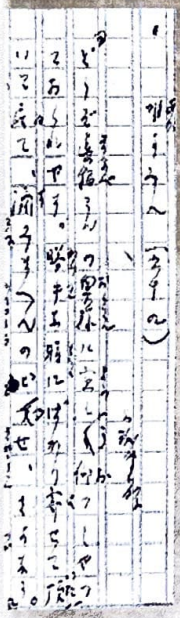

フェミニズム

Japanese Feminism: A Political and Cultural Perspective From 1901-1937

By: Danielle Corey

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Danielle Corey

Senior Honors Thesis 1999-2000

University of California at Santa Barbara

Mentor: Professor Luke Roberts

Seminar Director: Professor Jonathon Glickstein

Contents:

Explanation and Sources for Cover

I designed this cover with the goal in mind of combining images of traditional femininity, represented by the flower, contrasted with ideas of modern feminism, represented by the word 'feminism' written in Japanese katakana. Along with this, the young girl who is listening to records also depicts the mood of the Meiji and Taisho eras. This shows the western influence depicted by the record player and Japanese culture represented by the young girl wearing the traditional kimono. Last, I incorporated pictures of three feminists Kato Shidzue, Yosano Akiko, and Ichikawa Fusae, as well as Hayashi Fumiko's former residence, and the hand written poetry of Yosano Akiko to give this cover a more personal insight into the lives of these women.

Background – Japanese Painting by Katsuda, 1985. Title: Flower no. 181.

http://www.japancollection.com/katsuda.htm

Top left picture and poetry strip on left middle – Yosano Akiko and a part of one of her poems. http://www.city.sakai.osaka.jp/arekore/person/person2_e.html

Top right picture: Title: "Beautiful Girl 2" http://www.zzz.or.jp/asataka/monthly2.htm

Middle picture – Kato Shidzue, cover of A New Woman of Japan: A Political Biography of Kato Shidzue by Helen Hopper (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press 1996)

Right middle – Japanese Katakana – script used for foreign words: meaning "Feminism"

Right bottom picture – Ichikawa Fusae in the 1970s.

http://www.uic.edu/depts/owa/history_month_97/fusae.html

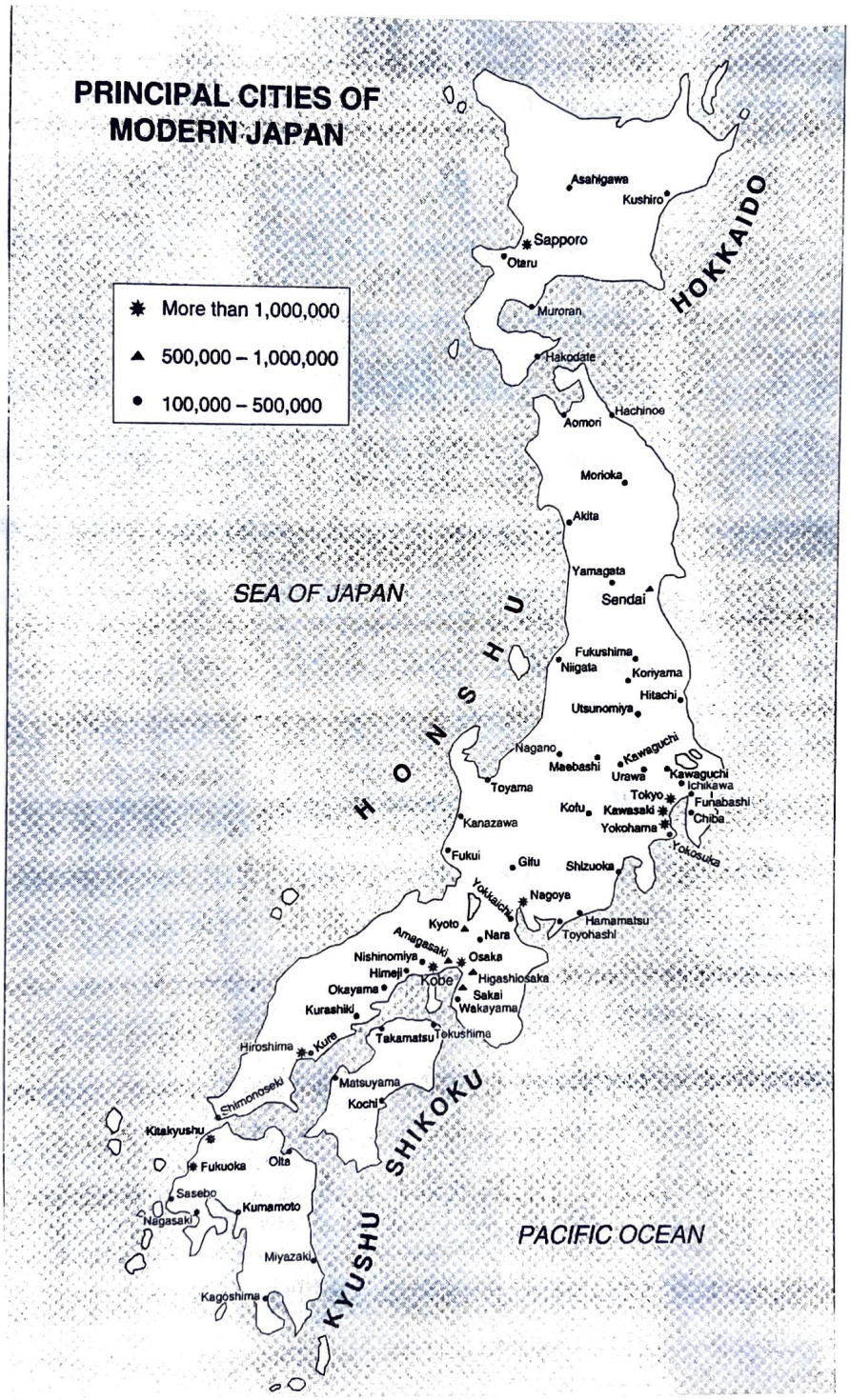
Left bottom picture – Picture of Hayashi Fumiko's former residence.

http://jin.jcic.or.jp/nipponia/nipponia8/tour045.html

Abstract

The pioneers of feminism in Japan in the late Nineteenth century were paramount in leading the way for future feminists in a prolonged battle that would forever change the status of women in Japan. From 1901-1937 the second wave of feminism occurred. This wave of feminism consisted of various movements of feminist activity, as well as many feminists who worked outside of any organized movement. In these feminist activities, there has been diversity in regards to theory, goals, and approaches to women's issues. Four particular women represent the diversity that existed during this period: Kato Shidzue, Ichikawa Fusae, Yosano Akiko, and Hayashi Fumiko. These four women represent different aspects of the feminist movement, with the main division being the political and cultural aspects to the feminist movements or anti-movements within Japan. By comparing and contrasting this diversity, first, I hope to uncover why these women deviated from traditional values within their society, by becoming feminist and leading active lives in perpetuating their beliefs. Second, I will explore what impact each group was trying to make in society. Third, I will prove that by analyzing both political and literary feminists together, one can get a clearer picture of the changes and impact that these feminists may have produced in society.

Map of Japan in Meiji Period



I. Introduction

From 1901- 1937, Japanese political and cultural feminists lived within the same national historical context. However, women's involvement in politics and the evolution of a "women's literature" have been so different in nature that feminists in either category cannot easily be grouped together either in terms of goals or in terms of the methods that they used to achieve those goals. The major difference between these two types of feminists is that political feminists primarily worked for political change (e.g. in, laws[1], constitutional rights, social welfare for women, etc.) while, cultural feminists were more concerned with social change on an individual level (e.g. redefining perceived roles and ideologies and changing a woman's self-perception). The methods that these feminists used were also different. Most political feminists spoke in public, lobbied politicians, and published pamphlets in order to make their views heard. Thus, their main goal was to change policy toward women. In contrast, cultural feminists did not always approach feminist issues as directly. Literary feminists, especially, wrote indirectly about how they viewed women and women's changing roles within society. Women's roles were of primary importance in literary feminist's writings, as it was an ideological or social change that they really hoped to gain. The social or ideological changes that these feminists tried to bring about revolved around ideas of what a woman's sphere should be. These feminists demonstrated that women did not have to accept male domination, or be otherwise submissive. They also showed that woman could be empowered through sexuality or through various roles, like motherhood. Overall, these feminists attempted to empower women in all senses beyond the traditional roles and limitations of what a

[1] Laws that political feminists tried to implement or reform revolved around women's right to vote, right to knowledge and access of birth control, right to participate and be a member of a political party, etc.

woman was "supposed" to be or think. Thus, the message of literary feminists is not always as obvious as the message of political feminists.

The way that I define feminism is that it is a theory that advocates social, political, and economic rights for women equal to those of men. Therefore, feminists are those who try to change the rights, status, or roles of women to affect their social, political or economic standing in society. However, the specific aims and methods of Japanese Feminist should not be associated or confused with western feminism or other feminist movements in the west, which depending on period and region, often have different objectives in their feminist theories. Although, feminist ideas came from the west, feminists in Japan adapted these ideas to meet the specific needs and concerns of Japanese women. These objectives, while still seeking the elevated status of women in Japan, did not approach feminist pursuits in the same way as western feminists.

The subject of this paper is the different changes that cultural and political feminists were trying to produce in Japanese society during this period. In addition, I will explore the way these changes, only when *analyzed together*, had even larger effect on Japanese society, than they did when analyzed separately. As far as I have been able to ascertain, no study exists that treats political feminists in contrast to cultural feminists in Japan that recognizes distinctions between their goals and achievements. In offering such a study, this paper will show how the movements in political and cultural feminism, despite their differences, both were essential to pave the way for changes in social attitudes and legal possibilities for women. Although many of the impacts are difficult to measure, I assert that the impact that these feminists had, when addressed together, are more significant than has previously been asserted by other historians.

My purpose for writing this paper is to prove first, that there was a viable feminist movement in Japan during this period. Second, it is to demonstrate that the stereotype that all Japanese women are submissive is misleading and wrong. This stereotype is so common because outsiders often measure the status of Japanese women in comparison to the status of women in other countries. In order to measure women's status and rights in Japan, or to measure how they have changed, one must analyze Japanese women's status according to the progress that Japanese women have made themselves, instead of contrasting them with or defining their progress in comparison to feminists in other nations. Third, I will show that, contrary to common stereotypes, Japanese women did speak out for their interests. Fourth, I will show that within this movement, it was necessary for both political and cultural feminists to exist, and to make changes in laws and ideologies affecting Japanese women. Furthermore, both were necessary because they helped define and propose solutions to different sets of problems and barriers for Japanese women. In turn by defining these problems, these feminists made these issues political. For example, political feminists helped highlight and define the need for birth control on a national level provided by the state, while cultural feminists defined what the roles of motherhood should entail.

It is important to note that neither movement was more important than the other. Without the literary feminists, important ideological developments would not have taken place that allowed political reform to be accepted. On the other hand, political feminists were responsible for many of these reforms, which helped shape the lives of future Japanese women. A key theoretical approach that is essential in understanding why both political and cultural feminists are imperative to make a change in women's statues, is the

concept of "role redefinition". This concept, used by Susan Pharr, points out that if women are granted certain rights that they were previously barred from, they must take part in a "role redefinition" if they are ever going to be able to exercise those newly gained rights. Role redefinition therefore entails a restructuring of one's view of what their role in society should be. For example, if the dominant group in a particular society deems that women should not have a role in politics, then that society will also condition women to their appropriate role, presumably inside the household. Thus, even when women (who believe that they should not have a role in politics) gain the right to vote, it does not mean that they will automatically accept this role. In many cases then, women have to become "reconditioned" so that they feel that it is appropriate to take on different roles. This role redefinition can come before or after rights are given, but is necessary to help women feel that the new roles that they received are "normal" or acceptable behavior. The political feminist's purpose then, is to change the laws and institutions affecting women. In contrast, the cultural feminist's purpose is to provide examples to women that they can take on different roles, outside of those prescribed by society, therefore producing this role redefinition. The roles of political and cultural feminists are not stagnate however, as there were times when cultural feminists did engage in political debates and times when political feminists set examples for role-redefinition.

Women are not the only ones, however, that have to take part in this role redefinition. Men's attitudes and roles must also change. In order for men's views of women to change they also must adapt to many of the ideas of cultural and political feminists that show that women can take on different roles and are entitled to those roles. Political and cultural feminists illustrate to men that women's status or legal rights are

alterable and can evolve. Political feminists demonstrate that a growing number of women are not willing to be content with the rights given to them by a patriarchal state. Literary feminists in contrast normalize the idea of the increasing number of women who defy traditional roles or boundaries set by society[2]. Both political and literary feminists therefore, help to redefine roles and perceptions that Japanese women had of themselves and that Japanese men had of women. This enabled both sexes to accept women's new roles within the political arena and in a broader sense as "newly" independent women.

This paper will explore these two different groups of feminism and aspects of role redefinition by focusing on four particular feminists: Baroness Kato (Ishimoto)[3] Shidzue, Ichikawa Fusae, Yosano Akiko and Hayashi Fumiko. Although these four feminists are not any more renowned than other Japanese feminists are, they demonstrate some of the diversity within the political and cultural feminist movement in Japan. Their diversity arises from the different way that they sought to empower women, which may have been a direct result of their extremely different backgrounds. For example, Kato was from the samurai class, Ichikawa was the daughter of farmers, Yosano was the daughter of a merchant family, and Hayashi the daughter of peddlers. All four feminists made significant contributions to society and were widely known in Japan during this period.

Kato Shidzue illumines one dimension of the political feminism of her time. Kato is noteworthy for her strong and influential advocacy of women's reproductive rights in the public and political arena. Ichikawa Fusae was another political feminist, who instead prioritized Japanese women's' right to vote. An important cultural feminist during this

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[2] The New Woman and Modern Girl are two examples of such women who were increasing in numbers during this period and threatened the male patriarchy. This issue will be addressed in more detail later.
[3] Ishimoto was Shidzue's married name until 1944. I will refer to her as Kato, which has been her married name since 1944.

time was Yosano Akiko, who encouraged a change in women's roles through her poetry, by making "women aware of their own mind and body" and teaching by them "self assurance."[4] Although Yosano's poetry was largely apolitical, she did engage in the political debates about what the role of the state should be in women's lives on a few occasions. In the journal Seito she expressed her belief that Japanese women should be "self assured" and have roles outside of motherhood, such as that of a career woman. Last is Hayashi Fumiko, whom scholars, such as Joan E. Ericson, do not even consider a feminist. It is true that Hayashi was never politically feminist. However, to limit the definition of feminist to those who participate in the political activity or make political statements is to adopt a very narrow definition of feminism. Hayashi, in contrast, was a true cultural feminist. She used fictional as well as biographical stories to expose how the ideologies in society do not represent realities. Thus, she gave validation to many women in society who were not living a traditional life.

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[4] Chieko I. Mulhern, Japanese Women Writers: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 486.

II. Historiography

Historians have identified many of the women who participated in the feminist movement of pre-war Japan as a whole. Sharon Sievers in particular does an adequate job of identifying many of the feminists in the first wave of feminism, in her study, Flowers and Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness.[5] In this study, she outlines many of the important activities and contributions the early feminists made from 1870 to roughly 1911, ending with the beginning of the first literary feminist journal Seito (Blue Stocking). Flowers in Salt, particularly focuses on the agenda of political feminists. These included the first feminists in the 1880s, textile workers, the Women's Reform Society, women socialists, as well as one extremist feminist, Kanno Suga. Although Sievers gives some attention to Seito and the literary feminists, her discussion stresses the political aims that are expressed in the journals rather than the ideological changes that many of the women authors brought to Japanese society.

Other works that provide discussions of women's issues during this time are two compilations of essays: Gail Lee Bernstein's Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945,[6] and Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda's Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future.[7] In Japanese Women, Mioko Fujieda's article discusses pre-war political feminists in "Japan's First Phase of Feminism."[8] Fujieda's article explains that there was a wide diversity within the political feminist movement, including elite feminists, Christian feminists, socialist feminists, moderate

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[5] Sharon Sievers, Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan (California: Stanford University Press, 1983).
[6] Gail Lee Bernstein, Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).
[7] Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda, Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future (New York: Feminist Press, 1995).
[8] Mioko Fujieda, "Japan's First Phase of Feminism" in Japanese Women.

feminists, and radical feminists. Orie Endo's article, "Aspects of Sexism in Language,"[9] address institutional obstacles that Japanese women have contended with. Endo's argument is that Japanese language subordinates women through the "kinds of words and expressions used to refer to or describe women" which are often belittling. Endo also shows that the language, which Japanese women use themselves also help perpetuate prescribed gender roles, which keep women in a subordinate position to men. The cultural construct of language is important to investigate, especially when considering literary feminists whose entire basis of resistance or empowerment centers around the use of language. Language for many Japanese women, especially writers, serves to segregate them from male spheres including, for women writers, mainstream or 'educated' writing.

In Laurel Rasplica Rodd's essay, "Yosano Akiko and the Taisho Debate over the 'New Woman'" in Recreating Japanese Women, she shows that many women were redefining their roles as mother, wife, and independent woman or new woman.[10] Some of these favored the possibility of becoming economically independent, with motherhood not necessarily holding the highest priority within a woman's life. Rodd also shows that there were other women who thought that motherhood should always have the highest value in a woman's life, but believed that women could still participate more fully in society. Barbara Molony's essay, "Activism among Women in the Taisho Cotton Textile Industry," highlights the problems that working women faced in trying to organize unions for worker's rights. [11] Molony's main argument is that women are characterized as passive and unable to organize an effective labor movement, which resulted in the fact

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[9] Orie Endo, "Aspects of Sexism in Language" in Japanese Women.
[10] Laurel Rasplica Rodd, "Yosano Akiko and the Taisho Debate over the 'New Woman'" in Recreating Japanese Women.
[11] Barbara Molony, "Women in the Cotton Textile Industry" in Recreating Japanese Women.

that many "analysts have overlooked the origins of labor activism among female workers."[12] Another important essay that points in a similar direction is Miriam Silverberg's "The Modern Girl as Militant."[13] Silverberg shows how the "modern girl" of the 1920s in Japan defied many norms in society. For example, the "modern girl" wore her obi higher so that it was not covering her buttocks, she cut her hair short, and she generally acted in an aggressive, liberated manner. As Silverberg states, the modern girl was so controversial "because woman's new place in public as worker, intellectual, and political activist threatened the patriarchal family and its ideological support" especially the idea of the "Good Wife and Wise Mother."[14]

Another important work is Mikiso Hane's Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan,[15] which makes the most thorough study of many of the most radical and visible political feminists of this period. Yamashiro Tomoe, for example, joined the communist movement in Japan, while Kanno Sugako plotted with others to assassinate the Emperor. Hane shows that some feminists of this period were not willing to wait for glacial changes in the government and society, but used force to try to speed up the process. Force, however, was not always successful in bringing about changes when a country's core values and ideologies revolved around the subjugation of women.

Mae Handy Esterline also contributed to this body of knowledge about feminism in her book They Changed Their Worlds: Nine Women of Asia.[16] Esterline approach is

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[12] Ibid., 237.
[13] Miriam Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant" in Recreating Japanese Women.
[14] Ibid., 263.
[15] Mikiso Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan (London: University of California Press, 1988).
[16] Mae Handy Esterline ed., They Changed Their Worlds: Nine Women of Asia (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

primarily biographical, showing in one example how Ichikawa Fusae literally changed her world through her activities in the women's suffrage league, the International Labor Organization, and several women's associations. Ichikawa increased awareness in Japan about a variety of women's issues, and she petitioned to make changes within the government. Helen Hopper takes a similar biographical approach in A New Woman of Japan: a Political Biography of Kato Shidzue, but instead focuses primarily on Kato Shidzue.[17] Hopper uses Kato's Diary and other primary sources to give an objective account of Kato's feminist contributions during both the pre-WWII and the post war years.

Sheldon Garon's Molding Japanese Minds,[18] has a different focus: the collaboration of women groups with the state. Here, Garon identifies two extreme interest groups: Ichikawa Fusae's suffrage wing and the elite bureaucrats who tried to manipulate women to engage them in war efforts. Sheldon regards the majority of women and politicians as somewhere between these two extremes. He further contends that social as well as political change took place during the war years because of the co-operation of these more moderate groups. Garon demonstrates how the government worked to serve "national" interests during the war years and only made concessions to the women when it served national interests. For example, the government instituted a national health care system to boost the health of the populace, (which was a goal of many women's groups) with its underlying goal being to ensure more soldiers. However, the government, which foresaw that birth control clinics would limit soldiers, closed Kato Shidzue's clinic.

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[17] Helen M. Hopper, A New Woman of Japan: a Political Biography of Kato Shidzue (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

[18] Sheldon Garon, Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Therefore, while women had some gains in health care, women's access and knowledge to birth control was limited. Collaboration between women's groups and the government, therefore, did not help change the status of women.

The works mentioned above, with the exception of Rodd's article on Yosano, do not directly integrate the cultural feminists of this period into the larger narration of political feminism. However, there does exist a range of secondary material that specifically addresses many issues associated with literary feminists and women writers of the pre-war period. Among these, The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writings is an excellent compilation of essays that analyze the many problems facing Japanese literary feminists.[19] Joan E. Ericson's contribution illustrates that institutionally many males in society manipulate the definition of women's literature to subordinate the works of women authors. Another important essay is Sharalyn Orbaugh's "The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women's Fiction." Here, Orbaugh argues that because "both gender and the body are [socially] 'constructed,' determined by historical forces," one can look at women's bodies as a "political battleground."[20] Women writers can therefore use descriptions and metaphors of the female body to expose issues of patriarchy. This use of the female body is one form of female resistance, although some women writers who did this may not have even intended to be participants in a resistance movement.

Apart from those essays appearing in compilations, a number of other essays address feminist issues in relation to individual authors. Janine Beichman's articles,

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[19] Paul Schalow and Janet A. Walker ed., The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing, (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

"Yosano Akiko: The Early Years"[21] and "Yosano Akiko: Return to the Female,"[22] focus on the life of the author as well as her contributions to women's literature. "Return to the Female" illumes Yosano's contribution to the feminist movement and her questioning of Japanese mores. Beichman, however, does not explore how Yosano sought to break taboos by validating women's experiences through her writings. In contrast, I will show how Yosano sought to redefine women's roles and women's perceptions of themselves through her poetry and other writings. Furthermore, I will show how this helped women engage in role redefinition.

A number of scholars also minimize the contributions that these early feminists made. One example is Susan Pharr in her Political Women in Japan.[23] Pharr claims that "the prewar women's suffrage movement in Japan lacked the popular support that would have allowed it to function ... in a consciousness raising [way]."[24] Pharr attributes the political awareness of Japanese women, as measured by voting, to the occupation efforts, rather than to the work that Japanese feminists had been doing since the 1870's to earn voting rights for women. In another article entitled, "The Politics of Women's Rights,"[25] Pharr minimizes the efforts made by Japanese feminists to participate in writing the women's rights clause of the post-war constitution during the occupation.

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[20] Sharalyn Orbaugh, "The Origins of the Concept of 'Women's Literature,'" in The Woman's Hand, 124-125.
[21] Janine Beichman, "Yosano Akiko: Return to the Female" Japan Quarterly January - March (1990), 204-228.
[22] Janine Beichman, "Yosano Akiko: The Early Years" Japan Quarterly April – June (1990), 37-54.
[23] Susan J. Pharr, Political Women in Japan: The Search for a Place in Political Life (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).
[24] Ibid., 28.
[25] Susan J. Pharr "The Politics of Women's Rights" in Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation ed. Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

Contrary to Pharr, one of my theses is that the exercise of in newly gained political rights after World War II by so many Japanese women was attributable to the fact that many feminists had been raising awareness about political and ideological issues since the 1870s, nearly 70 years before the occupation came to Japan. Also contrary to Pharr, I contend that they did have popular support, which is evident in the many successes that they attained in their respective pursuits. One goal of my paper, then, is to show what cultural and political feminists did during the pre-war period to heighten awareness about feminist issues, women's rights, and women's self-perception in Japanese society.

III. General Historical Background

The rights and status of women began to change in Japan after two major events. First was the establishment of contact with the West, marked by the arrival of Mathew Perry in 1853. The second was the Meiji Restoration, which took place in 1868. The Restoration brought about the collapse of the Tokugawa government and created a new government centered on the emperor. In the decades following, the popular rights movement pressured bureaucrats to draft a new constitution. This occurred at a time when there were many debates among different groups as to the direction that Japan should take to escape inferiority to the West. These debates included the beginning of feminism in Japan as women began to participate in these debates and demand political rights along side of men who were also petitioning for expanded political rights.

For the next half-century many bureaucrats and intellectuals in Japan focused on learning western technology. In record time, Japan became very successful at "catching up." One example of Japan's progress is apparent in its emulation of western imperialism. With the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Japan became the first non-western nation to win a war against a western nation. In 1910 Japan annexed Korea. In subsequent decades Japan became a world power and engaged in several major wars, most notably against China in 1937, and then against the Allied Forces in World War II. Japan was clearly changing, but not only in matters of military and in technology related to warfare. Japan was also experiencing cultural, social, and political change. For example, men as well as some women began wearing western clothing and getting western haircuts. In the political sphere, new reformers began to look to the west for ideas on how to structure a new constitution.

Contemporaneous with these events, women's rights and status were also changing in Japan, while also in many ways remaining the same. The status of women became one of the possible measuring rods of civilization as Japan began to compare itself to other westernized nations. At this time, many intellectuals in Japan claimed that women's status in western nations were equal to that of men, which was one reason that the west was more advanced. Yet, "the irony of such a claim was obvious to women in the west who were struggling to improve their status in 'civilized' societies."[26] Although Japan did begin to educate more women and men in order to measure up to western countries, its government unfortunately, also followed the lead of many of these same countries and refused to grant women political rights during this period. At the same time, however, only men who paid 15 yen or more in taxes could vote which amounted to only about 5 percent of the adult male population.[27] Thus, men also could not participate in politics freely. For example, government regulations required organizers to obtain a permit in order to hold a public meeting. Police also attended political meetings to make sure that no one attending these meetings discussed any "forbidden" topics.[28] In light of these circumstances, it is not surprising that women's rights did not expand much under the Meiji Constitution, which decreed that women would remain without political rights, just as the majority of men also limited in their political activity. Men, however, gained the vote by 1925, while women had to wait until 1945 and the promulgation of the constitution drafted by General Douglas MacArthur after World War II.

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[26] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 10.
[27] Kenneth Pyle, The Making of Modern Japan Second Edition (Lexington Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 123.
[28] Stephen Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1868-1885," in The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 5 The Nineteenth Century, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 412.

IV. Overview of Important Norms, Institutions, and Roles Affecting Women

Besides the general historical background, it is also important to discuss the most important norms, institutions, and roles that affected women during this period. One social institution in the forefront was the *ie* or family system. The *ie* put the family at the core of the state, as the state itself represented the ultimate family of every Japanese individual. In 1898 the Meiji government perpetuated this system, which had previously existed under the Tokugawa house, by enacting a law under the Civil Code which deemed that, "the patriarchal head of the family held an unquestioned authority over the rest of the family."[29] Thus, Japanese women, who lived under this system, would obey their father as a child, their husband as an adult, and finally their son in old age. This meant that a woman would never have authority over herself or her family, as she would never be able to assume the highest role in this hierarchical system. This was contrary to life during the Edo period, when some women did become heads of households usually when there was an absence of an appropriate male.[30] In addition, a woman would never be able to break free of this system because it was her duty to the state to put her family first. The "Meiji Greater Learning for Women," a guidebook on how a woman should act, dictated that, "the home is a public place where private feelings should be forgotten."[31] Thus, discrimination generated by the family system, both within the household and in society, compromised women's rights. As shown in this quote, the

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[29] Sachiko Kaneko, "The Struggle for Legal Rights and Reforms: A Historical View," in Japanese Women: New Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kamiko (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), 4.

[30] For a more thorough explanation of the roles of women during this period see, Kathleen S. Uno, "the Household Division of Labor," in Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

[31] Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910," in Recreating Japanese Women 1600-1945 ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley and Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 1991), 156.

status quo expected women to forget their private needs or feelings and instead focus only on their public duty to the nation.

An important norm that was similarly patriarchal that developed at the end of the nineteenth century was the ideal of the "good wife and wise mother." Fukuzawa Yukichi was one of the leaders of progressive thought concerning women in the late nineteenth century who perpetuated this norm. The idea of the "good wife and wise mother" emphasized that "a Japanese woman should be broadly educated so as to be able to function as a true guardian and educator of her children in the new social order as well as to be a true companion to her husband and capable of moving outside the primary sphere of the home when required."[32] The idea that women should have such an important role in the household and in their children's education was different from the mother's role as prescribed in the earlier Edo period. The ideal of the good wife and wise mother gave women more authority and responsibilities in one sense, yet women could only use this authority to help their children. Women were to develop their mind only to help their family, rather than to develop their own individual talents or identity. At the same time, men's ability and individuality were also limited to that which served the state. A woman's identity, therefore, centered on her family while a man's identity centered on the state. Even in school, young girls were restricted to studying, sewing, and needlework to prepare them for their expected family roles during this period. This was an advance in women's status, in comparison to principles in the Edo period, such as *danson johi* (meaning respect the male, despise the female), that denied women these roles. Yet, one

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[32] Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, "The Japanese Ideology of 'Good Wives and Wise Mothers': Contemporary Research," Gender & History vol. 3 no. 3 (1991): 345.

cannot deny the negative implications of a new system that still did not recognize the autonomy of Japanese women and still limited the sphere in which they participated

A new role that developed during this period was the "new woman." The role and concept of the new woman developed after World War I, and referred to women who resisted many of the patriarchal norms and values of society. Although there were many different discussions as to what the "new woman" actually was, it is clear that the one thing that she was not, was traditional. Many women's journals became forums for debate about the role of the "new woman," addressing women's roles as mothers, wives, wage earners, and equal partners in a marriage. Yosano Akiko was one woman who maintained that women could be a breadwinner in the household or have different roles that did not revolve around motherhood. A new woman therefore appeared to be independent, working, and self-assured. Society negatively labeled many of the women who engaged in this debate a "new woman." This in turn created a double burden for these women in that they first had to define what a "new woman" meant to them and then defend their position to society. Thus, the women who were trying to define this term had mixed feelings about what the "new woman" actually meant. Negativity resulted for some women who received backlash and scorn from their communities, after critics labeled them as a "new woman." Other women, however, whether or not they received negative reaction, felt honored to be leaders among women. For these women, when critics labeled them as "new women," it meant that they were breaking ground for all women to become more independent.

V. History of Political Feminists from 1868- 1937

Among the first feminists were a limited number of men who made important contributions in the way society viewed the role and status of women, yet ultimately did not supported full and immediate equality between women and men. However, many women feminists in this early period also did not advocate or even believe that women should have total equality. These women, like the male feminists saw that there were different spheres of activity for each gender. Therefore, they advocated more right within a woman's prescribed sphere, but not total and immediate equality as to be able to participate in men's spheres.

One of the most famous of the first feminists, but in no way representative of all male feminists was Fukuzawa Yukichi. Fukuzawa directed most of his analysis to samurai women, yet many of his ideas for reform, including the aforementioned norm of the "good wife and wise mother," turned out to be far reaching for other Japanese women. Many of his ideas, like the "good wife and wise mother" also went against old Tokugawa values about women. For example, in his book On Japanese Women Fukuzawa states that "My idea for the improvement of our race is to enliven our women's minds and encourage their physical vigor to grow with them, thus to obtain better health and physique for our posterity."[33] It is clear from the statement that although Fukuzawa encourages the education of women, he sees the benefit of the nation, not the benefit of the women, as the ultimate goal. These goals seem moderate today, yet they were progressive for this period and they did help women make great strides in education. In another reference to women, Fukuzawa states, "They are given no

[33] Fukuzawa Yukichi, On Japanese Women. tr. and ed. Kiyoka Eiichi (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press. 1988), 7.

responsibility at all ... [their responsibility] only concerns clothing, which is perhaps the biggest item; the smaller items concern salt and bean paste as a seasoning for food. Moreover, the control of household finances is retained by the husband and the wife's sphere of activity is always confined under her husband's supervision."[34] Fukuzawa used this example to show how few responsibilities Japanese women had, a demonstration which leads to his argument that were women given more responsibilities, they could take a more active part in society. Although it appears that Fukuzawa might advocate equality between the sexes at this point, he concludes that since women had not had any kind of responsibility they were not ready yet, for complete equality. He did envisage a point in the future when women might enjoy equality with men. But, this point remained unclear, since Fukuzawa neither offered his own daughters a "modern education" nor did he allow them to choose their own marriage partners.[35] Overall, Fukuzawa was willing to advocate a change in women's status throughout society, yet he was not ready to apply this change to his own family.

The Meirokusha or Meiji Six Society,[36] of which Fukuzawa was a member, shared his belief that society must redefine the roles and status of Japanese women. This society included enlightened members of male society, particularly writers who advocated the western liberal tradition and cultural revolution.[37] Some of the most prominent members included, Mori Arinori, Nishi Amane, Tsuda Mamichi, Kanda Kohei, and Kato Hiroyuki. Many of these individuals agreed with Fukuzawa that Japanese women were simply not ready for some of the rights that western women were

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[34] Ibid., 9.
[35] Pyle, Making of Modern Japan, 83.
[36] The Meiji Six Society was named for the year it was founded in 1874, the sixth year of the Meiji era, not for the number of members it contained.

enjoying, including the right to vote. These individuals, like Fukuzawa, did encourage other changes in women's status and rights before as well as after the founding of the Meirokusha, that should not be overlooked.

Fukuzawa and Mori Arinori especially had an influence in guiding the enactment of several laws that changed women's rights and status. One law in 1870 gave women who were concubines the same rights as legal wives. Another law in 1872, freed all prostitutes.[38] Another positive step was that many of these prominent men convinced the Japanese government to send five girls abroad in 1871. Among the youngest of these five was Tsuda Umeko, who later founded a college for middle and upper class women. Tsuda, however, still faced limitation because of her sex, and she found that after returning from America in 1882, she did not receive the same privileges and honors that returning males received. After being away from Japan for eleven years, she states:

> "I was especially struck with the great difference between men and women, and the absolute power, which the men held. The women were entirely dependent, having no means of self-support, since no employment or occupation was open to them, except that of teaching, and few were trained for teaching or were capable of it. A woman could hold no property in her own name, and her identity was merged in that of father, husband, or some male relative. Hence there was an utter lack of independent spirit."[39]

Because of the problems that Tsuda perceived, she decided to found a college to try to help middle and upper class women attain some independence. Unfortunately, however,

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[37] Kenneth B. Pyle. "Meiji Conservatism" in The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 5 ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 676.
[38] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 13.

she was still required to stay within the bounds of the "accepted" women's sphere. As Barbara Rose also concludes, "Women's higher education could be attempted only if the hierarchies of family and society remained unthreatened."[40]

During this period of westernization and modernization, a number of women struggled to gain a part in Japan's nation building. Many of these women did not have the intention of starting a movement or engaging in any kind of protest. Instead, their goal was to participate in the exciting process of westernizing and modernizing by making political statements. For example, women cut their hair short to emulate males who were cutting off their "top knot" to show a break from the feudal tradition. After some women had engaged in this practice, however, Meiji legislation made it illegal for women to cut their hair unless they did so for health reasons or owing to old age.[41] This prohibition enforced the idea that while the Japanese male was modernizing, the female was to remain a symbol of Japan's past with unchanging roles, rights, or responsibilities.

Another debate that emerged during this period revolved around a woman's right to vote. Although women never gained the right to vote in national elections under Meiji rule, several towns did institute suffrage for any person (man or woman) who paid a set amount of taxes in 1880.[42] In addition to the right to vote, in "Kochi prefecture government, all townspeople aged twenty and over – men and women – were qualified to run for election to the town council as well as to vote."[43] One particular woman, Kusunose Kita, was especially adamant over her right to vote, since she herself was the

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[39] Barbara Rose, Tsuda Umeko and Women's Education in Japan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 45.
[40] Ibid., 162.
[41] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 14.
[42] Junko Wada Kuninobe, "The Development of Feminism in Modern Japan" Feminist Issues vol. 4 no. 2 (Fall 1984), 6.
[43] Ibid., 6.

head of her household and paid the property tax. In her letter to prefecture authorities she brought up many issues of women's rights and status:

> We women who are heads of households must respond to the demands of the government just as other ordinary heads of households, but because we are women, we do not enjoy equal rights. We have the rights neither to vote for district assembly representatives not to act as legal guarantors in matters of property, even though we hold legal instruments for that purpose ... My rights, compared with those of male heads of households, are totally ignored.[44]

Although these towns did give women who paid property taxes the right to vote, they lost this right once the central government learned about it. This would be the closest women would come to voting until shortly after World War II.[45]

The next important step in the formation of the feminist movement was women's participation in the "Popular Rights" movement, also referred to as the "People's Rights" movement. The People's Rights movement consisted of diverse elements of the population, from "Restoration leaders and intellectuals, urbanites and villagers, shizoku and wealthy commoners, and finally, radicals and impoverished farmers – all who shared an interest in opposing oligarchic rule."[46] From 1882, women began speaking publicly for women's rights and equality at the People's Rights gatherings. Although women participated in this way, none of the diverse people's movements directly supported or endorsed the rights of women; they allowed women only to speak at their meetings.

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[44] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 29.
[45] For a more complete discussion of the drafting of the 1945 constitution refer to, Pharr, "The Politics of Women's Rights." While she does not acknowledge the gains of women activists, this article does point out the American side of the drafting of the constitution and the important American influences in its text.
[46] Vlastos, 402.

One such woman who had a tremendous impact on this movement was Kishida Toshiko. Kishida was an exceptional woman of her day, in that she was able to obtain all the educational opportunities that were open to her. By the age of fifteen, news of her beauty and of her academic success reached the Meiji empress, who asked her to come as a "lecturer and literary advisor."[47] In 1882, at the age of 20, Kishida was traveling all over Japan lecturing to large crowds about women's liberation.

Kishida believed that many changes in women's status were necessary if Japan were to become civilized and modern. She noted that, of the ideologies affecting women, "The most reprehensible was the practice of 'respecting men and despising women.' Yet in this country, as in the past, men continue to be respected as masters and husbands while women are held in contempt as maids or serving women."[48] Thus, Kishida believed that the ideology, *danson johi*, was outdated and unfounded. She added, "We are today, through cooperation, trying to build a new society."[49] One can conclude that the 'we' represents both men and women. Yet, if men despise women they will not be able to participate adequately in this process. Therefore, it would benefit the whole nation if women were included as equal members of the society.

Kishida extended the same argument of equality and equal participation in nation building to other areas in need of reform. Education was one of these areas. Kishida argued that a stronger nation would result if women were educated, because then women could be self-sufficient. Kishida stated that:

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[47] Sharon Sievers, "Feminist Criticism in Japanese Politics in the 1880's: The Case of Kishida Toshiko" Signs vol. 6 no. 4 (Summer 1981), 606.
[48] Ibid., 609.
[49] Ibid., 609.

> Today, we have come to feel that we have "managed" if 8 out of 10 daughters who are married do not return home in divorce. Actually, no one should make such a claim. One of the first requirements ought to be learning what it is to manage after marriage ... Daughters must be taught basic economics and the skills which would permit them to manage on their own. Even a woman who expects to be protected for the lifetime of her husband must be able to manage on her own, armed with the necessary skills, if he should die.[50]

This statement suggests that, although Kishida was pushing for major reforms in policy and in ideology, she still had to stay within some bounds of what was socially acceptable. She claimed, for example, that women should be educated so that they would be able to take care of themselves if their husband died or if they divorced. In contrast, she does not suggest that women should be educated and then have the right to choose whether to get married or whether to be self-supporting. Therefore, she is not trying to overturn the existing social values on marriage. In either case however, society did not expect or want women to be self-sufficient. If a woman's husband died, societal norms dictated that either she should move back in with male family members, or if her son were old enough, he would take care of her. It is evident that Kishida subscribed to many of these norms concerning a woman's sphere, like Fukuzawa, she did not advocate full equality between men and women. Ultimately, Kishida condemned the tradition of "putting daughters in boxes," as it was "like growing flowers in salt."[51] She emphasized that the failure to provide girls with the same opportunities for education and self-expression that boys had was stifling women's potential. However, even the majority of the male population had

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[50] Ibid., 610.
[51] Ibid., 611

no guarantee of receiving even a primary school education. Kishida's efforts, as well as those of the other women involved in the popular rights movement, illustrates that women could voice their own needs. In addition, this early feminist movement also served as a valuable step in motivating other Japanese women to think about their roles and responsibilities within Japanese society.

By 1886, women had also initiated the first strike in modern Japanese history, at the Amamiya silk mill. During this strike, 100 women walked out, protesting the longer hours and lower wages that the management had proposed. The strike lasted four days, and in the end, although "the Amamiya workers did not win on the issues of the spinning association's new regulations, they did get the owner to back down from adding 30 minutes to each shift, thus making the normal work schedule 15 hours."[52] What is most significant about this strike, is that it taught women at other mills that they could make change through this type of protest. That summer there were four additional protests in the same area, showing that other women felt that they could employ the same tactics to bargain with employers. In 1890 another strike in Osaka, proved to be one of the most successful strikes in early Meiji.[53] During this strike, women were able to negotiate higher wages and gain control over their savings, which was a major accomplishment for the period. Overall, the strikes persuaded many women workers that they could improve their social situation through activism.

The feminist gains in the 1880s would seem to have been in vain, however, as the Article 5 of the Police Security regulations of 1890 denied women the right to attend

[52] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 18.
[53] Ibid., 83.

political meetings or join political organizations.[54] Whereas, before 1888 "women were constrained by restrictions on organizations, meetings, and the press that applied to men as well as women. The first restrictions applying to all women, and only women, were clearly directed against hotbeds of popular rights agitation."[55] This one regulation, however, would not end the backlash against women's participation in the popular rights movement and labor unions. In 1900, the government passed the Police Security Regulations Law, which prohibited women, minors, students, and soldiers from attending political meetings. Even this law, however, would not squelch the persistent attempts of women to win equal rights by speaking out.

Although some of the male intellectuals mentioned previously, including Fukuzawa, attributed the backwardness of Japan to the low status of women the government instituted no real changes other than to guarantee women a limited education to improve women's status.[56] Instead, women became symbols of the past, acting as a source of security in this time of change and westernization.[57] In this period, however, education did become an important factor in the changing status of women as the literacy rate among women grew. During the Meiji period, girls' attendance of primary school for at least four years rose from "18 percent in 1875 to 72 percent in 1900 to 97 percent in 1910."[58] Literate Japanese women also increasingly read about the roles and status of women elsewhere as more and more books were imported. Most notably, this included John Stuart Mill's work on the status of women, which was translated in 1872 and Henrik

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[54] Nolte and Hastings, 154.
[55] Ibid., 155.
[56] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 18.
[57] Ibid., 15.
[58] Joan E. Ericson, "The Origins of the Concept of 'Women's Literature'" in The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writings. ed. Paul G. Schalow and Janet A. Stanford (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 82.

Ibsen's play, A Dolls House, which was first performed in Japan in 1911.[59] Heightened awareness of the status of women outside of Japan stimulated Japanese women's ability to question their own traditional values as well as the mores of Japanese society. The increase of literacy among women as well as the increase of women who graduated from high school also created a mass readership among women, which led to the widespread publication of women's journals most prolifically in the 1910s and 1920s.

All of these events had a major impact on feminists between 1901-1937. New ideas of feminism were no longer unfamiliar. Urbanization had also opened many doors to women, as they were able to escape the confines of rural life and move to Tokyo or other cities on their own. In this context, the political feminists of the early twentieth century became concerned with a myriad of issues, some that feminists in the 1880s addressed as well as new issues that concerned "modern women." Hiratsuka Raicho, was one of these feminists helped to form the "New Woman's Organization" in 1920. "Their bulletin Josei domei [Women's Alliance] outlined a platform calling for equal opportunity for men and women, elimination of sexual discrimination, clarification of the social function of the family, and protection of motherhood."[60] Ichikawa Fusae and other political feminists also promoted women's suffrage and women's right to participate in political activities. Fusae helped form both the "New Woman's Organization" and the "Women's Suffrage League of Japan."[61] There were also political feminists concerned

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[59] For brief readings on both these works consult, Miriam Schneir Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings (New York: Vintage Books. 1972).
[60] Kuninobe, 9.
[61] Takeda, Kiyoko, "Ichikawa Fusae: Pioneer for Women's Rights in Japan" Japan Quarterly vol. 31 (1984), 410.

with both socialist and Christian activities. Finally, because class divided many feminists, a proletariat as well as a bourgeois feminist movement emerged.

Kato Shidzue (1897-)

VI. Kato Shidzue[62]

Kato Shidzue was one political feminist who was not primarily concerned with gaining suffrage for women. Her main concern was the liberation of women through the knowledge of contraceptives and access to birth control. From the history of Kato's upbringing, however, one could not predict that she would develop these values. Kato grew up in a very traditional family in which her mother was the ideal "good wife and wise mother." Although her father, Ritaro Hirota, admired western architecture and knowledge, he still held on to old samurai values.[63]

Kato's involvement in the political struggle for women's rights had a sporadic beginning. Her earliest exposure to political activism began in her own home when her uncle hosted meetings with other students to discuss humanism, among other things. Although these ideas were new and interesting to the young Kato, at that time she was not motivated to participate in movements to change Japanese society. Through these meetings, she met her first husband Ishimoto Keikichi and with her uncle's encouragement, she married him.[64]

The early years of marriage to the Baron proved to be a major turning point in Kato's development of a political consciousness. One month after Kato's marriage, Keikichi obtained a supervisory position for the Mitsui Mining Company. Soon after, they moved to a mining town in Kyushu. This event was important because for the first time Kato witnessed the extremity of human suffering. The suffering of the female miners especially touched her; for example, she observed women working right up to

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[62] Picture: Kato Shidzue and Margaret Sanger in 1922 in Japan during Sanger's first lecture tour in Japan. From Ishimoto Shidzue, Facing Two Ways.

[63] Ishimoto, Shidzue, Facing Two Ways: The Story of My Life, into. and afterword by Barbara Molony (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 6.

their delivery and then going back to work. In her autobiography Kato recounts, "My heart ached when I saw babies coughing badly and left without medical attention till they died . . . Why must the mother breed and nurse while she works for wages?"[65] Later, Kato asked her husband to take her down to the mines so that she could observe everything the miners endured. She later recounted that while down in the mine, "I felt that I could not go any farther, but my husband told me that the miners worked in places narrower and lower than this and that women had to creep into these passages like wiggling worms to pull baskets of coal out to the place where the wagons stood."[66] This quote depicts two important aspects of Kato's development of a political consciousness. First, this exemplifies Baron Ishimoto's role in pushing and molding what Kato experienced. Second, this was the beginning of Kato's consciousness of women's issues and needs of mothers. It was not at this point, however, that Kato decided to become a political activist, although these events would be instrumental in forming her political consciousness.

The encouragement of Ishimoto increased substantially in the following years, as he insisted that she becomes a "modern woman." Along with becoming more aware about humanist and women's issues, his encouragement proved to be an equally important influence in Kato's development of a political consciousness. As a good wife, Kato could justify developing feminist ideologies, since she was obeying her own husband's wishes. Kato observed "My husband began his constructive task of educating his girl bride into a 'real' person. He insisted on my changing my attitude even toward

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[64] Ibid., 105.
[65] Ibid., 164.
[66] Ibid., 159.

him from a meek feudal wife to an alive, liberal and understanding companion."[67] Even more than this, he wanted her to develop her political and humanistic consciousness, especially concerning his own causes. Kato remarks, "he then turned to me and explained, 'If everybody else fails to understand my struggles, you will understand them, Shidzue!'"[68] Up until this point, it seemed that Ishimoto was trying to educate Kato so that she would become his equal. Yet, this statement reveals another side to his motives, which is that Ishimoto was a frustrated man who was trying to gain validation. Thus, he wanted to educate Kato so that at least she would be able to validate his views, and help him in his humanistic pursuits. In contrast, he did not educate her so that she could develop pursuits of her own.

These influences, however, were important steps in Kato's development, but it was not until her trip to the United States and her acquaintance with Margaret Sanger that she finally began to forge ahead, with her husband's encouragement, to become an independent woman engaged in improving the lives of others. During Kato's stay in New York, Ishimoto Keikichi abandoned her, for a little less than a year. He reasoned that this would help Kato learn to become self-sufficient and a model for other Japanese women. The homesick Kato struggled to learn English while at the same time attending courses at "The Ballard School for Practical Education," where she learned stenography, bookkeeping, secretarial duties, and typewriting. This activity made Kato realize that "a woman would never be free . . . as long as she did not achieve personal independence."[69] Although this experience was trying, she did gain a new independence, one that would drive a wedge between her and Ishimoto's relationship. An even more important

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[67] Ibid., 298.
[68] Ibid., 190.

realization, inspired later by her contact with Margaret Sanger, was that "the achievement of female independence [was directly tied] to a woman's need to control the size of her family."[70] Thus, her experience with the coal mines helped her make a connection with birth control and the status of Japanese women. Sanger's encouragement and example prompted Kato to vow to help women in Japan gain this freedom. Without these experiences, however, Kato may not have connected women's independence to the birth control movement, which then inspired her to act.

Upon Kato's return to Japan, her desire to see Japanese women attain both economic and biological freedom began to manifest itself. Kato tried to gain economic freedom and independence for herself by opening up her own imported yarn shop, where she employed other upper class women who might attain the same freedom. However, Kato's most important achievement was her work for the birth control movement in Japan between 1920 to 1937. During this period, Kato worked for this cause in one way or another. Margaret Sanger's visit to Japan gave the movement considerable impetus. At first, however, Japanese government prohibited Sanger from speaking on birth control in public, because birth control was contrary to the state ideology of the "family." This ideology dictated that women should put their family's needs ahead of their own for the benefit of the nation. Thus, they should value their position as mothers and fulfill that duty as their primary goal in life. Kato managed to work around the government's prohibition regarding public speech about contraception, and organized small private talks in which Sanger could spread her message. Kato thereby earned the title "the

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[69] Hopper, 12.
[70] Hopper, 12.

Margaret Sanger of Japan." Kato largely ignored these insults and was proud to be a "new woman" helping liberate all Japanese women.

Shortly after Sanger's visit, Kato began to write pamphlets with the aim of educating the Japanese public about birth control. Along with publishing Sanger's pamphlet, "Family Limitation," Kato wrote a pamphlet entitled, "The Problem of Japanese Population and Birth Control."[71] Here, Kato does not make it clear whether or not the pamphlets that she published received state censorship. She did acknowledge that her pamphlets could reach far more people than a single clinic could. With the publishing of these pamphlets, Kato faced, as she says, the "Antagonism of my own class."[72] She further remarks, "They called me 'Madame Control" and drew caricatures of me in papers and magazines."[73] Kato characterized this criticism thusly: "Instead of urging my sex to bear as many soldiers – noble patriots – as they possibly could, I was even belittling the military glory of the nation, so they said."[74]

Kato also propagated her message by giving speeches to miners and their families at the Ashio copper mines, among other places. In these speeches she discussed issues such as, "the ideal of a planned population for the betterment of the human race, voluntary motherhood in its relation to the elevation of women, the necessity for birth control as a means of abolishing injurious abortion, infanticide and everlasting poverty, the connection between birth control and labor problems."[75] Although Kato only reached a few thousand miners, their reaction was positive. Kato later wrote, "I received hundreds

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[71] Ishimoto, 231.
[72] Ibid., 237.
[73] Ibid., 232.
[74] Ibid., 232.
[75] Ibid., 234.

of letters from the mining people asking for more information about birth control. They were taking the matter very seriously." (236)

During the 1920s, several events in limited Kato's full participation in the birth control movement. In 1931, however, Kato became actively involved with the movement again. In March of that year, Kato wrote Sanger a letter in which she outlined three of her major aims for birth control in Japan:

> First is the educational work to promote the movement with right understandings. The second is, to bring out the work of Birth Control in Japan not as a solitary independent movement but in co-operation with other countries as an international movement for the common cause . . . The third work is to directly help the poor mothers or would be mothers from pressing need for the contraceptive method.[76]

Kato began working on at least one of these goals even before writing this letter to Margaret Sanger. In 1930 Kato gathered data on many of the birth control clinics in Japan and sent the information to Sanger to use in the Seventh International Birth Control Conference.

Through the 1930s, Kato continued to receive guidance and advice from Sanger. This is evident in 1936, when she went to New York to attend a "three-month internship on birth control techniques in Sanger's New York clinic" and later opened an "exact replica of that clinic in Tokyo's Shinagawa Ward."[77] Kato's clinic enjoyed great success with an almost 98% effective rate in preventing pregnancy, mainly because of Kato's own efforts at providing birth control devices, of which there were few available in

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[76] Ishimoto, Shidzue, The Margaret Sanger papers microfilm edition: Smith College Collections, ed. Katz, Esther (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1994), S06:106.

Japan.[78] In another letter to Margaret Sanger, Kato briefly stated her work at her birth control clinic, "I hope you will imagine me in our new birth control clinic. I wear my white gown over my American suits, when I instruct mothers there." She went on to say as a compliment to Margaret Sanger, "I often repeat paragraphs from Mrs. Sanger's book how this wonderful pioneer woman had fought, then it always gives me a new strength to march ahead."[79] Here Kato was not only fulfilling her goal of liberating women through birth control, but she was also acting as a model to other Japanese women. She illustrated, first, that women could achieve economic independence as she was doing by operating a birth control clinic. Second, the fact that she dre4ssed in western clothes also made a statement that she did not follow traditional Japanese customs by not dressing in kimonos. In these ways, Kato was both providing women with more rights, through her work with birth control, and also redefining women's roles by setting an example of a woman who lived outside of the norm.

Unfortunately, Kato's success ended abruptly after the government shut down her clinic on December 15, 1937. One reason for the closure of Kato 's birth control clinic was that Japan had just entered war with China in 1937. Thus, Kato 's birth control aims for Japan were directly in conflict with government war propaganda that urged families to have more children. Government officials perceived Kato's birth control movement as an impediment to the war effort. By 1941 the government set up women's youth groups to offer marriage counseling, to "cause women to move from an individualistic view of

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[77] Molony, Facing Two Ways, xix.
[78] Ibid., xix.
[79] Ibid., S08:648.

marriage to a national one and to make young women recognize motherhood as the national destiny."[80]

Before, the closure of Kato's clinic, another important event occurred in Kato's life; she separated from Ishimoto. At the end of their marriage, Kato's independence exceeded what her husband could tolerate, and their marriage dissolved. Kato had originally upheld many of the values of the "good wife, wise mother" – indeed the initial feminist changes in her social outlook had been encouraged by her husband. However, while Kato had become more progressive over time, her husband had become more conservative. This is reflected in a statement he made towards the troubled end of their marriage around 1936, "I have never heard of a single man so despicable as to confide his ambition to his woman! It spoils masculine heroism. It will ruin great enterprises!"[81] This quote by Ishimoto shows that many of his previous attitudes had changed about women. He now rejected the idea of a woman being her husband's intellectual companion. Like Fukuzawa, Ishimoto also had difficulty carrying out, in his own family, the so-called "civilized" or "enlightened" reforms that he had previously advocated. At this point, however, the obedient and submissive Kato who had previously opened herself up to her husband's radical ideas no longer existed. This time Kato was not going to be obedient to her husband's wishes and again change her own ideologies; she had come too far to turn back now. As Kato states, sometime around 1936, "With the sorrow of a broken love but

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[80] Thomas Havens, Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc. and George J. McLeod Limited in Toronto, 1978), 135.
[81] Ishimoto, 318.

with gratitude to the man who had been my guide toward mental maturity, I set out on a path of thought and action – alone."[82]

Within the larger political feminist movement, Kato saw a major division. On the one hand, there was a contingent of bourgeois feminists whose main goal was to obtain suffrage. On the other hand, there were the proletarian feminists who were more concerned with the class war. As Kato states, "For certain domestic reasons, I had to choose an independent path and join neither of these women's parties."[83] Kato decided instead to join the "Research Institute" in order to make a "deeper study" of women's issues. Nevertheless, despite Kato's independent stance, it is evident that her activities helped both the bourgeois and the proletarian feminists. Kato's activity in the birth control movement helped disadvantaged women free themselves from the biological constraints that tied them to poverty, which was, above all, a proletariat concern. On the other hand, Kato also extended her support to the bourgeois feminists, noting that, "Finally convinced that action was imperative, I stepped out from the ivory tower of my institute to join the women's suffrage campaign."[84] In this movement Kato became the chairperson of the finance committee for the Alliance of Suffragettes and helped to raise money among "many literary men, artists and journalists, together with their wives."[85] In addition, Kato spoke out at public meetings and helped with other suffragists to petition Diet members. Overall, Kato was active in many arenas within the feminist movement, fighting for a diverse set of goals. This, however, was not the end of Kato's success. In

[82] Ibid., 320.
[83] Ibid., 353.
[84] Ibid., 355.
[85] Ibid., 355-356.

the postwar period she herself would become a member of the Diet and continue to be an active participant in the movements for the equality of women.

Kato was an influential feminist both through her political actives as well as in her private life. She helped reshape politics and the rights and access that women had to birth control. She also took essential steps in allying the Japanese birth control movement with international movements. Her success can be seen in the miner's reaction to her speeches, the success of her birth control clinic, as well as her popularity after WWII, which got her elected to the diet. Thus, contrary to Pharr, in this case, Kato did make an impact and did have the popular support of many people in Japan before WWII.

Her influence in her private life, revolved around the fact that she strove to become economically independent, before and after the dissolution of her marriage. To do this, she opened her own yarn shop, birth control clinic, and gave lecture tours in the United States, in order to support her sons. In a way, she was representative of the modern woman in that she participated in spheres of activity outside of motherhood; this was especially unusual for women of her class. Through these activities, she illustrated to other women that they could become in control of their bodies and their economic situation. What is more important is that she was an example herself, of how women could take on new roles and strive for political rights in society. Thus, she helped show that women could have alternate roles of either participating in politics or owning their own business. As more women began to participate in these roles in the post war period, one can only conclude that it was partly women like Kato Shidzue, who normalized these roles, that paved the way for role redefinition and the expanded rights of women

Ichikawa Fusae (1893-1981)

VII. Ichikawa Fusae[86]

As mentioned, Ichikawa Fusae was most interested in gaining suffrage for Japanese women in the pre-war period. Ichikawa was born on May 15, 1893 on Honshu Island in Aichi Prefecture near Nagoya, to Ichikawa Tokuro and Tatsu. Although, as Esterline notes, her parents were "moderately successful farmers" who also "owned some rental houses and engaged in silk cultivation" it appears that Ichikawa still had quite a difficult childhood.[87] One reason for this difficulty is as Ichikawa states, she was, "one addition too many to already too many daughters".[88] From an early age, it is apparent that Ichikawa realized the misfortune of having been born a woman in this period of Japanese society. Her mother who would lament, "what a misery it is to have been born a woman" reinforced these ideas.[89]

Despite these disadvantages however, Ichikawa was able to attend six years of primary school. After graduating from primary school and under the advice of her older brother, Toichi, she enrolled in a Christian girls' school, Joshi-Gakuin, in Tokyo. Due to lack of funds, she left school and took a temporary job as a substitute teacher until her family could afford for her to return to school. When Ichikawa was able to return she enrolled at Okazaki instead. In school, Ichikawa excelled in as Esterline states, "the 'masculine' subjects of mathematics, physics and other sciences, while doing poorly in the 'female' courses of home economics, music and sewing."[90] After graduating from high school, Ichikawa failed to pass the Tokyo Women's Teachers' College entrance examination, and therefore was forced to return home, where again she taught school.

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[86] Picture: Ichikawa Fusae, sometime during the 1970s. From Tomoko Yamazaki, The Story of Yamada Waka.
[87] Esterline, 18.
[88] Ibid., 18.

Ichikawa summed up these early experiences of her life in the statement, "My youth can be summed up in a nutshell. I grew up in Nishio City, attended Aichi Women's Normal School – because tuition was free – graduated, and became an elementary school teacher."[91]

After teaching for a few years and then working on a daily newspaper as the editor of education and women's affairs, Ichikawa quit and decided to leave for Tokyo. As Ichikawa states about this period in her life, "I was still not satisfied with what a woman's life had to offer. I dreamed of going to Tokyo, of meeting new faces and learning new ideas."[92] Once in Tokyo, Ichikawa met Yamada Waka and Kakichi under the advice of her brother. This event would be profound in Ichikawa's introduction to new ideas as well as and many literary and political feminists. As Ichikawa states:

> I'd like to tell you just what happened on my first visit because it had a tremendous impact on my future. From the beginning Kakichi and Waka seemed interested in my welfare. They found as small room for me on the second floor of a house of a charcoal dealer in their neighborhood. But even at four yen a month the room was too expensive for me. Eager as I was to come in contact with new ideas, I needed a job. The Yamadas helped me with everything. When I decided it would be useful to learn English so I could read foreign literature, Kakichi began to teach me for half an hour before work every morning. I went to my first lesson with only a smattering of English from my Aichi school days. I was stupefied by

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[89] Ibid., 18.
[90] Ibid., 19.
[91] Yamazaki, Tomoko, The Story of Yamada Waka: From Prostitute to Feminist Pioneer tr. Hironaka, Wakako and Ann Kostant (Tokyo: Kodansha International., Ltd. 1985), 34.
[92] Ibid., 34.

Kakichi's choice of text: Ellen Kay's Love and Marriage, translated from the Swedish.[93]

Ichikawa was therefore, introduced to the "new ideas" that she sought to find out about which included new view of women and gender roles, as depicted in Ellen Kay's work. At the same time, she was also introduced to ideas of Taisho Democracy. Later, Ichikawa declared, "I am by no means a theorist or a thinker. A libertarian christened at the fount of Taisho democracy, it seems I was always a very practical activist." Taisho democracy, as articulated by Stephen Dodd, "is best known for its progressive features such as the growth of political party organizations, universal male suffrage, union activity, and other elements."[94] As Takeda Kiyoko notes, Ichikawa's insistence, "on equal rights for women was based on the humanist assumption that men and women are equally deserving of respect as human beings... [And] a firm supporter of government for the people and by the people, and was committed to parliamentarian government and universal suffrage."[95]

In 1918, the first year that Ichikawa was in Tokyo, she began attending the Unitarian Church. In addition, she became a member of the women's department of the Yuai Kai, (Friendship and Love Association) the first labor union in Japan. Soon after joining the Yuai Kai, Ichikawa became the editor of the union magazine. As Esterline notes, at this time the feminist movement and labor movements were intertwined especially since, "By 1914, in private factories, which employed 10 or more workers, 71 percent of the work force was female."[96] Ichikawa soon left this position, although it is not clear if it was because of organizational disagreements or her discontent at the lack of

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[93] Ibid., 35-36.
[94] Stephen Dodd, "Different feelings: the Intellectual shift between Meiji and Taisho" in Currents in Japanese Culture ed. Amy Vladeck Heinrich (New York: University of Columbia Press), 267.
[95] Takeda, 412.

success that the union was having. The liberation of women through unions therefore, did not prove to be Ichikawa's true calling.

Shortly after this, Ichikawa did find her calling. In March of 1920, Ichikawa joined forces with Hiratsuka Raicho and Oku Mumeo to form the Shin Fujin Kyokai (New Woman's Association). As Ichikawa states,

> The program of the Association included various topics and phases of activities, but most emphasis was placed on the principle of emancipation of women from traditional means of treatment of their sex. Though under the constant pressure from the people, our utmost efforts were given to filing petitions and bills in order to acquire the rights to attend political meetings, of assemblage, civil rights and women suffrage.[97]

In addition to this, the New Woman's Association planned also to increase the availability of higher education for women, improve the position of women within the family and to provide welfare for working women.[98] Their first objective was to attack the Peace Preservation Law of 1890, which prohibited women from participating in politics. The New Woman's Association set out to collect over 2,000 signatures on a petition that they presented to the Diet. In addition, as Vavich states, "In their efforts to see Diet members about the reform issue, SFK women often waited for long periods at the Diet building only to be refused admittance and at times verbally insulted by the men."[99] Unfortunately, the Diet was dissolved by the cabinet to avoid a discussion of the

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[96] Esterline, 20.
[97] Ichikawa Fusae, "Woman Suffrage Movement in Japan" in Women of the Pacific Pan –Pacific Women's Conference (Honolulu: Pan Pacific Union, 1928), 210.
[98] Dee Ann Vavich, "The Japanese Woman's Movement: Ichikawa Fusae, A Pioneer in Woman's Suffrage" Monumenta Nipponica vol. xxii no. 3-4 (1967), 411.
[99] Ibid., 411-412.

universal voting rights for men.[100] This meant in retrospect that the issue of the Peace Preservation Law would also be avoided.

After this setback, Ichikawa and Hiratsuka did not stop at collecting signatures and petitioning Diet members to try to reform the Peace Preservation Law. As Ichikawa states, after the dissolution of the diet, during mass meetings that were held for the discussion for the subject:

> One day in February, Miss Hiratsuka and I attended a meeting held at the Y.M.C.A. This particular meeting was held for the purpose of impeaching the conduct of government, especially, the expediency of the last dissolution. We were arrested in the place for the alleged violation of the fifth article of The Peace and Police Act. Though the punishment was not heavy, the incident injected a strong stimulus and zeal for the movement for the acquisition of women's right to assembly. This right was granted finally in 1922, when both Houses of the Diet passed a law granting women this right.[101]

The fact that Hiratsuka and Ichikawa were the only two women that were arrested, leads one to conclude that they probably were the only two women there, and therefore, knew that they should not be there. In this way, both Hiratsuka and Ichikawa made a statement to the rest of the male and female Japanese population that they disregarded the Peace Preservation Law. Even more important, was the fact that they showed that they were willing not only to speak out for women's rights, but that they were also willing to put themselves in jeopardy for the cause of women's rights. While these events were occurring, both also received criticisms in newspapers for wearing western clothes, which

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[100] Esterline, 21.
[101] Ichikawa, 201.

they said were "far more comfortable for our busy life." This was once again a visual way that both women illustrated to Japanese society that they were unwilling to obey traditional norms. The act of dressing in western clothing was threatening because the women who engaged in these activities were supposedly "free-living and free-thinking," who went against the group sanctioned roles.

From 1920 to 1924, Ichikawa decided to live in America. In Seattle, Ichikawa worked on her English and cultivated relationships with a variety of American women activists. She met Carrie Chapman Catt, who organized the League of Women Voters, and Alice Paul, who had organized the National Women's Party. In addition, in Chicago she visited Jane Addam's Hull House. Later, she moved to New York where, "she enrolled in a Columbia University extension course and studied at the Land School of the Socialist Party."[102] These events paved the way for her establishment of the International Labor Organization of Japan and participation in the League for Winning Women's Suffrage.

From 1924 to 1927, Ichikawa worked at both of these organizations, until because of time constraints, she had to quit one. She chose the LWWS, as she states, "I reasoned that anyone could replace me at the ILO office while nobody else could work on the suffrage movement as I could. I did not mind losing income if I could devote all my time and energy to the cause in which I believed."[103] By 1925, men had won universal suffrage, so in 1928, during the first election in which all men could vote, it became the cause of the LWWS to petition political parties to support women's right to vote. Here Ichikawa and her colleagues received criticism from left-wing women's movements for

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[102] Esterline, 22.
[103] Ibid., 23.

being non-discriminatory in the parties that they approached for assistance and not supporting the left wing movement. Yet, Ichikawa realized that if women were ever going to gain the right to vote, they needed all the support that they could muster. Another criticism from socialist and communist feminists was that suffrage or inequality was not the problem, but rather that capitalism was the cause of women's inequality in society. Ichikawa addressed this criticism thusly:

> Strangely enough, the Communists and Socialists were also against our movement. Their reasons were based on their belief that the cause of women's low social status was capitalism which protects personal property. They also believed that if a communistic society was established, women's status would rise simultaneously. For them to support or aid our suffrage movement meant the acceptance of a capitalistic society.[104]

Ichikawa's view on suffrage was quite different, to her, the suffrage movement consumed her whole being, and was the answer for solving a slew of other women's issues including women's civil rights and women's ability to join political parties. In Ichikawa's own words, she illustrates how she has literally put her life into this movement: "I honestly believe that what I am doing is right... I will dedicate all I have –time, power, money –for this movement.

Ichikawa not only received criticisms in regards to her ideas of feminism and theory, but many critics soon began a critique of her as a woman. Ichikawa and other women activists were viewed as unfeminine, and "lacking sensitivity and womanly virtue." Ichikawa also addressed this criticism stating:

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[104] Vavich, 417.

> "The conservative public opposed woman's suffrage believing that a woman's place was in the family, for the ideal of Japanese womanhood was to be a good wife and wise mother; and if women should have equal rights politically with men, conflicts would probably arise within the family thereby destroying the traditional family system which has been the center of Japanese life since ancient times. Those who opposed the movement were intent on protecting the family system where one man rules the family, this man usually being the father. The opposition to woman's suffrage was a reaction to the threat it presented to the family system.

Here, Ichikawa makes very astute observations, that the attacks on her personal character and on the feminist movement, not only stem from the male patriarchy, but also from the "ancient values" that are deeply ingrained in the institutional structure of Japan. Thus, to allow women a role outside of their sanctioned roles in society would upset the balance and structure that is the foundation of Japanese society.

In order to overcome these obstacles, Ichikawa sought outside support. In 1928, Ichikawa traveled to the First Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu to try to solicit international support for the suffrage movement in Japan. In this conference, Ichikawa states the resolution that the Pan-Pacific Women's conference passed regarding Japan:

> Whereas, we believe that the eternal peace in the Pacific is secured when the women of nations confronting the Pacific acquired political franchise, Whereas, the women of Japan are deprived of political freedom though the Fusen-Kakutoku-Domei (Women's Suffrage League) constantly moved forward for the

> acquisition of said franchise in the past, Whereas now the time has come to discuss the great problem of Peace in the Pacific by peaceful women, Be it resolved that the women of Japan ask the cooperation and sympathy and guidance of the Pan-Pacific Woman's Conference for the acquisition of political freedom in Japan.[105]

Thus, like Kato, Ichikawa sought international support and guidance to try to improve the status of women in Japan. Ichikawa realized many of the limitations that she faced within Japan because of the power of the patriarchy and in response sought international intervention to help aid the enfranchisement of women. In one statement, Ichikawa outlines the opposition in Japan astutely stating, "The Woman's Suffrage Movement is directly opposite to the traditional womanly virtues of Japan and this very act destroys completely the long-cherished daily conduct of women."[106]

For a short period after this, it would seem that Ichikawa's efforts were paying off. As Vavich states, "After the general election of 1928, the movement entered into what Ichikawa likes to call 'a period of hope.'"[107] At this time, women's suffrage became an important issue in many political parties. In addition, Diet members also began to respond to the demands of feminists and gradually began to realize that woman's suffrage was nearby. However, there was still staunch resistance by many conservative members, as Home Minister Mochizuki Keisuke exemplified in his statement: "Go back to your homes and wash your babies' clothes! This is the job given to you and there is the place in which you are entitled to sit!"[108] By 1930, however, the Diet passed the feminine civil

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[105] Ichikawa, 204.
[106] Ibid., 202.
[107] Vavich, 418.
[108] Ibid., 418.

rights bill and the Peace Preservation Law was further corrected to give women the right to join political parties. In 1930, 500 women gathered for the First National Meeting for Women's Suffrage. By 1931, however, the Diet revised this bill resulting in the limiting of women's civil rights again. During this time, Ichikawa petitioned for unqualified civil rights, yet she faced staunch resistance by conservative right-wing political groups. During this time, Ichikawa states, "our movement became very 'dangerous.'"[109] In this, she refers to a series of incidents that were particularly physically threatening for the suffrage group members. This included an attempt by one man to drag her physically off a stage so that she could not speak about the expanded rights for women. After this, Ichikawa's period of hope ended. Once Japan entered the war with Manchuria in September of 1931, all hope and activity for the suffrage movement almost completely ended. Ichikawa, however, did join government women's groups to try to improve the status of women in other ways. However, she would not see the actualization of her efforts until after World War II.

Overall, Ichikawa's formation of a political consciousness stemmed from realizing the disadvantages that faced women and many almost "lucky" opportunities to become allied with other important political feminists of her day. Once involved in this movement, Ichikawa sought every support possible to try to change women's rights. Her success with the peace preservation law along with the changing attitudes of many Diet members who did sign her petition show not only the popular support for her movement by some members of society, but it also shows that views of women were in fact changing.

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[109] Vavich, 419.

In Ichikawa's personal life, she also served as an example to other women, that they could be more independent. First, Ichikawa traveled to both Tokyo and America alone. Second, Ichikawa became self-supporting while living in Tokyo, with some assistance from the Yamada's. Third, Ichikawa also showed that she would not heed to the norms that society dictated toward Japanese women. She did this by dressing in western clothing and by attending political meetings when it was against the law. Again, Ichikawa like Kato illustrates that women can participate in different spheres. By actually participating in these spheres, Ichikawa helped normalize these actives and served as a model to other women that they could too. Therefore, Ichikawa helped change women's rights and helped produce role redefinition in Japanese society for both women and men.

VIII. Background on Literary Feminism 1900- 1937

The history of literary feminists was quite different from that of political feminists. As Ericson comments women's contribution to literature during the Edo period had almost completely disappeared primarily because of the influence of Neo-Confucian values that devalued women. Women's contributions to literature began to increase after the Meiji Restoration and especially after the beginning of the twentieth century.[110]

During this time, the term "women's literature" began to take on very different meanings from what it had in the past. The term as defined during this era categorized all women's literature and all women writers as the same, although many of these women writers used different methods and wrote in different genres. The term "women's literature" was used to devalue women's writings as "popular," rather than as "pure" literature. Women's writings became hampered by this stigma, especially because some journals and organizations began to bestow prizes on (and otherwise award) women who wrote in a "popular" style. Women who wrote in a more intellectual, technical, complicated, or – in short – "man like" fashions did not receive positive recognition. In defying the stereotypes, such women faced opposition from many male literary critics, who agreed that they were violating their prescribed boundaries and social roles.

Throughout this period literacy among Japanese women was steadily rising. By 1910, 97% of women attended at least four years of primary school. At the same time, the number of women who graduated from high school was also increasing. According to Ericson, the number of girls that graduated from high school reached about 10% in 1920.

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[110] Ericson," Origins of the Concept of "Women's Literature", 79.

These graduates became the bulk of the readers of women's journals during the pre-war era.[111]

While these magazines circulated among the estimated 10% of educated women, even more women could have read about the magazines in mainstream newspapers. These newspapers published women's literature and information on what was going to be published in upcoming women's journals. As Ericson points out, however, such newspaper coverage should not be overemphasized as a positive acknowledgement of women's contribution to literature: "Women may publish in prestigious journals, but the categories through which their work is discussed prejudge their contributions as marginal and outside the literary mainstream."[112]

Although many of these women knew each other and interacted with one another, it is more difficult to characterize the literary feminists of this era than it is to characterize the political feminists. One reason is that many of the literary feminists were not part of a unified, self conscious group that was trying to accomplish specific goals, as many of the political feminists were. The one unifying pattern was that many of these women published in women's literary journals. In such journals, literary feminists expressed themselves and their views of the changing roles of women in a variety of ways. They wrote short stories, novels, *tanka*, free verse, and essays. The issues treated in their writings included poverty, motherhood, classicism, as well as the changing roles of women and the redefinition of traditional gender spheres and responsibilities.

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[111] Ibid., 83.
[112] Ibid., 76.

Yosano Akiko (1878-1942)

IX. Yosano Akiko – One Literary Feminist[113]

In 1878, Yosano Akiko was born into a merchant family, but as Beichman states, "Akiko's father at least was quite a cultured man – the education he gave his children was unusual for a merchant of his time and place."[114] Thus from an early age, Yosano was able to read many Japanese classics, and she even graduated from a girl's middle school, which was uncommon during the late 1880s. In 1871, the Ministry of Education planned to establish 256 middle schools, yet by 1879 had built only about 52%.[115] Another statistic reports that only 20% of all girls in Japan even attended the mandatory four years of primary school during the middle of the Meiji period.[116] One reason for the low attendance rate was that many parents did not feel that it was necessary to educate daughters since a woman's main function was to bear and rear children. Frequently, families were only willing to fund the education of male children. Even among boys, however, the attendance rate was only 50% during this period, showing that most families did not have extra money for tuition.

As a young girl, Yosano was extremely passionate. She stated that, "My body was fully occupied with the physical labor of working in the family store, but in my heart I was transformed into a noblewoman from The Tale of Genji."[117] During Yosano's adolescent years, she experienced overwhelming feelings about death. Yosano chose poetry as an outlet for these emotions. She noted of this period in her life that "I craved a

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[113] Picture: Yosano Akiko 1915. From, Laurel Rasplica Rodd, "Yosano Akiko and the Taisho Debate over the "New Woman" in Recreating Japanese Women.
[114] Beichman, "The Early Years", 45.
[115] Kimi Hara, "Challenges to Education for Girls and Women in Modern Japan: Past and Present" in Japanese Women (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), 96.
[116] Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 201.
[117] Beichman, "The Early Years", 47.

form of expression beyond the everyday commonsense language that helped in one area of life, in order to express totally and with all my being the pent up passion within me, and to soothe my constant tension . . . What satisfied my need happened to be poetry."[118] At this point, Yosano was not called to women's issues; rather she used her poetry as an expression of raw emotions and passion.

Poetry also became an escape for Yosano, however, as she had to contend with the indifference and hostility that many merchants and others in Sakai (Yosano's hometown) felt for the literary arts that she so highly valued. Yosano observed:

> I was surrounded by the conservatism, hypocrisy, corruption, ignorance, vulgarity, and depressing atmosphere of my family and birthplace, and I hated them. Then suddenly like a miracle there opened before me the bright world of poetry and love and I danced out into it. The romantic imaginings which excited me at some times, and the sentimental emotions which intoxicated me at others, were the truth of my life at that time and I expressed them spontaneously.[119]

Her criticism of society along with her assertion that she would counteract that negativity by expressing her passion and love through poetry indicated that she had grown beyond societal expectations of what a woman should be. By this point, as Beichman asserts, "She gave hints of the intellectual depth and imaginative fire that kept her from being the "mere woman" her parents had meant her to be."[120] Indeed, Yosano's passion for love and poetry could not survive within her hometown and the stifling traditions that it imposed.

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[118] Beichman, "The Early Years", 52.
[119] Ibid., 45.
[120] Ibid., 45.

The next stage in Yosano's life marked a complete change as she states: "After I turned 20, my life as a poet opened before me. Rather than fearing death, I found myself occupied with the pleasures of being alive."[121] In 1901, at the age of 23, Yosano ran away to Tokyo and moved in with her lover, Yosano Hiroshi who was married at the time to another woman. The first years of informal marriage were rocky for the Yosano's, as they faced public criticism and scandal because Yosano Hiroshi had not formally ended his last marriage when Yosano Akiko came to live with him. In addition, it appears that Yosano Hiroshi was not completely faithful to Yosano Akiko in these first few years. Their marriage did last, however, with Yosano Akiko bearing her husband eleven children.

During the next few decades of Yosano's life, through the scandals, her husband's emotional problems, and her continuous pregnancies, she continued to write poetry. She published her first collection, Tangled Hair, in 1901. These poems received praise for the "freshness of their language, the boldness of their imagery, and their passion."[122] Yosano's method of writing at this time was to write, as she described it, as if she were a man. While still living in Sakai, Yosano thought that her poems were mediocre and concluded, "it must be because I'm stuck in a woman's body."[123] Thus, while Yosano's poetry included topics on women's issues, at this time her criticism of herself as a woman writer caused her to "write like a man."

Yosano's poetry, however, expressed a kind of untold blunt sexuality. Previously, there were numerous amounts of poetry published about sexuality, yet none written by a

[121] Ibid., 51.
[122] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 205.
[123] Ibid., 207.

woman, which is the reason why this sexuality that Yosano wrote was "untold." Yosano's poems were shocking, not because of the content per se, but because she was the first woman of her time to write about the subjects which men had dominated for so long. Therefore, her poems gave women a new way to think about their bodies and their sexuality, in this way redefining roles and norms for women. Some examples of her early poetry are:

How short the spring! But why should such
As immortality be blest?
I'm young, and with my hand I touch,
And I caress my fullest breast.[124]

This poem shows the narcissism, the sensuality, and the emphasis on youth, which marks Yosano's early poetry. Yosano appears to be enjoying her youth and treasuring it, while also knowing that it will soon pass. Thus, she embraces her sexuality without shame. In another poem she writes:

Gently, I open
The door to eternal
Mystery, the flowers
Of my breasts cupped,
Offered with both my hands.[125]

The mystery seems to be the sexuality that Yosano offers to her lover. In this poem she again embraces her sexuality without shame, and shows that women can be aware of their bodies as beautiful and natural, no less than flowers. Many of Yosano's other early

[124] Yosano Akiko, The Poetry of Yosano Akiko tr. H.H. Honda (Japan: Hokuseido Press, 1957), 14.

poems are similar to these, revolving around themes of love and sexuality. These themes, especially when addressed by a woman, were taboo at the time and considered contrary to the ideal of the *ie* (family system). Woman's sexuality was not congruent with this ideal because the main requirement of this system was that all members must act according to group interests, rather than according to their own individual needs and desires. Yoshizumi, a historian on the *ie*, observes that "Any family member who behaved independently was severely sanctioned."[126] While this statement by Yoshizumi is extreme, it was true that any family member could be sanctioned for behaving outside of societal norms. Especially a woman who expressed her sexuality was among those who were defying their traditional group-sanctioned role. Men were also members of the *ie* and subject to group sanctioned roles, yet these roles were different from women's roles, and often allowed men more freedom to participate in more spheres of activity than women could. Men were also treated a lot freer in this respect especially since sexuality for men could take place either inside or outside of the home, which meant that men could express their sexuality supposedly without posing a threat to the ultimate goals of the state.

Another taboo issue that Yosano addressed was that of childbirth. At this point in her life, sometime around 1906 at the age of 28, Yosano "returned to the female."[127] That is, Yosano changed her writing style, abandoning her previous notions that she must write in the style that male writers used in order to be successful. She still used subjects that expressed what was uniquely female as an inspiration in her writing style, but she no

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[125] Yosano Akiko, River of Stars: Selected Poems of Yosano Akiko tr. Sam Hamill and Matsui Gibson (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997), 6.

longer felt the pressure to live up to a writing style that was measure against men. She states, "For women novelists to succeed, it would be best if they stop imitating novels by men as they have done until now, give up the effort to look feminine, improve their own sensibility, sharpen their powers of observation, and set forth honestly their own female feelings without hesitation."[128] At this point, Yosano truly became a cultural feminist, urging women to extend themselves beyond the prescribed notions of women's roles. Particularly for women writers, she shows that they do not have to accept the stereotypes or limitations that critics of literature place on them by measuring women's writing with men's writing. She advocates that women can be good writers on their own terms by asserting their feminine feelings.

From this point, Yosano's poetry becomes much deeper and meaningful, especially in regards to feminist issues. One issue that Yosano wrote about was childbirth. Here, Yosano choose to write about, with true feminine feelings, the one female that man could never experience. In one poem she writes:

Oh, damned be mankind! What are they?
They bear no child, no danger run,
As we do, of their lives, and play,
Leaving their things and ours undone.[129]

In this poem about birth, Yosano is criticizing what men do, saying that while they live a playful existence, women make the real contribution by bearing children. In addition, it

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[126] Kyoko Yoshizumi, "Marriage and Family: Past and Present," in. Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), 187.
[127] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 220.
[128] Ibid., 220.
[129] Yosano, Poetry of Y.A., 64.

seems that she goes beyond merely criticizing men and suggests that women are superior to men because they give birth. In addition to this poem, Yosano's poem about the birth of her second set of twins, her sixth and seventh children, are remarkably personal and moving. In this poem, she depicts the fear and pain of labor, while being pregnant with twins. During this pregnancy, Yosano had complications which was enhances by her fear from giving birth in a hospital for the first time. She writes:

Stranger than two suns
    In the sky
Are the three hearts
    That beat
In my body
    Like an insect
Devoured without trace
    By its young,
My end
    Nears

Here, Yosano obviously feels that her own death is near, as she is unable to protect herself from the trauma of labor. This clearly is the vivid danger that Yosano refers to in the first poem, which men do not face. Again, Yosano elevates women's status because they do face these life or death situations. In another part of this poem she writes:

I shall become an evil dragon
    And writhe in pain,
I shall become a wild boar,

And howl – unless I do,

Nothing human can be born.[130]

This last poem shows how Yosano even defied traditional Japanese disapproval of women screaming during their labor, by saying, "I shall become a wild boar, and howl." Yosano justifies this howling by the fact that unless she does, "nothing human can be born." Therefore, one must be able to express the pain of childbirth, by howling if they have to, instead of being a meek or quiet woman. In the other poems in this series, Yosano goes on to express her experiences regarding birth and her grief after losing one of her twins.

After the birth,

Head cold

Blood lost,

I become

A fish enclosed in ice

Its little hands

dyed with blood,

The child died

it peels the skin from

Its sleepy mother's eyes

At intervals,

Like a bowed lute

Harshly stroked,

[130] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 221-222.

The empty womb
Again knows pain.
As a mother
I know there is no world
Not cleansed by the blood
From a woman's
Torn body.[131]

The significance in this poem lies in the fact that previous Buddhist and Shinto notions dictated that blood was impure and that "menstruation and childbirth were seen as sources of uncleanliness and, therefore, a cause of ceremonial impurity."[132] This last poem indicates that Yosano defied traditional norms about birth, by insisting that birth is actually clean and purifying rather than impure. Yosano not only defies Japanese norms concerning birth but also glorifies the role of motherhood. The strength that women possess to endure the pain associated with childbirth renders them hero-like. Yosano depicts women as brave warriors, fighting to endure the physical pain of childbirth and the emotional pain of the death of a child.

In 1911, Yosano started contributing to the first feminist magazine, Seito (Bluestocking). This did not mean, however, that Yosano became highly politically oriented or an active part of the political feminist movement. Even while Yosano contributed poetry and involved herself in the debate over the "new woman," she still maintained her distance from the movement. One way to explain Yosano's view is by

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[131] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 223-224.
[132] Haruko Okano, "Woman's Image and Place in Japanese Buddhism" in Japanese Women (New York: The Feminist Press, 1995), 19.

examining a conversation that she had with the founder of the magazine, Hiratsuka Raicho before its publication in 1911. Hiratsuka recalled that Yosano did not seem very encouraging about the idea of a feminist magazine: "She kept repeating that women were no good, that women were not up to men, that she had to read many poems sent from all over the country but the best ones were always by men."[133] Here, Yosano seems to admonish women about the poor quality of their writings. Yet, her criticism partly reflects her critical view of her own writing, which she said was "not up to men." Then she developed her own individual genre based on individual feminine experiences and stopped trying to imitate men. Later, Hiratsuka even concluded that Yosano was really trying to encourage women rather than admonish them, especially since Yosano did decide to contribute to the journal. Her contribution helped illustrate the notion that women needed to grow and develop their own potential as women, which she also advocated for women writers. She writes:

> "Mountain moving day has come,"
> is what I say. But no one believes it.
> Mountains were sleeping for a while.
> Earlier, they had moved, burning with fire.
> But you do not have to believe it.
> O people! You'd better believe it!
> All the sleeping women move
> now that they awaken.[134]

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[133] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 226.
[134] Yosano, River of Stars, 105.

This poem depicts women as powerful beings who have been asleep but are now awakening, and who clearly have work to do before they can actualize their full potential. Her allusion to the past and the way that "earlier, they had moved, burning with fire" makes reference to the times in Japanese history when women were more revered. This is especially evident when examining Japanese creation stories that depict women as being the sun or the founding god of Japan. In addition, she may also be referring to writers in the Heian period that was revered for their writings, especially Murasaki Shikibu the author of The Tale of Genji. Her point is that women are capable of making an impact on Japanese society and receiving recognition for their accomplishments. Furthermore, once women realize this potential and exercise it, they will become a powerful force to be reckoned with. Seito was instrumental in helping women fulfill this potential and receive recognition. As the journal's manifesto declared, "its purpose is to supply a place for training, education and self-expression for women who wish to liberate themselves, and that it aims at the creation of women geniuses."[135]

Another important activity in which Yosano participated through Seito was a debate that ran through several issues regarding the image of the "new woman." As Rodd states, Yosano represented one type of "new woman."[136] Yosano took the position that women should not be limited in their roles as mothers. Instead, women should be able to take on as many roles as they wanted. She also insisted that among the various roles that women could pursue, motherhood would not necessarily be the most important role. " I believe that making motherhood absolute and giving supremacy to motherhood, as Ellen

[135] Noriko Mizuta Lippit, "Seito and the Literary Roots of Japanese Feminism" International Journal of Women's Studies vol. 2 (1979), 158.
[136] Rodd, 179.

Key does, among all the innumerable hopes and desires that arise as women undulate on the surface of life, serves to keep women entrapped in the old unrealistic way of thinking that gives a ranking to the innumerable desires and roles which should have equal value for the individual."[137]

Yosano continued to express her views on these and other social issues in a magazine called Taiyo, starting in 1915. Within this magazine, she wrote a column entitled, "One Woman's Notebook." Yosano's participation in all these activities shows that literary and/or cultural feminists could be interested in both political and social issues. Although Yosano most actively sought cultural changes through her poetry, she was also interested in making changes in the political arena through her essays and debates in journals.

Later, Yosano sought other avenues to realize her feminist ideals. Around 1912, Yosano translated into modern Japanese the Tale of Genji, which Murasaki Shikibu wrote during the Heian period, sometime around the beginning of the eleventh century. The fact that a woman wrote this famous prose emphasized to modern women the possibility that they could also make valuable literary accomplishments. In 1914, Yosano also translated the Eiga Monogatari (Tales of Glory); a long medieval historical tale attributed to Lady Akazome Emon. By translating these works, Yosano provided Japanese women with role models from the past. These role models proved to women in the Meiji era that their status was not always the same as what existed in their time, showing that their roles were not stagnant.

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[137] Ibid., 190.

Yosano made another important contribution in 1921, when "she joined forces with her friends in establishing Bunka Gakuin, a junior high school for girls," where she taught classical Japanese.[138] As already mentioned, there were few middle schools established during this period where children of either sex could get an education. Thus, Yosano's effort to establish, particularly a girls' junior high school, was a tremendous effort on her part to raise the status of women. This also shows that while Yosano advocated the idea that women should be able to have roles outside of motherhood, that she also took an effort to change roles of the women around her. Her efforts also illustrated to other women that they did not have to wait for the patriarchy to change the status of women, but women themselves could be instrumental in changing their own status. Yosano taught at this school and continued to write poetry until the end of her life in 1942.

It is difficult to estimate the impact that Yosano's poetry, essays, and other contributions had in changing the roles and status of women. One reason is that such impact is intangible or not measurable in terms of laws or constitutional changes. Yet the popularity of Yosano's literary output indicates that a great number of women and men in Japan were exposed to her new depictions of women's role and behavior. One poet Saito Mokichi (1882-1953) even commented, "Akiko's fame was really extraordinary. There is no other case like hers in the history of modern *tanka.* Even if you call us famous now, it's nothing compared to what she was. Scholars, writers, everyone praised her."[139]

Although it is difficult to measure the impact of Yosano's poetry, one can assume that her poetry *at least* made many women in Japanese society question the ways they

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[138] Mulhern, 481.
[139] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 205.

viewed their bodies and their roles in society. At the same time, it is impossible to imagine that she did not have an impact on male attitudes about the roles of women as well.

In her personal life, Yosano was a very independent woman who was self-motivated and who was responsible for supporting her husband and her children. By this fact alone, one can extrapolate how Yosano upset or caused a re-evaluation of traditional gender roles. Through this activity, it is clear that she wished to live her own life in accordance with the ideal of the "new woman" that she so strongly advocated. In this way, she also served as an example to Japanese women that they could take on other roles outside of motherhood, just as she did.

Hayashi Fumiko (1903-1951)

X. Hayashi Fumiko – Another Literary Feminist[140]

Hayashi Fumiko is unlike any of the women mentioned so far in this study. She is the most apolitical, as well as the most intellectually independent of the group. In her writing she refused to join any school of theory, instead preferring to write as she chose in regards to subject and writing style. From a very early age, Hayashi showed a kind of independence and confidence unusual for women of her time. One can say that Hayashi was a true cultural feminist in that she was never involved in political debates or any type of women's movement. Rather, she challenged societal norms and empowered women beyond traditional expectations by using the characters in her stories, and especially in her own diary, to show how women could take on different roles. In her writings, however, she never explicitly stated that women's roles should change. Instead, she set up a variety of situations that showed her characters challenging or defying the traditional norms and values of Japanese society to cause her readers to question the prescribed roles of women.

In examining the influence that Hayashi's writing had on Japanese society, one must first give a detailed account of her life. This account is important because it was her life of poverty that led her to become an independent woman and helped to shape her views that other women could also be independent, self-supporting, and assertive. Her views, which originated from her untraditional upbringing and lifestyle, are what gave rise to her cultural feminism. Central to the understanding of Hayashi is her work, Diary of a Vagabond,[141] which is both an autobiographical and a fictional account of her life.

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[140] The last photograph of Hayashi Fumiko taken in 1951. In Joan E. Ericson, Be a Woman.

[141] For two translations of this work see, Yukiko Tanaka, To Live and to Write: Selections by Japanese Women Writers 1913-1938. (Seattle, Washington: Seal Press, 1987) and Joan E. Ericson, Be a Woman:

Because of the connection between Hayashi's real life and her fiction, her stories focus on a concrete and often bleak reality of life as she experienced it. Her stories therefore, revolve around everyday events in her life, such as whether or not she has enough money to eat or somewhere to sleep. This is contrary to Yosano Akiko who focused abstractly on sexuality and the role of motherhood and alluded to women's issues instead of addressing problems that face women on a daily basis. Thus, Yosano abstractly, yet vividly addresses motherhood, writing, "The child died/ it peels the skin from/ It's sleepy mother's eyes"[142] to express the pain after loosing a child. While, Hayashi talks about being a nanny in a concrete manner saying, "I had given the baby a bath and she had calmed down, it was already eleven o'clock. I detested babies, but strangely enough, whenever they were put on my back, they fell right asleep."[143]

In examining Hayashi, it is important to ask what cultural impact did she attempt to produce in society. How particularly, was Hayashi a cultural feminist? How did she challenge cultural values and empower women beyond the norms of her day? How did her writing expose the realities behind the ideals commonly espoused by society? By investigating her work, Diary of a Vagabond, this paper will offer some answers to these questions. One common theme in Hayashi's work revolved around exposing the condition of the urban poor, as well as the plight of women. Hayashi used these experiences to express the blunt and vivid reality of poverty, hunger, abuse, etc. Most importantly, Hayashi's work and her unusual life led her to question the established norms and values of society. For example, Hayashi was a *shiseiji*, or illegitimate child.

Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

[142] Beichman, "Return to the Female", 223-224.

[143] Ericson, Be a Woman, 130.

Although she did not personally feel deprived or devalued because of her status, she used her writings to question and to challenge the social norms upholding the status of a *shiseiji*. Hayashi may not have felt sorry for herself, yet her writings throughout her life indicate that there were many instances when this status affected her life in some way. For instance, she followed her childhood love to Tokyo with the anticipation that they would marry but, after he graduated from Tokyo University, he did not marry her because his family was against him marring a *shiseiji*.

Many scholars suggest that some of the events or similar events in the diary really happened to Hayashi, yet they also suggest that a number of events are also fictitious. This does not diminish the value of the diary, as it still describes the reality of the lives of the poor that Hayashi was trying to depict, and that her own life approximated as well. Thus, it is difficult to separate the attributes of Hayashi the character from the attributes of Hayashi the person. While this is a problem for a biographer, the intended impact that Hayashi wanted to produce on in Japan during the 1930s, that I will analyze, is not dependent on whether all the events she described really occurred. Therefore, when addressing the diary, I will address events as they happened to the character/ person of Hayashi, together with the effects that Hayashi was trying to produce in society with her character/person in her writing.

Diary of a Vagabond may not seem shocking or revealing to the modern reader. However, to Japanese society in the 1920s and 1930s, Hayashi was representative of the taboo "modern girl" of the day. As Miriam Silverberg describes, one perspective of the of the modern girl was that, "the character of the Modern Girl [was] apolitical but militantly autonomous, neither an advocate of expanded rights for women nor a suffragette; yet at

the same time she had no intention of being a slave to men."[144] Hayashi is representative of the modern girl in that she never joined any formal political feminist group, but at the same time challenged the patriarchy and established values of society through her writing. In her own personal experiences, she also refused to be "a slave to men" in the fact that she left men when they were not faithful or abusive. In other ways she was representative of the modern girl in the fact that she lived on her own and supported herself through various jobs and eventually through her writing.

From the outset, the title, "Diary of a Vagabond," is the first major theme, which would have caught the attention of readers in Japanese in the 1930s. In other readings, it is possible to translate vagabond as "wanderer" or "drifter." Although, it was obviously not usual for women to be poor or to hold jobs, what was unique about Hayashi was that she was a woman wanderer, who was not under any male authority, and writing about it. The action of writing validated, to the whole of Japanese society, her experience and that of other women in her position. Another unique attribute of Hayashi is that she went from job to job, and from man to man unsupervised, on her own authority, without needing to seek anyone's approval. Hayashi also depicts an insiders' perspective on a life that was becoming more common for urban women as they began to live on their own and work at low paying, unskilled jobs while wandering around the city. This is exactly the characteristic of the modern girl that was becoming so threatening to many male authorities, who saw the latter as subverting the morality of both family and state. Such women threatened the ideas of patriarchy and the *ie*.

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[144] Silverberg, 241.

In the diary itself, Hayashi discusses a variety of issues and events that seem trivial on the surface yet in fact pose larger ideological and philosophical questions about the values and mores of Japanese society. In the beginning of the diary, as translated by Ericson, Hayashi describes a very independent child who fearlessly and selflessly helps her parents peddle their goods at various places in Japan. There is conflicting information regarding Hayashi's actually date of birth, yet most scholars place it on December 31, 1903. A more relevant fact to Hayashi's life story was that she was born a *shiseiji*, or illegitimate child.

Hayashi's parents, Miyata Asataro (1882- 1945) and Hayashi Kiku (1868- 1954) lived together for seven years after Hayashi's birth. Most scholars, however, assume that her father never intended to marry her mother since he never recorded Hayashi's birth in his families' register. Because Hayashi was not recognized in her father's family registry, the "stigma of illegitimacy was to follow Fumiko throughout her life."[145] In addition, as Hayashi comments in, Diary of a Vagabond, "Because my parents were cast out by their families, travel is my real home."[146] Kiku and Asataro's parents frowned upon their relationship not only because they were never formally married, but also because Kiku was fourteen years Asataro's senior. Hayashi's life, therefore, began with the stigma of being illegitimate as well as with the disadvantage of being cut off from both sets of extended family.

In many other ways, Hayashi continued to have a difficult life. In Hayashi's diary she comments that "My father was an itinerant peddler of cotton and linen cloth … My mother was the daughter of the owner of a hot springs inn on the island of Sakurajima in

[145] Hayashi Fumiko, I Saw a Pale Horse and Selected Poems from Diary of a Vagabond tr. and intro. Janice Brown (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1951), 10.

Kyushu."[147] In the first seven years of Hayashi's life, her father was successfully operating an auction house, which he soon expanded into several different branches in many cities. Although Hayashi did not move around during this period, her family life still was not optimal. Her father was a known philanderer and at the time, he was having an open affair with a geisha. At one point, in order to save the expense of housing his geisha, Hama, her father moved her into the shop residence that all of the family members occupied. Not long after this, Hayashi's father accused Kiku of having an affair with one of his other employees, Sawai Kisaburo, and he consequently turned them both out. At this point Hayashi chose to remain with her mother and the three of them left together. As Hayashi recounts in her diary, "When I was still young, my life took a turn for the worse. After reaping a windfall at his kimono auctions in Wakamatsu, my father brought home a geisha. Her name was Hama. She had run away from Amakusa Island off Nagasaki. Mother left my father's house on a snowy New Year's Day, taking me with her."[148]

After leaving her father's house, Hayashi, Kiku, and Kisaburo remained together. Eventually, Kisaburo adopted Hayashi as his own daughter. Hayashi's life, however, remained very unstable as her parents constantly moved around. Hayashi traveled with her parents for the most part, although for a brief period she did reside with her maternal grandmother in Kagoshima as well as with her mother's niece. During this time, Hayashi changed schools frequently, yet her attendance was quite infrequent. For the most part,

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[146] Ericson, Be a Woman, 123.
[147] Ibid., 123.
[148] Ibid., 123.

she helped to peddle wares with her parents as they traveled. In an excerpt from Diary of a Vagabond, Hayashi comments on her early life of peddling:

> I began a routine of crossing the Onga River and going through the tunnel to the mining quarters and huts. There I tried to sell the goods I had tied up in a gray cloth bundle on my back, things like fans and cosmetics my father stocked ... At lunchtime, I waited for the miners to spill out like foam from the dark tunnel entrance, with its scaffolding as intricate as an ant hill. Young as I was, I would walk among them, selling my fans. Even when it rained, I did my rounds, not skipping a single house along the Nogata streets ... Sales were not all that difficult for me. As I plodded along from house to house, the cash in my homemade wallet grew a few sen at a time.[149]

From early on Hayashi exhibited independence and the inner strength to maintain optimism during these times. As a young girl, she had so many responsibilities that independence and self-reliance were virtually forced on her. Such childhood experiences may have also given her the impetus to lead a life independent of male authority and to pick up and go to Tokyo alone as a young woman.

When Hayashi was thirteen, her family finally decided to settle down in Onomichi and Hayashi enrolled in the Second Municipal Elementary School. It was here that Hayashi would meet her teacher Kobayashi Masao, who "was the first teacher to recognize Fumiko's literary talent."[150] Upon completing elementary school, Hayashi was granted admission to high school after passing the entrance exam. During the next several

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[149] Ibid., 126 & 128.
[150] Susanna Fessler, Wandering Heart: the Work and Method of Hayashi Fumiko (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 4.

years, she worked to pay the tuition for school and wrote poetry in her spare time. In 1921, while she was in her fourth year in high school, she published poems in San'yo hinichi shinbun (The San'yo Daily Newspaper) under the pen name Akinuma Yoko. She also published three poems – 'Haien no yube' (Evening at the Superannuated Estate), 'Kanariya no uta' (Canary's Song), and 'Inochi no sake' (Elixir of Life) – all in Bingo jiji shinbun (the Bingo Current Events Newspaper).

In spite of the fact that Hayashi was never a brilliant student, she still managed to graduate from school at the age of nineteen. During her school years, she was often reclusive, preferring to engross herself in a variety of literature including a great deal of translated works from the West. These included Jack London's White Fang and Abbe Prevost's L'Historie du Chevalier des Griux et De Manon Lescaut (The History of Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut). In addition, she also read poetry by Heinrich Heir, Walt Whitman, and Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, among others.[151] Hayashi read all of these works in translation and never managed to master any foreign language. Later however, one of her trademarks was to include foreign words, written in *katakana*[152] or Chinese characters, in her writing.

After graduating from high school, Hayashi followed her first love, Okano Gun'ichi, to Tokyo, where he was a student at Meiji University. Unfortunately, after he graduated he succumbed to pressure and decided against marrying Hayashi. The major objections that his family had to her probably centered around her low family background and illegitimacy. Although Hayashi was shocked, she continued to live and work in Tokyo until the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1, 1923.

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[151] Fessler, 5.
[152] Katakana is a Japanese script that phonetically represents foreign and technical words.

From 1921 to 1923, Hayashi took a variety of low paying jobs to support herself while she waited for Okano to graduate and marry her. The first job that Hayashi took in this period was that of a maid/nanny. Hayashi complained of this job in her diary: "By the time I had given the baby a bath and she had calmed down, it was already eleven o'clock. I detested babies, but strangely enough, whenever they were put on my back, they fell right asleep, much to the amazement of the household ... I wasn't going to be a maid all my life."[153] Not only does Hayashi not resign herself to being a maid, with a maid's consciousness; she also illustrates that motherly instincts are not inborn in all women or even necessary to being a good mother.

Apart from holding various jobs, Hayashi, as noted, was an independent woman who lived free of any male authority. Yet, Hayashi went back and forth between wanting the protection of a man and wishing to maintain her own independence. After being fired from her job as a maid/nanny, Hayashi went through a period in which she was unable to get another job, and barely had enough money to feed herself, let alone secure lodging at a boarding house. She states of this period that:

> My inexplicable reaction to my dilemma was to yearn for male company. (Wasn't there anyone to rescue me?) ... Gazing at the face of the good-luck god Daikoku plastered to the wall, I daydreamed that I was lord above the clouds, though I was really quite small. (Should I go home and get married?)"[154]

Here, Hayashi was debating the benefits of leading a so-called "normal" or "traditional" life. She challenges the notion that society instills in women, even today in American and throughout the world, that somehow women need help and protection of men.

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[153] Ericson, Be a Woman, 130.
[154] Ibid., 134-135.

Essentially, then, Hayashi is asking whether she can survive on her own or whether she should make her life "easier" by succumbing to traditional roles. The debate that she is conducting with herself demonstrates to other Japanese women that different choices do exist, in contrast to a single set of norms that all women must follow.

In 1924, after the Great Kanto Earthquake, Hayashi briefly moved back with her parents, and then back to Tokyo at which time she began keeping a journal that would eventually become the basis for Diary of a Vagabond. For the next couple of years, Hayashi struggled in low-paying jobs to support herself, and she had many short relationships with abusive and unreliable men. Fessler comments that Hayashi worked as a "celluloid factory worker, salesperson in a wool shop, scrivener's assistant in the city district office, office worker, sushi shop assistant, waitress, and so on."[155] Still, Hayashi could barely support herself and she often had to rely on money from her parents to make ends meet.

Part of Hayashi's financial problems during this time stemmed from the fact that she spent her time and money supporting worthless men. One such man was the poet and actor Tanabe Wakao (1889 – 1966). In their relationship, Hayashi was the sole supporter. As it turned out, he was actually hoarding money from her, as well as having an affair. Upon discovering that her lover was unfaithful, Hayashi wrote, "Last night I took a peek into the bag you always kept so carefully locked. Those two thousand yen belied your 'we proletariat' talk. I felt humiliated to have shed such beautiful tears for you. If I had two thousand yen and a young actress, I'd be able to live a long life, too."[156] Although Hayashi was not necessarily opposed to supporting a man, she refused to continue in the

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[155] Fessler, 10.
[156] Ericson, Be a Woman, 148.

relationship after he had been so deceptive. In the line, "I felt humiliated to have shed such beautiful tears for you" her self-confidence and strength to move on without her lover shines through. Her only regret is that she wasted something beautiful on him. Upon their separation, she writes, "Our separation that morning at the intersection was colder than if we had been strangers... From that day, I commuted to work. To be supported by a man is worse than eating mud. Rather than look for a good job, I took the first one to come along as a waitress in a sukiyaki restaurant."[157] Hayashi never lost her independence when living with a man. Instead, she exhibited a sense of self-respect when she refused to put up with her lover's mistreatment of her. In response to his actions, she immediately took a job that would give her the ability to abandon this unacceptable relationship.

Sometime after, Hayashi moved in with a leftist writer, Nomura Yoshiya. Nomura similarly burdened Hayashi with the task of supporting both of them. In Diary of a Vagabond, Hayashi describes Nomura as someone who beat her. In one passage she writes:

> When I told him I didn't want him around where I worked, Nomura picked up an ashtray and threw it at my chest. Ashes flew into my eyes and mouth. I felt like my rib bones had been snapped. When I ran away out the door, Nomura grabbed my hair and threw me to the floor. I thought maybe I should pretend to be dead. He kicked me over and over again in the stomach.[158]

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[157] Ibid., 150.
[158] Fessler, 15.

Eventually, Nomura also took another lover, so in 1926 Hayashi left him. As Fessler concludes, it was both the difficult childhood and the abusive behavior of her lovers that Hayashi endured that encouraged her "tendency to write with brutal frankness."[159]

After these failed relationships Hayashi wrote, "It was obvious that all men were worthless."[160] Here it seems that her early childhood and her love affairs gone sour had scarred and disillusioned her about relationships. In all of these passages there is a tension between Hayashi's desire for a traditionally sanctioned or acceptable relationship and her desire for a new independence and a mutually respectful or autonomous relationship. Although Hayashi went through many negative relationships with men, she still yearned for male companionship. In another part of her diary, she writes about the visit of an artist for whom, it seems, she does not really care about:

> Yoshida had fallen silent and was trembling. I considered for the first time how sad oil paints smelled. For quite some time, we made love. Then the tall Yoshida disappeared through the gate, and I burst into tears, still clutching the mosquito netting to my chest. My more vivid thoughts were of the other man from whom I was separated. I called out his name, and wailed like an uncontrollably selfish child.[161]

Throughout the diary, this problem of finding an acceptable male companion, one who would respect her, is never truly resolved. Still, these accounts give readers a closer look at the inner life of the so-called modern girl who takes many lovers, and who is thereby threatening the family system. These accounts also show that a woman's

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[159] Ibid., 12.
[160] Ericson, Be a Woman, 154.
[161] Ibid., 156.

independence comes into direct conflict with her desired relationships with males. In Hayashi's effort to maintain her independence, she is usually unwilling to accept money from men, and she also refuses to stay in unfaithful or abusive relationships. In addition, it seems that Hayashi at this point in her life was opposed to the idea of having a traditional husband/wife relationship. Moreover, she despised the role of housewife.

Another issue Hayashi addressed in her diary was that of the male patriarch and the role of women in the patriarchy. Here she shows how women are subject to men's desires. In one instance, when Hayashi was working as a waitress, a customer propositioned her for sex. Hayashi describes this proposition and her reaction:

> 'I was off to buy me a prostitute, but I've taken a liking to you, so how about it?' a balding man propositioned me this evening. Rolling my apron into a ball, I choked back tears of heartwrenching loneliness.[162]

This proposition obviously insulted and degraded Hayashi. After initially going to a deserted room to cry, Hayashi began to think about the situation and she states:

> My instinct for self-preservation was destroyed. Putting both hands under my head, I fantasized suicide. I fantasized I was drinking poison. 'Instead of going out to buy a prostitute, I've gotten to like you' Life was certainly absurdly cheery. I was without a home, but still found it distressing to think about my mother. Should I become a thief? A mounted bandit?[163]

This passage conveys Hayashi's recognition that this man had taken away her "instinct for self-preservation," or at least her self-respect. She reacts by contemplating her options. There was suicide, which was a form of submission of sorts to the situation. She

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[162] Ibid., 166.
[163] Ibid., 167.

could become a thief or bandit, which would represent a more empowering, unfeminine reaction to the situation. Hayashi also expressed her opposition to male authority in her remark: "I naturally hated authority. It was more oppressive to kowtow to the traditions of a wealthy family than to commit hara-kiri."[164] Not only did Hayashi question the validity of bowing to the rich; she also defied the authority of the traditional patriarchal system. As the observations of a woman, Hayashi's statements were likely to be perceived by traditional Japanese readers as very bold and rebellious. They must have wondered about her resistance to traditions that venerated displays of respects as well as about her insistence that death would be preferable to adhering to these traditions.

During this time, Hayashi became associated with anarchist poets, although she eventually concluded that many of the poets in the group were too extreme for her. Fessler comments that this group of poets was involved in a variety of leftist movements including "anarchism, liberalism, nihilism, and Dadaism [which, though they] do not share identical ideologies, they do have one thing in common: they are all anti-establishmentarian."[165] Although Hayashi, for the most part, chose to remain apolitical she admitted to having nihilistic views. Fessler comments, however, "Fumiko's definition of nihilism was a further departure from futility; when she refers to nihilism, she clearly takes it to mean a sort of individualism, or rebellion against social norms and trends."[166] Hayashi, then, was never really a true nihilist in either the western sense or the Japanese sense of the word. Hayashi never joined any group or theory, but it is evident in her work that she definitely was outside of the establishment. She even commented: "I am not

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[164] Ibid., 139.
[165] Fessler, 11.
[166] Ibid., 59.

capable of being 'left wing' or 'right wing.' Although I was a member of the poor proletariat, I did not take part in the proletarian movement. I walked my own path. I have no connection whatsoever to such political groups."[167]

After the many trials that Hayashi faced before 1926, her life began to take a different turn. First, in 1926, she briefly left Tokyo to live with her parents in Shinjuku. Later that same year, Hayashi returned to Tokyo and met a man by the name of Tezuka Rokubin (1902– 1989). By December of that same year, the two were married. Tezuka was very different from the men whom Hayashi had previously chosen. He was a painter who was "patient and good natured," and who "abandoned his painting career and devoted himself to promoting his wife's writing career."[168] In addition, Tezuka was willing to let Hayashi have all the physical and emotional space she needed, and he did not mind if she traveled alone. The first few years of marriage were difficult because of Hayashi and Tezuka's constant poverty. However, Hayashi had certainly found her life mate.

Up until this time, Hayashi had been publishing some poetry, although these had made little impact. Her true break as a writer came in October 1928 when she published her first installment of what was to become Diary of a Vagabond in the Magazine Nyonin geijutsu (Women in the Arts).[169] In 1929 Hayashi published Ao uma o mitari (I Saw a Pale Horse), her first anthology of poetry, which she had been working on for the last ten years. By 1930, Diary of a Vagabond appeared in book form and enjoyed immediate success, selling 600,000 copies.[170] In 1931, Hayashi also published the short story, Fukin

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[167] Ibid., 57.
[168] Ibid., 16.
[169] Ibid., 16.
[170] Brown, 20.

to uo no machi, (The Accordion and the Fish Town) which was the last stepping stone to securing her place in the literary world.

Overall, Hayashi was a true cultural feminist in the fact that she did not directly advocate a change in women's roles. Instead, she used her work to depict her characters in untraditional roles, which caused people in Japan who read her works, to re-evaluate the way they lived their lives and to question traditional norms. She opened new spheres of activity by validating new roles, in her depictions of the modern girl. In addition, through this validation, she helped normalize the idea of women who lived, worked, and made decisions on their own. Hayashi, was also an example to women, that motherhood did not have to be one of the roles that they engaged in. Instead, she shows that many "traditional feminine qualities" like motherly instincts or the desire for motherhood are not inherent in all women. Thus, Hayashi changed the way women viewed themselves and their place in society. She also made the point to many men that women were not afraid or incapable of taking risks and defying the patriarchy.

XI. Conclusion

In conclusion, the major difference between cultural and political feminism in pre-war Japan was that literary feminism focused on redefining women's roles and producing an inner liberation while political feminism focused on achieving legal equality for women. As it has been noted, however, both groups of feminists often could cross over in their activities for improving the status of women, in that political feminists at times participated in activities, which produced role-redefinition, and some cultural feminists on occasion participated in political debates. For example, Yosano's main goal was to empower women so that they could fully develop their intellects fully to actualize their complete potential in any spheres or roles that they choose. Thus, this was more of an individual concern that only women could achieve within themselves. Yosano did this by expressing her true emotions in her poetry, and by carrying out an equal partnership with her husband, in which she made her own decisions. At the same time, Yosano debated in literary journals about what role the state should have in women's lives in regards to motherhood. Hayashi Fumiko, in contrast never participated in political debates, but by questioning many of the norms in Japanese society, the issues that she addressed became political. Through her works however, she questioned the role of motherhood, the value of marriage, the stigma that is placed on *shiseiji*, etc. All of these issues and roles affected women in the way that women thought about themselves, yet these issues also had national, political, and social implications outside of an individual. Thus, while Hayashi validates women who were living an untraditional life, she also raises the question to society as to the way they treat those women.

In contrast, on the political feminist side, Kato Shidzue, achieved her goals of making birth control available to Japanese women by establishing her own clinic and doing research on birth control in the United States. In addition, she heightened the awareness of women's issues by giving public lectures and publishing pamphlets. Later, she joined the suffrage movement, as she concluded that it was the only way women could fully gain these rights was through involvement in the political process. In her personal life, as mentioned, Kato was representative of the "modern woman" as was Ichikawa Fusae. Both women at times dressed in western clothes and participated in activity that led to police and government censure. Thus, these women not only tried to improve the rights of women, but they also paved the way for women to participate in different spheres by taking the first few dangerous steps themselves.

Without the changes that these women helped to produce ideologically, socially, as well as politically, one wonders whether or not Japan would have been ready for the dramatic changes in women's rights that took place after World War II when MacArthur and his staff rewrote the Japanese constitution. The success of this movement can be seen in the sheer statistics of women voters in 1947, which was the first year that women voted in Japan. Japanese women in this year outvoted American women who had had the right to vote for over 20 years. Nevertheless, the feminist contribution during this period cannot be overlooked in the way that it laid the foundation for the modern feminist movement.

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