

Women Philosophers Overview

Throughout most of Japan's history, only a small number of women who had distinguished themselves in literature were able to express their ideas publicly. Not even the increased educational opportunities and the birth of specialized journals dedicated to women's issues that came with the Meiji Restoration of 1868 were any match for the deeply male view of women as domestic "property" unsuited to intellectual inquiry. We see this reflected in Fukuzawa Yukichi's* plea to his compatriots in 1899:

In the Imperial Restoration of thirty years ago people did away with the oppression of the feudal Tokugawa regime.... Had people hesitated at the time for fear of disturbing the peace, we Japanese would still be wallowing under the feudal caste system today. Therefore, to have women claim their legitimate rights and to create equality between men and women would be like discarding the old feudal regime and establishing the new constitutional system of the Meiji government. People were daring enough in the political revolution. I cannot see why they should not be the same in a social revolution. (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1899, 263-4 [195])

The many women who struggled against their disadvantaged position in society to serve as "public intellectuals" did so believing that a betterment of their circumstances would come only through studying and cultivating their ability to think rationally and write coherently. With Japan's emergence from two centuries of isolation, wave after wave of western ways of thinking washed ashore, carrying with them stories of the intellectual, spiritual, and social struggles of women abroad. Such western feminists as Mary Wollstonecraft, Olive Schreiner, Ellen Key, and Charlotte Gilman soon became familiar names to the Japanese women intellectuals, as did the writings on women's issues by John Stuart Mill, Leo Tolstoy, August Bebel, Lester Ward, and others. But, as Hiratsuka Raichō* and women who joined with her to found the "Bluestocking" circle in 1911 knew only too well, for Japanese women themselves, "literature" remained their only avenue for expressing publicly what they thought about all of this. Reflecting back on the history of their journal *Seitō*, she recalls:

Their expectations for education betrayed, held down by the feudalistic family system, many women found that the only path left open to them was literature. And by expressing themselves through words, they had begun to awaken to their inner selves and to question their lack of self-awareness and individuality and their parasitic dependence on men. Young women today cannot imagine the degree to which young women at that time were drawn to literature. *Seitō* provided a new venue, and that, I believe, explains its great appeal. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1971, 1: 340 [163–4])

Within the limited forum accorded them, these women struggled to find ways to articulate their situation. Theirs was a new beginning, born out of their existential concrete situations and not of an attempt to juggle connections with an established body of philosophical texts. Today the works of Japanese women philosophers are included in anthologies of their specialized field of study, such as Leibniz studies or Thomistic philosophy. But the origins and development of women's philosophy in modern Japan resist classification in the familiar categories of epistemology, metaphysics, logic, aesthetics, and ethics. Theirs was a "philosophy in the making" and needs to be read as such. As Nishida Kitarō* might have said, they were in transition "from the created to the creating," leaving behind them *resources* for future introduction into philosophical forums. At the same time, these women posed a radical challenge to the traditional boundaries of "rational thinking" and cannot be dismissed as a mere "proto-philosophy."

Takahashi Fumi (1901–1945) was the first woman to graduate in philosophy from Tōhoku Imperial University. She studied abroad under Heidegger and others and became well enough versed in German to translate two essays of her uncle, Nishida Kitarō. Unfortunately, the career of this promising young woman was cut short by tuberculosis. With a few exceptions, those who, like Takahashi, were fortunate enough to be educated abroad or at one of the three Imperial Universities that accepted female students (Tōhoku, Hokkaido, and Kyushu), had to wait until 1947 to study philosophy formally. The first generation of such women is only now reaching retirement age. In an important sense, their careers stand on the shoulders of figures like Yosano Akiko*, Hiratsuka Raichō, and Yamakawa Kikue*, whose writings extracted in the pages that follow may often seem far removed from contemporary thinking on women's questions, let alone the whole range of classical philosophy East and West to which Japanese women have contributed. For example, Sakaguchi Fumi (1933–), who did doctoral studies at the University of Munich and made important contributions to medieval studies at Tōhoku University, reflected in hindsight on the "structures of discrimination" under which her generation was obliged to work:

Those who discriminate are almost always unaware of the fact. For those who are being discriminated against, this lack of awareness on the part of the

discriminators is terribly and undeniably real, like a solid and impenetrable wall or a dagger poised over one's chest. The relationship between the two is completely asymmetrical, as I believe it is in all cases of discrimination.

What makes it worse is that the voice of the discriminator echoes around inside the minds of the victimized since both have grown up and live in the same culture and society... As long as one turns a blind eye to the material, social, and psychological conditions that influence human beings, it is easy to attribute all sorts of "incapacities" to women and think of them as belonging to the "essential reality" of women. There is also a certain convenience for the discriminator to have an "inferior" near at hand.

Women of my generation were raised on such essentialist ideas, though I must say, it is by no means limited to women's issues or to the situation in Japan. When it comes to judging the capacities of women, there does not seem to be much difference between the more advanced countries and the less advanced. My friend Anna, who gave a guest lecture at a university in Germany at the end of the 1980s, told of a female student who came up to her after her talk and exclaimed, "Today, for the first time, I realized that women, too, can engage in Asian Studies." I had to laugh, but the fact is, this perception continues to prevail around the world... The problems of discrimination for reasons of race or class or caste are the same ones women encounter.

Sakaguchi goes on to remark that exposure to sexual discrimination has equipped women better to transcend cultural differences:

In fact, there are many women like Anna who have found a way in their personal lives to transcend the barriers that divide East and West. I suppose the reason is that the cultural divide between East and West is not as great as the divide that runs through a sexist culture, penetrating to the very core of our being and devastating the lives of women as "professional" and as "private" persons. It is a barrier that is visible only to women because women have not been given the chance to voice their real experiences. In the past, women tended to look at themselves through the eyes of men, filtering their image of themselves through literature and philosophies created by men. The situation is gradually changing, but the kind of pain Anna felt is still there for many professional women. (SAKAGUCHI Fumi 1996, 4-7)

RELIGION, IDEOLOGY, AND WOMEN

The history of Japanese religious thinking shows a characteristic ambivalence towards women, a mixture of reverence and disdain found the world over. On the positive side, one of the most remarkable features of the native Japanese religiosity typified in Shinto is its direct affirmation of the power

of feminine spirituality. Mythology gives the central place to the sun goddess, Amaterasu, and the role of a woman's body in bearing children is honored in rites of harvest and matrimony. Without this positive Shinto ethos of protecting women, it would be difficult to explain why archaic Chinese notions of the inferiority of women did not take root in ancient Japan as they did among many of its East Asian neighbors.

For all the aspersions cast against Buddhism for its attitude toward women, in Japan it contributed significantly to the intellectual development and spiritual emancipation of women and in some measure provided women with a framework to express their own distinct view of the world. Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973–1014), the celebrated author of *The Tale of Genji*, appeals to Buddhist ideas to ground her profound observations on human psychology and to sustain her own relentless questioning and resistance to the fatalism and determinism that the law of karmic causality seemed to inspire.

In one passage she uses language that reflects the Tendai Buddhist categories of 'emptiness', the provisional, and the middle way between them, to justify reading and writing tales of fiction. The creation of the art of fiction was a major contribution of Heian-period women to Japanese culture, and in the following passage Murasaki's protagonist, Prince Genji, at first displays a rather Confucian attitude of utter disdain toward it. But then he begins to see it in terms reminiscent of Tendai philosophy, suggesting that while reality is "empty" of substance, and qualities such as "good and bad" are empty in themselves, nevertheless our tales give them expedient provisional expression, and readers are asked to exercise the hermeneutical principle of a balance between non-substantial reality and its provisionally realistic expression. Genji, finding his adopted daughter enthralled by some tales, at first comments:

"Oh no, this will never do! Women are obviously born to be duped without a murmur of protest. There is hardly a word of truth in all this, as you know perfectly well, but there you are caught up in fables, taking them quite seriously and writing away without a thought for your tangled hair in this stiflingly warm rain!"

Then, gently chided by the lady for presenting the view of someone "accustomed to telling lies," Genji replies:

"I have been very rude to speak so ill to you of tales!... It is tales that contain the truly rewarding particulars!... Not that tales accurately describe any particular person, rather, the telling begins when all those things the teller longs to have pass on to future generations—whatever there is about the way people live their lives, for better or for worse, that is a sight to see or a wonder to hear—overflow the teller's heart. To put someone in a good light one brings out the good only, and to please other people one favors the oddly wicked, but

none of this, good or bad, is removed from life as we know it. Tales are not told the same way in the other realm, and even in our own the old and new ways are, of course, not the same, but although one may distinguish between the deep and the shallow, it is wrong always to dismiss what one finds in tales as false.

“There is talk of ‘expedient means’ also in the teaching that the Buddha in his great goodness left us, and many passages of the scriptures are all too likely to seem inconsistent and so to raise doubts in the minds of those who lack understanding, but in the end they have only a single message, and the gap between enlightenment and the passions is, after all, no wider than the gap that in tales sets off the good from the bad. To put it nicely, there is nothing that does not have its own value.” He mounted a very fine defense of tales. [MURASAKI Shikibu N.D., ch. 25 (461)]

Arguably the greatest Japanese Buddhist philosopher, Dōgen* (1200–1253), is known to have encouraged women to practice Zen, having as much right as men to do so:

What is so exalted about a man? Space is space; the four elements are the four elements; the five aggregates are the five aggregates. For a woman it is the same thing. In acquiring the ‘dharma’, all acquire the dharma equally. All should pay homage to and hold in esteem one who has acquired the dharma. Do not make an issue of whether it is a man or a woman. This is the most wondrous law of the ‘buddha-dharma’.

Though more progressive than many of his contemporaries, Dōgen’s attitude toward women by no means measures up to today’s standards. Still, far from simply ignoring women, he took them as disciples, an act whose symbolism was not lost among the aristocratic families from whose midst he had risen. Commenting in the same text on the practice of barring women from monastic compounds, for example, he writes:

Furthermore, there is something laughable here in Japan: places called “restricted realms” or “training halls for the practice of Mahayana” that do not allow nuns or lay women to enter. This evil custom has been handed down over a long time, and no one has ever questioned it. (DŌGEN 1240D, 250, 254)

As Chinese meditation masters immigrated to Japan toward the end of the Song dynasty, the doors were opened still wider to women practitioners. The nun Mugai Nyodai (1223–1298), whose enlightenment was authenticated by one of these eminent Chan masters, founded nunneries in Kyoto where aristocratic women and imperial princesses were welcomed into the monastic life. This practice continued on through the Tokugawa period, producing sizeable numbers of women disciples, both lay and monastic. While none of them distin-

guished herself as a scholar or thinker, some of their biographies are recorded in the late nineteenth-century *Treasured Biographies of Recent Zen Monastics*. It comes as no surprise, then, that overall the positive influence of Zen on early feminist thinkers like Raichō, whose enlightenment was verified by two different masters, overshadows their criticisms of it.

Confucianism presents an entirely different case. Its fixation on the innate moral and intellectual inferiority of women to men, though slow to take root in ancient Japan, eventually came to play a crucial role in the formation of Japan's social conscience. Neo-Confucianism was the mainstream ideology during the Edo period. The feudal class system was supported by the *The Great Learning for Women*, a work attributed to Kaibara Ekken* that promoted "submission and obedience" as the ideal for women. Even after the Restoration, for most of society the idea of "feminine docility" remained as transparent as the air they breathed, paving the way for the Meiji government to pursue its agenda of turning Japan into a military-industrial nation. It was in this context that Fukuzawa Yukichi, convinced of the absolute equality of the sexes, spoke out against Confucian education, "because the more one teaches it the more restricted women become. It is nothing but a philosophy to oppress the mind and, in the process, destroy the physical body, too" (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1885, 4 [7]). Fourteen years later, in his *Critique of The Great Learning for Women*, he was still warning women to be on their guard against its insidious teachings and encouraging them instead to "cultivate self-respect and defend their rights." Critical of the hypocrisy of "gentlemen and enlightened men of civilization," he accused them of hiding "under the protective sleeves of that rotten doctrine of Confucianism and deceiving civilized society. Their cowardice is either to be pitied or laughed at" (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1899, 284, 311 [215, 241]). Despite these efforts, echoed among women's circles with increasing frequency, it was not until after Japan's defeat in World War II that this Confucian bias would come to its end.

Christianity had the good fortune to enter Japan after having outgrown much of its one-sided prejudice against women. Among the missionaries who entered the country following the Meiji government's lifting of the ban against Christianity in 1873 were many who encouraged women to seek an improvement of their lot. Its morality of love was a welcome relief to those who had suffered under the ethic of conformity. Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), for example, was one of five young girls dispatched for study to the United States by the Meiji government in 1871 in order that they might return to take on the responsibility of raising the educational standards for Japanese women. While abroad, she became fluent in English and also embraced Christianity. As a frequent spokesperson at international events, she argued the superiority of western Christian ethics to the traditional ethics of Japan in the same breath as she encouraged "independ-

dent work and independent thinking” ideals that were the cornerstone of the Women’s English College she founded.

In the midst of this moral disorientation of the ruling elite of Japan—on the one hand pressured to carry on its old ways, and on the other pressured to embrace the new—one challenge stood out above all others: to stand shoulder to shoulder with the West as a modern nation. The impact of this predicament on the changing perception of women was to prove devastating.

With the transition from the Tokugawa ‘shogunate’ to the Meiji government, Japan rushed to stabilize its place among the nations of the world and preserve its imperial tradition by setting itself up as a constitutional monarchy. Meantime, the spread of western colonial and military power in Asia prompted the Japanese government to fortify itself, and this entailed a highly centralized system of education. One after the other, leading political figures turned away from the euphoria of liberal ideas to tighten the government’s grip on the ordinary citizenry, and the flickering hopes of emancipation for women were quickly extinguished. Slogans like “loyalty to the emperor, love of country” and “good wife, wise mother” went hand in hand. Young women’s educational opportunities were severely restricted and they were encouraged to give birth to as many babies as possible to increase the nation’s population. By the mid-1930s, the voices of original and independent thinking had been all but suppressed and the women’s movements fell into limbo.

This situation was obviously fraught with contradictions. Modern egalitarian ideas and social philosophies were widely translated and studied, cutting through the traditional social fabric and value systems to feed the emerging consciousness of women, even as political realities made their implementation increasingly impossible. This led some, like Fukuda Hideko (1865–1927), to turn to radical Marxist ideas. In 1913 she wrote an essay for Raichō’s journal, boldly claiming:

Under what condition, then, will we be liberated? No matter what others may say or argue, I believe a complete and satisfactory liberation will not take place until a thoroughgoing communist system is firmly established. This holds true for men as well as women. On the day a communist system is implemented, as a matter of course, love and marriage will also be free. (cited in HIRATSUKA Raichō 1971, 2: 434 [206])

Despite the state’s overt turn to militarism, which came to a head in the late 1930s, the influence of Marxist ideas did not wane. Among women in the thick of this transition empowered by the social agenda was Yamakawa Kikue, whose native intelligence and critical theoretical training afforded her a broad and objective global perspective. The following passage from a 1931 essay entitled

“Gunshots in Manchuria,” for example, is aimed at encouraging women to rise up against the warmongering ways of their fellow countrymen:

A movement drawing on the peaceful instincts of women to prevent war is child’s play in a time of peace. Women may love peace and hate war, but the collective social upbringing that urges them to sacrifice for the common good of the society they belong to, and for the sake of what they believe to be just, runs deep. It leads them to forfeit their personal well-being and personal feelings. No society is without this readiness of women to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the fatherland. The same passion they devote to raising their children makes them willing to offer those children up, without regret, at the altar of Mars for “justice and the common good.” Their uncritical, instinctive stirrings of maternal love and their devotion to a peaceful family life dispose them to sacrifice for the well-being of the group. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1931, 12–13)

In the end, Yamakawa’s fears were well grounded, as many Japanese women ended up supporting the nationalistic agenda and the colonial ambitions as “mothers behind the guns.”

Also to be mentioned in this connection is Miyamoto (née Nakajō) Yuriko (1899–1951), a prolific writer and social critic. As wife of the future chairman of the Japanese Communist Party, which the government police regarded as dangerous because of its rejection of the emperor system, she was repeatedly arrested and incarcerated, only to return to the limelight after 1945 as one of Japan’s foremost women opinion leaders. During the early days of the postwar occupation, militaristic ideologies, ultra-nationalism, and state-sponsored Shinto were all swiftly dismantled. Officially, discrimination against women was abolished as part of the democratizing agenda of the occupying powers. Almost overnight women’s social standing before the law was transformed. Universal suffrage was put into effect and institutions of higher education began to accept female students.

MOTHERHOOD AND WOMAN’S BODY

With the exception of Kūkai*, who saw sexuality as a fundamental human reality and made it an entrance point for Buddhist practice, male philosophers have tended to deal with the body as something abstract and sexless, and hence to approach it primarily from an epistemological or ontological point of view. Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsurō*, and Yuasa Yasuo* are all examples of this way of thinking. For female philosophers, the ownership of the body and the significance of motherhood were an integral part of their thinking, and the

body an essential aspect of their identity as women. Raichō's resistance to the value that traditional morals place on a woman's virginity typifies the kind of concern that is all but absent from writings of male philosophers and religious thinkers:

Japanese women had long been a possession of men, and this idea was cultivated through the ages so that chastity has become an instinct for women. The emotion to overemphasize women's unconditional chastity is deeply and blindly rooted in the sentiment of women, who had been subjected to the influences of Buddhism, Confucianism, and *'bushidō'*. And this sentiment is still strongly at work. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1916, 164)

Women's consciousness of the body's importance for how one thinks was quick to take hold. But the central question was: Am I first a human being and only secondarily female, or should I always see myself as a female human being? This restoration of gender to women's self-identity underlay the lively debate over the "protection of motherhood" that took place late in the first decade of the twentieth century. On the one hand, there is Yosano Akiko, who agreed with the South African feminist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920) in championing the primacy of awakening to one's equality as a "human being," and on that basis laying claim to equal opportunities for work, higher education, and financial independence.

On the other hand, there is Raichō, influenced by the Swedish feminist Ellen Key (1849–1926) to declare that the highest and most sacred role of women as a sexed body was motherhood, and that mothers should be protected and provided social welfare. Critics of Yosano pointed to her idealistic fixation on the power of the individual, while critics of Raichō complained that she put too much emphasis on mothering. Yamakawa Kikue chimed in on the debate, reiterating her insistence on reform of the social system from capitalism to socialism, but not making much of a contribution regarding the meaning and role of the sexed body.

For Yosano, the poet and writer, the life of artistic creation was of the foremost importance, and as a creator, she considered herself a human being first, and then a woman. Critical of views privileging motherhood, she reflected on her own experience of becoming a mother:

It was not an absolute event in my life. I am a mother, but I am also the wife of a man, a friend to my friends, a member of the global human race, and a Japanese subject. I am also a human being who engages in thinking, composes poetry, writes manuscripts, provides food and clothing, and carries out all sorts of mental and physical activities. I make it a point of concentrating wholeheartedly on whatever task I'm performing at any given moment for as long as time permits.

I do not live by my maternal instincts alone. Even when I may appear to be exercising those instincts, I am conscious of the activities I am presently sacrificing; they continue to hover around me like countless stars revolving about the star on which my gaze is fixed for the moment.... It would take a great number of words to name all the centers that occupy my life: motherhood, friendship, wife, work, art, country, world.... What would be the point to naming them all? The fact is, these centers are all relative and numerous, coming and going continually. My life is one dynamic flux. (YOSANO Akiko 1916, 199–200)

Ten years later, on hearing news of the passing of Ellen Key, Yosano reiterated her objections:

I was sad to see Key emphasize motherhood as women's mission in life. It seemed to me biased and wrongheaded. The idea might be novel in Europe, especially for middle-class women who had come to neglect the education of their children in the pursuit of personal enjoyments or for those countries that have been forced to build nurseries and child-care centers for poor women. But for us Japanese, born in a male-chauvinist country where women had traditionally been locked inside the house and confined to the role of caretaker for their husband, their children, and the kitchen, Key's idea seemed an old-fashioned idea dressed up in new arguments.... Every aspect of my life is real for me. None of it is a means to an end or mere expedience.... To follow Key's line of reasoning, does not romantic love end up a means to becoming a mother, so that motherhood ends up being the highest good?

.....

I myself am a mother of more than ten.... Some of my colleagues began to promote Key's arguments for motherhood, but the reason I did not go along was that, just as men do not live out of their paternal instincts alone, so, too, women should live their lives as fully as possible, and not make everything a means to a single end. For me, motherhood was a natural course to take. I have a hard time accepting young women who hold a job just until they get married; this strikes me as insincere in the extreme. (YOSANO Akiko 1926, 389–92)

In contrast, Raichō came to form her view on the female body through her personal crisis of losing her self-identity as a contemplative author and becoming a mother. During her pregnancy she agonized over two contradicting forces: one instinct for self-preservation and another for altruism and self-sacrifice. She candidly confessed her inner struggle in a letter of 1915:

I used to be biased against the life of women as members of the female "sex" and to feel hatred and contempt for men as members of the male sex. Clearly this blocked my way to a correct understanding of women's conditions and prevented me from formulating women's issues in a helpful manner.

For a long time “romantic love” meant no more to me than a strong curiosity about the opposite sex. In hindsight I have to ask myself how I could have committed such outrageous things just to satisfy my curiosity!... How could I have known that this curiosity was but the harbinger of true feelings of love? My love for O taught me this. As my love deepened, I felt driven to enter a common life with him, and eventually I moved in with him. Romantic love became something solemn and significant that I had to look at with completely different eyes. I had to think long and hard about what it means to live as a woman and what value there is for a woman to live a life of love.... In the process I came to see the need to *liberate women not only as human persons but also as sexed women*. This was a totally new philosophical problem for me. My guide and moral support at the time, my source of ideas and hints as to how to proceed was a book by Ellen Key. During these two years of living with O, I have slowly awakened to myself as a mature, integrated woman. At the same time, my life of love conflicted with my inner life—with my eagerness to work and with the cry of my soul for solitude.

And now, I find myself pregnant, faced with the prospect of giving birth to a baby and raising it. Ellen Key has written that the most significant conflict in the lives of European women is... that between “soul life” and “family life.” This is a problem that Japanese women also face at present....

Recently, I came to recognize that the desire to have my own baby and to be a mother are both latent in me, but that these desires have been covered over by other desires.... How could I deny a baby, which is the creation of love—of that love that I affirmed when I entered into a life of love?... In this way, the idea of aborting the fetus vanished completely from my mind. Although I am filled with fears and anxieties, along with an immense sense of responsibility, as I approach this unfamiliar world step by step, I am also beginning to experience a certain attachment, unexpected hope, and even joy. Not only that, the bond between my beloved and me has gotten deeper, more sincere, and our commitment to each other has strengthened. This is when I began reading Ellen Key’s *The Renaissance of Motherhood*. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915C, 49–51)

Raichō also believed in the corollary for women to be liberated as sexed bodies—the liberation of men as sexed bodies:

I affirmed my romantic love initially in order to assert my individual identity and develop it. But love rooted in self-affirmation and self-development turned out to be a gateway to the love of others, the other side of life. In no time, the whole panorama of love of the other unfolded in front of me, first through the love I bore my lover, and then through my love for my child. I ended up experiencing all sorts of contradictions in my life, but I can no longer dismiss them as merely “life’s contradictions.” I have rather come to think of them as gateways that open out into a wider, larger, and deeper life. And

the real harmonization of these two orientations may well be the subtle and ultimate flavor of life itself. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1917, 274–5)

[YM]

A WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY OF AWARENESS

Gender as a Philosophical Category

When it comes to gender, Asian cultures in general are marked by great fluidity. We often find femininity widely used as a cultural category distinct from biological sexuality. When talking about gender in Japan, therefore, we need always to keep the diversity of usage in mind, lest we uniformly impose modern dualistic notions of gender on femininity where they do not really belong. As a cultural category by and large independent of the duality of the sexes, femininity has held an essential place in Japan's cultural self-understanding.

Before taking up particular women thinkers, we may take a brief look at the general place of femininity in Japanese culture. This is crucial, given that the modern idea of gender with its strict and systematic dichotomy of the sexes is a modern invention where Japan is concerned. If we are to understand its place in premodern Japan, we need to disassociate the meaning of femininity from questions of biological and social dualism.

As a cultural category in Japan, femininity clearly holds sway over masculinity. It is not enough to consider femininity as a principle on a par with masculinity, analogous to *yin* and *yang*. Ichikawa Tazumaro, in his *Maga no hire*, criticized Motoori Norinaga* on precisely this point, and insisted that the two are not interdependent but rather altogether different principles: "Men and women are men and women, the sun and moon are the sun and moon, water and fire are water and fire, just as they appear to the eye" (ICHIKAWA Tazumaro 1780).

Femininity belongs first and foremost to Japanese aesthetics, as notions like *taoyame-buri* (delicate elegance), '*yūgen*' (graceful subtlety), and '*iki*' (chic) indicate. It is hardly surprising to find a strong tradition of women's poetry in Japanese literature. In modern times, Orikuchi Shinobu* (1887–1953) was particularly important in revitalizing the tradition of feminine poetry. Baba Akiko (1928–) tries to recover the lost premodern tradition of female poetry by tracing its origins to the poems of Princess Sotoori in the '*Kojiki*'. She refers to an introduction to the *Collection of Japanese-language Poetry Ancient and Recent* (ca. 905), where the feminine style is compared to a simple woman who "appears just as she is, without the show of power that might preoccupy a woman of the nobility." Baba demonstrates how this tradition of female poetry was marked by a principle of polyphony, giving voice to a manifold interiority. Women's poetry

is an expression of a complex emotional dynamic that draws on poetic tools of indirect depiction. To be sure, this is an image of femininity borrowed from a traditional way of considering woman's nature, but as a cultural category it was widely adopted without reference to women. In the Japanese context femininity needs to be seen primarily as a principle of polyphony.

The tradition of the culture of femininity is not limited to poetry or literature, however. Sakabe Megumi* explores the philosophical implications of this culture of femininity and sees in it the ground of the Japanese idea of the subject. He emphasizes the dynamic crossover in the relation between masculinity and femininity, citing the Shining Prince Genji as "a typical example of a hero with 'delicate elegance.'" The reversibility of gender is clearly one of the basic elements of Japanese culture, suggesting a use of femininity completely different from that of sexual dichotomy. This, in turn, suggests that the modern concept of the "subject," with its individualistic overtones and its clear distinction between the sexes, is largely alien to traditional Japanese modes of thought. It is for this reason that Sakabe recommends approaching the Japanese "subject" as a polyphonic phenomenon.

Gender and Japanese Modernization

These reversible gender relations disappeared in the course of Japan's modernization. Like modernization almost everywhere, the direction of the process in Japan was strongly dominated by masculinity. It is interesting to note how the ruling powers invented modern gender dualism by disassociating modernity from more traditional images of gender. As convenient as this was for speeding up the social adjustment to modernization, it was obviously an idea imported from the West.

The modern notion of gender in general has two defining characteristics: it is naturalistic and dualistic. It is naturalistic because it is based on the biological determination of sexuality, it is a naturalistic category; it is dualistic in that it creates two completely distinct gender identities. The modern notion of gender is thus able to function as a driving force supporting dualistic thinking. This explains why modernization necessarily entailed the destruction of traditional polyphonic gender and why the introduction of modern gender was seen as an index of successful modernization.

This may also help to explain why the "women's question" was one of the most popular topics among Meiji intellectuals and the philosophers of the "national morals" project, a nationwide program of moral education based on the problematic 1890 *Imperial Rescript on Education*. No doubt this project set the ideological background to military nationalism in prewar Japan.

A number of intellectuals of the Japanese 'Enlightenment', like Fukuzawa

Yukichi* and Mori Arinori (1847–1889), devoted considerable attention in their writings to the “women’s question.” On the surface, their texts leave a surprisingly liberal impression. They denounce existing patterns of discrimination in Japanese society and emphasize the equality between men and women. Fukuzawa criticizes traditional polygamy, for example, by insisting:

Men and women are alike in that both are born as human beings. And inasmuch as each has an indispensable role to play in society, one cannot escape from being a man or a woman. In all times and places, a woman is as much a human being as a man is. (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1876, 151)

Fukuzawa saw the introduction of modern western monogamy as one way to secure this equality. Other liberal authors joined Fukuzawa in calling on Japanese women to liberate themselves from the restrictions of the traditional family system with its underlying Confucian ideology. It is important to note that this liberal gender discourse focused on discrimination against women within the family, and reduced the whole of the women’s issue to the domain of the “household.” Characteristically enough, these writers did not pay any attention to the social and political problems of women, among them the absence of political equality. Their liberal discourse served to limit women’s issues to the family and to brand women’s “liberation” as a revolt against the traditional structure of family morals. A critical reading of these Enlightenment intellectuals shows how, at this very early stage of modernization, an effective transformation of traditional gender into modern gender was coming about, a transformation that had a powerful influence on the self-understanding of Japanese feminists as modern women. Beneath the outward trappings of liberal thinking, a political system was being put in place that would exclude women from political decisions and activities.

Recent gender studies have analyzed this paradoxical role of gender in the process of Japanese modernization and pointed to a strain of “orientalism” in Japan as the background (see SEKIGUCHI Sumiko 2007). The modern idea of gender understood women always in relation to Confucianism. Viewed as a backward social group, “women” were defined in terms of their ties to traditional Confucian family morals. “Woman” thus became a symbol of the backward state of Asian traditions as such, so that femininity could be called on to legitimate the creation of a “Greater East Asian Empire.” Remarkably, all the major intellectual figures of the Japanese cultural awakening, as well as political activists like Ueki Emori (1857–1892), saw the “women’s question” as a problem of Confucian family values. Equally amazing is how quickly Japanese bourgeois women at the time adopted this view as their own.

It is little wonder, then, that in the very different discourse of “national morality” that flourished in the 1920s and 1930s, femininity became central

once again in two ways. On the one hand, in order to legitimate the superiority of Japan, the myth of Japan's founding goddess Amaterasu was evoked to show the superiority of Shinto over Confucianism and Buddhism. On the other hand, Japanese women were held up as examples of a backward social group trapped in a repressive Confucian ethic. The transformation of traditional gender into modern gender was in great part determined by this amalgam of orientalism and sexism. It was a rapid and powerful process of destruction.

Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) was one of the few modern intellectuals still able to sense the presence of a strong female power in premodern Japanese society. His book, *The Way Things Were before Cotton* (1938), is a valuable source of information on the female power that Japanese women gained by dropping out of the normal framework of the community, as well as on the cross-border existence that social exclusion made possible. Here again, we see femininity at work as a principle of polyphony, albeit one that was to be extinguished in the process of modernization and colonization.

Jin Jungwon's impressive study on the virtue of being a "good wife and wise mother" has detailed the invention of "feminine virtues" were invented in the 1890s in Japan, and then around 1905 in China and Korea under the influence of Japan, while traditional feminine values disappeared from the scene (JIN Jungwon 2006). Feminine values had been something that reached beyond mere social norms, and indeed seemed to have had a social and cultural power that enabled them to transcend normal social differences. But these were replaced by modern "feminine virtues" like that of "good wife and wise mother" that served to tether women to the realm of home and children. The concept of "feminine virtues" itself is a remarkable modern invention, based on the idea of the autonomous modern subject as well as on the vague image of traditional femininity. This transformation of traditional gender into modern gender-dualism not only kept Japanese women from being active in the official political domain, but also had serious consequences for the development of Japanese feminism as a social movement. Japanese feminism has lost its meaningful connection to its own history of "femininity," and with it, to polyphonic modes of thought.

Original, Unborrowed Thinking

What, then, does "women's thought"—which is wider than merely what women themselves have said and thought—consist of, and where do we locate it in the modern intellectual history of Japan? Two differentiations stand out, one from the side of philosophical studies by men, the other from the side of western feminists. Modern Japanese philosophy, even in the case of Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō, has aimed at a fusion of East and West grounded in the cultivation of western philosophy. Women thinkers are not part of this

current. Rather, they have tried to think out of their own experience and reality. The starting point of women thinkers has been the rejection of borrowed thought and an insight into “the contradiction of a conceded liberation.”

Japan’s modernization was borrowed. Rather than something developed internally, in large part it followed a western model. Modern Japanese philosophy is no different. Its chief enterprise has been the adoption of philosophical ideas from Europe and the United States. In particular, beginning from the 1920s, the neo-Kantianism and phenomenology prevalent in Europe at the time also flourished in Japan. Philosophy was not “thinking for oneself.” It was a part of western culture, and especially in the case of professional philosophers at the Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, learning the latest theories from the West amounted by and large to mastering “technical knowledge”—a kind of intellectual game.

Women thinkers reacted very critically to modern Japanese philosophy’s habit of “borrowing.” Yosano Akiko, for example, disparaged it head-on as a “frigid study of philosophical problems” that avoided “pressing fundamental questions.” This is not to say that women thinkers were disinterested in western philosophy. Yamakawa Kikue’s study of Marxist thought is an example of a woman who threw herself into the study of western philosophy despite the limited intellectual resources available to her. Yosano and Hiratsuka Raichō read Rousseau and Nietzsche. Others, like Takamure Itsue (1894–1964), the pioneer of women’s history, quoted Plato, Kant, and Schopenhauer. But most women thinkers, unlike their male counterparts, did not study western philosophy as such. For them, it was more an aid for understanding their own problems. They keenly felt a need to do their own thinking rather than rely on something borrowed. Thus, while representative thinkers like Raichō, Yosano, and Yamakawa took their lead from the ideas of Ellen Key and were influenced by feminist writers and activists of Europe and the United States, they never abandoned the commitment to thinking through their own questions in their own way. For them, the failure to “think for oneself” would turn whatever freedom and liberation they would gain into another form of servitude.

Enlightened thinking on women’s liberation shows up early on in the modernization period. Interestingly enough, although Raichō and Yosano were drawn to Rousseau and Nietzsche, they did not acknowledge the pioneering efforts of figures like Fukuzawa Yukichi in this regard. Why so? As we saw, modern ideas on the emancipation of women began in early Meiji with critiques of social mores ranging from Confucian views of the family to clichés about honoring men and despising women. Even as these ideas remained embedded in social institutions and dominated the process of change, the ideal of liberating women was also embraced early on as part of modernization and westernization.

Looking at early Meiji ideas of the emancipation of women, two character-

istics stand out. First, the outspoken advocates were in fact men. And second, their aim was liberation from a Confucian past. Thus, what was said of “women’s liberation” did not represent the ideas of women for themselves. Women were the objects of liberation and men were its subjects. Further, many male intellectuals did not understand women’s liberation as belonging to the wider problem of an independent society but projected it onto a resistance against the “Confucian past.” Hence, it became a question of freedom from the East, emblematic of the drive to “escape the East for the West.”

Early Meiji concerns with women’s liberation are distinctive in that not only enlightened thinkers but even reactionary nationalists pressing for a “national morality,” like the philosopher Inoue Tetsujirō,* addressed the question. Inoue, an acknowledged authority on the *Imperial Rescript on Education*, followed the modern approach of the western countries to insist forcefully on an end to the “enslavement of women.” Thus already by mid-Meiji a strong period of resistance set in as the liberation of women shifted from an academic question to a concrete social issue.

The closer “liberation” got to reality, the more enlightened debate on the question retreated into the shadows. In exchange, the debate over “discrimination” flourished as women began to find their voice. Among those proclaiming the equality of men and women was Gotō Fusa,¹ who published a tract around 1885 called *New Ideas on Unequal Rights for Men and Women*. During this period of reaction, early enlightened women thinkers did little more than borrow ideas from Europe and the United States to inform women of how powerless they were. Beginning from the adoption of liberationist thinking as part of the process of westernization and passing through the debates on equality during the period of counter-reaction, feminist thought came to maturity during the Taishō era. Here, at long last, women like Raichō, Yosano, and Yamakawa were able to voice their own thinking. These three figures belong to an age that had experienced the dangers of borrowed liberationist thinking. They shared the felt need to think with their own feelings and words, even as they learned from the West. As long as the goal of liberation was western feminism and “equality with men,” it would be a conceded liberty, something borrowed from men. This contradiction was to be the starting point of modern Japanese women’s thinking.

Philosophies of Self-Awareness

Japan’s women thinkers understood liberation as different from standing on a par with the West or with men. In pursuing the possibilities of a

1. [It is not clear whether Gotō Fusa was a woman or a man writing under a woman’s name, nor when or where the tract was actually published.]

liberationist thinking different from that of western feminists, they inaugurated women's thought. Raichō, for example, clarified in her own way the meaning of "liberation" by working from a methodological distinction between "freedom of lifestyle" and "personal freedom." The feminism she saw in Europe and the United States was a movement for equal rights for men and women: "an immediate demand for the legal, political, economic, and employment rights or freedoms" in order to "possess the freedom to enjoy the same life as men" (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1920, 160).

This, says Raichō, is nothing more than a social movement to secure freedom of lifestyle. In contrast, what she and others sought was a personal freedom, by which she understood a twofold "self-possession." First, it entailed taking hold of oneself as an individual, disentangled from the social restraints that inhibit freedom of lifestyle. For Raichō there was a second self-possession truer than that of securing equal rights for men and women, namely, the stage at which one can be more. This is the personal freedom she exhorts with the cry, "Woman, be a true woman!"

Yosano issued a warning against teaming up to borrow the ideas that men were proclaiming: "The question of the emancipation of modern women arises not as something women themselves speak up about, but rather as something arising from certain elite men, who think they are freeing their wives when in fact they are merely debating about it." For Yosano, Japanese men knew nothing of true liberation. Theirs was no more than liberation by concession. "Were not the men of Japan first liberated like everyone else by the *Charter Oath*² and proclamation of the constitution?", she asks to invoke what she calls "being treated like a women twice over." Women, she suggests, suffer from the double spell of being women and being "women oppressed by men who themselves do not know freedom." She sees the discrimination against women in Japan as resulting from men who themselves have become like women by succumbing to the West, only to turn around and oppress women. Her idea was quickly picked up by those pressing for equal rights for men and women.

Aside from the social activist Yamakawa Kikue, Raichō, Yosano, and Takamura all gave precedence to "women's awakening" over social reform. In this sense, women's thought may be classified as a "philosophy of self-awareness." In Raichō's words, "Instead of simply demanding freedom and independence and rights in the outward things of life—or rather, *before* those demands are made—women have to return to themselves, awaken to their own dignity, seek emancipation within so as to secure freedom in their inward, spiritual parts."

2. [The *Charter Oath*, a document promulgated in 1868 on the occasion of Emperor Meiji's ascension to the imperial throne, set the course for Japan's modernization. In it, the class divisions of feudal Japan were abolished in favor of equality for all under the law.]

Prior to feminism as a social movement, she stressed the need for a women's philosophy of "the inner self." By this she meant a spiritual movement aimed "first of all at securing a sense of self for Japanese women, who by and large lacked one at the time" (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1920, 160).

Yosano, while continuing to argue for the needs of economic independence for women, also stressed the importance of thinking. "I believe the most noble thing a person can do," she writes, "is to think and conceive ideas. Having ideas is the freest, most enjoyable thing there is.... Only after one has thought, do meaning and value come to life in one's work." And elsewhere she goes on: "Based on my own convictions, I want to encourage ordinary women to think. As women, our renunciation of thought has gone on long enough. We have been no more than arms and legs and mouths—without a brain of our own" (YOSANO Akiko 1911, 16).

Gender Distinctions in Question

Behind this focus of women thinkers on "awakening" lay a philosophical approach to gender and sex distinctions. Raichō initially considered gender distinction a category fixed in the lower levels of consciousness but absent in higher consciousness of the true self: "In both men and women, gender differentiation is concentrated in the middle or lower strata of the psyche where it forms part of the provisional self that needs to become conscious so that it can fade away and die. It is not possible at the higher, more conscious strata of the psyche, in the eternal, undying true self."

Unless the true self is realized, there is no way to overcome the inhibitions that block gender distinctions from becoming conscious. "Weakness of character! This really shows us what women are. And men, too." Those who define themselves within the parameters of gender distinctions have yet to find their path to liberation.

So what is this true freedom and emancipation I seek? Obviously, it is something that inspires hidden genius and helps bring great and hidden talent to the surface.... When we have been set loose, we discover latent genius.... It means becoming a "no-self." (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1911, 16, 25 [158–9])

In the debate on women's chastity, Yosano also takes the view that gender distinction is no more than a relative category. Demanded only of women as the "child-bearing" sex, it genderizes morality by seeing chastity as a "feminine virtue." In the same vein, she interprets the nature of human morality as fundamentally a "rule of life." As a poet, Yosano understood "rule" to include not only regulations and mandates but also the "rhythm" of life. Thus she debunked the concept of chastity itself as "immoral":

People's morality does not lie somewhere up in the sky but in the serious, real, and spirited things of life. Morality is the rule of human life, the real marching song. It must be life's musical score and plan. (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 431)

Starting from this idea of ethics as the rhythm of life, she considered the very concept of a "universal morality" to be anti-moral. In the effort to set out a common morality for everyone, it ignored the ethic of life's own rhythms. Life is about change: "Life continues to bear fruit in and out of season. Novelty is the true countenance of life.... Our ethical views must also be in habitual transition. The quest of eternal truth is as foolish as gluing down the bridges on a *koto* harp." Or again:

In my view there is not only no eternal truth, but not even a common truth for all people. By failing to heed the inconvenient fact that the quest for a fixed truth traversing time and space does not fit the reality of human life, was not the world of the past filled with anxiety, skepticism, and dejection? Have not philosophy and religion and morality as we have known them lost their authority for our times? (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 432)

For Yosano, gender distinction is one more item in the list of regulations devised by a heteronomous morality that has forgotten the "true countenance of life." It has left people stuck in the mud and unable to move, fallen into the most dangerous position of yielding to the "extinction of the will to life." Freedom needs to be accompanied by intelligent performance:

True life is simply performance. Unless performance is at once free and intelligent, it will fail. I do not mean a failure measured against the social standards of success or the lack of success, but the extinction of the individual will to life. I mean arriving at a point where self-introspection invites resentment for being incomplete and unfulfilled. (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 433)

This is similar to how Raichō, under the influence of Zen, had early relegated the category of gender distinctions to the "lower strata of the self." Similarly, Yosano, speaking within the context of Heian literature and from the perspective of the rhythms of life, claims that infusing gender distinctions into morality is indeed an abuse of women's morality, one that fosters resentment within the self. There could be no doubt that for both of them gender distinctions were not a matter of biology but of social and cultural categories.

Yamakawa's case is somewhat different. In 1919 she published an important essay on the question entitled "To Our Sisters in the Working Class." Addressing the deplorable conditions under which women were put to work in the early years of Japan's turn to capitalism, she sees gender as "a distinction generated by the exploiting class." She is referring not to the biological fact of women being

daughters or mothers but to the curious confusion over “femininity” and the disgust it brings with it.

When I looked at those young women, I always felt a sense of surprise akin to fear. Like scrawny, homeless dogs their shabby figures—twelve or thirteen years old, to judge from their height—moved about hesitantly to the point one could hardly think them human and with faces that could only belong to a woman of thirty. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1919, 248)

Yamakawa’s observations speak to how gender, as a tool of exploitation, had robbed women not only of their rights but of their human appearance. These young girls, their bodies arrested in the natural process of development, the years of their youth torn away from them, seemed to her “a mixed breed of human and machine and animal.” And yet, despite it all, they exhibited a raw sense of womanhood befitting women more than twice their age.

Yamakawa communicated her profound anger at the miserable state into which these mill girls had been dragged by their gender, all but despairing at the plight of women workers. At the same time, like Raichō and Yosano she did not lose hope in her own inner strength:

And yet, are we simply to collapse into despair?... No. No! As a Japanese woman, I cannot lose my faith in the strength of the women of Japan. I cannot give up believing in the future. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1919, 253)

The Debate on Motherhood

There is another sense in which it seems only natural that Japan’s women thinkers should have been drawn to a “philosophy of self-awareness.” For Ueda Shizuteru* “self-awareness,” unlike self-consciousness, means that the “self,” located in a particular place, opens out into the “non-self,” and illuminated by that expansion of its place, comes to know itself. Taken in this sense, gender distinction can be seen as a fundamental difference whose structure is that of a self opening out into non-self. One’s own sex always opens out into the “other sex.” But for Japanese women thinkers the “non-self” to which their existence opens was not men; neither was it western feminists. Both Japanese men and western feminists, as different as their standpoints are, constitute “a presence that cannot be self-liberating.” In this context it is helpful to recall the philosophical meaning of the “debate over motherhood” (1918–1919), considered to be the most famous debate in the history of modern Japanese feminism. Beginning with Raichō, what opened Japanese women to the “non-self” was their own body, a body that belongs to “motherhood.” Through the accumulated experience of pregnancy, birth, and child-rearing, thinkers like Raichō and Yosano discovered the philosophical meaning of motherhood. For Raichō,

motherhood was an experience of the fundamental powerlessness of human existence.

Impotent and powerless in my own strengths, there was nothing I could do. I was really beyond the reach of anyone's help in this world but my own, pitiful and forlorn self. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1917, 268)

This encounter with the “other” provided Raichō with a glimpse into the lives of the socially weak. In contrast, Yosano saw the experience of childbirth as basically “a matter of life and death,” an experience of ultimate values:

Men have nothing to do with the event of birth wherein we stake our very life; they are of no use in it. This is a great role that women always and everywhere bear alone. As important as the nation is, whatever one may say about scholarship or war, I cannot imagine any great task surpassing that of a woman giving birth. (YOSANO Akiko 1911, 3)

For modern militarist nations, the highest human good is to give one's life for one's country. In contrast to that scale of values, Yosano's description of the experience of motherhood in birth represents it as an event in which one stakes one's life no less than in sacrifice for one's country, an event that tolls a philosophy of birth loud and clear against a philosophy of death. The fierce “debate over motherhood” that waged between Raichō and Yosano was to prove a decisive stimulus for modern Japanese women thinkers to break new ground in a “philosophy of motherhood.” The debate is not to be taken simply as a political discussion over the patronage of motherhood. It has rather to be seen as an attempt to think through the experience of motherhood. And this attempt, in turn, opens up a dimension of ontological ethics that conceives of the female body as the primary ethical body, each bound structurally to the other.

Takamura Itsue, whom Raichō called “my philosophical daughter,” took a further step towards an ethics of the female body by describing the natural process of nursing. The female body is structured to give birth to and nurse new life. Women live unconsciously with this body opened primarily to the other. At the same time, Takamura described the tragic split between the ethical body of women and established social rules (TAKAMURA Itsue 1930). Her wider message is clear: it is not the female body that is to be moralized. Society itself must be moralized.

[kis]

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YOSANO Akiko 与謝野晶子 (1878–1942)

Yosano Akiko (née Hō Shō), poet, social critic, and educator, lived a rich and many-sided life. The wife of the poet Yosano Tekkan and mother of eleven children, she published fifteen volumes of collected commentaries on social issues, twenty-one volumes of collected poems, a novel, and a collection of children's stories, in addition to translating important Japanese classics into the modern idiom.

Although widely known for her passionate poetry, Yosano evolved into a public intellectual and opinion leader. She encouraged women to look for their identity beyond motherhood, to achieve financial independence and train their minds, and ultimately to realize their own liberation through some form of creative work. These ideas are reflected in the passages excerpted below.

She drew inspiration from women writers of the Heian period like Ono no Komachi, Izumi Shikibu, and Murasaki Shikibu, and tried to combine what she saw as their freer, romantic sensitivity with the morality of modern monogamy. At the same time as her fascination with medieval aristocratic society and affection for the emperor inhibited her criticism of the post-Meiji imperial system and its political structures, it protected her from the attacks of the ultranationalists.

Her awareness of social issues was piqued by a five-month stay in Europe in 1912. She was received in the literary circles of Paris as Japan's leading poet, and in a journal interview spoke frankly of what she saw as the challenges facing French feminism. She later cofounded a school, Bunka Gakuin, where she used her own textbooks, dissatisfied with those sanctioned by the government.

[YM]

WOMEN AND THINKING

YOSANO Akiko 1911, 13–18

Doing and working are mechanical and secondary things. They have no value in themselves and occupy no more than the lower neural centers. The most precious thing for humans is to think and imagine. To imagine is the most free and most sublime thing. Our capacity for imagination allows us to understand, design, create, criticize, self-reflect, synthesize, and so forth. When we act on the basis of what we think, our work gains in significance and value. Humans are different from animals and machines precisely because of this capacity to think. The difference between being civilized and uncivilized is also a function of the development of this capacity to think or the lack thereof.

The reason I began with so obvious a remark is that the Japanese, and especially Japanese women, are remarkably wanting in this area. I call attention to

this fact as a matter that demands serious reflection from all of us. For instance, men work hard for material gain; they are driven by the desire to acquire money. Enterprises of all sorts have arisen, profiting a large number of capitalists and putting a large portion of the population to work. But there are only a few who actually stop to think about the basic question of why we need money and what the money is for. The majority of workers simply move their limbs blindly in order to earn a bit of it. As a consequence, economic wealth does not serve the most useful things of life, but is only accumulated and exchanged for goods or for superficial, pretentious, and harmful pursuits. There is no shame in resorting to whatever means, even criminal and unethical, to accumulate and exchange money. Economic theories, sociological studies, entrepreneurial ethics—it all ends up being an empty academic exercise with no application to actual life.

Take another example, the recent Russo-Japanese War, which cost both sides a large number of lives and heavy expenditures. Most Japanese men only see the final victory. Few of them think deeply and objectively about the significance of the war or the sacrifices it entailed; few stop to ask whether the beautiful name “war” did not in truth amount to anything more than an exercise in brutality, a far cry from the guiding ideals of a civilized world. In the days of despotic or theocratic rule, we had only to subjugate ourselves to a minority of leaders and powerful persons, following their orders mechanically. But today, when we enjoy freedom of thought and speech, it runs counter to the demands of civilization for individuals not to exercise their rights.

Widespread among government officials, educators, and parents today is the tendency to denigrate “thinking” to a rank below “working,” or to consider thinking and working to be incompatible, or even to dismiss “thinking” as harmful. It is troubling to realize how deeply rooted this kind of barbarous mentality is among the Japanese, ignoring the Charter Oath of Emperor Meiji who pledged to “seek knowledge far and wide throughout the world”...

Those who know the pleasure of meditation and quiet thinking are blessed indeed. The discipline to think about even small things seriously steers us away from merely emotional reactions. It opens the eye of wisdom to help us reflect on ourselves, criticize our actions, and sharpen our capacity for understanding. In so doing, our thoughts, emotions, and actions become integrated and missteps are reduced. Understanding ourselves, we are also able to understand others and accommodate them. We develop social awareness and skills. In a word, contrary to all the fears and worries of the conservatives, “thinking” creates a deeply ethical person.

Based on my own convictions, I want to encourage ordinary women to think. As women, our renunciation of thought has gone on long enough. We have been no more than arms and legs and mouths—without a brain of our own....

Recently the question of the liberation of women has come to the fore. It was not the women who initiated the discussion but rather a group of men who took an academic interest in the question, all the while opposed to the actual liberation of their own wives and daughters. They felt sorry for women and thought it would be good for them to have a decent education. None of this attracted much attention among the women themselves. Of late a counter-reaction to this view has arisen with many men now proclaiming that women's training should be in the practical matters, such as sewing and embroidering, and not in higher education. Women, they say, should be educated to become docile creatures. The reason they give for their opposition to women's higher education is the movement in England, where women's suffrage has become a matter of some urgency. Japanese men consider women their property, and servants, and become enraged when the subject of women's liberation is brought up. Is it not an irony that these men actually gained their independence as human beings only with the proclamation of the Charter Oath following the Meiji Restoration and the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution? It is laughable to see Japanese men forget their joy at liberation, suppress the liberation of women, and revert back to old misogynist ideas.... But Japanese middle-class women are not even aware of these issues that stare them in the face.

It is up to women to wake up and deal with the problem of women's liberation, regardless of what men say. If we are not to accept the old-fashioned position of "glorified maid-servants," middle-class women must take the lead by opening their eyes, reforming themselves, and securing the necessary qualifications to solve women's issues. What is urgently needed here is for women to become thinking women, women with brains, in addition to being working women.

[YM]

FREEDOM TO BE A FULL PERSON

YOSANO Akiko 1915, 438–41; 1918, 317–20

My Personal Journey

Until the age of twenty I grew up in the depressing melancholy and boredom of an old household that made me timid. During the day, I was responsible for the ins and outs of the family business. At night I would slip out of my parent's sight to read books on the sly, consoling myself with the world of fantasy they opened up. In time I wearied of these bookish fantasies and began to yearn to be a free individual. Through a series of remarkable coincidences, I found the courage to all but put my life on the line to grab hold of the freedom to love and break away from the old-fashioned family that had held me in its

cage. And as if through another miracle, I found that I was able to express my thoughts in words. So it was some ten years ago that I gained the threefold freedom to love, to be ethical, and to engage in artistic pursuits.

Since that time I have become aware of the need for the freedom of others. My dearest wish was to elevate women from their lowly status to a position of equality with men. But I was not without my illusions and misconceptions. It seemed to me then that the rare geniuses and free thinkers I met as heroines in European novels could set the goal and serve as a standard for our efforts at achieving emancipation and equal status with men. Though I never expressed it, I even felt a secret urge to resist the violent suppression of men.

After a long period of inner reflection, I realized that the reason women's status had fallen so low was not merely the heartless domination of men. At some point women's brains had stopped evolving. I do not consider women by nature inferior to men. Witness the women geniuses who appear from time to time. But there is no getting around the fact that women's intuitive powers, past and present, have been shallow, their reasoning dull, and their will power feeble. Given all this, how could women stand up as men's equals?

I came to be convinced that for women's status to be elevated, we women have to come to the realization among ourselves of our current ignorance and weakness of character. This is what I have been writing about for the past four or five years in the attempt to reach out to women readers with my ideas. But beyond that and most important, I have tried to discipline myself as far as possible in order to respond to my thirst for knowledge and my desire for creative activity.

Taking a hint from the talented women of the Heian period, I have advocated the economic independence of women. For this reason, I not only extended my sympathy to professional women, but also was happy to see an increase in the number of jobs for women and in the number of educated women starting to respond to these new opportunities. For my part, I have also struggled to support my entire family through my work.

Before departing on a recent trip to Europe, I had merely been drifting through life in a narrow corner of the world. My heart longed to see a "world" wider than "Japan." When I was travelling around Europe, people everywhere treated me as a representative of Japanese women—a very special welcome that made me feel both truly appreciative of being a Japanese woman in the public forum and at the same time ever so humble. My heart returned home to Japan from the "world." I learned that of all countries, it is Japan that I love most. I learned that in addition to loving myself I must love this land where my fellow Japanese live. The experience taught me that there is no clash between a heart that loves Japan and a heart that loves the world. Since my return, my interests and attention have turned more to controversial ideas and concrete issues than

to artistic matters.... This dim-witted person took many detours, but at long last I am prepared to dedicate my passion to the homeland.

The Three Sides of Life

My aim is consciously to effect a unity among the three sides of life: as a private individual, as a citizen of a country, and as a member of the wider world. All of us are constantly living in a unity of these three, but I would like to build a life for myself that is clearly conscious of this fact. The reason lies in a desire for happiness and well-being in life. This desire is a powerful instinct and is supported by another—the drive to be rational....

The reason we want to make a happy life for ourselves is that our lives have not been very fulfilling so far and have left us dissatisfied. And the reason for the dissatisfaction is that the three aspects of life—individual, national, and global—contradict one another, clash, and fall apart. What is beneficial to the life of an individual may be harmful to the life of the nation, and what may be beneficial to the life of the nation may be harmful to one's life as a global citizen. This is the contradiction we find ourselves in. For instance, war not only kills individuals and disrupts the safety of individual lives, it also disturbs world peace. This is so obvious, and yet even in our own day, when global culture is thought to have progressed, a cruel World War has been raging for the past several years. Behind it stands an antiquated mode of thought that gives too much weight to the life of a people and allows the state, as representative of a people, to sacrifice the individual and the global dimensions of our existence....

When we eat, sleep, read, and work, we do so as private individuals and are not conscious of our country or the wider world. When we file our taxes or strive for a universal suffrage, we do so as members of our country. Our private lives may stand in the immediate background, but we do not always think of ourselves as citizens of the global world. When we engage in academic studies and artistic pursuits, and indulge in the appreciation of knowledge and art, we are living the life of the global human race that transcends race, borders, and national history. At such times, our attention is not directed to the gain and loss of individuals or of any particular people. This is something clear to all of us. We move naturally and seamlessly from one realm to another. As the need arises, the individual, national, or global aspect becomes central and our lives take on one dominant hue or the other.... The more conscious we are of the demand for unity among the three, the harder we must strive to realize it.

For example, in war it is the peoples and their representatives, that is, countries, that fight one another. History shows that victory rarely results in an increase in happiness or well-being for individuals or humanity at large....

The World War being waged at present is an extension of muscular force, a throwback to an age of barbarism that does not benefit the lives of the peoples engaged in it. The violence it works on the lives of individuals and the disruptions it causes to global peace bring no increase in happiness to individual citizens anywhere. Only by harmonizing the three aspects of our existence and fusing them together can we hope to bring human life to its fullness....

How can we achieve such a unity consciously? If we are to eradicate contradictions, clashes, and collapses, we need to focus on common elements that enhance human well-being and discard the rest. In particular, the first common element is love. Economics, academics, the arts, and natural sciences—all these things can contribute to the happiness of the global population by benefitting individuals and nations.... But for this to happen, we need a global cooperation based on love. Call it philanthropy, humanitarianism, or what you will: we must act to bring about mutual love and assistance among human beings.

[YM]

CONDITIONS FOR REFORM

YOSANO Akiko 1919, 201–2, 207–15

The meaning of reform is both very ancient and very new. Human existence is a process in the making that has undergone one reform after another ever since the birth of culture in prehistoric times. By skillfully taking control of the process, men came to develop their identities and, over several millennia, to establish a culture biased in its male standards. Meanwhile, the women stagnated and were left behind. In the infant stages of human history, when animal instincts wielded considerable power—the age of muscular strength that was extended into weaponry and further transformed into authority—there is no denying the fact that women were repressed by men and made subordinate to them. The result was severely deadening and distorting for the development of women’s personalities—like queen bees reduced to their reproductive functions, powerless and deformed creatures incapable of anything else.... This dismissal of half of humanity was a misfortune not only for women but for the whole of the human race.

Things are turning around now and the women of the world are waking up. “Reform” today means the transformation of *all* of humanity, women and men. The question is how best to proceed with the reform.

The first condition of reform is what I call *the principle of ego development*. Instead of suppressing the personality by bending it in a certain direction, we should let it unfold and expand freely in all directions, as much as it wants and

as much as it can stand. The inherent capacities of the human personality are unlimited.... Women, especially, are an unopened treasure chest....

The second fundamental condition of reform is establishing *the principle of culture* as the ideal of human life.... An awakening to culture is crucial for opening the “eyes” or the “soul” to the principle of ego development.

.....

The third condition of reform is *the principle of the equality of men and women*, and the fourth, *the principle of classless solidarity in taking responsibility for humanity at large*. I have spoken often of the third, but let me just add that gender difference has nothing to do with inferiority or superiority. Sexual discrimination is never a reason for determining the rights and duties of persons to participate in cultural life. The fourth condition may be seen as a natural consequence of the first three. When it comes to the creation of cultural life, all human beings bear the responsibility to act in solidarity. As women, we desire an equal share in this responsibility.

.....

The fifth and final condition of reform is *the principle of work for everyone*.... From the time I was a little girl, there were those whom I admired for their spirit of work, while I could not repress my disgust at the laziness of those who lacked that spirit. I believe the day must come when everyone without exception will work.... From the standpoint of the principle of work for everyone, I desire that every sort of occupation and profession be open to women as well, and that they be given the opportunity for the higher education needed to prepare themselves. The reason I have been so insistent on the importance of learning and financial independence for women is precisely that I want to see this desire all the way through to its realization.

.....

It is true that in present-day Japan women have been given opportunities to be professionals, instead of remaining cooped up in the kitchen or bedroom. But the fact is, the range of professions open to women has been restricted by sexual discrimination.... If women were free to choose their professions based on their aptitudes and intellectual gifts, and if we were to encourage women to compete freely for their profession of choice, Japan would not be stuck in the miserable state in which, as Yamakawa Kikue* has pointed out, the one or two women scientists we have are honored as rarities.

.....

These, in rough outline, are what I see as the five fundamental conditions for the improvement of the status of women in Japan. They also serve as a basis for improving the situation of men in Japan. Far from such vague ideals as “wise mother and good wife” or the “protection of motherhood,” ... these conditions amount to the sort of thoroughgoing individualism, personalism, and human-

ism in which all persons can enjoy life equally and harmoniously, without bias or inequality.

[YM]

A POET'S MIND

YOSANO Akiko 1931, 296–302, 305–8

Because my initial motivation for writing poetry was to indulge in the self-satisfaction of fulfilling my wish to sing my emotions with words, if I can compose a poem that pleases me, the purpose of composition is already achieved. There is nothing else that I seek from it. From olden times, many 'waka' poets and haiku masters, particularly the men, were driven by a spirit of competition. Eager to earn themselves worldly praise and a place of honor in the literary hall of fame, they prided themselves on outdoing others. I cannot twist my mind and heart the way such specialists do. From the experience of having entered earnestly into the deep concentration of composition, there is no room in my mind for thoughts of fame. When one's mood is colored by thoughts of fame, it loses its purity.

I therefore continue to think of myself as the same “beginner” I was when I began writing poems many years ago. Even now, I am sometimes overcome by doubts as to my poetic gifts and worry that I may be too ignorant to write poetry. But once I find my way back to the mind of the novice, these doubts fall away on their own. I try to open my inner eye to fresh emotions by taking in human feelings, by gazing at the colors of mountains and rivers, by letting flowers and plants and trees manifest themselves—by approaching the poem as if for the first time. I cannot abide reliving yesterday's feelings today.

Poets of the Heian period like Ki no Tsurayuki and Fujiwara no Kintō,³ comported themselves as great masters of poetry, but their poems lack warmth. The narrow-minded conceit of being a “great master” kept them from exposing their stark-naked humanity or from writing freely, without reservations.... In contrast we have “free artists” like Murasaki Shikibu, Sei Shōnagon, and Izumi Shikibu.⁴ These women were not prisoners of their own conceit but simply wrote poems and essays because they wanted to. As a result, their work leaves plenty of room for drawing the reader into the embrace of their intimate sense of humanity....

3. [Ki no Tsurayuki (872–945) and Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041) were celebrated classical poets belonging to the court aristocracy of the Heian period.]

4. [Sei Shōnagon (966–1017) was a lady of the court and author of the famous *Pillow Book*. Izumi Shikibu (fl. 1000) was perhaps the most accomplished poet of the mid-Heian period.]

My attitude at the time of composition must be completely grounded in my “real feelings.” By this I do not mean some prosaic commonsensical emotion that can be expressed in conversation or quickly put to paper.... I mean a very particular emotion that belongs to the realm of poetic feeling, something that enables me as a writer to leap over the conventional and come in contact with new joys or sorrows previously unknown, an excitement that shakes my life out of the ordinary and everyday.

.....

Like a painter contemplating the composition of a canvas, I toil over how to “turn my words” poetically. To be sure, when inspiration abounds, words come to me like fish jumping out of the water. At such times the composition is effortless. When such is not the case, I have to strain, filling the page black with words, writing and erasing until my words come to just the right “music.” In these *douleurs de l'enfantement* lies the hidden pleasure known to the poet alone.

I speak of composing music with words because *waka* is a kind of music. It is neither an academic essay nor a magazine article. It uses very few words to express many feelings musically. To search a *waka* for an idea, a philosophy, or a current ideology is as misguided as it would be to look for these things in a piece of music. What is more, *waka* does not simply state raw, naked poetic feelings; it is a kind of music that speaks directly to human sentiment. To turn the poetic emotion into the right music, one needs to choose the right words and then create a melody out of them. For each new emotion, a new piece of music has to be composed.

To accomplish this, one must understand the tone and flavor of each word, as well as the musical effect brought about by their combination. In the same way that painters fret over the purity of their colors, the thickness of the pigment on the face of the canvas, and the quality of the finished work, poets invest the same care in their work. A poem can never rest content with merely communicating a certain meaning the way a prose composition can.

The poetry of Japan has a particularly short form unlike any other in the world. Not only does it not allow for a single word or sound in excess, it seeks to eliminate explanation as far as possible, so that a clean and subtle combination of words can make a scent float off a flower or tinge a mountain mist the color of the rising sun, allowing these intangible images to yield a clear and definite contour of feeling.

.....

It has been my experience that when I set to compose poetry my “love” is broadened and refined. Moreover, my interest in “beauty” is elevated and enriched. Weeds and flowers I had not noticed before, fallen leaves, pebbles and stones, withered trees—in such things I discover interesting lines and angles, colors, delicacy, and other kinds of beauty that had escaped my attention. And

then there arises in me a feeling of love towards these things; I feel an intimacy with them as if they could share with me the joys and sorrows of life.... To the cold eye of rationality all this may sound like so much silly emotion, but most of the time we live immersed in this kind of sentiment, not in reason....

Through writing poems I feel a deepening of love and sympathy to people, as well as to nature. I find I am able to view their merits and demerits, their beauty and ugliness, with tolerance and respect. This is why from ancient times art, religion, and ethics have come together, ultimately, in nature. The fact that the Japanese deities composed poetry, or that the Greek myths and others have muses and gods of beauty, are signs of profound aesthetic appreciation.

Scholarship, which relies chiefly on reason, also enhances human life, but arts make our feelings transparent and as such wash our life clean in a more direct way. If one has only to read another's artistic expression to be emancipated from the narrow and oppressive world of the "useful," how much more so when one actually experiences the joys and trials of creativity!...

[YM]

HIRATSUKA Raichō 平塚らいてう (1886–1971)



Hiratsuka Raichō (née Hiratsuka Haru) is Japan's most celebrated feminist activist of modern times. She began her public career in 1911 with the organization of Seitō (The Bluestocking Society), a literary movement that announced the birth of the women's liberation movement in Japan. A fierce individualism coupled with the self-effacing practice of Zen meditation combined to sustain her engagement in women's questions throughout her adult life. During the first decade of the twentieth century, she stood up for women's right to genuine romantic love. She herself fell in love with Okumura Hiroshi, a painter five years her junior, and, in defiance of a prewar civil code that deprived married women of their individual rights, entered into a common-law living arrangement with him, proudly registering their two children as "illegitimate." After throwing herself into the debate over "motherhood" with Yosano Akiko* and others, she turned to social issues in the 1920s and founded the Women's League with the aim of demanding equal status with men in matters of the law and political participation. In the 1930s, she turned to the cooperative movement, which she considered the logical, grass-roots path to social reform. She kept silent during World War II, preferring to till the soil as a simple farmer, but resumed her activist career in the postwar period. Focusing her efforts on promoting world peace, she formed the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations in 1953 and helped establish the New Japan Women's Association in 1962. The passages below reflect the breadth of concern and the depth of commitment in this beautiful and elegant woman whose fiery spirit helped shape the consciousness of twentieth-century Japan.

[YM]

TWO MANIFESTOS

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1911, 14–18 (157–9), 22–6; 1920, 159, 164–5, 169

The Foundation of Seitō, the Bluestocking Society

In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person.
Now she is the moon, a wan and sickly moon, dependent on another, reflecting another's brilliance.

Seitō herewith announces its birth.

Created by the brains and hands of Japanese women today, it raises its cry like a newborn child....

Passion is the power of prayer. The power of will. The power of Zen meditation. The power of the way of the gods. Passion, in other words, is the power of spiritual concentration....

Each and every woman possesses hidden genius, the potential for genius. And I have no doubt that this potential will soon become a reality. It would be deplorable, indeed, if this tremendous potential were to remain untapped and unfulfilled for lack of spiritual concentration....

Freedom, liberation! The pleas for women's freedom and liberation have been murmured for years. But what do they mean? Haven't both freedom and liberation been terribly misunderstood? The term "women's liberation" alone covers a multitude of ideas. And even supposing that women are liberated from external pressure and constraints, given access to so-called higher education, allowed to work in a wide range of occupations, given the vote, released from the confines of home, the custody of parents and husbands, and allowed to lead a so-called independent life, will they achieve freedom and liberation? To be sure, these conditions and opportunities will enable them to achieve true freedom and liberation, but they are no more than experiments, the means, and not the goal. Nor do they constitute the ideal....

Only when we cut ourselves loose from the self, will we reveal our genius. For the sake of our hidden genius, we must sacrifice this self....

Our savior is the genius within us. We no longer seek our savior in temples or churches, in the Buddha or God.

We no longer wait for divine revelation. By our own efforts, we shall lay bare the secrets of nature within us. We shall be our own divine revelation. We do not seek miracles or yearn for the realm of mystery and wonder in some far-off place. By our own efforts, we shall lay bare the secrets of nature within us. We shall be our own miracles, our own mysteries....

Let us devote ourselves unceasingly to fervent prayer, to spiritual concentration. Let us continue our efforts to the very end, until that day our hidden genius is born, until that day the hidden sun shines forth....

Woman will no longer be the moon. On that day, she will be the sun as she was in the beginning. An authentic person.

[TC]

The Foundation of the Women's League

As I am about to write the preface to the *Women's League*, I cannot help but recall my youthful essay that began with the line: "In the beginning women were the sun," published exactly ten years ago in the journal *Seitō*....

My thoughts and my personal life then and now, as well as the women's world and women's issues then and today, are vastly different. The feminist movement

has taken big strides and changed considerably in the last decade.... Rather than demand legal, political, and economic freedom, as western feminist movements have done, we focused on awakening the spiritual freedom and spiritual independence of women.... In that sense, one could call it a kind of spiritual (or religious) movement, but not yet a social movement.

We have now advanced from self-awareness as human beings to self-awareness as women. The feminist position that centers on the self in the narrowly individual sense is already out of date.... The focus of feminist thought has shifted from equality of the sexes, equal rights, and opportunity, to issues that concern both men and women (that is to say, love and marriage), motherhood, and children. In other words, feminism has shifted from the individual to the group, from self-interest to altruism....

The procreation of children, that is, a woman's work of love as a mother in the home, has hitherto been dismissed by men and by women themselves. Now this work has once again acquired a sacred and valuable social and moral significance in the hearts of women. The heaven-ordained role of women is to be mothers. The work of mothers is not merely to bear and raise children, but to bear good children and raise them intelligently....

For the sake of humanity, they must go beyond reproducing the species to improving its quality. Therein lies the social significance of women and mothers. The ultimate goal of the most advanced women's movement is to demand a woman's right to love and to have children so that she may improve humankind, radically restructure society, through love and marriage, through bearing and educating children....

In the past, we called for the end of sexual discrimination and demanded equal rights as human beings.... Now, as women, we call for rights that enable us to fulfill our rights and obligations as mothers. At the inception of the women's movement, we tended to see female suffrage as an end in itself and as a way to bring about political equality. Now we see it as a right that can be effectively exercised for a certain purpose, namely, reforming society so that women, as women, may carry out their work of love.

[YM]

THE RISE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915A, 106-16

It was through the influence of Rousseau's philosophy and the spirit of the French Revolution that European women slowly began to wake up and to pursue women's issues on various fronts and in various ways. By the end of the eighteenth century serious works had been published by progressive men and

women, such as the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* by Olympe de Gouges, *Original Greatness of Women* by Thomas Thorild, and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft. From the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century, such talented women as Madame de Staël and Georges Sand advocated the rights of romantic love as against the kind of loveless marriages performed in churches or by the state that forbade divorce. In Germany Rahal Varnhagen, a forerunner of the new woman, was already active. I believe it was sometime around 1850 that the famous book by Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, was published.⁵ From the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, Charlotte Gilman in North America, Olive Schreiner in South Africa, and Ellen Key in Sweden took the lead, each championing her unique views. At the same time, in the literary world authors like Ibsen brought women's issues to the attention of the public, kindling in women's hearts dreams of a different way of life. Women's issues were not merely discussed at the level of theory and abstract concepts; they also gave birth to movements. Prompted by their inner instinct, as well as by external necessity, women took up the difficult struggle. The result was a significant improvement in their social and economic status as well as an expansion of their legal and political rights.

The nineteenth century is rightly called the century of women in Europe and North America, since it was women's issues that defined the period. Some would even say that the women's century is already a thing of the past and that we are already in the century of the children. Be that as it may, what was the situation of women in Japan at the time?

The Meiji Restoration belonged to the men, and to a small number of young men at that. The simple if courageous attempts of these newly enlightened leaders to import western civilization into every aspect of culture and organization were barely more than a superficial, uncoordinated, and partial imitation. Yet they succeeded in creating a quick and ready-made civilization. At that time, women—the other half of the country—were also to some extent stimulated by the ethos of the day. Some were moved by the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement to enter into politics. Others, swept up in Itagaki Taisuke's enthusiasm for equal rights with men but not yet awakened to themselves as women, rashly imitated the behavior of men. Around 1894 or 1895, beginning with Higuchi Ichiyō, young talented women appeared in the literary world, but here again they did little more than imitate men to show that women, too, were able to write novels on a par with them. To be sure, some women wrote about their own experiences and feelings in order to vent the suffering and despair of the

5. [In fact, it was published in 1869.]

life they had resigned themselves to. But what was lacking in this writing was a fighting spirit to undo this state of affairs and better it through new ideals. Still caught in the traditional morality, customs, education, and other social structures, they were unable to wake up from the slumber of their resignation and break through their passive and subordinate position as weak creatures.

The first women activists in Japan were Imai Utako and Endō Kiyoko.... We may also mention Fukuda Hideko, who published the journal *Women of the World* and introduced a socialist view of women. Some years later, Yosano Akiko* began to voice a moderate and commonsense view of women, advocating the equal treatment of men and women. Scholars of western thought drew attention to works on women's issues.... But these efforts did not succeed in creating the kind of social movement that would make men stand up and take notice of women's issues or reflect on themselves. Japanese society at large carried on with the ideal of women as "good wife and wise mother" and made it the sole focus of girls' education.

Still, Japanese women did not remain asleep long. On the surface, Japanese society looked calm and peaceful, but the spirit of the new age—the new ideas born of modern civilization—were seeping into the minds of middle-class young women, silently but surely maturing in the recesses of their souls.

Some young women were influenced by the naturalist movement that dominated the Japanese literary world. Some were influenced by the trend of individualism. Some were stimulated by new types of women depicted in modern literature. But some, who had lived as daughters, wives, students, teachers, and professionals under the weight of old traditions restricting them in society and at home, where women were ignored, looked down upon, and treated like slaves, began to harbor doubts in the face of the ceaseless barrage of insults, lies, contradictions, and conflict. They began to reflect on themselves and slowly to face the question of self-identity. They realized that their youthful vitality and individual dignity were being trampled on and crushed by their surroundings. They longed to become free to live their own lives as independent and authentic individuals. Everything they had been told by their parents, by their husbands and teachers, their elder friends, religionists, moralists, and educators began to sow in them seeds of contempt and dissatisfaction. They could not suppress a cry of resistance against the old figures of authority.

The only thing that kept young women from voicing their true thoughts and emotions was the submissive education that had forced patience on them in the name of "femininity" and "modesty."

Around the end of the Meiji period, I collaborated with a number of like-minded friends in the bold initiative of publishing the journal *Seitō* as a sign of our passionate sincerity to express ourselves publicly. No doubt, what we had to say was rather naive and our thoughts were not yet developed in a coherent

manner. I would even say that at first every hint of philosophical content was overshadowed by uncontrollable outbursts of as yet vague aspirations....

To put it simply and succinctly, our article of faith was this: Women are human beings as much as men are; we, too, have souls. Therefore, women should be given the opportunity of a higher education and should be allowed freedom and independence of thought and emotion so that they can gain a basic inner enlightenment and outwardly attain the economic, social, political, and legal rights that follow from inner liberation. We were of one mind in condemning the lamentable condition of women past and present, raising awareness of our state, and longing for a new life as liberated women.

Just what is this “new life” that we were seeking? What kind of religious, moral, educational, political, and legal systems would it require? How would the sexes relate? What economic structure is suited to such a new life? We did not have a clue as to how to make this “new life” concrete, nor did we have any practical steps for bringing it about. In fact, we did not even have a clear concept to guide us, let alone the mental composure to engage in deep thinking or research. In a word, the “new life” floated around us like a phantom. Intellectually, we were still children and dreamy-eyed poets.

For all our shortcomings, and as juvenile, ignorant, biased, inconsistent, and shallow as our initial attempt may have been, I do not believe we were mistaken in identifying the starting point as interior liberation, only from there to dismantle the traditional conventions and structures in order to replace them with a new system based on the authentic wishes and personal dignity of women. In the true sense of the word, we were the first to sponsor the women’s movement in Japan.

How did Japanese society react to these small but significant steps? Far from magnanimously. Some were initially intrigued and curious about our efforts, viewing us calmly and with stiff smiles. But as we moved ahead, they began to insult us and make fun of us, and in time their derision grew to criticism, attacks, and a virtual storm of slander and abuse. In the end, the authorities turned to censoring our activities as a disturbance of moral order, labeling us purveyors of dangerous ideas.

But the spirit of an age is not something to be suppressed. Notwithstanding the fact that male intellectuals rejected our efforts as a feminine vanity that offends the traditional virtues of Japanese women, word reached us of more and more young women who, dissatisfied with the traditional demands of marriage and dreaming of independence, had left home for the capital city to pursue an interest in learning or the arts, women disgusted with the idea of ending up in an arranged marriage merely to secure material stability.

In 1913 and 1914 a number of newspapers and magazines took up the question of the “women’s movement” and people from various fields entered the debate

about the “new woman.” And so the word spread around Japan, but at the same time a false image grew about us and we came to be seen as merely following the vulgar fashion of the day. Thus the public sensation surrounding women’s issues was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it made the general public aware of women’s issues, but on the other it incited dirty attacks, accusations, and deliberate misunderstandings. A disproportionate amount of time and energy was spent defending ourselves from such aggressions.

The whole experience made us more adamant in our resolve, but it also made us want to turn away from the public eye to reflect on ourselves and further cultivate our thinking. We made efforts to put our ideas down in writing, which meant first breaking away from the largely incompatible environments in which we found ourselves. For example, some of us moved out of our parent’s households, which were a symbol of outdated ideas and social structures, and began to live independently. Some experienced romantic love and, claiming such love as our right, entered freely into marriage or lived together. Some of us gave birth to children—creations of love. As a consequence, our thinking gained in substance; we began to deal with concrete problems of daily life and, as a natural result, to take up the question of sexuality, which had been overlooked, neglected, and at times even denied. (In its early phase, the women’s movement tended to deny femininity and tried to make women more like men. This was a reaction against the fact that for too long the focus had been too much on sexuality: the sexual life was thought to be the whole of a woman’s life. Curiously, this was the case in the history of women’s movements in the West as well.)

We gradually began to realize that our liberation is not to be *from* our “female sex” but *as* an authentic “female sex.” Our promotion of women’s rights is not simply for us as human beings but as a *female sex*. In my case, this conviction was reinforced by a chance encounter with the philosophy of Ellen Key where love is seen as the central issue of the women’s movement....

During the past four years *Seitō* served as a representative of the first stage of women’s issues in our country: the iconoclastic phase of the movement. But now we face the question of how to construct a new life for women, and this means identifying new spiritual, moral, ethical, and legal realities for women. This is the second phase of the movement, a positive and studied phase of construction. This phase brought us to far more complex and challenging questions such as... the actual conflict between the “soul life” and “family life” for women, that is, the question of how to resolve the contradiction between rights as humans and rights as persons of the female sex. In the first, iconoclastic phase of opposing tradition, we needed only passion, courage, and the spirit of sacrifice. Today we need to exercise intelligence and wisdom. In addition to pointing out the problems, we need actually to resolve them in the concrete. This will require a certain grasp of scientific knowledge related to the whole

spectrum of human life present and past, in areas such as biology, anthropology, sociology, and economics.

It will also benefit us to examine the struggles that leaders of women's movements in other countries have undergone and to study their guiding philosophical principles. It is not that we wish merely to mimic movements of the West, but rather that we can see them as a source of inspiration in suggesting new paths to forge....

[YM]

NEITHER CAPITALISM NOR MARXISM

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1930, 173–80

The Women's Front is the second Seitō, signaling a transition from individual awakening to social awakening.... Twenty years ago, Japanese capitalism was still in its initial stages. I was fortunate to be born to a middle-class family and with the financial support of my parents was able to receive upper-level schooling. In my twenties I became aware of the bourgeois idea of individualism. Unable to stand by idly, I joined forces with a small number of friends to launch the magazine *Seitō*, in which we proclaimed respect for the individual, the self-transformation of women, and the like. Longing for the autonomy and freedom of women as human beings, we stood up publicly against male despotism and the feudalistic system that kept women subjugated.

Although one of the pioneering women's liberation movements, Seitō was rather abstract in its goals and did not venture far beyond the confines of an intellectual literary movement. The criticisms and ridicule it prompted from the still-powerful feudalistic forces were beyond our expectations and it seemed our movement was suffocating under mountains of misunderstanding. But the seeds sewn by the Seitō movement actually took root in the hearts of young women across Japan, gave them hope, and began to bud and flower in courageous action.

.....

In the decade following the publication of *Seitō*, Japanese capitalism made great strides, thanks to the First World War in Europe. Today, Japanese women are working and make up a significant part of the labor force.... In the summer of 1919, I travelled around silk factories and textile mills to observe the actual working conditions of women. How wretched were the scenes I saw and the stories I heard!... I was deeply moved and felt obliged to leave the self-satisfied literary movement for one of solidarity and action.... In 1920, we founded the New Women's Association. By then, I was no longer a daughter protected by the

wealth of my parents. I was a destitute mother of two, trying to earn a living and perpetually worried about how to make ends meet. I was also tormented with the problem of motherhood and the need to become a career woman.

.....

Since the founding of the New Women's Association, another decade has passed. And what a decade of change it was! As Japanese capitalism matured, its cruel and poisonous aspects came to light. Many Japanese workers lost their jobs and could not find work; small and medium-sized industries collapsed and the intellectuals were at an impasse. A dark shadow was creeping up behind the gaiety of urban culture.... I began to think that, as women and as members of the working class, we needed to fundamentally restructure the economic system in which a handful of capitalists were monopolizing the wealth, exploiting the masses of laborers, and submitting them to unredeemable misery....

I found the Marxist socialist movement uncongenial in its methods and its ideals of social structure... and was, therefore, more attracted to the movement towards cooperatives slowly coming to birth all over the world—both because they were down to earth and because they sought to undermine modern capitalism. Although aware of class distinctions, the cooperative movement did not excite the combative male instincts to engage in the radicalization of class struggle or to wrench power from the hands of the capitalists through a power struggle. Its aims were closer to women, to the ordinary humble life of the consumer in the kitchen, as was its spirit of mutual aid. Through peaceful and yet concrete practical means, the movement clearly and effectively erodes the capitalist organizations while it works towards building a new society of cooperation and self-government. As such, it seemed most suited to the life and temperament of women.

[YM]

THOUGHTS AT THE END OF THE WAR

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1948, 42-4

The present revolution that is taking place amid the sacrifices following the defeat in the war is a great and wonderful revolution—something the Japanese people have not known in the past. With one blow of the axe it has cut through the roots of the long years of subjugation women have suffered. Women are swiftly being emancipated from all sorts of limitations and restrictions. One cannot but be overjoyed at all of this....

I believe that now is precisely the time for liberated Japanese women to recover the original vision of the feminist movement and become conscious

of their primary dignity as human beings. We are not dolls or robots or female animals. Our true identity is noble and divine; it harbors infinite life and its capacities know no bounds. Each of us women needs to know this truth through self-examination. The quest for inner divinity may sound difficult in the extreme, but that is far from the case. We were merely unaware of our original divinity and only needed to rediscover it. You may feel that you are weak and ignorant, but if you delve deep enough within yourself in all earnestness, you will always arrive at God (the divine reality that is the origin of the universe itself). This is what it means to become self-aware.

This self-awareness will give us insight into the profound significance of the principle of the dignity of persons and the equality of every Japanese citizen, the principles on which democracy rests. It will help restore the self-confidence, courage, and passion that seem to be lacking in today's women. True unshakable self-confidence, untiring courage, and sustained passion are rooted in infinite divine power. The day will come when Japanese women, liberated in self-awareness, will overcome, step by step, the unfavorable conditions of the present and harvest the brilliant fruits of emancipation. In 1911, when I was twenty-six, I lamented: "In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person. Now she is the moon, a wan and sickly moon, dependent on another, reflecting another's brilliance." Today, thirty-seven years later, I can cry out full of joy: "From the bottom of the emancipated Japanese women's heart, a great sun rises. Behold! The day has come."

[YM]

THE VALUE OF VIRGINITY

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915B, 53–60

Although the question of the value of virginity belongs to the larger issue of chastity, it has unique aspects of its own.... Conventional wisdom has it that virginity is something to be cherished, that purity and innocence are precious, and that girls must not throw away their virginity lightly. As such, virginity has been a cornerstone of female morality since ancient times.... Just why this is so has not been questioned. The only arguments are circular: virginity should not be devalued because it is absolutely valuable. Its inherent value has not been thought through.

The question, then, is why conventional morality unconditionally condemns women who lose their virginity outside of marriage.... Rather than engage in generalities about whether or not virginity is important, we need to rephrase the question to ask: How long is it meaningful for a virgin to keep her virgin-

ity? Because virginity is an integral part of the sexual life of a woman, of her station in life, and of her level of maturity, it is a highly personal matter. Pressed for a general answer to the question, I can only say, "A virgin should preserve her virginity, which is hers to keep as she wishes, until the best time to lose it comes around. To throw it away at the wrong time is a waste, but so is not to lose it at the right moment." In terms of the inner life, the most fitting time to lose one's virginity is when sensual desires arise out of a romantic love grounded in a spiritual attraction to the beloved, when the union of two persons can be felt intimately and deeply.... From a wider perspective, the loss of virginity for a woman means achieving a fuller, healthier development of her sexual life beyond the virginal state, one that further enriches the whole of life and increases her vitality....

Female chastity consists of holding on to virginity as long as necessary and then letting it go at the right time. In this way virginity takes on great value. The most essential questions for women are whether or not they are able to pursue romantic love, which is so central to women's existence; whether or not they can develop a healthy and natural sexual life, which also belongs to the core of women's existence; and whether or not they can achieve happiness in life. In this sense, it is only natural for women to defend their virginity when it is threatened with violence. It is something that belongs to the individual, who must proclaim her rights to her own life and must respect the desires of a healthy individuality. Apart from this essential and sexual aspect of virginity, I see no value in virginity or any fundamental reason to consider it valuable.

How do women usually lose their virginity? How many of them lose it at the most suitable time? In most cases, women's virginity has been treated like a "thing" bound to custom or external circumstances. Although by right virginity belongs to the individual, most women have no choice but to follow the social mores and give it up when told to. The loss of virginity in formally arranged marriages, which today's society endorses and conventional morality champions, seems to me often something ugly, even criminal. For a woman to forfeit her virginity for security in life, as a temporary escape, out of simple vanity, or for the sake of her parents or family, is a crime. Even in a romance, if a woman gives herself to her beloved without feeling sexual desire herself but only in order to be loved, this, too, is a crime, albeit a romantic one. Of course, we cannot be blind to the reality of women who are forced by poverty to barter their virginity. But what makes their actions more sinful than that of women losing their virginity in a loveless marriage?

I long for the day when the feudal system of arranging marriages is done away with and the loss of virginity can take place in a genuine marriage.

[YM]

YAMAKAWA Kikue 山川菊栄 (1890–1980)

Yamakawa Kikue (née Morita Kikue), a committed socialist, was one of the most influential opinion leaders and social activists of the twentieth century. Stimulated by firsthand experience of the conditions of the “mill girls,” she strived both in her writings and through participation in social movements to improve the position of women and to heighten awareness of social injustices. Yamakawa is also known for her publication of an oral history of women from lower-class samurai in late Tokugawa Japan. An open debate with Itō Noe, a member of the Bluestocking Society, concerning the abolition of legalized prostitution launched her into the public domain. Unlike Itō, who considered prostitution a necessary evil, Yamakawa criticized it a shameful legacy of the feudalistic past. Subsequently, she acted as an arbiter between Yosano Akiko* and Hiratsuka Raichō* in their discussions on “motherhood,” arguing for the more basic need to transform the economic system from “bourgeois capitalism” to socialism.

In 1921 Yamakawa banded with other like-minded women to organize the first socialist group, the Red Wave Society. Through this group, and others she was instrumental in founding, she took it upon herself to bridge the gap between intellectuals and working women, as the following selection will testify. Along this line she made proposals to socialist parties on such matters as the abolition of the patriarchal household system, paid leave for pregnant women, and the establishment of nurseries in the workplace. An avid advocate of planned parenthood, she insisted on women’s right to decide when to bear children. Having had to change her family name twice, once to insure the succession of her maternal lineage and again at marriage, she was an early advocate of the right of women to keep their maiden names. After World War II, she was appointed the first director of the Labor Ministry’s Bureau for Women and Minors.

[YM]

AN INQUIRY INTO FEMINISM

YAMAKAWA Kikue 1928, 167–74

The Significance of Women’s Culture

“Feminist culture” and “women’s culture” are terms we often hear these days. For those of us who regard culture as a product of the historical development of human society—whether ancient culture based on slavery economics, feudal society based on serf economics, modern capitalist culture based on wage-enslavement, or a future culture based on socialist economics—a male culture created by men and a female culture created by women are both

inconceivable. There has never been a society that developed without engaging people of both sexes, and in that sense, all cultures have the quality of constantly representing a specific time and society. Hence there never can be any gender culture that represents and is led exclusively by one gender. True, with the rise of private ownership of property human societies stratified into classes, and a few members who became the center of the ruling class took control of culture and education, not to mention political and economic authority. It was for them and through them that a system was established to maintain a status of relations in which women, who, together with all the oppressed, were as a rule deprived of political and social power, and were not allowed freely and actively to participate in the creation and enjoyment of culture.

Of course, within the ruling class there were women who were educated to a certain extent, but that was for the pleasure of their male masters. It had nothing to do with the personal development of women as individuals or with granting them a place in the life of society. This is no less true in the case of men who belonged to the wider class of the ordinary and oppressed. Their education needs to be contrasted with the learning of academics in order to appreciate how education and training are a salient feature of the men of the ruling class, enabling them to maintain control and leadership within a society. The men of the oppressed class, like women, were given only as much morality and education as would fortify the foundations for the improvement of the ruling class and the optimization of its privileges. For this reason, the practice of referring to the culture of upper-class society as male-centered is not really accurate. It was not composed of *all* males but only of a limited number of males who held managerial dominion. What has been called “male-centered culture” should more properly be referred to as “ruling-class culture.”

This way of thinking completely changed with the arrival of the age of capitalism and the role of women as independent and vital members of production. Women today are independent constituents of the economy who seek legal and political recognition of their new position in society, and along with that, equality in education and employment. What is referred to as “feminist culture” entails the demands of the autonomous women’s movements that arose in response to the changing economic position of women. It is a culture of women standing on their own, freely constructing a cultural establishment for themselves.

Rather than companions or subsidiaries, women are the peers of men. They take an independent stance and it is only proper that they should work diligently towards the construction of an autonomous culture. It is as much a duty as it is a right for women, as human beings and as individual members of society, to seek what it is only natural for them to expect.

However fundamentally just this demand may be, whether present-day

society will actually recognize the purely legal equality of women is another question altogether. Actually, among men there are no legal provisions for discrimination or restrictions in rights in such areas as politics, education, and employment. But given disparities of economic status, these universal rights are formally the privilege of a select few in society, which is tantamount to the majority being banned from their exercise. For the great majority of the people, when, due to their ignorance and poverty, the capacity to be concerned with and understand anything beyond the immediate issues of life has been taken away; when freedom of speech and the right to public assembly and to hold public office have been arbitrarily restricted; when free access to education and employment have ended up being determined by economic conditions; in other words, when the exercise of rights has been reduced to financial power and all liberties made subservient to it, it is obvious that liberty and equality are labels whose meaning is diluted or illusory.

Among men, *formal* equality does not in the least diminish inequality *in fact*. Nor should we hesitate to add that in the case of women, mere equality in name is altogether powerless to change their position. After the World War, there was a nominal reform of the position of women. The right to participate in government and the freedom of education and employment became the rule in civilized countries. But with the onslaught of capitalism and the sacrifices imposed on the proletarian class, women were beset with one hardship after the other, and suffered still more than men because of the weakened unity of their class. As ever longer workdays, declining wages, unemployment, and the suppression of labor unions became a worldwide phenomena, the misery of the have-nots and their enslavement seemed to know no end. Like the men, whose political franchise was powerless to check these developments, women were no match for the growing tyranny of capital.

The process gained momentum domestically with the utter oppression and exploitation of the proletariat class and the increasing power of capitalism. On the international level, this meant an increase in the exploitation of ethnic minorities. And throughout it all, there was the gut feeling of an impending imperialist war, as the peaceful development and creative culture of humanity as a whole was being mercilessly overrun and destroyed by the course of events. When facts such as these are faced, the question of the actual meaning of “feminist culture” comes into its own. To speak of women’s liberation and the creation of a new culture without reference to the profound dispute with capitalism itself and the concomitant ruin of life and culture is, in fact, to cooperate with the brutal capitalist government that makes these things impossible and indeed is nothing more than an impediment to social progress and the liberation of women. Apart from the liberation of humankind itself, there can be no liberation of women. Women can have no unique culture of their own independent

of the culture of all humanity. To preach “feminist culture” while ignoring the profound struggle with the politico-economic factors that inhibit the creation of a culture by and for the human race amounts, in fact, to feminist cooperation with a capitalist culture based on oppression and exploitation, and intended for the class of the privileged few. Clearly, to preach a “feminist culture” that grants an equal share and participation only to the small class of privileged women at the center of capitalism may seem progressive at first glance, but it harbors a reactionary element within. It can never amount to more than a shallow and weak expression of feminism.

International Peace and the Feminist

In response to the exclusion of women from public life within a capitalist system of economics, it is the feminists who embrace the dream of the radical reconstruction, through participation in public activities, of a human government, morality, and lifestyle—one that restores all public rights. We do not regard the differences between men and women a major factor compared to the essential characteristics that unite us in being human. We understand that, just as men are subject to the social environment, so, too, are women swayed by their environment. On the surface it may seem that men control the forces moving society. But in point of fact, the more fundamental power lies in the social conditions that move the way we think. It is for this reason that women’s liberation, and at the same time that of all humanity, should not be directed at men as opponents in the struggle. We must turn our attention to the social conditions that control their thinking. As long as there is no change in these conditions, women will never attain more than what current government and economics allow them when they assume the same position as men; for when the same societal conditions prevail, the same results will emerge. At present, in countries where feminist political rights and other conditions for the liberation of women have been realized, women ministers of state, department heads, legislators, and professors are on the increase. At the same time, ninety percent of the world’s population lives in deprivation and suffering, trapped in processes that enslave them.

As the facts attest, the results are everywhere the same. To male chauvinists, women are to be looked down on because of their gender; to feminists, women are to be held in esteem because of it. They believe that, based on the same societal conditions, what men could not attain, women, because of their sex, are trying to attain selflessly. There is no scientific evidence for this. They believe that their own hopes will be unconditionally and subjectively actualized just as they are. We need to think of women as every bit as much human beings as men. Thus what has not been possible for men is not possible for women

either; what was inevitable for men is no less inevitable for women, and there is no reason to believe that gender will make a difference. Women are not gods, neither are they demons. They are, quite simply, human beings just as men are. If it is a mistake to think of women as inferior to men, it is no less a mistake to think of them as superior.

Believing that women love peace, some seek world peace within women's unity. But that belief is an abstraction, a propositional generalization unsubstantiated and without scientific basis, all but lacking foundation in actual, concrete observation. In general and in the abstract, humanity—or men—cannot be said to favor the unconditional end of warfare. As a rule, when it comes to loving peace more than war, we cannot even consider men inferior to women. The real issue does not lie in abstractions or general rules. The point is rather what attitude to have and what recourse to take in the face of the wars going on at present.

Before the war, feminists of the world spread propaganda advancing women's political franchise as a means to secure world peace. But when it came to responding to the imminent perils of war and military proliferation, they dared utter hardly a word of protest. Not surprisingly, after the Great War began, they did not reject the most brutal imperialist governments and their most brutal weapons of invasion. Were not the most loyal supporters of Lloyd George and his demonic, blood-thirsty cry, "Fight until the last drop of blood is spilled, seize the enemy's last stand," Emily Pankhurst and her followers?

No sacrifice was too great for waging the war. The lives of twenty million children were lost, husbands were wrenched from their wives, children torn away from their mothers, and humane civilization wiped out. And was it not the feminists, the very spokespersons of "feminist culture," who served as lackeys for capitalism? Those who cried out, "Stop the war," "Peace now," "Peace without compromise or reparation," and "War against war" were not the feminists but the international proletarian class, were they not? What brought war to an end? The confused feminists? No, it was the power of the Russo-German proletariat class that buried the imperialist government in its own country.

And now, hour by hour, the danger of a second world war draws ever closer. With the China problem at its center, this danger looms large before our very eyes in the skies of the Far East. Faced with these events, what effort will spokespersons for "feminist culture" expend to prevent war? Is there even one among the group advocating the rise of women's status, or within the proletarian class, to raise a voice of dissent against troop deployments that provoke the crisis of world war?

The small-minded women's magazines have the leisure to discuss reform, only to cover up an indifference to the far greater problem of four hundred million lives in China and seventy million in Japan currently being threatened. If

it is only a simple indifference, it is hard enough to redeem the ignorance and lack of self-awareness this implies. But if the cover-up is conscious, then it is a deliberate sabotage of the prospects for international peace, which is all the harder to redeem.

Faced with these prospects, the Pacific Rim International Women's Conference that is about to open must, like it or not, and for as long as a voice for international peace can be transmitted, make the complete repudiation of China's troop deployment its central issue; otherwise, everything else will be meaningless. Women of the various countries of the Pacific Rim, do not make it your primary goal to collaborate with the women of China to achieve the people's liberation! To approve of China's brazenly imperialist actions at the same time as you talk of world peace is a betrayal of the cause of peace and an aid to the oppression and plundering of four hundred million of our neighbors in the name of women. This is an almost unpardonable international crime. Whether harbingers of peace or lackeys of imperialism, the essential nature of the Pan-Pacific Women's League is for each delegate to discover for herself.

[RF]