

MARTIAL MOTHERHOOD IN MODERN JAPAN,
1905-1955

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Over the course of forty years, from 1905-1945, Japan's Ministry of Education successfully formed, propagated, and invented the martial mother tradition. The stories compiled in the Ministry of Education's textbooks taught young women not only to encourage their future sons' patriotism, but also to enter public spaces themselves and show their own patriotism or *matriotism*. Throughout wartime Japan many mothers behaved as stoic, tear-less, child-sacrificing martial mothers in public; however, in private they shared very close and loving relationships with their adult children. While many mothers told their departing soldier sons to "come back dead" in public, the dynamics of their private relationship with their sons were quite different. In the postwar era, though the martial mother ideal vanished from Japan's educational system, the manifesto of the Mothers' Congress of 1955 revealed that martial motherhood was a significant aspect of many mothers' wartime experience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Women are terrible. They’re demons.” [...] Lining the road to the station were girl students holding little flags, and members of the *Kokubo Fujinkai*, each calling out ‘Thank you!’ (*gokurosama*) and ‘Do your best!’ (*ganbatte kudasai*). Amongst them were some old women who just stood motionless facing Mr. I and the others, their palms pressed together in prayer. [...] “In front of such women, can you be caught in an unmanly expression? Whether you like it or not you must raise your eyes, keep in step and march on—isn’t that so? They’re terrible, women. With such gentle and beautiful expressions on their faces, they send men into the jaws of death.”¹

As an older veteran, ‘Mr. I’ recounted this memory in a conversation with a researcher named Kano Mikiyo.² Mr. I departed for war after receiving his call-up notice in 1939.³ Like many proud Japanese soldiers, Mr. I put on a strong, “manly” expression and marched through the barrack gates; however, on the inside he “felt like a lamb going to the slaughter.”⁴ Ironically, Mr. I felt obligated to keep a “manly” expression on his face while keeping in step and marching on with his fellow soldiers; however, he did not hesitate to insult and even demonize the public behavior of the women who saw him off. While Mr. I called women “terrible” and “demons” for having “gentle and beautiful expressions on their faces” while waving goodbye to soldiers, he found no fault with his manly expression.

¹ Sandra Wilson, “Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan: The National Defence Women’s Association and the Manchurian Crisis,” in *Gender and History* 7:2 (1995): 302.

² Wilson, “Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan,” 302.

³ *Ibid.*, 302.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 302.

While modern historians of Japan have examined the public and private behavior of soldiers such as Mr. I, few have explored the complexities of women's public and private wartime behavior.⁵ Some historians have briefly explored the public militancy of Japanese women. For example, after quoting Mr. I in "Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan," Sandra Wilson wrote, "Thus did women, doubtless unwittingly, help to put a 'healthy gloss' on the process of departing for war."⁶

Furthermore, historians have used women's quotes from censored wartime newspapers to argue the militancy of Japanese women, and especially, mothers of soldiers. In "Doubling Expectations," Yoshiko Miyake used a comment made by an elderly farming woman to a journalist during wartime as an example of the willingness of mothers to "send their sons to the front in the belief that their honorable deaths would bring recognition to the family."⁷ Mariko Tamanoi also speculated that, based on a newspaper article, one woman may have felt "honorable" for her sons' deaths because "she conformed to the state's expectations of rural women as national subjects."⁸

⁵ One of the first volumes to look at the writings of Japanese soldiers was originally published in 1949: *Kike Wadatsumi No Koe: Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei No Shuki*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1982; For more recent scholarship, see Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); For the first work of scholarship that examined the complexities of women's public and private behavior, see Tsurumi Kazuko, *Social Change and the Individual Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁶ Wilson, "Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan," 302.

⁷ Miyake Yoshiko, "Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s." In *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 271.

⁸ Tamanoi also speculates that this woman might have thought otherwise, but ultimately argues that the newspaper reporter clearly did not make up the quote. Tamanoi, Mariko, *Under the Shadow of Nationalism: Politics and Poetics of Rural Japanese Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 165.

Although many mothers evinced the behaviors cited above, the reasons why they did so remain unexplained. This lack of analysis invites readers to jump to conclusions that all mothers of soldiers were ignorant, selfish, or extremely militaristic. In reality, many mothers dreaded the fact that their sons were marching “into the jaws of death.”⁹ Nevertheless, for many reasons—such as the state’s enforcement of its standards of public behavior through mechanisms such as the *kenpeitai* (military police) and through its use of organizational control—a mother’s public behavior did not always reflect her internal conflicts.¹⁰ Most mothers were not ignorant, but informed and educated. Many mothers were not selfish, but instead, aware of the repercussions of unpatriotic public behavior not only for themselves, but also for their entire families. Not all mothers were militaristic. Many mothers tried to help their sons avoid or delay conscription, while others mothers ceaselessly worried about their soldier sons’ safety.

Between 1905 and 1945, Japan’s Ministry of Education taught girls to behave stoically in public during wartime. The Ministry of Education specifically targeted future mothers of soldiers. Through influential and powerful textbook stories such as “Mother of a Sailor,” “Hey, Ichitarō!” and “Women of Japan,” the Ministry of Education taught

⁹ Wilson, “Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan,” 302.

¹⁰ Though I have decided to focus on mothers, I do not mean to suggest that fathers do not also play an important role in their children’s lives. See Ann Phoenix and Anne Woollett, “Introduction,” In *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices, and Ideologies*, ed. Ann Phoenix, Anne Woollett, and Eva Lloyd, (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 3-5.; For more on pronatalist discourse, See Diana Tietjens Meyers, “The Rush to Motherhood: Pronatalist Discourse and Women’s Autonomy,” *Signs* 26, no. 3 (April 1, 2001): 735–773; For more on childless women and women’s associations during wartime Japan, see Miyake Yoshiko, “Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women’s Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Wilson, “Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan;” Thomas R. H. Havens, “Women and War in Japan, 1937-45.” *The American Historical Review* 80:4 (1975): 913-934; Thomas R. H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two*, (New York: Norton, 1978).

girls how to behave as martial mothers during wartime. By the term ‘martial mother’ or ‘martial motherhood,’ I refer to the stoic, tear-less, child-sacrificing ideal promoted by the state, not actual women who lived during this time.¹¹ After learning about martial motherhood as children, and as the state reinforced martial motherhood ideals through propaganda such as films, many mothers behaved as martial mothers in public during the war. But sources such as oral histories, letters, and diaries reveal another, more complex side of mothers’ private relationships with their adult children. Many mothers shared close relationships with their children, but felt forced to behave as martial mothers in public.

Measuring the influence of ideas taught in schools may seem impossible, but time and time again, historians have shown the power of the ideas taught in Japan’s prewar educational system.¹² It is not coincidental that women all across Japan knew how to behave during wartime; they learned proper wartime behavior in schools from as early as 1905. The Ministry of Education’s promotion of martial motherhood, however, often becomes muddled or lost in historical scholarship on Japan’s primary feminine ideal, *ryōsai kenbo*, or “good wife, wise mother.”

¹¹ Historians have used the term “martial motherhood” in different ways. Miriam Cooke discusses a few of the works that have used this term in her review essay Miriam Cooke, “War, Gender, and Military Studies,” *NWSA Journal* 13, no. 3 (October 1, 2001): 181–188. Also, it is important to mention that I am using the term ‘martial motherhood’ to describe this ideal and behavior. Throughout this paper, the mothers themselves did not use this term; however, other Japanese historians have used terms such as “militarist mother” to describe this behavior. Such as Nakauchi Toshio, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1988); and Tsurumi Kazuko, *Social Change and the Individual Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

¹² For example, Japan’s “good wife, wise mother” was a model for other Asian countries, especially China. See Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 765–803; Joan Judge, “The Ideology of ‘Good Wives and Wise Mothers’: Meiji Japan and Feminine Modernity in Late-Qing China,” in *Sagacious Monks and Bloodthirsty Warriors: Chinese Views of Japan in the Ming-Qing Period*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel, (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2002).

“Good wife, wise mother” ideology succinctly defined women as “managers of domestic affairs in households and nurturers of children” and relegated women to the domestic sphere alone.¹³ Though this new ideology promoted the home as the proper place for women, “good wife, wise mother” had public resonance in that leading educators, such as Nakamura Masanao (1832-1891), believed that “fine mothers” produced and raised “superb children” resulting in Japan becoming a “splendid country in later generations.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, “good wife, wise mother” taught women that they could serve the state through the actions of their well-raised children rather than serve the state directly through their own public actions.

Martial motherhood, on the other hand, diverged from “good wife, wise mother” as a state-promoted ideal in that it required mothers to serve the state through their own actions in public, rather than through the actions of their children. Martial mothers demonstrated their *matriotism* as public figures in public spaces.¹⁵ Even more importantly, martial motherhood called for mothers to participate in war front-related activities, and all public spaces that held front-related activities were heavily masculinized public spaces.¹⁶ Not only did martial motherhood require mothers to enter

¹³ Kathleen Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’?” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 294. For a thorough explanation on the domestic labor and productivity of Japanese women, see Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, “The Meiji State’s Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ before 1931,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 498.

¹⁵ For the purpose of this study, I define *matriotism* as a mother’s support for her country through her own public actions, rather than merely through the actions of her children.

¹⁶ Cooke, “War, Gender, and Military Studies,” 181-188.

the public sphere, it required them to participate in a heavily masculinized public space. The ideal place for mothers in society as well as the contributions of mothers that existed in “good wife, wise mother” ideology fundamentally differed from the ideal place and contributions of mothers in martial motherhood.

In addition to arguing the importance of martial motherhood, this thesis also argues that the state promoted conflicting maternal ideals throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though the state strongly promoted “good wife, wise mother” ideology, this ideology did not encompass all stances that the state took on motherhood. Recently historian Kathleen Uno suggested that transmutations of “good wife, wise mother” occurred in prewar Japan and “were closely related to strategies of war and empire.”¹⁷ Although I agree that transmutations of “good wife, wise mother” occurred as a result of the contributions of “private school educators, intellectuals, journalists, feminists, and young women,” I argue that martial motherhood was more than a transmutation of “good wife, wise mother.”¹⁸ Instead, I suggest that “good wife, wise mother” was only one element of a larger gender system.¹⁹ Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the state mobilized women into the public sphere in times of war through martial motherhood, but simultaneously promoted the home as their ideal place

¹⁷ Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ before 1931,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, (Cambridg: Harvard University Press, 2005), 509.

¹⁸ Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire,” 497.

¹⁹ For a look at the shifts in maternalist phases and shifts in the early twentieth century, see Ohinata, Masami, “The Mystique of Motherhood: A Key to Understanding Social Change and Family Problems in Japan,” in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda, (NewYork: The Feminist Press, 1995). Other elements of this larger gender system included the productive economic roles of women as well as the wartime view of women known as “motherhood in the interest of the state” (*kokkaeteki bosei*) that emerged in the 1930s. For more on this larger gender system, see Miyake Yoshiko, “Doubling Expectations.”

with “good wife, wise mother” ideology.²⁰ Not only did the state promote conflicting constructions of “ideal” mothers, martial motherhood did not reflect the “reality of motherhood for many mothers.”²¹

In order to engage conflicting maternal ideals in modern Japan, it is important to note that maternalism as an ideology did not come into widespread use in Japan until after the Meiji Restoration in 1868.²² Prior to the Meiji Restoration, early modern norms (1600-1867) did not require mothers to be the primary providers of child-care. In-laws, older children, fathers and other relatives worked together to raise children.²³ Following the Meiji Restoration, Western maternal ideals, such as educated motherhood, began to enter Japan.²⁴ This resulted in Japanese male “enlighteners” importing and adapting maternal ideals to strengthen the Japanese citizenry. In the 1890s, in a combined effort, male and female educators introduced the “good wife, wise mother” conception of womanhood and motherhood. The Western and Japanese cultural tensions in ‘good wife, wise mother’ ideology also reveal an additional difference between “good wife, wise mother” and martial motherhood. While “good wife, wise mother” included Western and Japanese maternal ideals, the martial mother ideal was distinctly Japanese and entirely

²⁰ Farhat Haq makes the same argument about the LT’s mobilization of women in Pakistan. Farhat Haq, “Militarism and Motherhood: The Women of the Lashkar-i-Tayyab in Pakistan,” *Signs* 32, no. 4 (June 1, 2007): 1023–1046.

²¹ Ann Phoenix and Anne Woollett, “Motherhood: Social Construction, Politics and Psychology,” in *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices, and Ideologies*, ed. Ann Phoenix, Anne Woollett, and Eva Lloyd, (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 13.

²² Kathleen Uno, “Maternalism in Modern Japan,” in *Journal of Women’s History* 5:2 (1993), 126.

²³ Kathleen Uno, *Passages to Modernity: Motherhood, Childhood, and Social Reform in Early Twentieth Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 44,140.

²⁴ Uno, “Maternalism in Modern Japan,” 126.

self-referential.

The definition of the term *maternalism* is also important to this thesis. This broad term evokes different meanings for different fields of study. For modern Japan, Kathleen Uno's definition of maternalism as a "belief in motherhood as an idea validating policies or public actions" hits the mark.²⁵ Uno suggests that a conviction crucial to this definition is that "motherhood and mothering are very important not only to the home but to the larger society."²⁶ This thesis looks at the state's promotion of "good wife, wise mother" and martial motherhood as social constructions of "ideal" or "good" mothers.²⁷ According to Japan's wartime propaganda, Japan's "good" and "ideal" martial mothers and their soldier sons stood in stark contrast to the "selfish, hedonistic mothers [of the West] and their [cowardly] children."²⁸

Chapter Two of this thesis examines the invention of martial motherhood in modern Japan. The invention of martial motherhood was the product of a series of conscious choices by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education first formulated martial motherhood in the ethics textbook story "Mother of a Sailor," and further formed and propagated this invention with subsequent textbook stories throughout

²⁵ Uno, "Maternalism in Modern Japan," 126.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁷ Phoenix and Woollett, "Motherhood: Social Construction, Politics and Psychology."

²⁸ David Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 418. It is also important to note that the state's maternal policies did not go unchallenged. Throughout the early twentieth century feminists discussed and debated issues surrounding not only motherhood, but also the relationship between motherhood and the state. See Laurel Rasplica Rodd, "Yosano Akiko and the Taishō Debate over the 'New Woman,'" in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Barbara Molony, "Equality versus Difference: The Japanese Debate over 'Motherhood Protection,' 1915-1950," in *Japanese Women Working*, ed. Janet Hunter, (London: Routledge, 1993); Barbara Molony, "Japan's 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the Changing Discourse on Gender," *Signs* 20, no. 2 (1995).

the early twentieth century. Over the course of forty years, these textbook stories successfully formed, propagated, and invented the martial mother tradition. The stories compiled in these national textbooks taught young women not only to encourage their future sons' patriotism, but also to enter public spaces themselves and show their own patriotism, or *matriotism*.

Chapter Three explores the complexities of the behavior of soldiers' mothers during wartime.²⁹ Many mothers behaved as martial mothers in public; however, in private they shared very close and loving relationships with their adult children. While many mothers told their departing children to "come back dead" in public, the dynamics of their private relationships with their sons were quite different.³⁰ This chapter also examines how adult children viewed their mothers. I argue that although young men and women were familiar with the martial mother ideal, they did not visualize their own mothers as militaristic.

Chapter Four analyzes the demise of the martial mother in the postwar era. First, it follows the demilitarization of the martial mother ideal in Japan's educational system. Second, it looks at the demilitarization of the martial mother in the media. While the martial mother vanished from all media outlets, a new emotional and enduring maternal ideal called the "Mother of the Quay" became popular in the media. Finally, the chapter engages with one maternal postwar peace movement known as the Mothers' Congress (*Hahaoya Taikai*). Overall, the chapter examines the quick transition of the martial

²⁹ This chapter looks at not only soldiers' mothers, but also the mothers of women who lived outside of Japan during the war.

³⁰ Yamamoto, Mari, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London; Routledge Curzon, 2004), 192.

mother ideal from a “good” Japanese tradition in the prewar era to a “bad” and censorable offense in the postwar era.

CHAPTER II
MAKING MATRIOTS: THE INVENTION OF MARTIAL MOTHERHOOD
IN MODERN JAPAN

Japan's Ministry of Education formed and propagated the martial mother tradition throughout the early twentieth century. The Ministry of Education first formulated the tradition of distinctly Japanese martial motherhood in the textbook story "Mother of a Sailor" ("*Suihei no Haha*"). Although the martial mother, who wrote an admonishing letter to her soldier son in "Mother of a Sailor," was Japanese, the story did not specifically teach primary school-aged students that all Japanese women should behave in this manner. The story primarily promoted martial motherhood behavior as "admirable."³¹ In the third edition of ethics textbooks, the Ministry of Education continued this pattern with the story "Hey, Ichitarō!" ("*Ichitarō Yaa!*"), which starred another Japanese woman who tearlessly saw her soldier son off as an example of martial motherhood. Similar to "Mother of a Sailor," this story did not necessarily apply the example of this mother to all Japanese women. But, another story did. "Women of Japan" ("*Nihon no Fujin*") described the special and unique virtues of Japanese women that set them apart from women of other nationalities and ethnicities. "Women of Japan" included examples of martial mothers from throughout Japan's history to show that martial mother behaviors were among the many inherent traits of Japanese women. Over the course of almost forty years, stories in nationalized textbooks that included martial mothers as the main characters of the stories became the agent of the Ministry of

³¹ The story was originally titled "*Kanshinna Haha*," or "Admirable Mother."

Education's slow formation, propagation, and successful invention of martial motherhood as a Japanese tradition.

In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm developed the theory of invented tradition in modern societies and applied the concept to British history.³² As Hobsbawm wrote, “‘Traditions’ which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.”³³ Invented traditions create a factitious continuity with the past.³⁴ They can be understood as a set of practices “which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition.”³⁵ Building on the scholarship of Hobsbawm and Japanese historians such as Stephen Vlastos, this project explores martial motherhood as an invented tradition.³⁶

Though Meiji intellectuals redefined gender roles around the turn of the century, they did not entirely invent new gender roles.³⁷ The Meiji feminine ideal, “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) was a composite feminine ideal made up of Confucian thought and the early Meiji idea of educated motherhood.³⁸ The traditional Confucian

³² Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³³ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 1-2

³⁵ *Ibid*, 1, 9

³⁶ Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity*.

³⁷ Dina Lowy, *The Japanese “New Woman” : Images of Gender and Modernity*, (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 4.

³⁸ Margit Nagy, *How Shall We Live?: Social Change, the Family Institution and Feminism in Prewar Japan*, (Seattle: University of Washington, 1981), 42-43.

“good wife” obeyed her husband and mother-in-law while she ran the household.³⁹ The newly defined “wise mother” ideal was developed from Western ideas that promoted the education of women. Still, under this ideology, the primary purpose of educating women was to teach them how to properly raise children.⁴⁰ Even though the Japanese state integrated new ideas into its redefinition of the role of women in modern society, the feminine ideal “good wife, wise mother” was not entirely new.

The martial mother ideal in and of itself was an entirely new ideal for women. While the state—primarily the Ministry of Education—promoted the feminine ideal “good wife, wise mother,” it simultaneously invented and promulgated a very different ideal woman—the martial mother. The martial mother diverged from the “good wife, wise mother” ideal. While the domestic work of the “good wife, wise mother” contributed to the nation’s public welfare through the service and patriotism of her husband or son, the martial mother entered the public sphere to show her own *matriotism*.⁴¹ One of the most important traits of a martial mother lay in her ability to keep her composure in public. Martial motherhood focused on the public role of mothers of soldiers, while “good wife, wise mother” taught women to perform a domestic role that was central to the well being of the nation.

The historiography of ethics education textbook stories contains few books that have given attention to martial motherhood. The first comprehensive history of

³⁹ Lowy, *The Japanese “New Woman,”* 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴¹ For the purpose of this study, I define *matriotism* as a mother’s support for her country through her own public actions, rather than merely through the actions of her son.

textbooks was Karasawa Tomitarō's *The History of Textbooks (Kyōkasho no Rekishi)*.⁴² Published in 1956, Karasawa's book referred to the mothers from "Mother of a Sailor" and "Hey, Ichitarō!" as "*Gunkoku no Haha*," or "militarist mothers."⁴³ In 1970, sociologist Tsurumi Kazuko's *Social Change and the Individual* explored the importance of "Mother of a Sailor" and the impact that such stories had on women.⁴⁴ In the late 1980s, Nakauchi Toshio's *Moving Military Tales and Textbooks (Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho)* built on the work of Karasawa and delved further into the actual lives of the people on whom the textbook stories were based.⁴⁵ This chapter participates in the efforts of these scholars to interrogate the content and language of textbook stories that promoted martial motherhood.

Morals Education

A strong majority of girls read and learned about these textbook stories in school. By 1905 the public schools in Japan experienced an astounding increase in enrollment rates.⁴⁶ In 1880, just 40 percent of all boys and girls were enrolled in primary schools. Less than 60 percent of boys enrolled, and just over 20 percent of girls enrolled.⁴⁷ However, by 1905 primary schools saw the enrollment numbers of boys and girls increase, altogether, to about 95 percent (97 percent of boys and about 90 percent of

⁴² Karasawa Tomitarō, *Kyōkasho No Rekishi Kyōkasho to Nihonjin No Keisei*. (Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1956).

⁴³ Karasawa, *Kyōkasho No Rekishi*, 248, 311-314, 392-396.

⁴⁴ Tsurumi Kazuko, *Social Change and the Individual Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁴⁵ Nakauchi Toshio, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1988).

⁴⁶ Byron Marshall called this time a "revolution in education." Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 88.

⁴⁷ Marshall, *Learning to be Modern*, 73.

girls.)⁴⁸ Though the enrollment rates continued to rise, enrollment rates did not necessarily reflect actual attendance numbers.⁴⁹ The attendance rates of male and female students who lived in poor families in both urban and rural communities fluctuated.⁵⁰ Additionally, male and female textile workers struggled to attend primary school.⁵¹ Despite issues of class affecting attendance, Japan's enrollment rate in 1900 nonetheless surpassed the enrollment rates of students in Italy, England, and Wales, and nearly matched the enrollment rates of France and Germany.⁵² Further changes in the compulsory education system continued in the early twentieth century. In 1907 the Ministry of Education increased the term of compulsory education from four to six years.⁵³ From the ages of six to twelve, boys and girls were required to attend elementary school.⁵⁴

Though poverty affected the attendance rates of some students, generally speaking, over 90 percent of Japan's students learned morals education in elementary school. Students learned morals education along with other weekly subjects. The weekly subjects and subject hours varied depending on what grade a student was in. Subjects taught in school included: Morals, Japanese Language, Arithmetic, Japanese History,

⁴⁸ Ibid, 73.

⁴⁹ Mikiso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcastes: The Underside of Modern Japan*, (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 51.

⁵⁰ Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcastes*, 51.

⁵¹ Ibid, 51.

⁵² Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern*, 89.

⁵³ Ibid, 93.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 94.

Geography, Science, Drawing, Singing, Physical Education, Sewing (for girls), and Handicrafts.⁵⁵ Although students studied morals education for two hours a week, based on the allotted hours for each subject, the percent of time devoted to morals education changed for students from year to year. For example, in 1906, a first year lower elementary student spent 10 percent of his or her time in school learning morals. In the second year, he or she spent 8 percent of his or her time learning morals. From the third year all the way to the sixth year of higher elementary school, students devoted 8 percent of their time to morals education.⁵⁶

Between 1904 and 1945, elementary schools all across Japan taught morals education with Japan's first national ethics textbooks. The Textbook Evaluation Committee (*Kyōkayōtoshō Chōsa Iinkai*), created by the Ministry of Education, compiled and edited all of the stories that appeared in the five different editions of the textbook.⁵⁷ Schools used the first edition from 1904-1910. Subsequently the other four editions were published and taught in schools 1910-1918, 1919-1933, 1934-1939, and 1941-1945.⁵⁸ The textbooks contained numerous stories that demonstrated what the Ministry of Education deemed core values for Japanese citizens and subjects. Characters in stories

⁵⁵ "Japan's Modern Educational System: Table 3-5 Subjects and Weekly Subject Hours for Ordinary Elementary Schools (1908)," Ministry of Education, accessed March 21, 2012, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpbz198103/index.html

⁵⁶ Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern*, 85.

⁵⁷ Nakauchi, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 59.

⁵⁸ Samuel Yamashita, "Confucianism and the Japanese State, 1904-1945," in *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 133.

behaved in ways that modeled ideal traits, such as loyalty and patriotism. Textbooks stories also heavily emphasized Confucian values.⁵⁹

Measuring the effect of morals education textbook stories on young readers is nearly impossible. Historian Byron Marshall had written that “the actual number of hours devoted to morals courses in elementary schools was not very great,” but, I argue that this does not mean that morals education was ineffective.⁶⁰ For example, beginning in the third year of lower elementary school, girls only practiced sewing for one hour a week. By the sixth year of higher elementary school, girls attended sewing class for only three hours.⁶¹ Essentially girls did not spend much more time sewing than they did learning morals education. Yet to argue that girls did not learn to sew because it only comprised approximately 7 to 10 percent of their time in school seems dismissive. Certainly students may or may not have internalized the ideals “preached” in morals education. Some students may have even disagreed with the themes taught to them.⁶² Nonetheless, students still would have learned the stories and would have become familiar with the ideals that the stories taught. Additionally, quite a few stories from morals education textbooks were not just learned in school—some stories gained popularity outside of the

⁵⁹ Yamashita, “Confucianism and the Japanese State;” Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 102.

⁶⁰ Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern*, 85.

⁶¹ “Japan’s Modern Educational System: Table 3-5 Subjects and Weekly Subject Hours for Ordinary Elementary Schools (1908).”

⁶² Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern*, 85. For other perspectives on morals education, see Hiratsuka Raichō, *In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 47-48; Mishima Sumie Seo, *My Narrow Isle: The Story of a Modern Woman in Japan*, (New York: The John Day Company, 1941).

educational system. Stories, such as “Mother of a Sailor” and “Hey, Ichitarō!” received a lot of attention from the media, primarily in the 1920s.

The Textbook Evaluation Committee put a lot of thought and discussion into carefully selecting appropriate textbook stories for the Ministry of Education’s nationalized ethics textbook. Of the many textbook stories that the committee expunged over a forty-one year period, “Mother of a Sailor” was the only story that appeared in the first edition of the textbook in 1905 and remained in every subsequent edition.⁶³ Admiral Ogasawara Naganari introduced the story “Mother of a Sailor” to the Textbook Evaluation Committee.⁶⁴ Naganari served on the *Takachiho* warship during the First Sino-Japanese War, where he recorded the incident that appeared in the story in his memo pad. Eventually these memos were published in a document called *Kaisen Kiroku*, or *Naval Battle Record*. Naganari recorded few details about the sailor, which resulted in future speculation about the true identity of both the sailor and his mother.⁶⁵ But the story took on a life of its own due to the public’s interest in the story.

As early as 1929, newspapers such as the “Higo Province Daily Newspaper” began publishing stories about the true identities of the story’s characters. Eventually, after the Ministry of Education acknowledged rumors about “Mother of a Sailor,” it came to light that the sailor in the story was ill. Shortly after Naganari originally wrote about

⁶³ Nakauchi, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 59.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 59.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 59.

the incident in the late nineteenth century, the sailor left the *Takachiho* warship and returned to his mother's village. He died of an unknown illness just three years later.⁶⁶

The sailor's sickness is central to understanding not only the main character of the story, but also the purpose and lesson of the story.⁶⁷ A sickly soldier did not best exemplify "distinguished service" in the Japanese military.⁶⁸ After the media revealed the true identity of the sailor in "Mother of a Sailor," the Textbook Evaluation Committee continued to publish the story in textbooks with the same plot. More than likely they did not continue printing the story in later editions of the textbook to teach young boys a lesson in becoming brave and honorable soldiers. Therefore, the sailor was not the story's main character. Likewise, although the captain admonished the sailor's behavior, the captain played a relatively small role in the story. The Textbook Evaluation Committee continued to publish the story in each edition of the textbook because the mother was the main character of the story.⁶⁹

Since the mother was the main character of the story "Mother of a Sailor," clearly it appears that the story aimed to teach students about the proper conduct of mothers during wartime. The story taught boys how their mothers should behave during the war. It also taught girls—that is, many future mothers—how to behave as wartime mothers. The intricate details and language of the story "Mother of a Sailor" provided an understanding of the martial mother's public and private behavior. Additionally, the

⁶⁶ Ibid, 62-64.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 62-64.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 62-64.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 62-64.

story contained a subtle, misogynistic tone. One of the characters in the story, the lieutenant, hinted that “excessively effeminate” behavior was unacceptable in public military spaces. Since the lieutenant never clearly defined “excessively effeminate” behavior, it seems that he used misogyny as a tool “in the making of a soldier.”⁷⁰

“Mother of a Sailor”

On a day in 1894, during the middle of the First Sino-Japanese War, a sailor hunched over a letter in a corner of the medicine room of the *Takachiho* warship.⁷¹ Tears streamed down his cheeks.⁷² Since the sailor sat in a common room of the *Takachiho*, privacy was a near impossibility. A young, handsome lieutenant wearing a pressed uniform walked by and saw the sailor.⁷³ His hands clasped behind his back, the lieutenant gazed down at the sailor. With one glance at the handwriting, the lieutenant could tell that a woman had written the letter.

“Mother of a Sailor” was written from the perspective of the lieutenant (Ogasawara Naganari). The story’s audience read the lieutenant’s thoughts throughout the story. At the beginning of the story, the lieutenant had a vague, yet important, thought. When he saw the sailor crying, the lieutenant thought that the sailor’s behavior seemed “excessively effeminate.”⁷⁴ What about the sailor’s behavior seemed particularly

⁷⁰ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 143.

⁷¹ Ogasawara Naganari, *Kaisen Nichiroku*, (Tōkyō: Shun’yōdō, 1895), 46.

⁷² Ogasawara Naganari, *Kaisen Nichiroku*, 46.

⁷³ “*Suihei no Haha*,” in *Jinjō Shōgaku Tokuhon*, (Tokyo: Monbushō, 1922) 9: 92-97.

⁷⁴ “*Suihei no Haha*,” 92. For my full translation of this story, see appendix.

“effeminate”? One might assume that the captain perceived tears in general as

“effeminate.” Following his thought, the lieutenant made a cutting remark to the sailor:

Hey! What the hell is going on here? Are you beginning to regret your life in the military? Are you beginning to long for your wife and child? You became a soldier and left for war, I don't think you are showing the honor of a young soldier. This war is everything! The shame of one soldier is the shame of the entire warship; the shame of one warship is the shame of the empire!⁷⁵

In this scene, the lieutenant had clearly assumed that the soldier was crying over a letter written by his wife, when in actuality the soldier was crying over a letter that his mother sent to him. Since the captain described the sailor's behavior as “effeminate,” one might wonder how Japanese society gendered tears at this time. Was crying perceived as an inherently feminine trait?

Japanese sociologist Mita Munetsuke researched Japanese popular songs produced after the Meiji Restoration to compile a “history of tears” in modern Japanese history. Mita made a graph that demonstrated a sharp increase in popular songs that used the word “tears” beginning in 1896. Although many of the songs originally related to the impact of war, from 1910 onward, popular songs no longer mentioned tears in a way that related to the political sphere. Instead, popular songs used the word “tears” only when evoking feelings of love in the private sphere.⁷⁶ Although “Mother of a Sailor” took place over a decade prior to 1910, Mita's research helps unpack the scene between the crying sailor and his lieutenant.

Since both male and female performers sang about tears in popular songs, at this time tears were not necessarily considered intrinsically “feminine.” In the scene from

⁷⁵ Ibid, 93-94.

⁷⁶ Mita Munetsuke, *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, (New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 1992), 31-33.

“Mother of a Sailor,” this seems especially true since the captain assumed that the soldier cried about his wife and children. When the lieutenant approached the crying soldier, above all else, he assumed that the soldier cried over an acceptable and understandable issue in his private life. Perhaps the lieutenant did not take particular issue with a man that cried because he missed his wife and children. More than likely, for the lieutenant, it did not matter that the sailor cried, but it mattered *where* he cried: in a public, military space.

Even though the lieutenant briefly asked the sailor if he longed for his wife and children, the lieutenant primarily vented his outrage with the sailor. By crying in a public, military space, the lieutenant felt that the sailor brought shame to the *Takachiho* warship, and by extension, to the entire Japanese empire. Ultimately the lieutenant connected shame and immaturity to femininity. The lieutenant’s misogyny in this scene supports the argument that in military thinking, masculinity is often connected to reason and rationality, while femininity is often connected to irrationality.⁷⁷ In the lieutenant’s eyes, the sailor brought shame to the Japanese empire by behaving in an irrational, “feminine” manner—crying in a rational, masculine military environment.

This scene provides insight into the behavior required of martial mothers. The martial mother did not cry in public. Not only was the martial mother a public figure, then, she was a public figure that was associated more with rationality and masculinity rather than stereotypically irrational, feminine behavior. As the captain suggested, if a soldier hysterically cried in a public military space, he behaved in a feminine, improper, irrational manner. In order for a woman to be a martial mother, she had to behave

⁷⁷ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 145.

properly in a public, military space; and, in order to achieve this, she had to adopt a certain sense of rational, masculine behavior.

“Mother of a Sailor” was the first textbook story to teach marital mother behavior. After the lieutenant and the sailor shortly exchanged words, the sailor handed his mother’s letter to the lieutenant. Her letter read in part:

I heard that you did not serve in the Hōtō-oki Sea Battle and once again, on August tenth, during the Ikaiei Offensive, you did not achieve any distinguished service. Your mother thinks this is indeed disappointing. For what purpose have you gone to war? Is it not for you to lay down your life in gratitude to the Emperor? Every morning and every night, the people of our village always kindly make conversation with me, they say, “Since your only son went off to fight for our country, surely you are suffering. Please don’t hesitate to ask us for help.” Every time your mother sees them, I am reminded of your cowardice. My heart just breaks. Every day I visit Hachiman’s shrine to pray that you might succeed in fulfilling an admirable purpose.⁷⁸

The mother’s primary concern was not the safety of her son. Above all, she wanted her son to risk his life and fight in battle.

After the lieutenant finishes reading the mother’s letter, interestingly, a tear falls from his eye. While the story paints the sailor’s tears as irrational and feminine, and perhaps even unpatriotic, the lieutenant’s tear, on the other hand, can be understood as masculine and patriotic, and therefore legitimate and rational. The lieutenant then tells the sailor that his mother’s spirit is admirable. With his head lowered, the sailor listens to the lieutenant’s words. The lieutenant finishes speaking and the sailor raises his head. The story ends with the sailor saluting the lieutenant. The sailor then smiles and laughs as he exits the room.

By continuously publishing this story in ethics textbooks, the Ministry of Education taught young children the way in which a mother should act in times of war.

⁷⁸ “*Suihei no Haha*,” 94-95.

In this letter, the sailor's mother admonished her son for not giving his life for the Emperor. She told him that she felt ashamed of her cowardly son. And finally, everyday she visited the god of war's shrine to pray that he would finally go into battle. From this story, young girls and young boys were supposed to learn how a wartime mother should feel, and how a wartime mother should act in public. "Mother of a Sailor" was the first of many ethics textbook story that taught the martial mother ideal to young, impressionable students.

"Hey, Ichitarō!"

While "Mother of a Sailor" appeared in every edition of the ethics textbooks, the Textbook Evaluation Committee retired the story "Hey, Ichitarō!" after printing it in only one edition of the textbook (the third edition, from 1918-1932). Like stories such as "Mother of a Sailor," "Hey, Ichitarō," a short story about an older mother saying goodbye to her departing soldier son, achieved great fame outside of the public school system. Almost everyone in the country would have been familiar with the story "Hey, Ichitarō!" The country abounded with biographical writings, magazines, and many newspaper articles written about "Hey, Ichitarō!"⁷⁹ One author, Hashimoto Shunryō, even wrote a fictional story titled *Ichitarō Monogatari (The Tale of Ichitarō)*.⁸⁰

Similar to the public's curiosity surrounding the true identity of the family in "Mother of a Sailor," the public also wanted to know the true identity of the family in "Hey, Ichitarō!"⁸¹ In 1921, the Osaka Asahi Newspaper discovered that the soldier from

⁷⁹ Nakauchi, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 66.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 66.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 68-69.

the textbook story was still alive, and printed a story titled “The Hero of a Legend Lives” on October 1.⁸² Additional articles further exposed the life of the soldier during and after the Russo-Japanese War. Apparently, he entered the war and was injured during the Siege of Port Arthur.⁸³ He returned home, received medical treatment, and then returned to the front once again. A Kanagawa Prefecture news circular from November of 1921 detailed the scene in which the son once again departed for the front. The circular provided another angle of the martial mother from “Hey, Ichitarō!” Instead of yelling, “don’t worry about things at home,” in reality, Ichitarō’s mother seemed “sad.”⁸⁴

The details of the real Ichitarō’s life continued to diverge from the Ichitarō that the public and media imagined. In reality, Ichitarō and thousands of other Japanese soldiers fought day after day in the severe Russian weather. Over time, Ichitarō suffered with extreme frostbite. His hands swelled and gradually became numb, cold, and hard. In extreme cases of frostbite, like Ichitarō experienced, blisters filled with bloodstained fluid appear on the damaged skin. Thus, the national hero watched his hands become black as the body tissue on his hands died and decomposed.⁸⁵ Even after he returned home, Ichitarō’s hands did not heal. Six of his fingers had to be amputated.⁸⁶ As students all across the country read the textbook story “Hey, Ichitarō!” Ichitarō could not find work

⁸² Ibid, 68.

⁸³ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁵ *The Merck Manual of Medical Information: Second Home Edition*, (Whitehouse Station: Merck Research Laboratories, 2003), 1656-1657.

⁸⁶ Nakauchi, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 69.

due to his disability.⁸⁷ Following the publication of the “real” Ichitarō’s fate, after much deliberation, the Textbook Evaluation Committee removed the story from future editions of the textbook.⁸⁸

The Martial Mother in “Hey, Ichitarō!”

In the Tado District of Kagawa Prefecture, a statue of Ichitarō’s mother stands in Tōryō Park, facing the port where her son departed for battle in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Surrounded by trees that produce cherry blossoms in the springtime, the statue, built in 1931, stands stoically, her right arm raised in the air. Her eyes full of concern and her mouth agape, she waves goodbye to her son forevermore.⁸⁹

As the textbook story “Hey, Ichitarō!” explained, during the Russo-Japanese War a crowd of people gathered at Tadotsu Port, near Tōryō Park, to see soldiers off. An older woman shuffled through the crowd of people standing on the wharf as she repeatedly said, “Excuse me! Excuse me!”⁹⁰ The story described her as a 64, almost 65, year old woman. As she finally approached the ship, she shouted, “Hey, Ichitarō! If you are boarding that ship, raise your gun!”⁹¹ Shortly after, a man on the deck raised his gun. Again the mother yelled, “Do not worry about anything at home! Serve the Emperor

⁸⁷ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 69-70.

⁸⁹ “*Kōen no Shinboru Ichitarō Yaai*,” Tōryō Kōen no Arukikata, Last accessed March 22, 2012, <http://ichitaro.qee.jp/>

⁹⁰ “*Ichitarō Yaai*,” in Nakauchi Toshio, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), 65. For full translation of this story, see appendix.

⁹¹ “*Ichitarō Yaai*,” 65.

well! If you understand me, raise your gun once more!”⁹² After she finished shouting, she vaguely saw a gun being raised once more. The old woman said “good grief” and took a seat. Everyone other than the old woman, including the district head, cried while seeing the soldiers off.⁹³

As in “Mother of a Sailor,” Ichitarō’s mother strongly supported her son’s service in the military. This martial mother knew that it was more important for her son to go off to war rather than stay home and help her. She said goodbye to him without shedding tears, while everyone else in the vicinity cried. By her expression of “good grief” it seemed that she almost felt relieved by his departure. Indeed, the mother in “Hey, Ichitarō!” exemplified martial motherhood.

In this story, the mother acted in a public, military space. While the story “Mother of a Sailor” took place in an entirely militarized space that included military personnel only, stories such as “Hey, Ichitarō” occurred in public military spaces. Perhaps the most popular domestic military space during wartime was the farewell event. Whether soldiers departed via military boat, train, or if they marched through the streets, people throughout the community publically supported departing soldiers. Formal events that included the interaction between soldiers and the public constituted public military spaces in prewar Japan.

“Hey, Ichitarō” provided an ideal example of how the state wanted national subjects to behave during potentially emotional events held in public military spaces, such as farewell events. It was especially important for the state to teach mothers, the

⁹² Ibid, 65.

⁹³ Ibid, 65.

primary caregivers of children as established by “good wife, wise mother” ideology, how to behave during such events.⁹⁴ In this story, by not crying, the mother practiced the correct rational and “masculine” traits associated with public displays of emotion within military public spaces.

As in “Mother of a Sailor,” this story also addressed the issue of crying in public. Although “Hey, Ichitarō!” did not use such distinct language as the captain in “Mother of a Sailor” when he called the sailor’s crying “effeminate,” the story still provided commentary on the shedding of tears in public. The last line of the story read, “Rumor has it that first the district head, then the people seeing the soldiers off, began to cry.”⁹⁵ Men and women cried while seeing soldiers off. This supports the notion that tears were not necessarily gendered at this time, at least not in these stories. But, at the same time, the story also condemned the people’s tears. “Hey, Ichitarō!” purposefully taught students not to cry in public military spaces by applauding and memorializing the behavior of Ichitarō’s mother, who did not cry. The mother was the exemplary hero of the story.

The famous martial mother in “Hey, Ichitarō!” —so famous that a statue of her was built to commemorate the Showa Emperor—showed that martial mothers were public figures who could adopt rational and admirable behavior. Certainly Ichitarō’s mother visited the port in order to say farewell to her son, who also became famous, but she herself also became a hero. In the story, her stoic public behavior stood in contrast to

⁹⁴ For more information on the establishment of women as the primary caregivers of children, see Kathleen S. Uno, *Passages to Modernity: Motherhood, Childhood, and Social Reform in Early Twentieth Century Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999).

⁹⁵ “*Ichitarō Yaai*,” 65.

that of the crying people in the crowd. The story uplifted her as a hero, not just Ichitarō. Ichitarō's mother became famous for her own public patriotism, not for the patriotism of her son or husband.

“Women of Japan”

Matsudaira, a member of the “old elite” in Miyagi Prefecture, stated the purpose of ethics education as “to establish the foundations of the *kokutai* [national polity] and teach the way of patriotism and ethics, thus producing a people who are not ashamed to be Japanese.”⁹⁶ Certainly, this opinion was only one of the many opinions bureaucrats and governors expressed regarding the main purpose of ethics education. Nonetheless, the three stories discussed in this chapter only used Japanese women and Japanese men as protagonists. The mother from “Mother of a Sailor” was based on a Japanese woman from the First Sino-Japanese War. Ichitarō's mother from “Hey, Ichitarō!” was based on a Japanese woman who lived during the Russo-Japanese War. Finally, the story “Women of Japan” contained multiple examples of Japanese women not only from the Meiji era, but also from earlier eras of Japan's past. In ethics textbook stories, the martial mother was always Japanese.

The story “Women of Japan” best exemplified the self-referential component of the martial mother figure. Unlike “Mother of a Sailor” and “Hey, Ichitarō,” the origins of the story “Women of Japan” are still a mystery. “Women of Japan” at the very least appeared in the eleventh volume of the third edition (1919-1933) of the textbook *Jinjō*

⁹⁶ Matsudaira made this comment at the “Prefectural Governors' Conference in Tokyo in February of 1890.” The purpose of ethics education became a topic of debate at this conference. Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 115, 344.

*Shōgaku Tokuhon.*⁹⁷ While the mothers in “Mother of a Sailor” and “Hey, Ichitarō!” were both Japanese, the stories did not actually refer to the mothers as Japanese women. “Women of Japan” on the other hand, specifically listed positive character traits of Japanese women—traits that were attributed to their Japanese ethnicity and Japanese nationality.⁹⁸ While the title of the textbook story most clearly made that point, the content of the text also supported this assertion. Throughout the text, phrases such as “our country’s women,” and “Japanese women” appeared multiple times. According to “Women of Japan,” one of the inherent character traits of Japanese women rested in their ability to protect the morals of Japan. Although the story never clearly defined these morals, the text provided some examples.

“Women of Japan” used the stories of three women as examples of ideal behavior in times of emergency. Of the three examples, two were martial mothers, the mother of Uryū Tamotsu, and the mother from “Mother of a Sailor.” Indeed, the Textbook Evaluation Committee valued the story “Mother of a Sailor” enough not only to insert the story in the textbook, but also to reference the story in other textbook stories. On the other hand, the story of Uryū Tamotsu’s mother appeared for the first time in ethics textbooks in the story “Women of Japan.” Interestingly, another source had already

⁹⁷ “*Nihon no Fujin*,” in *Jinjō Shōgaku Tokuhon*, (Tokyo: Monbushō, 1922) 11: 87-90. For full translation, see appendix.

⁹⁸ For more on the idea of the ethnic nation (*minzoku*), see Doak, Kevin M. Doak, “Narrating China, Ordering East Asia: The Discourse on Nation and Ethnicity in Imperial Japan,” in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

revived the old story of Uryū Tamotsu's mother in the 1890s, before the publication of ethics textbooks.⁹⁹

In 1893, the Japanese Woman's Commission printed the story of Uryū Tamotsu's mother in a book written in English for the World's Columbian Exposition. The book, *Japanese Women*, provided details of Uryū Tamotsu's mother that were not included in the textbook story "Women of Japan." With the intention of sharing the book *Japanese Women* with a foreign audience, several Japanese women and "noble ladies" compiled various histories of Japanese women to exhibit the work of women.¹⁰⁰ *Japanese Women* included the stories of famous women who influenced the history of Japan's politics, literature, religion, and charity. It also included information on the daily life of women such as domestic life, industrial occupations, and education.

The story of Uryū Tamotsu's mother appeared in the chapter on women in politics under the subscript "The Age of Ashikaga." During the Kenmu Restoration (1333-1336) the warrior Uryū Tamotsu fought alongside Wakiya Yoshiharu against the Shogunate in the Province of Echizen.¹⁰¹ Uryū died while fighting in hand to hand combat alongside his fellow generals. The news of Uryū Tamotsu's death reached the castle where Wakiya Yoshiharu stayed. Everyone inside the castle worked themselves into a "frenzy of lamentation."¹⁰² Uryū Tamotsu's mother was the only person who controlled her feelings in the entire castle. While the others cried, she came forward and said, "That she was

⁹⁹ *Japanese Women*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg for the Japanese Woman's Commission for the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893).

¹⁰⁰ *Japanese Women*, Preface.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 26.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 26.

glad that her son had fallen in war in company with such distinguished generals.”¹⁰³

After she finished speaking, she “pointed to three of her sons still remaining alive and bade her chief Wakiya be of good cheer.”¹⁰⁴ The unknown author of the story continued on to say that the words of Uryū Tamotsu’s mother uplifted the spirits of all of the warriors.

By incorporating a historical figure from Japan’s distant past, the Ministry of Education “created a factitious continuity with the past.”¹⁰⁵ The Ministry of Education used one story of a heroic woman from the fourteenth century to promote the martial mother as an ideal that had always existed in Japanese history. “Women of Japan” taught students that martial motherhood had always been a part of Japanese history because it was a historical trait of Japanese women.

“Women of Japan” also used deliberately allusive language. The first example of allusive language appeared in the second paragraph of the story:

When these people encountered serious emergencies, they did not lose composure, they behaved properly. Women are not inferior to men in properly conducting these difficult principles. These difficult principles are the strong point of our country’s women. Out of loyalty, the mother of Uryū Tamotsu did not mourn the death of her beloved child during the war. Similarly, one of the mothers of a sailor on the Takachiho warship abandoned her loved and scolded her son. The sailor’s mother, without concern for her son’s death, similarly observed these principles. Everyone, our Japanese women provide flawless examples of behavior during times of emergency.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ “*Nihon no Fujin*,” 87-88.

In the above excerpt, the phrase “times of emergency” (*hijōji*) seems rather unclear. The entire story only provided three examples of “times of emergency” and all of the examples only showed one emergency: war. Throughout the history of Japan certainly women survived and persevered through times of emergency other than war: famines, natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, etc. Yet the story only mentioned the emergency of war—and this choice was deliberate. The purpose of the story was to teach students how women should behave during wartime.

The phrase “times of emergency” becomes even more peculiar when paired with another phrase in the story. The third paragraph of “Women of Japan” reads, “Be that as it may, we do not always find ourselves in times of emergency that allow Japanese women to show these merits. During times of peace, women exist as good wives and good mothers, they follow woman’s duties, this is their virtue.”¹⁰⁷ Here the story provided examples of how women should behave during “peacetime” (*heiji*). *Heiji* can also be translated as “normal times,” however, in contrast to the examples provided in the paragraph on “times of emergency,” the story appeared to reference times of peace. The most obvious antonym of “times of peace” is “times of war,” yet the author of the story deliberately settled on the phrase “times of emergency” to describe times of war. Furthermore, the story associated “good wives and good mothers” with “times of peace” while it associated ideals such as the martial mother with “times of emergency” or times of war. Through the use of allusive language, the story conflated two different ideals of womanhood: the wartime woman and the peacetime woman.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 88.

As seen in the story “Women of Japan,” a wartime woman was expected to behave differently than a peacetime woman. The two examples of a wartime woman included Uryū Tamotsu’s mother and the “Mother of a Sailor.” Both women behaved as martial mothers: one did not mourn the death of her son and the other urged her son to fight in battle. While “Women of Japan” provided multiple and various examples of peacetime women, the story only stressed one wartime womanly ideal—the martial mother. Based on the themes of this story, the key to being a Japanese woman during wartime was keeping one’s composure:

A woman’s role is to help her husband, manage the household, teach her children, and to elevate the family name. This spirit must not be forgotten under any circumstances. Be that as it may, in this life we cannot know when unforeseen disasters and unexpected emergencies will occur. Therefore, if you are not prepared to always follow this conduct during times of peace, when faced with challenging times, you will become upset and feel lost, and behave disgracefully. Stay calm on the outside. To guard the virtues of love and respect, possess firm principles within, never forgetting to stay composed when disasters arise. Indeed, these are the virtues of Japanese women.¹⁰⁸

A Japanese woman’s “virtues” included remaining calm on the outside, keeping composure, not fretting, and not behaving disgracefully. This phenomenon can also be referred to as *tatemaie*, or a public position or attitude.¹⁰⁹ This story showed that the Ministry of Education was not concerned with the overwhelming amount of pressure it placed on women. Instead, the Ministry of Education primarily concerned itself with young women learning proper public behavior during wartime.

The Ministry of Education’s concern with the public behavior of mothers during wartime highlights the stark difference between “good wife, wise mother” ideology and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 89-90.

¹⁰⁹ The behavior of martial mothers is referred to as *tatemaie* in Nakauchi, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 73.

the martial mother ideal. While “good wife, wise mother” ideology focused on the contributions women—as wives and mothers—made to the country through the service of the members of their family, martial motherhood just focused on the public behavior of mothers themselves. All three stories reinforced this idea. “Mother of a Sailor” did not focus on how the mother raised her son; but rather, on the admirable and patriotic behavior of the mother. In “Hey, Ichitarō!” instead of focusing on how the mother raised a patriotic and brave soldier son, the story painted the mother’s public patriotic behavior as exemplary. Finally, in “Women of Japan,” all of the stories about women focused on the behavior of the women themselves. The story about Uryū Tamotsu’s mother did not emphasize the fact that Uryū Tamotsu’s mother raised a son who died honorably in battle. Instead, the emotional stoicism and patriotism of the mother of Uryū Tamotsu was the moral of the story.

Japan’s Martial Motherhood in Perspective

A comparison between German and Japanese martial motherhood will help place Japanese martial motherhood in a broader, global context. By comparing Japan to Germany, I hope to illuminate the similarities and differences of martial motherhood in the two countries. Why focus on a comparison of martial motherhood in Japanese and German textbooks? While Germany and Japan had many differences, they were both aggressor nations in World War II. Additionally, after signing the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 and then the Tripartite Pact in 1940, Nazi Germany, Japan, and Italy became allies.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ For more comparisons between Japan and Nazi Germany, see David Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 51.

One striking difference between Japan and Germany in the early twentieth century was the political status of Japanese and German women. Claudia Koonz had argued in regard to the “Nazi revival of motherhood” that Nazi social policy “carried to grotesque extremes plans that other nations advanced only timidly.”¹¹¹ In respect to the social policies that Koonz discusses, Japan was one of the few nations that was not so timid. As early as 1900, Article 5 of Japan’s Public Peace Law (*Chian Keisatsu Hō*) banned women from political meetings, from expressing political opinions in public, and from joining political organizations.¹¹² In short, Japanese women were not accorded political rights. By contrast, German women gained the right to vote during the Weimar Republic in 1919. And, of course, between 1930 and 1932, some German women supported and voted for the Nazi party.¹¹³

Nazi education also promoted martial motherhood. Additionally, while the Japanese state promoted “good wife, wise mother” ideology, Nazi Germany also promoted Germany’s “traditional” ideas of womanhood: *Kinder, Küche, and Kirche* (children, kitchen, and church).¹¹⁴ Just as “good wife, wise mother” and martial motherhood were separate ideals in Japan, Gilmer Blackburn argues that Germany’s

¹¹¹ Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 177.

¹¹² Part of the Public Peace Law was repeal during the Taishō era, but women did not have the right to vote until 1945. Though women were banned from political meetings, expressing political opinions in public, and prevented from joining political organizations, women’s organizations nonetheless fought against this law. For more on women’s activism in the early twentieth century, see Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5; and Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).

¹¹³ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 127.

version of the martial mother differed from “the traditional German woman.”¹¹⁵ The martial mother in Nazi Germany was expected to “demand that her son seek death in battle rather than accept the disgrace of retreat.”¹¹⁶ Nazi Germany’s promotion of martial motherhood also became a part of Nazi educational ideals.¹¹⁷

For many reasons, Spartan ideals influenced the Nazi state and the Nazi regime’s educational system. The Spartan concept of upbringing, the military training of young men, and eugenics, all influenced Nazi ideology.¹¹⁸ The Spartan mother was no exception to this rule. According to Plutarch’s *Sayings of Spartan Women*, some Spartan mothers sought their sons’ martyrdom: “Another woman handed her son his shield and exhorted him: ‘Son, either with this or on this.’”¹¹⁹ The sentiment of this Spartan saying percolated into Nazi martial motherhood. For example, in a textbook story, Queen Louise told her sons—who fought against the French in the Wars of Liberation (1813-1814)—to be brave warriors: “Be men and strive after the glory of great field commanders and heroes [...] But if you cannot in spite of all of your strivings raise up again the humbled state, then seek death!”¹²⁰ In this story, Queen Louise acted as a martial mother, or a “Spartan mother.” In this way, the story was self-referential in that Queen Louise was German (Prussian), however, the story also referenced another, non-

¹¹⁵ Gilmer Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: A Study of Race and History in Nazi Textbooks*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 106.

¹¹⁶ Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, 106.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 107.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 97-98.

¹¹⁹ Sarah Pomeroy, *Spartan Women*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 58-60.

¹²⁰ Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich*, 112.

German people: the Spartans. This reference differed starkly from Japanese martial motherhood, which only referenced Japanese women.

Conclusion

The Japanese state's concern for a mother's public behavior during wartime provides further evidence that martial mothers were in fact public figures. As early as 1919—the publication date of “Women of Japan”—the state expected mothers to perform a public role during times of war. Most importantly, the state concerned itself with establishing and teaching the proper public behavior of mothers of soldiers during wartime. All three stories focused on mothers of soldiers, and the main characters of these stories were the mothers—not the soldiers. The martial mother was a public figure who showed her own patriotism through her own actions—not just through the patriotism of her son.

In order to achieve the goal of having all women behave as martial mothers in public, the Ministry of Education formed, propagated, and invented the martial mother figure as a Japanese tradition. While the mothers from “Mother of a Sailor” and “Hey, Ichitarō!” were examples of ideal martial mother behavior, “Women of Japan” promoted this ideal as a tradition. The story made martial motherhood seem like an inherent virtue of Japanese women—so inherent that women had behaved in this manner for centuries. All three stories worked together to teach young children the specific behaviors of martial mothers. Furthermore, the stories connected the behaviors of martial mothers to Japan's historic past.

As for the martial mother ideal, she diverged from the feminine ideal “good wife, wise mother.” In fact, the martial mother did not represent the ideal of femininity at all.

Instead, the public behavior the state asked of women during wartime resembled the rational masculinity idea often found in military thinking. In the three textbook stories, the exemplary behavior of the martial mothers even surpassed the behavior of the men in the same stories.¹²¹ In public militarized spaces, women were not supposed to cry or show emotion. Furthermore the state taught students that admirable mothers admonished their sons to participate in battle and give their life for the emperor. And if a martial mother heard news of her son's death, she should not shed tears. Instead, she should be glad that he fell in battle. The martial mother was not a domestic feminine ideal like the "good wife, wise mother." The martial mother represented a very specific public ideal for a very specific "time of emergency" in Japan—war.¹²²

The state-compiled ethics textbook stories taught young women the ideals of martial motherhood. Through the lessons of these stories, young women did not just learn that they had to cheer their future sons on in battle; they learned that as mothers they themselves would have to enter public military spaces. They learned that others would watch their behavior and judge their public actions. They learned that if they wanted to properly continue the "tradition" of martial motherhood in Japan, they would have to behave as patriots. And, indeed, when war came to Japan, many mothers of soldiers all across the country behaved as martial mothers.

¹²¹ For example, the "Mother of a Sailor" wrote a very tough and honest letter to her son and her son responded by crying. In "Hey, Ichitarō!" all of the people in the crowd cried, while the mother did not. In the story of Uryū Tamotsu's mother, everyone in the castle cried while she held her composure.

¹²² "Time of emergency" from "*Nihon no Fujin*," 87-90.

CHAPTER III
PUBLIC MATRIOTS, PRIVATE MOURNERS:
MOTHERS, SOLDIERS, AND THE WAR

Beginning in 1905, children in Japanese primary schools opened their Ministry of Education approved textbooks to find the story “Mother of a Sailor” (*Suihei no Haha*), clearly defined the ideal role of a martial mother in wartime Japan.¹²³ From this childhood story, the Ministry of Education introduced impressionable young girls to the ideal of self-sacrifice. According to the Ministry of Education, a martial mother encouraged her son to face death with the knowledge that his sacrifice would bring glory to the nation and the emperor. The young girls who read this story at the beginning of the twentieth century grew up to become the mothers of young Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Beginning in 1919, the next generation of children in Japanese primary schools opened their Ministry of Education approved textbooks to find “Mother of a Sailor,” “Hey, Ichitarō!” and “Women of Japan.”¹²⁴ All three stories defined the ideal role of a martial mother in wartime Japan; but more than that, they presented a composite portrait of the martial mother as a Japanese tradition. Many of the young boys who read these stories became soldiers at a very young age during the war. Some of the young girls, on the other hand, became nurses, factory workers, and some even settled parts of the

¹²³ I chose 1905 as my starting date because the Ministry of Education first published “Mother of a Sailor” (called “Admirable Mother” at the time) in ethics textbooks in 1905.

¹²⁴ I chose 1919 as my starting date here because the Ministry of Education published all three stories in the third edition of ethics textbooks (1919-1933).

Japanese Empire with their young families.¹²⁵ Though female nurses and colonizers were not soldiers, many encountered life-threatening situations, while others were killed in action.

By the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War, both mothers of soldiers and soldiers understood the public role that the state required of mothers of soldiers. When the war began, textbook stories and most war films taught about the martial mother ideal, and it seems that mothers often did not cry in public. Many mothers behaved as martial mothers. Yet, throughout the war, mothers and their adult children privately shared very loving relationships.

This chapter argues that the way in which mothers presented themselves in public was deceptively complicated. Though many mothers behaved as martial mothers in public, the martial mother ideal conflicted with the nature of their private relationships with their children. In private, many mothers had intensely loving relationships with their children. Many mothers experienced a “conflict of emotions.”¹²⁶ Despite having conflicted emotions, mothers behaved as society and the state expected in public—as self-sacrificing, or rather, child-sacrificing mothers. They behaved this way primarily due to two intimately connected factors: first, they feared a visit from the *kenpeitai* (military police), and second, they feared being ostracized from their community, and by extension, Japanese society as a whole.

¹²⁵ Such as Manchuria and the Philippines. For example, see Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998); Mariko Asano Tamanoi, *Memory Maps: The State and Manchuria in Postwar Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

¹²⁶ Tsurumi Kazuko, *Social Change and the Individual Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 259.

Just as mothers struggled with conflicted emotions while their sons were deployed, their sons also longed for their mothers on the warfront. In life threatening situations on the warfront, soldiers and nurses called out for their mothers. *Tokkōtai* pilots (kamikaze) often wrote to their mothers before their final missions.¹²⁷ And some soldiers and noncombatants strove to survive the war just to see their mothers again. For many of these young men, their relationships with their mothers were still the closest bonds in their life. Not only does this tell us that many of these men shared close bonds with their mothers, but it also serves to remind us that so many men died at a very young age. Many young men died before having a chance to form an intimate bond with a person other than their mother, and furthermore, they died before having children of their own. This chapter will also examine how soldiers and young women on the warfront visualized their mothers. This chapter argues that though young men and women were familiar with the martial mother ideal, they did not therefore visualize their own mothers as militaristic.

The historiography of women and the war contains few books that have given attention to martial motherhood. Some historians, such as Thomas Havens and Yoshiko Miyake have written about the important roles women filled during the war as well as the mobilization of women for total war.¹²⁸ These works of scholarship and others primarily

¹²⁷ I decided to use the term *tokkōtai* instead of *kamikaze* to avoid “distorted images of kamikaze outside of Japan.” *Tokkōtai* is a military term that means “special attack force.” Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xviii.

¹²⁸ Some important works on women and World War II include: Thomas R. H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (New York: Norton, 1978); Thomas R. H. Havens, “Women and War in Japan, 1937-45,” *The American Historical Review* 80:4 (1975): 913-934; Yoshiko Miyake, “Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women’s Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, 267-295, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Sandra Wilson, “Mobilizing Women in Inter-war Japan: The National Defence Women’s Association and the Manchurian Crisis,” *Gender and History* 7:2 (1995): 295-314; David Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008); Haruko Taya Cook, “Women’s Deaths as Weapons of War in

focus on the state's policies toward women. This chapter on the other hand, adds to the efforts of sociologist Kazuko Tsurumi, who first looked at the impact of the war on everyday women in 1970. More recently, historian Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney has carefully analyzed the writings of *tokkōtai* pilots in order to understand the impact of state nationalism on “ordinary” individuals, and whether they accepted or rejected nationalistic principles.¹²⁹ This chapter applies this framework to “ordinary” mothers of soldiers. Rather than focusing simply on the “masses,” this study analyzes the public and private behaviors and subjectivities of individual, everyday women.¹³⁰

The Martial Mother in Film

Before analyzing the relationships between mothers and their children, it is important to look at the new media image of the martial mother in the 1930s. The advent of film in the 1920s provided a new medium for the Japanese government to teach martial mother ideals. Throughout the war, the state used films to teach “appropriate standards of social conduct.”¹³¹ Following the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the story of the martial mother portrayed in ethics textbooks was revived and

Japan's ‘Final Battle,’” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, edited by Barbara Molony, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005); Mariko Tamanoi, *Under the Shadow of Nationalism: Politics and Poetics of Rural Japanese Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998). In Japanese, see Wakakuwa Midori, *Sensō Ga Tsukuru Joseizō: Dainiji Sekai Taisenka No Nihon Josei Dōin No Shikakuteki Puropaganda* (Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō, 1995); Mori Yasuko, *Kokkateki Bosei No Kōzō* (Tōkyō: Ōzorasha, 1992).

¹²⁹ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 1; Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries*.

¹³⁰ For scholarship on the militarization of the masses, see Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006); Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

¹³¹ William B. Hauser, “Women and War: The Japanese Film Image,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 296.

reimagined through the medium of film. Films demonstrated how women should act when notified of the death of a family member on the warfront. Film censors asserted that visibly distraught behavior and crying was inappropriate for mothers, especially when seeing their sons off to war. Instead, wartime films often showed mothers smiling proudly as they sent their sons off to war.¹³²

Nonetheless, the characterization of the martial mother in film often diverged from the flawless examples of martial mothers in ethics textbook stories. Filmmakers struggled with the portrayal of the martial mother in film. Reading about the behavior of martial mothers in ethics textbooks was one thing, but translating this emotionless and stiff character to film was a difficult task for filmmakers.¹³³ Peter High has argued that director Yamamoto Kajirō and scriptwriter Yamazaki Kentarō, found a solution to this problem by following scenes in which a mother spoke rather callously about the life of her son with a scene of the mother's thoughtful silence.¹³⁴ For example, in Yamamoto's film, *Sea War from Hawaii to Malaya (Hawai Mare Oki Kaisen, 1942)*, a mother in the film states that her son is no longer a member of her family after he leaves for military training.¹³⁵ Later in the film, the mother is unexpectedly faced with her son's brief return home.¹³⁶ The mother, "in a voice choked by tears," says, "I'm so very glad you've come

¹³² Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959), 140.

¹³³ Peter B. High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War 1931-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 401.

¹³⁴ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 401.

¹³⁵ Yamamoto Kajirō, Director, *Hawai Mare Oki Kaisen (Sea War from Hawaii to Malaya)*, 1942.

¹³⁶ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 401.

home.”¹³⁷ Yamamoto ended the scene there. Certainly a statement like, “I’m so very glad you’ve come home” would have never escaped the lips of an ethics textbook martial mother; but Yamamoto did not extend the scene any further. He kept the scene just brief enough to follow official proper standards of conduct.¹³⁸ In the final scene of the film *Army (Rikugun, 1944)*, however, director Kinoshita Keisuke shot a 9-minute scene in which a distraught mother saw her soldier son off.¹³⁹ Additionally, this incredibly detailed scene helps us visualize public militarized spaces during the war.

As a soldiers’ procession commences outside, little by little the distant sound of trumpets resonates within the home of a soldier’s mother. Due in part to the black and white film, the soldier’s mother sits shrouded in darkness. Slowly recognizing the familiar sound, she stands up and goes to the door. Fiddling with her apron, she hesitatingly dashes to the alley outside and joins a small crowd of people running toward the sound of trumpets that grow increasingly louder. The film’s audience sees many different faces in the crowd: children, young adults, older men, and women. The soldier’s mother slowly approaches the crowd cheering on the marching soldiers—the overwhelming sound amplifies as the cheering crowd accompanies the trumpets. Almost everyone in the crowd excitedly waves a small Japanese flag. Some women wear sashes emblazoned with the words: “The Greater Japan’s Women’s Association.”¹⁴⁰ The mother desperately shuffles her way to the front of the crowd in search of her son. Tens of

¹³⁷ Ibid, 402.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 402.

¹³⁹ Kinoshita Keisuke, Director, *Rikugun (Army)*, 1944.

¹⁴⁰ The *Dai Nihon Fujinkai* (The Greater Japan’s Women’s Association) was established on February 2, 1942. Havens, “Women and War in Japan,” 915.

soldiers march by until she sees his face, but the viewers of the film do not. Instead, they see the mother's face as she smiles and says her son's name, "Shintaro."

Just then, the music changes into a recognizable wartime song. Shintaro marches past his mother, and she begins to run after him. As she desperately chases him, the camera tracks her son from behind, a flag propped up on his shoulder. It is not until his mother fully sees Shintaro's face that the film's audience sees his face for the first time. The mother shows concern as the camera cuts to Shintaro, a very young man. She only gestures, nods, and tries her best to smile, and yet she clearly communicates with Shintaro and, by extension, she also communicates with the film's audience. With a handkerchief, she wipes tears from her eyes as she runs beside the troops for as long as she can keep up. Eventually she stumbles and falls behind. As he marches on, neither the mother, nor the film's audience, sees Shintaro again. At last the mother stops chasing Shintaro; she stands dead still in the middle of the energetic crowd. Tears flow down her cheeks. She solemnly brings her hands, held close together, to her chest and bows her head, as if she is saying a prayer for her son.

Though honest, powerful, and emotional—the mother's behavior in this scene does not embody the state's ideal wartime mother—the martial mother.¹⁴¹ In ethics textbook stories, the Ministry of Education clearly defined the martial mother, and the mother in *Army* did not live up to the definition. In this scene, the mother became visibly upset, cries, and chased after her son, but the martial mother was expected to remain stoic and tearless. After the film premiered in November of 1944, reportedly an officer "stormed into the main offices of Shochiku film studios" and accused the film's director, Kinoshita

¹⁴¹ Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 99.

Keisuke, of treason.¹⁴² Censors also discussed cutting the scene altogether.¹⁴³

The film *Army* did not portray the martial mother as the state clearly intended; instead it provided a different view of an emotional wartime mother. This divergence from the martial mother ideal provides an incredible example of conflicting ideas of motherhood that existed within Japanese society during the war. Perhaps filmmakers struggled with portraying the martial mother in film because the ideal differed from their conception of Japanese mothers. As the textbook story “Women of Japan” suggested, the virtue of Japanese women was in their ability to know when to behave like peacetime mothers and when to behave like wartime mothers. As the scenes in *Army* and *Sea War from Hawaii to Malaya* showed, the transition from a realistic and complicated peacetime mother to a stoic and emotionless wartime mother was difficult for filmmakers to make. And as the rest of this chapter will show, this transition was difficult for mothers and soldiers to make as well.

Public Matriots

In the first chapter, we briefly examined the public militarized spaces that often appeared in ethics textbook stories. Public militarized spaces included heavily militarized environments that non-military civilians entered, such as farewell events in which civilians saw off departing soldiers. While this space was restricted to specific events and specific public spaces during the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, it gradually expanded after Japan entered the Second Sino-Japanese War. After 1937, the Japanese government gained enormous organizational control of its

¹⁴² High, *The Imperial Screen*, 402.

¹⁴³ Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001), 93.

subjects through “labor associations, youth and women’s groups, civic associations, and neighborhood units.”¹⁴⁴ Because of these various groups, it was difficult for Japanese subjects to avoid the state’s gaze. Therefore, public militarized spaces expanded from specific spaces to general public spaces. Due to the state’s extensive organizational and observational control at all levels of society, almost all public spaces became militarized.

Since militarized space expanded in wartime Japan, many members of society carefully self-censored their actions and speech in all public spaces. From sources such as diaries and memoirs, it appears that people generally feared the interpretations of their public actions on the part of: the judgments of their neighbors and local officials, and the “stern gaze” of the military police (*kenpeitai*).¹⁴⁵ These fears were often warranted. Fear, along with social pressure to act as martial mothers, often resulted in mothers behaving like martial mothers in public.¹⁴⁶

An account by Yamada Sadako exhibited how people properly sent their loved ones off to war. Sadako’s husband received his induction papers just a few days after their wedding.¹⁴⁷ Without any idea of her husband’s destination, Sadako and Sadako’s mother-in-law saw her husband off. As she described the scene in the park, filled with people holding banners and the Japanese flag swaying in the wind, Sadako described the

¹⁴⁴ Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 71.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Hideo Yamashita, *Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 27; For an account detailing the detainment and death of a young man thrown in prison as well as the impact it had on his family, see Kiga Sumi, “Isn’t my brother one of the ‘War Dead’?” in *Japan at War: An Oral History*, compiled and edited by Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, 227-231, (New York: The New Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁶ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1.

¹⁴⁷ Yamada Sadako, “As I Remember It,” in *Women Against War*, compiled by Women’s Division of Soka Gakkai and translated by Richard L. Gage, (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1986), 19.

sentiment of the procession, “The spirit of the times forbade us to shed tears; everything was being done in the name of ‘honor.’”¹⁴⁸ Similar to the mother in “Hey, Ichitarō!” Sadako and her mother-in-law acted out the ideal self-presentation in public—stoic, proud, and without tears.

In addition to standing stoic, proud, and without tears, martial mothers also used stock phrases. *Tokkōtai* pilot Sasaki Hachirō wrote down his conversation with a martial mother in his diary.¹⁴⁹ At his good-bye party, he exchanged words with a couple of women. One woman in particular, Mrs. Koyanagi said, “Since I am a military man’s mother, I am not going to say ‘*Itte irasshai*’ [a common phrase for seeing off people who are expected to return]. I say to you, rather, ‘*Ikinasai*’ [a command meaning ‘go.’] Whenever I get to see you, I assume it is for the last time.”¹⁵⁰ As a martial mother, Mrs. Koyanagi felt as if she had to use very specific language with soldiers. Being a martial mother did not just include behavior, but also language. Together, martial mothers had to both behave and speak in a very specific way in public.

Mothers who expressed emotion in public, on the other hand, attracted attention from others. On November 30, 1942, first lieutenant Ichishima Yasuo wrote about a scene he witnessed while boarding a train packed with departing soldiers.¹⁵¹ Amidst the

¹⁴⁸ Yamada, “As I Remember It,” 20.

¹⁴⁹ Sasaki Hachirō, “Hachirō Sasaki,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbetsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 118-129, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 123.

¹⁵⁰ Sasaki, “Hachirō Sasaki,” 123-124.

¹⁵¹ Ichishima Yasuo, “Yasuo Ichishima,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbetsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 221-227, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 221.

waving flags and excitement, he noticed an old woman holding her son's hand close to her chest. Both the mother and her son cried together. Very touched by the scene, Yasuo felt like he had to look away.¹⁵² Though touched, Yasuo had a different opinion of how a mother should see off her son, "the scene [I witnessed was that] of a mother who, humanly, could not give up her sorrow, could not do anything but cry when she was not supposed to cry!"¹⁵³ Instead, Yasuo believed the mother should have sent her son off "with a congratulatory and positive attitude toward his future."¹⁵⁴ The interaction between this one mother and her son made enough of an impression on Yasuo for him to record the memory in his diary.

As Hatano Isoko and her fourteen-year old son, Hatano Ichiro, watched a train full of soldiers leave the station in 1944, Isoko attracted the attention of others with her tears.¹⁵⁵ In a letter exchanged between Isoko and Ichiro, young Ichiro reprimanded his mother for crying in public.¹⁵⁶ Ichiro's reaction to his mother's public display of emotion demonstrated how a young boy understood the role of a martial mother:

Another thing, Mother; you cried today at Fujisawa didn't you, when from the train window we saw all those soldiers leaving? I don't like that, just anywhere. The people opposite us were looking at you. And although you knew none of the soldiers, you said: "Oh, they are all going off so full of enthusiasm!" I was terribly embarrassed...It seems you are not capable of becoming a wartime mother. Poor Mother.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Ichishima, "Yasuo Ichishima," 222.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 222.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 222.

¹⁵⁵ Isoko and Ichiro Hatano, *Mother and Son: The Wartime Correspondence of Isoko and Ichiro Hatano*, translated by Margaret Shenfield, (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962),10.

¹⁵⁶ Hatano, *Mother and Son*, 10.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 10-11.

Here, one can see that Ichiro concerned himself with the thoughts and judgments of the people who saw his mother cry. Additionally, Ichiro, even though he was only fourteen, had a very clear conception of how a martial mother was supposed to act in public. Isoko certainly did not hold back her emotions in public, but she tried to explain to Ichiro that some mothers forced themselves to look happy, even if they were miserable:

Each one of them (soldiers) has a mother who has gone through untold pain in trying to bring up her children well. These mothers must now witness without protest their sons being led off to war. When I thought of the sorrow of these women, I could not hold back my tears...But do you think there is anyone in the world who would not be sad to see a son leave for the war? Isn't it rather that people force themselves to look happy, although in their hearts they are unbearably miserable?¹⁵⁸

Isoko conveyed the difficult circumstances of other mothers in Japan at this time. She understood that some mothers forced themselves to act a certain way in public, and that they could not protest their sons leaving for war. At the same time, she believed that the mothers seeing their sons off felt unbearably miserable in their hearts. Both Ichiro and Isoko thought deeply about public behavior. While Ichiro worried about how his mother appeared to others, Isoko thought about how some mothers forced themselves to appear happy despite their misery.

Interestingly, on January 17, 1945, in a letter from Isoko to Ichiro, it came to light that the *kenpeitai* investigated the Hatano family.¹⁵⁹ According to Isoko, the military police investigated their family because Ichiro's father somehow earned the dangerous

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 11-12.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 75.

label of a “liberal” professor.¹⁶⁰ The *kenpeitai*’s investigation of the Hatano family helps vindicate the legitimate fears of Japanese civilians during wartime. In a group-oriented society like Japan, being a recipient of labels such as “liberal,” “red,” or “traitor” in wartime not only drew attention to the person who received the title, but to the people around that person as well. Receiving a label such as “liberal” placed a family in danger. Not only did the *kenpeitai* constitute a legitimate presence and a threat to people who dissented from the majority in wartime Japan, but also, a family under the investigation of the *kenpeitai* unfortunately subjected themselves to alienation from the community. Certainly, no one else in the community wanted to associate himself or herself with someone under criminal investigation.

Ultimately, the legitimate and intimately connected fears of the *kenpeitai*, potential imprisonment, and ostracization from the community motivated civilians to behave properly in public. These fears worked especially well to shape the public behavior and speech of many mothers. Not only did mothers fear for their personal welfare, but for the welfare of their families. This resulted in many mothers playing the role of martial mothers in public spaces.

Private Relationships: Adult Children and Their Mothers

The study of the place of motherhood in different societies involves looking at the personal relationship between a mother and her children. Consequently, the exploration of contemporary conceptions of motherhood from the perspectives of children and mothers alike is necessary to understand the relationship. More importantly, investigating the accounts of adult children helps confirm how some mothers behaved

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 75.

with their children privately. This section will explore how young men and women viewed motherhood and motherly figures to explain the relationship between children and their mothers.

References to the Japanese word for mother, *Okaasan*, appeared frequently in accounts of World War II soldiers and in the accounts of those who worked near the front. The word *Okaasan*, evoked “feelings of close attachment, the bliss of security and comforting warmth, and bittersweet memories of childhood.”¹⁶¹ When these men and women spoke of their mothers, not only were they referring to their natal mothers, they were also recalling memories of their childhoods. While reading these accounts, it becomes clear that these men and women often felt nostalgic for life before the war. Since sons and daughters associated their mothers primarily with childhood, when thinking of their mothers, they did not commonly think of them as militaristic. For them, childhood was a time before militarism and before the war.

Though young men and women understood the ideal behavior of wartime mothers, they never thought of their mothers as militaristic. Young men, such as the above-mentioned Ichiro, understood the role of a wartime mother, but this did not affect how they understood their private relationships with their mothers.¹⁶² For many young people who experienced severe hardships during the war, the brief, primarily public martial mother ideal, did not overshadow the private and very real loving relationship that they shared with their mothers.

¹⁶¹ Iwao Sumiko, *The Japanese Woman: Traditional Image and Changing Reality*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 126.

¹⁶² For example, Hatano Ichiro had a very close relationship with his mother, Hatano Isoko.

In his diary, *tokkōtai* pilot Takushima Norimitsu, recalled his childhood and thoughts of his mother. Norimitsu's mother died in 1943, almost two years before Takushima crashed his plane on April 9, 1945. Throughout his diary Norimitsu recorded fond memories of his tender and selfless mother.¹⁶³ On his birthday, March 20, Norimitsu wrote, "My mother never leaves my mind, whenever I remember anything of my past. Mother, Mother, Mother. No matter how old one gets, the most important figure in life is one's mother."¹⁶⁴ On October 15, 1944, Norimitsu wrote his last diary entry.¹⁶⁵ It included a nostalgic poem that recalled a vivid and fond memory of his mother holding him as a young child when he was afraid.¹⁶⁶ In the short time preceding his death, Norimitsu's thoughts of his mother melded with thoughts of his childhood. Rather than thinking of his mother as a matricidal or militaristic figure, he thought of her as a safe and loving figure in a time and place far away from the war.

For the brave young women of the Himeyuri Student Corps, in a time of great duress, the thought of loving mothers also temporarily transported them away from the war.¹⁶⁷ Miyagi Kikuko, a student member, recalled that the Himeyuri Student Corps group was comprised of fifteen to nineteen-year old girls, two hundred nineteen out of

¹⁶³ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries*, 104.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 119.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 132.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 133.

¹⁶⁷ For another incredible account from a member of the Himeyuri Student Corps, see Jo Nobuko Martin, *A Princess Lily of the Ryukyus* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Kyoiku Tosho Co., Ltd., 1984). The battle of Okinawa began on April 1, 1945. Before the official start of the battle for the island, approximately 2,000 boys and girls were mobilized for the Himeyuri (Lily) Student Corps for girls and the Blood and Iron Student Corps for boys. Less than half survived.

three hundred of whom died during the war.¹⁶⁸ After ninety days of living in dark caves, witnessing her friends and teachers die, watching a friend try to push her intestines back into her stomach, and scaling a cliff, Kikuko and her surviving companions began to cry as they contemplated suicide.¹⁶⁹

For the first time we all sobbed. We all wanted to see our mothers. “*Okaasan!*” (“Mother!”) came from our mouths. We’d struggled so hard not to speak of our families up until then...That day, for the first time, someone said, “I want to see my mother!” Yoshiko-san, who was an only daughter, clung to me [...] She, too, said to me, “I want to see my mother just once more.” We all said it.¹⁷⁰

Kikuko’s account revealed the strong emotional feelings that young people expressed about their mothers—especially when they were under duress and threatened by imminent death. Certainly the girls and their teachers missed their families, but their initial reaction was to think about their mothers. Simply saying the word “*Okaasan*” immediately elicited a reaction from the entire group. It brought forth a gush of emotions that the group buried inside themselves throughout their service in the war. Thinking of their mothers allowed the group to remember life with their mothers and their entire family. It allowed them to remember life before the war. For the young girls of the Himeyuri Student Corps in this scene, the hope of seeing their mothers again not only made them emotional, but also gave them a reason to not complete suicide.

In the case of Ōkita Sueno, thinking of her mother also helped her to survive an impossible situation. In January 1938, Sueno moved to the Philippines with her young

¹⁶⁸ Miyagi, “Student Nurses of the “Lily Corps,” 355.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 355-363.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 361.

children to live with her husband.¹⁷¹ Her family began to face great adversity following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. In May 1945, shelling from American planes forced her family to flee into the mountains, where they fought to survive starvation, tropical squalls, attacks from Filipino soldiers, and aerial shelling.¹⁷² Following a night of sleeping next to a burning thicket, Sueno and her husband held a grenade and contemplated whether to pull the pin. Just as Sueno's husband was about to do the deed, Sueno remembered her mother's face: "I shouted for him to stop. 'Women are cowards!' he said weakly. 'No,' I said. 'It's not cowardice. Mother told us to come home alive.'"¹⁷³ Despite the misery, Sueno and her family endured in the Philippines; she wanted to survive to see her mother again. Unfortunately, Sueno's husband and son, Katsuji, did not return home with her.¹⁷⁴ On November 3, 1945, Sueno and her surviving son, Shigenobu, returned home safely.¹⁷⁵ Sueno's will to save her family and powerful desire to see her mother again enabled her to return home. If Sueno had visualized her mother as a martial mother, perhaps she might have made a different decision. Instead, Sueno thought of her mother who told her to come home alive. Sueno's mother did not behave as a martial mother, and Sueno did not visualize her that way.

Many soldiers shared their visualizations of their mothers in their personal writings during the war. In 1949, a group of Japanese intellectuals compiled the writings of

¹⁷¹ Ōkita Sueno, "Philippine Death Diary," in *Women Against War*, compiled by Women's Division of Soka Gakkai and translated by Richard L. Gage, (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1986), 46.

¹⁷² Ōkita, "Philippine Death Diary," 50.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 53.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 54-55.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 59.

seventy-five university students killed during the war in one volume titled *Kike—Wadatsumi no Koe* (Listen to the Voices from the Sea).¹⁷⁶ Of the seventy-five short excerpts from diary entries and letters, twenty-six of the authors included specific memories or thoughts of their mothers.¹⁷⁷ Conscripted soldier Uemura Genta visualized his mother as waiting anxiously for his return.¹⁷⁸ Twenty-three year old Ichii Jūji struggled with life in the military and wrote a poem that visualized his mother’s face as a fond memory of his life at home, “Immediately following roll call, iron-fisted punishment comes down like rain and hail. I crawl into bed, crying miserably, and dream of my mother’s face back home.”¹⁷⁹ Army sub lieutenant Satō Takashi recorded that he really needed “another human being’s love” and felt that human being was his mother: “everything would be perfectly fine if only I could see my mother.”¹⁸⁰ For young Takeda Kiyoshi, the simple memory of his mother peeling a persimmon for him as a child was a strong, loving memory, “Skin of a persimmon is peeled off so smoothly—and I long for

¹⁷⁶ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 198.

¹⁷⁷ In this number I included soldiers who wrote a significant point about their mothers or mothers in general. I also included letters that soldiers wrote to their mothers. Ōi Hidemitsu, Katai Kiyoshi, Fukunaka Gorō, Asami Yuichi, Sanada Daiho, Ichii Jūji, Sato Takashi et al., *Kike Wadatsumi No Koe: Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei No Shuki* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1982).

¹⁷⁸ Uemura Genta, “Genta Uemura,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 74-82, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 79.

¹⁷⁹ Ichii Jūji, “Jūji Ichii,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 87-94, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 91.

¹⁸⁰ Satō Takashi, “Takashi Satō,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 107-110, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 109.

my mother.”¹⁸¹ Twenty-three year old Ōtsuka Akio worried about his mother crying over him, “Mother—Please do not cry. I am going to face death with a smile on my face.”¹⁸²

The writings of the young men in *Listen* recorded positive recollections of their mothers. Although the writings of a few men showed they understood martial motherhood, it did not shape how they visualized their own mothers. For these young men, visualizing their mothers provided a mental break from their military lifestyle. Certainly, if they had conceptualized their mothers as militaristic, they would not have thought of their mothers during times of frustration with military life. For the above men, they visualized their mothers as at home, waiting for their return, and at times, crying. Additionally, for men like Kiyoshi, memories of mothers often intersected with happy and blissful memories of their childhoods.

The above accounts demonstrate some of the perceptions that sons and daughters held about motherhood. None of the writers of the accounts described their mothers as martial mothers. Instead, children and young people remembered and envisioned their mothers as loving and affectionate figures, far removed from the horrors of warfare. When young men and women used the word *Okaasan*, they were not referring to martial mothers; they were referring to personal recollections of their loving mothers, or a combination of their loving mothers and their childhoods. For the daughters and sons in this narrative, the martial mother figure was completely absent. The writers of the accounts never stated that their mothers told them to die; in fact, the opposite was true,

¹⁸¹ Takeda Kiyoshi, “Kiyoshi Takeda,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbetsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 178-187. (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 178.

¹⁸² Ōtsuka Akio, “Akio Ōtsuka,” in *Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students*, compiled by Nihon Senbetsu Gakusei Kinen-Kai and translated by Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph Quinn, 228-230, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 229.

the mothers in the accounts told their children to survive the war.

Perhaps, above all, this was the main reason why the authors of the accounts associated their mothers with life without war. Despite all the militaristic influences in their lives—state policy, state education, military life, propaganda, war films, war songs and general mobilization efforts—sons and daughters continued to visualize their mothers as non-militaristic figures. Additionally, in time of great duress, instead of thinking about a national symbol, such as the emperor, sons and daughters thought of their mothers. Even though the state widely promoted the martial mother ideal, these adult children still conceptualized their own mothers in a very different way.¹⁸³

Private Relationships: Mothers and Their Sons

During wartime, though most mothers usually played the part of the martial mother in public, in private they behaved quite differently. Four particularly revealing patterns of behavior can be seen in wartime accounts provided by mothers of soldiers and soldiers. First, some mothers dissented from the ideals taught in martial motherhood by urging their sons in private to continue school instead of joining the military. Second, some mothers followed martial mother ideals when they heard the devastating news of the deaths of their sons; however, though they may have acted as martial mothers in public, they grieved in private. Third, after the end of the war, some mothers began openly grieving the deaths of their sons. And finally, when young men and women returned home from their service in the military, their grateful and overjoyed mothers welcomed them home.

Mothers did not always urge their sons to join the military; some mothers

¹⁸³ For another account that discusses conceptions of motherhood, see Nakamoto Hiroko, *My Japan 1930-1951*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1970).

encouraged their sons to continue their education. The mother of Sasaki Hachirō, a *tokkōtai* pilot, hoped and prayed for Hachirō to receive the best education possible. On April 4, 1939, at about the age of sixteen or seventeen, Hachirō recorded a touching and intimate moment with his mother.¹⁸⁴ At this time, Japan had been at war with China for almost two years, and Hachirō had already begun thinking about his future in the military. However, his mother was focused on his educational future. After learning that Hachirō had been accepted to the First Higher School, Sasaki's mother ran up to his bedroom, fell onto his bed, held his hands and said:

“Thank you. Thank you. It is all because of your effort”...Then, she began to cry...I tried my best not to cry, since a man with a great future should not show emotion for this sort of thing. So, I just listened to her. But, it was hard to control my emotion when she told me that she made pilgrimages [to a shrine to pray for his success] for twenty-one days, even on the days of rain and high wind.¹⁸⁵

The thoughts, actions and emotions of Sasaki's mother did not bear any resemblance to the mother in “Mother of a Sailor.” The greatest difference lies in the different prayers of the mothers. While the mother in the state-issued textbook prayed for her son to fight in the war, the actual mother of a future soldier prayed for his academic future. This very private moment between Hachirō and his mother shows that Hachirō's mother did not always act like the martial mother. Rather than pray that her son die in military service, she instead envisioned an academic future for her son.¹⁸⁶ In private, Hachirō's mother did not act like a martial mother; instead, she encouraged and prayed for a life for Hachirō

¹⁸⁴ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries*, 43.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 43.

¹⁸⁶ Two years after the military drafted Sasaki, on February 20, 1945, Sasaki volunteered to become a *kamikaze* pilot. *Ibid*, 39.

outside of the military.¹⁸⁷

Takasaki Haru, a farmer in Hiroshima prefecture, also concerned herself with her son's education. Haru, a survivor of the attack on Hiroshima, fought for her son, Yutaka, to continue his college education even though the administrators and teachers at his college encouraged him to enroll in the preparatory course for the Fleet Air Arm.¹⁸⁸

After Yutaka told his mother of this plan, she immediately went to the college (Saijō Agricultural College) and told the administrators, "Please don't put ideas into my boy's head like soon applying for a studentship for the Fleet Air Arm. Please let him finish his studies at college."¹⁸⁹ Afterwards, Haru heard from her son that the teachers at the college called her a traitor. Haru did not seem to mind being called a traitor, an accusation that many people feared then. Her reaction was simple and straightforward: "I think it's a good thing that I was a traitor! If I'd let Yutaka join the Fleet Air Arm, he wouldn't be alive today."¹⁹⁰ Certainly the majority of mothers did not act as brazenly as Haru. But, Haru's actions demonstrated that not all mothers acted as the ideal martial mother. Both Sasaki's mother and Haru prioritized the education of their sons over the military service of their sons.

¹⁸⁷ A similar story appeared in Hirai Kiyoshi's diary. His mother insisted that he switch his field of study to avoid conscription. Hirai Kiyoshi, "Hirai Kiyoshi." *Kike Wadatsumi No Koe: Nihon Senbotsu Gakusei No Shuki*, 132-134, (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1982).

¹⁸⁸ Takasaki Haru, "We've Lived This Long by Encouraging One Another," in *Widows of Hiroshima: The Life Stories of Nineteen Peasant Wives*, edited by Mikio Kanda and translated by Taeko Midorikawa, (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd.,1989), 128.

¹⁸⁹ Takasaki, "We've Lived This Long by Encouraging One Another,"128.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 128.

Not all mothers were as lucky as Haru; many mothers lost their sons in the war.¹⁹¹ In addition to dealing with the news of the deaths of their sons, mothers suffered with conflicted emotions.¹⁹² These conflicted emotions consisted of intense love for their sons and the stress of behaving as martial mothers.¹⁹³ Mothers who lost their sons in the war also feared that their neighbors would discover their actual feelings of grief.¹⁹⁴ After the end of the war, as mothers who lost their beloved sons in the war began to share their experiences with other mothers, they learned that they were not the only ones who suffered with conflicted emotions.

In 1961, a group of twenty-two mothers gathered in a community center located in Iwate Prefecture and shared their experiences in the war.¹⁹⁵ As they began to open up, they found that they shared a common habit of picking up pebbles on the riverside.¹⁹⁶ While growing up, these mothers heard a saying that if they washed pebbles that they found near the riverside, offered them to the gods and prayed that, “a soldier may be

¹⁹¹ We can see another emotional example of a mother’s grief in Okuzaki Kenzo’s 1987 documentary “The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On.” Okuzaki Kenzo, a Japanese veteran of World War II, was the subject of a documentary that showed him searching for the men responsible for the deaths of soldiers in his unit. In his investigation, Okuzaki visited the mother of one of the soldiers who tragically died in New Guinea. As they began talking about her son, almost forty years after the war, the mother became visibly upset and began crying. Kobayashi Yoshiko, Kazuo Hara, Kenzo Okuzaki, and Jun Nabeshima, *Yukiyukite Shingun (The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On)* (Tokyo: Shisso Productions, 2006).

¹⁹² Tsurumi, *Social Change and the Individual*, 259.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 259.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 259.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 258; Ohara Tokuji, *Ishikoro Ni Kataru Hahatachi: Nōson Fujin No Sensō Taiken* (Tōkyō: Miraisha, 1964).

¹⁹⁶ Tsurumi, *Social Change and the Individual*, 258.

saved from getting a corn on his foot.”¹⁹⁷ Since these mothers all heard this story, throughout their sons’ deployments in the war, they picked up pebbles everyday. Besides washing the pebbles, the mothers also talked to them. This group of wartime mothers made comments to the pebbles, such as “feel better with your feet, don’t you? I shall clean your feet, so that you may sleep well.”¹⁹⁸ Another mother placed the pebble on her chest and slept with it.¹⁹⁹

The connection that these mothers felt towards pebbles showed how mothers expressed their feelings and love in private ways that evaded the eyes of the state and community. Rather than connect with the people around them, even women who were in the same circumstance, this group of mothers felt that they could only talk to inanimate objects. They did not feel that they could share their true feelings or emotions with anyone. It took these mothers almost twenty years after the war to open up about this secret habit.²⁰⁰ Since this group of mothers had to perform the role of martial mothers in public, in private they fulfilled their roles as loving mothers by taking care of pebbles as if they were their sons.

For some mothers who never saw their pebbles return home, the news of the deaths of their sons was devastating. The mother of Hayashi Tadao, a 24-year-old *tokkōtai* pilot drafted in 1943, felt so heartbroken over the death of her son that she died

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 258.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 258.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 258.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 259.

less than a year after his death.²⁰¹ Hayashi and his mother always had a close relationship—so close that he planned to live together with her after his graduation.²⁰² In his last letter to his mother, written on May 30, 1945, Hayashi expressed concern for his mother’s future, “Mother, there is no hope [of living] together now that we are swept up in the torrents of the world. How are you going to live? [...] My aging mother to whom I cannot offer my love. I cannot bear the thought of you—my poor mother.”²⁰³ Although it is unknown precisely how Hayashi’s mother reacted to this letter, we can surmise that in public she acted as a martial mother. Unfortunately, the suffering Hayashi’s mother endured became tragically apparent a year after Hayashi’s death. Historian Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney explained that Hayashi’s mother “lost her will to live and began to ‘wither’ visibly.”²⁰⁴ She died on February 16, 1946.²⁰⁵ As a *tokkōtai* pilot Hayashi’s fate was almost inevitable; however, the news of his death devastated his mother. The ideal martial mother was supposed to urge her son to die for the nation, but Hayashi’s mother was instead left shattered.

Some mothers remained uninformed about the deaths of their sons until long after the end of the war. Monzen Tsuruyo, a farmer and survivor of Hiroshima, did not receive an official letter informing her of her son’s death until February of 1946.²⁰⁶ Her son,

²⁰¹ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries*, 74-75.

²⁰² I decided to call Hayashi Tadao by “Hayashi” in this paragraph since the first name of the young man in the following paragraph was also “Tadao.”

²⁰³ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries*, 96.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 75.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 74-75.

²⁰⁶ Monzen Tsuruyo, “All the Tortures of This World Made into One,” *Widows of Hiroshima*, edited by

Tadao, was killed in the South Sea Islands on July 27, 1944.²⁰⁷ Similar to Sasaki's mother and Takasaki Haru, Tsuruyo encouraged her son to finish school before joining the military; however, Tadao did not change his mind.²⁰⁸ Upon hearing the news of his death, she was heartbroken and felt that, although he was brave, he had thrown away his young life.²⁰⁹

Shortly after she heard the news of his death, Tsuruyo received another letter informing her that she could collect Tadao's remains. She traveled to Kaita Temple (in Kaitaichi) and received a box with Tadao's ashes in it. On the way home Tsuruyo wore the ashes around her neck and hugged the box. While she waited for one of her trains, she opened the box and discovered that the box was empty: "There I was, sitting all alone on a bench on Yokokawa Station, clutching this box with its nasty smell of pine resin and crying to myself."²¹⁰ Tsuruyo hugged the box and cried the entire trip home. This public display of grief was a rare site in Japan during the war; however, as seen in this account, it became more common near the end of the war.

After the end of the war, while many mothers grieved the death of their sons, many mothers joyfully welcomed their sons home. The sons of Monzen Tsuruyo and Ryōso Shizuko returned home after the end of the war. An official letter informed Tsuruyo, who lost her son, Tadao, in the war, that her oldest son, Toshio, had also been killed in

Mikio Kanda and translated by Taeko Midorikawa, (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1982), 17.

²⁰⁷ Monzen, "All the Tortures of This World Made into One," 17.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 17.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 17.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 18.

the war. No sooner did the family give up on his return, however, than he suddenly returned home: “I can’t tell you how happy I was to see him turn up alive.”²¹¹ Tsuruyo, and many mothers, did not want their sons to die in the war and were happy to see them return home safely.

Ryōso Shizuko’s son Isao, who was called up in 1941, returned in June of 1946. While she was working in the fields, Shizuko heard somebody call, “Mum!”²¹² When she turned around, “there he was standing on the embankment with a big rucksack on his back...It was like seeing the sun rising from that spot. I was so happy! Looking back on it now, it was the happiest moment in the 80 years that I’ve lived.”²¹³ Not only was Shizuko thrilled to have her son home, but also she described his return as one of the happiest days of her life.

The above accounts illustrated that not all mothers acted as martial mothers in private. The mothers in the accounts demonstrated behaviors that completely conflicted with martial mother ideals. Some mothers helped their sons delay or avoid conscription by trying to keep them in school. Many mothers struggled with their sons’ deployments and even grieved privately. And as mothers who welcomed their sons home showed, mothers wanted their sons to return home safely. The martial mother figure promoted by the state did not engage in any of these behaviors. The private grief that many mothers struggled with began to change in the postwar era. Gradually mothers felt that they could grieve and share their experiences in public since all public space, and the

²¹¹ Ibid, 17.

²¹² Ryōso Shizuko, “An Invalid Like Me Was Left Alive,” in *Widows of Hiroshima: The Life Stories of Nineteen Peasant Wives*, edited by Mikio Kanda and translated by Taeko Midorikawa, (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1982), 108.

²¹³ Ryōso, “An Invalid Like Me Was Left Alive,” 108.

martial mother herself, was demilitarized.

Conclusion

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, a generation of future mothers of soldiers learned martial mother ideals. When the Second Sino-Japanese War began, many mothers put these ideals into practice by behaving as martial mothers in public. However, this martial mother public persona did not reflect the true nature of mothers' private relationships with their adult children. For many mothers, this resulted in a conflict of the heart and mind. On one hand, mothers felt pressured to behave as martial mothers in public spaces. On the other, they had loving relationships with their adult children. Though mothers who lived during the war behaved as martial mothers in public, they missed their deployed sons, struggled with their emotions, and privately grieved the deaths of their sons if they died in action. Additionally, some mothers even took further steps and tried to help their sons avoid conscription. Some mothers begged their sons to pursue academia rather than join the military, while other mothers continually hoped for the sons' safe return.

In the second quarter of the twentieth century, future young soldiers and women who served on the warfront also learned martial mother ideals. The subjectivities of these adult children revealed that they did not visualize their mothers as militaristic. Many sons and daughters refused to visualize their mothers as the martial mother. Additionally, the memories they recorded of their mothers did not seem militaristic either. Instead, sons and daughters visualized their mothers as loving figures in their lives.

The martial mother was a public persona that all Japanese subjects became familiar

with. Whether they learned about martial mother ideals in school or witnessed the reformulation of martial mothers in wartime films, young boys and girls, older men and women, understood the role of a martial mother. But as the above accounts revealed, for many the martial mother was merely a public persona.

CHAPTER IV
THE MARTIAL MOTHER IN THE POSTWAR ERA

In the aftermath of World War II, motherhood was demilitarized. Certainly, the martial mother had to be demilitarized in part due to the United States' ambitions of demilitarization and democratization for postwar Japan; however, the process of demilitarizing the martial mother began before the occupation army arrived in Japan.²¹⁴ This process of demilitarization began not only from above, but also with Japan's youngest generation of students. Though they followed the orders of the Ministry of Education, young students all across Japan played a major role in reforming militaristic ideals like the martial mother. "Mother of a Sailor" was one of the many textbook stories that the Ministry of Education deemed inappropriate for postwar Japan. The demilitarization of the martial mother ideal began with students censoring "Mother of a Sailor" in their textbooks and progressed as the Ministry of Education decided to omit the story from future textbooks. The demilitarization of the martial mother continued as her image evaporated from all media outlets. As the martial mother vanished, a new postwar maternal ideal replaced her: the "Mother of the Quay." The ideal image of a tearless mother cheering on her soldier son shifted to an ideal image of a mother crying while waiting for her son's safe return from the war.

Although the Ministry of Education and SCAP demilitarized the martial mother in education and in the media, she still lived on in the memories of mothers who behaved as martial mothers during the war. Not only did the martial mother simply remain in the

²¹⁴ Mark Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, "Introduction: the U.S. occupation of Japan-innovation, continuity, and compromise," in *Democracy in Occupied Japan the U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, ed. Mark Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, (London: Routledge, 2007), 4.

memories of women who survived the war, but also, women activists evoked the memory of the martial mother as a rallying point for postwar peace movements. Women involved in movements such as the Mothers' Congress argued that martial motherhood, in part, invited war not only for Japan, but for countries all around the world. For women who became involved in the Mothers' Congress, martial motherhood was a central component of their wartime experience.

This chapter argues that the demilitarization of the martial mother illustrates the difference between “good wife, wise mother” and martial motherhood. While the martial mother had to be demilitarized in the postwar era, ideas associated with the “good wife, wise mother” ideal continued in postwar education. The development and subsequent demilitarization of the martial mother was significant for Japanese women. The consequences of the ideal resonated for decades following World War II. Not only did Japanese society demilitarize an ideal, they destroyed an invented tradition. For the previous forty years, from 1905 to 1945, Japanese subjects learned in school that the martial mother was a Japanese tradition that had been around for centuries. Yet, in just a few months, Japanese citizens had to remove almost all evidence of the existence of martial motherhood. Martial motherhood instantly transitioned from a highly respected trait of Japanese women to a shameful practice that needed to be censored. Martial motherhood is one example of students, women, and all Japanese citizens having to unlearn major characteristics of being a “good” Japanese person in the postwar era.

The historiography of postwar Japan still remains rather scarce, especially in the English language.²¹⁵ On the subject of women in the postwar era, Tanaka Sumiko,

²¹⁵ Some important English-language scholarship on postwar Japanese history include: Andrew Gordon, *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Hane, Mikiso, *Eastern*

Kathleen Uno, Sandra Buckley, Fukaya Masashi, and various authors who contributed to the volume *Onna no Imēji* have produced important scholarship.²¹⁶ Women and postwar peace movements have also been a well-explored topic in *Organizing the Spontaneous* and *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan*.²¹⁷ This chapter builds on the idea put forward by gender historians that the “good wife, wise mother” ideals continued on in the postwar era educational system. This chapter uses the existing scholarship on postwar “good wife, wise mother” and highlights the distinct differences between this ideology and martial motherhood.²¹⁸ Additionally, this chapter explores the deconstruction of martial motherhood.

Phoenix: Japan Since 1945 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996); Edward R. Beauchamp, ed., *Education and Schooling in Japan since 1945* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998); Edward R. Beauchamp, ed., *Women and Women's Issues in Post World War II Japan* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998); John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999); Mark Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, ed., *Democracy in Occupied Japan the U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, 2007); Nozaki Yoshiko, *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Post-war Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2008).

²¹⁶ Tanaka, Sumiko, *Josei Kaihō No Shisō to Kōdō* (Tōkyō: Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1975); Takako Hirano, “Gendai no Joseikan,” in *Onna No Imēji* ed. Joseigaku Kenkyūkai (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1984); Noguchi Masayo and Kimura Keiko, “Gakkō Kyōikuto Joseikan,” in *Onna No Imēji* ed. Joseigaku Kenkyūkai (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1984); Inoue Teruko, “Masukomi to Josei no Gendai,” in *Onna No Imēji* ed. Joseigaku Kenkyūkai. (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1984); Amano Masako, “Gendai Nihon no Hahaoyakan: ‘Bosei ‘kara Ikujisei’ he,” in *Onna No Imēji* ed. Joseigaku Kenkyūkai, (Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō, 1984); Kathleen Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’?” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Sandra Buckley, “Altered States: The Body Politics of ‘Being-Woman,’” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) Fukaya, Masashi, *Ryōsai Kenbo Shugi No Kyōiku* (Nagoya: Reimei Shobō, 1998).

²¹⁷ Wesley Makoto Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Yamamoto, Mari, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London; Routledge Curzon, 2004).

²¹⁸ See Ichibangase Yasuko, “Women's Status and Task of Education,” *Education in Japan: Journal for Overseas* 6 (1971): 59-68; Buckley, “Altered States;” Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’?”; Fukaya, *Ryōsai Kenbo Shugi No Kyōiku*.

Postwar Education

One of the greatest burdens of reconstruction in Japan's postwar era lay in the area of education.²¹⁹ Perhaps education was the most important problem in the postwar era, second only to the "primary needs of food, shelter, and clothing."²²⁰ At the end of the war, eighteen million students were idle, 4,000 schools had been destroyed, and few school textbooks were available for students.²²¹ Many students still temporarily resided in the countryside due to the evacuation of major cities, while other students lived in cities devastated by fire bombings and nuclear weapons.²²² Japan's education system barely functioned, and the educational system that existed before the war was in dire need of reform.²²³

Before the Occupation army settled in Japan, Japan's Ministry of Education began implementing its own educational policies as early as August and September of 1945.²²⁴ The Ministry of Education took this initiative voluntarily based on the government's understanding of the Potsdam Declaration.²²⁵ On August 28, the Ministry of Education

²¹⁹ "Education Swings to Peace," *Nippon Times*, September 8, 1945.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ "Educational Situation at End of the War," in *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

²²² "School Education under the New Situation," in *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

²²³ Edward Beauchamp, *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 6.

²²⁴ "Educational Policy for the Construction of a New Japan," in *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994); Yoko Hirohashi Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan: 1945- 1952* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1990).

²²⁵ Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*, 124.

ordered the reopening of schools by mid-September.²²⁶ In preparation for the reopening of schools, the Ministry of Education set out with the “New Education” policy of “constructing a peaceful nation by the eradication of militarism.”²²⁷ The Ministry of Education abolished military education in schools, disassembled the wartime system of education, and redirected their efforts to improve education in the realms of science, peace, and “raising the general level of knowledge and virtue.”²²⁸ In order to implement these new, sweeping policies, the Ministry of Education had to reeducate teachers, provide special education for students “who were mobilized for labor or military service,” reform the structure of the Ministry of Education itself, and revise Japanese textbooks.²²⁹

Prior to the formation of the Supreme Command Allied Powers known as SCAP on October 2, 1945, Japan’s Ministry of Education began selecting textbook stories to omit in order to pave the way for a new curriculum.²³⁰ The Japanese government ordered schools to begin blackening over (*Suminuri*) militaristic and nationalistic textbook

²²⁶ Ibid, 143.

²²⁷ “Educational Policy for the Construction of a New Japan,” 55.

²²⁸ “Educational Policy for the Construction of a New Japan,” 55-56; Morals education was abolished on December 31, 1945, “Suspension of Courses in Morals (*Shushin*), Japanese History, and Geography.” In *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 75.

²²⁹ Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*, 264; “Educational Policy for the Construction of a New Japan,” 56. For a thorough overview of U.S. wartime preparation for postwar educational policies and SCAP’s policies, see Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*.

²³⁰ “Educational Policy for the Construction of a New Japan,” 55-58.

passages on August 26, 1945.²³¹ The Ministry of Education wrote a directive that specifically stated the types of materials that were to be removed from classrooms:

A. Materials that emphasize national defense and armament; B. Materials fostering fighting spirit; C. Materials that may be harmful to international goodwill; D. Materials that have become obsolete as being entirely removed from present postwar conditions and the everyday life of students.²³²

Based on these criteria, the Ministry of Education specified certain passages and stories that had to be deleted. Following the orders of the Ministry of Education, teachers instructed their students to censor their textbooks. In this way, young students became the agents of the government's censorship. With brushes saturated with heavy black ink, students painted over textbook stories that students all across the country had studied for the past four years.²³³ Of the many ethics textbook stories that the Ministry of Education ordered students to blacken over, the Ministry of Education decided to omit "Mother of a Sailor" altogether from future textbooks.

The Deconstruction of the Martial Mother in Education

The censorship, or blackening over, of textbook stories and passages began before the Occupation Army arrived and continued until the Ministry of Education could produce and publish new and appropriate textbooks.²³⁴ Teachers received a list of specified passages that needed to be deleted or "handled with care" from the Ministry of

²³¹ Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*, 264; Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 247.

²³² Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*, 149.

²³³ The last edition of wartime textbooks were published in 1941, making the versions that students blackened out four years old.

²³⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 247.

Education.²³⁵ Teachers then told their students to paint over the specified textbooks stories and passages. For many of the young students ordered to censor their textbooks, the experience was traumatic.²³⁶

One of the many students who experienced censoring his own textbook was Wada Tashichirō. Tashichirō was born in Akita prefecture in 1935. He remembered his young teacher telling the class to “paint over the characters until they could no longer be read.”²³⁷ Tashichirō vividly described what seemed like a never-ending amount of black ink the students in his class painted over the pages of their textbooks.²³⁸ In his memoir, Tashichirō included excerpts of three stories that he remembered blackening over in school.²³⁹ “Mother of a Sailor” was the first of the three.²⁴⁰ For Tashichirō, the experience of blackening over these texts caused his eyes to well up.²⁴¹ But, blackening over “Mother of a Sailor” was above all, the most disappointing.²⁴² Tashichirō remembered seeing the upperclassmen of his school perform a play of “Mother of a

²³⁵ Thakur, *Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan*, 149; Wada Tashichirō, *Bokura Suminuri Shōkokumin: Sensō to Kodomo to Kyōshi* (Tōkyō: Taihei Shuppansha, 1974), 200; For a complete list of the deleted textbook stories and passages, see Ōzorasha, *Fukkoku Suminuri Kyōkasho Kaisetsu* (Tōkyō: Japan Monbusho, 1985), 31-44.

²³⁶ See Yuri Hajime, “*Kyōkasho no Haisen Taiken*,” in *Sengo Taiken: Nannimo Nakatta Ano Koro, Migi No Pokketo Ni “Kibō” Ga Atta* (Tōkyō: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1981).

²³⁷ Wada, *Bokura Suminuri Shōkokumin*, 16-17.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 16-17.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 201-204.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 201-202.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 204. The entire “Mother of a Sailor” story had to be blackened over. Other wartime textbook stories were only partially blackened over.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 204.

Sailor,” and he felt deeply moved by it. Privately he wanted to play the role of the sailor.²⁴³

At the tender young age of ten, Tashichirō, his classmates, and students all across Japan, played a role in erasing “Mother of a Sailor,” a story that had been printed in textbooks for the past forty years, from textbooks. Tashichirō’s story not only provided an example of the distress students experienced while blackening over textbooks, but more importantly, it showed the emotional connection that he and other students felt toward ethics textbook stories, and more specifically, “Mother of a Sailor.” As Tashichirō wrote down his memories later in his life, he still had a very specific memory of “Mother of a Sailor.” Tashichirō’s story demonstrated the powerful influence of textbook stories—especially stories that contained influential ideologies and ideas, such as the martial mother ideal.

Furthermore, Tashichirō’s story showed the small part that Tashichirō and his classmates played in demilitarizing an ideal that the Japanese state invented over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. Male and female students had read “Mother of a Sailor” and stories such as “Hey! Ichitarō!” and “Women of Japan” for forty years. Tashichirō’s generation was not the first to connect deeply with these textbook stories. Previous generations of students had all connected with these stories. But most importantly—as seen in Chapter Two and Chapter Three—they learned that martial motherhood was a tradition that reached back to as early as the fourteenth century. The Ministry of Education and later, SCAP, did not just censor and delete a

²⁴³ Ibid, 204.

simple story in a textbook.²⁴⁴ They demilitarized the martial mother ideal—a tradition that seemed to have existed for centuries, when in actuality it had only existed in Japan for forty years.

The Ministry of Education’s decision to remove “Mother of a Sailor” from textbooks also received national publicity. On September 21, 1945, the *Asahi Shinbun*, one of Japan’s most circulated national newspapers, published a prominently placed article entitled “Even the National Language Story ‘Mother of a Sailor’ Will be Deleted: Unsuitable Sections to be Purged from Textbooks.”²⁴⁵ The article explained that many stories and unsuitable sections of stories were to be omitted from textbooks. The article continued on to describe some of the criterion by which the Ministry of Education decided to omit passages and stories.

Interestingly, the newspaper article did not provide any kind of brief explanation or summary of the story “Mother of a Sailor.” This indicates that the *Asahi Shinbun* writers and editors assumed that all readers would be familiar with the story. Furthermore, the article listed other famous stories and passages that the Ministry of Education also planned on omitting from textbooks. For example, the article also noted that the famous textbook story “The Three Brave Heroes” (“*Sanyūshi*”) would also be removed. Yet, the title of this newspaper article only named “Mother of a Sailor.” One can gather that the deletion of the “Mother of a Sailor” story was especially shocking.

²⁴⁴ SCAP included nominal representation of the USSR, Britain and others of the allied forces, but it was primarily run by the “Truman administration in Washington and the headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo.” Marshall, *Learning to be Modern*, 143.

²⁴⁵ “Even the National Language story ‘Mother of a Sailor’ will be deleted: Unsuitable sections to be purged from textbooks,” *Asahi Shinbun*, September 21, 1945.

Not only did the censorship of “Mother of a Sailor” hold significance for students like Tashichirō, but the *Asahi Shinbun* deemed the story’s removal from textbooks newsworthy. For students enrolled in school at this time and for adults who read “Mother of a Sailor” in their childhood, the demilitarization of the martial mother represented just one of the many rapid changes underway in postwar Japan. Just a few months prior to the war’s end, the behavior of the martial mother seemed admirable and “good.” The martial mother was an ideal. In the immediate postwar era, all of Japanese society had to relearn that the martial mother was in fact, unspeakable.

From Martial Mother to “Mother of the Quay”: The Demilitarization of the Wartime

Mother in the Media

Along with the demilitarization of education came the demilitarization and censorship of media outlets in Japan. Japan’s wartime censorship policies were eliminated and replaced by SCAP’s censorship operation in the postwar era.²⁴⁶ SCAP heavily enforced censorship policies through the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) apparatus from September 1945 through September 1949.²⁴⁷ Even after Japan regained its sovereignty, the CCD still conducted censorship in certain forms.²⁴⁸ The CCD censorship policies affected all media outlets, including “newspapers, magazines, trade books [...] radio, film, and plays.”²⁴⁹ Although SCAP enforced many censorship

²⁴⁶ Hauser, “Women and War: The Japanese Film Image,” 303; Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, 160-164; For a more in-depth look at SCAP’s censorship policies, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 405-440.

²⁴⁷ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 406-407.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 406.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

policies, one of the primary goals was the elimination of nationalistic and militaristic themes in all media outlets.²⁵⁰ Due to these dramatic changes, filmmakers and media outlets moved away from heavily nationalistic and militaristic themes and explored new, often antiwar, themes.

As new postwar themes emerged in the media, new roles and images of women also appeared.²⁵¹ One of the most influential new images of mothers in the postwar era grew in popularity after the end of US occupation.²⁵² The media named this mother figure based on a real woman, the “Mother of the Quay” or “*Ganpeki no Haha*.” The “Mother of the Quay” story rose out of the repatriation era, a time in which approximately 6.6 million people, primarily soldiers, had still not returned to Japan after the end of the war.²⁵³ The “Mother of the Quay” quickly became a symbolic mother of this specific time in Japan.

Hashino Ise, the “Mother of the Quay” famously waited for her son, Shinji, to return home from the war. In January of 1950, repatriation ships from the Soviet Union began to arrive at Maizuru harbor in Kyoto prefecture.²⁵⁴ Whenever a repatriation ship docked at Maizuru harbor, Ise, who lived in Tokyo, showed up looking for her son. From

²⁵⁰ Hauser, “Women and War: The Japanese Film Image,” 303.

²⁵¹ For in-depth analysis of women in postwar film, see Hauser, “Women and War: The Japanese Film Image.”

²⁵² The US occupation ended in 1952.

²⁵³ Amano, “Gendai Nihon no Hahaoyakan,” 75.

²⁵⁴ “Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum,” ”http://www.maizuru-bunkajigyoudan.or.jp/hikiage_homepage/again/again_glame.html.”

1950 until 1956, Ise waited for Shinji on Tairasan Bridge, near Maizuru harbor.²⁵⁵

Though many people came in and out of Maizuru harbor in search of their loved ones,

Ise's persistence eventually caught the eye of the press and her story became famous.²⁵⁶

In 1954, singer Kikuchi Akiko recorded a popular tearjerker song based on Ise's story entitled "Mother of the Quay" ("*Ganpeki no Haha*").²⁵⁷ Akiko emotively sang the lyrics:

"Mother came, today she came again/To this quay she came again today/While knowing her unfulfilled wish/Possibly, possibly."²⁵⁸ The song sadly suggests that although Shinji may never return, his mother never gives up hope.²⁵⁹

The similarities between the "Mother of the Quay" and the martial mother, specifically the martial mother from "Hey, Ichitarō!" are striking. Both stories took place near a harbor and revolved around the movement of troop ships. Ichitarō's mother saw her son leave the harbor on a ship, while the "Mother of the Quay" waited for a ship to bring her son home. Both stories became famous, and the mothers in the stories became maternal symbols. The lyrics from the song "Mother of the Quay" also resembled part of the text in "Hey, Ichitarō!" textbook story. Both the song and the story emphasized the great distance that the mothers traveled. While Ichitarō's mother ran "for five leagues along mountain roads in straw sandals ever since the morning" to see her son off, the

²⁵⁵ Amano, "Gendai Nihon no Hahaoyakan," 76. Maizuru is located in Kyoto Prefecture.

²⁵⁶ "Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum," http://www.maizuru-bunkajigyoudan.or.jp/hikiage_ho_mepage/again/again_glame.html.

²⁵⁷ Amano, "Gendai Nihon no Hahaoyakan," 75.

²⁵⁸ Hashino, Ise, *Ganpeki No Haha* (Shin Jinbutsu Ouraisha, 1976).

²⁵⁹ For more on the repatriation eras, see Tamanoi, Mariko, *Memory Maps: The State and Manchuria in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

“Mother of the Quay” traveled a thousand leagues to wait for her son.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, just as a statue still stands in honor of Ichitarō’s mother, a statue with a short poem memorializes the “Mother of the Quay” in the Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum Park.²⁶¹

The “Mother of the Quay” phenomenon also demonstrated the demilitarization of public military spaces. One of SCAP’s first objectives in the postwar era was to demilitarize Japan. SCAP accomplished this by demobilizing Japanese troops, by beginning the long process of repatriation, by purging advocates of militarism, and by destroying Japanese armaments.²⁶² Not only did SCAP intend to completely demilitarize Japan in the postwar era, they planned to permanently demilitarize Japan.²⁶³ Due to the complete and permanent demilitarization of Japan, public military spaces became demilitarized public spaces in the postwar era. Throughout her memoir, Hashino Ise described her public behavior while waiting for her son. She often described herself as “crying” or “wailing.”²⁶⁴ A photo Ise included in her memoir even depicted an emotional Ise. In the photo, Ise stood in a crowd of people, a bereaved expression on her face, while she wiped tears from her eyes with a handkerchief.²⁶⁵ In wartime Japan, Ise’s

²⁶⁰ Hashino, *Ganpeki no Haha*, front cover; “Ichitarō Yaai,” in Nakauchi Toshio, *Gunkoku Bidan to Kyōkasho*, 65.

²⁶¹ “Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum,” http://www.maizuru-bunkajigyoudan.or.jp/hikiage_homepage/again/again_glame.html.”

²⁶² Hane, *Eastern Phoenix*, 14-15.

²⁶³ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 75.

²⁶⁴ Hashino, *Ganpeki no Haha*, 3, 16.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, front photo insert.

public behavior would have attracted negative attention, as seen in Chapter Three. In postwar Japan, on the other hand, Ise's public behavior drew in positive attention. Her public behavior garnered public interest and sympathy. Due to the demilitarization of public space in postwar Japan, the public grieving of mothers became acceptable. Even more importantly, the public and the media "admired" the "Mother of the Quay's" public display of emotion, just as the martial mother's behavior was admired during wartime.²⁶⁶

Both the "Mother of the Quay" and Ichitarō's mother became symbolic mothers of soldiers, but from completely different eras. Ichitarō's mother symbolized martial motherhood in prewar and wartime Japan, while the "Mother of the Quay" symbolized a new model of mothers of soldiers in the postwar era. Due to the postwar demilitarization emphasized by the Japanese government and the censorship policies enforced by SCAP, the martial mother figure had to be completely demilitarized in the media. In terms of motherly images in the media, the martial mother disappeared and the "Mother of the Quay" appeared.²⁶⁷

The Martial Mother in Memory

As the educational system and media began to change in the postwar era, so did the position of women in society. For the first time in Japan's history, women received full political rights and became full citizens. It did not take long for women to begin

²⁶⁶ The first version of "Mother of a Sailor" was titled "Admirable Mother."

²⁶⁷ Miriam Silverberg made a similar argument about the modern girl (*moga*): "The Modern Girl did not age into womanhood. She merely disappeared and the wartime mother appeared." Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 161-162.

exercising their new rights.²⁶⁸ Approximately 67 percent of women voted in April 10, 1946, the day of Japan's first postwar national election.²⁶⁹ In this first election, women voters played a role in electing 39 female politicians to the Diet.²⁷⁰ Women began organizing movements, unions, associations, and demonstrations.²⁷¹ Certainly it should not come as a surprise that women played a large role in the postwar peace movements of the 1950s. Following the United States' H-Bomb test on Bikini Atoll in 1954, women began forming and participating significantly in grassroots pacifist movements.²⁷²

Politically center-left organizations, such as the Society for the Protection of Children, organized the grassroots mothers' movement known as the Mothers' Congress (*Nihon no Hahaoya Taikai Renraku Kai*, or *Hahaoya Taikai*). Organized in 1955, the movement included women from all across the country. A variety of women from different economic circumstances joined this movement, such as farmers, impoverished widows, middle-class housewives, and white-collar workers.²⁷³ The Mothers' Congress held public meetings that provided a platform for women to publically express themselves.²⁷⁴ This self-expression quite often involved many women shedding tears

²⁶⁸ See Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁶⁹ Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, 123.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 123.

²⁷¹ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 242.

²⁷² Nihon Hahaoya Taikai, "Nihon Hahaoya Taikai," http://hahaoyataikai.jp/02_taikai/taikai_1/taikai_1.html; Yamamoto, Mari, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan: The Rebirth of a Nation*, (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 167.

²⁷³ Yamamoto, *Grassroots Pacifism*, 168.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 164.

over their hardships.²⁷⁵ In June of 1955, some 2000 women attended the inaugural meeting. By 1960, 13,000 women attended the national meeting of the Mothers' Congress.²⁷⁶

The Mothers' Congress declared their intentions in a manifesto dated June 9, 1955. Since the Mothers' Congress gathered to discuss social issues they believed would aid in achieving world peace, they first had to create a shared memory of their experiences in World War II. The thousands of mothers involved in the Mothers' Congress all had different individual experiences in the war. Nonetheless, to draft a united manifesto, they had to pinpoint at least one shared memory, and the one they chose was the martial mother ideal:

Because of wars, the joy and pride of being a mother have been shattered. And yet mothers were forbidden to even mention this very natural feeling that they had: that they neither liked nor wanted war. We mothers were not even allowed to shed tears as we sent our sons away to war; we had to bear this sadness only by gritting our teeth. And what this invited—in addition to the general tragedy of war—was the terrible matter of dragging into the war countless other youths of foreign countries, causing their mothers to experience the same thing²⁷⁷

The mother described in this manifesto is the martial mother. Despite whatever feelings she had towards the war, the martial mother bore her pain alone. When her son departed for the front, she did not shed tears, she grit her teeth. For the thousands of women who joined the Mothers' Congress, the martial mother ideal exemplified their experience in the war more so than anything else.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 164.

²⁷⁶ Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, 135.

²⁷⁷ Fujioka Wake, *Women's Movements in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1968), 80-81. The Mothers' Congress manifesto is interesting for many reasons. I decided to focus on the martial mother aspect of the quotation, but for analysis on this quotation and its maternalist orientation, see Kathleen Uno's "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'?"

The Mothers' Congress manifesto revealed that thousands of wartime mothers felt forced into the martial mother role. This group of mothers explained that they did not like nor want war, but that they were not allowed to express this sentiment during the war. Furthermore, this group of mothers also acknowledged that martial motherhood dragged soldiers from other countries into the war, "causing their mothers to experience the same" pain of losing their sons. Here, a group of socially and politically engaged women acknowledged both the national and global repercussions of martial motherhood. The martial mother encapsulated the wartime experience of many of the women involved in the Mothers' Congress. Among the many ways in which women contributed to the war, the Mothers' Congress believed that the martial mother ideal played the largest role in inviting the war. Although the image of mothers in the media began to change in the 1950s, as seen with the "Mother of the Quay," the Mothers' Congress still took the time and energy to reflect on the reality of their public role in the war in an effort to promote pacifism. This shared memory revealed by the Mothers' Congress showed that martial motherhood was a significant aspect of women's experience in the war.

In addition to addressing martial motherhood, the activism of the Mothers' Congress also had further important implications. The Mothers' Congress can also be interpreted as women justifying their activism in terms of motherhood.²⁷⁸ Historian Kathleen Uno suggests that the Mothers' Congress "reflected a strong maternalist orientation;" but, at the same time, the Mothers' Congress represented nonmaternalist organizations.²⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the Mothers' Congress, and other early postwar women's

²⁷⁸ Uno, "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'?" 308.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 308-309; For a definition of maternalism, see Kathleen Uno, "Maternalism in Modern Japan," *Journal of Women's History* 5:2 (1993): 126-130.

movements, used women's traditional roles as wives and mothers to push for social reform.²⁸⁰ This certainly brings up the question of the feminine ideal “good wife, wise mother” in postwar society.

*The Death of the Martial Mother and the Survival of the “Good Wife, Wise Mother”
in the Postwar Era*

Japanese gender historians generally agree that “good wife, wise mother” ideals continued into the late 1980s.²⁸¹ Although the concept of “*Kazoku Kokka*” (“Family State”) was abolished and the specific phrase “good wife, wise mother” went out of use in the postwar era, the teachings of “good wife, wise mother” and the gendered division of labor persisted.²⁸² The occupation forces promoted the enfranchisement of women in Japan, but they did not enforce full educational equality in the same way. Enrollment rates of women were high from the turn of the century onward, but even in the postwar era access to equal education was still a problem for women.²⁸³

Elements of gender segregation in education became apparent immediately after the end of the war. A Ministry of Education document dated September 12, 1945 read: “In the girls’ youth schools, while feminine virtues are to be fostered, guidance should be

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Tanaka, *Josei Kaihō No Shisō to Kōdō*; Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’”; Fukaya, *Ryōsai Kenbo Shugi No Kyōiku*; Buckley, “Altered States.”

²⁸² Fukaya, *Ryōsai Kenbo Shugi No Kyōiku*, 271.

²⁸³ Buckley, “Altered States,” 360.

especially given in how to conduct daily life more scientifically.”²⁸⁴ This document related the idea that although girls would gain access to scientific education, the Ministry of Education still planned on continuing to promote feminine virtues in schools. Furthermore, a *Nippon Times* article dated September 1, 1945 stated, “Education henceforth will be pursued with stress laid on two main points, namely scientific education for boys and thorough domestic training in the ways of womanhood for girls.”²⁸⁵ Although the Ministry of Education planned on reforming the entire education system in the postwar era, they still planned to teach students prewar gender roles.

Even SCAP did not seem entirely committed to eliminating aspects of gendered education. A document sent to the Imperial Japanese Government from SCAP’s General Headquarters on October 22, 1945 read in part, “Discrimination against any student, teacher, or educational official on grounds of race, nationality, creed, political opinion, or social position will be prohibited, and immediate steps will be taken to correct inequities which have resulted from such discrimination.”²⁸⁶ The absence of discrimination based on the grounds of sex is conspicuous to say the least. SCAP’s seemingly lax attitude towards gender discrimination in schools left room for Japan’s Ministry of Education to continue certain segregated education practices and ultimately, its perpetuation of the feminine ideal “good wife, wise mother.”²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ “School Education under the New Situation,” in *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, 54.

²⁸⁵ “Education Will Undergo Big Changes in Purpose: Scientific Studies for Boys, Domestic Training for Girl Will be Stressed,” *Nippon Times*, September 1, 1945.

²⁸⁶ “Administration of the Education System of Japan,” in *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study*, ed. Edward Beauchamp, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 63.

²⁸⁷ Byron Marshall makes a similar argument in *Learning to be Modern*, 165

The continuation of the “good wife, wise mother” ideal in postwar education highlights and reinforces the argument that the martial mother and “good wife, wise mother” ideals were indeed always separate maternal ideals. While postwar textbooks continued to promote male and female roles in society, the martial mother had to, by order of the Japanese government and SCAP, be fully demilitarized.²⁸⁸ If “good wife, wise mother” was in fact a homogeneous ideology all along, it either would have survived the postwar era, or been completely eliminated. The fact that the martial mother disappeared while “good wife, wise mother” ideals persisted into the postwar era demonstrates that these ideals did not belong to one comprehensive ideology. Instead, the state promoted two ideals throughout the first half of the twentieth century. “Good wife, wise mother” ideals taught women their domestic role in the “family state,” while martial motherhood taught women to publically display their patriotism during wartime. One set of ideals survived the postwar era, and the other died during demilitarization.

Conclusion

Ideas associated with “good wife, wise mother” ideology did not gradually fade away after the end of the war. The ideas remained deeply ingrained in the minds of millions of Japanese citizens and entrenched in the new policies and educational system in the postwar era. But, this was not the case for the martial mother ideal. On the judgment of the Japanese government and SCAP, the martial mother could not exist in any capacity in postwar Japan. The martial mother did not gradually fade away as many

²⁸⁸ Uno, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’?” 306; Ichibangase, “Women’s Status and Task of Education,” 59-68.

ideologies and ideas do during times of transition. Instead, she was vanished. The martial mother tradition is now hidden beneath a heavy, grotesque coat of black ink.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the martial mother's demise lay with women publicly speaking about their experiences and their memories of martial motherhood. The martial mother was not supposed to speak about her feelings towards war, but in the postwar era, time and time again women have publicly and privately told others about the horror of losing their children to war. And this lends further significance to the rise of symbols such as the "Mother of the Quay." Not only did she symbolize the demilitarization of the martial mother in the media, but she also represented many women who refused to continue to let the state dictate their public behavior.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

From as early as 1905, Japan's Ministry of Education formed, invented and propagated the tradition of martial motherhood. By the time Japan entered the Second Sino-Japanese War and subsequently, the Pacific War, mothers with adult children understood what the state required of them: that they sacrifice their sons for the greater good of the nation, just as Japanese mothers had done for centuries. While mothers and their children understood the martial mother "tradition" in theory, the reality proved difficult for many mothers. Many mothers struggled greatly with the idea of sacrificing their sons to the "sacred war" with stoic expressions on their faces. Since so many mothers felt conflicted emotions over the emotionless martial mother ideal, they later confronted the martial motherhood ideal in the postwar era. Even though the Japanese government and SCAP "demilitarized" martial mothers in the postwar era, the mothers who joined associations such as the Mothers' Congress still remembered the martial mother ideal as a major element of their wartime experience. By discussing the importance of the martial mother ideal in the postwar era, mothers who survived the war played a major role in using their voices to articulate the tragedy that ideals such as martial motherhood invited not only for Japan, but for all nations.

Though many Japanese subjects behaved stoically in public during the war, the state specifically attempted to deploy maternal emotional stoicism as a means to fight the war. As explored by Sara Ruddick and more recently, Farhat Haq, the state and women

themselves have used maternal grief for both militaristic and pacifistic purposes.²⁸⁹ Haq had argued, however, that globally maternal grief has been used more for militarism.²⁹⁰ For example, in “Militarism and Motherhood,” Haq had explored the Pakistani militant Islamist group, Lashkar-i-Tayyabia (LT), and its manipulation of mothers of martyrs’ grief. Haq explains that the LT used the stories of mothers to show that if mothers were “willingly sacrificing their sons, then the cause of the jihad must be just.”²⁹¹ On the other hand, in “Drafting Motherhood,” Lorraine Bayard de Volo had examined the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs organization that existed during the Contra war in Nicaragua.²⁹² While the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs organization, comprised of mothers of children killed or captured during the Nicaraguan revolution or Contra war, acted as support groups for mourning mothers, the Sandinista state used the organization to attempt to repress the grief of mothers.²⁹³ When a mother’s son died in action, a member of the organization delivered the news of the war death, hoping to prevent the mother from resenting the government. This organization tried to control mothers’ grief to prevent

²⁸⁹ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Farhat Haq, “Militarism and Motherhood: The Women of the Lashkar-i-Tayyabia in Pakistan,” *Signs* 32, no. 4 (June 1, 2007): 1037; Maternal grief was used for pacifist movements in Sri Lanka and Argentina, see Malathi de Alwis, “Motherhood as a Space of Protest: Women’s Political Participation in Contemporary Sri Lanka,” in *Appropriating Gender: Women’s Activism and Politicized Religion in South Asia*, ed. Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu, (New York: Routledge, 1998); Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Mothers of the Disappeared,” in *Representations of Motherhood*, ed. Donna Bassin, Margaret Honey, and Meryle Mahrer Kaplan, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

²⁹⁰ Haq, “Militarism and Motherhood,” 1037.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 1038.

²⁹² Lorraine Bayard de Volo, “Drafting Motherhood: Maternal Imagery and Organizations in the United States and Nicaragua,” in *The Women and War Reader*, ed. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 249-251.

²⁹³ de Volo, “Drafting Motherhood,” 250.

mothers from turning against the Sandinista government.²⁹⁴ Similarly, from as early as 1905, the Japanese state anticipated constraining the voices of future mothers of soldiers in an effort to prevent antiwar discussions.

Martial motherhood was not the only form of emotional stoicism during wartime Japan. As seen in Mr. I's quotation in the introduction, many Japanese subjects remained stoic in public, despite the fact that they felt afraid or apprehensive of war. Perhaps the mothers who talked to stones, as discussed in Chapter Three, brought this concept to the forefront in the most evocative way. The mothers who talked to stones all felt the same way about losing their sons to the war, but none of them talked to each other. Instead, they talked to stones. The primary reason why Japanese civilians did not discuss their feelings with each other was fear of the military police and fear of being ostracized from the community and society. This fear was not a large issue in Japan's early wars, such as the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, but public militarized space expanded in a dramatic way during Japan's entry into a total war period in 1937. Any public space became a militarized space. Anytime anyone stepped outside of their home, they had to worry about how their public behavior could be perceived by others.

One of the most significant aspects of the Japanese state's suppression of maternal grief and its promotion of martial motherhood was the eventual demilitarization of the martial mother ideal in the postwar era. Although the United States military occupied Japan after the end of the war, ultimately the Japanese people affirmed their strong commitment to a peaceful and democratic Japan.²⁹⁵ To begin the process of demilitarization, the Japanese government demilitarized and reformed areas of

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 250-251.

²⁹⁵ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 30.

government that promoted militarism and nationalism, such as the educational system. In a very short span of time, especially before the establishment of SCAP, the Japanese Ministry of Education censored many ideas that they once taught to students as characteristics of “good” Japanese citizens. All that was once “good” became “bad.”

In a worldwide conflict, Japan was but one defeated nation that had to disassemble the militaristic and nationalistic traditions of their war culture. Many nations, particularly the victors of the war, did not have to deconstruct and demilitarize the successful traditions of their war culture. Instead, the patriotic and ultra-nationalistic traditions of victorious nations survived. Without understanding the historical processes and forces that form, invent, and propagate powerful and dangerous ideals such as martial motherhood, victorious and defeated nations alike risk the reinvention and perpetuation of such ideals.

APPENDIX

TEXTBOOK STORIES

水兵の母

明治二十七年戦役の時であった。或日我が軍艦高千穂の一水兵が、女手の手紙を読みながら泣いていた。ふと通りかかった某大尉が之を見て、余りにめめしいふるまいとあって、「こら、どうした。命が惜しくなったか、妻子がこいしくなったか。軍人となって、いくさに出たのを男子の面目とも思わず、其の有様は何事だ。兵士の恥は艦の恥、艦の恥は帝国の恥だぞ。」と、言葉鋭くしかった。

水兵は驚いて立上って、しばらく大尉の顔を見つめていたが、「それは余りな御言葉です。私には妻も子も有りません。私も日本男子です。何で命を惜しみましょう。どうぞ之を覧下さい。」と言って、其の手紙を差出した。

大尉はそれを取って見ると、次のような事が書いてあった。「聞けば、そなたは豊島沖海戦にも出ず、又八月十日の脅海衛攻撃とやらにも、かく別の働なかりきとのこと。母は如何にも残念に思い候。何の為にいくさには御出でなされ候ぞ。一命を捨てて君の御恩に報ゆる為には候わずや。村の方方は、朝に夕にいろいろとやさしく御世話下され、『一人の子が御国の為いくさに出でし事なれば、定めて不自由なる事もあらん。何にてもえんりよなく言え。』と、親切におおせ下され候。母は其の方方の顔を見る毎に、そなたのふがいなき事が思い出されて、此の胸は張りさくるばかりにて候。八幡様に日参致し候も、そなたがあっばれなるてがらを立て候ようとの心願に候。母も人間なれば、我が子にくしとはつゆ思い申さず。如何ばかりの思にて此の手紙をしたためしか、よくよく御察し下されたく候。」大尉は之を読んで、思わずも涙を落し、水兵の手を握って、「わたしが悪かった。おかあさんの精神は感心の外はない。お前の残念がるのももつともだ。しかし今の戦争は昔と違って、一人で進んで功を立てるようなことは出来ない。将校も兵士も皆一つになって働かなければならない。総べて上官の命令を守って、自分の職務に精を出すのが第一だ。おかあさんは、『一命を捨てて君恩に報いよ。』と言ってられるが、まだ其の折に出会わないのだ。」と言聞かせた。

水兵は頭を下げて聞いていたが、やがて手をあげて敬礼して、にっこりと笑って立去った。

Mother of a Sailor

It was the twenty-seventh year of the Emperor Meiji, a time of war.²⁹⁶ One day on our nation's Takachiho warship, one sailor cried as he read a letter written in a woman's handwriting. A lieutenant happened to pass by casually and saw this, I thought this behavior to be excessively effeminate. The lieutenant sharply scolded the sailor, "Hey, what the hell is going on here? Are you beginning to regret your life, are you beginning to long for your wife and child? You became a soldier and left for war, I don't think you are showing the honor of a young soldier. This war is everything! The shame of one soldier is the shame of the warship; the shame of the warship is the shame of the empire!"

Startled, the sailor quickly stood up. For a moment he stared at the lieutenant, then said, "Your words are cruel, sir. I do not have a wife nor child, sir. I am also a young Japanese soldier, sir. Why spare our lives? Here, look at this please." The sailor said this as he handed a letter written by his mother to the lieutenant. The lieutenant took the letter and looked at it, the following characters were written: "I heard that you did not serve in the Hōtō-oki Sea Battle and once again, on August tenth, during the Ikaiei Offensive, you did not achieve any distinguished service. Your mother thinks this is indeed disappointing. For what purpose have you gone to war? Is it not for you to lay down your life in gratitude to the Emperor? Every morning and every night, the people of our village, always kindly make conversation with me, they say, 'Since your only son went off to fight for our country, surely you are suffering. Please don't hesitate to ask us for help.' Every time your mother sees them, I am reminded of your cowardice. My heart just breaks. Every day I visit Hachiman's shrine to pray that you might succeed in fulfilling an admirable purpose. Your mother is also a person, to my child my thoughts might seem mysterious since I don't always tell them to you. Deeply consider the thoughts that are written up in this letter."

The lieutenant read this, instinctively a tear fell from his eye. The lieutenant grasped the sailor's hand and said, "I was wrong. Your mother's spirit is admirable, no doubt about it. Your outward display of disappointment is natural. But, the wars of today are different from the wars of the past, one cannot achieve merit by oneself. Commissioned officers, soldiers, everyone must work as one. Entirely follow your superior officer's orders, showing spirit in your duties is most important. Your mother said, 'Are you casting aside the command the Emperor has bestowed upon you? Are you throwing away the life that you are supposed to return to the Emperor?' but still, even now, you are not in battle."

The sailor listened with his head lowered, but finally he raised his hand and saluted, smiled and laughed, then left.

²⁹⁶ 1894. This story takes place during the First Sino-Japanese War.

一太郎やあい

日露戦争当時のことである。軍人をのせた御用船が今しも港を出ようとした其の時、「ごめんなさい。ごめんなさい。」といいいい、見送人をおし分けて、前へ出るおばあさんがある。年は六十四五でもあろうか、腰に小さなふろしきづつみをむすびつけている。御用船を見つけると、「一太郎やあい。其の船に乗っているなら、鉄砲を上げろ。」とさげんだ。すると甲板の上で鉄砲を上げた者がある。おばあさんは又さげんだ。「うちのことはしんぱいするな。天子様によく御ほうこうするだよ。わかったらもう一度鉄砲を上げろ。」

すると、又鉄砲を上げたのがかすかに見えた。おばあさんは「やれやれ。」と行って、其所へすわった。聞けば今朝から五里の山道を、わらじがけで急いで来たのだそうだ。郡長をはじめ、見送の人人はみんな泣いたということである。

Hey, Ichitarō!

In the days of the Russo-Japanese War.²⁹⁷ Just as the ship was starting to leave the harbor. “Excuse me! Excuse meeee!” an older woman said as she pushed aside people seeing off soldiers in an effort to get in front of them. Her age was 64, maybe even 65, a small furoshiki was tied around her waist. When she saw the warship she shouted, “Hey, Ichitarō! If you are boarding that boat, raise your gun!” Shortly thereafter, a man on the deck of the ship raised his gun. The older woman once again shouted, “Don’t worry about things at home! Serve the Emperor well! If you understand, raise your gun once more!”

Thereafter, once more she dimly saw a gun being raised. The older woman sighed, “good grief,” and sat down. When asked, she said that she had run for five leagues along mountain roads in straw sandals ever since the morning to get here. Rumor has it that first the district head, then all the people seeing the soldiers off, began to cry.

²⁹⁷ 1904-1905.

日本の婦人

上手野形名蝦夷を討ちて利あらず、部下の兵皆四散せしかば、夜に乗じて城を逃れんとす。形名の妻、夫を勵まして曰く、「夫君ただ身を全うして、祖先以来の武名をはずかしめ給ふか。」と、自ら劔を帯び、侍女數人と弓をとりて、盛に弦を鳴らす。賊之を聞きて、城中兵尚多しと思ひ、其の夜圍を解きて去れりと。

非常の大事に会ひて心を取亂さず、能く處すべき道に處して、其の志操の固きこと男子に劣らざるは、我が國婦人の長所なり。瓜生保の母が忠義の為には愛子の戦死をも悲しまず高千穂艦乗組の一水兵の母が恩愛を忘れて其の子を叱りたるが如き、或はおつなが死を顧みずして主人の子を守りしが如き、皆、我が日本婦人の、非常時に處して誤らざりし例にあらずや。

されど日本婦人の長所は、必ずしも非常の時に於いてのみ發揮せらる、に
あらず、平時にありては、良き妻良き母として、能く婦道を守るところに其の美点存す。松下禪尼の儉を教へ、鈴木今右衛門の妻の慈善をほどこし、或は高崎正風の母のよく子を訓育せる、何れも婦人の模範とすべき徳行といふべし。山内一豊の妻が、貧苦に居て夫の一大事を忘れざりしは、戦陣の際に夫の名誉を全うせる形名の妻と、其の徳を同じうすといふべく、古田松陰の母が、よく家を治め子を勵まして、其の志を助けたるは、正行の母が、子を戒めて忠を全うせしめたるに比して、必ずしも劣れりといふべからず。

凡そ婦人の道は、夫を助けて家政を治め、子を教へて家名をあげしむるにあり。此の心は何處如何なる場合にも忘るべからず。されど人世には、思はぬ不幸、驚くべき事變の、何時起り来らんもはかられず。故に平時に於て常に之に處するの道を覚悟し置かずば、時に臨みて心乱れ気まどひて、見苦しき行を為すことあらん。外温順。愛敬の徳を守り、内確固たる志操を持して、如何なる事變に際しても自若として其の常を失はざるは、實日本婦人の美德なり。

Women of Japan

Kamitsukenono Katana did not benefit from the defeat of the Ezo, since all of his subordinate soldiers scattered, they took advantage of the night and fled the castle.²⁹⁸ Katana's wife encouraged her husband, "My husband has achieved his objective, but this has brought shame to the military fame of our family." She brandished a sword and her lady attendants picked up bows. They vigorously plucked the bowstrings to make them echo throughout the castle. The enemy heard this sound, and thought the castle was still filled with soldiers, that night they prepared to surround the castle, but left.

When these people encountered serious emergencies, they did not lose composure, they behaved properly. Women are not inferior to men in properly conducting these difficult principles. These difficult principles are the strong point of our country's women. Out of loyalty, the mother of Uryū Tamotsu did not mourn the death of her beloved child during the war.²⁹⁹ Similarly, one of the mothers of a sailor on the Takachiho warship abandoned her loved and scolded her son.³⁰⁰ The sailor's mother, without concern for her son's death, similarly observed these principles. Everyone, our Japanese women provide flawless examples of behavior during times of emergency.

But the strengths of Japanese women are not only revealed in times of emergency. During times of peace, women exist as good wives and good mothers, they follow woman's duties, this is their virtue. Matsushita Zenni's lessons on thriftiness, Suzuki Imaemon's wife's donations to charity, or Takasaki Masakaze's mother's discipline of her children, we should follow all of these women's examples and their morality.³⁰¹ Yamauchi Kazutoyo's wife always gave foremost consideration to her husband during times of hardship, in festivals on the battlefield, his wife's prestige is celebrated, and we should follow her virtues.³⁰² Yoshida Shōin's mother encouraged her children to manage the household.³⁰³ On the contrary, Kusunoki Masatsura's mother reinforced this spirit by

²⁹⁸ Kamitsukenono Katana was a general during the conquest of the Ezo. He lived during the reign of Emperor Jōmei in the seventh century CE. *Kokushi Daijiten Henshū Iinkai, Kokushi Daijiten: Dai I-han*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1979-1997), 3: 582.

²⁹⁹ Uryū Tamotsu's birth year is unknown, but he died in 1337. He was a general during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts. *Kokushi Daijiten*, 2:187.

³⁰⁰ This is a reference to the textbook story "*Suihei no Haha*." The story takes place during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-5).

³⁰¹ Matsushita Zenni was a woman of the samurai class during the Kamakura era. She was the mother of Hōjō Tokiyori. *Kokushi Daijiten*, 13:119; Suzuki Imaemon died in 1801, he was a philanthropist. Heibonsha, *Nihon Jinmei Daijiten*, Fukkokuban, (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1979), 3: 472; Takasaki Masakaze (1836-1912) He was a poet. He was also a privy councilor. *Kokushi Daijiten*, 9:22.

³⁰² Yamauchi Kazutoyo (1545-1605) A general during the Sengoku period (the period of the Warring States, 1467-1573). *Kokushi Daijiten*: 14:108.

³⁰³ Yoshida Shoin (1830-1859) An intellectual and an educator during the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. *Kokushi Daijiten*, 14:407.

admonishing her son.³⁰⁴ Fulfilling this spirit in this way should not always be looked down upon as inferior.

A woman's role is to help her husband, manage the household, teach her children, and to elevate the family name. This spirit must not be forgotten under any circumstances. Be that as it may, in this life we cannot know when unforeseen disasters and unexpected emergencies will occur. Therefore, if you are not prepared to always follow this conduct during times of peace, when faced with challenging times, you will become upset and feel lost, and behave disgracefully. Stay calm on the outside. To guard the virtues of love and respect, possess firm principles within, never forgetting to stay composed when disasters arise. Indeed, these are the virtues of Japanese women.

³⁰⁴ Kusunoki Masatsura died in 1348. He was a general during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts. *Kokushi Daijiten*, 4:782.

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