

Japanese Women in the U.S. and the Formation of Japanese Gender Discourses: Depictions of *Ryōsai-Kenbo* (Good Wife and Wise Mother) in Japanese Women's Magazines

SHIORI NOMURA-ICHIMASA

I . Introduction

The discourse of *ryōsai-kenbo* (a good wife and wise mother) had been promoted in Japan since the late 19th century. This idea was closely linked to both contemporary Japanese gender discourses and Western gender discourses. It has been suggested that the idea of *ryōsai-kenbo* was spread via the modernization of social institutions such as the Japanese *ie* (household) system, education, and the media in Japan.

Many studies have investigated Japanese gender ideologies, including the idea of *ryōsai-kenbo*, as relevant and important factors influencing Japanese immigrant women in the early 20th century in the U.S.¹⁾ The major Japanese female migration to the U.S. occurred between 1908 and 1924, at which time a restrictive immigration law was introduced.²⁾ Most of these women who arrived during this period were the wives of male immigrants who had already relocated to the U.S.³⁾ Hailing from many different backgrounds, most of the first-generation Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. in the early 20th century were born in Japan between the 1880s and the 1900s and

-
- 1) Yuji Ichioka, "Amerika Nadeshiko: Japanese Immigrant Women in the United States, 1900–1924." *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (1980): 349.
 - 2) Yukiko Hanawa, "The Several World of Issei Women" (MA thesis, Long Beach, CA: California State University, 1982), 55; Malve von Hassell, "Issei Women between Two Worlds: 1875–1985" (PhD thesis, San Diego: University of California, 1987), 86.
 - 3) Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 8.

came to the U.S. in their late teens to mid-twenties.⁴⁾ Thus, they would have been exposed to the gender discourses prevailing in Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, likely shaping their worldview even after emigration.

It has been said that Japanese women in the U.S. accessed Japanese gender ideologies through the Japanese media. Importantly, the Japanese media space did not encompass only Japanese communities within Japan, but also throughout the world. Yoshitaka Hibi has revealed how Japanese immigrants in the U.S. contacted the discursive network of the Japanese media since the late 19th century. He emphasizes that Japanese newspapers, magazines, and books were published in “various districts of Imperial Japan,” then “delivered and sold” in a distribution network “across the Pacific Ocean” or sent from friends and relatives to Japanese people in the U.S.⁵⁾ Immigrant women in the U.S. also continued to read Japanese women’s journals, magazines, and books which they brought, or sent for, from Japan. Indeed, immigrant newspapers of the late 19th to early 20th century carried many advertisements for Japanese women’s magazines.⁶⁾ In one study on the Japanese immigrant media and immigrant women, the author highlighted that many immigrant women had access to images and discourses of women through reading the Japanese press both before and after their arrival in the U.S.⁷⁾ For example, in an article of one of the major Japanese immigrant newspapers, *the Nichibei*, one woman interviewed specifically said that she and her acquaintances were still reading Japanese women’s magazines sent for from Japan.⁸⁾ The newspaper notably carried a letter from a frequent contributor to her older

4) Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride*, 43; Hassell, “Issei Women between Two Worlds”, 72.

5) Yoshitaka Hibi, “Nikkei America Imin-isseiino Shimbunto Bungaku” (“Newspapers and Literature of the First-Generation Japanese American”), *Nihon Bungaku (Japanese Literature)* 53, no. 11 (2004): 25–26.

6) See, for example, advertisements for women’s magazines in *The Nichibei* newspaper (*The Nichibei*, 19 Apr. 1923, 8 Feb. 1924, 4 May 1924, etc.)

7) Shiori Nomura-Ichimasa, “Nihon-jin imin jousei-to nihongo media” (“Japanese immigrant women and the Japanese language media”), in Shuhei Hosokawa ed., *Nikkei Bunka-wo Aminaosu (Rethinking the Culture of People with Japanese Origin)* (Kyoto: Minerva, 2017), 93–105.

8) For example, one contributor described the busy life of Japanese female immigrants by saying, “They can hardly find the peace to read even monthly magazines from Japan” (*The Nichibei*, 13 Mar. 1919).

sister in Japan:

Recently, a Mrs. (Okusan), who is my acquaintance, sent me the *Shin-Jokai* (the *New Women's World*) and other good magazines. Feeling that all these things are signs of (God's) guidance, I feel pleased and read them thoroughly.⁹⁾

During an interview conducted in the Japanese American Oral History Project by the Orange County and California State University, Fullerton, in the late 1980s, one first-generation Japanese American woman also told her interviewers about sending for and reading Japanese women's magazines:

Q: Then what did you do every day?

A: Well, I wrote letters and read magazines (...)

Q: OK. Were those magazines sent from Japan?

A: Yes, I got them from Japan.¹⁰⁾

As these sources show, Japanese immigrant women continued to learn the popular discourses of being a "good wife and wise mother" in a good "home" that were spread in the Japanese media throughout the world in the early 20th century.

These studies are important in that they reveal how Japanese transnational networks such as the media influenced the process of forming gender discourses among Japanese immigrant women. However, fewer studies investigate how voices of Japanese immigrant women were actually used to reinforce Japanese gender discourses such as *ryōsai-kenbo* in the Japanese media network.

In reality, immigrant women had a chance to include their own writings in

9) *The Nichibei*, 6 Mar. 1919.

10) The Oral History Program, California State University, Fullerton, "O.H. 1752, Yukiko Furuta (interviewed by Arthur A. Hansen and Yasuko Gamo on June 17 and July 6, 1982)" in *Issei Experience in Orange County, California*, K. Tamura Orange County Japanese American Oral History Project, Historical and Cultural Foundation of Orange County Japanese American Council and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program Japanese American Project, 1986, retrieved on 30 Sep. 2018 from https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=ft7p3006z0&brand=oac4&doc.view=entire_text.

Japanese women's journals and magazines: they were not just readers but also active contributors who sent letters, opinion messages, essays, pictures, and literary works.¹¹⁾ Some of their writings were chosen by the magazines' editorial staff for publication. The ideas and opinions which immigrant women offered had an influence on the process of forming Japanese gender discourses in the Japanese language media network. Thus, in this paper, first, I will describe how the ideas of *ryōsai-kenbo* were constructed in the Japanese press in Japan and how these ideas were conveyed to Japanese women readers living in the U.S. Then, I will exemplify how ideas and opinions contributed by Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. to Japanese women's magazines were used to reinforce or reform the Japanese gender ideology of being "a good wife and wise mother (*ryōsai-kenbo*)."¹²⁾ To do so, I will analyze writings sent by Japanese women then living in the U.S. to Japanese women's magazines, published mainly in Japan but read by many Japanese women within and outside Japan in the early 20th century. I will look at several main Japanese women's magazines, including *Fujin-Club* (*Women's Club*), *Fujokai* (*The Women's World*), *Shinnjokai* (*New Women's World*), and *Shufuno-tomo* (*Friends for Housewives*)¹²⁾. In particular, *Fujokai* (*The Women's World*), published in 1910 in Japan, was important because it carried more letters and literary works sent by Japanese women in the U.S. than any other women's magazine. It also put forward the image of modern family and womanhood by constructing discourses of *katei* or *home* in association with middle-class Protestant Christian values. This means that this magazine tended to have more Japanese women readers in the U.S. where they were required to absorb Protestant values. Eventually, I will try to reveal how the press displayed active participants of Japanese (immigrant) women in constructing a

11) Mei T. Nakano, *Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1890-1990, with Okaasan by Grace Shibata* (Berkeley, Sebastopol, San Francisco: Mina Press and Nat'l. Japanese American Historical Society, 1990), 54-55.

12) These magazines were some of the most popular Japanese women's magazines in Japan. They were sold in Japanese bookshops in Japan towns in the U.S., and many advertisements for these magazines were carried on some of major Japanese immigrant newspapers. See, for example, *The Nichibei*, 10 Apr. 1922, 21 Apr. 1923, 4 Dec. 1923, and 12 Feb. 1924.

broader global dialogue of what it meant to be a ‘good’ Japanese woman, which helped shaping an image of expanding imperial Japan.

II . The idea of *ryōsai-kenbo* (a good wife and wise mother) in the late 19th century

Before discussing the roles of writings from Japanese women in the U.S. in Japanese media and its transformation at the turn of the 20th century, it is important to examine how this ideology formed and emerged in modern Japan. It has been said that before the middle of the 19th century, the gender hierarchy of the former *samurai* (warrior clan) class placed women in a secondary position—one in which they were completely dependent upon their fathers, husbands and sons. The roles and images of women in this era were described in a variety of texts, including *kakun* (family precepts), *kyōkun* (educational texts), and *jōkun* (teachings for women), such as *Omna Daigaku* (Greater Learning for Women).¹³⁾ The common depiction of women in these textbooks implied that they were weak, foolish people who needed men’s strict control and instruction;¹⁴⁾ therefore, women had to be obedient to men’s guidance and always under their supervision. One textbook said that “women must be gentle, obedient, faithful, thoughtful, and quiet” and that they were required to serve their husbands, in-laws, and the relatives of their husbands.¹⁵⁾ According to Koyama, these textbooks did not emphasize the importance of mothers in raising, training, and educating children.¹⁶⁾

13) Many texts of these teachings for women in the *samurai* class were issued in the early *Edo* period (the 17th century). The editions were mostly based on instruction books for women in China. From the 18th century, more textbooks for women were published; these were often short, with simple content, and suitable for teaching basic writing and reading, as well as morals. They spread widely among people in the *samurai* and rich merchant classes. Matsutaro Ishikawa, “Kaisetsu (Comment),” in Matsutaro Ishikawa ed., *Omna Daigakusbu (Collected Textbooks of the Greater Learning for Women)* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977), 299–301; Matsutaro Ishikawa, “Kaisetsu Kaidai (Comment and Bibliography),” in Matsutaro Ishikawa ed., *Oraihen Joshiyo, Nihon Kyokashotaikai (Collected Japanese Textbooks for Women, vol. 15)* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1973), 13.

14) Hassell, “Issei Women between Two Worlds,” 77.

15) *Omna daigaku tamatebako (A Secret Box of the Greater Learning for Women)* (published in 1734), in Matsutaro Ishikawa, ed., *Oraihen Joshiyo, Nihon Kyokashotaikai*, 306.

This was a period of social and political change in Japan. At the end of the Tokugawa era, particularly after the country opened itself to trade with the world, and during the *Meiji* Restoration from the late 1860s to the end of the 1880s, the country's dominant forces— opinion leaders, intellectuals, so-called “Enlightenment thinkers,” and bureaucrats— came largely from the former *samurai* class. Having lost their overt privileges as the ruling class after the *Meiji* Restoration, the former *samurai* class “enthusiastically acquired Western knowledge” to enhance their own job opportunities as well as improve their country.¹⁷⁾ Among the most influential ideas promulgated were those about marriage, family, and womanhood in Western countries. Intellectuals and national leaders in the late 19th century introduced Western gender discourses and discussed the important roles and position of women in forming, maintaining, and reinforcing the Japanese nation. Textbooks of teachings for women written by progressive thinkers in the 1870s and 1880s display this shift in the dominant gender images and roles of women. A textbook of *Meiji Omna Imagawa* claimed: “Mothers are the models for children...women are responsible for domestic affairs and economy. Each family can be a school to enlighten [children]. A good mother has power equal to one hundred teachers.”¹⁸⁾

Westerners themselves also reinforced this discourse. The American administrator of the Ministry of Education from 1874–79, David Murray, issued influential educational policies for Japanese women. He said that:

It is women who can educate children well when children are small and their wills are not firm enough. Women not only teach them to study but also they can be their models in their words and behavior. If you

16) Shizuko Koyama, *Ryosaikenbo to iu Kihan (Norms of a Good Wife and Wise Mother)* (Tokyo: Keisoshobo, 1991), 13–24.

17) Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism*, 42–43.

18) Emshi Obara, *Meiji Omna Imagawa* (first published, Tokyo: Bunyudo, 1880), in Ishikawa ed., *Oraihen Joshioyo, Nihon Kyokashotaikei*, 226–227. See also other textbooks which emphasized the roles of mothers and wives in managing domestic affairs and raising and educating children, such as Shimsen Omna Daigaku (published in 1882) and Jogaku Hitsudoku Jokun (1874), in Ishikawa ed., *Oraihen Joshioyo, Nihon Kyokashotaikei*, 353, 378–390.

want to make future nations good, it is necessary to educate their mothers and make them good first.¹⁹⁾

Here, the idea of women's educational needs, as well as their influence as educators themselves, was formed as Japanese intellectuals actively introduced gender discourses from Western societies. Japanese leaders, including those who had studied in the West, increasingly accepted the importance of motherhood and education for women. For example, Yukichi Fukuzawa believed that well-educated wives and mothers would be important not only for their families but also for the nation.²⁰⁾ Fukuzawa discussed the need for women's education and health training to improve their skills and physical strength; eventually women would be able to practice and manage domestic duties and economic affairs while also raising and educating children well.²¹⁾ For Fukuzawa, "it was required for households and the nation, that the position of women would be improved to become equal to men's."²²⁾ Women were expected to contribute to the blossoming of Japan through their reproductive work at home—that of bearing, raising, and educating children—and by doing domestic work.²³⁾

At the same time, there had emerged from the mid-19th century in Japan a discourse of monogamy in relation to the idea of modernization and the development of the nation. In the late 19th century, polygamy was still acceptable and commonly practiced in Japan. The new criminal law (*Shin Ritsukōryō*)²⁴⁾ promulgated in 1870 assumed the equal status in law of the

19) Cited from the First Annual Report of the Ministry of Education, 145, in Shizuko Koyama, *Kateino Seiseito Joseino Kokuminka (The Construction of Homes and the Nationalization of Women)* (Tokyo: Keisoshobo, 1999), 36.

20) Koyama, *Ryosaikenbo to iu Kihan*, 25–35.

21) Yukichi Fukuzawa, *Shin Omna Daigaku* (first published, Tokyo: Jijishimposha, 1899), in Ishikawa ed., *Omna Daigakushu*, 250–271.

22) Yukichi Fukuzawa, "Nihon Fujimron Kohen (Discussion about Japanese Women: Number 2)" (first published in *Jijishimposha*, 7–17 July 1885), in Keio University, ed. *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshu (the Complete Works of Yukichi Fukuzawa)*, vol. 5–6 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1954, 1959), 507.

23) Koyama, *Ryosaikenbo to iu Kihan*, 93.

24) This was the first criminal law under the *Meiji* government. However, the content was not Westernized and it referred mostly to Chinese laws, especially those from the late 14th

first wife and *mekake* (concubines or subsequent wives) as legal spouses.²⁵⁾

On the grounds that polygamy was an indicator of pre-modernity, male enlightenment thinkers in the early *Meiji* period (the late 1860s to 1880s) began to press for a reform of Japanese family and marital relationships, replacing traditional structures with monogamy in order to “civilize” the country.²⁶⁾ Fukuzawa criticized polygamous practices in Japan, writing:

The basis of public ethics is private ethics in a family...the private ethics starts with the ethics between husband and wife... The relationship between men and women is the fundamental in establishing the nation.²⁷⁾

Debates about monogamy and the roles of men and women were also developed in the media, including *Meiroku Zasshi* (*Meiroku Journal*), which published a series of articles from March 1874 through November 1875. Adding their voices to Fukuzawa’s, leading thinkers such as Arinori Mori, Masanao Nakamura, and Mamichi Tsuda claimed monogamy for the Japanese nation.²⁸⁾

In addition to these opinions advocating the benefits of monogamous families for the nation, the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) caused a backlash against Westernization and enhanced nationalism. This backlash extolled “the neo-Confucian values of ‘loyalty’ and ‘filial piety’” and promoted people’s obedience to the emperor.²⁹⁾ Seen as the nation’s most important institution, the *ie* (household) system of registration was modernized to function as Japan’s fundamental socio-political and economic unit. Rejecting other forms of household as pre-modern, the *Meiji*

to 18th centuries, and laws from the Tokugawa shogunate.

25) Sachiko Kaneko, *Kindai Joseiron no Keifu (the Genealogy of Modern Thoughts about Japanese Women)* (Tokyo: Fujisuyuppan, 1999), 23.

26) *Ibid.*, 13.

27) Yukichi Fukuzawa, “Nihon Danshi Kohen (Discussion about Japanese Men),” (first published, Tokyo: *Jijishimposha*, 13–24 Jan. 1888), in Keio University, ed. *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshu*, 616.

28) Kaneko, *Kindai Joseiron no Keifu*, 24.

29) Yasutake, *Transnational Women’s Activism*, 77.

government defined as a basic national unit the sort of lineal patriarchal family household which had been the ideal among the former *samurai* class.³⁰⁾

The formation of a modern *ie* (household) system started with *Jinshin Kosekihō* (the *Jinshin* Family Registration Law) in 1871. “All people” in the country, whether classes or individuals, had to be registered under *ie* units, and householders were obliged to enter all members on the local government register.³¹⁾ The *Meiji* Civil Law, in effect from 1898, defined the *ie* system more clearly and systematically, while also “sanctioning the status of women as non-persons without legal rights in marriage.”³²⁾ The concept of *ie* encompasses two main features.³³⁾ First, it espoused the principle of age-ascendant, lineal, and male supremacy over descendants, collateral relations, and females.³⁴⁾ This system was based on “a patrilineal and patriarchal structure.”³⁵⁾ Second, every household saw itself as a continuing entity that was unified into one large family, the Japanese nation, headed by the *Temnō* (emperor) as father and god. Here, individuals became members of the nation and “children of the Emperor.” Individual filial piety and obedience to the emperor were essential to develop the nation, just as piety within a family contributed to its maintenance.³⁶⁾ A woman’s most important role was now to serve her families and the nation as daughter, wife, and mother.

Notably, the emerging Japanese gender discourse of *ryōsai-kenbo* also included the idea of women as a source of labor, but working-class women were looked down upon or even ignored in Japanese society. Despite the middle-class ideal of a *ryōsai-kenbo* housewife, a vast number of women from poor rural areas and the urban working class were exploited as cheap labor in Japan’s developing industries. The share of female labor out of all the

30) “*Ie* (Households),” in *Nihon Daihyakka Jiten (Japanese Encyclopedia)*, CD-ROM, (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1998).

31) Nakanojo Yamanaka, “Kazokuseido (Family System),” in *Sekai Daihyakka Jiten (World Digital Encyclopedia)* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1998).

32) Hassell, “Issei Women between Two Worlds,” 81.

33) Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride*, 202.

34) Yamanaka, “Kazokuseido.”

35) Hassell, “Issei Women between Two Worlds,” 76.

36) Yamanaka, “Kazokuseido.”

industrial labor in Japan between 1890 and 1912 was around 60%,³⁷⁾ and by 1910 it had reached 71%.³⁸⁾ In particular, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were more women than men working in the textile industries, which comprised the most important national economic sector of the time.

Nationalist discourses emphasized the importance of women's devotion to the family and the nation through their hard work. Thus, they succeeded in encouraging women to work for their families and the nation, whether at home or in industry. Samejima wrote in his *Tsūzoku Joshi Seishi Kyōhon* (*A Popular Textbook of Filature for Women*) that "To work at your own calling will contribute to yourself and your family in a narrow context and to your country and nation in a wider context."³⁹⁾

In reality, despite this call to all women to invest themselves in their family and country, there was a social and economic gap between middle-class and working-class women. Japan's rapid industrialization and modernization put a heavy burden on farmers, who formed the largest population group in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Poor farmers sent their daughters to mills or factories or to work as servants in towns or cities. They sometimes even sold their daughters to brothels. Often, the industrial labor contracts for these women were signed by the heads of their households or *ie* and their salary was paid in advance to these heads of family. Therefore, in many cases, the working-class women were essentially sold to the factories.⁴⁰⁾ Increasingly, these women served as a form of virtual slave labor in the developing Japanese industries of the 1900s and 1910s; although they were paid, they never received control over that money, nor over their choice of employment or environment. Thus, this form of work was not seen as proper for middle-

37) Hanawa, "The Several World of Issei Women," 31.

38) Hassell, "Issei Women between Two Worlds," 74.

39) Shigeru Samejima, *Tsūzoku Joshi Seishi Kyōhon* (*A Popular Textbook of Filature for Women*), 1910, in Nobuhiro Miyoshi, *Nihon no Josei to Sangyo Kyoiku: Kindai Shakai ni okeru Josei no Yakuwari* (*Japanese Women and Education for Industries: Roles of Women in the Modern Industrial Society*) (Tokyo: Toshindo, 2000), 137.

40) Yutaka Kasuga, "Koujouno Shutsugen (The Emergence of Industrial Factories)," in *Iwanami Kouza, History of Japan*, Vol. 17 (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1994), 207–212.

class Japanese women.⁴¹⁾ However, linking the idea of the *ryōsai-kenbo* (good wife and wise mother) with nationalism created roles and positions for both middle-class and working-class women: women would contribute to their families and to the nation via the mode of employment most fitting to her class, either in the home or in the factories. This became the dominant gender ideology for women in the early 20th century in Japan.

Jayawardena points out that the impact of Western colonialism or imperialism and Western gender discourses gave rise to nationalistic attempts to modernize family ways in many Asian countries in the 19th century.⁴²⁾ According to Jayawardena, intellectuals and professionals had been exposed to Western knowledge by studying abroad or in modern schools and colleges in their own countries, and they proclaimed the need for “adopting Western models”⁴³⁾ in order to make their country more competent in the emerging global context. On the other hand, both foreign and local capitalists and landowners needed “cheap or ‘free’ labor” for “plantations, agriculture, and industry,”⁴⁴⁾ a need which could be met best by women as the cheapest available source of labor. These influencers promoted “the emerging bourgeois ideology of the period,”⁴⁵⁾ which aimed to modernize marriage, family, and eventually entire nations, and to bring about new roles for women as housewives and/or hard-working laborers in a capitalist and nationalist market environment.⁴⁶⁾ Thus, the emerging discourses of *ryōsai-kenbo* also included two aims as defined by Jayawardena: “to establish in their countries a system of stable, monogamous nuclear families with educated and employable women typically associated with capitalist development and bourgeois ideology” and “to ensure that women would retain a position of traditional subordination within the family.”⁴⁷⁾

41) Nobuhiko Murakami, *Taishoukino Shokugyofujin (Women in Occupation in Taisho Period)* (Tokyo: Domesu Publisher, 1983), 42–52.

42) Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed, 1986).

43) *Ibid.*, 3–4.

44) *Ibid.*, 8.

45) *Ibid.*, 9.

46) *Ibid.*, 15.

47) *Ibid.*

III. The new concept of *ryōsai-kenbo* and the idea of *katei* or *home* in Japan

As mentioned, the idea of *ryōsai-kenbo* appeared in the late 19th century, but it started to be used in the discussion of *katei* or *home* around the late 1880s. Conceptions of *katei* (home) were closely related to the idea of social reform under the influence of Western gender ideology and middle-class Protestant values in Japan.⁴⁸⁾ The Japanese media helped espouse this new model of family in the late 1880s, and the idea spread widely in Japan from the early 1890s through the early 1900s, when the main wave of Japanese female emigration to the U.S. occurred. From the early 1890s, magazines whose titles included the word *katei* or home or which discussed home affairs were issued in a surge. Meanwhile, many newspapers started to include a women's page or a home section, and more women's magazines and journals started to be published.⁴⁹⁾ Many publications, including translated books about the home and child-rearing, emerged during this period. Moreover, "a genre of popular novels called *katei* (home) novels was established" and "the word *katei* (home)" was often heard among people of every class.⁵⁰⁾

There have been many studies of the discourses of "home" in Japan in the 1880s and the 1890s. According to Shizuko Koyama, studies on the gender discourses of "home" between the 1880s and the 1890s reveal three important characteristics. First, "the sharing of emotions among family members was highly valued; in early discourses of 'home,' ideas such as the 'harmony of family members' and 'peace and joy at home' were emphasized."⁵¹⁾ These family members consisted of "a husband and wife, their children and paternal relatives" and were required to have "emotional unity" such as "love and closeness."⁵²⁾ In addition, this emotional unity was given a moral value; morality was seen as essential to the creation of a

48) Institute of Art and Science in the Doshisha University ed., "*Shinjin*," "*Shinjokai*" *no-kenkyū*, 178.

49) Yasuyoshi Kawashima, *Fujin Kateiran Kotohajime (The Birth of Women's and Home Pages)* (Tokyo: Seiabo, 1996).

50) Koyama, *Katei no Seisei to Josei no Kokuminka*, 29–31.

51) *Ibid.*, 34–35.

52) *Ibid.*

“proper” family and home. In the special space of “home,” women were required to establish and maintain this critical emotional unity. Second, a home was run by a family whose members adhered to socio-economic gender divisions in which “men work outside and women do domestic duties and raise children.”⁵³⁾ Third, children were given a special position at home: “They were no longer regarded as the labor force of a family but were seen as those who had to be loved and educated by adults.”⁵⁴⁾ The role of mothers at home became significant in loving, raising, and training children.

However, Koyama observed that homes which tried to practice these values, partly displaying these characteristics as middle-class constructs, did not constitute a solid population bloc until the 1910s. The spread of these discourses of “home” in the 1880s and the 1890s involved “the emergence of the discursive home.”⁵⁵⁾ Nevertheless, the use of this word, *katei*, symbolizes a key shift in the process of modernizing and nationalizing individuals and families in Japan which had begun in the mid-19th century. Social change in Japanese society after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and especially World War I caused a shift in its national ideology as well.⁵⁶⁾ Rapid industrial development after these wars swelled the ranks of the urban middle class. This resulted in the spread of discourse about “home” and in the development of a population whose households displayed some of the characteristics of this conception of “home,” including its essential gender system.

Importantly, this term spread through the developing mass media. Women became major readers and writers in this space. In particular, after the increase of female education following a government act establishing girls’ high schools, many women’s magazines started to be published.⁵⁷⁾ Increasing numbers of journals and magazines promoted the ideal image of a middle-class woman as a well-educated wife and dutiful mother serving in the ideal

53) Ibid., 33.

54) Ibid., 36.

55) Ibid., 37.

56) Ibid., 25, 37, Koyama, *Ryosaikenbo-Toiukihan*, 98.

57) Kaneko, *Kindai Joseiron no Keifu*, 96.

“home.” Moreover, while the main readers of Japanese media had hitherto come from a relatively small middle-class group, now an increasing number of men and women of the middle class and other socio-economic strata joined as “mass” readers of the developing media.⁵⁸⁾ Thus, various women became readers of women’s magazines and women’s or home sections of newspapers, thereby becoming indoctrinated by the idea of being a good wife and wise mother in a modern home.

This emerging concept of “home” was “different from a conventional family or *ie* (household).”⁵⁹⁾ It reflected discourses occurring in women’s movements and media activity by new groups of women in Japan, such as those called *Atarashii Omna* (“new women”) in the *Seito* literature magazine group, who criticized the traditional image and role of the good wife and wise mother⁶⁰⁾.

The Japanese media also interpreted and used the discourses of women’s movements present in the U.S. and Western Europe to advance their own social agendas when promulgating the ideal model of the home. For example, the *Shinnjokai* (*New Women’s World*), a Christian-related magazine published between 1909 and 1919 in Japan, had the aim of “correcting the shameful and distasteful world” or “saving good homes which were disturbed” and “dealing with confusion among Japanese women which was caused by the influx of new American and European ideas.”⁶¹⁾ In this magazine, love and monogamy between husband and wife were re-emphasized. The magazine focused on a couple’s marital relationship and desirable gender roles and moral values which a family could embody. One of the main female writers in *Shinnjokai*, Japanese Christian activist Miyako Ebina, wrote that “Japanese homes (*katei*) were shameful in the eyes of the world.”⁶²⁾ She emphasized

58) Shigetoshi Nagamine, *Zasshi to Dokusha no Kindai (Modernity of Magazines and Readers)* (Tokyo: Nihon Editor School, 1997), 21–34, 182, 185.

59) Institute of Art and Science in the Doshisha University ed., “*Shinjin*,” “*Shinnjokai*” *no-kenkyu*, 177.

60) Kazue Muta, “Senryaku toshiteno onna: Meiji-Taisho no ‘onna no Gensetsu’ wo megutte (Women as Strategies: ‘Women’s Discourses’ in Meiji-Taisho Era),” *Sisou*, no. 812 (Feb. 1992): 213.

61) Institute of Art and Science in the Doshisha University ed., “*Shinjin*,” “*Shinnjokai*” *no-kenkyu*, 25.

fidelity for both men and women and criticized the contemporary sexual double standards in Japan, which required women to be faithful but allowed men to have extramarital relationships.⁶³⁾ This opinion aimed at creating and maintaining monogamous families in Japan in order to modernize and reform Japanese society.

A Christian intellectual leader, Riichiro Hoashi, clarified this shift from a conventional family to a “home” as follows:

Marital couples have been subordinate to their families...this tradition has been changing gradually... Husband and wife form a unit in society. A home cannot be established until a marital couple is formed. It is clear that the couple has new rights and obligations in this home. If people marry only for their families, for example to maintain the family line, they blaspheme the sanctity of marriage.⁶⁴⁾

These opinions were connected with the idea of social reform and modernization—a predominant message of the time was the idea of “reforming homes in order to reform Japanese society.”⁶⁵⁾ As Japanese society changed in the early 20th century, and as discourses of “home” developed, the established ideology of a “good wife and wise mother” was also transformed into a new version of the original concept. By using a new word, *katei*, or the Japanese-English word, *hōme*, the Japanese media portrayed new images of appropriate gender roles; the linguistic shift paralleled a cultural shift in ideals, yet still with traditional structures and meanings remaining.

IV. Japanese gender discourses and immigrant women

These emerging Japanese gender discourses, especially the concept of *ryōsai-kenbo*, were very influential among Japanese immigrant women. The term, *ryōsai-kenbo* often appeared in interviews, for example, those conducted

62) Ibid., 180.

63) Ibid., 180–2.

64) Riichiro Hoashi, “Fujin no Keizaiteki Dokuritsu nitsuite (Economic Independence of Women),” *Shinnjokai* 10, no. 7 (Apr. 1918): 13.

65) Ibid., 31.

by Yukiko Hanawa in the late 1980s, with *issei* (first-generation immigrant) women.⁶⁶⁾ Written sources such as Japanese immigrant newspapers and magazines, as well as the minutes and other reports of Japanese immigrant organizations in the early 20th century also tended to use this term. For instance, the immigrant newspapers sometimes reported discussions of *ryōsai-kenbo* in Japan and presented gender discourses by using the exact term or discussing this concept.⁶⁷⁾

Importantly, the characteristics and contents of this gender discourse among immigrant women were different from those in Japan in many aspects. Researchers, especially Hanawa,⁶⁸⁾ have investigated how the Japanese gender value of being a good wife and wise mother (*ryōsai-kenbo*) functioned among first-generation immigrant women, particularly examining the link between their roles in the U.S. and the value system for women which had been inculcated in them as part of their Japanese upbringing and the nationalist movement. By interviewing a sample of first-generation Japanese women, Hanawa was able to reveal their important contribution to the workforce, not only in domestic work and family businesses but also as wage earners for the family; the women in these roles “had substantially redefined what it meant to be a ‘good wife’ and ‘wise mother’ in the American context.”⁶⁹⁾

What transformed the Japanese gender ideology of a “good wife” and “wise mother” in this new context? Many studies point out the impact of Americanism and American gender ideology on the discourses of the *ryōsai-kenbo* among Japanese immigrant women. Of course, it should be noted that gender discourses in modern Japan had been greatly influenced by Western values since the late 19th century. For example, after the Japanese government officially permitted Christianity in 1873, missionaries from Western countries soon arrived to evangelize Japanese people. Some Japanese people, including prominent farmers and merchants, became Christians. Christian

66) Hanawa, “The Several World of Issei Women.”

67) See, for example, *The Nichibei*, 6 July 1915.

68) Hanawa, “The Several World of Issei Women.”

69) *Ibid.*, 87.

intellectuals and activists became “a very influential group in Japanese society” in forming gender discourses.⁷⁰⁾ However, in the U.S., Japanese immigrants tended to become Christian partly to show they could assimilate into mainstream American society. Thus, a large number of Japanese people in the U.S. were actively engaged in religious performance, participating in worship services and various activities in Christian churches and religious groups and thereby absorbing Protestant values. Moreover, in the U.S., from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, women’s expected role of correcting corruption in American society was emphasized in a reformative movement known as “progressivism.” This movement aimed to combat increasing social problems allegedly brought about by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and mass immigration. With regard to issues of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and Asia, the movement tried to promote ideas of moral and social reform among immigrant communities; the morals of a healthy home and family were reformed based on marriage and monogamy, and it was believed that society would improve through the increase of such healthy homes.⁷¹⁾ For those in the U.S. who held anti-Japanese attitudes, Japanese immigrant women were used to exemplify particular perceived negative characteristics of Japanese immigrants. By showing such perceived characteristics, anti-Japanese sentiments attempted to prove that Japanese people would not be able to assimilate themselves into American society.⁷²⁾ In order to oppose U.S. anti-Japanese discourses and support Japanese female immigration, leading discourses among Japanese immigrant communities tried to create images and roles for Japanese female

70) Rumi Yasutake, *Transnational Women’s Activism: The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004), 43; Institute of Art and Science in the Doshisha University ed., “*Shinjin*,” “*Shinjokai*” *no-kenkyu: Nijusseikishoto Kirisutokyo Journalism (Studies on “New People” and “New Women’s World:” Christian Journalism in the Early 20th Century)* (Kyoto: Jimbun-shoin, 1999), 179.

71) Kumiko Shindo, *Gender Politics: Henkakuki Americano Seijitosei (Gender Politics: Politics and Women in Changing America)* (Tokyo: Shimhyoron, 1997), 47.

72) Hanawa, “The Several World of Issei Women,” 55–57; Ichioka, “Amerika Nadeshiko,” 355; Kei Tanaka, “Japanese Picture Marriage in 1900–1924 California: Construction of Japanese Race and Gender” (Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey, 2002), 5–6.

immigrants by adopting American middle-class protestant gender values, integrating these ideas with the Japanese gender ideology.⁷³⁾ Thus, Japanese immigrant women were influenced by ongoing themes and ideas of women, family, nation, and race occurring both in Japan and the U.S.

This can be best seen in the emerging Japanese immigrant media in the U.S. In the early 20th century, the Japanese immigrant media promoted the idea of a good home and social reform for modernizing and Americanizing Japanese families, and women in particular. This process was influenced by emerging capitalism, imperialism, and nationalism in Japan and the U.S. Many articles, news reports, and literary works in the immigrant media promoted nationalistic discourses of the importance of civilizing and modernizing families to the Japanese “race” and “nation,” which could be recognized as a “superior race” in the world, in addition to trying to make Japanese immigrants eligible for citizenship in the U.S. These discourses also carried a strong message regarding the need for women to become good wives and wise mothers.⁷⁴⁾

The discourses of women and “home” in the immigrant media in the early 20th century had close links to this idea of social reform; among Japanese immigrants, it emphasized women’s role in establishing a healthy and moral family in the face of U.S. anti-Japanese movements. Japanese women then living in the U.S., and particularly first-generation Japanese immigrant women, actively expressed their opinions and ideas regarding morality and family, and some sent their writings to both the immigrant media and the Japanese media. In the immigrant media, their voices were closely linked to the formation of the racial, transnational and ethnic identity of the ‘Japanese in the U.S.’ as a group. However, Japanese women’s magazines allocated space for contributions and letters from Japanese women in the U.S. in order to construct the image of Japanese women, *ryōsai-kenbo*, in the public mind. Thus, it can be said that the writings carried in the Japanese media were given different roles from those in the Japanese immigrant media.

73) Yasutake, *Transnational Women’s Activism*.

74) Nomura-Ichimasa, “Nihon-jin imin josei-to nihongo media,” 93-105.

V. Japanese women's magazines and contributions from immigrant women

As mentioned, many immigrant newspapers carried advertisements for Japanese women's magazines, which implies there were a relatively large number of female readers of these publications in the U.S. For example, the *Nichibei* carried advertisements for *Shufuno-tomo (Friends for Housewives)*,⁷⁵⁾ *Fujokai (The Women's World)*,⁷⁶⁾ and *Fujin-Club (Women's Club)*.⁷⁷⁾ The advertisements also listed five bookshops which sold the magazines in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento. Moreover, one of the popular magazines for girls, *Shoujo Club (Girls' Club)* was available by mail from Japan or in these bookshops.⁷⁸⁾ The demographic reached by these publications was broad. As noted by one female reader in the U.S. who wrote to *Fujokai*:

I am an ordinary woman who does not have a good education. However, I love reading magazines. I have been reading many women's magazines such as *Jogakuzasshi (The World of Women's Education)* and *Fujinn-Sekai (The World of Women)* for 10 years... I am recommending female friends and acquaintances here in the U.S. to read *Fujokai (The Women's World)*.⁷⁹⁾

Women's magazines were an important medium through which Japanese women could communicate. Under the influence of this media network, female readers and contributors started to form a characteristic voice through writing essays, reports, and literary works.

There are three important features related to how the Japanese women's magazines chose and carried writings sent in by Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. First, these writings were used to show the global network, or

75) See, for example, *The Nichibei*, 19 Apr. 1923, 8 Feb. 1924, and 4 May 1924.

76) See, for example, *The Nichibei*, 10 Apr. 1922, 21 Apr. 1923, 4 Dec. 1923, and 12 Feb. 1924.

77) See, for example, *The Nichibei*, 22 Apr. 1923, 6 Aug. 1923, 9 Feb. 1924, 16 Mar. 1924, and 17 May 1924.

78) See for example, *The Nichibei*, 30 Apr. 1923 and 7 Apr. 1924.

79) *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 15, no.1 (Jan. 1917): 172–173.

discursive community, of Japanese women readers. For example, in a *Fujokai* article, one editor wrote:

A growing number of copies of this magazine were spread overseas. We thank all of you who worked actively in many places of the world, far from our home country, and still have been reading this magazine.⁸⁰⁾

It should be noted that letters, essays, and literary works sent by Japanese female readers in the U.S. comprised only a small proportion of the many writings contributed by women then living in various places around the world. In fact, many Japanese women's magazines carried a great quantity of letters and literary works such as *Tanka* poems (short poems) written by Japanese women in Japan but also those in the burgeoning global diaspora. Contributing women lived in Great Britain,⁸¹⁾ Canada,⁸²⁾ South America,⁸³⁾ Indonesia,⁸⁴⁾ China,⁸⁵⁾ and the Japanese colonies in Taiwan and Korea,⁸⁶⁾ among others. Apart from writings sent by women in Japan, almost all women's magazines of the time tended to carry more letters and literary works sent by women readers in Taiwan and Korea than from readers in other parts of the world. However, Christian-related women's magazines such as *Shinjokai*⁸⁷⁾ and *Joshiseinenkai* (the organ of the Japanese YWCA)⁸⁸⁾ tended to include many contributions from Japanese immigrant women in the U.S. or Japanese Christian women visiting that country, although other

80) *Fujokai*, May 1921, 156.

81) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 24, no. 3 (Sep. 1921): 156.

82) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 29, no. 4 (Apr. 1924): 318.

83) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 22, no. 2 (Aug. 1920): 157.

84) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 24, no. 5 (Nov. 1921): 157–158.

85) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 21, no. 5 (May 1920): 158; 24, no. 3 (Sep. 1921): 158.

86) For example, see *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 21, no. 4 (Apr. 1920): 197–198; 22, no. 2 (Aug. 1920): 157; 24, no. 3 (Sep. 1921), 158–159, *Fujin-Sekai (The World of Women)* 10, no. 7 (Jun. 1915): 128; 12, no. 1 (Jan. 1917): 132.

87) For example, see *Shinjokai (The New Women's World)* 7, no. 9 (Sep. 1915): 39–59.

88) For example, see an article contributed by the wife of the founder of the *Nichibei* newspaper, Yonako Abiko, in San Francisco, *Joshi Seinenkai (The Japanese YWCA)* 9, no. 9 (Oct. 1912): 17–19.

major Japanese women's magazines also carried some letters and literary works from Japanese women in the U.S.⁸⁹⁾ For example, in 30 issues of *Fujokai (The Women's World)*⁹⁰⁾ issued between January 1912 and June 1914, I identified nine letters and three articles from Japanese women readers and correspondents in the U.S. Some letters from women readers in the U.S. imply that women were trying to communicate with other women readers in and outside Japan through the global Japanese media network by regularly sending writings and letters to Japanese women's magazines. In *Fujokai*, a woman reader apologized to other readers for not having sent letters to the magazine much earlier and thanked other readers for their engagement, stating that she had received many letters from other Japanese women around the world since her letters started to be carried in the magazine.⁹¹⁾ Although the number of writings by Japanese women in the U.S. was smaller than those by women in Asia, they nonetheless had some impact on forming the image of the network of Japanese women living and working globally.

Second, most of the women whose writings were carried in Japanese women's magazines were wives of Japanese immigrant men and had a middle-class background. Of the eight readers who sent the nine letters and three articles to *Fujokai* mentioned above, almost all were wives of Japanese immigrant men, except for one who was married to a Japanese businessman who stayed in New York for a short period.⁹²⁾ Their husbands were farmers, farm laborers, and railway construction workers in states like California, Utah, Wyoming, Oregon, and Montana. Some women mentioned that they or their husband worked hard and lived in a rural area in the U.S. Nevertheless, many seemed to have a middle-class background, either in Japan or in their new country. Needless to say, the wife of the Japanese

89) See also, for example, *Shufunotomo (Friends of housewives)* 8, no. 2 (Feb. 1924): 304–308.

90) I checked the original copies of the magazine, which are stored in the Meiji library in the University of Tokyo. The issues which I read were as follows: *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 1, no. 1; 5, no. 1; 12, no. 3; 14, no. 5–6; 16, no. 1; 17, no. 3; 18, no. 1, 3; 20, no. 6; 21, no. 3–5; 22, no. 2; 23 no. 5; 24, no. 1, 5; 27, no. 1, 3; 29, no. 4–6 (1912–1924).

91) *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 22, no. 2 (Aug. 1920): 155.

92) *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 27, no. 1 (Jan. 1923): 56–61.

businessman was a middle-class woman. She was trained as a hairdresser in a local beauty salon in New York, and opened her own shop when she returned to Japan.⁹³⁾ However, two other women also wrote that they had graduated from or dropped out of a girl's high school.⁹⁴⁾ The fact that many women contributors were (or had been) middle class previously but were members of farming families in the U.S. reflected the changing social and economic conditions in the Japanese immigrant community in the 1910s and 1920s.

The development of agriculture in the western United States relied on a contract system for organizing "an alien labor force" of single men. At the end of the 19th century, with the development of modern transportation system such as the railways, the emerging industrial agriculture of fruits and vegetables in this area demanded a large, unskilled, cheap labor force.⁹⁵⁾ When the Chinese Exclusion law stopped Chinese labor immigration to the U.S, a severe labor shortage occurred, affecting the production of fruit and vegetables. White laborers preferred working for urban industries, leaving these intensive agricultural sectors with no new labor force that they could afford. From the end of the 19th century, Japanese immigrants contributed to the development of agriculture as useful and hard-working laborers and, later, as farmers themselves, especially in intensive forms of agriculture and when cultivating lands which had been perceived as "not suitable" for agriculture.⁹⁶⁾

By the early 20th century, many Japanese male sojourners recognized that they could not make enough money or gain enough status in the U.S. to return to Japan within the time that they had originally estimated. They started to make plans for longer or permanent settlement in the U.S. Kyutaro Abiko, the founder of the *Nichibei*, and other immigrant leaders

93) *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 27, no. 1 (Jan. 1923): 56–61.

94) *Fujokai (The Women's World)* 24, no. 3 (Sep. 1921): 157–158, no. 5 (Nov. 1921): 157.

95) Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 80; David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, *The Japanese American Experience* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 19.

96) O'Brien and Fugita, *The Japanese American Experience*, 21–22.

recommended immigrants start farming, establish their own families, and settle in the U.S. Moreover, because “the Japanese were generally excluded from participation in any sort of board-based working-class movement because of the discriminatory policies of American labor unions,” they moved to agriculture from “the urban labor market,” which had attracted “many white workers from the fields,” seeking additional opportunities for success.⁹⁷⁾

Thus, between 1905 and 1920, many male laborers could “[leave] the ranks of common laborers to become small farmers and small businessmen.”⁹⁸⁾ The yearbook published by *The Nichibei* newspaper company in 1914 reported that, after excluding wives, children, and the unemployed from the 95,483 Japanese people living in the U.S., 71,299 Japanese immigrants had occupations in the U.S. in 1913. The greatest number of these worked in farming; people in business were next and those in domestic service came third. Eventually, there was a “shift of the economic center of gravity of Japanese America from the city to the country, from a dependence on labor to entrepreneurship.”⁹⁹⁾ The number of Japanese employed as laborers for such projects as building railroads “decreased gradually.”¹⁰⁰⁾ Moreover, the economic boom experienced during World War I in the U.S. contributed to transforming the occupational characteristics of more Japanese immigrants “from wage labor to family businesses.”¹⁰¹⁾ Thus, women, as the wives of farmers and those of owners and employees in small ethnic businesses in cities, can be seen as an important group among readers and contributors of Japanese magazines.

These women often expressed their opinions in writing, mainly in relation to their roles as mothers and wives at home in developing Japanese

97) David O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, “Middleman Minority Concept: Its Explanatory Value in the Case of the Japanese in California Agriculture.” *Pacific Sociological Review* 25, no. 2 (Apr., 1982): 190.

98) Ichioka, “Amerika Nadeshiko,” 340.

99) Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle and London: The University of Washington Press, 1988), 135–137.

100) *Nichibei Nenkan (The Japanese American Yearbook)*, Vol. 10. San Francisco (CA): Nichibeishimbunsha, 1914, 99.

101) O'Brien and Fugita, *The Japanese American Experience*, 32.

communities. Because many of these women had a middle-class background or were well educated, they currently or previously had access to the gender ideology of “good wife and wise mother” espoused in Japan. Moreover, most of the women contributors were indeed mothers and wives. Thus, these Japanese women then living in the U.S. gained a voice to support the concept of a good wife and wise mother at home as a key contributor in the development of Japanese immigrant communities as well as that of the Japanese nation. The ideas offered by these women tried to introduce concepts of modern domestic work and knowledge into the Japanese context, building on the model of ideal womanhood then prevailing in the U.S. At the same time, they supported elements of Japanese gender ideology, such as working hard as a wife and mother to benefit their own family.

Now, once their voices were selected for inclusion within the Japanese media, they came to convey a different message through editorializing and manipulation of the surrounding discourse. Here, we see that a third function of the contributions of Japanese immigrant women to women’s magazine was that their voices were used to emphasize the expansion of imperial Japan and the contribution of Japanese women living in many places throughout the world. In *Fujokai*, a Japanese immigrant woman reported that her infant son had received a second prize in a local baby contest. To this, the magazine added a comment, saying “she showed the power of our country protected by Gods, and she did an incredible job for our fellow people.”¹⁰²⁾ In a letter printed in *Fujokai*, a Japanese woman living in the state of Montana introduced American ways of living and described the everyday lives she and her Japanese neighbors lived. Then, she wrote:

Foreign countries are not dangerous nor terrible places. [Whether you can be successful or not] is really up to your attitude. I hope that we can be more ambitious, and more and more women can go abroad with their will, through learning from our dear magazine, *Fujokai*.¹⁰³⁾

102) *Fujokai (The Women’s World)* 23, no. 5 (May 1921): 156.

103) *Fujokai (The Women’s World)* 29, no. 5 (May 1924): 100–103.

These voices were allocated space in the Japanese media, persuading Japanese women to realize that they were also involved in nation building and should therefore contribute to the development of the Japanese nation as active members.

VI. Conclusion

Throughout my research, I exemplified how writings submitted by Japanese women in the U.S. were used to reinforce or form the Japanese gender ideology, *ryōsai-kenbo* (a good wife and wise mother), in the Japanese media. In the early 20th century, Japanese women living in the U.S. sent a variety of submissions to women's magazines in Japan. I analyze their letters and essays, which were printed in several mainstream women's magazines such as *Fujokai* (Women's World).

The way in which Japanese women's magazines such as *Fujokai*, allocated space for writings by Japanese women in the U.S. was related to the construction of discourses of Japanese women. It was associated with the discourse of women as "mothers and wives at home," under the influence of both Japanese and American middle-class gender ideologies and ideas of social reform.

Well-educated women or women who had a middle-class background in Japan played a significant role as readers and contributors to these magazines. Many lived in developing Japanese communities in the U.S. In letters and essays contributed by the women themselves, Japanese women in the U.S. were described as having dual roles as mothers and wives, contributing to defining the structure of Japanese families in this emerging Japanese immigrant society as well as for the Japanese nation in a global context. Japanese women readers in the U.S. may have absorbed and sometimes adjusted the ideas of a "good wife and wise mother" in a "good home" in their socio-political, economic, or cultural contexts in the U.S. However, in the Japanese media network, their voices were also used to emphasize the development of the Japanese nation, creating an image of good Japanese mothers and wives who lived and worked all over the world.