

WRITING OF JAPANESE AMERICAN WOMEN: CHANGING ROLES  
IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

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DEDICATED TO  
MY FATHER, YUNOSUKE TAKAHASHI  
MY MOTHER, HARUKO TAKAHASHI  
AND  
MY HUSBAND, DONALD C. WOOD

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This paper examines the rhetoric of Japanese American literature, focusing on the changes in women's roles in America and Japan. The introduction presents a historical overview of Japanese American literature and addresses the obscurities in the descriptive terms related to it. Chapter one introduces two Issei writers, Etsu Sugimoto and Haru Matsui, and discusses how the feminist movement in Japan affected their writings. Contrasting Nisei, Yoshiko Uchida and Hisaye Yamamoto, are analyzed in chapter two, according to whether their experiences had any effect on their Japanese heritage: Japanese womanhood, which is often compared to the sun, and Japanese aesthetics, in association with nature. A sansei, Joy Kogawa, exemplifies the successful transmission of Japanese heritage and its reconciliation with Canadian heritage in chapter three. The paper concludes that the essence of Japanese culture is preserved in the writings by the Sansei, despite the fact that they are no longer a homogeneous group.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Civil Rights movement of the late 1960s evoked a new awareness of American diversity and an appreciation of ethnic literature, which has been flourishing since then, and also threw light on Japanese American literature. During the century after the first Japanese immigrants' arrival, Japanese Americans struggled, strived, and gradually conquered all difficulties, the language barrier, cultural differences, poverty, and prejudice, to eventually call America their home. When they paused to look back, they saw how far they had come and how many changes they had made in their short lives. Many autobiographical works by the Issei, the first generation of Japanese Americans, and the Nisei, the second generation of Japanese Americans, took root in their early experiences. The pursuit of Nisei identity and its establishment, the common theme in Nisei literature, has been examined in many scholarly works. Their protests against discrimination have been acknowledged. Now the Sansei, the third generation of Japanese Americans, and the following generations, after completing their assimilation, are trying to express themselves in an American way, through creativity and individualism. Among them, Issei writers and their literary works tend to be overlooked. The Issei are treated by critics as mere characters in the Nisei and the Sansei's works. Although nobody seems to remember or to hear about them, the contributions to Japanese American literature of the Issei authors, such as Etsu Sugimoto, Haru Matsui, and Reiko Hatsumi, should not be forgotten. From their autobiographical novels and short stories, a reader gains a profound knowledge of modern Japanese history--the Meiji

Restoration, the Russo-Japanese War, the feminist movement, and World War II. The reader is exposed to Japanese aesthetics: its subtleties and tranquility, mixed with Romanticism.

The introduction of Aiiieeeee! considers John Okada's No-No-Boy (1957) as "the first Japanese American novel in the history of American letters" (20) and ignores Etsu Sugimoto's A Daughter of the Samurai first published in 1925 and Hare Matsui's Restless Wave in 1940. Reiko Hatsumi's Rain and the Feast of the Stars appeared only a year after No-No Boy. Since these works are written in English, not translated from Japanese, one possible reason for their omission is that the authors were well-educated Issei women from upper class Japanese society, whereas the majority of the Issei are from farming families. Generally a work qualified as American literature is written in English and by an American citizen. Many Issei, unfortunately, had not been able to fulfill the latter prerequisite because of legal restrictions, and their rejection of American citizenship motivated by their indignation against their confinement in the concentration camps. Their imprisonment with their American-born children clearly changed their opinions of justice in the United States. Thus, the boundary between Japanese and Japanese Americans is obscure in defining the Issei. Even the definition differs a little in each dictionary. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines Issei as "a Japanese immigrant to America and esp. to the U.S." Whether the Japanese Brazilians and Japanese Peruvians are included in this category is ambiguous. The American Heritage Dictionary limits countries to two; "[a] Japanese immigrant to the United States or Canada." The Random House Dictionary provides two definitions: one limits the time period as "a Japanese who immigrated to the U.S. or Canada after 1907 and was not eligible until 1952 for citizenship"; the other is "any Japanese immigrant to the U.S."

In any case, permanent residency is sufficient to fulfill the requirement for immigrant status; therefore Etsu Sugimoto at least had a right to claim herself as a Japanese American, and that is why, in her first book, she described "[h]ow a daughter of feudal Japan, living hundreds of years in one generation, became a modern American". The small number of publications may have sometimes caused the invisibility of the Issei writers among Japanese Americans. It is especially hard to trace biographical information on Haru Matsui and Reiko Hatsumi, even to judge if they were Japanese or Japanese Americans, because the source of information is one published autobiographical novel for each, except for Hatsumi's short stories, which first appeared in several magazines. If Reiko Hatsumi Allen's last name on the copy-right page is correct, it may be that she married an American man. Compared to these women, Sugimoto published a great many essays, short stories, and novels, which, translated into Czech, French, German, and Japanese, won fame. Helen Ferris, in her book on the lives of five famous women entitled When I Was a Girl ranked her with Nobel prize chemist Marie Curie. Sugimoto's obituary appeared in the New York Times. Since Sugimoto gave birth to her two daughters in the United States, as stated in her autobiographical novel A Daughter of the Samurai, she must have had American residency. Therefore calling her a Japanese American would be valid. The content of their books and their official status may make it difficult to think of these three women as Japanese Americans, rather than as Japanese. Since their books are autobiographical, and their intentions are to introduce Japan and Japanese ways to the American populace to improve understanding, the books are filled with Japanese scenery, events, traditions, customs, people, philosophy, and religion, in contrast to Nisei writers' works, which are set mostly in Japanese communities in the United States. Because the works of Sugimoto,

Matsui, and Hatsumi, upper-class, sophisticated "new women," were too far removed from the majority of immigrants' writings which vividly reflected their hardships and sufferings in their new environments, the critics may hesitate to categorize their works as Japanese American literature. At any rate, it is time to look again at Issei women writers' works and re-evaluate their place in the history and development of Japanese-American literature. Their works carry with them a clear pictorial image of the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, when people were kept on the trot to catch up with their quickly changing societies.

## CHAPTER II

### ISSEI: ETSU SUGIMOTO AND HARU MATSUI

Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto was born in 1874, six years after the Meiji Restoration. She was the youngest daughter of the chief counsellor of a feudal lord, and was raised in Echigo Province (now Niigata Prefecture) in north-east Japan, noted for its long, snowy winters and its rustic inhabitants, which she celebrated in her stories. Though brought up under strict Buddhist codes, she entered a Methodist girls' school in Tokyo and eventually converted to Christianity. Learning English and Western culture was necessary for her because she was to marry a Japanese merchant in the United States whom she had never seen. In 1898, she married Matsuo Sugimoto and bore two daughters in Cincinnati, Ohio. She spent six years in Tokyo following her husband's death, and then moved to New York City, where her books were published.

Although A Daughter of the Samurai was "the most continuously successful book of nonfiction" for the publisher, apparently not many readers understood its real value. The book review in the New York Tribune stated that she "pleads no causes, asks no vexing questions" about the controversial issues of Japanese exclusion from American society. Like most Issei, she preferred to hide her emotions deep inside and did not touch the issues directly. However little showed on the surface, she possessed sympathy and compassion for Japanese immigrants, found especially in A Daughter of the Nohfu. In that book, Koemon, a farmer of Takiya village wins the first prize trip to Tokyo in a contest for the best silk cocoon. In the bath at an inn, he meets a young farmer who is leaving for Brazil. The young man speaks of the miserable conditions in his village to Koemon, who is opposed to the



idea of emigrating. A middle-aged man agrees with the young man, points out a benefit of emigration from a business perspective and says "if we emigrated to Brazil we could not only earn good money, but we could also help make a market for Japanese goods" (70). The public bath in the inn, the place chosen for holding the conversation, is symbolic and contains some messages. "[B]eing without the garments which would distinguish position or wealth, no one was awed by another; and since everyone looked like everyone else, no one seemed a stranger" (70). That is a reflection for the importance of people's being equal regardless of their occupations or their social class, and for the freedom of speech, for which the United States stands, and what Sugimoto believes in. She seems to have a vision of a unified people--people from different races, countries, and classes--living in the world like a big family. Yet, just as everything looks vague behind the steam in the bath, Sugimoto avoids the direct way of expressing her opinion about the issue and does not give a conclusion to the conversation. Moreover, a public bath must be unfamiliar enough to distract American readers' thoughts from the messages from the author. Ambiguity is typical of Japanese speech.

Seven years of teaching Japanese language and history at Columbia University seems to have deepened Sugimoto's knowledge and to have made her more sensitive about the use of language. What may trouble a reader of books by Issei women writers is the frequent use of feminine language and honorific language for which an English equivalent can hardly be found. The dialogue, as a result, sometimes sounds dull and too formal, so that the reader might chuckle at the exaggerated expressions like "to my humble thinking."

The style of Japanese language strongly reflects the role and position of the speaker. For instance, the continual use of "honourable" to address oneself to another who holds a higher position

in a male-dominated society, such as a father or an eldest son, is a typical example of both feminine language and of the translation problem. Sugimoto recognized that and gradually switched from "Honourable Grandmother" to "O Baa Sama," the honorific and formal way to say grandmother in Japanese, in Grandmother O Kyo. The prefix "O" is one of the features of feminine language; it is attached to a noun, often a female's first name such as O Haru and O Kyo. To use "Sama" instead of "San" shows more respect to a person, so that it is more polite. In A Daughter of the Samurai, Sugimoto tells of being called "O Etsu San" in her school in Tokyo in order to break down the rigid Japanese manners and teach American customs. Her new name and its social effect are in the interest of "giving up the use of honorific 'Sama' and substituting the less formal prefix, 'O'; thus placing the girls on a plane of social equality" (121). It should be noted that regardless of gender, a grandmother is called "honourable" even by a man if he is younger or lower in position. The grandmother in Grandmother O Kyo can use both feminine speech and rather masculine speech according to the situation and to whom she speaks because she holds a rather high position in her family. The fact that language forms were and are more greatly determined by social class and social status is well illustrated here. Japanese women here had a reputation of being polite, submissive, and gentle and are often considered inferior to men. In reality, however, they are in charge of the family finances, children's education, and the preservation of family tradition. Actually they had and still have the power to manipulate men. In O Kyo's case, she has to fill the roles of both male and female because her first son was killed in the Russo-Japanese War, and her husband, who "resigned himself to fate" (22) died as if following his son. She is the head of the family. Therefore, she is highly respected and will not tolerate disrespect.

Feminine features of Japanese language include lexical items: the sentence particle "ne" indicating gentle assurance like a tag question in English, and particle interjection "ma" indicating surprise. Haru Matsui compares "ne" to the French "n'est ce pas" in a marginal note. How much and what effect it gives to use "ne" and "ma" in an English sentence is questionable. Even though that may cause some confusion over the meaning or an interruption of the sentence flow, Matsui dares to use "ne" in Restless Wave. A female relative is persuading Haru's father to have a second wife and ends her speech with "they [his children] need a mother, ne" (37). The stress would be on "ne" if it were written entirely in Japanese, and the particle would no longer indicate gentle assurance, but a forcible one. It is hard to convey the nuance expressed orally in the written form, especially for Matsui whose first language is not English. Nevertheless, this example at least explains the characteristic of Japanese feminine language that certain features occur in a particular context or with a marked frequency.

Sugimoto's childhood nickname "Etsu-bo" is significant as "bo" is a suffix often attached to a boy's name. The nickname immediately implies that she is a tomboy, or at least a vicarious one, and simultaneously foretells that the path she will follow will be an unusual one for a Japanese woman. The path was unusual because she was a "Meiji onna" who was born in the transitional period between the old feudal society and the modern Meiji era, which employed Westernization to achieve its goals of "civilization and enlightenment." A picture bride who came to the United States to marry a man whom she had never met, she was also a writer who wrote Japanese stories in English; a "cultural feminist" (Shimada 162) like many other women such as Umeko Tsuda and Motoko Hani; and a Japanese American who lived in Japan and the United States before and after the disastrous World War II and loved both countries. These

were the phases of her long path. She played such various roles in her seventy-six years of life, as if her life itself were an embodiment of change.

Born in Meiji and living through the Taisho and Showa eras, Meiji onna, the epitome of womanhood, actively played a part in making the foundation of modern Japan. Sugimoto praised their deeds and dedicated A Daughter of the Samurai to her "two mothers," one is her real mother and the other is Miss Wilson, whose home she calls her American home; A Daughter of the Narikin (1932) to her "little, ball-bouncing friend Yukiko [,] a daughter of the narikin"; A Daughter of the Nohfu (1935) to "the young women of the rural district"; and Grandmother O Kyo to "the grandmother of the world." These dedications reveal her purpose for writing books. For example, "narikin," which translates roughly into nouveau riche or parvenu, has a negative connotation and is spoken with contempt. "Nohfu" means the farmer, who was theoretically higher in the class system than the artisans and merchants, yet decidedly below the samurai class, suffered most both physically and financially at the time. By choosing a cross-section of characters, both women and men of different classes play their given roles diligently, and Sugimoto's novels retain reality.

The Japanese still refer to Meiji onna with great respect and reminisce about such individuals as Umeko Tsuda and Motoko Hani. Their achievements in women's education improved women's positions in a male-dominant society and opened the door to democracy. Their thoughts and theories, which penetrated Japanese women to their marrow, are inherited from mothers to daughters. Tsuda and Hani are called cultural feminists, in order to distinguish them from socialists and communists. Although socialists and communists helped to liberate Japanese women from discriminatory practices, their purpose was to change the social

structure entirely and immediately by political actions. On the contrary, Tsuda and Hani preferred gradual but valid change, that brought the change of women's roles and of morality at last.

Born in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1865, Umeko Tsuda was sent to the United States at the age of six as one of the first Japanese women to study abroad. She returned to Japan in 1882 and founded Joshi Eigaku Juku (Women's English School) in 1900. The way Tsuda reacted to Japan and its culture sounds similar to that of the Nisei because her observations on the Japanese tend to be one-sided, favoring Westernization, Americanization in fact, and Christianity, and rejecting traditional women's roles, like that of her own. She claims that Japanese do not hold with "the congenial intercourse between men and women, husbands and wives" (Shimada 164). In short, she doubts the existence of love among Japanese people at the time when even the term "love" itself was a newly imported word accompanied with the diffusion of Christianity. She believes that the long-time emphasis on women's virtues and their role practices is the cause. However, the truth is that the emotions deep in the Japanese mind are expressed by hardly noticeable actions or in an intimate atmosphere with no words. Japanese proverbs say: "Eyes are more eloquent than lips" or "Silence is more eloquent than speech." For Tsuda and the Nisei, who grew up in the culture of speech, it seems to difficult to listen to silence.

Motoko Hani was born Motoko Matsuoka in 1873 in Aomori prefecture. She was educated in Daiichi Tokyo Jogakko (The Tokyo First Higher Girls' School) and in Meiji Jogakko (Meiji Girls' School). Although she was from the samurai class, she could not entirely depend on her parents' financial support. People living in rural areas were more conservative than people in urban cities. Her mother's encouragement and the job offered by the educator Yoshiharu Iwamoto helped her to be independent.

Her main achievements were founding the private school Jiyu Gakuen (Freedom School) in 1921 and publishing influential magazines represented by Fujin no Tomo (Woman's Friend), which won general applause among housewives and their daughters from middle to lower class and motivated them to establish a woman's intelligence network called Tomo no Kai (Friends' Association).

To compare Sugimoto to Tsuda and Hani, all of them belonged the samurai class and received the best possible education for women. Also, their conversion to Christianity was similar. However, similar though they looked, the differences between them were greater. Concerning the way of educating women, Tsuda differed from Hani. Tsuda's goal was educating elites, who would be the wives of important men or educators like herself. Her ambition was as high as that of a man, and she devoted herself to fulfilling it. She never married. In contrast to Tsuda, Hani's interest was on educating the masses, middle to lower class women. She thought of the home as the most influential unit acting upon society, so that if the burden of house chores was reduced by adapting Western clothing and inventions, women could afford time to educate themselves. Tsuda's approach was vertical, Hani's horizontal. Sugimoto employed both ways. In the United States, she lived in the upper-class white suburbs on the East coast as Tsuda did; yet she knew what was happening to the other Japanese immigrants, mostly from the farming class, who settled in great numbers along the West coast. It is evident from an account of Sugimoto's brother, who goes to the United States after his wish to marry a girl of low birth is rejected as a misalliance in A Daughter of the Samurai. Also, her dedication of her books to women of various classes, status, and age showed that she took a broad impartial view of things.

Education led some women to find their way into intellectual

occupations such as teaching, medicine, and journalism, and this is one of the Meiji onna's achievements. However, most women's occupations were still manual labor, such as conductors, typists, operators, and weavers, developed through Japanese economic growth after the first World War. Sugimoto used characters to explain her opinions on women's occupations. Kotoko Chiba in A Daughter of the Narikin becomes an elementary school teacher against her elder brother Ken's will. Countess Takesu in the story reflects a general opinion about teaching as "the most respectable profession for a woman in Japan" (54), but concludes that even teaching is too modern for a young woman because having an occupation means being independent. On the other hand, being financially independent is what makes Kotoko feel free. She describes her feeling on receiving her first salary as "her joy had been mostly a sweet, fresh sense of freedom" (33). Freedom here also means freedom from the restricted life of Japanese women, including arranged marriage. Interestingly enough, Sugimoto says of Kotoko that she is not a "mercenary," nor is she "an advocate for Woman's Rights" (33). This is a limitation of Sugimoto, Tsuda, and Hani's perspective on feminism. They never encouraged women to participate in political feminism, which attributed discrimination against women to legal, economic, and political systems, but stood only for cultural feminism.

A Daughter of the Nohfu is Sugimoto's challenge to conservatism, which denies social change and progress but persists in its old way of life and thought. Sugimoto, who believes that people's ignorance is the cause of such attitudes, tries to show the reality of changing society from a woman's perspective. The book is based on historical facts: the torrential flow of population from rural areas to big cities like Tokyo and the entry of working women into various occupations. O Haru, an idealized protagonist, works for sericulture along with her mother, O

Ineh. O Ineh and her husband Koemon start as opponents of modernization and end up as its supporters. O Tatsu is criticized for becoming a bus conductor and is called "weed-seeder" (16) with contempt. In spite of the village people's criticism, no shame can be found in her brisk and efficient behavior at work because there is no selfishness or greed in her mind. She needs to earn money for her brother to become a photographer, so her deed is justified in the light of both Confucianism and Christianity. Self-sacrifice is also characteristic of the Issei parents who strived for the sake of their children.

Sugimoto's alert eyes never overlooked the vices of the social system, such as legal prostitution and the sex-related industries that victimized women in poverty for the sake of their families. In reality, most women who were trapped in the vicious industries were from the farming class in rural areas; irresistible power, sometimes called fate: natural disasters, economic depressions, and diseases, was the direct cause of their fall. Sugimoto, also from a rural area, was aware of the fascination of the modern city. O Natsu, the eldest daughter of Koemon and O Ineh, degrades her family and herself by becoming a cafe waitress, a despicable occupation involving the alluring of men with coquettish sexuality to sell drink and food. As her name "Natsu," which means "summer" in Japanese, implies, she is passionate, unyielding, and ambitious. That causes her fall. When proud Mrs. Oyama, a wife of the village master, objects to her son Noboru's marrying O Natsu, O Natsu herself flees from the conservative village to Tokyo "to work and study and raise herself to the level of the madam [Mrs. Oyama]" (140), so that she may be able to get Mrs. Oyama's approval or to "make a name for herself" (138). She knows that there are some accomplished women nowadays in the cities. Nevertheless, her hope is defeated. Worse than that, she cannot even go home since the news of her affair spread



throughout the village, and may affect the matrimonial chance of O Haru. Sugimoto extends sympathy and warmth to the imprudent O Natsu and rescues her from the dead-end by marriage, the traditional way of changing one's life. Although marriage is a turning point for every woman, O Natsu's marriage is especially striking because her marriage is not an arranged marriage, but a love marriage; her husband, George Sato, is a Japanese American Nisei, who owns a taxi company in Tokyo, and whose father is a successful merchant in the coffee business in Brazil; O Natsu emigrates to Brazil with her husband.

Umeko Tsuda, Motoko Hani and other cultural feminists, such as Akiko Yosano and Raicho Hiratsuka, supported the idea of love marriage. They, except Tsuda who never married, set examples of love marriage themselves. For instance, Hani was a divorcee, who remarried and took her second husband's last name. She explained the reason for her divorce as incompatible personalities. Akiko Yosano, born in 1878, was an inspiration for and a contributor to Myojo, which was published in 1900 by Tekkan Yosano. Her "tanka" poems fascinated contemporaries with her sensibility, passion and sensual expressions of love and of self. She was like a Muse infusing Romanticism into the heads of the Japanese and leading the Japanese Romanticism movement which pervaded the first decade of the twentieth century. Considering the popularity of Romantic poetry and novels, it is no wonder that many Issei women read and wrote tanka and haiku to express their feelings. Raicho Hiratsuka, who lived from 1886 to 1971, was a noted feminist, who declared the appearance of the new woman in her famous proclamation of emancipation printed in the first volume of Seito (The Bluestocking Journal).

In the beginning, woman was really the sun.

She was a true person.

Now Woman is the moon.

She depends on others for her life  
 And reflects the light of others.  
 She is sickly as a wan, blue-white moon.  
 We, the completely hidden sun, must now restore ourselves.  
 "We must reveal the hidden sun--our concealed genius."  
 This is our constant cry and the inspiration of our unified  
                     purpose.           [t/o]  
 The climax of this cry, this thirst, this desire will impel  
                     the genius in ourselves to shine forth.           [t/o]

(Trans. by Robins-Mowry)

Seito-sha, the Bluestocking Association, was founded by Hiratsuka in 1911 and aimed at the emancipation of Japanese women from the old bonds: the establishment of the female ego, obtaining women's rights and the freedom of love. As "bluestocking" means a member of a mid-eighteenth century London literary circle represented by Lady Montagu, the members of Seito-sha came from the upper-middle class, including Hiratsuka herself. In consequence, the goal of Seito-sha was far from the needs of the lower class women struggling in poverty. Afterward, Hiratsuka founded Shin Fujin Kyokai (New Woman's Association) in 1920 with some socialist women, such as Fusae Ichikawa and Mumeo Oku, to propel the women's movement--her transition from cultural feminist to political feminist.

As mentioned above, Motoko Hani was a divorcee. Akiko Yosano captivated married Tekkan with her tanka, "You have yet to touch / This soft flesh, / This throbbing blood-- / Are you not lonely, / Expounder of the Way?" and took his wife's place. Raicho Hiratsuka was known to the public by the Baien Incident, her attempted suicide together with Sohei Morita, who disclosed it when his novel Baien appeared in The Asahi Newspaper. Those love affairs resulted from their serious pursuit

of true love. At least, they believed so and never imagined that the public judged the affairs as immoral scandals. Ironically, as feminists became more enthusiastic about love, people's attention to the feminist movement subsided.

Unlike those feminists, Sugimoto played a traditional woman's role and never exceeded woman's authority until her husband's death. She never was an advocate of feminism either; she accepted and even approved of the gradual change and moral change by feminists, though. Radical quick change would only bring chaos to society, so Sugimoto relied on the power of the pen, not on action.

What made Sugimoto remarkable was her ability to reconcile supposed opposites: East versus West, Christianity versus Buddhism and Shinto, American womanhood versus Japanese womanhood, and master versus servant. "Versus" no longer exists, but is replaced by "and" in Sugimoto's books because they are an embodiment of her belief that life could be beautiful and peaceful if people recognize that "hearts are the same on both sides" (Samurai 314), in other words, every person is equal. For example, the master-servant relationship is incompatible to reconciliation since the relationship is usually based on the power structure; however, Sugimoto harmonizes O Kyo and O Sawa in Grandmother O Kyo. O Sawa's monologue, "when your work is so appreciated, you [don't] mind if it [is] hard [but] not every mistress took to the trouble to praise a servant's efforts" (133), clarifies that O Kyo's appreciation and respect for O Sawa as a equal individual and O Sawa's loyalty to and hard work for O Kyo in return makes the difference in the relationship. The trust between a master and a servant was necessary, for mothers of the newly rising and prosperous middle to upper classes were customarily forced to rely on servants not only to do house chores, but also to take care of their children and themselves. The nurse,

called "baya" if she is elderly and "neya" if she is in her late teens to twenties, was especially important for mothers. As a nurse usually serves a family for a long time--sometimes she nurtures a couple of generations of the family--she knows the family history and tradition in detail. A nurse serves one child at a time. The child is nurtured by her, sleeps on her back while she is busy doing house chores, listens to folk tales and legends from her, and spends most of the day with her. As a result, the child is deeply attached to her and is strongly influenced by her. For children, nurses were substitutes for missing mothers. Therefore, to understand the master-servant relationship is a key to comprehending mother-daughter relationships and the Japanese people's loyalty to the emperor as well. Sugimoto and another Issei writer Reiko Hatsumi remembered the loneliness they felt when they were little, so that they chose to raise their children by themselves. Mothers were sacred. They were moral models, not like mothers from the lower class.

Reiko Hatsumi skillfully depicted a girl's confusion and agony at being torn between her Christian mother and her Buddhist baya in a short story entitled "Between Heaven and Paradise." Reiko's mother pushes Reiko to go to the catechism class in the Catholic church. For the mother, Reiko has no excuse for not going to the church even though she is too little--she has not even started schooling yet--to understand any religion. As her dream vision of "heaven with flowering lotus blossoms and rainbow colored mandalas" (88) implies, the Christian heaven and Buddhist paradise are merged and never have been apart in Reiko's mind. Reiko has to go because it is a duty of a high-bred girl to be a good example for other children. Besides, it is Father Flaujacque's request. Reiko's devoted Christian mother absolutely believes that people have to "obey" their authorities--the Reverend Fathers, not the husband in her

case--"in whatever they say" (92). Her enthusiasm for Christianity and her duty of playing the role of a respectable mother blinds her to Reiko's anguish--worrying about where she will go after she dies--and the helplessness that is affecting the child both mentally and physically. To make matters worse, Reiko's mother, being afraid of the baya's influence on Reiko, discharges the blameless baya in order to break the strong tie between them. In the story, the ideal master-servant relationship based on mutual trust that Sugimoto demonstrated is destroyed by the conflict of religions, and a reconciliation of the two religions does not occur. An episode in which the Archbishop gives Reiko a leaf peony, a flower cabbage, with a smile is as symbolic as a flower cabbage itself. The flower cabbage, whose shape resembles a squatting Buddha, is left in the flower garden alone after the rest have died out, "or perhaps they have all gone to heaven" (98), according to the Archbishop. The vegetable is a food, the necessity of people's everyday life, whereas the flower decorates life with its radiant beauty, yet it is not always necessary. Like the flower cabbage, it is difficult either to define the identity of Buddhism or to think of Buddhism on the same level with Christianity because Buddhism is deeply rooted in Japanese life, and its practices are customary, while Christianity is still a foreign religion unrelated to Japanese everyday life. By the Archbishop's handing a Buddha-like flower cabbage to Reiko showing the forgiveness and tolerance of Christianity, Hatsumi suggests Reiko's future understanding of Christianity and the forever lasting belief and practice of Buddhism in Japan.

For defining Japanese womanhood, existing stereotypes and immature understandings of womanhood obstruct accuracy. Although the stereotypes created in foreigners' fancies are extreme or exaggerated since they are

based on impressions about either upper class ladies or geisha girls encountered during short stays in Japan. They often work on the mind and distort reality. If the person is young, the impact of interaction with foreigners is stronger and is imprinted deeply on their memory. The same thing happens to young Sugimoto when she delightedly recounts her first contact with foreign women, teachers of a missionary school she attended, in A Daughter of the Samurai. Their "young, lively, most interesting and beautiful" (120) figures in western garb are as if an embodiment of the young Sugimoto Etsu-bo's fantasy; they are so casual-mannered that they sometimes look like school girls; they are as good as Japanese mothers at doing handwork like sewing and mending; yet, they keep the dignity of teachers. Sugimoto chose them as the symbol of American womanhood: "self-respecting, untrammelled, changing with quick adaptability to new conditions" (139), to contrast with Japanese womanhood which is "modest, gentle, and bearing unjust hardship without complaint" (139). This positive image of missionary teachers eventually led Sugimoto to convert to Christianity, while she attributed the negative side of Japanese womanhood to strong Buddhist influence. Her admiration for all American teachers and of Florence Mills Wilson, whom she called her American mother, averted her eyes from reality. She never mentioned any hardship of American life or American women of the lower class; not a single unkind American woman appeared in her books. Adapting the upper-class white identity as her own in the matter of defining American womanhood is a defect and weakness of Sugimoto. Consequently, the part of the book about her life in the United States sounds a little unreal, in spite of her insight into cultural differences, and is removed from worldliness except for her feelings toward Matsuo, her husband.

In Japanese society now, most people believe themselves to belong

to the middle class; however, Japanese society in Sugimoto and Hatsumi's books, even though it was changing and modernizing, revealed itself as still hierarchical. The gap between women belonging to two remote classes: the samurai class and the farming class, and positions: the master and the servant, was too great to deal with them in the same category. The patriarchal system, moreover, which cultural feminists were striving against, refused to admit the identity of women as equally strong and powerful as men, and put women down as subordinates to men. Therefore, girlhood, wifehood, and motherhood, which were projected out of men's needs, existed and often replaced womanhood, while there was, and still is, no matching word for wifehood--husbandhood, maybe--even in The American Heritage Dictionary.

In her autobiographical novel, Sugimoto always admired her mother, but with a little awe because she was "aloft, like the sun, flawless, and steady, filling the home with life-giving warmth, yet too far away to be treated familiarly" (94). The distance between the mother and daughter is understandable since it was not exceptional for upper, middle class families at that time to have nurses who shared the responsibility of bringing up children and the love of children with mothers. Although mothers had no intention of favoring one child over the others, or of discriminating between an heir and girls, their duty as a wife of a household sometimes took up their time and energy for family anniversaries and ceremonies and servants' affairs; social custom required special care and education for the eldest son of the family, too. It is no wonder that not only Sugimoto, but also Hatsumi, who were both the youngest daughters of their samurai families, remember feeling lonely when they were little. Unfortunately, when they were in the age of longing for the mothers' touch, attention and affection, some events, such as their elder sisters' wedding preparations and the sickness of a

family member occurred and occupied the mothers' minds. Also their intercourse with the outside world was limited by their mothers' orders. On the other hand, nurses rejoiced and sorrowed with children as if everything what happened to their little mistresses was their own affair. Since they were humbly born, they could cry when their hearts ached and could laugh when their hearts sang, while samurai mothers should restrain and control their emotions by not showing them to others.

Two episodes about Etsu-bo's curly hair distinguish her mother from her baya, Ishi, and shows the clear contrast between them. On every hairdressing day, Etsu-bo had to saturate her hair with hot tea and scented oil, an ongoing torment for her, to straighten her curly hair, a rarity in Japan. One day, she "rebelled and used return words" (15) to blameless Ishi, who was only trying to comfort her. Although Ishi immediately forgave her, her mother overheard it and reproached her by saying "do you not know that curly hair is like animal's hair? A samurai's daughter should not be willing to resemble a beast" (15). For her mother as a mistress, admonishing her young daughter for her impolite behavior towards Ishi, her elder, was necessary to do justice to the household and to avoid spoiling her daughter. No matter how Etsu-bo behaved, her deed did not deserve such cruel, merciless words. Besides, having curly hair was not her fault. Because of the distance, her mother did not even realize how much she hurt her daughter. This severe attitude and rigid discipline, common practice in samurai families, found its origin in a legend that the lioness pushes her three-day-old cubs over a cliff and cares for them only if they are strong enough to climb back from the valley. The other episode, Etsu-bo's humiliating experience at her seventh-year celebration and her baya Ishi's sacrifice to rescue her, depicts a strong tie between



Etsu-bo and Ishi, and is very touching. Etsu-bo, as does Ishi, overhears vilification whispered by her aunt which says that Etsu-bo's "ugly, twisty hair" (16) shows up against her gorgeous kimono. For a woman, young or old, there is nothing more painful than having pointed out the ugliness of her personal appearance. Ishi's loyalty to and pride for her dear little mistress mixed with her maternal love, something like a woman may have for her adopted child, propelles her to perform a bold deed. She ventures to cut off her beautiful straight hair and sacrifices it to her Shinto God for the wish of replacing Etsu-bo's curly hair with hers. Considering the fact that women's hair is as precious as their own lives, Ishi's deed is no way inferior to that retainers risking their lives on the battlefield for the sake of their samurai lords, or of patriotic soldiers in the imperial army. What is striking, moreover, is that Ishi never explains the purpose of her praiseworthy action, though lowly-born people have more freedom to express their feelings. Only the stream of silence between Etsu-bo and Ishi conveys the feeling of sympathy, compassion, respect, appreciation, and affection. Sugimoto wrote "my whole heart was filled with tender love for my dear, patient, unselfish Ishi" (94) in the book. Ishi successfully makes up for the missing aspect of maternity in Sugimoto's samurai mother. At her American home, when Sugimoto was five months pregnant, she received "iwata-obi," a sash used for keeping an expectant mother's abdomen warm and the fetus in the right position, from her mother and a paper charm of "Kishibo-jin" (Demon of the Mother-heart), the guardian goddess of mothers and children, from Ishi. She thanks her "thoughtful, loving, far-away mother" (214); nevertheless, it was Ishi, whose wisdom and love she longed for, who relieved her from the anxiety of pregnancy.

As Hatsumi indicated Buddhism as a religion utterly permeated

Japanese hearts by revealing the friction between Buddhism and Christianity, Sugimoto repeatedly expressed the permanent influence of Buddhism and Shinto as the moral conduct and Confucian philosophy guiding ethics, as what was indispensable to unify Japanese people and to secure the steady development of the nation, but what somehow cast Japanese women in the same conventional mold. Storytelling and traditional events are the most effective ways to accustom naive children to old Japanese thoughts and customs. Children have many storytellers around them, such as grandmothers, nurses, and elderly servants, around them and constantly listen to numerous tales, legends, and myths until they absorb the messages of those stories into their subconscious. Tales of his ancestor's adventures or righteous actions, for instance, arouse pride and respect for his ancestry and eventually establish self-knowledge as a future lord of the family in a boy's mind. With Taro and Hana in Japan by Sugimoto shows how children were taught their social roles segregated by sexes through seasonal events: the Boy's Festival and the Dolls' Festival. At the Boy's Festival, ten-year-old Taro, the eldest son of the Kawamura family, dressing up in the highly formal kimono with family crest on, feels "grand" (53) like a real Japanese gentleman, who is "strong and brave to work for their Emperor and their country" (50). On the other hand, eight-year-old Hana, after filling the role of the hostess at the Dolls' Festival, is told by her mother that it is "just a happy time when little girls can practise housekeeping" (36). The merriment of festivals, like the sweet coating of a bitter pill, hides the reality of a restrained life ahead.

Turning back to her girlhood, Sugimoto found herself happy, but "it [never knew] one throb of what may be called joyousness" (138) or "reckless freedom" (136) because of "a strain of hopeless sadness" (138) in Buddhist thought, "mujo" in Japanese. The moon waxes and wanes;

cherry blossoms bloom and fall; the man who is once born, once must die; therefore, nothing is certain and never changes. Strict teaching of Confucianism and its sexually segregated manners helped to confine girls into oppressive conditions. While boys could stretch their arms and legs carelessly, there was a proper modest position for sleeping according to the notion that daughters of the samurai should control their minds and bodies even in sleep. Boys could ask questions freely, whereas girls had to be "more demure and womanly" in their inquiries that finally placed them in "cramped silence" (137). Asking questions is a normal, important process of child development, yet their desire for knowledge was suppressed under the following circumstances. Primarily, the Japanese value the wisdom of silence in general. Children also learn it from the tales like "Why the Jelly-Fish Has No Bones"; a jelly-fish called Slippery Tongue fails its mission because of talking too much and is beaten till all its bones are crashed as punishment. Secondly, girls are destined to be brides and to leave their natal homes. No question is uttered about their fate because marriages are supposedly arranged by the Shinto gods and goddesses at a meeting held during October in the Izumo Shrine. Storytellers prefer to tell stories about people who resist their fate but find it useless in the end, just like Sugimoto's brother experienced. A tactful nurse concludes it with the comment; "What is planned must be obeyed" (68). Women who do not follow this matter-of-course path, by becoming a nun or a priestess like Yukiko in A Daughter of the Narikin and cutting off from worldly affairs, or being independent like Umeko Tsuda, also undergo hardship. Nevertheless, women will face the difficulties of life, so it is better to marry a promising young man or one with fame and fortune since there is a greater chance of living in comfort. To be chosen as a bride of such a man, girls are taught "the usual training in

cooking, sewing, and various household duties, as well as flower-arranging, tea-serving, and other womanly accomplishment" (92). In short, people associated women's education with education to be a wife. Last of all, the fact that women were not allowed to participate in either politics or the business world was reflected in women's education. For women who were ambitious to be independent, there were few women's schools which offered higher education or vocational education equivalent to that for men. Hence, women awakening to their need of an ego went abroad to complete their studies if they were from liberal, prosperous families, or they fought their way in men's society by educating each other, as did cultural feminists. The customary course now--being educated, getting a job and being financially independent, getting married by one's own will--is neither what a woman could do nor what she could be proud of in old days. Even the law took men's side and kept women in a subordinate position. If a woman, for example, inherited a fortune from her father, the fortune would no longer belong to her, but her husband, when she was married. Thus the girlhood of samurai daughters is colored by Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism and is seen as a preparative period for wifehood. The girls accept their fate in silence.

The doubt posed by Umeko Tsuda about the existence of amicable, congenial relations between the two sexes among the Japanese people, though it actually exists in different manners, keeps to the point. By Confucian moral conduct, men and women hardly had the chance to associate with each other, so love-matches rarely or never happened. Love needs time. A newly wedded couple by arranged marriage had to wait until the mere acquaintance ripened into love. Besides, marriageable age for women was especially young in those days. In the case of Sugimoto, she was not quite thirteen years old when she became engaged

to Matsuo. She was too little and innocent to question an arranged marriage and to understand what love is. The dramatic change in Sugimoto's feeling toward Matsuo shows the process of her coming to maturity and of the developing relationship between Sugimoto and Matsuo as a wife and a husband at the same time. From the beginning, this match was discordant for her class since the Sugimotos were "only a branch of the main family" (242) whose head, Uncle Otani, was Matsuo's foster father. With the wish of becoming a successful businessman, Matsuo came to the United States "when he was a boy in his teens," so he, like a Nisei, was "unfamiliar with many Japanese customs" (163) and got no higher education in Japan. Sugimoto's brother, who ironically once intended to marry for love, brought about the match as a return for Matsuo's kindness, which he had received in his miserable days in America, by marrying his youngest sister off to America, though he knew Matsuo's background. Therefore, he apologetically said that he had never known "an unselfish person" (152) except his sister. Like many Issei men trying to assimilate themselves to America, in other words, trying to be invisible among American people, Matsuo appears as "modern, progressive, foreign in everything except his face" (157); like many picture brides, Sugimoto is reproved by Matsuo for wearing a kimono at their first meeting, which changes her optimistic mood to the bitter awareness of her becoming a wife of a stranger in a foreign land. Her loneliness and disappointment are expressed in the extremely short description of her wedding and in her seeking her beloved father's image in aged men. The difference in their value judgments grows out of their different backgrounds. The fake Japanese goods which Matsuo sells as "made in Japan," though they are designed by Americans, triggers off trouble for honest Sugimoto. Matsuo, as a shrewd, rational merchant, only cares about the commercial value of the goods, but Sugimoto pays

attention to the true worth of Japanese craftsmanship rather than money. Sugimoto avoids further argument about it with Matsuo. After all, she depends on him financially, and he earns the family income by trading such goods. Sugimoto confesses that they had "no common topic of conversation," (224) contrary to their friendly attitude till their first baby, Hanano was born. A Japanese proverb, "a child is a hinge of one's parents" means that love toward the child, like a hinge, makes the relationship between a husband and a wife closer and more intimate is true to Sugimoto; nevertheless, she has to go through many stages to realize that the baby should be the crystallization of parents' love. Sugimoto's pride as a daughter of the samurai is ambivalent. Usually it gives her strength to make her way out, here it makes her arrogant and insensitive to Matsuo's feeling. Her confession that "I [Sugimoto] did not trace any likeness to Matsuo; nor did I want to" (224) is a shocking proof. At this point, it is obvious that she subconsciously feels an aversion to Matsuo, who belongs neither to her class nor to the Inagakis, whereas the baby belongs to her family and herself. However, it is not Matsuo who causes Sugimoto's emotional explosion since Matsuo, as a private individual, disagrees with the common notion of women's being inferior to men; he adapts American life styles, and recommends her to do so. It is Sugimoto herself, who avoids seeing Matsuo as he is, but as a typical Japanese man who is symbolic of the force which tries to keep her to the beaten track of Japanese wifedom. In the country of freedom, she wants to free herself from the strict samurai code, but being a daughter of the samurai is her pride. She is caught in a dilemma. An incident of finding a lacquer box in which Matsuo keeps the memorial objects of the baby's growth in his office opens Sugimoto's eyes and for the first time she begins to feel love for her husband, though she expresses it as "a strange new feeling" (225).

Ultimately, Sugimoto's American mother's comment on Matsuo's devotion to the baby Hanano, which outdoes even American fathers in tenderness and unselfishness, makes Sugimoto realize that not only women, but also men, the supposed authorities, are victims chained to the conventions and social system of Japan. Matsuo's love and trust in Sugimoto are strongly expressed in his will that "his daughters should receive the liberal education" under their mother's guidance. The hearts of Japanese people are not different from those of people of other countries, but for centuries, especially in samurai homes, they had been strictly trained to regard duty, not feeling, as the standard of relations between men and women.

Reiko Hatsumi's beautiful, pathetic story, "Dolls' Festival" is significant primarily because the origin and history of the dolls' festival relates to Shinto; secondly, the story depicts the sign of the change in Japanese womanhood. Ever since the divine Being, Izanagi, purified himself by washing "kegare" (impurity) off, purification became one of the most important rituals of Shinto. As time passed, small paper dolls called "hitogata" were thrown into rivers to remove kegare every year. Dolls of the emperor and empress with various attendants and furniture replaced hitogata in the Edo period. At that time, the festival's original purpose was faint, and the festival became an occasion for girls to practice women's duties. As to the date of the festival, it was originally "First Serpent Day of Spring" in the lunar calendar because the serpent's habit of shedding its skin was regarded as the symbol of the seasonal change from the dark winter, symbolic of death, to light, warm spring symbolic of life. According to Shinto mythology, Amaterasu, the sun goddess appeared from the purification of Izanagi's left eye. The sun is the source of life. Thus, the dolls' festival is deeply connected with the sun goddess.

Hatsumi pictures Mariko, the eldest daughter, as if she were a empress doll, kept in a paulownia box in the godown except on one occasion: the dolls' festival. Mariko's girlhood suddenly closes when her parents propose a match. From that moment to the time of the wedding, Mariko becomes more and more like the empress doll and finally transforms herself into it at the wedding. At first, she hesitates to accept the proposal, but soon, like a doll without will, she leaves the important decision to her parents. The evening before the wedding, the youngest daughter Reiko finds her sister "staring vacantly at the garden" (27) like an expressionless doll. Her figure which reflected "[t]he soft, golden glow of the clouds" (27) is also identical to the empress doll at the pageant lit up by candlelight, and to herself at the wedding reception. Her act of burning "letters, scraps of poetry, and a diary" (28) that evening is not a deed of sentimentality to say good-by to her girlhood, but a spontaneous attempt to meet her fate with resignation. As if announcing the completion of Mariko's transformation, the sky on the wedding day is unusually clear without any sign of foulness. On the other hand, Mariko's mother is unstable, contradicts herself, and betrays her emotions in her speech. At the moment, she thinks her daughter is too young to marry and to face the hardship because she knows from experience that marriage is a risky business; nobody can tell how much or how little happiness it will bring. The next moment, her sympathy vanishes, for she finds a good excuse to justify herself: marriage is a duty of women; there is no match for younger daughters if the oldest daughter remains unmarried; and a younger bride is more adjustable to a new home. This unsteady attitude is never seen in the case of Sugimoto's samurai mother since her belief in Shinto and in tradition completely supports arranged marriage. Therefore, Sugimoto can follow in her mother's footsteps with



no doubt, and confidence in her mother makes her closer to and her mother than ever during the betrothal through the wedding, while lack of confidence makes the distance widen between Mariko and her mother. The climax of the story comes when Mariko's mother touches her daughter's shoulder to adjust her shawl. Mariko jerks her mother's hand off as if touched by something impure and stops it "in a tiny choking voice" (32). A clue to this unexpected behavior lies in two objects in her room, one representing Christianity and maternal love: "the statue of the Virgin Mary," and one representing Buddhism and ancestry: "a string of crystal beads that belonged to my [Mariko's] grandmother" (23). Simultaneously, the Virgin Mary and crystal beads imply the innocence and purity of Mariko's mind. Another clue is found in Sugimoto's wisdom that "it is wiser and kinder--to accommodate themselves somewhat to fading belief--unless it should be a matter of principle" (216) to live through a changing society. As for the principle, there is a fundamental difference between Mariko and her mother. Being a Christian often meant being liberal and modern in those days, and that is what the mother values more than the teachings of Christ. She is sociable, outgoing, up-to-date, and urbane; she does not place importance on "outdated things" (213) as her husband does; yet, she clings to the authority of being a mistress of the household and puts on the appearance of a model mother. On the contrary, Mariko believes in Christianity and respects her ancestors and their beliefs as well. When she finds it hard to live up to the Christian principle, the only way left for her is to follow the example of her samurai grandmother. With a tender heart like that of the Virgin Mary, Mariko forgives her mother by saying, "they [her parents] can't help it" (29). Instead, she expects her mother to be like a lioness in the metaphor since she is the one who pushes her to do woman's duty, marriage. Even if a mother's heart aches for her daughter

with sympathy and love, the mother should conceal her feelings. In that way, it is easy for Mariko to transform into the empress doll: the emotionless, expressionless, splendid doll which moves to Mariko's husband's home with Mariko and sits in a box in the new godown till a daughter of her own comes into the world. In the last moment of her departure, Mariko's mother fails to meet her expectations by kind words and action, which causes the mask of the empress doll to break down and pushes Mariko into agony.

Some other stories in Rain and the Feast for the Stars tell about two other daughters, Michiko and Reiko, in relation to their mother, who tries to keep abreast with the times in a society heading toward militarism and war. The second daughter, Michiko, comes home after spending two years of study in America with the determination to become Americanized and to make her family more so as well. Progressive though the mother is, she cannot catch up with Michiko, who introduces new ideas such as welfare, the reform of working conditions and women's occupations, and love-matches, and tries to put them into practice. Contrary to Michiko's expectation, the plans hardly work out since servants are not ready to receive western values and find Michiko too foreign to their eyes. Besides, "[a]ll changes must come from within. One cannot force anything, even good, on others" (67). The mother realizes the value of the old customs and the conventions of daily life for the first time when they are almost swept away, and she declares her authority over the household again. However, she knows subconsciously that she cannot stop Michiko from wearing western garments and working outside because Japan itself is changing and absorbing the imported culture. In the "Epilogue" of the book, after World War II, the youngest daughter Reiko is about to leave for America. Her father gives her a sword that belonged to your her grandmother as a reminder of

family pride. It is ironic that he, who has been so liberal, becomes the reminder of traditions and withdraws to "the life of quiet contemplation and aestheticism" (213) after the war. On the other hand, war experience makes her mother humane. She no longer pretends to be a samurai mother or a model mother; she can, like ordinary people, express her feelings freely; she treats Reiko as an equal woman whose free will should be respected. Instead of saying that there is no home for a married woman to come back to except her husband's home, Reiko's mother says, "Remember--that no matter what happens, this will always be your home" (215).

It is no coincidence that Etsu Sugimoto identified the image of the samurai mother with the sun and that Raicho Hiratsuka declared regaining women's nature as the sun, considering the characteristics and functions of the sun. From a distance, the fair and disinterested sun ceaselessly shines and warms every living thing. Like the sun, a source of life, a woman gives birth to children, raises them with her unlimited unselfish maternal love, and assures the continuity and perpetuity of the human race. The sun is so powerful that it needs to keep its settled distance from others; if there is too much distance, it may freeze people's hearts with loneliness or scorch them with its heat if it loses itself in solitude and draws itself too close. Many Issei women appearing in Nisei's stories are examples of such cases. The dominant sun is also closely linked to political power. That impartiality, as well as other traits of the sun, the quality of leading the people regardless of their numbers, explains it. Amaterasu Omikami in Shinto mythology and female rulers, such as Himiko, the Empress Jito and other empresses in Japanese history, must have flashed through the minds of Sugimoto and Hiratsuka on the occasion of choosing the sun as the metaphor for Japanese womanhood because Amaterasu is the sun goddess, who is worshipped as the

founder of Japan and the progenitor of the imperial line, whose female and solar characteristics nicely fit to the description of an ideal woman in their vision. Himiko was a queen and a shaman in the third century. Although the separation of politics from religion, and the transformation of society from matriarchy to patriarchy gradually eliminated the charismatic mystical female authority figures, her shamanistic ability was taken over by the present shamans, called "miko" or "itako," also women, and some rural people still rely on them. In general, women have a tendency of being somewhat intuitive and of believing the supernatural. It was Sugimoto's mother and grandmother, who planned Etsu's future to be a priestess since she "was born with the navel cord looped around the neck like a priest's rosary" which was supposed to be "a direct command from Buddha" (17) in A Daughter of the Samurai. Also it was O Ineh who demanded to see a diviner to ask about the matrimonial affairs of her children "to ensure the future happiness of the children" (268) in A Daughter of the Nohfu; the diviner was not a woman though. Shinto worked upon the minds of women ambivalently. On one hand, it tied women to the old conventions like arranged marriage; on the other hand, its important goddess Amaterasu became the symbol of the women's movement in the early twentieth century to liberate women from a subservient position and to awaken women's ego. Likewise, the sun, the ultimate goal of Japanese womanhood, possesses seemingly conflicting masculine (authority and power) and feminine characteristics. However, masculinity in this case simply means dominating the society and no more. Were matriarchal society reestablished, masculinity would be made subordinate to femininity, so Japanese womanhood would no longer retain an internal contradiction. Sugimoto gives an example of a female governing community in Hachijo Island where "both men and women are healthy and happy; [and] the social

life there is more strictly moral than it is in any other community [ruled by men] of equal intelligence in Japan" (Samurai 203). Even though the truth of the report remains to be confirmed, it shows her acknowledgment of women's potential capacity in politics, despite of her stance as a cultural feminist, and her unconscious desire to resurrect a matriarchy or an egalitarian utopia.

In the middle of the torrent of westernization and modernization in the Meiji (1868-1912) and the Taisho (1912-1926) periods, when many people abandoned wisdom they inherited from their ancestry and rushed to swim with the stream, Sugimoto stood still like a solid dignified rock. She carefully observed the changing societies of both rural and urban areas and of both the United States and Japan, gained an insight into human nature, and found herself "standing upon a cloud in space, and gazing with measuring eyes upon two separate world" (Samurai 179), East and West. There can be no mistaking what she meant by it.- She became the sun, which unifies the world with its brightness and warmth and creates a peaceful world of equals. Sugimoto owed her successful transformation to the sun, Japanese ideal womanhood, and her ability of reconciling the supposed oppositions that helped her achievement, to her two mothers: Japanese samurai mother, Inagaki, and American mother, Miss Florence Mills Wilson, to whom she dedicated her book. Miss Wilson's obituary in The Japan Times described her as a "living Embodiment of True Friendship" and printed her famous remark, "I am an American by birth, yet a citizen of the world" (Kiyooka 214). According to the book Pioneers in Self-Government, a qualified world citizen "can see and appreciate the point of view of another as well as one's own" (120). Then mother Inagaki, who never traveled abroad but respected Miss Wilson, Christianity, and American culture as much as her own religion and culture, should also be called a world citizen. The book calls

Sugimoto a pioneer in self-government and in world-citizenship, yet she had two forerunners. Probably these two mothers had their own models, too. As long as the sun shines as it did yesterday, it is a symbol for both Japanese womanhood and world citizenship.

### CHAPTER III

#### NISEI: HISAYE YAMAMOTO AND YOSHIKO UCHIDA

This chapter devoted to two Nisei women writers, Hisaye Yamamoto and Yoshiko Uchida, will examine, by comparison/contrast of their writing to that of Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto and Reiko Hatsumi, if there are any traces of Japanese culture, if they inherit the essence of Japanese American Issei literature, and if so, what the legacy is.

Sugimoto, in spite of her popularity among her contemporaries, was not included in anthologies of Japanese American literature, such as Fusion '83 and Ayumi, while even haiku, tanka, and senryu written in Japanese by the Issei were included, and eventually excluded, by the post-Civil Rights Movement critics. Hisaye Yamamoto, a Nisei writer stated that "[a]ny extensive literary treatment of the Japanese in this country would be incomplete without some acknowledgment of the camp experience" (69). This echoes the Nisei biases of the critical establishment about what constitutes Japanese American literature. First, Sugimoto's works were accepted as a part of the canon of English literature, while most Nisei writers experienced rejection from main publishers and censorship because the mood of the time was intensely anti-Japanese. Sugimoto's acceptance was due to the timing of her publication and the period she depicted in her autobiography, from the Meiji Restoration to the Taisho Democracy, from which emanated the optimistic air of a potential egalitarian democracy, which is akin to the American ideal of the democratic society. Second, Sugimoto lived in the East, primarily in Cincinnati, Ohio and New York City, and was from the upper class, whereas the authors of most of autobiographical novels, novellas, and short stories dealing with internment lived on the West

Coast and were working class. Last of all, Sugimoto's language unsuitable to her transcendental view of the future must have annoyed the language-conscious critics with jargon, unnatural expressions, and exaggerated polite language directly translated from Japanese. Thus, Sugimoto was disqualified as a Japanese American writer, especially by critics such as the editors of Aiiieeeee!, whose "premise that a true Asian American sensibility is non-Christian, non-feminine, and nonimmigrant" (Wong 8).

As for the class bias, Sugimoto is not the only one who has been crossed out. Yoshiko Uchida's autobiography, Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family and a novel, Picture Bride are hardly examined by critics, even though she is an accomplished writer of juvenile literature, and her books are by no means inferior to others'. The clue to Uchida's disregard is found by comparing Uchida, from the samurai class, with Yamamoto, from the working class. Ironically they both were born in 1921, yet they differ to extremes: Uchida is optimistic, Yamamoto pessimistic.

Uchida's unshakable optimism can be attributed to her parents and her upbringing. Uchida's parents, Dwight Takashi Uchida and Iku Umegaki Uchida, were both from the samurai class and were graduates of Doshisha University, which was established by Jyo Niijima in 1875 (Meiji 8) as the first private English school based on Christian principles. Taking account of the Christian principles and the liberal atmosphere of private English schools such as Doshisha which were established one after another during the Meiji era when modernization and westernization were the goal of the nation, it is no wonder that Uchida's parents were neither "strict traditionalists" nor "nationalistic in nature"; "their first loyalty was always to their Christian God, not to the Emperor of Japan" (36). Likewise, Ryoichi Fujii, another Doshisha graduate,



declares that "My [Fujii's] belief was an intuition as a Christian, and wasn't based upon logic" (3) in his "Autobiography" translated and collected in Ayumi. As if to testify to it, his life underwent dramatic changes: his interest in social issues and Marxism, agony between the real world and the Christian ideal as a preacher, studying theology in the United States, joining the Communist Party of the U S A, and receiving a deportation order. Nevertheless, he does not seem to have lost faith in Christianity. This coexistence also in the minds of an Issei writer, Haru Matsui, and of some Japanese intellectuals who were in the vanguard of the new era can be explained by "the Judeo-Christian tradition of human brotherhood" (435) found in the influential theory of Leo Tolstoy. Also people educated in these schools had a good grasp of Western culture and its economical, political, and martial power from their frequent contact with Westerners. Increasingly skeptical about Japanese victory in World War II, like Mr. K. from Aoyama Gakuin in Fujii's autobiography, they watched the course of events with calm resignation and cooperated with Nisei to keep order in camp. Uchida remembers that pro-Japan agitators, nationalistic Issei and Kibei, born in America but educated in Japan, threatened her father because of his position in camp that required "close contact with the white administrative staff" (140). Uchida's father worked for Mitsui, one of the biggest companies in Japan, so that the Uchida family, like Sugimoto, had lived in a middle class white neighborhood in an urban city, Oakland, California, while most Japanese immigrants lived in either densely populated districts like Little Tokyo in Los Angeles or on sparsely populated farm land. As for Uchida's mother, Iku, while economic realities forced the majority of Issei women to work in labor camps, farms, and small businesses along with their husbands, she played the traditional woman's role of dutiful wife and intelligent mother

owing to her husband's secure income. However traditional she was, Uchida's portrayal of her mother suggests that Iku shared the kindred spirit of cultural feminists, especially with Motoko Hani about ideal womanhood and with Akiko Yosano about her Romantic notion of literature and creating tanka.

Considering what Hani and Iku had in common: first they had similar backgrounds; they were born in the samurai class in poverty, they were highly educated for women, and they were both converts to Christianity; second, they both valued human networks and were leading figures of the networks; third, they regarded domestic duty as paramount. As for the concept of love as taught in Christianity, Iku's marriage with Takashi was arranged at first, but developed into a love marriage through their correspondence during their engagement and their married life in which "they always shared a deep and abiding faith" (24) in God, and Takashi played the role of a modernized husband. Yoshiko remembers that Takashi often helped to do some household chores which were supposed to be a woman's responsibility. Moreover, there was a mutual feeling of respect between Iku and Takashi. Takashi cherished Iku's dreams and creativity and even tried to learn her skills of creating tanka. Gestures of love such as dedicating flowers which he cultivated to Iku just to see her happy and publishing Iku's tanka, are interspread throughout the book.

The Japanese say that "no matter how old men become, they are still little boys for women." This is true in spite of the power of the father as a head of the family because it is the mother who most deeply affects her family members, both mentally and physically. Koji Sasaki agrees and explains why in Chichi-Oya towa Nani ka: Sono Imi to Ari-kata. He agrees that the psychological process of unification of Japanese society should be represented as a big pyramid formed by small triangles, each triangle at the bottom of the pyramid representing a

family. An apex of a small triangle which connects with an upper triangle is a mother or mother figure, who is not necessarily a female if the person functions like a mother. One of the functions that is undertaken by the father or father figure in Western societies is to motivate his children to identify themselves with the norm and to achieve their goals in society. The other function is to be the last dependable, forgiving person for children, in short, to be an emotional savior. Sasaki suspects the ideal mother that is Kannon, the Buddhist god of mercy, may have developed from the latter function of mother. With regard to a family triangle, compared to the Western family which is pictured as a father and a mother standing in parallel on a up-side-down triangle, a Japanese family is drawn as a triangle of which a mother occupies the apex and her husband is demoted to the base, together with a child or children, each occupying one of the lower points. In other words, the husband-wife relationship is a reproduction of the mother-child relationship based on the emotional bond and marriage. He finds a mother figure in his wife since she has her own mother and mother-in-law as models to follow. Yoshiko Uchida's parents, Iku and Tadashi, exemplify this matriarchal structure. As the head of the Uchidas, Tadashi is introduced as a typical Japanese businessman with "a sense of confidence that sprang from a strong self-image" (22); his strong self-image only pertains to his position on economic and political stages. Nevertheless, the descriptions of Iku reveal who was the mental pillar of the family. Her strength, which betrayed her "shy, reticent, and sheltered" (6) appearance, was tested and proved at crises. Her sensitivity and creativity inspired not only Yoshiko, but also Takashi to appreciate "the creative aspects of life" (23). Her "gentle" (22) and "empathic" (14) mind let her family practice a moral philosophy, "[i]ndifference is the worst fault of all" (15). From those

descriptions, it is clear that Iku fulfilled two seemingly contradictory functions of a mother. In addition, her mother-in-law, Katsu Uchida was living in the United States and was "a devout Christian" and "the spirited woman" (17). Since Iku and Katsu had something in common, Katsu must have been a model of Japanese womanhood to follow. Iku became closer to the ideal, her marriage became more steady and stable, and as a result, the Uchida family had strong family ties. Although Yoshiko tends to emphasize her being American rather than being Japanese and looks at all events from the point of view of an American who was treated unfairly during World War II, she understands her Japanese parents and ancestors much better than Hisaye Yamamoto does. The cultural heritage and a family legacy were successfully transmitted from grandmother Katsu to Iku and finally to Yoshiko. Because Yoshiko estimated the values of what she inherited not according to its origin, but to the norm which she learned through her mother, she never had any doubt about her nationality, nor was she ever lost in confusion between Japan and the United States.

As to the human networks, Motoko Hani, who regarded it as important to educate women in the lower and middle classes, actively expanded organizations throughout Japan. There was a need for cultural feminists, who were determined and charismatic like Hani and Akiko Yosano. On the contrary, Iku seems not quite aware of the power of human connections or her ability to lead people, even though she served as the president of the Women's Society of the Japanese Independent Congregational Church of Oakland, the first Japanese church in the United States. Yoshiko has a recollection of her mother engaging in "many silent, unseen chores" (35) of the church that were revived in Picture Bride. Iku never boasted of anything. It was a spontaneous deed for a "giving and deeply caring person" (15) like Iku to help

people around her because it was consistent with the teachings of Christianity and with her personality. By looking at her mother, Yoshiko must have learned the importance of the human networks. In Desert Exile, there are many names of associations, such as the Northern California Congregational Conference, the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, the University of California, the YWCA, and social action groups which supported Japanese Americans' struggle to gain access to their constitutional rights or protested against the inexcusable maltreatment of Japanese Americans--the mass incarceration; the Japanese Woman's Student Club and the Nisei Christian community, in which Yoshiko and her sister were actually involved. Yoshiko emphasizes the necessity of those organizations for Nisei, as they, a minority rejected by the majority, hardly had any chances to hold positions of leadership or responsibility" (44); gaining positions in American society immediately means Japanese Americans' uplift and general acceptance by the majority. Thus, Iku silently imbued Yoshiko's mind with the new ideas of cultural feminists that women can conduct both homes and society without the risk of neglecting domestic duties or damaging a good reputation of Japanese womanhood by setting good examples, their own lives, to their daughters.

Both autobiographical and biographical works about the lives of the Issei often contain lists of books, authors, and poets that reveal their tastes for literature as both individuals and as a group and their level of education and even intelligence. Desert Exile also has a various list ranging from Bacon to Tagore to Tolstoy, which may partly reflect the influence of American missionaries, essentially the early twentieth century Western canon of literature, but also suggests Japanese intellectuals' tastes in literature. Yoshiko remembers Iku's attempt to memorize Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" in her seventies.

In addition to Wordsworth, the list includes Shelley. They are the most influential figures for the rise of Japanese Romanticism. This shows Iku's fondness of Romantic poetry. Notably Wordsworth's short poems are often compared to haiku because of their "approximations of the spirit" (Holman 221) and that of the concept of nature. In contrast to her liking for Romanticism, she never opened books by Tolstoy even though she had "the Japanese translation of Tolstoy's entire works" and "hoped one day to read" (23) them. Yoshiko explains it as being due to "the needs and demands" (23) of the family that left little time for Iku to pursue her dreams and creativity, a common problem for women writers with families to take care of. Ironically, considering the path some humanitarian Japanese writers followed, it must have been best for a "sensitive and empathic" (14) woman like Iku not to have read Tolstoy's novels. Influenced by the life of Tolstoy, his renunciation of his private property and running a school for peasants for example, and his works, some of the greatest realist compositions in literature, some Japanese writers stepped out from literature to practice the ideas, socialistic and communistic, in which Hare Matsui was involved. At any rate, her alertness to the current mode of literature, along with her knowledge of Western literature, should be pointed out. Yoshiko concludes each chapter of Desert Exile with Iku's tanka which genuinely expresses her concerns, thoughts, emotions, and feelings in thirty-one syllables. "Pale smoke rises / From the leaves I burn, / The sight of my mother / I see in myself" (25). In this nostalgic poem, because of the mystical scent of the thin smoke, abundant colors of fallen leaves, and the warmth of the fire, Iku momentarily returns, like *dejavu*, to an autumn scene in her childhood when her mother made a small fire with leaves which she had swept away from the garden. One still moment has passed, and she realizes that every custom and tradition inherited from

generations of women are now with her even in a foreign land. "Banished to this / Desert land, / I cherish the / Blessing of the sky" (121). "The fury of the / Dust storm spent, / I gaze through tears / At the sunset glow" (121). Both poems were made in Topaz, the Central Utah Relocation Center. Iku is moved to tears by the grandeur of nature and its supreme beauty, although she attributes her tears to the dust. Nature's destructive force has already been forgotten, or it is just a blessing in disguise. Iku's tanka were eventually bound in a book by her family. This, along with tanka printed in Desert Exile, show her family's appreciation and respect for Iku. Thus Iku's sacrifice of her time and energy for her family was not in vain.

Generally, Uchida's protagonists are well-educated Christians, whereas many of Yamamoto's characters are somewhat deviant or out of the Japanese norm; Uchida's writing style is plain and straightforward, so that a reader can take what is written at face value, whereas Yamamoto's style, accompanied with a "muted plot" or "buried plot," is complex and ambiguous, so that multiple viewpoints are possible in interpreting the texts. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong says that the use the photographs inserted in Desert Exile in chronological order are "graphic rendition" (136) of the once successful Uchidas' economic decline to avoid direct criticism, and to add a tragic touch, which is expected but missing in the book by saying that "the supposed culmination of their American story was really the beginning of a collective trauma" (137). Then she puts a most inadequate interpretation of the two family pictures at the end of the book, "which can be read as attempts to affirm regeneration and family togetherness" (137), in parenthesis and objecting to it as "almost pathetically ineffective" (137). Obviously Wong, traumatized by the grave Asian American history, like many Nisei writers, does not accept this exceptional person, Yoshiko Uchida, who has never lost her belief

in humanity or her trust in American morality, which makes American politics regenerate and egalitarian democracy possible. Therefore, her works remain optimistic. However, it is a fact that a variety of opinions about camp life are found in autobiographical or biographical books written by the Nisei. For instance, the camp life was a temporary relief from poverty for the mother of Akemi Kikumura in Through Harsh Winters: The Life of a Japanese Immigrant Woman and from terrorism by anti-Japanese fanatics in Desert Exile. On the other hand, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston realized later that her "own family--collapsed as an integrated unit" (32) in Farewell to Manzanar.

As to Hisaye Yamamoto, in the interview with King-Kok Cheung, Yamamoto remarked that some female Japanese students' response to "Seventeen Syllables," approving of Mrs. Hayashi's giving up creating haiku in order to be a traditional obedient wife, was surprising, and subsequently she commented that "women's lib hasn't made much of an inroad into everyday Japanese life" (84). This statement reveals Yamamoto's lack of awareness of her position as an author with a double audience, Japanese and non-Japanese; in other words, her consciousness as a minority writer who tries to cut into the main stream of American literature and her limited understanding of Japanese society and its people, including the Japanese American Issei. Japanese art represented by haiku and Hiroshige woodprints, Japanese seasonal events like the New Year's Day Celebration, the Japanese-style bath house, Japanese food such as green tea, rice cakes and rice balls with pickled plum, and the Japanese language and jargon: those elements of Japaneseness could produce ambivalent effects on a reader. For Japanese readers, supposing they obtain adequate knowledge about their own culture, it is easy to distinguish what is real to the Japanese from what is Yamamoto's imaginary Japaneseness. Whether it seems like her imagination to



Japanese readers or not, it is real to Yamamoto since it is based on her actual experiences and observations in contact with Japanese culture through the Issei; it is fragmentary, though. Yamamoto's perception of Japanese culture is never the same as that of the Japanese, partly due to the language barrier between the Issei, whose dominant language is Japanese, and the Nisei, whose first language is English. It is common for Issei parents to say something to their Nisei children in Japanese and to get a reply in English. Yamamoto confesses to King-Kok Cheung that her "spokēn and written Japanese is practically nonexistent" (76). Another Nisei writer Yoshiko Uchida feels regret for her insufficient Japanese reading skill, which never progressed beyond the "fifth grade Japanese Reader" (40). Language is a power; speech is highly valued in Euro-American culture. To prove it, whoever takes the initiative in the conversation depends on what language is used in Yamamoto's "The Brown House." The conversation is held between Mr. Hattori and his wife's Nisei nephew. As soon as Mr. Hattori sternly orders the nephew to answer him in Japanese, the nephew's behavior, jeering at and confusing Mr. Hattori with English slang and casual speech, changes. His impressions about Mr. Hattori are turned over; he no longer manipulates the conversation since his childish Japanese diminishes his power. This kind of power struggle, not only between the Issei and the Nisei, but also between the American and the Japanese, did happen in the real world. Many Issei men must have been in Mr. Hattori's shoes.

Why the story, "Seventeen Syllables," was entitled so instead of "Haiku" may puzzle a Japanese reader. The ordinary haiku rigidly takes a form of five-seven-five syllables, so the sum of the syllables used in a haiku does not mean anything, nor does a haiku by itself. Nevertheless, most critics seem to agree that the number seventeen bespeaks of Mrs. Hayashi's stillborn son with her lover in Japan who

would have been seventeen years old, and that gives her a sudden enthusiasm for haiku--maybe as a requiem. King-Kok Cheung's speculation that the constraint of the haiku form symbolizes the culturally-suppressed Japanese women represented here by Mrs. Hayashi is also based on the presupposition that a haiku equals seventeen syllables. For the Japanese reader, seventeen syllables, which almost satisfies the haiku formula but not completely, can be interpreted as a mark of Mrs. Hayashi's unusualness and her passive resistance to the situation she is in. The resistance is passive as she never breaks the bounds of seventeen syllables, which may be a metaphor for the Japanese American community, she goes beyond the restrictions of five-seven-five syllables though. As Yuji Ichioka points out in "Amerika Nadeshiko: Japan Immigrant Women In the United States, 1900-1924," many picture brides who came to the United States with a hope of setting themselves free from "social predicaments" (345) were disillusioned by the harsh reality and ended up deserting their husbands, sometimes even their children, too. Zenobia Baxter Mistri associates "the three line scheme--five, seven, and five syllables--used for haiku", with "the metaphor for Tome's separateness" (198) from her second self, writing under the pen name, Ume Hanazono. This can be explained as metaphors for Tome's misdeeds in her girlhood, wifehood, and motherhood, disgracing her family in Japan with her love affair and unexpected pregnancy, abandoning her husband and daughter because of her passion for haiku, and forcing her secret on her daughter as well. Thus, three lines are for her three misdeeds.

Mistri's surmise about Mrs. Hayashi's first name, Tome, and her pseudonym, Ume Hanazono, may not go down with a Japanese reader. Since Tome, a conjugated verb "tomu," has homonyms, Mistri chooses a wrong homonym and translates it into "'good fortune,' or 'luck'" (198);

however, the name was customarily given to the latest born female baby (Tomekichi maybe for a male) with the parents' wish to have no more babies. Knowing nothing about modern birth control, wives of the farming class were often burdened with children that financially suffocated their families. Mrs. Hayashi, whose father had "no money" and was "a drunkard and a gambler" (18), obviously belongs to that class. Hence, the word "Tome" unmistakably means "to stop," which brings about the forced ending of Mrs. Hayashi's career as a haiku poet. Her pseudonym, "Ume" means "the plum" and "Hanazono" means "a flower garden" in Japanese. Although Mistri's emphasis is on three months, the period from a plum tree's blossom to bearing fruit and the duration of Ume Hanazono's active creativity, a reader should rather consider the characteristics of the plum tree. According to Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto, the plum blossoms pushing through the snow to announce spring's arrival beforehand are Japanese women's bridal flowers and are the "emblem of duty through hardship" (139). The pseudonym, Ume Hanazono, sounds somewhat odd because the modest, durable plum tree for which the first name stands does not fit the heavenly splendid image of a flower garden for which the last name stands.

Mr. Hayashi's destroying the Hiroshige print, the first prize that Mrs. Hayashi received, with an axe, strangely corresponds to the act of chopping down a tree and to the phrase, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" in Matthew (3.10). It should not be that hard to break the frame, to smash the glass, and to tear the print. The scene is made more horrible and exaggerated by the axe. What he wants to cut down is a plum tree growing in the wrong place, the flower garden, so that it bears the wrong fruit, haiku, instead of an heir, and which even forgets to take

care of its only fruit, Rosie. Many autobiographical novels and short stories reveal that most Japanese farmers who emigrated to America planned to go home after first earning some money. Yet they gradually started making their own families as they "left the ranks of common laborers to become small farmers and small businessmen" (Ichioka 339). After their children, the Nisei, were born, they finally decided to make their homes in America for the sake of the children--"kodomo no tame"--the phrase repeatedly uttered by Issei parents. Rosie's father is one of them. He wants to make America his home and to share the dream with his wife, who is distracted between her desire for creativity and domestic responsibility. Actually, Tome's conflict has been a problem for many female artists for a long time. Harriet Beecher Stowe, for example, tried to live up to the model American womanhood shown by her mother, Roxana Foote, as she struggled with her career as a writer, believing always that her first duty was to her family and her domestic duty. The tension of performing a double service triggered her depression and exhaustion. Likewise, Yamamoto, who remarks that "a writer must possess an enormous ego" (61) and "a writer must be a neurotic" (64), suffered a nervous breakdown, which "stemmed from fear of responsibility" (67). Unlike Stowe and Sugimoto, whose visions of an egalitarian society are deeply rooted in the values of the domestic sphere, especially of motherhood and the family as its core, Yamamoto values creativity above domestic responsibility, so she laments her mother's not having explored her potential creative ability and devotes "Seventeen Syllables" to her mother as a requiem. Therefore, Yamamoto, who believes that "a writer . . . cannot afford to bother with what people in general think of him" (60) but must have either someone or something that the writer financially depends on, sympathizes with Tome in the story and excuses her from neglecting her duty as mother and

wife. Unless the Hayashis were farmers when racist groups started expelling Japanese American farmers from their farm land in the name of the law and every day was a struggle for survival, Tome could pursue haiku without damaging Japanese womanhood, "dutiful wife and wise mother [ryosai kenbo]." Instead of accusing Tome, Yamamoto cunningly shifts the object of being criticized from Tome to her husband, who has no first name given by the author. It was and still is common for a married couple to call each other by the title of their roles in the family. For example, in her autobiography, Yoshiko Uchida's parents address each other as "mama" and "papa-san" ("san" is an honorific suffix as mentioned in chapter two) affectionately, so as most Issei parents found in Nisei's works, they may call each other simply "father" and "mother," though. That way, the feeling of sharing domestic responsibility and the importance of the family ties would be strengthened each time they speak. The impact of individualism in the Western world, on the other hand, may be exemplified by their calling each other by their first names, although it is tempered by terms of endearment, such as "honey," "sweetheart," and "dear"; at the same time, it may signify the idea of marriage as two individuals united by the Christian God. Estrangement between Mr. and Mrs. Hayashi is couched in the very words, "father" and "mother," by their referring to each other as "your [Rosie's] father" and "your mother"; otherwise prosaic "you" and the nonverbal gesture of acknowledgment replace it. Considering the fact that even minor characters such as Tome's sister and her husband have first names, Taka and Ginpachi, it may be deduced that Yamamoto covertly intended for Mr. Hayashi to be anonymous for several reasons. First, Yamamoto's purpose of writing "Seventeen Syllables," which she calls her mother's story, is to reveal the Issei women's harsh lives ever since they, as picture brides, got a glimpse of their husbands for

the first time at the immigration station. Therefore, the detailed story of the Issei men is omitted. As a result, it is left to the reader to analyze Issei men's character and to guess their psychology from a few clues. Because single men exceeded women of marriageable age in number the United States, urgent necessity caused men to take advantage of the long-practiced Japanese custom of arranged marriage from retouched photos and overdrawn resumes.

Yoshiko Uchida dramatized the deception practiced by men and women's disillusionment in her novel Picture Brides. Her protagonist, Hana Omiya, despite her wish to become a school teacher in Tokyo, a dream occupation in a dream city for most highly educated women in the early twentieth century, now retreats to "the smothering strictures of life in her village" (3) and is under the pressure of "finding a proper husband" (2) at the age of twenty-one. On the other hand, Taro Takeda, Hana's future husband, is introduced as "a conscientious, hard-working man" who "could provide well for a wife" (2) in America. Although the photograph Hana received was taken at Taro's graduation from Middle School, possibly taken more than fifteen years ago since Taro is thirty-one years old, there is no evidence that Hana and her family care much about it. For a woman's family, a man's appearance is not a matter of importance as long as he is from a decent house or, in Taro's case, earns a decent living. Moreover, people's trust in the go-betweens and their information in arranged marriage as the best system in short, was steadfast. For Hana, the marriage with Taro means not only a flight from the status quo and foreseeably a future loveless marriage with a farmer or a merchant, but also satisfies her romantic notion of love, probably nurtured during five years of high school education in Kyoto, which allows her to venture to America. She fancies herself becoming a life-saver of Taro from his loneliness and living happily ever after,

just like Cinderella. This girlish heroism, sentimentalism and the lure of material comforts in America blinds her to the deception. Hana even denies her anxiety about Taro's personality and their compatibility as "they would have a lifetime together to get to know one another" (5) when her instinct vaguely senses dishonesty in Taro's letters from America. As mentioned in the second chapter, Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto depicted how arranged marriage affects women's mentality on the subconscious level by tracing her aversion to Matsuo after their first baby was born to the point of realizing love for him. Flurried by the sudden shut-out of her carefree girlhood, unconscious resistance to losing one's identity represented by the last name, and fear of losing one's innocence and sexuality are so strong that even the mask she puts on to play a role in a society hardly helps to hide her inner struggle for emotional stability. Worse than all, to adjust herself without any models such as a mother-in-law or a sister-in-law is like groping her way in the dark and is especially difficult in a foreign land. By a lucky chance, Etsu had Miss Wilson around to consult with; not many Japanese Americans had such a patron. Unlike traditional Japanese women who usually avoid direct eye contact, Hana gazes upon Taro in bewilderment at their first meeting on the pier in San Francisco because his appearance, his head turning bald and the gold fillings of his teeth are very different from what she has imagined about him. Since it was her will to come to America to marry Taro, all Hana can do is face the unexpected situation with calm resignation; yet she cannot help feeling aversion to Taro. As if he were an embodiment of impurity which defiles her purity, Hana tries to let "no part of their clothing [touch]" (7) when she sits beside him. Thus, some Issei male characters in women's fiction tend to symbolize what most Issei women are opposed to, such as a hierarchical, patriarchal society, defilement and violence, which are

irrelevant concepts as applied to real Issei men in the history of Japanese Americans.

Next, Yamamoto's memory of her father influenced her creation of the nameless Mr. Hayashi, who may be used as a synecdoche for Issei fathers, who were farmers or laborers, whom Yamamoto actually knew or heard about, but not intellectual upper class Issei fathers. Comparing Yamamoto's father to those of Etsu Sugimoto and Yoshiko Uchida, the difference is obvious. The latter encouraged their daughters' intellectual development in seeking higher education as did Yamamoto's mother, but "my [Yamamoto's] father not so much" (Cheung 85). Uchida's self-disciplined father never complained of his daughters' leaving behind their parents in camp to attend colleges because what mattered more than his loneliness or worry was that his daughters made good futures in the United States. Whereas Yamamoto's father "begged" (80) Yamamoto and her brothers to come back to camp from Massachusetts as he could not bear the death of his son in Italy. Therefore, though Yamamoto stated that "he [Mr. Hayashi] was acting the way he'd been brought up to act, the men were supposed to be" (Seventeen Syllables 85), a reader should not confuse Issei fathers in those two classes. Fathers from the farming class could express their emotions more freely; if not by articulation, then by their behavior, such as violence, gambling, or drinking. Besides, it is understandable for them to feel rage, inferiority, humiliation and helplessness because the whole situation was embittered by discriminatory American laws. Hence, Mr. Hayashi could be replaced by any Issei father from the working class.

Last of all, Yamamoto's intention of depicting Mrs. Hayashi or her mother as double victims of seemingly patriarchal Japanese society and of American racism and war-time hysteria was made possible only by the elliptical description of Mr. Hayashi, including his name. If the



historical background of the story were given, or communication between Mr. Hayashi and Rosie were amicable, the reader would see through the author's intention. For example, Rosie who meets her father coming out from the bathhouse says, "I was going to ask you to scrub my back." "'Scrub your own back,' he [Mr. Hayashi] said shortly, going toward the main house" (14). Public bathing is a well known custom in Japan. People scrubbing each other's backs is not a surprising scene. Nevertheless, younger people usually take care of their elders with respect and tenderness. Babies and children who are too little to wash themselves are the only exceptions. Rosie in her adolescence does not need any help, especially from her father. Thus Rosie's request ridicules Mr. Hayashi and her rudeness embarrasses and offends him. Yet, understanding Mr. Hayashi's feeling correctly from his short reply without a description of his facial expression or explanation by the first person narrator is almost impossible.

As mentioned above, Yamamoto's use of anonymity, along with her use of "muted plot," which describes parallel phenomena running through the story, is an effective device to control the reader with its intentional obscurity. "Seventeen Syllables" can be read as either an ethnic political protest against the mistreatment of Japanese Americans during World War II or as a feminist protest against the patriarchal Confucian code practiced in Japanese society. Moreover, such devices are appropriate for a Nisei writer who is struggling to achieve an identity between American culture and Japanese culture. Even history, the chronological order of events, cannot avoid ambiguity. Events occur because of people; people report these events as history. As long as people associate, subjectivity works, so that truth hides in obscurity.

Yamamoto's short stories have two distinctive features. One of them is the absence of any description of nature or its beauty, which is

the essence of Japanese aesthetics. The other trait is agoraphobia. In most stories, where characters are and events occur is a small confined space which may superimpose a depressing, stifling atmosphere of horse stalls used as temporally housing and makeshift barracks in a desert which were called an assembly center and a relocation camp.

Without abandoning the rituals and seasonal events of Buddhism and Shinto, many Issei tried to accommodate their ancestral religions to Christianity by looking for possible replacements or similarities. Integration of Buddhism and Christianity happened in the minds of Japanese Americans who were converted Christians. An example can be seen in Etsu Sugimoto's comparing the love of Christ to the love of mothers and ultimately to the mercy of Kannon, the Buddhist god. The trait of Kannon interposes a woman's characteristics, especially giving up her own ego, devoting herself to others, her children and a husband, enduring the suffering, supporting her children to accomplish their dreams, and being the last prop for them by forgiving endlessly. On this point, most mothers are Kannon and vice versa. The identification of Kannon and mothers strengthens the impression that the concept of Japanese motherhood, especially the mother as a savior, and merges with other religions in deeper level. In the same manner, Shinto and Christianity were blended through the romantic notion of nature. However, Hisaye Yamamoto takes a stand on the traditional Western view of nature, powerful, awesome, and hostile nature against sinful mankind. It presents a striking contrast to the feminine image of nature in Shinto, prolific, nurturing, and protective, in which the people exist as if in a mother's arms. Description of nature is hardly found or not found at all in Yamamoto's short stories. If it exists, it opposes and threatens people with destructive force in "Yoneko's Earthquake," or the bizarre and ominous image of the Bering Sea found in "The Eskimo

Connection." Nature is a reminder of God's vengeful eyes penetrating every "nook or cranny" (61), exposing Yuki Tsumagari, the protagonist's imaginary defilement of sacred places and beautiful nature by having sex with Marco in "Epithalamium." Rocks on the beach do not hide the lovers from others' eyes. Huge black mosquitoes punish Yuki with their stingers in the woods, and skunk cabbages growing near the creek mark her guilt on the back of her dress as if she were the heroine of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. "Epithalamium" is a story of "[d]elusions of grandeur" (62) in which Yamamoto interwove Hopkins's "God's Grandeur" with the life of a Japanese American Nisei, Yuki Tsumagari. As if a merciless coroner were conducting an autopsy of one's dead past, Yamamoto sarcastically depicted Yuki's belated metamorphosis into a woman from a feminist perspective; there is no promised future or happy ending provided for her. The sequence of events is unpredictable because it depends on the memories activated by association. The story leaps in time and space as past experiences fragmentarily recur to Yuki, although it centers on her wedding day at Princess Bay trolley station where she is waiting for her drunkard husband to become sober. Also it has an underlying cynicism skillfully hidden in the names of people, places, rituals, and historical events, and coated with the sweet signs of spring or of hope: the psalms of the Tenebrae sung by the young seminarians in a nearby monastery, a beautiful scene near the creek which Yuki found on St. Joseph's Day, and the awe-inspiring ray of the morning sun which literally "springs" in Hopkins's poem.

The psalms of the Tenebrae are sung on Holy Wednesday and Thursday nights in commemoration of the crucifixion. The gradual extinguishing of candles, accompanied by singing, corresponds to the line of Hopkins's poem, "And though the last lights off the black West went," if Easter,

the celebration of the Resurrection, symbolizes light and hope. Yuki experienced momentary transcendence and purification of her soul through listening to the Tenebrae brought by the wind. However, that glorious moment was immediately obliterated by the painful memory of her fall from innocence.

Regarding the protagonist's first name, which literally means "snow," it suggests symbolic meanings as well: "purity" in association with its color, "coldness" with its touch, and as an element of winter, the season of "death" that confronts the signs of spring, the season of revival, and simultaneously explains Yuki's situation. She is as barren as the soil in the poem which "wears man's smudge and shares man's smell," and the soil covered with snow in winter. Her childlessness, along with her miscarriage, is depicted by the bread she made. No matter how she baked it, the bread turned out to be "wheaten bricks" (64). The image of severe winter calls up the life of Yukiko, whose name also means "snow," in Etsu Sugimoto's A Daughter of the Narikin. She quietly accepted herself as a passive object for men, first her father and then her husband. Since their marriage was based only on their family name and aspirations without respect or love between them, no matter how much she endured her humiliating situation, however hard she tried to satisfy her husband by performing as a model wife, she never could fulfill his expectations. Her dignified beauty that was criticized as "cold" estranged her from her husband's desire. Moreover, he instinctively knew of her strong ego concealed underneath her well-maintained docility and resignation. So when she reached the limit of her patience and came to a crisis in her self, she sought her way out by becoming a Buddhist nun. Kannon, the god of mercy, linked to the image of her late mother, guarded her from losing her ego.

As to the name of the trolley station, whether it is fictional or

not, "Princess Bay" subtly fits as the axis of the story. If Marco, an attractive seaman, were a prince charming for women, then Yuki, who was waiting at the bay, could be a princess in her fantasy; it is ironic that this seaman is not a hero seeking adventures, but an alcoholic, sleeping like the dead. Here, Yamamoto juxtaposes young seminarians and Marco Cimarusti to compare them and poses a question, what is the meaning of her existence?

Seminarians devote the springtime of their lives to God and are the embodiment of divine purity and love, men of restraint from vice and human desire for which Lent, fasting and penitence in preparation for Easter, is held. On the contrary, Marco is pictured as a "big-boned and hardy-handsome" (65) man. Even Madame Marie, one of the founders of Zualet Community, admired his physical beauty and strength as "a gift for work that not many are given" (66). According to Hopkins, there are always "the dearest freshness deep down things," that is the infinite source of beauty and love in the depth of both of man and nature. In the case of Marco, he has already passed the prime of youth and plunges into alcoholism. His once perfect face has become "flushed and swollen with drink" (61) and has lost the freshness of its first being.

Yamamoto's placing stress on this "lost freshness" of Marco's head, along with Yuki's posture, strangely corresponds with the beheading of John the Baptist and gives a clue as to why this unsuitable episode for the wedding was added to the end of the story. The narrator goes back to the central scene of the story three times, and each time there is a picture of Yuki and Marco posing like the Virgin Mary's holding Jesus's dead body, such as "He passed out with his head on her lap" (61); "small Oriental girl . . . cradling on her lap the head of this mould of man" (65); and "Marco slumped heavily against her" (68). In fact, Yuki must have imagined herself sharing maternal love, purity and virtue with the

Virgin Mary when she was supporting Marco's head and feeling its weight on her.

It was her imagination and inclination to romanticize or to fantasize about reality that caused her decisions at the turning points of her life. Because this characteristic is similar to the Cinderella complex, her Nisei companions of her literary circle in San Francisco contemptuously called her "a shopgirl at heart" (66) and criticized her as a deviant from the norm. A single woman at age thirty-one was freakish enough; worst of all, she was fairly contented with being in a situation which for most women would be a shameful and pitiful state. Through the reactions of others, Yuki became conscious of the invisible code of society, which urged her to give up waiting for a prince charming and to marry Michio, a Nisei man, with whom the future is predetermined and boring. Besides the social pressure, her mother's intention of saddling her daughter with her own destiny cornered Yuki. She knew instinctively that what Simone de Beauvoir called "the delights of passivity" inhered in her. Yet, the idea of accepting herself as a passive object for men like her Issei mother seemed untimely to Yuki. Therefore she asserted to her parents that there was something she had to do before marriage, but did not exactly know what to do.

According to Beauvoir, "[o]nly the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other" (267). If so, Yuki's mother's image which a reader creates in one's mind could be merely a reflection of her on Yuki's eyes while Yuki projected her existence into an image of "katawa" or "freak," which reflected on other Nisei's eyes. However, as previously discussed, Issei women were autonomous and transcendent subjects, who are symbolically compared to the sun. Because of concealing their ego under the persona of a passive object, they looked inferior and hateful to the eyes of the Nisei. The persona of her

mother was merely Yuki's delusion. Because of a deficiency of communication between Issei mothers and Nisei daughters caused by variety of reasons, such as lack of time for talk due to Issei women's joining labor ranks and small businesses for financial reasons, both the Issei and the Nisei's language deficiencies, the concentration camps' side effect of breaking up family ties, the Nisei's self-consciousness as Americans rather than as Japanese Americans to integrate themselves to American society during the time of their growing-up, and the Nisei's being educated in American schools and acquiring American values and American ways of thinking, most Nisei misjudged their Issei parents and neglected and underestimated their Japanese heritage until the threat of the war became a part of history. As found in two other stories by Yamamoto, "Morning Rain" and "Las Vegas Charley," it was often too late for the Nisei to accept the Issei as they were and to bridge the generation gap.

In spite of her age, the awakening of sexuality, which young girls usually pass through with the conflict between "the authentic demand of the subject who wants sovereign freedom" and "inauthentic longing" (298) for the delight of passivity, had not occurred to Yuki at this stage. Her purity and innocence were perfectly preserved, and in her mind, a romantic lover and his erotic urges never became synthesized in one man. However, her immaturity brought her solitude and the anguish of being distinguished as sole katawa in the Japanese American community instead. To be free from both social pressure and loneliness and "to be lost in the bosom of the Whole" (270), Yuki simply transferred to the Zualet Community, where "the offscouring of the world" (63) live together on Christian principles. The other motive of her joining the community was her longing for Madame Marie, whom she knew from her autobiography. The book described in detail how she gave up her love, who was conveniently

"a confirmed agnostic" (64) and ended up as "the wise virgin" (63) for the sake of accomplishing Providence, establishing the Catholic lay community. According to Beauvoir, at a transition period from girlhood to womanhood, a young girl often shows "lesbian tendencies" (343), that is to substitute "a virile woman" for a real man as an object of love. This form of love, often platonic love, is almost identical to "narcissistic enjoyment" (343) because the girl actually adores the immanent femininity inside of her as well. Also the girl can avoid facing her fear of men and disgracing herself by painful, violent carnal union/sexual intercourse. Madame Marie fulfills all the requirements for the virile woman: unmarried, economically independent, and having a profession and social recognition more than ordinary men, but retaining her womanly qualities. Therefore, instead of looking for a model in her mother, Yuki idolized Madame Marie, worshipped her, and strived to identify herself with her. She even knelt to the Christian God to whom her Mentor consecrated herself. Beauvoir's comment on this attitude offers an insight into this nature of women. "By choosing someone who is not attainable she may make of love an abstract subjective experience with no threat to her integrity" (348). Yuki, like Madame Marie, ultimately chose God as that "someone," who makes her "all-powerful through deepest resignation" (291) until Marco appeared in her life and fully awoke her eroticism and sexuality.

Interestingly enough, Yamamoto's choices of words: "defile" and "taint" for love making, "shame" and "physical, moral, and spiritual ruin" for Yuki's status, and "sweet" and "pure" for young seminarians voices, indicate that human sexuality is categorized as impurity. At the same time, it should be pointed out that Yamamoto's semantic properties and lexicon were unconsciously influenced by Shinto in which the Christian concepts of "good" and "evil" do not exist, but rather do



the concepts "pure" and "impure" instead.

Yuki's confusion of Western values based on Christianity and Japanese values based on Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism is seen in several places. For instance, the physical pain of lost virginity reminds Yuki of the burning sensation of hot water in a Japanese wooden bathtub and how hard she resisted taking the bath. Considering that bathing is a process of purification, Yuki's resistance may ironically suggest not only her refusal of Japanese customs, but also her preference of being "bleared, smeared with toil" expressed as the human condition in Hopkins's poem. This flashback also hints at her remorse for violating both social and religious codes spontaneously and at her regret for "the very laws of existence" (307) of women that completes Yuki's transformation to a woman only through pains.

Another example of her confusion is found in Yuki's reasoning behind her not being baptized. She explained it as filial piety, one of the most important virtues, which collides with the absolutes of Christianity. When little Reiko in "Between Heaven and Paradise" was forced to choose after death between Christian heaven and Buddhist paradise, sometimes called Limbo by Christians, she reluctantly chose heaven to please her mother. Likewise, Yuki was in anguish for her Buddhist parents because if she converted, she and her parents would be separated forever. To satisfy both, Yuki claimed that she was "in her heart Catholic," in other words, the rightness of the "baptism of desire" (68). At any rate, the foundation of her belief of the Christian God is shaky because it is based on delusions, dreams, and magic. Not only Yuki, but also Madame Marie was caught in the trap. Although she did not verbalize her very thought, Madame Marie seemed to believe that the pigeon perched on her shoulder was a sign from God, a divine messenger disguised as a pigeon. It is as "wicked and

unfaithful" (68) as Yuki's believing in Hopkins's poem echoing in her mind as a sign of God's approval of marriage to Marco. The only difference between them is their awareness or lack thereof, of their delusions. Madame Marie was unaware, so she was reckless of his rod and played the role of the savior of outcasts of society, whereas Yuki recognized her willfulness but still "wanted to believe" (68) the sign. She understood the significance of the poem, in which God smites and heals sinful human being in one and the same action, as olives need to be crushed to produce their oil. In the Catholic sense, she was certainly categorized as a sinner for reasons of her adultery, her unexpected pregnancy, and miscarriage. Yuki was half ready to accept His punishment as just and merciful, but half feared the punishment and doomed future she would have to face. Hence, she again used magic, which "involves the idea of a passive force" (341), according to Beauvoir, to ease the fear. That magic was to pretend to be the Virgin Mary, who represents ideal womanhood in Christianity and even possesses a common trait, mercy, with Kannon in Buddhism. Moreover, the last line of Hopkins's poem, "World broods with warm breast . . ." responds to maternal or feminine aspect of the love of God.

Yuki muttered, "O bright unhappiness. O shining sorrow. Why this man?" (65). There is no given answer to Yuki; the reader can assume it from the feeling of relief, which emerged between the lines. It is the relief of finding a new ideal love represented by the Virgin Mary. By nursing the hope of reforming Marco with her love and care, Yuki tries to compensate for her sins and to purify herself. Yet, Yamamoto alludes to Yuki's failure by overlapping the head of John the Baptist and the head of Marco. In harsh reality, her journey would be difficult whichever way she chose to go. Only in her delusions, she could identify herself with the transcendent. Yuki leaves the Zualet

Community since she, as a fully developed woman, no longer fits into the place for deviants. She goes back to the Japanese community as a married woman, but she still is deviant there since she married "a 'hakujiin' (white) alcoholic" (68). Although interracial marriages were in most cases unwelcome to Issei parents, they were considered fashionable and as a shortcut of integrating themselves into the white majority for the Nisei. Alcoholism was anathemas for both generations. Thus, Yuki went a long way round and reached the starting point.

When the Nisei, who had genuinely believed they were Americans, were suddenly exposed to hostility, racism, and injustice, they rather felt ashamed of their origins, their mother culture, and their appearance than feeling angry toward their "democratic country" and its politics. Some Nisei put the blame on their parents or came into conflict with everything Japanese, to vent their indignation from being rejected by the majority and classified as second class citizens. On the contrary, most Issei concealed their emotions: anger, humiliation, and bitterness, and maintained calm on the outside for the sake of their children--kodomo no tame. In reality, the Issei from middle to upper classes had already received modern education in Japan, so that their acculturation to the adopted country was comparatively smooth. The tremendous conflict and struggle between Issei parents and Nisei children often occurred in the working class families as found in the writings of the Nisei. Chiyo, a daughter of Etsu Sugimoto who claimed to be a Nisei, observed this tragedy in Hawaii and asserted that the cause was the language barrier: "the mother could neither speak or understand English and the attractive daughter could not understand or speak Japanese" (134). Most Nisei admitted lack of the Japanese language. Hisaye Yamamoto, who belonged to the latter, remembered that in most farming families even women and children were helping hands;

they could hardly talk after a day's labor. Because those parents were lacking in spare time, their knowledge of English to communicate well, and a higher education by which to teach, they often sent their children to Japanese schools to acquire the Japanese language, manners, and morality if the family lived in or close to a Japanese community. Otherwise, the remote families were totally isolated in the wilderness. American schools reward children for aggressiveness, initiative and individuality, whereas Japanese schools praise them for being part of the group since individuality seems likely to disrupt the social dynamics. This difference in values increased the tension between the American-self and the Japanese-self which coexisted inside of the children. As a result of their adolescent agony, which was fueled by their war experiences, many Nisei chose to live as Americans, and they abandoned their Japanese counterpart. Their parents were projected as stereotypical Japanese on their American eyes and were eventually embedded in their memories as parts of a forgotten past. When they reached their parents' age and realized their loss, they started resurrecting their dead past by writing histories about their Issei parents and themselves. The terrible war is long gone; Japanese Americans are now considered the model minority. However, the dead Issei are silent and carried their truth away to the tomb. For that reason Issei characters in the writings of the Nisei are either extremely stereotypical, anonymous, or pessimistic as those in Yamamoto's stories. Because of their immigrant status, of the destruction of the war, and of the Japanese characteristics colored by Confucianism, the majority of the Issei and the Nisei were too lacking in communication for reconciliation. Yoshiko Uchida was among the lucky few, who had little conflict between the two cultures and maintained an optimistic view of life. Economic security, higher education, and

belief in Christianity made her parents more malleable and Americanized than the others and made it possible to bond the two generations. Since they understood and believed in American ideals, they had no objection to their daughters' becoming Americans and making America their home. As living in a foreign country distant from their homeland also sensitized their eyes to a new light on the true worth of Japanese heritage, they tried to teach it, too. Thus, the Japanese heritage was successfully transmitted from the Issei to the Nisei in the books of Uchida, whereas false images of the Issei were depicted in stories by Yamamoto. Yamamoto's technique of employing these images enabled her to create more complex and sophisticated stories, which match the taste of modern readers than those of Uchida.

## CHAPTER IV

### SANSEI: JOY KOGAWA

As discussed in chapter one, wide definitions of terms relevant to Japanese Americans make it possible to categorize Japanese American literature, which is here defined as literature written in English by people of Japanese ancestry living on the American continents. On this hypothesis, a Sansei writer, Joy Kogawa will be examined in this chapter. Kogawa is Canadian. Besides nationality, several other elements divide the Sansei. Dates of birth, especially the distinction between prewar/postwar, predetermine the course of their work. Ethnicity is another significant element because the Sansei are no longer homogeneous in their blood and culture, as a result of intermarriage. They are heterogeneous and multicultural. Although the mixed blood may cause a Nisei-like identity crisis, it also adds a global perspective to Japanese American literature. The Sansei could be categorized into groups depending on when they were born, where they were raised, and what strains were mixed in their blood. That is why Japanese American literature by Sansei shows the variety of forms, styles, and themes and possibilities of a unique body of ethnic literature.

Born in 1935, four years before World War II, Joy Kogawa exists in a transitional period from Nisei to Sansei. Like as many Nisei writers who vented their pent-up feelings in creating artistic forms, which were often autobiographical or biographical, Kogawa also wrote autobiographical novels. The novels which were entitled Obasan and Itsuka combined fiction with documentary and recollection. Instead of a nervous breakdown, which Nisei writer Hisaye Yamamoto experienced, Naomi

Nakane, the Sansei protagonist of two serial novels, suffers from occasional stomachaches and nightmares. Certain psychologically-injured characters can only be depicted by writers born before the war, who actually experienced the concentration camps and hardships associated with them. Unlike Yamamoto, who completely ignored the beauty of nature, Kogawa successfully captured its beauty in her poetic prose. Her sensibilities led her even further to the stage of understanding Japanese core religions, Buddhism and Shinto, and of reviving the Japanese sense of "mujo" and Japanese aesthetics called "mono no aware."

Mujo, which Etsu Sugimoto referred to as "a strain of hopeless sadness" (Samurai 21) and to which doctrine which she imputed restraint in her childhood, is originally a Buddhist term. It means "everything that is born must die" and "nothing remains unchanged" (262). Its use in Japanese American literature is found in Issei's speech as directly as Obasan's refrain, "Everyone someday dies" and in the description of nature and its beauty that pulls one's heart-strings with subtle sadness. Acknowledging death, ageing, mutability as inevitable and reaching cognizance of the transience of human life and of the impermanence of things as the law of nature, gave strength to the Issei to endure humiliating experiences, discrimination, and the deaths of their close friends and family, to survive during the rough times of their lives by saying "it can't be helped," and to maintain their dignity and humanity. In the eyes of many Nisei imbued with Western values, especially in their youth, the sense of mujo was reflected as Buddhist pessimism. It was hard to associate the Buddhist sense of ephemerality with elegant beauty and, moreover, to apply Issei struggling in harsh reality, to the beauty. Hence, the doctrine of mujo was rejected, and the Issei were despised as those who had no sense of democracy and were either blindly obedient, docile, and humble servants

of the white majority or as savage Japanese. The upwardly mobile Nisei had to wait to realize the loss, the sense of *mujo* and their Issei parents, who had sacrificed themselves for the sake of children, which was a beautiful deed, until they reached their parents' age and were asked about their cultural heritage from their Japanese ancestors by the Sansei.

On the one hand, "mono" refers to external objects, "no" is a possessive particle, and "aware", originally an exclamation, implies internal feelings, such as pathos, sorrow, and grief; thus, *mono no aware* is "a deep, empathetic appreciation of the ephemeral beauty manifest in nature and human life, and it is therefore usually tinged with a hint of sadness" (246). There are several scenes in which Kogawa effectively applied this "uniquely Japanese way of seeing the world and its beauty" (Picken 57) to reveal Naomi's innermost feelings without actually articulating them. Rather, nature speaks for her. Her state of mind is visualised in natural phenomenon.

The natural setting of chapter thirty-one of Obasan, in the swamp in Granton, is more than just background. It is a microcosm of small creatures such as water spiders, tadpoles, toads, and frogs. It is not a world in which the weak become victims of the strong. Small creatures live there in harmony; they merge perfectly into their tranquil surroundings. There is nothing fancy in this cosmos. Bushes and bulrushes stand against the sky like "chopsticks or candles" (204) being offered to the dead on a Buddhist altar. Naomi squats motionless on the roots of a dead tree, which is a symbol of her mother's death, but her senses attentively detect nearly unnoticeable creatures, as she unconsciously tries to find signs of life. Naomi always finds them "in unexpected places" (204) and is amused by nature's great protection, the earth mother's care for her children. On the contrary, Stephen, her



brother, never respects or appreciates nature. He kills ants with his heel and slaps a mosquito without hesitation because they are worthless, trifling creatures to him. To his westernized ears, frog's croaks do not sound like music. Naomi finds a green frog with a broken leg, brings it home and names it Tad, an abbreviation for Tadashi, her father. She enjoys imagining that Tad is her father in disguise or possibly a messenger from him. Kogawa spends the rest of the chapter persistently writing about about Tad and how well Naomi takes care of him. There is no mention of the reason for the sudden visit from Nakayama-sensei, a Japanese priest, on that day. The death of Naomi's father, although it was alluded to by the fact that Tad was found near the dead tree, Stephen's "pervasive weight of gentleness" (207), the absence of reply letters from her father, and the disappearance of Tad, just like Naomi's mother, is finally verified in the next chapter.

Their first day in Slocan, the moment that the back door of their hut was opened, a marvelous scene of numberless butterflies flirting and hovering in the fresh air unfolded before Naomi and Stephen. Their response to this welcome by nature makes the distinction between one who understands the Japanese sense of aesthetics from one who does not. An exclamation, "Ah! the green air once more," (Obasan 122) in Naomi's mind shows her appreciation of nature as well as her feeling of freedom from worry in nature's arms. Her sensitive eyes wide open to each butterfly to see how uniquely each was made; nature is considerate even of the most trifling of creatures. Whereas Stephen cannot wipe away his frustration because he feels that nature is just a trap meant to confine him to a wilderness in order to keep him away from music, his mission only achieved in civilized life. Therefore, the breath-taking beauty of nature does not touch him, but rather it evokes anger and contempt. He labels the insects as bad because they eat holes in his dream as they do

to clothing. He scatters them, damages them, kills them, but nature never abandons her children. As if to symbolize nature's mercy, one butterfly flies over his head.

As the scenes above exemplify, the beauty of nature evokes Naomi's repressed emotions, especially when she sees natural objects as trifling, small, and as invisible as herself. In other words, what she sees in nature is her perception of human reality imbued with beauty.

Interestingly enough, the motif of reconciliation of opposites found in Etsu Sugimoto's works reappears in Kogawa's two novels. Etsu's two mothers, Mrs. Inagaki and Miss Wilson, are here revived as Naomi's two aunts: Ayako Nakane, who has raised Naomi and is depicted as a traditional Japanese, and Emily Kato, who is called a "militant Nisei" (Itsuka 3) and who devotes herself to the redress of Japanese Canadians. As Etsu's two mothers are representatives of East and West, each aunt represents the Issei and the Nisei, a master of the world of silence and that of speech. Naomi calls Ayako "Obasan," which means "aunt" but is used as a general title for any older female in Japan, while the other aunt is simply called "Aunt Emily." This difference also clarifies the author's intention of comparing the two. Naomi's attitude toward life is considerably affected, and she gradually steps out from the domain of silence to that of speech. However, she never neglects one for the other. She reconciles the two different worlds in one, as does Kogawa herself.

Another motif Kogawa takes over from other generations is an absent mother/lonely child situation. For Issei writers discussed in chapter two, the mother was often remote in their childhood because it was customary for mothers of upper class families to have "baya" or "neya" to nurse their children. Mothers existed, but children occasionally felt as if they were left behind. For most Nisei, mothers were missing

either literally or symbolically. According to Yuji Ichioka, notices of their desertions of husbands and sometimes children quite often appeared in community newspapers (170). Besides most Issei women engaged in small businesses or labor for financial reasons, as mentioned in chapter three. Therefore, time that mothers and children could spend together was scarce. Along with the problem of language efficiency on both sides, it resulted children's getting lost. Kogawa's novels depict two unfortunate mother-daughter pairs. Naomi and her mother are one, and Aunt Emily and Grandma Kato are the other.

As argued in chapter two, the image of ideal Japanese womanhood is based on the characteristics of the sun in association with the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami in Shinto. To sum up, the sun goddess's solar, shamanistic, and feminist traits are roughly interpreted as authority, power, and fairness (the sun), sacredness and spirituality (the shaman), and a source of life (the woman). Interestingly, three female characters in Kogawa's first novel seem to possess each of these traits; Aunt Emily has the solar characteristic, Naomi's mother the shamanistic, Obasan the feminine. Moreover, three women are categorized separately; Obasan is an Issei, Naomi's mother is a "Kibei," born in Canada but raised in Japan, and Aunt Emily is a Nisei. Another grouping is also possible. Aunt Emily is single; Obasan is married, but has no children; Naomi's mother is married and has children. By choosing important characters from a variety of people in various situations, Kogawa's Obasan successfully pictures a balanced view of a Japanese Canadian life. Naomi was raised by her own mother from her birth to five years old, then lived with or close to Obasan until 1976, when she reached her forties and moved to Toronto to work with Aunt Emily. Although Naomi spent a longer time with Obasan, Aunt Emily's picture is the most realistic, and clear compared to the other two. That is

partially because Naomi and Emily shared the same problem, missing their mothers.

Aunt Emily, Emily Kato, is described by Naomi as "the one with the vision" (31), "a word warrior," "a crusader, a little old grey-haired Mighty Mouse, a Bachelor of Advanced Activists and General Practitioner of Just Causes" (32), and "one of the world's white blood cells" (34). As if she were a politician, she devotes her life to her goals, to destroy social, political injustice, and to achieve the redress of Japanese Canadians. Only her political aspect is emphasized. In the eyes of Uncle Isamu, she is projected as a representative of Nisei women, she is "muzukashi," which means "difficult," "[n]ot like [a] woman" (36), and "not very Japanese-like" (40). The difference between the Issei and Nisei prevents Uncle from seeing her as an individual. When Naomi gets older, she begins to realize other aspects of Aunt Emily for the first time: her sensitivity, vulnerability, and humanity. These are seen in her persistent search for her mother and elder sister who were lost in Japan. Also her diary, which addressed her sister as "Nesan," which means "elder sister," shows her loyalty, respect, and love for her sister, who presents a striking contrast to her in appearance, life style, and the way of thinking. Naomi's mother was raised by her grandmother in Japan probably because of her fragility or the financial situation of the family during her growing up, or the combination of both. Meanwhile, Emily was left with her father, Grandpa Kato, who worked for Miss Naomi Best, an English Canadian missionary, as a houseboy and later became a student of the medical school with her help. To put Naomi's mother's surface characteristic briefly, "[s]he is altogether yasashi" (51). Her voice is "soft and tender" (51); her oval face is delicate and wears a pathetic look and childlike innocence; her quiet gentle manner appeases every negative emotion. She attracts

everybody without exception. On the other hand, Emily is definitely not attractive as a female. She has "the round open face" with glasses and "the stocky build" just like her father; her "solid and intelligent-looking" (19) appearance is far from beautiful; she is rational; her incisive speech sometimes sounds too harsh and direct to people's ears, and it is this which causes the distance between Obasan and herself.

The insertion of Aunt Emily's diary brings a double exposure effect to Obasan. Since the book takes the form of an autobiography, it only has a first person narrator, Naomi's perspective, except the diary part, which is written from Emily's point of view. Therefore, it reveals the circumstances, which caused Obasan to become the guardian of Naomi and Stephen, Naomi's father's love for his wife, reliance on Emily, and the unexpected emotional conflict between Obasan and Emily. Emily wrote about an incident that occurred on a stormy night: Naomi's father, Tadashi Mark Nakane (called Mark by Emily), found Naomi seated on a pillow, striking a Japanese doll her missing mother had given her before. The phrase, "Aya [Obasan] slept through the whole storm but Mark woke up" (81) alludes to her blame for Obasan for neglecting her duty as a guardian and for being so insensitive about children's psyches. Emily sympathizes and worries that Naomi, possibly because she sees herself as a lonely child in her niece, or she remembers the mixed feeling of longing and jealousy toward her sister, who got everything she wanted: beauty, talent, marriage, children, and a home. The relationship between ordinary Naomi and Stephen, who is a musical genius, is nearly identical. Nevertheless, Naomi cannot understand Emily's good intentions because Emily cannot express her compassion with the appropriate gentle words. Hence, Naomi occasionally criticizes her blind belief in the absolute power of speech and her ignorance of

Japanese values such as silence and filial piety as follows: "People who talk a lot about their victimization" are "as if they use their suffering as weapons or badges of some kind." ". . . it's the children who say nothing who are in trouble more than the ones who complain" (34). The other cause of Naomi's misunderstanding Emily is that she learned how to see things through Obasan's eyes and think with Uncle's brain, so it became her second nature. In 1954, Naomi noticed for the first time the tension between Obasan and Aunt Emily when Obasan put on one of her best dresses on the occasion of Emily's visit and Emily looked away after perfunctory greetings. This is the friction between Naomi's two aunts, based on their beliefs of what is best for Naomi, and who can dominate Naomi. In this scene, even militant Emily withdraws from Obasan's presence who like a queen or a rock firmly blocks Emily's way. For the sake of the children, the Issei woman un.masks her strength, true Japanese womanhood.

Aunt Emily suddenly manifests her other aspect as a woman of sensibilities in Itsuka when she encountered Min (Minoru) Kawai on the street in Toronto. He was once a talented young artist with a sensitive and naive heart till the war was changed the course of his life; now he is a loser, cut out from Japanese American communities and suffering mental problems. The drive which Emily has to go on the redress movement comes from him. Her feeling toward him, probably love, is too deep to speak of, so she cries and asks Father Cedric for help.

Naomi's mother and Obasan are allegorical characters in Kogawa's books. Both of them are called by their role titles, except Emily's calling Obasan Aya since she recognizes her as something of an opponent. Kogawa keeps Naomi's mother nameless to frame her as an embodiment of Japanese motherhood, especially to enhance her supernatural sacred image. The most terrifying, mysterious, but sorrowful scene is found in

chapter twenty-four, the shortest chapter in Obasan. Naomi's mother's soul, ghost, appears at dawn to touch her beloved daughter and unfold one of her experience in Japan, the atomic bomb explosion in Nagasaki, by sending the image of her deformed figure, "her hair falls and falls and falls from her head like streamers of paper rain" (167). Naomi can sense her presence and feel her touch, but knows nothing of what the image means. In Buddhism, people are supposed to become "hotoke," the one who attains spiritual enlightenment and lives in Paradise, after they die. People who have a strong attachment for their lives cannot become hotoke, but emerge themselves as ghosts in the world of living. Although revenge is usually a popular theme in Japanese ghost stories, Naomi's mother's ghost has no wrong intention, but wants Naomi to understand that the reason of her absence is nothing to do with Naomi's fall from innocence by the hand of Old Man Gower and to remember her touch, love.

Another Sansei writer, Cynthia Kadohata, also uses a ghost motif in The Floating World. Olivia Ann, the protagonist, sees the ghost of her biological father, Jack. It is rather he is somehow transported from the past to present time. Unlike Naomi's mother, Jack visualized himself as he was, yet takes no initiative in communicating with his daughter. There is no word uttered, no touch, and no interest in Olivia. After having a one way conversation for a while, Olivia figured she was the one who loved him, so did her mother, but her father did not love them. Even as a ghost, his mind is occupied with his business and has little space for her. Thus, Kadohata uses the same Japanese material in a unique way which matches the modern world.

Kogawa's recognition as one of the best Canadian minority writers is credited to Obasan, published in 1981, seven years before the Canadian government agreed to make reparations for the losses of

Japanese Canadians. There is no doubt that her book incited Japanese Canadians to let their inarticulate voices become articulate and contributed to the turning of public opinion toward compensation. Obasan and Itsuka published in 1992, make the case to a reader that what happened to Japanese Canadians never was a unique tragedy in history. Unless the majority realizes that injustice and discrimination based on racism, sometimes in the name of law, victimizes minorities, the powerless and the weak, history only changes the cast and repeats the tragedy. Native Americans were the victims, too. Therefore, Kogawa weaves Native Americans and their history into the plot. Sitting Bull, who is famous among his people for his victory against U. S. General George Armstrong Custer, Native American children in the school, the native Songhies of Esquemaht, with whom Grandpa engaged in a boat-building business, and the origin of Slocan, where Naomi and Stephen are expelled from home with Obasan: these are the only mentions of Native Americans in Obasan. No matter how few and insignificant the references sound, this element makes the plot more intricate and meaningful and the novel more universal. There are also some key words, such as Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, to decode Naomi's inscrutable nightmares. The Ghost Dance was "a group dance for communication with the spirits of the dead," which agitated Native Americans so deeply that their fanaticism terrified the white settlers and eventually led to the arrest and death of Sitting Bull followed by the massacre at the creek called Wounded Knee in 1890. Kogawa's artistry here is to interweave these historical facts with the psychology of Naomi in fiction, and to include an up-to-date social issue to renew a familiar theme of ethnic literature in a hackneyed autobiographical form. At age four, Naomi was molested by Old Man Gower, a white man living next door to her house in Vancouver. He had said that he would treat a scratch wound on her knee.



Although she knew it was a lie, she could not resist him because her childish body betrayed her and accepted his hand and touches as both "frightening and pleasurable" (65) while her mind was darkened and numbed by shame and horror. Oddly enough, Naomi stuck to the Japanese code of behavior even in such a situation: "[I]t is more polite to refuse" (62) when you are offered something to eat; children should obey adults; and avoid direct eye-contact. From these references, a reader may assume that Naomi could have avoided the situation by disobeying the code and refusing to go with him. However, the fact that Old Man Gower had had another non-Japanese victim, Veronica, shows that he would have molested Naomi anyway whether she had been bound by such traditions or not. Clinging to her Japanese ways barely helped her to maintain herself. Also, Naomi's attitude may suggest her refusal to be an object for the other. Unless she saw herself reflected in Old Man Gower's eyes as prey, she could believe in her invulnerability and inaudibility and pretend that nothing had ever happened. This traumatic sexual experience is projected in a recurring nightmare in which three naked oriental women try to save themselves from harm by becoming seductive and desirable. Kogawa details the change in one woman's psyche from "nausea," "hatred and lust" at an earlier stage to "[d]read and a deathly loathing" (62) after she is shot by a British officer and finds no hope of being saved. This situation perfectly fits in with Simone de Beauvoir's theory about the young girl and sexual development in The Second Sex as she wrote: "[s]he simultaneously longs for and dreads the shameful passivity of the willing prey" (321). However, it is strange that Naomi had the dream when she was twenty-eight years old. By then, she was offered a proposal by Hank, a bachelor in Granton who knew "what's right and what's wrong" (43), according to Naomi's evaluation; therefore she ought to have been out of the confused stage of her sexual

development. In reality, she is still disturbed by the guilt: her fall from her pure, innocent state and her mother's disappearance, which she believes is a form of punishment. It is as if she had stopped growing up after the juvenile stage which put her in agony between two contradictory feelings expressed as "terror and exhilaration" or "fascination and danger" (61) over man and her sensuality and sexuality. She retires to spinsterhood, about which she feels bitterness. Erika Gottlieb infers that "rape is used as a metaphor for any kind of violation or victimization" (45) which may include that unjust treatment of Japanese Canadians (Americans) in general. If so, then Naomi's long period of spinsterhood is a result of the rape by the Canadian government. It is no wonder that many Japanese American females, both in reality and in fiction, like Yuki in "Epithalamium" by Hisaye Yamamoto, either marry late or not at all.

At a coulee not far from Granton, Uncle Isamu's and Obasan's final destination in the world of living, Naomi associates Native Americans with Japanese Canadians. First, she indicates the resemblance in their appearance by comparing Uncle to Sitting Bull. Uncle has "the same prairie-baked skin" from long-years of farm labor on the prairie and "the deep brown furrows like dry river beds creasing his cheeks" (2). Besides their appearance, they have much in common. Sitting Bull was a Hunkpapa medicine man; Uncle functions as a medicine man for Naomi to heal the wounds in her mind. Both worship nature. Sitting Bull guided his people as chief of a tribe, and Uncle as the head of a family. Both were chased from their respective homelands to either a concentration camp or to a reservation. Then, she half jokingly remarks that Uncle could be an "Indian chief from Canadian Prairie" in a picture postcard sold as "souvenir of Alberta, made in Japan" (2). Although neither Uncle nor Sitting Bull are originally from Alberta, Canada, they fit

into the landscape so well that they can be representatives of the province. Kogawa stresses lack of appreciation for the minorities' contribution to Canada through this sarcasm.

Through observation, Naomi points out that some behavioral characteristics, such as invisibility, taciturnity, and unobtrusiveness are common to Native American and Japanese American children. She also recognizes that Native American children, like their counterparts, hide their feelings under their emotionless masks; she has seen "something in the animal-like shyness . . . in the dark eyes" (2). As if they were ashamed or afraid of showing their feelings, they avoid direct eye-contact and quickly look away. As the story goes, Naomi gradually finds out what "something" is, and this is also the process of Naomi's self-discovery.

Another episode related to Native Americans is the origin of Slocan told by Rough Lock Bill, probably a descendant of the early settlers, living in a solitary cabin on the shore of the Slocan lake. He tells Naomi and Kenji, a friend of hers at the segregated school for the Japanese in Slocan, that the real name is "Slow-can-go" (146). A brave Native American searched for a good place to live because his tribe was dying out for some reason, possibly an epidemic, wars, or starvation. At last, he found this beautiful hidden valley surrounded by mountains and rich with natural food, and brought his people by saying "If you go slow . . . you can go" (146). Eventually the phrase was shortened, the tribe was extinct after white settlers like Rough Lock's grandfather came into the area, and Slocan became the name of the village. This story obviously implies the sense of *mujo*. Twenty years later, when Naomi went back to Slocan with Aunt Emily and Obasan, she finds that "a large new sawmill owned by someone who lived in New York" (118) had replaced Rough Lock's cabin, which was built where the chief's teepee

used to be. This sequel is also Kogawa's satire on modern economy developed on the sacrifice of nature. Rough Lock's unearthly appearance: "skinny as a tree, his face grooved like tree bark", his very dark arm like "a knobbly branch," and his head covered by "scraggly hair" like the seaweed (144), calls up some characters in folklore, like a tree elf or a noble savage. Along with the wisdom pouring out of his mouth, he wonderfully blends in with surrounding nature and makes the scene more picturesque. Therefore, a sawmill and its owner from New York symbolize the invasion upon nature called economic development or the exploitation of natural resources, and Rough Lock as a tree elf was cut down and extinguished along with the beautiful scenery and the blameless Japanese Americans.

In Obasan, Rough Lock Bill plays the role of a storyteller that was played by "baya" and "jiya" to relay centuries-old knowledge--maxims, proverbs, folktales, and superstitions, in Issei literature. Rough Lock has his own logic. First of all, all children, regardless of their skin color, like stories. That proves that all humans are basically the same, so that "all the fuss about skin" (145) that happened and is happening in the world, does not make sense to him. Second, some people, especially those living in the city, can only say "Me, me, me" (147), like birds that can only say their names. This criticizes self-centeredness and self-importance, which cause discord. Finally, he concludes that "smart people don't talk too much" (147) nor do Redskins. They talk only when necessary. Thus they can avoid telling lies, which results in their tongues being cut in half by the King bird and their being unable to talk. Things which Rough Lock thinks worthy are also valuable to Japanese people. For instance, being "selfish and inconsiderate" is called "wagamama" (128) in Japanese. Instead of asserting themselves, they attend to the needs of others by guessing or

reading facial expressions. As to the insignificance of being talkative, the best example is found in Naomi's mother's short comment on a brutal incident that a white hen pecked yellow chicks to death. Without blame or pity for anyone or anything, three words, "Yoku nakatta ne" that means "It was not good, was it?" were uttered with no eye-contact. Naomi recollects a feeling of relief and assures that "[i]t is not a language that promotes hysteria" (60). If the white hen and yellow chicks were replaced by the white majority and Japanese Canadians, Naomi's mother's reaction and comment explains the Issei's calm reaction to the war situation. Rough Lock Bill, a philosopher in Slocan and the rescuer of drowning Naomi, and his stories influenced by Native American folklore, partially fill Naomi's empty childhood with lively memories like an oasis in a desert.

Later at Granton school, Naomi has a Native American classmate called Annie Black Bear. She has reacted in the same way to her ethnicity as many Nisei did--repulsion for everything Native American and longing for assimilation into her adopted culture. When she was mistakenly called Annie Black by her teacher, she rejoiced that her name, without the distinctive last name, sounds like a name of white people. Likewise, Naomi's brother, Stephen, rejects everything Japanese: food, language, customs, religions, and even Obasan, who is a foster mother for him. Japanese American girls are of no interest, and his first love, Tina, and his wife, Claudine, "a divorcee he'd met in Paris" (223) are both Caucasians. Intermarriage seems to be his attempt to erase his Japaneseness and to be international. Nevertheless, does intermarriage really eliminate Japaneseness and make Japanese Americans an endangered species?

Although Kogawa's reference to Native Americans is hardly noticeable in Obasan, its importance to Naomi and Japanese Americans

becomes obvious in Itsuka, her second novel published in 1992, as the story develops around Father Cedric, whose grandmother was Metis, of mixed Native American (Ojibway) and French Canadian ancestry. Also, unknown episodes of interrelations and intermarriages between Native Americans and both Japanese and black Americans are mentioned by him, with Naomi's attention to a child's rattle for a start. It was made by an Issei man, who fled from the Mounties and was sheltered by the Haida, for his Japanese-Haida child. Likewise, some black slaves from the American South mingled with them. This "Japanese-Haida child's rattle" (115) has a bird's head, supposedly that of the thunderbird, "the prime bird of all creation and the communication between earth and heaven" (142). Cedric presents the rattle, a gift from aunt Emily, to Naomi with the hope that it would improve communications between Cedric and Naomi and draw them closer to each other. It makes it possible to connect not only Cedric and Naomi, but also Naomi and Aunt Emily with the help of Cedric, who knows both languages: silence and speech. This relationship between the two opposites, earth and heaven, is also reflected in the relationship between trees and stars mentioned by Cedric. He says that trees are "the signs of an active mercy in the world" (213). They exist to heal people, but not to judge them even though people do violence to them; trees' mercy is active because they endlessly supply oxygen to the earth biologically and give people "the breath of life" (116). According to Cedric's mother, each breath is "a 'yes' to life" (116), a positive appreciation of nature which is essential to understanding Japanese aesthetic sensitivities, "mono no aware." Kogawa's intention of relating trees and silent people, Native Americans and Japanese Americans, is clarified by a metaphor used for Obasan and Naomi's mother in Obasan. Naomi generalizes Obasan as "every old woman in every hamlet in the world" (15) and believes that

"[e]verywhere the old woman stands as the true and rightful owner of the earth" (15), as if they were trees. Naomi speaks in images of her mother, who is compared to a tree: "a flesh shaft that grows from the ground, a tree trunk of which I am an offshoot--a young branch attached by right of flesh and blood" (64). This phrase also elucidates the fact that Naomi once belonged with the trees until she was molested by Old Man Gower and condemned herself and her sexuality to her mother's disappearance. On the other hand, the star is love, and its voice is "always the best guiding voice" for people to follow and to "extinguish" (257) the darkness of life. People like Aunt Emily do this through politics, while Stephen does so through music. Cedric never forgot to remind Naomi that the memories of love for the dead, such as Obasan, Uncle, and her parents, guide living people to love by the scientific logic that "[t]hose who travel by starlight . . . are drawn by a light that is a memory of a light" (258). Cedric talks to Naomi about the presence of love and says that love "toils and strives" with people in their wounds (260) from a more primitive and global point of view than that of an Anglican priest.

As to Father Cedric's characterization, he is the most complete individual among all. He believes in the Christian God as much as he respects pantheism and nature. "A curved drift shape, part crucifix, part bird in flight" (112) hanging on the wall instead of a standard crucifix attests to it. He is a male with a feminine/motherly characteristic. Naomi compares him to the "black-robed fairy godmother" (148) in Cinderella who makes the impossible possible; when she is in distress, he cradles her "as a mother holds her child, with care and confidence" (261). It is as if he had stepped into Naomi's mother's shoes; he extinguishes Naomi's doubts and fears with a gentle touch. Hugs, embraces and kisses: these are what little Naomi missed so much,

yet never got from Obasan, whose hands were for toil, not for embrace, and what longing for which would have been labeled as sinful by Pastor Jim, the fanatic fundamentalist in Granton. Naomi discovers that touch is more accurate than speech.

Besides the Native American link, which completes its circle by connecting Father Cedric with Uncle Isamu and Sitting Bull, there are several traits Cedric and Uncle share. To value femininity is one of them; Uncle's baking stone bread and cultivating African violets do not count much. As discussed in chapter two, the Japanese man tends to be a baby for women and to pursue his ideal female image into mother; he considers feminine traits as the keys to communication and to cooperation with others in the fundamentally matriarchal Japanese society. The description of Uncle exemplifies this tendency. For instance, in the first chapter, the eighty-three year old Uncle is depicted like a baby walking jerkily on "the unsure ground, his feet widespread, his arms suddenly out" (1) as if he is ready to be received in his mother's arms or to go back to "the underground sea" (14), the womb of the earth. Even in Naomi's dream of the flower dance, he deeply bows in "the depth of the forest" (30), which symbolizes the mercy of women. In reality, although he is the head of the family, he acknowledges that his wife, Obasan, is the superior in power dynamics and that he is under her protection. Therefore, he respects his wife's opinion and listens to it. Asked her opinion about the crimes of history and the redress argued between Aunt Emily and Naomi, she simply said, "Arigatai. Gratitude only" (42). Uncle, who was unsure of what to say, repeated his wife's words. Another trait is their strong "sense of place" (242), their attachment to the specific places: Uncle to the sea and Cedric to his Native American ancestral woodland, in Canada. Also they both agree that "the universe is a story telling itself" (95).



In Obasan, there was Rough Lock Bill, an embodiment of the noble savage, or of a tree elf, at least in his appearance, who spoke for the Native American tribe in Slocan. Kogawa developed and refined his figure in Cedric, who has a "disarmingly clear and uncomplicated elfin smile" (113) and inherits "a capacity to sense sentience" (142) from his mother. Therefore, Cedric can fathom Naomi's mind without urging her to speak, something which Rough Lock could never do. The wisdom of Native Americans is directly shown by Cedric's mother in a fairy tale, a dryad and three riddles of morning, noon, and love. The answer to the first is "wonder," the definition for which is "not the place to begin" (140). As if to follow the advice, the dryad goes back to the dawn at the end, and Kogawa sets up the ending scene of Obasan at dawn. The answer to the second is "laughter," which could be heard if Itsuka had had a sequel. The last answer is "A silent falling" which occurs when Cedric and Naomi are alone together. However, that silence is "filled with a wild unspoken sound" (214) of nature, such as the loon's pathetic cry and the sound of waves, which calls forth the concept of "mono no aware."

A dead sparrow buried with the memories of the dead in the attic of the Granton house was brought back to life by touch, when Cedric held her and cast a spell on Naomi, "Such lightness, little sparrow" (Itsuka 50). He fed mercy, love, and trust to her. At last, one day when justice is done, she is "as small and as hungry as a newborn sparrow" (280). Now she can fly freely between different worlds: the world of silence and speech, the world of the dead and the living, East and West, and past and future, to help them to communicate with each other. Like the Cinderella's story, Kogawa concludes her sequel novels with happy endings: the reunion and reestablishment of the Japanese Canadian community, the accomplishment of the redress, and long-waiting love for

Naomi and Aunt Emily. By employing Father Cedric, an Anglican priest with Native American heritage, Kogawa creates the Prince Charming of the modern age, who possesses an integrated personality, a multicultural perspective, and multiethnicity. On the other hand, the modern-day Cinderella searches for femininity, her mother lost in the masculine world, where nature is sacrificed for economic development. The only way to finding her missing mother is to listen to her dead ancestors: the Issei and Nisei.

Thus, Kogawa successfully adopted folklore and fairy tales to frame a plot and current issues to make the story more complex. Japanese aesthetic sensibilities *mono no aware* and the sense of *mujo*, upon which Kogawa's symbolic, poetic, and often pathetic descriptions of nature depend, added Eastern values to Western values. Kogawa's novels are half Japanese, half Canadian, and wholly universal; they are truly worthy of being called Japanese American literature.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

According to the documentary film entitled "Japanese American Women: A Sense of Place," the public's impression of being Japanese American is that of being the California Japanese American, in other words, one who lives on the West Coast. This can be supported by the fact that the caricatured or stereotypical Issei on the screen and the Issei characters, who suffer from racial discrimination and poverty, in the books written by the Nisei live on the West Coast or in the Hawaiian Islands. The film refers to the distinction between people living on the West Coast and those living on the East Coast, the key to which is the presence or non-presence of Japanese American communities like Little Tokyo, in Los Angeles. The Japanese language is still spoken; Japanese foods are eaten; Japanese traditions and customs are preserved; people are closely related to each other in these communities. Such communities have never been established on the East Coast; moreover, the Japanese American is an endangered species there due to intermarriage.

This contrast has actually been seen since the beginning of the history of Japanese immigration, which goes back to the late nineteenth century. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Japanese government actively promoted westernization and modernization with the slogan "civilization and enlightenment." The government panels and intellectuals were sent abroad for the purpose of establishing the Meiji Constitution, introducing modern technologies, and finding ways of improving living conditions. Christianity, higher education for both men and women, and Romanticism were by-products of foreign trade. Up to the outbreak of World War II, Japanese society revolved around famous

female figures, such as Umeko Tsuda and Motoko Hani, who founded women's schools and provided higher education for women. Japanese culture flourished because of Akiko Yosano, who was a leading poet of Japanese Romanticism, and Raicho Hiratsuka, who advocated the emancipation of women and inspired the feminist movement. They are called cultural feminists and are distinct from women who supported socialism and communism. Restless Wave by Haru Matsui, an Issei living on the East Coast, details how an innocent young woman from an upper-class family became involved in socialist activities; it shows her truly humanitarian motives and her idealistic vision of an egalitarian society that many intellectuals of the time shared. Hiratsuka, on the occasion of the initial publication of the journal Seito, which she founded, declared her intention to pursue the emancipation of women, set her goal of reclaiming the power that women had held in the matriarchal society found in early Japanese history, and compared women to the sun. The sun is significant in Shinto mythology in association with Amaterasu Omikami, the sun goddess. Her solar, shamanistic, and feminist characteristics are roughly interpreted as authority, power, and fairness (the sun), sacredness and spirituality (the shaman), and the source of life (the woman); the ideal Japanese image of womanhood internalizes all of the above. Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto and Reiko Hatsumi, who were from upper class families often expressed their loneliness and distance from their mothers, and at the same time, their intimacy and closeness to their "baya," old nurses, through the little protagonists in their stories. In middle to upper class families, it was customary for baya to raise children instead of mothers, who were busy playing the role of the mistress of the household. In addition, the mothers restrained their emotions, while old nurses from the labor class freely expressed their feelings and affection toward the children, so that they

were mentally and emotionally attached to their nurses. After she lost most of their fortune because of the war, this divided motherhood became integrated in Hatsumi's mother. In general, as Amaterasu exemplifies, Japanese society is psychologically united by mothers or mother figures at the top, and femininity is the key to communication and cooperation with others. In this fundamentally matriarchal society, fathers are, in contrast to the stereotype, like children for mothers. Although they control politics and economics in the big picture, their success depends on their wives at home from whom they require mental support. Women's solar characteristics are hidden beneath their modest and reticent appearance and are rarely expressed.

Nisei writers, Hisaye Yamamoto and Yoshiko Uchida, show striking contrast in the moods of their works: Yamamoto pessimistic and Uchida optimistic, and their difference is deeply related to their parents and their upbringings. Uchida's parents were from the samurai class; they were imbued with Japanese ethics and manners. Both of them graduated from Doshisha University, learned English and converted to Christianity; they did not have many difficulties in their assimilation of American culture. Also, Uchida's mother, Iku, was well versed in both Western and Japanese literature. Uchida inherited Japanese aesthetic sensibilities "mono no aware" through Iku's tanka. She recollects that Iku even inspired creativity and appreciation of the beauty of nature in her husband, Takashi, in Desert Exile. Moreover, since Takashi was a successful businessman, Iku could stay home as a housewife and spend time with her children. Thus, Uchida had no major identity crisis between America and Japan; no division existed between herself and Issei parents.

On the other hand, the majority of immigrants on the West Coast were engaged in small businesses or manual labor. For economic reasons,

wives and mothers who came to America as picture brides to find a new life had to work beside their husbands. These mothers hardly had time or energy to communicate with their children. In most cases of arranged marriage, husbands were often much older than their picture brides, who were influenced by the cultural feminists mentioned above. Especially, flourishing Romanticism resulted in numerous literary creations, such as tanka and haiku. Some Issei men like Yamamoto's father never understood the importance of higher education for both women and men and were offended by their upwardly mobile Nisei children, who disliked everything Japanese and despised their parents because of their English deficiencies. These Nisei neglected their Issei parents and Japanese legacies and were neglected by their countries, the United States and Canada, at the outbreak of World War II. Thus, many Nisei were in agony over their identity crises. However little they inherited from the Issei, most Nisei preserve "mono no aware" and the sense of "mujo" in their works. Yamamoto is an exception; she ignored the beauty of nature. Even her characters are failures, criminals, gamblers, alcoholics, and those who are somewhat abnormal.

Reconciliation of opposites, the theme suggested by Etsu Sugimoto reappeared in the works by Sansei writer, Joy Kogawa. Instead of West and East, Kogawa reconciles the Issei and the Nisei through a Sansei protagonist, Naomi Nakane, in her serial novels. And so the missing mother/lost child motif found in Hisaye Yamamoto's "Seventeen Syllables" is revived in a different situation. Naomi's mother is literally absent from Naomi's life when she most needs her mother's protection from a white child molester and wants the consolation of her gentle touch. Later on, the mother shows up again, yet no longer in the flesh. Her invisible inarticulate spirit touches her to free her daughter's oppressed femininity and sexuality and sends a vision of her death by

the atomic bomb explosion in Nagasaki telepathically. The use of ghosts in a story is sometimes seen in the writings by the Sansei such as Cynthia Kadohata. As to technique, Kogawa employs the double exposure, that is to depict an event which occurred in Naomi's childhood from different person's points of view: Aunt Emily's Nisei perspective and that of the narrator, Naomi. Hisaye Yamamoto's device called "muted plot" is similar to this. However, Yamamoto's two plots, hidden plot and apparent plot, may indicate two different facts, whereas Kogawa's device only clarifies the fact.

Kogawa's novels' universal value comes from her use of world literature, world history, and her knowledge and concept of the world. She captures the beauty of nature, which connotes the sense of *mujo* and exemplifies the Japanese aesthetic sensibilities *mono no aware*, into her poetic prose. Unlike some writers, who sprinkle Japanese words at random throughout their stories to bring exoticism into their works, Kogawa profoundly understands Japanese culture. Her use of fairy tales and folklore for framework and characterization is effective. Most of all, Kogawa's achievement is to epitomize the human tragedy in history based on racism by twining Native Americans and Japanese Americans together. Father Cedric, who is a Canadian Anglican priest with a pantheistic point of view and both a Native American and European heritage, says, "Without justice, love is a mockery" (*Itsuka* 175). Kogawa's purpose of writing is condensed in these words.

Etsu Sugimoto's books, which once won publicity and were accepted by the white majority readers, have been forgotten by modern critics and readers. That is because her life, that of being from an upper class family on the East Coast, was too different from the lives of the major Issei, who had to engage in hard labor to survive and suffered from racial discrimination on the West Coast, so the upwardly mobile Nisei

must have considered her works as mere Japanese literature, rather than Japanese American literature, which were unsuitable for their pursuit of compensation for their loss.

Now the Sansei literature is expanding. Their Japanese heritage no longer threatens their identity, but simply helps to determine their multicultural and heterogeneous qualities. Femininity is not a word for the meek and the weak, but the word indicating the characteristics of the sun, the ideal Japanese womanhood, which Japanese cultural feminists cherished and which also was transmitted from them to the Issei women. Japanese American literature exemplifies that hearts of women are the same in the world as the sun shines equally on the world. Japanese heritage inherited from the Issei was still alive in Nisei literature whether or not they realized it. For the Sansei, since they have surpassed their forbears' hardships, they are free to identify with their Japanese heritage thanks to the contribution of the Issei.



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