate and easy-going child, who helped her mother with the household chores, which she was expected to do in her role as the eldest daughter. Following her schooling, Shigeko stayed home to help her parents and to prepare for marriage. She was good at dressmaking and later it became her job. She worked as a dressmaker at home through her life.

The second daughter, Kazuko, was born in 1919, and grew up kindhearted and considerate. She studied to be a nurse and midwife and worked at an institution residing at an adjacent dormitory. The third daughter, Fukuko, who was interviewed for this essay, was born in 1923. Sensible, thoughtful and very pretty as she was, her nickname at school was *ichima ningyō* (a Japanese doll wearing kimono). Her good grades in school made her father send her to a girls' school and a vocational school. After 13 years of education, Fukuko was employed as a post office clerk.

The fourth daughter, Hisako, was born in 1926. She contracted tuberculosis, and due to a lack of effective medicines such as streptomycin and of nutritious food, her condition deteriorated. As the war continued, malnutrition and related deaths increased.<sup>209</sup> She was not hospitalized but stayed at home being cared for by her

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<sup>208</sup> Abe & Satō, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>209</sup> Tuberculosis was the first cause of death in Japan and 171, 432 patients lost their lives from the disease until a cure became available in 1943. *Kekkaku hangen kinen shikiten* (In commemoration of halving the numbers of tuberculosis patients) <<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/cool-susan/e/568992b77>



mother. Fortunately she completely recovered after the end of the war and was married off.

The first son, Heihachi, was born in 1928. He was 16 at the time of his father's death in 1944 and became the head of the family, inheriting the family house, and later worked at Kyōto municipal government office. The sixth child and second son Keijiro was born in 1930. He also became an heir to whom one of his father's houses was bequeathed, and went on to attend night school to get a university degree while working part time.

The seventh child and the fifth daughter, Toyoko, was born in 1936, one year before the commencement of the Japanese-Chinese War, when Etsu was 41 and her oldest sister was 19. At the time of her father's death in 1944 Toyoko was only eight. After the termination of the war and under the democratic Constitution of 1947, she received a six-year elementary school and a three-year junior high school education but for financial reasons went no further. Instead she learned dress- and kimono-making from her eldest sister and her mother.

Etsu nurtured her seven children just as other mothers in Kyōto did but, like them, paid no serious attention to her children's education or legal problems, trusting in her husband as the head of the family to make decision about financial matters or their children's education.

As a result, following the death of Ryōkichi in 1944, no family members gave much thought to the education for the last daughter and she had to curtail her education to save money. She was not alone, of course. The rate of girls advancing to three-year senior high schools was 39.6 percent and that of boys 51.4 percent in 1950.<sup>210</sup> Had she been a male, the decision might have been different.

### **Daily life before the Japanese-Chinese War**

This section will consider episodes in the lives of Etsu and her family, which were narrated during the interview and offer a glimpse of daily life before the start of the Japanese-Chinese War in 1937. The family was living comfortably in one of the houses owned by her husband in Kyōto, and Etsu was always busy keeping the house and raising their children. The water had to be fetched from a well, and firewood had to be chopped for the wood-fired kitchen range.<sup>211</sup> The household chores were hard

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<sup>210</sup> Gakkō kihon chōsa (Basic statistics of schools), the advancement rate of students through school (kindergarten, high school, college and university) from 1948-2011 <<http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?bid=000001015843&cycode=0,27>> on May/27/2011.

<sup>211</sup> A picture of a typical kitchen of that time can be seen in Kyōto eizōshiryō kenkyūkai (ed.)

and took patience, some of the work however being done by the older daughters, such as pumping and drawing water and taking care of smaller sisters and brothers. Etsu sewed kimonos for her family and took orders for *shibori*. She sometimes sat back and smoked a pipe by an oblong brazier when she wanted to take a rest. About once a week she had her hair stylist come to the house to do her hair in a traditional style.<sup>212</sup> Ryōkichi liked a merry and cheerful atmosphere and so did Etsu. Sometimes her husband arranged meetings to entertain his guests at Japanese restaurants and teahouses with geisha. He would sometimes bring the party guests home and dance and sing to shamisen music on the second floor. The children enjoyed the joyous and festive mood, and Etsu did not seem to mind. She stayed out of his business.

Etsu was highly pragmatic and believed what she saw and experienced rather than what was said or written. For example, during the interview, Fukuko recalled coming home from elementary school with *kōhaku manjū* (red and white buns with a bean-jam filling served on celebratory occasions) and telling her mother they were given in the name of the Emperor: “He is a very nice person.” Her mother answered, “Oh, is he? Look at the picture over there. He doesn’t look nice at all.” Etsu was free to express what she felt at home, while the daughter had learned the Emperor descended from divinity in an unbroken line and had memorized all the names of Emperors from Jinmu to Shōwa and worshiped the Emperor without question.

Etsu rarely forced her children to do anything and tried to give them what they wanted. However, at one time when Fukuko said that she had too many siblings and that she wished she were an only child so as to be able to monopolize her parents’ love, her mother found a family that wanted a child and Fukuko was adopted. The family was wealthy and Fukuko, being loved by her adopted parents, spent her time alone in a big room provided for her. She had to learn how to behave just as a young lady; tea ceremony; ikebana; and how to wear a kimono. Instead of bustle or mess, there was just silence and order. After a month, she realized life as an only child was lonely and not so exciting and eventually returned to her own home.

### **National General Mobilization Act and Foodstuff Control Act**

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(2004) *Koshashin de kataru Kyōto* (Kyōto seen through old photographs), p. 247, Kyōto: Tankōsha.

<sup>212</sup> In those days hairstylists were called *kamii* and every merchant house had their personal hairstylist. The wives and the hairstylist were friends and sometimes the merchant wives sent their hairdressers rice cakes and presents on the occasion of New Year’s holiday or they had something to celebrate. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

In August 1937, three slogans -- *kyokokuicchi* (national union or all nation, let's conform); *jinchūhōkoku* (loyalty and service to the country); and *kenninjikyū* (indomitable perseverance) – were issued to promote the solidarity of the nation in support of government policy.<sup>213</sup> In October 1937, the National Spirit General Mobilization Central Association was established,<sup>214</sup> and the Commission of Inquiry set up in the Association which, including some representative women from women's organizations, announced “the three programs for faithful family and thirteen disciplinary rules to practice” and called for women's co-operation to the war effort through their family. In 1938, the National General Mobilization Act was enacted to ensure co-operation with the government during a time of war. In 1940, Japan formed an alliance with Germany and Italy, attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and entered the Pacific War.

The government introduced four controls to police the daily life of the citizens with the National General Spirit Mobilization Campaign so as to obtain co-operation in the war effort. The first was the control of clothes and hairstyle. In January 1938, the police office issued notices expressing disapproval of permanent waves, as well as moving beauty salons or building new ones because wavy hair was against the natural beauty of Japanese women. The government also promoted the wearing of *mompe* pants for women in everyday life. The sailor-style school uniform for female students was simplified to one with a shawl collar in April 1941 by order of the Ministry of Education.<sup>215</sup>

Food was also controlled by the government. The Foodstuff Control Act was enacted in 1942 to guarantee a steady food supply for the military and stabilize the economy by controlling the production, distribution and consumption of foodstuffs. In the thirties, rural Japan suffered from a series of crises. Following the collapse of agricultural commodity prices in 1930, a serious famine struck the Tōhoku and Hokkaidō areas in 1931 and Japan experienced its worst harvest ever in 1932. Tōhoku was hit by a massive tsunami in 1933 and an even worse famine struck Japan's farming areas in 1934.<sup>216</sup> These all had serious effects on the Japanese economy. Rice production decreased as the Japanese-Chinese War (1937-45) expanded because many farmers went into the military.<sup>217</sup> People faced serious food shortages, along with

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<sup>213</sup> Kobayashi, Hirokazu (2006) *Taiheiyōsensō shireba shiruhodo* (The more you know about World War II...), p. 164, Tōkyō: Jitsugyō no nihon-sha.

<sup>214</sup> Abe & Satō, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>216</sup> Hamajima shoten henshū-bu (ed.) (1993) *Shiryō niyoru atarashii rekishi* (New history with data), p. 136, Nagoya: Hamajima shoten.

<sup>217</sup> Kobayashi, op. cit., p. 164.

other shortages caused by interrupted imports and the preferential allocation of goods to military use. The government bought out the rice and wheat that were harvested except for the amount allocated for public consumption. Later the government expanded this control to other foods, too. Only those licensed by the government were allowed to deal in controlled foods.

The third control curbed conspicuous consumption. Buying a new kimono and new clothes was considered lavish; as a result, the kimono industry declined. Etsu did not complain about losing her *kanoko-shibori* work in the wake of this control, simply believing that commoners like her should respect the words of the authorities. Drinking *sake* was also seen as extravagant although drinking after heavy physical labor was tolerated. For soldiers in the battlefield and mineworkers, drinking could be source of energy for the next day. “Japanese cannot allow luxury” was another slogan announced in 1939 to promote a frugal life, along with the *hinomaru bentō* lunch (a boxed lunch of white rice with a red pickled plum in the center) and wearing *kokumin-fuku* (national uniform for men) and *mompe* pants. The slogan, “We do not ask for anything until we have victory,” was the buzzword of 1942.<sup>218</sup> The slogans, “Lavishness is an evil,” or, “Lavishness is our enemy,” were announced in 1943 to boost morale<sup>219</sup> and the Japanese nationals suffered silently.

The fourth was to enforce strict control over sex-related businesses.<sup>220</sup> The National Spirit Mobilization Central Association campaigned to refrain voluntarily from personal amusements. Restaurants and bars stopped serving alcohol by agreement. In 1940, the police office ordered those shops and dance halls to close.

### **Food rationing**

In the urban areas, such as Tōkyō, Nagoya, Kyōto, and Ōsaka, food rationing began in 1941. Every family received ration tickets that could be exchanged for food such as rice, vegetables, sugar, and eggs. The daily allocation of food to a family was based on age. For example, 120 grams of rice were allocated for children under five; 200 were available for 6 to 10 years old; 330 for those 11 to 60; and 300 for those 61 and older. Later, as the war made greater demands on the country, these amounts decreased.<sup>221</sup> This system continued until 1949. Urban residents suffered malnutrition and the

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<sup>218</sup> *Hamajima shoten henshū-bu* (ed.), op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>219</sup> *Senjichū no surōgan* (Slogan in the war time), Toshokan kodomo shiryō (Data in children's library) <[http://library.kodaira.ed.jp/local/tkk/tkk10/tkk10\\_04.html](http://library.kodaira.ed.jp/local/tkk/tkk10/tkk10_04.html)> on May/10/2011.

<sup>220</sup> Abe & Satō, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>221</sup> “Mukashino seikatsu, haikyū seido” (Daily life of old days, rationing system) <<http://homepage3.nifty.com/yoshihito/haikyuu.htm>> on May/10/2011.

government urged the cultivation of potatoes and pumpkins to supplement the meager diet. Serious as food shortages were, the general public was pressed to buy food on the black market despite their knowledge that it was a violation of the law and that they would be legally punished in a severe fashion once they were caught.

### **The death of Ryōkichi**

Ryōkichi contracted tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium for several months. With the family breadwinner ill, the family suffered financial problems. Etsu had to earn money so as to feed her family and pay medical expenses for her husband, while caring for her husband and sick daughter and raising her other children. Engaged in paid work though some of the older daughters were, she needed more money to feed a family of eight.

Ryōkichi died in August 1944 when Etsu was 49 and the youngest child only eight. It was only then that Etsu realized that she had no right to inherit any of her husband's property; it was inherited by her two sons and by Ryokichi's brother. She could not count on any revenue from their rental or sale. Left with a meager income and facing extreme food shortages as the war worsened, she had to manage the household, even though, in the *koseki* family registration, her 16-year-old son was listed as head of the family.

### **Food shortages**

The longer the war lasted, the worse the food shortages became, but Etsu never questioned government policy; she simply tried to cut back to be cooperative. Relatives in the countryside sent her controlled goods, like grains and vegetables. She sometimes went there by train and came back with a big bag full of food. She was not the only one: almost all Japanese went to farming areas secretly to swap food in exchange for clothes, furniture, wrist watches, money and so on.<sup>222</sup> At first she gave food that her family did not need to her acquaintances in reduced circumstances in Kyōto, but eventually she was part of the black market as she struggled to find food for her children and people she knew well, such as her neighbors. Etsu knew it was illegal to procure and sell controlled food personally without a license, but she had a family to nourish and sustain, and provisions were her priority. The interviewee said that breaking the law did not matter to Etsu, since she deeply believed that survival was the only mission she had to fulfill. Fortunately she was never caught by the police. Perhaps

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<sup>222</sup> Nakanishi, Kōji (2009) *Sensō no naka no Kyōto* (Kyōto under the Pacific War), p. 158, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

there were so many sufferers like her that police officers could not help turning a blind eye to illicit traders.

### **After the Pacific War**

Food shortages continued after the end of the war, but after the first son finished high school and was employed, the family finances gradually recovered, and all her daughters were married off. When the second son, who worked part time to study in a night course at university, said he was going to join the Communist Party to make a better society, Etsu would say, “All right, but does the party help you when you are hungry? You can help the party but do they give you anything to eat?” Etsu had no political consciousness. He, instead of becoming a member of the Party, graduated from university, left home and started working full time at a tourist company while renting out the house his father left for him. Her first son stayed on with Etsu, and eventually got married but still remained at his family house with Etsu and his own family, since she had no other place to live in and no means to financially support herself aside from her *shibori* handwork orders, which brought her only a small amount of pocket money. He fed and housed his mother until her death of cancer in hospital, at the age of 78, in August 1973. The expenses of hospitalization and medication were paid for by her sons and her daughters who were engaged in paid work while the wife of the first son and daughters stayed at the bedside alternately, as if paying her back for devotion for them during the wartime.

Japan was occupied by the Allied Powers following its defeat until 1952, and, during the occupation years, election law, civil law and the education system were reformed with the help of the Allied Powers to build a society where equality based on gender was basic policy.<sup>223</sup> The new Constitution went into effect in May 1947; it assures the equality of all Japanese under the law and prohibits discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, and sex.<sup>224</sup> In April 1947, the Fundamental Act on Education and School Education Act were enacted, spelling out egalitarian educational policy. In December 1947, the Meiji Civil Law was reformed to abolish the designation of married women as incompetent; *ie* family-system-related stipulations; and ensured equality in marriage and divorce and equal succession to property with the establishment of the wife’s right of inheritance. In a sense, the new Constitution liberated Japanese women.

Democratization was introduced and all family members were considered to be

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<sup>223</sup> Abe & Satō, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>224</sup> The Japanese Constitution Chapter III, Rights and Duties of the People, Article 14.

equal: the idea that a father and the first son could dominate or suppress the family by means of legal privilege became outdated as early as in the 1960s as the Japanese economy recovered and prospered year by year. Co-education was promoted in secondary education and women were legally admitted to colleges and universities: the percentage of young women who advanced to tertiary educational institutions increased greatly. More and more women started to be employed by national or local government offices or private companies.

Etsu's daughters witnessed their mother clandestinely selling food, which she brought back from her hometown in the countryside in exchange for kimonos or other valuables she found at home, in the entrance hall of their family house. They all knew Etsu was breaking the law to save their lives and admired her courage and strength as a mother, and thus becoming their role model. All her daughters became housewives following their mother, and all the four granddaughters of Etsu followed their mothers despite their higher education and career. The daughters and granddaughters believed that domesticity was their sole responsibility and it was as worth doing as their husbands' work outside the home. They never asked themselves what the gender equality prescribed in the Constitution of 1947, or the new civil law, meant.

In addition, with the aim of increasing the labor force for the further prosperity of the economy, the post-war government introduced tax deductions for a spouse, in an attempt to improve the status of married women. Many feminists argued that this tax deduction system created discrimination against women and kept them from becoming financially independent. However, all the daughters and granddaughters of Etsu were content with this system. They never thought of living alone pursuing their career, without the head of a family to rely on or the hustle and bustle of raising their children to make them laugh.

New laws were enacted to make society less discriminatory against women, but nonetheless the income of single women was approximately sixty percent of that of men, the opportunities for women to pursue regular work were limited,<sup>225</sup> and there was a glass ceiling in each work place. The daughters and granddaughters had chosen domesticity, following the model of Etsu.

## **Conclusion**

Etsu was indifferent to the world outside her house as well as exhibiting no interest in

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<sup>225</sup> *Heisei 22 nen hataraku josei no jitsujō* (Current condition of female workers in 2010), Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry <<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/koyoukinto/josei-jitsujo/10.html>> on June/3/2011.

social matters and passively submitted to the tide of change, just as most Japanese citizens. However, she was adept at solving her immediate problems, and only a four-year school education though she received, she lived a fruitful and comfortable life as mother and wife. She conformed to established gender roles which were reinforced within the family. The life story of Etsu and her offspring manifests how gender roles are reproduced and family circumstances are more influential and powerful than the world outside the home.



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## Kuniko Fujisawa

I chose Yae Neesima for my essay this year after I happened to see two pictures of her at an exhibition held at Dōshisha University. In one picture, a middle-aged Yae clad in Victorian dress with a hat and gloves smiles at the camera; in the other, an elderly Yae, in men's *kimono* with a pair of swords on her side and a Spencer rifle in her hand, commemorates her young days as a female soldier for the Aizu clan. The photographs made me wonder about the kind of life this woman had led. I explored Yae's experiences, the people around her, and the era in which she lived. Despite her fame and achievements, I found surprisingly few primary sources such as letters and articles she had written herself; this may suggest the place of women in Japan during her lifetime, at least, in terms of the public record. At times, therefore, it was difficult to reconstruct her life with certainty. Nonetheless, as always, I had the pleasure of researching, thinking, and writing.

On 11 March 2011, around the time I finished writing the draft about Yae Neesima, Japan was hit by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, and the triple disasters of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant crisis. Yae's beloved hometown Aizu is in Fukushima Prefecture. Recently NHK announced that they will televise the life of Yae Neesima in 2013 in order to encourage all the affected people by the Earthquake. This is not a bad idea, because Yae endured the loss of family, friends, home and daily life after the civil war, a man-made tragedy. She went through the drastic changes in the times, just as we do, as we face a future of economic and environmental uncertainty. She overcame difficulties with her own optimism, fortitude and action as well as with the help and cooperation of others.

The historical saga on Sunday prime time should encourage viewers. On the other hand, the scarcity of materials may produce a romanticized heroine and the popular TV program may fix her image. I would like to see a fact-oriented quality drama which is both entertaining and edifying. If the production offers a good, critical biography, I look forward to Yae Neesima's extraordinary life being shared with subtitles to international audiences.

## Yasuko Hatano

I joined the Nagoya Womens' Study Group four years ago and this is my fourth essay. I chose Katsuko Saruhashi, a woman scientist, as the subject of my research because I was impressed with her way of living when I read a book about her entitled *Saruhashi Katsuko to iu ikikata* (The way Katsuko Saruhashi lived) (2009). It was not until reading the story that I realized there were several scientists who had fought against the *shi-no-hai* (ashes of death) at the time of the 1954 *Daigo Fukuryū-maru* accident (also known as the Bikini Incident). I recommended the book to the other members of *Bochibochi ikō kai* (Take-it-easy group) at Tsurumai Central Library, which meets once a month to discuss the themes of books for children. My son and daughter, who both selected science courses at university, enjoyed the story, as well. Though I did not study physics in my school days, I found it interesting to read scientific stories with my children as they grew up. Among such books, there was a picture book named *Koko ga ie da: Ben Shān no Daigo Fukuryū-maru* (Here is my house: Ben Shahn's *Daigo Fukuryū-maru*) (2006). Arthur Binard, an American poet, who has lived in Japan and written poems and essays in Japanese, has discussed the heroism of the crew who fought against the Pentagon and returned home to provide evidence of the hydrogen test.

While writing my essay, the catastrophic accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant occurred in the wake of the tsunami. I cannot help thinking of the regrets of those scientists who have tried their best to warn the public of the possible danger of such nuclear power plants. Binard, who has researched the Bikini Incident and more recently the Hiroshima atomic bombing, has made several trips to lecture in Japan, including in Nagoya, asserting that every nuclear power plant in Japan should cease operation immediately. I think it is time to consider why the efforts to make the public aware of the dangers of nuclear power exerted by Saruhashi and her research team headed by Dr. Miyake at the Meteorological Research Institute have not been passed down.

## Atsuko Ishikawa

For this edition of *Essays*, Dr. Shizuko Aoyama suggested that we should write about a woman close to us, such as our family members. It was not difficult to decide about whom I would write. One of the women whose trajectories I followed was my grandmother, Kimi Suzuki. She recognized that her own life had been dramatic and although she did not write about it, occasionally her daughters heard her talk about her experiences.

My mother told me that she had always wanted to write about her mother's adolescence (she belongs to a writing circle, by the way). Last year, we both started the same project in different languages: Japanese and English.

Although Kimi sometimes had told me about her early experiences, I didn't remember details. When writing the essay, I had to ask my mother who claimed that she had listened to Kimi the longest. In fact, Kimi often stayed with us and had much time to talk to my mother.

Once I started to ask my mother about what she remembered of Kimi's story, she found that some of her memories were rather vague. She even admitted that her story about Kimi's sisters was contradictory and so she interviewed her brother to verify some of the details. Meanwhile, I visited libraries in Gifu and Aichi to research the social background. In this way, we shared information and confirmed Kimi's recklessness in her youth.

The most difficult part of writing the essay was to deliver all the materials I collected as academic writing. Up to the very end of writing this paper, I found it difficult to cast a critical eye on Kimi's life. Prof. Bev Curran drew my attention to the introduction I wrote and pointed out a weakness in my argument. Thus, she helped me consolidate my discussion.

## Noriko Tada

I focused on the lives of female high school students during the Pacific War. When told to write the life story of any woman in my own family, I thought it would be challenging. However, given that my mother and female relatives are well over eighty-five years old and the last to witness the Pacific War from the perspective of high school students, I have come to think that the collection and recording of their stories is the responsibility of my generation.

Through research, I learned about the varied experiences of female high school students; some were engulfed in the maelstrom of the war and acquired a vague self-identification as a Japanese “national”, while others were spared such an ordeal but remained passive subjects. In short, the traditional *ryōsai kembo* model tenaciously survived despite a drastic change in educational policy for female students during wartime, which sought to shift the emphasis from fostering *ryōsai kembo* to women nationals.

I am grateful to four women who answered questionnaire and granted me an interview: my mother, the mother of my friend, and the mother of my second cousin-in-law and her former classmate. I would like to thank the school staff at Hikone Nishikō as well as the librarians at Shiga Prefectural Library who helped me find reference books and school records. Finally, I would like to express my special gratitude to Dr. Shizuko Aoyama and Professor Beverley Curran, who patiently gave me practical comments and suggestions to develop the essay.

## Tokie Takahashi

The 2010 essay was special for me because my topic was someone very familiar to me: my great-grandmother-in-law, Seki Takahashi, who used to live with me. This was my first research project about an unnamed ordinary woman. Before, I had written about famous figures influencing society through challenging activities or formidable contributions. Compared to such subjects, Seki did nothing special, although her life spanned almost one century. She was a quiet mother and wife, who enjoyed a low-key family life. Though the times in which she lived were full of ups and downs, including several wars, Seki bore these hardships in silence.

At first I was at a loss on how to approach her life. There was no space to depict her long life, and no unique incident that could serve as a focus. In addition, Seki passed away twenty-seven years ago, so the memories of her collected in two interviews with her elderly daughter-in-law and grandson were rather vague. I then considered her personality, and decided to write about her moderate character, which was shaped by her regional background; national trends and government policies of the time, particularly in terms of the education system and social norms. Seki was a typical Japanese woman who was created by the nation and the times.

I managed to complete this essay in which a part of the life of an ordinary woman was depicted, thanks to the sincere advice and proofreading of Dr. Bev Curran, the constant encouragement by Dr. Shizuko Aoyama and the support of the research group members. I appreciate what all of them have done for me.

## Keiko Watanabe

The topic for this year's essay was 'an average woman with a close relationship to the author', which applied very well to my mother. Although I initially hesitated to write about her whole life, I settled on a decade of her youth, from the ages of 15 to 25. Ten pages or so was not enough to write about her disturbing life.

Curious to know how the Pacific War affected the way people lived in the early Shōwa period, I read several novels based on true stories, including those of traumatic experiences during and after the war written by Tei Fujiwara and Kappa Senou. The clear image of war transfixed me. It was good that Teruko did not have such life-threatening experiences as they did.

I looked at my mother's photo albums with a feeling of satisfaction that she had such a brilliant time in her youth. She now looks back on them as the good old days. It was also amazing that pictures of the old annex of her girl's high school and remains of the third naval powder plant were so easily accessible through the Internet; accessing them made me feel as satisfied as if I had witnessed her historical evidence.

One of the themes of my essay was the gender roles in the *ie* system. Teruko adhered to the conventions of the *ie* system in passing the estate on to the next generation: she entirely devoted herself to nurturing a son and heir, expecting too much of him, which affected him adversely, while she expected her daughter to play a role of a good, supportive and patient elder sister. Gender roles are played out in family relationships, just as they are elsewhere in society. Initially I also accepted the gender roles Teruko had followed without question but I became aware that siblings should be treated equally regardless of whether they are the family heir or not.

## Junko Yamamoto

The picture above was taken during “jizō-bon,” a traditional festival held in Kyōto in the summer to wish for children to grow up healthy and happy. It is a custom that has been preserved for about 1000 years. When I was a child, I enjoyed it every summer when I went to my grandmother’s. Many things have changed since Etsu, my grandmother, was alive, while some have not. One of things that seems to have changed is our expectations as women, even though it seems as if we have far more gender roles to choose from and that the situation has been improved.

Upon reflecting on the subject of the essay, I must admit that I have been influenced by dominant gender roles and what they demand of women; that is, I have followed the examples of my grandmother and mother and in my turn relayed ideas about what society expects of women to the younger generation. The comments and suggestions from Dr. Bev Curran helped me see the life of the subject from a different perspective. Women could choose not to follow the gender role models of their mothers of being a housewife and dependent of their husband in the post-war society that promised gender equality. Given the freedom of choice, I would like to observe women of the younger generation making the most of their own life.

Writing an essay has been always challenging for me and this one was especially difficult after a six-year hiatus from Dr. Aoyama’s class. I feel undying gratitude to Dr. Aoyama, and to Dr. Bev Curran, for their continued support and consideration. Without Dr. Aoyama’s paramount efforts, I would not have been able to finish writing. I am also grateful to the members of the group for their encouragement and kind help.



## Beverley Curran

Beverley Curran is a working mother who teaches linguistic, cultural, and media translation at Aichi Shukutoku University. She is the current editor of the *Journal of Irish Studies*; the author of *Theatre Translation Theory and Performance in Japan: native voices, foreign bodies* (Manchester: St Jerome, 2008); and a founding member of the Kansai Translation Studies Research Group. She has learned a lot from editing the essays of the Nagoya Women's Studies Research Group.

## Shizuko Aoyama

In the fall of 2010, the regular writers of our book of essays were writing a 66-page Japanese book of essays on the achievements of, and the dilemmas faced by, women in 19th century England. Normally I tell our writers to get together once or twice for brainstorming in preparation for their English essays in the fall and to start writing them early in the next year. However, they were working on their Japanese book, taking time out of their busy everyday lives and I thought it might be impossible for them to write their essays for Essays 2010. At one time I told them we could skip our English essay book this year since they had a tremendously tight schedule. Nonetheless they insisted that they should write new essays. So here is Essays 2010. Of course, their Japanese book of essays was completed and published in January 2011.

I always admire their efforts and hard work in making our essay book each year. Unfortunately I am busy these days with my own writing project as well as teaching English at college and university, and will be far busier with my own research and studies next year, 2012. Nonetheless I will keep supporting them as before so that many people can enjoy reading our essay book. In fact, working with the members of this group is enjoyable and I learn a lot from them, not only how to live as a Japanese woman (I have had to relearn) but also what sincerity and honesty and teamwork are. What I have learned from them are my treasures and will stay with me for the rest of my time.