

Meiji's New Women from the Perspective of Visual Fusion based on Soseki Natsume's Novel *Sanshiro*

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Abstract: *Sanshiro* is the first of the three early works by Japanese writer Soseki Natsume. Mineko Satomi, the character image of the female protagonist, extends to the other two works, *Sorekara* and *Mon*. The event of Thirty yen in the work not only demonstrates Soseki Natsume's unique view on money, but also demonstrates the author's views on women, ethics and civilization criticism. This study utilizes the method of Role-model Theory from the perspective of fusion of horizons to explore the author's creative motivation for the new women, the similarities and differences between Mineko and her prototype Haru Hiratsuka under a pseudonym of Raityou Hiratsuka, the mission and significance of the Meiji new women and the famous magazine *Seitou*.

Keywords: *Sanshiro*; Soseki Natsume; Japanese Women's Education; Raityou Hiratsuka; New Women.

1. Introduction

It is well known that Mineko Satomi, the heroine of Soseki Natsume's (1867-1916) novel *Sanshiro* (1908), was based on Raityou Hiratsuka (1886-1971), a Japanese women's activist and writer. *Sanshiro* Ogawa was based on Toyotaka Komiya. Sohachi Nonomiya was based on the physicist Torahiko Terada. Yojiro Sasaki was based on the children's writer Miekichi Suzuki, who was a disciple of Natsume's Thursday Club. Professor Cho Hirota is based on Professor Tei Iwamoto.

Much has been written about the correlation between Mineko Satomi and Raityou Hiratsuka, such as Hideaki Sasaki (1994, *The Arrival of the New Woman - Raityou Hiratsuka and Soseki*), and Sumiko Sekiguchi (2014, *The People Who Deviated from the Principle of Good Wives and Good Mothers - Toshiko, Raityou, and Soseki*). Taking the marriages of Soseki Natsume's female disciples, Isoko Asabuki and the sisters Yoshiko Mozume and Kazuko Mozume as examples, Toshiki Hashikawa elaborates on the similarities of Mineko's marriage, and clearly points out that Mineko is full of negative characteristics such as arrogance, permissiveness, pursuit of freedom of love, and love of literature and art. These characteristics is opposed to the traditional good wives and good mothers, which were common among the so-called schoolgirls during the Meiji period [1]. Michiyo Okada, the prototype of Yoshiko Yokoyama, the heroine of Katai Tayama's (1872-1930) private novel *Futon* (1907, *Shinshosetsu*), is also a representative of so-called schoolgirls. On the other hand, there are those who hold the view that Raityou Hiratsuka has won the struggle against patriarchy, against the media, which represents male power, and against the knowledge and sexuality inherent in the self [2].

In addition, Shuzo Ogura points out that the typical image of Felicitas as a wicked woman in the novel *The Undying Past* by the German writer Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928) influenced not only the creation of the image of the unconscious hypocrite in *Sanshiro* but also the creation of *Sorekara* and *Mon* [3]. Shouhei Oooka (1909-1988) was also

convinced of this viewpoint [4].

The purpose of this paper is to explore Soseki Natsume's view of the new woman and the new women's movement in the Meiji era from the perspective of modeling theory by comparing the character of Mineko Satomi with the archetypal feminist activist, Raityou Hiratsuka.

2. Opportunity for the Creation of New Woman

Soseki Natsume's student Souhei Morita (1881-1949) worked as a teacher at a girls' school in 1908 and fell in love with a student, Haru Hiratsuka (pen name Raityou Hiratsuka). Morita already had a wife at the time, so they eloped to Shiobara, Tochigi Prefecture, to be martyred, but this ended in failure due to Morita's remorse. At the time, Morita Souhei was 27 years old and Haru Hiratsuka was 22. The incident became known as the Soot Incident (also known as the Shiobara Incident), and became a scandalous affair. Soseki was in charge of the literary section of the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* at the time, and suggested that Morita write a work about it. After obtaining permission from the Hiratsuka family, Morita wrote a long story that was serialized in the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* from January to May 1909 for 127 episodes.

Although Soseki wrote the preface to *Soot*, he was quite dissatisfied with the portrayal of Haru Hiratsuka (Tomoko in *Soot*). And he decided to write a novel about new woman. In the novel *Sorekara* (1909), he commented on *Soot* through the characters who appeared in the novel, which shows his dissatisfaction.

There are also references to the female playwright Aphra Behn (1660-1689) and the ancient Greek poetess Sappho (630?-592?) in *Sanshiro*. They also appear in casual conversation or in jokes, which shows that Soseki Natsume paid a lot of attention to intellectual women. *The London Study Diary* contains the following sentence: "On the night of 20 May, I had a chat with Ikeda. We gave detailed descriptions of ideal beauties. There is still a gap between our wives and the beauties. I laughed out loud." [5] Soseki was 35 years old

when he wrote this diary and had married Kyoko in 1896. Ikeda is the chemist Kikunae Ikeda. The diary does not record the content of their conversation, but it can be seen that Soseki Natsume had already begun to conceive the image of ideal beauty in 1901 or even earlier. Regarding Soseki Natsume's wife, Kyoko, there has been a saying of bad wife and tough wife, which was put forward by Toyotaka Komiya and other disciples of the Thursday Club. In this regard, a contrary view was put forward in the book *Soseki No Omoide* (1929), told by Kyoko Natsume, transcribed by Yuzuru Matsuoka. There is no need to argue whether this is true or not, but for Soseki, who suffered from intermittent depression, sensing the gap between his ideal beauty and his wife may have been one of the opportunities for him to create New Woman.

3. The Social and Contemporary Context of Sanshiro

Sanshiro is a work about growing up as a young man at the end of the Meiji period, and is highly regarded as Japan's original novel of Bildungsroman. Kyushu-born Sanshiro Ogawa came to Tokyo to study, and on the other hand used it as a way to escape the marriage his mother had arranged for him in his hometown. Through the eyes of youth, the author depicts and criticizes the social climate in Japan, which is eager to catch up with Europe and the United States and blindly accepts Western culture in its entirety. With the caution, inferiority complex, and confusion of a countryman, Sanshiro embarks on a new life at the university. This is a work that depicts a young man's insecurity and confusion in the face of learning, friendship, and love, and is the prelude to the pre-trilogy of *Sorekara* (1909, serialized in the *Asahi Shimbun*) and *Mon* (1910, serialized in the *Asahi Shimbun*).

The new women in *Sanshiro*, Mineko Satomi and Yoshiko Nonomiya, were well-born and had received Western-style higher education. Mineko is even more beautiful and generous, with the beauty face and Western-style double eyelids. Her behavior and speech are Ibsen-style, mystery, rough, Western-style woman. Sanshiro is deeply attracted to Mineko and discovers the three spiritual worlds of his life: his hometown (mother), his studies (teacher), and his love (Mineko), and envisions a new life in which he will bring his mother from the countryside to Tokyo, marry a beautiful wife, and devote himself to his studies.

Throughout the Meiji era, the university advancement rate throughout Japan was less than 1%, and women were unable to enroll in regular universities and had to attend girls' schools. In 1886, First Higher school (presently The University of Tokyo) was established. That is why First higher school students Sanshiro and Mineko do not epitomize the popular youth of the entire Meiji period. According to Yoshikazu Kataoka who is a Japanese literary scholar and critic (1897~1957), Mineko, like Sanshiro, was a person who was only half liberated [6]. Both are lost sheep in an era of alternating old and new values. If we look at the intellectual youth of the Meiji period as a whole, we can see that they were suppressed by the patriarchal system in their families and became the sons of following their fathers' footsteps, while in society, they were educated only as the screws who were expected to make a difference in accordance with the national policy. In such a state of the times, although they will be confronted with the natural sprouting of the bud of love, they will certainly choose to know what to do [7].

After the victories in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-

Japanese War, the whole of Japan regarded itself as a first-class great power and gradually embarked on the route of foreign aggression and expansion by enriching the country and strengthening the army with big ships and huge cannons. Yoshikazu Kataoka points out, "For author, although this atmosphere of social unease is vaguely pervasive in all aspects, he is unable to dig any further into the various reasons behind this unease." [6] However, in the context of the historical era, the people and the intellectuals, although dissatisfied with the war, were at a loss as to what to do, just like the lost sheep under the trend of the devil (militarism). This critique of the Meiji government, the era, and the war is also scattered throughout *Wagahai Wa Neko De Aru, Sorekara, Botchan, Bungakuron*, and *Gendai Nihon No Kaika*.

4. Old-fashioned Men and New-fashioned Women

In Chapter 12 of the novel, Yojiro Sasaki said to Sanshiro, "You're a fool to like that kind of woman! What's the use of liking her! First of all, isn't she the same age as you? Women always fall in love with men of the same age, which is a love concept of vegetable shopkeeper Oshichi."

The love of Sanshiro is still Edo-style, as Yojiro explains. Here, Oshichi is a woman who actually existed in the history of the pre-Edo period. She was sentenced to death by fire for setting a fire because she missed her lover. The incident was included in the recent novelist Saikaku Ihara's *Five Women Who Loved Love*. The character of Oshichi is well known in literature, kabuki, bunraku, and other arts and crafts. In addition, the comparative writer Atsushi Koyano (1981-1987) points out that Sanshiro's various conjectures about Mineko, which were essentially a test of a woman's sincerity toward him through various actions, were male-oriented and more typical of the literary viewpoints at the beginning of the Edo period, and that Sanshiro, who held such a viewpoint, had a egoism complex of his own [8].

On the other hand, Haru Hiratsuka, the third daughter of a high-ranking official in the Accounting Prosecutor's Office, is a talented woman who graduated from a women's university in Japan. She opposes the education of good wives and good mothers, seeks to her own self by sitting in a Zen temple, and holds a strong interest in literature. In 1907, Haru studied at the Women's English College, but became bored with the ascetic school culture and switched to the Narumi Women's English School (Idacho, Kojimachi Ward, Tokyo). Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which was used as a textbook at the school, led to Haru's first interest in literature. She participated in the Girls' Literary Society, an extracurricular literary seminar organized by Choukou Ikuta (1882-1936) and souhei Morita. Female Waka singer Akiko Yosano (1878-1942) was also one of the organizers. In addition to Haru Hiratsuka, 15 or 16 other women participated in the organization, including Kikue Yamakawa (1890-1980) [9].

In 1903, Raityou envisioned the Meiji government's new education policy and aspired to study English, but her father objected on the grounds that women do not need to study outside of a girls' school, and she was eventually enrolled in the Department of Home Economics at the Japanese Women's Vocational School (presently Japanese Women's University). After the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in the following year, populist education gradually intensified. At this time, Raityou caught up in the conflict between the pursuit of the outside and the self, and buried herself in reading books on

religion and philosophy. After reading *Zenkai Ichiran* by Kosen Imakita (1816-1892), she became an ardent Zen practitioner and followed the rituals of the Rinzaï Sect [10]. While practicing at the Zen dojo which named Ryoboan, she studied Chinese and English at Nishogakusha (presently Nishogakusha University) and the Women's College of English (presently Tsuda University). In 1907 she enrolled in the Narumi Women's English School.

It is said that Sakyamuni attained enlightenment through sitting meditation. In Japan, the Rinzaï Sect began with the monk Eisai who travelled to the Song dynasty, and sitting meditation was once very popular before the Russo-Japanese War. Soseki Natsume, Touson Shimazaki (1872-1943), Daisetsu Suzuki (1870-1966), and Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945) were among the most famous people who practiced this art. Sosuke, the protagonist of *Mon*, can only cope with his affliction by sitting in Zen (Rinzaï).

According to the chronology [11], in December 1894, after the death of his sister-in-law, Tose, Souseki went to Engakuji Temple in Kamakura at the age of twenty-eight and began to sit in Zen meditation in order to pursue the answers to life's questions. However, he was still at a loss for 2 weeks. Three months after leaving the gates of Engakuji Temple, Souseki went to Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture, alone as a middle school teacher. This year, the symptoms of neurasthenia were particularly severe. That's why there is a line in the novel *Mon*: "No matter how you knock on the door, the gatekeeper on the other side of the door doesn't respond. Only heard the voice: 'Knocking is useless, you have to find a way to open the door and come in.'" The psychology of the main character, Souseki, is similar to that of Souseki at the time. Raityou Hiratsuka, on the other hand, sat in Zen several times in her life, and as a woman, attempted to achieve equality with men in the religious world, which was very rare at the time, and

was therefore derided by the media at the time as Zen Daughter.

In terms of marriage, Mineko is opposed to another Yamate Daughter, Yoshiko Nonomiya. Yoshiko had talked about the bank clerk who had suddenly gotten engaged to Mineko with a sarcastic tone, "He's the one who had said that he wanted to marry me. Hahaha, it's ridiculous, isn't it?" However, it is evident that Mineko's marriage partner is a male who does not care who he marries. Yoshiko's rejection of marriage is motivated by the fact that she possesses a more independent self-spirit than Mineko.

In the Edo period, Japan was deeply influenced by the Confucian idea of the inferiority of men and women, which demanded that a woman should walk three paces (three feet) behind a man. Today, this still plays a subtle role in society. At the beginning of the novel *Sanshiro*, a strange young mother appears on the train. She not only rides alone, but also blandly sleeps with Sanshiro and laugh at him the next day, "You're a gutless man, aren't you?". Compare this with the humble, meek, and obedient mother who follows her young son around in Naoya Shiga's (1883-1971) short story *To Abashiri* (1910), which was published at almost the same time. Despite the individual differences in characterization, it is clear that none of the women in *Sanshiro*, which was serialized in 1908, fulfilled the Meiji Era's requirement for women to be good wives and good mothers.

5. Men and Women and Money

The author believes that the relationship between the characters about borrowing money in *Sanshiro* is the most complicated in Souseki's works. The relationships is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Borrowing Money in *Sanshiro*

The flow of money relationship	Characters and Events	Change in amount	Main chapters in which it appears
Nonomiya lends Professor Hirota 20 yen.	Nonomiya misappropriates the 20 yen his parents gave to his sister Yoshiko to buy a violin. It was lent to Professor Hirota for his moving deposit.	20 yen.	Chapter 8
Professor Hirota gives 20 yen to Yojiro	Professor Hirota receives a stipend of 60 yen and gives 20 yen to Yojiro to return the money to Nonomiya, but Yojiro loses all of it betting on horses. When Mineko is reluctant to lend money to Yojiro, Yojiro borrows money from Sanshiro. Therefore, Sanshiro borrows 30 yen from Mineko.	20 yen becomes zero.	Chapter 8
Sanshiro borrows 30 yen from Mineko.	Yojiro returns 20 yen to Nonomiya. Sanshiro writes a letter to his mother in the countryside asking for the money on an invented pretext. The money is again obtained through Nonomiya, a fellow villager of Sanshiro.	20 yen becomes 30 yen.	Chapter 9
Mineko takes back 30 yen.	Mineko is disappointed in Sanshiro. Sanshiro learns of Mineko's marriage to a stranger.	30 yen returned to zero.	Chapters 10 to 12

Among the above characters, the wealthiest one is undoubtedly Minako, who also has her own bank account in her name. And the competitive Minako calmly controlled several males and thus became proud. Souseki praised *The Undying Past* in his January 1909 conversation notes (*Foreign Fiction Operas That Make You Love to Read*) of the magazine *Fun*, "I admire the character of the women named Felicitas and her manner of narration. I would like to write a character of such characterization once in my life." In October of the same year Souseki again claimed in the magazine *Waseda Bungaku* that "Felicitas has a very sensitive character,

and I would rate her as an unconscious hypocrite. Though inappropriate of such a translation..... as coquettishness, is not deliberate, but almost unconscious nature that captures the male" And since *Sanshiro* was serialized from September to December of the same year, it's natural to notice that Mineko in *Sanshiro* bears a resemblance to Felicitas in the form of a bad girl.

Mineko lends Sanshiro 30 yen with great generosity. In terms of the relationship between the sexes, Mineko not only strongly attracts Sanshiro, but also enjoys a sense of superiority in the form of borrowing money, which is rare for

women of her generation, and which is acquired by a man. Alternatively, her act of borrowing money implies a desire to maintain a bonding desire or a desire to manipulate with Sanshiro. Therefore, the perceptive Yojiro also said, "You can borrow this money forever!" At the end of the story, Mineko says to Sanshiro, "I know my sin, and my sin is always before me," which shows that she had already realized that she was an unconscious bias. In Japan, from the Edo period onward, there were many greats such as Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Ihara Saikaku who created works such as *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, *The Love Suicides at Ikutama*, *Voyage of Geisha Girl in Hakata*, *The Oil-Hell Murder*, *This Scheming World*, and *Nihon Eitaigura*, reflecting the clash between moral values and the concepts of money. In these works, there are even more numerous murders caused by money. The literature of the Edo period was a secular literature of the downward cultural shift and the townspeople. It is the literature of entertainment for the common people in the period when the law was not yet sound and the feudal society was still in place. However, in the history of modern literature, it is rare to find writers like Souseki Natsume, who combined his own experience with the environment in which he grew up, to write passionately about disputes over money and human feelings [12-13].

For example, from his debut novel *Wagahai Wa Neko De Aru* (1905, *Hototogisu*) to his unfinished novel *Meian* (1916, *Asahi Shimbum*), including *Kusamakura* (1906, *Shinshosetsu*), there is a line that says, "It's easy to get sleepy in the spring, so the cat forgets to catch mice, and the man forgets to pay his debts." *Sorekara*, which is the sequel to *Sanshiro*, also contains a description of how Daisuke borrows 200 yen from her sister-in-law Umeko in order to lend 500 yen to Hiraoka. His later work, *Kokoro* (1914, *Asahi Shimbum*), begins with a dispute over the estate of Sensei and his relatives. The protagonist of Souseki Natsume's novel *Botchan* (1906, *Hototogisu*), Botchan, had a monthly salary of 40 yen in Meiji 39 (1906, *Hototogisu*), and if we look at the prices of that time, we'd know 1 yen was equivalent to about 20,000 yen in the Rwa era. At that time, carpenters were paid only 1 yen a day, and Takuboku Ishikawa (1881-1912) earned 12 yen a month when he was employed at the *Otaru Daily News*, and 25 yen a month when he was the chief editor of the *Kushiro News*. Ougai Mori (1862-1922), who fulfilled several jobs at the same time, earned as much as 300 yen a month [14].

The setting of these works in which money governs the fate of the protagonist is clearly intentional. Borrowing money is an act that the Japanese swear by the righteousness of their reputation [15], not to mention the fact that it is a man who borrows a sizable amount of money from a woman in *Sanshiro*. Sanshiro's mother wrote that 30 yen was enough for a family of four for half a year. Sanshiro, who came from a middle-class family in the Kyushu countryside, deeply sensed the difference between views of people from countryside and in Tokyo on money. He put the money mailed from his mother on his pillow and thinks, "This 30 yen is also the product of the destiny fooled around." Mineko's sudden engagement to the bank clerk had to be seen as a compromise, driven by utilitarianism on the part of both the man and the woman. In this regard, it has been argued that the 30-yen loan incident was also the medium through which the teenager Sanshiro awakened from his inner three worlds to the real world [16].

On the other hand, there is also the view that Souseki's attitude toward money is not uniformly spiteful and hostile,

but also has the side of the affirmative function of money as a necessity for the continuity of life and spiritual stability [17]. Souseki's attitude towards money is also scattered in the lecture *Watashi No Kojinsyugi* and the essay *Eijitsusyohin*, etc. The author believes that it embodies his unique ethical outlook on the conflict between money and morality in the early days of the establishment of capitalism in the context of the Meiji era when the conflict between the rich and the poor was aggravated by the rush for quick success and instant profits.

6. Raityou's Feathering and the Meiji Women's Movement

The educator Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901) published *Encouragement of Learning* (1872), followed by *Onna Daigaku Hyoron* (1899) and *Shin Onna Daigaku* (1899), in which he criticized the ideas of *The Great Learning for Women*, a book of lessons written by Ekiken Kaibara (1630-1714), for being corrupt and bad. In 1871, the Iwakura Mission, which visited Europe and the United States, departed from the port of Yokohama. The mission team contained 58 Japanese students, including five women. Umeko Tsuda, who is under 7 years old, is also among them. In the early Meiji period, Tokyo Girls' School, Meiji Girls' School, Women's Teachers' Training College, and Prefectural Girls' Schools were established, giving rise to a large number of female educators and social activists, such as Sutematsu Ooyama (1860-1919), Kakei Atomi (1840-1926), Utako Shimoda (1854-1936), and Yae Nijijima (1845-1932), etc. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been an unprecedented development of women's education in Japan, and the number and scope of women's employment have gradually grown and expanded. Publications and magazines such as *Hujinkai* (1902), *Hujinnotomo* (1903), and *Hujinsekai* (1906), which were aimed at female readers, also sprang up on the stage of history. Among them, the women's literary magazine *Seitou*, which featured an all-female audience, attracted a lot of attention.

The pen name Raityou originated when Haru Hiratsuka, while recuperating in Nagano Prefecture after the Shiobara Incident, was attracted to a species of Rock ptarmigan that changed its plumage throughout the seasons, and so she adopted this pen name. This marked the 25-year-old Haru's transformation, meaning she was reborn. Three years later, Raityou Hiratsuka used her dowry to finance the publication of *Seitou* with female writers. The cover of the inaugural issue (September 1911) was by Chieko Naganuma (1886-1938) (wife of Koutarou Takamura). The magazine *Seitou* is a collection of new women of the Meiji era, such as Noe Itou (1895-1923), Beniyoshi Otake (1893-1966), and Toshiko Tamura (1884-1945). It has become a landmark in the history of women in modern Japan. Genshi (Originally), women were the sun. The declaration of this wonderful phrase in the inaugural issue, had a strong impact on the society at that time. Regarding the word Genshi, Lichien Yen quoted Yuan Xiang Saying, which is similar to the meaning of the Zen Buddhist saying that one's own face is the same as that of one's parents before they are born [18]. Akiko Yosano also published an article titled *On the Day of the Great Mountains Singing* in the inaugural issue. In 1913, Raityou, together with Ichiyu Higuchi (1872-1896) and Akiko Yosano, were praised by Ougai Mori as new women. The magazine also received financial support from Ougai Mori's wife. However, in the

same year, *Seitou* was banned, and Raityou herself broke off her relationship with her father and published an article entitled *About Independence - A Letter to My Parents* in 1914. In 1915, Raityou transferred the editing rights of the magazine to Noe Itou. The magazine was banned because of the sensitive issues of the time, such as chastity, prostitution, and abortion. In 1916, after the February issue, it was closed and its historical mission was over.

The word *Seitou* originally referred to the women who gathered in the middle of the 18th century to discuss literature in the salon of the social reformer and noblewoman Elizabeth Montagu in London. But it was derisively labeled by men as blue stocking, which referred to women of talent and also meant women who showed off their talents. It is assumed that the magazine mocked herself by the title of Raityou. Noe Itou denied marriage as an institution, but not love, and Raityou resonated with her article, *The Way of the New Woman*, and published the article *I am a New Woman* in the January 1913 issue of *Chuokoron*. Subsequently, Raityou Hiratsuka lived with her boyfriend, the painter Hiroshi Okumura (1889-1964), under a different name from that of her husband and wife, and was not naturalized until after the birth of her eldest son.

7. Conclusion

Mineko Satomi in *Sanshiro* does not deviate from her family and ethics, but returns to her family in the form of marriage. It has been pointed out that among the many female characters in Souseki's works, the author admired Mineko Satomi and gave her a successful marriage in the secular sense. It is clear that Mineko's characterization extends to the remarried Michiyo in *Sorekara* and the isolated Oyone in *Mon*. However, Mineko's model was only Haru Hiratsuka, a so-called schoolgirl during the period of the Soot Incident, and not a feminist activist Raityou Hiratsuka.

In 1919, together with Fusae Ichikawa (1893-1981), Raityou formed the New Women's Association that only consisted of women. In 1923, Raityou entered the writing period of her career. After the war, she continued to call for peace at the age of 84 and participated in demonstrations against the security treaty. Until her death in 1971, Raityou spent her life on the front lines of the struggle between women and the anti-war movement. Souseki Natsume, on the other hand, had already passed away in 1916, an afterthought that he had no chance to witness.

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