Title	The Japanese new woman : Hiratsuka Raichō's feminism and its influence upon the Japanese women's movement
Sub Title	日本の「新しい女」： 平塚らいてうのフェミニズムと日本の婦人運動に及ぼした影響
Author	富田, 裕子(Tomida, Hiroko)
Publisher	慶應義塾大学日吉紀要刊行委員会
Publication year	2020
Jtitle	慶應義塾大学日吉紀要. 人文科学 (The Hiyoshi review of the humanities). No.35 (2020.) ,p.245- 274
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	
Genre	Departmental Bulletin Paper
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN10065043-20200630-0245

The Japanese New Woman: Hiratsuka Raichō's Feminism and Its Influence upon the Japanese Women's Movement

Hiroko Tomida

Introduction

After the end of the Meiji era, particularly during the Taishō period, female organisations were established to support women's education, wider female employment, legal reform affecting marriage, divorce and child custody, women's health, birth control, suffrage and the like. Ichikawa Fusae, Katō Shidzue, Oku Mumeo, Yamakawa Kikue, Hiratsuka Raichō and others devoted themselves to such causes. Like other Japanese feminists, Hiratsuka Raichō applied her convictions to such varied problems. As she made a unique contribution to many women's causes before 1945 and helped raise women's status, she is usually considered to be one of the most influential feminists in Japan. One cannot talk about Japanese feminist movements between 1910 and 1945 without great attention to her.

This article is an evaluation of this major figure's life and work, drawing special attention to her feminist activities in comparison with those of her contemporary feminists. It aims to assess her key roles in the history of the Japanese women's movement, and her achievements and limitations as a feminist leader.

Women's status in the Meiji and Taishō periods

Although the main objective of this article is an assessment of Hiratsuka, one cannot fully evaluate her courage and challenge to society without discussing the social, political and legal situation of women, especially in the Meiji and Taishō periods when Hiratsuka developed her feminist activities. What rights were women at that time deprived of? Which laws were detrimental to women?

The Meiji Constitution, the Shūgiin Giin Senkyo Hō (Electoral Law to choose members of the House of Representatives), the Kizokuin Hō (House of Peers' Act), and other laws such as the Giin Hō (Diet Law), the Kaikei Hō (Public Accounts Act), were all promulgated in 1889, but none of them aimed specifically to upgrade women's status.(1) For example, the Meiji Constitution conferred no national political rights or voice to women.(2) Under the Shūgiin Giin Senkyo Hō, both the right to vote for members of the House of Representatives and eligibility for election were only given to men.(3) Women lacked civil rights, and could not hold office in government or take up any other public office.(4) The promulgation of the Shūkai Oyobi Seisha Hō (Assembly and Political Organisation Law) on 25 July 1890 deprived women of their freedom to participate in political activities.(5) Its enactment enabled the government to suppress women's involvement in all political matters. Articles 4 and 25 of the law were incorporated into Article 5 of the

(1) Emura Eiichi, *Meiji no Kenpō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), p. 34.

(2) Sotozaki Mitsuhiro, *Kōchiken Fujin Kaihō Undōshi* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1975), pp. 40–41; Sotozaki Mitsuhiro, *Nihon Fujin Ronshi: Joseiron Hen*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1986).

(3) 'Shūgiin Senkyo Hō', *Hōritsu*, 3 (11 February, 1889), reprinted in Ichikawa Fusae (ed.), *Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1977), pp. 105–125.

(4) Emura, *Meiji no Kenpō*, p. 39.

(5) Yoneda Sayoko, *Kindai Nihon Joseishi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1972), p. 58.

Chian Keisatsu Hō (the Peace Police Law), enacted in March 1900.[6] Clause 1 of Article 5 stipulated that women were forbidden to join political organisations. Clause 2 of Article 5 provided that women were forbidden to organise or attend political assemblies.[7] Under this law women were deprived of political rights, and were excluded from almost all political activities.

The legislation which was most damaging to women's status was the Meiji Minpō (the Meiji Civil Code), which was promulgated in 1898. Its main objectives were to prioritise family lineage and a patriarchal family '*ie*' system.[8] Many of the Meiji Civil Code's provisions demonstrated male-dominated, Confucian features common to the warrior family system in the Edo period. The Code preserved and systematically legalised many principles of the *ie* system, having a pervasive effect upon people's private lives.[9] It also corresponded to the Emperor-based notion of the perfect woman: one who had strong loyalty and patriotism, womanly virtues based on Confucian teaching, who conformed to the *ie* system, and served as a faithful servant to husband or head of the family.[10] Such views pervaded Japanese women's lives, taking away their freedom to adopt other identities or options. The

(6) Itoya Toshio, *Josei Kaihō no Senkusha: Nakajima Toshiko to Fukuda Hideko* (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1984), p. 169. Article 4 stipulated that all women were banned from attending political speech meetings, and political assemblies (along with servicemen, policemen, teachers, students and minors). Article 25 stipulated that all women were forbidden from joining political organisations.

(7) Suzuki Yūko, *Joseishi o Hiraku*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1989), pp. 80–81.

(8) 'Meiji sanjū-ichi-nen Minpō, Shinzokuhen, Sōzokuhen' (June, 1898), in Yuzawa Yasuhiko (ed.), *Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1976), pp. 239–276.

(9) Helen M. Hopper, *A New Woman of Japan: A Politcal Biography of Katō Shidzue* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 187–188. It was extraordinary that the Meiji Civil Code survived for half a century, until the new civil code came into effect on 1 January, 1948. That finally abolished the *ie* system, and deprived head of the family of his authority and rights.

(10) Tanaka Sumiko (ed.), *Josei Kaihō no Shisō to Kōdō: Senzen Hen* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1975), pp. 115–116.

Meiji Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education were also used to reinforce the ideology and authority of the *ie* system.[11] Through educational policies whose main objectives were to encourage men to offer their service to the state, and encourage women to become 'good wives and wise mothers', the government imparted ideas of patriotic nationalism, and tied its educational policies to the *ie* system.[12]

Hiratsuka's early life and the formation of her radicalism and feminism

Although Hiratsuka grew up at a time when many Japanese women faced severe discrimination and many constraints, she challenged the *ie* system and the conditions of women's subordination, and took many steps to destroy old customs and laws which restricted women. In her school days at Ochanomizu Girl's High School she opposed the *ryōsai kenbo kyōiku* (an education for making good wives and wise mothers), which was the government-approved educational policy for women, and was widely adopted at schools.[13] Hiratsuka, who was frustrated with school objectives and conventions, described her miserable school days by stating that she felt like a little bird in a small cage, about to suffocate.[14] She boycotted classes for the compulsory *shūshin* (morals) course, which was the core of the

---

(11) Vera Mackie, *Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labour and Activism, 1900–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

(12) Itoya Toshio, *Meiji Ishin to Josei no Yoake* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), p. 235.

(13) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Mukashi no jogakusei to ima no jogakusei', *Josei Kaizō* (January, 1950), reprinted in Hiratsuka Raichō Chosakushū Henshū Iinkai (ed.), *Hiratsuka Raichō Chosakushū*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1984), pp. 76–77; Hiratsuka Raichō, *Genshi Josei wa Taiyō de Atta: Hiratsuka Raichō Jiden*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1971), p. 117. On Hiratsuka's life, see Hiratsuka Raichō (trans. by Teruko Craig), *In the Beginning, Woman was the Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Yoneda Sayoko, *Hiratsuka Raichō: Kindai Nihon no Demokurashii to Jendā* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002).

(14) Hiratsuka Raichō, *Watakushi no Aruita Michi* (1955, Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Centā, 1994 edn), p. 31.

ryōsai kenbo kyōiku.[15] She was the only student who boycotted the course.[16] All aspects of her behaviour here demonstrated an independent mind and a potential that later became more publicly evident. Although it was extremely rare for women in the Meiji period to study at a higher education level, Hiratsuka, who took education seriously from an early age and was well-motivated, entered the Nihon Joshi Daigakkō (the Japan Women's College), in spite of her father's opposition.[17] She chose the college because she read its founder Naruse Jinzō's *Joshi Kyōiku* (*Women's Education*), and was impressed by his aim to educate female students as human beings, as women and as Japanese citizens.[18]

After she graduated from the college, in 1908 she attempted double suicide with Morita Sōhei (a literary critic and writer, who was already married with a child), which was known as the Shiobara Incident.[19] Hiratsuka, who was unhappy with familial expectations, was clearly seeking to break away from Japanese middle-class conventions. Her opposition to the *ie* system and the morals expected of women contributed to the Shiobara Incident. Her conduct in running away from home with a married man and attempting double suicide was a challenge to the established family system, since unmarried daughters from the upper and upper-

---

⑮ Kobayashi Tomie, *Hiratsuka Raichō: Ai to Hangyaku no Seishun* (1977, Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1986 edn), pp. 60–62.

⑯ Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 1, p. 116. The *shūshin* class was devoted to moral training which entered the school curriculum when the *Gakusei* (the Fundamental Education Law) was enforced. Both males and females had to study it at primary and secondary schools, apart from private schools, between 1872 and 1945. Textbooks for this course were written and supplied by the government. At secondary-school level, where a co-educational system was not in effect, girls' high schools used textbooks designed for girls only entirely different from their male equivalents.

⑰ Hiratsuka, *Watakushi*, p. 36.

⑱ Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 1, pp. 152–153.

⑲ Horiba Kiyoko, *Seitō no Jidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), pp. 29–35; Sasaki Hideaki, *Atarashii Onna no Tōrai* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), pp. 8–100; Kobayashi Tomie, *Hito to Shisō* (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1988), pp. 58–80.

middle classes were prevented from having social relationships with men outside their family and were expected to obey their fathers.[20]

Until the incident Hiratsuka had led a relatively uneventful life, and was considered an innocent, attractive, well-brought-up daughter from a respectable family, with good marital prospects. But the incident transformed her life and reputation. In one night these events reduced her social status from that of '*hakoiri musume*' ('a girl brought up in a box'), to that of a notorious young woman who had disgraced her family. However, Hiratsuka's behaviour exerted much influence on many young female students, who were becoming more conscious of their own value and importance and wanted to express their own views. It was reported that they showed sympathy for her and praised her conduct.[21] Journalists and educationalists interpreted the incident as a negative influence on young women. One commentator saw Hiratsuka's conduct as a social threat, poisoning the minds of innocent young women.[22] Hiratsuka was depicted as an immoral, selfish, possessive woman, who had tried to destroy Morita's marriage and take him from his wife and child. The press made concentrated attacks on Hiratsuka.[23]

Her name was removed from the list of the alumni association of the Japan Women's College, on the grounds that she had brought disgrace to the institution, which had a reputation as an ideal educational establishment producing elite women who could become fine examples to others.[24] She was harassed for several months, and received many obscene letters, including half-joking marriage proposals.[25] What was most remarkable was the way in which she dealt with the

---

⑳ Horiba, *Seitō no Jidai*, pp. 32–38.

㉑ *Jiji Shinpō* (19 March, 1908).

㉒ *Jiji Shinpō* (29 March, 1908).

㉓ *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* (28 March, 1908); *Jiji Shinpō* (29 March, 1908).

㉔ Aoki Takako, *Kindaishi o Hiraita Joseitachi: Nihon Joshi Daigaku ni Mananda Hitotachi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1990), pp. 57, 64; Ōfūkai (comp.), *Ōfūkai Kaiin Meibo* (Tokyo:Ōfūkai, 1908–1991).

criticism. She never surrendered to it, but instead faced up to it in a dignified way.[26] The criticism probably strengthened her capacity to resist traditional forces in Japanese society. The support she received from other young women made her realise that she was not the only woman unhappy with the *ie* system and its conventions, who wanted to be released from them. There is little doubt that the Shiobara Incident helped her development as a feminist.

Hiratsuka's feminism in her *Seitō* days

After the Shiobara Incident, she became more determined to fight against those conventions and to improve women's status. She founded the Seitōsha (the Seitō Society), which was named after the eighteenth-century British women's literary circle, the Bluestocking Society, and launched its magazine *Seitō,* which was edited and controlled exclusively by women, in September 1911.[27] Hiratsuka wrote a statement of editorial intent entitled 'Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta' ('In the beginning woman was the sun') for the inaugural issue of *Seitō*. It begins as follows:

> In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person. Now, woman is the moon. Living dependent on others, reflecting their brilliance. She has the moon's face, and its unhealthy pallor. And now,

---

(25) This account is from Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 1, p. 273.

(26) Horiba, *Seitō no Jidai*, p. 3.

(27) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 1, pp. 325–327. On the Seitō Society, see Jan Bardsley, *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Women Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911–16* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Hiroko Tomida, 'Hiratsuka Raichō, the Seitō Society, and the emergence of the new woman in Japan', in Hiroko Tomida & Gordon Daniels (eds), *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subservience, 1868–1945* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2005), pp. 192–221; Hiroko Tomida, 'The legacy of the Japanese Bluestocking Society: its influence upon literature, culture and women's status', *Language, Culture and Communication*, vol. 48 (2016), pp. 129–150.

> *Seitō* cries, newly born. Created by the brains and hands of today's Japanese women. *Seitō* cries, newly born. Women's undertaking is only sneered at, but I [Hiratsuka] am convinced that there is hidden potential there…Now she must restore her hidden sun. Reveal her own hidden sun and her hidden potential. This is our ceaseless cry to ourselves, our uncontrollable and immovable yearning…Make us do these to the best of our ability until the day when we will bring hidden female talent into the open, until the day when the hidden sun begins to shine again. On that day we will rule everything, the entire world will fall into our hands. On that day woman will no longer be the moon. On that day she will become the sun, as in the beginning. She will become an authentic person.[28]

The keynote of Hiratsuka's message and advocacy of *Seitō* was her call for female self-awakening. Under the patriarchal system, women had to aim to be obedient and virtuous, and society assumed female abnegation. However, Hiratsuka believed in women's potential power, and aimed to show through *Seitō* that all women had inherent talent.[29] She encouraged women to awaken to themselves and their abilities. According to Hiratsuka, she did not intend her manifesto to go beyond a fearless confirmation of women's selfhood, and she little dreamt that it would exert a powerful influence on the women's emancipation movement in Japan in the 1920s.[30] Against her expectations, her readers interpreted it as a declaration of women's rights.[31]

---

(28) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta', *Seitō*, 1:1 (September, 1911), pp. 37–51. This is my translation, but I consulted Sharon Sievers' accomplished translation of the first two sections. See Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), p. 163.

(29) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 1, p. 362.

(30) Ibid., p. 362.

It was also during her *Seitō* days that Hiratsuka declared herself to be 'a new woman' in her article entitled 'Atarashii onna' ('A new woman'), written for the prestigious magazine *Chūō Kōron*. The statement went as follows:

> I am a new woman. Day by day I seek and make every effort to be the true new woman I want to be. The only thing which is truly and eternally renewed is the Sun. I am the Sun. Day by day I seek and make every effort to be the Sun I want to be…A new woman places a curse on 'yesterday'. She can no longer endure silently and obediently to walk the path which an oppressed old-fashioned woman walked. A new woman is not satisfied with the life of an oppressed old woman, who was made ignorant, made a man's slave and was treated as nothing but a lump of meat by male selfishness. A new woman wishes to destroy old morals and laws, which were created for men's convenience…A new woman not only attempts to destroy old morals and laws which were built out of male selfishness, but day by day she attempts to create a new kingdom where a new religion, new morals and new laws, based on the spiritual values and virtues of the Sun, will be enforced. Truly, the mission of a new woman is the creation of a new kingdom…The new woman now single-mindedly aims to gain power. She desperately seeks power to fulfil her mission. She seeks sufficient power to enable her to study, pursue knowledge, making efforts and struggling for the sake of still unknown things.[32]

---

[31] Horiba Kiyoko, 'Sōkan sengen nado', in Horiba Kiyoko (ed.), *Seitō Josei Kaihō Ronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), p. 10.

[32] Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Atarashii onna', *Chūō Kōron* (January, 1913), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1 (1983), pp. 257–259. See Tomida, 'The legacy of the Japanese Bluestocking Society', pp. 138–139. This is my translation, but I consulted Goldstein and Ninomiya's translation. See Setouchi Harumi (trans. by Sanford Goldstein & Ka-

There is probably nothing to compare with this in international feminist literature. Equating herself with Amaterasu, the Sun goddess, Hiratsuka's vivid advocacy, expressed as poetic individualism but on behalf of other women, reveals her vitality and determination to fight against male-dominated Japanese society, and to transform it into a better place for women.[33]

Hiratsuka also published two special issues on 'new women'.[34] She wanted *Seitō* women to discuss 'What is a "new woman"?' and 'How a true "new woman" ought to behave.'[35] These special issues marked a significant change in direction for *Seitō*, from a women's literary magazine to a women's magazine with a feminist tone, dealing with serious women's causes and problems. They provoked much controversy among authors and educationalists.[36] They also triggered a journalistic boom on 'new women' in 1913.[37]

In her *Seitō* days Hiratsuka had become more critical of the ways in which women were suppressed under the Meiji Civil Code. In the April 1913 issue of *Seitō* she wrote 'Yo no fujintachi e' ('Addressed to women in the world') in opposition to the *ie* system and existing marriage law. She suggested that women should open their eyes to the limitations of the current system.

---

zuji Ninomiya), *Beauty in Disarray* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993), pp. 163–164.

(33) Horiba, *Seitō no Jidai*, p. 151.

(34) The first special issue 'Atarashii onna sonota fujin mondai ni tsuite' ('New women and other women's issues') appeared as a supplement to the January 1913 issue. The second special issue on new women appeared as a supplement to the February 1913 issue.

(35) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 2 (1983), pp. 90–91.

(36) Ide Fumiko, *Seitō no Onnatachi* (Tokyo: Tsubame Shobō, 1975), pp. 149–152, 155–158.

(37) Ide Fumiko, 'Kaisetsu', in Fuji Shuppan (ed.), *Seitō Kaisetsu, Sōmokuji, Sakuin* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1983), p. 15. On Japanese 'new women', see Dina Lowy, *The Japanese New Woman: Images of Gender and Modernity* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

> The so-called women's virtues exist only for men's convenience. The lives of many wives are no more than being their husbands' slaves during the daytime and their prostitutes at night…Under the current social system, marriage is the relationship between the ruler [husband] and his subordinate [wife], which lasts their entire lives. I know that wives are treated as no more than minorities or disabled people. Wives have no rights to own property and no legal rights over their children. Although their adulteries are punished, their husbands' are forgiven. I have no inclination to get married or to become a legal wife, going to the extent of obeying such an unethical, unlawful and unreasonable marriage system, one which I do not approve of.[38]

Hiratsuka raised strong doubts about the *ryōsai kenbo kyōiku,* disapproved of ordinary female forms of living dominated by marriage, and summed up the unreasonable nature of the existing marriage system, in particular the provisions of the Meiji Civil Code, which were inequitable to married women in many regards. She encouraged women to alter their lifestyles. This was also her first declaration that she had no intention of marrying.

Hiratsuka wanted to lay a foundation of new sexual morality based upon free cohabitation, which she believed was the natural outcome of love.[39] In 1914 she had decided to put this into practice, and began to live with a young painter, Okumura Hiroshi, without marrying him.[40] In *Seitō* she published her purportedly private letter to her parents under the title of 'Dokuritsu suru ni tsuite ryōshin e'

---

(38) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Yo no fujintachi e', *Seitō*, 3:4 (April, 1913), reprinted in Kobayashi Tomie & Yoneda Sayoko (eds), *Hiratsuka Raichō Hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987), pp. 30–31.

(39) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 2, pp. 184–185.

(40) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Musume ni haha no isan o kataru', *Shin Nyoen* (March & April, 1937), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 6 (1984), pp. 228–229.

('Addressed to my parents with regard to my becoming independent').[41] In it her decision to leave their house and cohabit with Okumura was explained as follows:

> Yesterday you [Hiratsuka's mother] said that it would be immoral for me to live with a young man without marrying him. You also asked me what I would do if I became pregnant. As I am dissatisfied with the existing marriage system, I have no intention to enter a legal marriage…It might be odd if a man and a woman, who do not love each other, live together. In this case their cohabitation may need to be approved by others. However, it is the most natural thing for a couple like us, who love each other, to live in the same house. As long as we agree to do this, it does not matter if we marry legally…I also have good reason to decline legal marriage since marriage law is full of provisions about women's obligations which are extremely disadvantageous to women. Moreover, convention and morality, as they exist in our society, impose unreasonable restrictions upon married women. For example, they have to respect their parents-in-law, are compelled to obey their husbands and parents-in-law, and are expected to fulfil forced duties and make all the sacrifices. There are too many burdens in married women's lives. I do not want to put myself into such a handicapped position. As Hiroshi [her partner, Okumura] understands my reasons and point of view, he does not expect me to marry him legally.[42]

This letter revealed the extent of her criticism of the *ie* system and the Meiji Civil Code. Although Hiratsuka had devoted herself to *Seitō* for five years, she gave up

---

(41) Hiratsuka, *Watakushi*, p. 149.

(42) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Dokuritsu suru ni tsuite ryōshin e', *Seitō*, 4:2 (February, 1914), reprinted in Kobayashi & Yoneda (eds), *Hiratsuka Raichō Hyōronshū*, p. 56.

the editorship due to poor health, and *Seitō* survived only another 13 months under Itō Noe's editorship, coming to an abrupt end in February 1916.[43] Hiratsuka saw its ending as unavoidable. The demise of *Seitō* marked a turning point in Hiratsuka's life, and in her autobiography she stated that the termination of *Seitō* ended her youth.[44]

Hiratsuka's involvement in the controversy over the protection of motherhood

Hiratsuka then gave birth to her daughter Akemi and her son Atsushi, and registered them as illegitimate. She established her own family register in which she was head of the family, and had her children entered in her register.[45] This bold action clearly demonstrated her hostility to the *ie* system.

After *Seitō*, most of her time was taken up with child-rearing, domestic work, and the nursing of a sick partner Okumura, who was suffering from tuberculosis.[46] Using her limited spare time, she wrote articles on women's issues for prestigious magazines such as *Chūō Kōron* to support her family. Hiratsuka found it extremely hard to combine child-rearing with a writing career. Her personal experiences helped her to mature beyond her *Seitō* days. Her restricted financial circumstances, and the difficulty of combining motherhood and writing, altered the personal and sometimes self-absorbed feminist ideas of her *Seitō* days. She became more aware of women's problems, and this had a direct influence upon her later feminist activity.

Based on her own experience, Hiratsuka began to realise the significance of the protection of motherhood. She developed a heated debate between 1918 and

(43) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 2, p. 283.

(44) Ibid., p. 288.

(45) Ibid., pp. 260–261.

(46) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Haha to shite no ichinenkan', *Fujin Kōron* (May, 1917), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 2, pp. 266–267.

1919 over the rights and wrongs of the state protecting motherhood with Yosano Akiko, who was a leading poet, essayist and women's commentator.[47] This debate became known as the *bosei hogo ronsō* (controversy over the protection of motherhood). Yosano, who valued women's economic independence, found it hard to accept the view that wives were dependent on their husbands in exchange for procreative services.[48] On the same principle she refused to accept western feminist demands that the state should provide mothers with financial assistance. She argued that wives' marital dependence was no better than women's dependence on the state. She advised women not to rely on others – whether husband or state - under any circumstances, and to stand on their own feet.[49]

Yosano's remarks on traditional marriage practice resembled the South African writer Olive Schreiner's famous analysis of marriage as 'a form of legalised prostitution in which the economic and emotional dependence of women on men was institutionalised and justified in a sexual form'.[50] Moreover, Yosano's ideal of women – who have stopped being 'sex parasites' and who have taken up jobs and become independent of men – corresponds with Olive Schreiner's definition of 'new women'.[51]

Hiratsuka, who was disturbed by Yosano's rejection of state financial

---

(47) Kōuchi Nobuko, 'Kaidai', in Kōuchi Nobuko (ed.), *Shiryō: Bosei Hogo Ronsō* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1984), pp. 289–290. On the controversy over the protection of motherhood, see Hiroko Tomida, 'Controversy over the protection of motherhood and its impact upon the Japanese women's movement', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 3:2 (October 2004), pp. 243–271.

(48) Yosano Akiko, 'Joshi no tetteishita dokuritsu', *Fujin Kōron*, 3:3 (March, 1918), reprinted in Kōuchi (ed.), *Shiryō*, pp. 85–86.

(49) Ibid., p. 85.

(50) Liz Stanley, 'Olive Schreiner: new women, free women, all women', in Dale Spender (ed.), *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Women's Intellectual Traditions* (London: The Women's Press, 1983), p. 236.

(51) Yosano, 'Joshi no tetteishita dokuritsu', p. 85. See also Olive Schreiner, *Woman and Labour* (1911, London: Virago, 1978 edn), pp. 33–150.

protection, challenged Yosano and attempted to show how vital state provision was to mothers, especially working mothers:

> Fundamentally mothers are the precious source of life. Before women produce children, they are regarded as nothing but mere individual beings, but through their worthwhile act of giving birth to children, their status as trivial individual beings is raised to the point where they are considered to be socially and naturally important. Protecting mothers is necessary not only for the sake of their own happiness but also for the contentment of society a whole and the future of all humanity.[52]

Hiratsuka regarded child-bearing and rearing as a social good, conducive to national well-being, and suggested that the state should provide mothers with financial protection during pregnancy, childbirth and the early stages of child-rearing. These views originated from Ellen Key, a Swedish writer, social reformer and feminist, whose work Hiratsuka admired. They had already been put into effect to varying degrees in some western countries, although not in the developed institutionalised manner that was later to emerge. It was still rare, even in western countries, to find such assistance for motherhood, and in an international context Hiratsuka's views were very progressive indeed.

Hiratsuka advocated family allowances to help protect motherhood, much like her British counterpart Eleanor Rathbone.[53] Rathbone founded the small Family

---

(52) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Bosei hogo no shuchō wa iraishugi ka', *Fujin Kōron*, 3:5 (May, 1918), reprinted in Kōuchi (ed.), *Shiryō*, p. 89.

(53) Eleanor Rathbone (1872–1946) was a suffragist and social reformer in Britain. She was a leading speaker for the Women's Suffrage Society led by Mrs Fawcett. After suffrage was granted to British women, Rathbone campaigned for women's social issues such as family allowances and widows' pensions. In 1918 she published a pamphlet *Equal Pay and the Family*, in which she outlined a policy for family endowment. In

Endowment Society in 1917, through which she ran her energetic campaign for family allowances. She also established the Children's Minimum Council in 1934 to work for the same objective. There were many similarities between Rathbone and Hiratsuka's views of family allowances. Rathbone is best remembered for her analysis and justification of such allowances, and many of her points were also made by Hiratsuka. Rathbone first campaigned for them in 1917, which coincided with the protection of motherhood debate in Japan. Like Hiratsuka, Rathbone was particularly anxious that women's contributions as mothers should receive recognition and be rewarded. Rathbone believed that motherhood was largely incompatible with work external to the home, and when she proposed family allowances she argued that these would pay women a 'wage' at home, and so give them a dignified and secure economic status.[54] As Hiratsuka never referred to Rathbone in writing, it is impossible to trace direct links between the two women, or even to find out whether Hiratsuka was familiar with Rathbone's ideas and whether they influenced her. These were ideas that were widely discussed in western women's circles at the time; but it is not usually appreciated that such discussion had direct counterparts in Japan, which may have been derivative, but which were certainly almost exactly contemporary.

Although the controversy was merely an ideological or theoretical dispute in print, lacking a practical dimension, the debate made the public more aware of issues relating to the protection of motherhood. The controversy originally

---

1929 she was elected as Independent Member for the Combined English Universities, and in the 1930s she fought for family allowances in Parliament.

(54) Johanna Alberti, *Eleanor Rathbone* (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 76–78; Jane Lewis, 'Models of equality for women: the case of state support for children in twentieth-century Britain', in Gisela Bock & Pat Thane (eds), *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 74; Jane Lewis, 'Eleanor Rathbone, 1872–1946', in Paul Barker (ed.), *Founders of the Welfare State* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p. 84.

embraced the single subject of motherhood, but in the course of its development it extended to many other women's issues, including employment, economic independence, and suffrage. The debate set the stage for a wider public discussion of women's roles and participation in society.[55]

Hiratsuka and the Shin Fujin Kyōkai (the Association of New Women)

Less than a year after the protection of motherhood controversy ended, Hiratsuka, who had finally come to realise the key importance of women's political rights, founded another women's organisation, the Shin Fujin Kyōkai (the Association of New Women) with Ichikawa Fusae and Oku Mumeo, in the autumn of 1919, to launch a women's political and social campaign.[56] The Association had a distinctive political agenda, with three immediate objectives: to amend Article 5 of the Chian Keisatsu Hō (Peace Police Law); the enactment of a law restricting marriage by men with venereal disease; and the amendment of the electoral law to choose members of the House of Representatives, to request women's suffrage.[57] Hiratsuka, Ichikawa and Oku launched petitioning and lobbying campaigns, and also persuaded Diet members to present a bill to amend the Peace Police Law.[58] In

---

(55) Kōuchi, 'Kaidai', pp. 318–320.

(56) On the Association of New Women, see Hiroko Tomida, 'The Association of New Women and its contribution to the Japanese women's movement', *Japan Forum*, 17:1 (April 2005), pp. 49–68. On Oku Mumeo, see Akiko Tokuza, *The Rise of the Feminist Movement in Japan* (Tokyo: Keiō University Press, 1999). On Ichikawa Fusae, see Barbara Molony, 'Ichikawa Fusae and Japan's pre-war women's suffrage movement', in Tomida & Daniels (eds), *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subservience*, pp. 57–92.

(57) Ichikawa Fusae, 'Chian Keisatsu Hō daigojō shūsei no undō, part 1', *Josei Dōmei*, 1 (October, 1920), p. 26; Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Karyūbyō danshi kekkon seigen hō seitei ni kansuru seigan undō', *Josei Dōmei*, 1 (October, 1920), pp. 30–31; Shin Fujin Kyōkai, 'Shūgiin Giin Senkyo Hō kaisei ni kansuru seigan sho', *Josei Dōmei*, 3 (December, 1920), p. 2.

(58) Oku Mumeo, *Nobi Akaakato: Oku Memeo Jiden* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1988), p. 52; Ichikawa Fusae, *Ichikawa Fusae Jiden: Senzen Hen* (Tokyo: Shinjuku Shobō, 1974), p. 71.

addition, they organised public lectures and meetings to promote their political activities. They also produced the journal *Josei Dōmei* (the *Women's League*), which was first published in October 1920. The *Women's League* had very strong political content from its inauguration. It published detailed progress reports on the Association's parliamentary campaigns, and gave a record of speeches and events inside and outside the Diet relating to the causes which the Association worked for. It also published international news, giving progress reports on western countries' women's movements, especially regarding suffrage.

Hiratsuka was very actively involved with the Association's campaigns as its leader. She made good use of her family, literary and political connections, and appealed to other women's organisations for collaboration. Moreover she succeeded in recruiting many members in provincial areas, founding more than 30 branches, and transforming the Association into a nationwide organisation.[59] In spite of her success, Hiratsuka withdrew from the forefront of the Association after the 44th Diet Session because of illness. Ichikawa also left the Association in June 1921, and Oku had to run the Association alone. Although the two petitions regarding venereal disease and women's suffrage failed, the Association succeeded in bringing about passage of the bill to amend Clause 2, Article 5 of the Peace Police Law during the 45th Diet Session.[60] The new Act came into effect from 10 May 1922, which enabled women to attend or organise political meetings, although they were still unable to be members of political parties. The Association had a promising future and it looked as though its political campaign might develop into a larger feminist movement. However, it came to an end in December 1922.

---

[59] Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 3 (1973), pp. 164–165.

[60] Sakamoto Makoto, 'Chikei daigojō shūsei undō no gairyaku', *Josei Dōmei*, 14 (June, 1922), p. 11.

Hiratsuka's later activities

Between July 1921 and March 1923, Hiratsuka recuperated. She and her family stayed away from Tokyo, moving around the country. She devoted herself now to child-rearing and to family tasks that had been neglected during her period of feminist activity. The only non-domestic work she did between July 1921 and 1928 was occasional writing for magazines. Although the women's suffrage movement escalated after the dissolution of the Association of New Women, Hiratsuka withdrew from its mainstream, cut ties with her ex-associates and seemed to have lost her interest in the women's movement.[61] In contrast to Ichikawa's striking and sustained contributions to the women's movement, Hiratsuka now became little more than a background observer of the events and campaigns under way.

In 1930 Hiratsuka briefly joined the Musan Fujin Geijutsu Renmei (the Proletarian Women's Arts League) organised by Takamure Itsue. The League was highly influenced by anarchism, and aimed to create a society where state power and politics would be dismissed and nature would be valued. Hiratsuka's contribution to the League was limited to two articles in its magazine *Fujin Sensen* (*Women's Front*). Compared to her days in the Association of New Women, her ideas represented in the articles became more radical, and she now advocated the necessity of undermining capitalist society to protect women and children.[62]

Hiratsuka also became involved in the women's consumers' cooperative movement, which she believed to be an ideal campaign for women to reconstruct society. In 1930 she founded an independent cooperative society called 'Warera no

---

(61) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Karasuyama yori', *Fujo Shinbun* (20 September, 1925), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 4 (1983), p. 132.

(62) Hiratsuka Raichō, '*Fujin Sensen* ni sankashite', *Fujin Sensen*, 1:2 (April, 1930), pp. 37–39.

Ie' ('Our House') in Seijō, Tokyo.[63] The initial objective of the cooperative society that she chaired was to form an economically self-governing consumers' union which would be jointly administered by its members.[64] Their everyday goods would be purchased jointly to reduce the cost, and consumers could become producers and lead self-sufficient lives. The family economy of every household would be socialized and equalized and no profits needed to be made. As she became more involved, she was more persuaded that the cooperative society movement might be able to undermine capitalism and construct a new self-governing society.[65] Although her society did well, after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the move towards a wartime control economy made the activities of independent cooperative societies such as Hiratsuka's difficult, and it came to a close in 1938.[66]

When Japan declared war against Britain and the United States on 8 December 1941, Hiratsuka, who was opposed to the war and had no intention of cooperating with it, left Tokyo for Todai Village in Ibaraki Prefecture.[67] She spent six years there, engaged in farming and leading a self-sufficient life. It was during the war that her pacifist views developed and provided the basis for her post-1945 involvement in the peace movement.

After the war she became a leader of the women's peace movement, taking steps to create a society in which women would be protected and educated. She founded the Nihon Fujin Dantai Rengōkai (the Federation of Japanese Women's Groups) in April 1953 and became its chairwoman.[68] Its main objectives were to

---

(63) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Kinuta-mura zassō', *Fujo Shinbun* (22 June – 21 September, 1930), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5 (1984), pp. 207–208.

(64) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Mōkenai shōbai: shōhi kumiai ni tsuite', *Josei Shinbun*, 74 (29 September, 1930), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 5, pp. 219–220.

(65) Hiratsuka, 'Mōkenai shōbai', pp. 219–20.

(66) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 3, p. 297.

(67) Hiratsuka, *Genshi*, vol. 4 (1972), pp. 18–19.

(68) Kushida Fuki, *Sutekini Nagaiki* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1991), p. 156; Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Hitotsuni musubu chikara', *Sekai no Fujin to Nihon no Fujin*, 1 (De-

hinder any revival of militarism and rearmament, to remove American military bases from Japan, oppose the manufacture and use of atom and hydrogen bombs and bacteriological weapons, and to collaborate with women internationally to pursue world peace.[69] Although she resigned from that position in 1955, she devoted the rest of her life to the peace movement. Through that movement she overcame her reputation for being a 'bourgeois feminist', for she successfully brought together Japanese women from very different social, educational and political backgrounds. Compared with her pre-war feminist activities, she exhibited more perseverance in the peace movement. She was also a more effective leader. Even on her deathbed, she was concerned about the Vietnam War. She died of cancer on 24 May 1971.[70]

Her 85 years were atypical and dynamic: a series of fights against established views to improve women's status and achieve a peaceful world. Hiratsuka's life, as reconstructed from many sources, reveals a rare personality and identity, showing self-assurance and originality. She had many trials and her career was by no means an unbroken series of triumphs. She was at times the focus of public criticism because of her progressive views, and in such circumstances her resolution was impressive. She had a strong desire to improve herself by constant self-education. She was also extremely sensitive to social changes, and was quick to respond to the

cember, 1958), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 7, pp. 242–244.

(69) Kushida Fuki, 'Josei kaihō eno jōnetsu', in Maruoka Hideko *et al*, *Hiratsuka Raichō to Nihon no Kindai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986), pp. 39–40.

(70) Obituaries lamenting her death appeared in many newspapers. These included 'Ribu no tōshi mo kenka: Sayonara Raichō-san', *Asahi Shinbun* (31 May, 1971); 'Hiratsuka Raichō-san ga shikyo', *Asahi Shinbun* (25 May, 1971); 'Hiratsuka Raichō-san ōkyō nashi mushūkyōsō', *Asahi Shinbun* (31 May, 1971); Ichikawa Fusae, 'Tsuyoi ishi de shinnen tsuranuku: Hiratsuka Raichō joshi o itamu', *Asahi Shinbun* (25 May, 1971); 'Wūman ribu no senkusha: Hiratsuka Raichō-san shikyo', *Mainichi Shinbun* (25 May, 1971); 'Nihon fujin undō no senkusha: Hiratsuka Raichō-san shikyo', *Akahata* (25 May, 1971); 'Kakukai no hitobito ga chōmon; Hiratsuka Raichō-san shikyo', *Akahata* (25 May, 1971).

times. In her book *Marumado Yori* (*From the Round Window*) she expressed a wish not only to be a supporter of new developments, but to be one herself.[71] As Yoneda Sayoko stated, Hiratsuka paid little heed to her past, discarding it as if it was an old kimono, and always advanced herself by pursuing something new.[72] In this, as in other regards, she was surprisingly forward-looking for a Japanese woman of her period.

Hiratsuka's achievements and contributions to women's causes

Among all her major activities, Hiratsuka's involvement with the Seitō Society and *Seitō* made her the best known feminist in Japanese women's history. It is indisputable that she helped raise the confidence of other women by creating and editing *Seitō*.[73] As she later wrote, in its emphasis upon creating female confidence and personal expression, the Seitō Society had some characteristics in common with the very early stages of the women's movements in western countries.[74] It did not compare with the radicalism of the contemporary British women's movement led by the Pankhursts, but despite modest aims it received much publicity. *Seitō* provided a literary voice for women. It served as a vehicle to promote female talent and self-awareness, increased readers' knowledge of some social issues, and created an ideal venue to discuss women's problems such as marriage, divorce, husband's adultery, child-bearing and rearing, birth control and abortion. The publications of the translations of the work of Ellen Key and other feminists like Olive Schreiner and Emma Goldman introduced their feminist theories to *Seitō* readers, and *Seitō* created space to develop discussion about their

---

(71) Hiratsuka Raichō, *Marumado yori* (1913), reprinted in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 1, p. 8.

(72) Yoneda Sayoko, 'Kaisetsu', in Hiratsuka, *Chosakushū*, vol. 4, p. 395.

(73) Kobayashi, *Hito to Shisō*, p. 6.

(74) Hiratsuka Raichō, 'Shakai kaizō ni taisuru fujin no shimei', *Josei Dōmei*, 1 (October, 1920), p. 3.

views and aspects of women's emancipation. The discussion in the journal contributed important ideas to later feminists, and under some definitions may be viewed as a 'feminist' development which laid much groundwork in the Japanese women's movement. However, it went no further than theoretical dispute in print and never developed into political action, such as presenting petitions to Parliament or organising demonstrations.

In Japanese women's history Hiratsuka's political activities through the Association of New Women had a far broader historical significance than her Seitō Society's activities. The Association was the first nationwide women's organisation to conduct full-scale petitioning and lobbying campaigns in Japan, aiming to achieve women's political rights. It was also the first women's organisation to submit a women's suffrage petition to the Diet. It advanced the revision of Article 5, Clause 2 of the Peace Police Law, and helped women to gain the right to organise and attend political assemblies. The amendment of the Peace Police Law was the first legal change ever achieved by women for women in Japan – it had a significant impact on millions of women and gave them further self-confidence. Many took an increasing interest in politics and women's rights. Inspired by the Association of New Women, other women's organisations were founded. Its campaigns also had much impact on the growth of other women's organisations such as the women's Christian organisation, Kyōfūkai. Women's issues became subjects of wide public interest and concern. Although the Association's suffrage campaigns were unsuccessful, it laid a significant foundation for the women's suffrage movement. In these regards the Association was extremely significant. Yosano Akiko stated that it brought the Japanese women's movement to the more advanced status of its counterparts in America and Britain, and it marked a new impetus for that movement after the Seitō Society.[75] The Association also attracted Ichikawa and

[75] Yosano Akiko, 'Shin Fujin Kyōkai no seigan undō', *Taiyō* (February, 1920), reprinted in Kano Masanao & Kōuchi Nobuko (eds), *Yosano Akiko Hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami

Oku, who became leading feminists, and were active as politicians after the Pacific War, working towards further improvement in women's status. Ichikawa was to play a key role in Japanese political history.

In all this, one sees Hiratsuka's influence. Her literary style, the Seitō Society, the Association of New Women, and her choice of associates, were all to have a major impact, and they are her chief memorials. The most distinguished role Hiratsuka rendered as a feminist was an initiator. She commenced her feminist activity almost ten years before any of her contemporary Japanese feminists. She inspired feminist debate, and launched campaigns which became central to the Japanese women's movement. She exerted a strong influence upon many contemporary women. Her unorthodox conduct and way of life gave many others an opportunity to compare themselves with her, to improve themselves educationally, and to gain self-confidence. She even affected people's vocabularies, producing linguistic changes. 'Hiratsuka Raichō' became a synonym for '*atarashii onna*' (a new woman).[76]

Hiratsuka's limitations as a feminist leader

With all her contributions to women's causes, many women's historians who have written on Hiratsuka, especially Kobayashi Tomie, have tended to idolise her and describe her as 'an impeccable feminist leader'.[77] However, it is instructive to assess Hiratsuka as a feminist leader in comparison with the other leading feminists. Although she had the foresight to launch the Seitō Society and the Association of New Women, she did not persevere with them, abandoning them to others while they were still in operation. This was partly because of her ill health and family

---

Shoten, 1990), p. 313.

(76) Kobayashi Tomie, 'Atarashii onna no negai: Raichō no shōgai kara uketsugu', in Maruoka *et al*, *Hiratsuka Raichō to Nihon no Kindai*, pp. 42–43.

(77) Personal interview with Kobayashi Tomie, 30 May, 1991, Tokyo.

circumstances. She did not have the self-sacrifice or staying power of some other Japanese and western feminist leaders. Japanese feminists usually stayed with their causes over long periods, but Hiratsuka did not remain at the forefront of the women's movement after the dissolution of the Association of New Women.[78]

In her pre-war feminist activities Hiratsuka lacked public charisma. She did not have great organisational ability or speech-making talent – being hindered by her weak voice – and in these respects she differed from Ichikawa, or the Pankhursts, Millicent Fawcett and Josephine Butler in Britain. Moreover, Hiratsuka's privileged upbringing, city-bred lifestyle, and refined manner and beauty, while helping her to lobby influential men, worked against many of her activities as a feminist leader, arousing antipathy among some feminists from humbler backgrounds like Yamanouchi Mina, or socialist feminists such as Yamakawa Kikue.[79] Such women described Hiratsuka as a self-important and snobbish 'bourgeois feminist', who had little empathy with working-class women and their problems.[80]

Hiratsuka's personality also tended towards moodiness. She was temperamental, and did not easily command loyal support from others. She was inclined to monopolise and control the organisations which she joined.[81] In her public life, there was little that was democratic about her running of women's organisations.

There were thus defects in her leadership. Hiratsuka spotted promising young

---

(78) Kobayashi, *Hito to Shisō*, p. 186.

(79) On Yamakawa Kikue, see Kate Wildman Nakai, 'Introduction', in Yamakawa Kikue (trans. by Kate Wildman Nakai), *Women of the Mito Domain: Recollections of Samurai Family Life* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992).

(80) Yamakawa Kikue, 'Shin Fujin Kyōkai to Sekirankai', *Taiyō* (July, 1921), reprinted in Suzuki Yūko (ed.), *Yamakawa Kikue Josei Kaihō Ronshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984), pp. 13–15; Yamanouchi Mina, *Yamanouchi Mina Jiden: Jūni-sai no Bōseki Jokō kara no Shōgai* (Tokyo: Shinjuku Shobō, 1975), pp. 91–92.

(81) Ibid., p. 92.

co-workers, like Oku and Ichikawa, but made little effort to encourage them as future leaders. She advocated collaboration among her fellow workers. However, she had difficulty in fulfilling this herself, tending to criticise or underestimate them, as in the Association of New Women. This failing seems to have resulted from her strong and rather conceited personality. Her lack of collaborative skills stood in contrast to those of other feminist leaders.

With these limitations, Hiratsuka was not in fact ideally suited as a leader of the pre-1945 women's movement. She could not rival Ichikawa, who was hardworking, patient, energetic, strong-willed, charismatic, and organisationally very adept. Ichikawa shared many qualities found in leading western feminists However, through the post-1945 peace movement Hiratsuka overcame many limitations of her pre-war feminism, and formed international ties with many other women's organisations. She then showed more staying power, bringing together more effectively Japanese women from a wide range of backgrounds.

Conclusion

While acknowledging her limitations as a feminist leader, one should not underestimate the role Hiratsuka Raichō played in the Japanese women's movement. She initiated many ideas and objectives, even though the woman who brought them to fruition was Ichikawa. Hiratsuka is rightly regarded as the main pioneer of the women's emancipation movement in Japan.[82] Without her inspiring literary ability, her vision and concerns, and her recognition of the possibilities in others, that movement would probably have developed more slowly. Later in her lifetime Hiratsuka's contributions were acknowledged publicly, and she received a commendation from Prime Minister Satō Eisaku for her service to women and for promoting their suffrage. This was made on 10 April 1971, at a special ceremony to

---

(82) Kobayashi, *Hito to Shisō*, p. 4.

celebrate the 25th anniversary of women's acquisition of the vote, about a month before her death.[83]

After her death Japanese people gained deeper understanding of her importance in the women's movement, particularly through her four-volume autobiography and collected writings. She has since acquired considerable fame. The Japan Women's College alumni association, having erased Hiratsuka from its membership list immediately after the Shiobara Incident in 1908, restored her name to the list on 25 April 1992 in recognition of her distinguished service to the women's emancipation movement.[84]

Today Hiratsuka is widely considered as the 'originator' of that movement in Japan, and she has a greater reputation than other contemporary feminists such as Ichikawa Fusae and Katō Shidzue, even though their feminist activities were longer-lived and perhaps more productive. In many people's eyes Hiratsuka's manifesto for the inaugural issue of *Seitō* has become inseparable from the history of the Japanese feminist movement, and is often seen as the spiritual source of Japanese feminism.[85] Through her inspired writing, Hiratsuka Raichō's reputation has persisted well beyond her period.

Bibliography

Alberti, Johanna, *Eleanor Rathbone* (London: Sage, 1996).

Aoki Takako, *Kindaishi o Hiraita Joseitachi: Nihon Joshi Daigaku ni Mananda Hitotachi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1990).

Bardsley, Jan, *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Women Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911–16* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

Barker, Paul (ed.), *Founders of the Welfare State* (London: Heinemann, 1984).

---

(83) Hiratsuka was critically ill and could not attend the ceremony. See 'Hiratsuka Raichō-san go shikyo', *Asahi Shinbun* (25 May, 1971).

(84) 'Hiratsuka Raichō Fukken: Dōsōkai meibo ni hachijū-yo-nen buri kisai', *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (4 May, 1992); 'Hiratsuka Raichō no fujin undō minaosō: Hachijū-yo-nen buri ni fukken', *Mainichi Shinbun* (26 April, 1992).

(85) Tomida, 'The legacy of the Japanese Bluestocking Society', p. 145.

Bock, Gisela & Thane, Pat (eds), *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Emura Eiichi, *Meiji no Kenpō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992).

Hiratsuka Raichō, *Genshi Josei wa Taiyō de Atta: Hiratsuka Raichō Jiden*, 4 vols (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1971–1973).

Hiratsuka Raichō (trans. by Teruko Craig), *In the Beginning, Woman was the Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Hiratsuka Raichō, *Watakushi no Aruita Michi* (1955, Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Centā, 1994 edn).

Hiratsuka Raichō Chosakushū Henshū Iinkai (ed.), *Hiratsuka Raichō Chosakushū*, 8 vols (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1984).

Hopper, M. Helen, *A New Woman of Japan: A Politcal Biography of Katō Shidzue* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

Horiba Kiyoko (ed.), *Seitō Josei Kaihō Ronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991).

Horiba Kiyoko, *Seitō no Jidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988).

Ichikawa Fusae, *Ichikawa Fusae Jiden: Senzen Hen* (Tokyo: Shinjuku Shobō, 1974).

Ichikawa Fusae (ed.), *Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1977).

Ide Fumiko, 'Kaisetsu', in Fuji Shuppan (ed.), *Seitō Kaisetsu, Sōmokuji, Sakuin* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1983).

Ide Fumiko, *Seitō no Onnatachi* (Tokyo: Tsubame Shobō, 1975).

Itoya Toshio, *Josei Kaihō no Senkusha: Nakajima Toshiko to Fukuda Hideko* (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1984).

Itoya Toshio, *Meiji Ishin to Josei no Yoake* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976).

Kano Masanao & Kōuchi Nobuko (eds), *Yosano Akiko Hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

Kobayashi Tomie, *Hiratsuka Raichō: Ai to Hangyaku no Seishun* (1977, Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1986 edn).

Kobayashi Tomie & Yoneda Sayoko (eds), *Hiratsuka Raichō Hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987).

Kobayashi Tomie, *Hito to Shisō* (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1988).

Kōuchi Nobuko (ed.), *Shiryō: Bosei Hogo Ronsō* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1984).

Kushida Fuki, *Sutekini Nagaiki* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1991).

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

Mackie, Vera, *Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labour and Activism, 1900–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Maruoka Hideko *et al.*, *Hiratsuka Raichō to Nihon no Kindai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986).

Molony, Barbara, 'Ichikawa Fusae and Japan's pre-war women's suffrage movement', in

Hiroko Tomida & Gordon Daniels (eds), *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subservience, 1868–1945* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2005), pp. 57–92.

Oku Mumeo, *Nobi Akaakato: Oku Memeo Jiden* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1988).

Ōfūkai (comp.), *Ōfūkai Kaiin Meibo* (Tokyo:Ōfūkai, 1908–1991).

Sasaki Hideaki, *Atarashii Onna no Tōrai* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994).

Schreiner, Olive, *Woman and Labour* (1911, London: Virago, 1978 edn).

Setouchi Harumi (trans. by Sanford Goldstein & Kazuji Ninomiya), *Beauty in Disarray* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993).

Sievers, L. Sharon, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).

Sotozaki Mitsuhiro, *Kōchiken Fujin Kaihō Undōshi* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1975).

Sotozaki Mitsuhiro, *Nihon Fujin Ronshi: Joseiron Hen*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1986).

Spender, Dale (ed.), *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Women's Intellectual Traditions* (London: The Women's Press, 1983).

Suzuki Yūko, *Joseishi o Hiraku*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1989).

Suzuki Yūko (ed.), *Yamakawa Kikue Josei Kaihō Ronshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984).

Tanaka Sumiko (ed.), *Josei Kaihō no Shisō to Kōdō: Senzen Hen* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1975).

Tokuza, Akiko, *The Rise of the Feminist Movement in Japan* (Tokyo: Keiō University Press, 1999).

Tomida, Hiroko, 'Controversy over the protection of motherhood and its impact upon the Japanese women's movement', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 3:2 (October 2004), pp. 243–271.

Tomida, Hiroko, 'Hiratsuka Raichō, the Seitō Society, and the emergence of the new woman in Japan', in Hiroko Tomida & Gordon Daniels (eds), *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subservience, 1868–1945* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2005).

Tomida, Hiroko, 'The Association of New Women and its contribution to the Japanese women's movement', *Japan Forum*, 17:1 (April 2005), pp. 49–68.

Tomida, Hiroko, 'The legacy of the Japanese Bluestocking Society: its influence upon literature, culture and women's status', *Language, Culture and Communication*, vol. 48 (2016), pp. 129–150.

Wildman, Kate Nakai, 'Introduction', in Yamakawa Kikue (trans. by Kate Wildman Nakai), *Women of the Mito Domain: Recollections of Samurai Family Life* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992).

Yamanouchi Mina, *Yamanouchi Mina Jiden: Jūni-sai no Bōseki Jokō kara no Shōgai* (Tokyo: Shinjuku Shobō, 1975).

Yoneda Sayoko, *Hiratsuka Raichō: Kindai Nihon no Demokurashii to Jendā* (Tokyo:

Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002).
Yoneda Sayoko, *Kindai Nihon Joseishi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1972).
Yuzawa Yasuhiko (ed.), *Nihon Fujin Mondai Shiryō Shūsei*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1976).