

Early Women's Poetry of the Asia-Pacific War

Poems from *Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology*
現代女流詩人集

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Women's war-themed poetry has been long neglected in Japanese literary studies. This paper discusses one of the earliest women's poems of the Asia-Pacific War published in arguably the first women's free-style *shi-poetry* anthology, *Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology* 現代女流詩人集,¹⁾ as a part of my women's war-poetry research project, which aims to reveal what women wrote during the war on war-related issues, to analyze how they grasped the war and tried to express their war experiences in their poems, and possibly to examine the reasons why they did so. I hope this paper gives some examples of women's war poetry and demonstrates the variety of their voices.

I **Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology**

Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology (CWSPA) was edited by Nagata Suketaro (永田助太郎) and Yamada Iwazaburo (山田岩三郎) and published from Sangabo-publisher in November 1940.²⁾ When published,

1) Women-stream is originally *joryū* 女流 in Japanese, which is often translated as 'women's'. However, the word *joryū* is different from *josei* 女性, which means 'women' or 'women's'. *Joryū*-poetry and *josei*-poetry have different connotation. *Joryū* means women-stream or women's stream, which is not or cannot be a part of main-stream. It suggests that women's works are not considered to belong to the 'main-stream' of literature, and thus women need to have their own stream.

2) In this paper, the names of the Japanese poets/editors follow the Japanese convention, which is a family name first followed by a given name.

they proudly stated ‘there were no women poets anthology’,³⁾ implying that this is the first women’s poetry anthology in Japan.

However, there were at least two anthologies of women’s poetry published prior to their publication. One was *New Selection of Contemporary Women-stream Tanka and Shi-poetry*⁴⁾ published in June 1930, with an introduction written under the name of Yomiuri Newspaper, one of the most influential newspapers in Japan. The poems included here were shi-poems and tanka-poems which were priorly published in Yomiuri Newspaper (‘Afterwards’ p.196). The introduction boasts ‘there has never been a project, which involved such a large number of women shi-poets and tanka-poets in Japanese history’⁵⁾ and includes the works of 57 tanka-poets and 17 shi-poets.⁶⁾

The other is *Japan Women Poets Anthology*.⁷⁾ It was published in July 1930, a few weeks after *New Selection* was published. *Japan Women* was edited by a woman poet, Inoue Kiyoko (井上 淑子 1903-1989). Inoue explains the purpose of this publication in the first sentence of her introduction: ‘Because it has been such a regret that no anthology of women poets has ever been yet published in Japan, this antholo-

gy is put together, with support and help from the senior women poets’.⁸⁾ She then acknowledges three senior women poets, Yosano Akiko (与謝野 晶子 1878-1942), Fukao Sumako (深尾 須磨子 1888-1974) and Ikuta Hanayo (生田 花世 1888-1970).

What role Inoue played is not clearly stated, but Inoue seems to play a role of the representative of a group of women poets. In her introduction, Inoue uses the pronoun ‘we’ instead of ‘I’ and declares ‘we have put all our passion and love for this anthology’.⁹⁾ Also, it is implied that Inoue did not select the poems for the anthology, but these poems were selected and sent to Inoue by the poets themselves. This anthology includes two to five poems from 39 women poets. Many of them, such as Nagase Kiyoko (永瀬清子 1906-1995), Hayashi Fumiko (林 芙美子 1903-1951), Hanabusa Yoshiko (英 美 子 1892-1983), Mori Michiyo (森 三千代 1901-1977) and Takeuchi Teruyo (竹内 てるよ 1904-2001), actively kept writing during and after the Asia-Pacific War.

The publication process of *CWSPA* was different from the above two, because it was published as if it was the seventh volume of poetry anthology. Prior to publication of

3) 「詩歌のおほいに行はれる昨今にあつても、なほ遡る過去に於ても、女流詩人のかかる華麗のアンソロジーは江湖にみず」(現代女流詩人集, p.391)

4) 新選現代女流詩歌集. Hereafter abbreviated as *New Selection*. Shi-poetry is a free-style poetry developed only after Meiji Restoration, 1868.

5) 「今日までこれほど他州の女流歌人及び詩人を集め得た企てはありません」P.4.

6) ‘Contemporary’ meaning ‘living’ at the date of publication. Tanka has a long tradition, and because it developed as a love-poem exchange between men and women, there are many women tanka-poets in Japanese literary history. It was encouraged especially for upper class

girls, for it was often considered as one of the means for their better marriage.

7) 日本女性詩人集. Hereafter abbreviated as *Japan Women*.

8) 「日本に於ける女性詩人の詩花集が、いまだ刊行されぬのを遺憾として、先輩諸姉のお力を借りてこの集を編みました」(序 ‘Introduction’, no page number)

9) Note that in Japanese the subject is very often omitted. There is a great emphasis on ‘we’ here in Inoue’s introduction. Underline emphasis added.

CWSPA, in 1940, they have published a set of six volumes of *Contemporary Poets Anthology*. There was no woman included in these six volumes. Thus, it looks as if they dedicated their seventh volume exclusively to women. However, the publisher, Kawaguchi Keigo (川口敬五) explicitly states this is not meant to be their seventh volume,¹⁰⁾ as if implying the women's poetry should not be considered as a part of contemporary Japanese poetry.

Despite the denial to be the seventh volume of this major poetry collection of the time, *CWSPA* follows the editorial layout of the other six volumes of *Contemporary Poets Anthology*. It includes ten to twenty poems from each poet. Because a large number of poems are selected from each poet, it gives a reader a good understanding of each poet's poetics and aesthetics. It almost looks like 15 solo poetry books of 15 women put together as a book. Each poet has given a title for the selection of her poems as if giving a title to her own solo poetry collection and has her own introduction or brief biography along with her autobiography. It gives a good insight and understanding of each poet.

Furthermore, this anthology covers not only the senior women poets but also the younger emerging poets and introduces the 'latest' trends of poetic movement of the time. Good amount of modernist women poets, who were not included in 1930s anthologies, such as Ema Shoko (江間章子 1913-2005) and Naka-

mura Chio (中村千尾 1916-?) were included, along with some prose poems of Tsuyuki Yoko (露木陽子 1910-2003)¹¹⁾ and Shōhara Teruko (莊原照子 1909-1999).

The anthology, *CWSPA* successfully demonstrates the varieties of women's poetic voices of the time as well as how women of the time tried to express themselves through poetry. War-themed poetry is a good example of struggles, conflicts and complexities of women poets of the time.

II

Hanabusa Yoshiko (英美子 1892-1983)

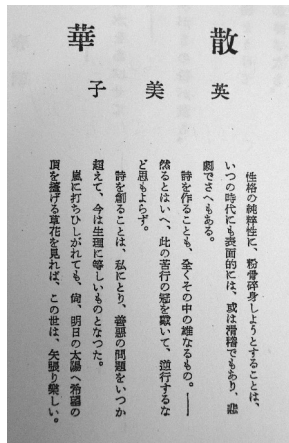
'Fallen Blossom 散華'

'This is my boy
The day he graduated from aviation school at
Kasumigaura—
A memento of the time
He received a gift from the Emperor,
I say this, pointing at the desktop photo

In a plaza, walled by red and white curtains,
In front of another long curtain,
You, straight as a shoot of bamboo,
Raise your hand to salute the Emperor
I vividly feel
Your pulse, your pride
But only a few days later, far too soon,
He was sent to the Navy Base in Oita

10)「本女流詩人集は必ずしも先に刊行した『現代詩人集』の続刊ではない。しかし、現代女流詩人の詞華修である意味においてそれにつながるものである」(後記 p.391)

11) Also known as Yamamoto Fujie (山本藤枝).



12)

May 24, 1939
 7:25 in the evening
 Those numbers—forever, as long as I live—
 Will remain deeply lodged in my body and
 soul
 He joined a night drill
 In preparation for the heavy yet honorable
 duty
 To which he was about to be called
 They say he asked to lead the aircraft 95 in
 combat,
 But that evening
 His life concluded at twenty-four years
 As he died, becoming a fallen blossom in the
 open sky
 That was the last of him
 His fighter plane crashed
 Onto the great plains in Oita, darkness
 already falling

Dyeing the navy-blue wheat field with
 burning red
 Like a falling meteorite
 The officers dashed there, shouting
 Who's that? Whose craft? What aircraft
 number?
 His body was clad tight in uniform,
 His face hidden in his helmet,
 It wasn't easy to identify who he was
 One voice screamed, 'Lieutenant Colonel
 Ikeda!'
 Tearing through the darkness of night
 His comrades-in-arms held their breath
 Then called your name like thunder
 While surrounding you, my boy
 Their cries called him back to life
 Using his last strength, he sat,
 Held the control stick again

12) The title page with a short biographical essay and the photo of the poet, Hanabusa Yoshiko, in *CWSPA* (pp.143-144).

As if to lift his spirit and fly once more
He lasted only half a minute more
They brought him to the Navy Hospital
But despite diligent care,
My boy's soul left this world

In Oita

All wept for his heroic end
Those who knew him and those who did not
Attended the solemn military funeral
All this was written in a heart-felt letter
I received from a perfect stranger

That day

Was the southern sky
Beautiful with a misting of blossoms?
His father hurried there without packing a
thing

How he praised our boy, I wonder
His name was written on an honorable flag
of death
'Navy Lieutenant Colonel Ikeda, Seventh
Court Rank'—My Isamu,
The name you received in honor shines
brilliantly

You

Made my wishes come true
Your mother, who adores the blue sky and
wide-open ocean,
Had her wishes granted thanks to you
Beautiful both inside and outside, you
became
One of the youngest, bravest soldiers of the
sea, of Japan, of the Fatherland
Your death is in the utmost honor

13) *CWSPA*, p.154-153. All poems are translated by me unless otherwise noted. I try to quote the whole poem in my papers on women's war poetry, because these poems often have limited access. I believe it is important for each of us to read them and think what women of the time went through.

This translation first appeared in *Transference* vol.6 (2018). Special thanks for Prof. Jeffrey Angles, who made beautiful suggestions on my draft.

これは、あの児が
霞ヶ浦の航空隊卒業の日
畏き廻りからの、恩賜品を拝受した時の
記念の写真です
と、私は、机上に飾った一葉の写真を説明します。

紅白の幔幕が張り廻らされた広場の中央
一つの天幕の前に
お前は、一本の竹のやうな姿勢で
挙手の最敬礼をしてゐる
その光景に波打つお前の矜持が
私には、はつきりと感じられます
それから、日ならず、あの児は
大分航空隊に所属を命ぜられました。

昭和十四年四月二十四日
午後七時二十五分

この数字は——
私の命ある限り
私の肉体と魂とを深く決るでせう。

近く、再び出動の
重き栄えある内命を身に帯びて
夜間演習に参加
かねて、あの児の志望の九五式戦闘機上に編隊を指揮し
てゐた、と申しませんが
その夕、あの児は
二十四歳を一期として
大空に散華してたのでございます。

私は、その最後を
纔に承りました
既に夕闇の迫つた大分の曠野の
青き麦畑を、からくれなゐに染めて
隕石のやうに墮ちた、一機へと
さつと押し集つた係りの人々は
誰れだ？ 何機だ？ と口々に絶叫するのですが
飛行服に身を固め
毛糸の飛行帽にすつかり包まれた顔は
容易に誰れと、見分けもつかなくなつた。

その中に、池田中尉だ！ と
闇を裂く一声に
固唾を呑んだ戦友達は

I wish for nothing more in this world, for
humankind, for myself
There is nothing more I wish to say

I, a nameless woman poet,
Am humble, full of awe.
I say 'Long life—banzai!—to Your Majesty,
the Emperor.'¹³⁾

This poem by Hanabusa is one of the earliest shi-poems by women which directly reflects the *Ten'noism* of wartime Japan. However, the significance of this poem is not only the strong impact of Japan's *ten'nosei* belief, which makes the poet celebrate her son's death in the air-force drill by saying '*ten'no-heika* banzai!',¹⁴⁾ but because it demonstrates the shift of the feeling from the sorrowful mother to the

proud 'military mother, 軍国の母 *gunkoku-no-haba*'.

Hanabusa is one of the women pioneers of free-style modern verse, and her first solo poetry collection, *Over the White Bridge* 白橋の上に, was published in 1925. She was one of the first five women who managed to publish a solo free-style poetry collection in Japan. Hanabusa was already a well-recognized poet when *CWSPA* was published. She explains her long poetic career as her life exercise: 'before I realized, writing poetry has become my physiology, the act of writing is beyond the judgement of good and evil' (*CWSPA*, p.143). She did not need to 'sell' her name as a poet by writing propaganda poetry.¹⁵⁾

Some may claim it was necessary to praise the *ten'no* because of the censorship or the poet

忽ち嵐のやうに、池田、池田、と
お前を囲んで、叫び始めた。

その声に、あの児は、息を吹き返しました
そして、懸命な力で半身を起すと
直ぐ、操縦桿を握つて
再び飛ばうと試みる氣勢を示しました、が
それは、僅に三十秒ばかり
海軍病院に運ばれ
手厚い手当の甲斐なく
あの児は、魂絶えました。

大分の街は
その雄々しい最後にみな泣いて
知るも、知らぬも
莊厳を極めた海軍葬の盛儀に参列しました
と、これは、未知の人から私への
温い手紙です。

その日
南国の空は
美しく、花に霞んでゐたでせうか
取るものも取り敢えず駆けつけた
勇の父は、
どんな風に、あの児を讃めてやつてくれたでせうか
光榮ある弔旗に刻ぎまれた
海軍中尉、従七位池田 勇の

最後の名の晴れやかさ。

お前は
恒に、青空と、広き海とに
限らない憧れをもつ、この母の
希望を、よく実現してくれました
人となり秀れた、お前が
祖国 日本の、海の 若き荒鷺の一人となり
死所を得た喜びで
私は、もう、世にも、人にも、自分にも
何も、申す言葉はない。

名もなき、女詩人の身として
畏れ、かしこみ
天皇陛下、万歳を申し上げ奉る。

14) *Heika* means 'His Majesty'. The word *ten'no* was almost always combined with *heika* as *ten'no-heika*.

15) Some have argued the less established poets thought it was a good chance to be better known in the literary world and claim this as one of the reasons of writing propaganda poetry (against their will or belief). This does not apply to any of the poets I deal in this paper, for they were already established before they start writing poems in support of war.

needed to praise the *ten'no* to protect herself from the persecution, but I argue it was not the case. Most of the poems published in *CWSPA* do not deal with *ten'no*. Most poems do not even mention the war. There are other war-related poems in this anthology, but no other women poets directly mention *ten'no*. Also, the censorship was mainly for checking the words related to communism, socialism, anti-imperialism and anti-*ten'noism*. Praising *ten'no* or having the word, *banzai*, was not necessary.

It seems to me that Hanabusa wanted to make it clear that the mother in the poem is not feeling sorry for her son's death but honored, by using the phrase, '*ten'no-heika banzai*' in the last line. It is interesting that the mother in the poem clearly expresses her deep sorrow at the beginning of the poem but finishes with her praise for *ten'no*, who is the cause of her son's death. It does not seem consistent, and the poem does not provide the reason why there is such an emotional twist in the poem.

The tragedy of the poem lays in this paradoxical twist of the mother's feeling: the mother is sorrowful because of the death of her son, who has died to protect the *ten'no*'s country, but in the end, she is filled with the feeling of honour because of her son's death, who has died for *ten'no*. It seems to me as if the first feeling is instinct, and the latter is a socially learned response. However, the poem implies

the latter is what the mothers of the *ten'no*'s soldiers would and should feel.

This is an autobiographical poem about her first-son, Isamu, who is the war-victim in this poem. Hanabusa has given away Isamu when he was about six years old, and she has not seen him since. According to her first autobiographical novel, *Waves* (浪, 1941), which was published soon after this poem was published, Hanabusa finds out Isamu's death from Isamu's stepmother. At that time, Hanabusa was living as a single mother with her second son, Atsumasa, whose father is different from Isamu's.

The details of the background of this poem as well as a dramatic life of a woman, who wanted to be a poet in the era which was difficult for women to have any profession, are narrated in *Waves*, but the most striking is the contrast of the feelings towards Isamu and Atsumasa. I shall discuss the contrast between the feelings of the mother depicted in *Waves* and in *Spring Carp Diary* 春鯰日記 (1953), which is about her life in the countryside with *Atsumasa* from the spring 1945 to 1953, in a separate paper due to a limited number of pages allowed in this issue.

'Over the Winter Mountains' is another war-related poem of Hanabusa included in this anthology. This poem was published in February 1940, first in the feminism journal, *Kagayaku* (which means 'to shine'). This poem is

16) Translation first published in *Transference* vol.6 (2018).

冬山を越す
(湊病院を慰問する、輝く部隊の一行に加はりて。)

「花を持って来れば可かつたね」
と、誰れかバスの中で言つた

成る程、誰れも花を有つてゐない
たゞ、一筋な心に
冬山を越すのである。

伊豆は、埃を浴びて
むつつりとしてゐた
島、鷗、裸樹、山肌
何處を見ても寒い

about her visit to Minato Veteran's Hospital in Izu as a member of *Kagayaku* women's troop, a group of women writers and feminist advocates in support of war.

'We should have brought some flowers,'
Someone said in the bus.
She was right, no one has flowers
But still we go over the winter mountains
Bearing only our pure hearts

The seaside town of Izu, covered in dust,
Greeted us gloomily
Islands, seagulls, fruit orchards, mountain
surfaces
Everything I see makes me cold
Lake Ippeki is the only blue
Turning from the bus
I fill my fountain pen
With the clear water of this lonesome high
land

Minato Veterans' Hospital, are we there yet?
Not yet, much, much further
This mountain, that mountain
From the city of Shimoda,
We once more go over the mountains¹⁶⁾

Though these appear to be the poems in support of war, I argue that the immediate feeling of a woman, who must do something to overcome the daily fear of losing her son(s) is ex-

pressed through the act of praising *ten'no* in the first poem and in the second poem, through the act of visiting wounded soldiers who are still willing to get well and fight.¹⁷⁾ The women in the latter poem are giving 'comfort' to those wounded in the hospital by their visit, but at the same time, they are giving 'comfort' to the frontline soldiers. The poem is sending the message that the soldiers would be treated respectfully and kindly at home front, even if they fail to be 'war heroes'. Moreover, the women in the poem seem to find 'comfort' in their own sadness, fear and loss through the act of visiting the hospital.

III | Ikuta Hanayo (生田花世 1888-1970)

Ikuta is another senior poet, who was very 'active' and 'productive' during the war. She started to publish her prose in literary journals in 1924, and since then, she kept publishing tanka poems, shi-poems and autobiographical short stories in various feminism and literary journals. During the war, she visited some Japan-occupied towns and cities in Asia as part of 'comfort' visits as a poet and published nine solo-books between 1940 and 1945.¹⁸⁾

For *CWSPA*, Ikuta submitted eleven poems, under the title of 'Japan-Sino Poetry Collection (日支詩篇)' along with her photo taken in front of the destroyed buildings and piles of

青いのは、一碧湖だけ
高原の孤独に澄む水を
私は、バスから振り返って
万年筆に入れた。

湊病院は、まだか
まだです、まだ、まだ
あの山、この山

下田の街から
また、山越すのである

17) Hanabusa actually meets soldiers who knew Isamu in these 'comfort' visits. I am using the word, 'comfort' here as the equivalent of Japanese 'ian (慰安)'.

18) About Ikuta's war poems, see pp.71-75 in my paper on 'Ikuta Hanayo' in *Women Literates in Tottori* (2017).

rubble. Many of these poems are about her visit to Japan occupied China in September 1939. This photo must have been taken during this trip.

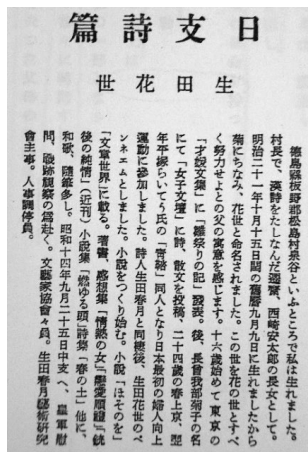
Despite the fact that she is visiting the battle fields and meeting Japanese soldiers at front line, the relationship between China and Japan in her poems is naively depicted as friendship. Strongly reflecting the concept of Holy War, Japanese soldiers appear to be fighting ‘for China’ not ‘against China’. The poet innocently seems believe the peace in Asia will be brought by the Japanese soldiers she has visited during her ‘comfort’ trip. There is no sign of occupation or imperialism in these poems. In these poems, China neither appears as Japan’s enemy nor the victim of Imperial Japan’s

occupation but the friendship between China and Japan is emphasized.

In the poem, ‘Celebrating the establishment of Chinese Nationalist Party 国民政府生誕を祝して’, Ikuta finishes the poem by celebrating the collaboration of China and Japan for the better future:

Now is the time, we work together
Oh, this is such a joy
The utopia Japan and China longed for
Shall come true because of this²⁰⁾

A girl in China is also simplified or reduced to as an icon as a friendship tool between China and Japan:



19)

19) The title page with a short biographical essay and the photo of the poet, Ikuta Hanayo, in *CWSPA* (pp.19-20).

20) Last 4 lines. 「国民政府生誕を祝して」(最終4行のみ抜粋) “今ぞ 力を合す／嗚呼 喜ばしきかな／日支待望の楽園／これよりぞ来る”

Along the horse carriage path
 To visit Hánshānsì temple
 Violet flowers, too,
 Line up
 A *gūniáng* with round eyebrows picks them
 To present to a *tsuwamono*-soldier of the
 country Japan²¹⁾

Though it may imply the colonial relationship between China and Japan, by symbolizing China as a young, pure, pretty woman suggested by violets and Japan as a man, a brave soldier (*tsuwamono*), the focus is more on the purity of a young Chinese girl and her respect for a Japanese soldier. Ikuta's poems do not show attempts to explore a Chinese girl's feelings or her viewpoints, but a Chinese girl is used only as an ornamental figure to (mis)represent the local respect Japanese soldiers have won in China.

It is shocking, and to some extent hard to believe, that Ikuta, one of the advocates of women's right and established poets, seems to lack the imagination what Japanese soldiers meant for the young girls in China at that time. For Chinese girls, Japanese soldiers were invaders. They could have been raped and killed. However, Ikuta does not seem to have a slightest doubt that Japanese soldiers were the

heroes for the people in China just like they were thought to be the war heroes in Japan.

Ikuta's poetic focus was somehow limited to the emotional turmoil and inner selves of Yamato people. In the first poem of *CWSPA* anthology, 'Battle Ship Dispatch 出征船', Ikuta depicts the emotions of the parents who could do nothing but repeat crying out 'banzai',²²⁾ when sending their son off to the front line. The poem is set five minutes before the ship's departure. There is a father (st.5) and a mother (st.6) looking up the ship. The emotions in both stanzas are intense. In stanza 5, 'the eyes of the father under smiling face / put all his energy and spirit'²³⁾ to stare at his own son out of thousands of soldiers on board. Following the same poetic pattern and rhythm, stanza 6 describes a mother: 'the hand of the mother under her falling tears / holds her own breast tightly'.²⁴⁾ In stanza 7, the ship starts to move away:

Thousands of fathers cry out
 Thousands of mothers wave her arm
 Trying to hang on to the last two minutes,
 to cling to one last minute²⁵⁾

The narrative in stanzas 8 and 9 carries the soldiers slowly away. The soldiers, standing stiffly

21) Last 6 lines. 「支那の春を思ふ」(最終6行のみ抜粋)
 “寒山寺訪ふ／馬車のみち／堇の花も／咲くならむ／／
 眉まるかりしクーニャンの／摘みておくらむ日本の国のつはもの
 に”

22) Literary means 'Long life to Emperor' but it was commonly used for cheering up the soldiers going to the front line and battle field. It is also commonly used for celebrations, meaning 'Hurray'.

23) 笑の中で父の眼は／父の精力をつぎこむのだ (CWSPA p.23)

24) 涙の下で母の手は／母の乳房をふくめるのだ (CWSPA pp.23-24)

25) CWSPA p.24.
 “千人の父は叫び／千人の母は手を振り／二分を惜しみ一分にすぎる”

at attention, never move. They are getting smaller and smaller, and finally blend into the ship:

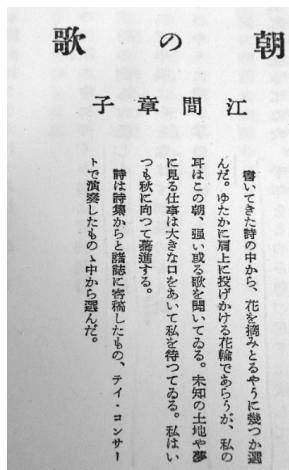
Losing sight of their target, the herd of
mothers and fathers
Kept crying out ‘banzai’, ‘banzai’,
repeatedly.²⁶⁾

Ikuta did not seem to grasp the fact that these young men who were sent off with their parents’ tears became villains once arrived in China in her war poems. Almost in all her war-po-

ems, Ikuta seems to view Japanese soldiers as ‘victims’ of the Japanese Imperialism.

IV Ema Shoko (江間章子 1913-2005)

A modernist poet, Ema Shoko, selected 20 poems for *CWSPA* anthology. Many of them are witty, uniquely structured poems, full of foreign words. These poetic elements were ‘fashionable’ in the modernism poetry of the time.²⁸⁾ Ema, too, has some poems in relation to war in *CWSPA*.



27)

26) The last two lines (*CWSPA* p.25)
“対象を失った父母の大群は／「万歳」「万歳」と叫びつづけた”

27) The title page with a short biographical essay and the photo of the poet, Ema Shoko, in *CWSPA* (pp.239-240).

28) It is interesting to compare her early modernism poems with her war poems.

‘Autumn Flower Basket 秋の花籠’ is an elegy for the journalist who has lost his life in Nomonhan Incident (known as the Battle of Khalkhin Gol in the former Soviet Union and the Battle of Halhin Gol in Mongolia),²⁹⁾ which took place in Mongolia from May to September 1939. Japanese soldiers fought against Mongolian and Soviet armies and were defeated severely.

Tiny shoes with fine embroideries,
Pure white evening dress with high collar,
a ring with jewels shining with the color of
grass and sea,
I have put all of them and then
wrapped the green ‘Osaka Mainichi
Newspaper’ logo armband.
This armband was on Sato, the journalist,
who has lost his life as a war correspondent
at Baintsagan Hill last July.³⁰⁾

This collage like images from line 1 to 3 is a technique she has learnt as a modernist poet in the 1920s and 30s. Many of the male (ex-)modernist poets stopped using these techniques when writing war poems and went back to the traditional Japanese poetic style, but interestingly, women (ex-)modernist poets, such as

Ema and Nakamura Chio, applied their modernism techniques in some of their war poems.

This poem is crucial, for it proves poets could publish poems which lament the war dead. They did not have to necessarily cry out ‘*banzai*’ for their lost lives, but simply express sorrow in a subtle way, if not using the censored words explicitly. Ema successfully applied her poetic skills in order to express in order to express her sorrow without being too explicit.

Another example of such is ‘The snake of 1937 一九三七年の蛇’.

War steals men from women, it is said,
but it deprived me of my eyes.
I feel as if I am in love with the stature
without a form.
I hear as if all words and voices come from a
gramophone.
It is as if pinning a photo of an actress in my
old room when I was poor.
O, the orange colored sun,
are you being out there even at night?
I will go to the cinema and listen to music.
The first violet of spring, I will give to you.
The image of eternity is raining again
today.³¹⁾

29) About the names of the places in English related to this poem, see https://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=89 (10 Jan. 2019).

30) きれいな刺繍の小さな靴よ
カラアの高い純白のソワレよ
海と草の色に光る宝石の指輪よ
わたしはそれらを身につけて
「大阪毎日」の緑の腕章を捲いてみた
これは去る七月バルシヤガル高原近くで報道戦線の華と散
った
佐藤記者の腕にまかれてゐたものである (p.260)

31) 戦争は女から男たちを奪ふといふけれど
それはぼくから眼をとりあげた
ぼくは姿のない彫刻を愛し合つてゐる気持だ
優しい声も言葉もレコードをかけてゐるやうだ
ちやうどむかし、貧しかった室に女優の写真一枚貼りつけて
ゐたやうな
オレンジ色の太陽よ
お前は夜でも出てゆくのか
ぼくはシネマへ行つて音楽を聴かう
春は最初のすみれの花を貴方に上げませう
けふも永遠のイメエジに雨がふる (pp.257-258)

This poem is unique, because ‘I’ in the poem is a male first person, speaking of his lost sight in the battle. It was very rare for women poets of the time to write a poem using a male voice.

It is often argued that poets could not write anti-war poems and it was one of the reasons they ended up producing many pro-war poems. However, as Ema’s poems prove, not being able to write anti-war poems does not mean they have no choice but to write pro-war poems. Her war-poems show that there were different approaches to the war poems. These two poems are either pro-war or anti-war, but both deal with the victims of the war, which as a result, may leave a reader a feeling of anger, sadness or even aversion towards war.

In contrast to many other war poems published during the war, especially after Pearl Harbour Attack in 1941, Ema’s war poems pay little respect to 7-5 syllable counting poetic tradition. Instead, Ema freely enjoys the *katakana*-words, just like she did before the war in her modernism poetry. These *katakana*-words are the adopted words from the Western languages. In the ‘The snake of 1937’, for example, we can observe cinema シネマ, image イメージ, gramophone レコード and evening dress ソワレ (*soiree* from French).

Not only the vocabularies, but the images Ema uses in her poems very much reflect Western cultures. For instance, her poems are much more individualistic than other war-themed

poems, which use the first-person narrative voice, ‘we, Yamato women’. In both poems, Ema is trying to grasp the moment of personal emotion not through the feeling but through the objects. In the first poem, it was the arm-band. In the second poem, it is the music (records) and visions (cinemas) which connect his past he could see and his present he cannot see.

V

Ueda Shizue (上田静栄, 1898-1991)

In this anthology, not only Ema, but also some of other modernist women poets demonstrate the influences from the Western culture and literature. Ueda Shizue is another example. Ueda started her poetic career with anarchist or socialist inclinations, but after her marriage to a modernist poet, Ueda Tamotsu (上田保 1906-1973), she started writing poems under modernist influences. Her poems included in this anthology show a unique mixture of socialism and modernism. A good example is her ‘The Lady’s Cat 貴婦人の猫’. It is a satirical poem with the symphonic image of all the cats owned by a rich lady being burnt one after another.

‘Thinking of the warriors 戦士を想ふ’ by Ueda demonstrates the association with the war. This poem also shows a curious combination of her interests in social issues and modernist poetics, though not as explicitly as in

32) CWSPA p.195. 「戦士を想ふ」

大陸の戦野をかける勇士たちよ。
私はいつもあなたたちを見つめてゐる。
この詩はある日ニュース映画で私の見た
あなたたちの姿です。

33) pp.195-197. Italics added in I.7.

天も地もきびしい白色だ。
充滿する白銀の光は、
無限の鋭い矢だ。

雪白の房と揺らぐ樹木。
うねり輝く高原を、

‘The Lady’s Cat’. The poem has a four-line explanation at the beginning:

For the warriors, who run through the
battlefield of the continent
I am always watching you
This poem is dedicated to you
To you, I saw in the evening motion picture
news on that day³²⁾

Then, the poem begins:

The heaven and earth, unmercifully white
Silver white lights filling the air
Are the infinite sharp arrows

Along with snow white bunches of blossoms,
the trees swing
Through the winding, shining grassland
From valley to valley
The *soldiers* march
Marching, this one action,
Is made of thousands of farewells
Their heart is unmercifully white

Making snow a shield
Staring fiercely at the black steel dragon,
Shivering with anger at white smoke of the
muzzles,
Snow blossoms fall with a shower of sparks
They stare and stare
They fire and fire

谷から谷へ、
進撃する兵士たち。
その一つの行動と、
千の訣別よ。
彼等の心情はきびしい白色だ。

雪を楯に、

Rapid heartbeats at the battle
Their life is unmercifully white³³⁾

While many of the women’s war poetry is subjective and emotional, this poem is rather objective. Ueda applies one of the modernist techniques, which tries to eliminate feelings of the objects in the poem, and tries to compose a picture-like poem, which was one of the characteristics of Japanese modernist poetry. It works effectively, for this poem is about a scene she has seen at the motion picture news. The scenery is all white. It must be somewhere snowy. The poet overlaps the image of the land the soldiers are sent to with the image of their cold, freezing, shivering feelings by using ‘white’.

It is worth noting that Ueda has chosen the word, warrior戦士 *senshi*, for the title. This word, *senshi*, was hardly used for war poetry in Japan. Instead, the word, soldiers (兵隊 *heitai* or 兵士 *heishi*) was used. Many women used *heitai-san* (兵隊さん), which literary mean Mr. Soldier. A word, ‘san’ in *heitai-san*, is a polite suffix. It is one of the Japanese honorifics, which indicates attachment, respect and affection of the speaker. Men poets rarely used *heitai-san*. It was mainly used by women or for children’s verse. In the poem itself, Ueda chooses not to use the word, *senshi*, but replaces it with *heishi* (l.7).

睨む鋼鉄の黒き龍。
怒り慄ふ銃口の白い炎。
火花と散る雪花。
彼等は凝視する。
彼等は射つ。
戦ひのはげしい鼓動だ。
彼等の生命はきびしい白色だ。

The word, *senshi* was avoided in poetry, most likely because the pronunciation is exactly the same as *senshi* (戦死), which means the death in war. Sen (戦) means battles or war or fighting. The *kanji* character for shi (士) in soldier means ‘a person’, but a *kanji* character for war dead, shi (死) means death. It is clear when you are reading the poem on the page, because the different *kanji*-character is used for ‘shi’. However, if you are listening to the poem, it has a different effect. Many war poems were read aloud during the war time,³⁴⁾ and therefore the sounds of each words must have been crucial.

Moreover, in Japanese culture, there is a strong belief that the spoken words have power to make what is spoken come true. The sound of the words has a spiritual power. The word *senshi* (warrior戦士) would sound like a curse or bad spell, when spoken to a soldier who is going to the battlefield, for it does sound like a curse to bring *senshi* (the death in battle 戦死) to him. In other words, the title, ‘Thinking of the warriors’ sounds like ‘Thinking of the war dead’, which would suggest the double meaning of the poem. The poet is thinking of the soldiers she saw in the motion film news, however at the same time, she is thinking of those who were killed and are going to be killed.

V Shōhara Teruko (荘原照子 1910-1999)

It is worth noting another modernist poet, Shōhara Teruko, although, or rather because, none of her poems published here are war related. She has nine poems, including eight-pages long prose poem, ‘Moon Pollens’ (月の花粉) in this anthology. Her poems are very imagistic and full of Western images with lots of katanaka-words. Her poem, ‘The Tree in Desert (砂漠の木)’ has a queen (王妃) and princess (王女) instead of empress or emperor. The name of the girl in ‘Dream Growing’ (育つ夢) is Erica (エリカ). There is a sofa (ソファ) on the Persian carpet (ペルシャ絨毯) in ‘At Night (夜に)’, and a pieta painting of Amedeo Clemente Modigliani (1884-1920) in ‘Eagle Dwelling Dish (鷲の棲む皿)’, and even Jesus Christ (キリスト) in ‘Moon Pollens’ (月の花粉) (p.308).

Shōhara has been a mysterious figure for long. She started her poetic career in *Shii-no-ki* (Oak Tree 椎の木), which was a poetry journal organized by Momota Sōji. Many established poets, such as Murō Saisei (室生犀星 1889-1962) and Nishiwaki Junzaburo (西脇順三郎 1894-1982) and younger emerging poets, such as Ito Sei (伊藤整 1905-1969), Sagawa Chika (左川ちか 1911-1936) joined, and the group produced many modernist poets.

Shōhara’s poems and prose were collected and published in the solo collection, *Roman*

34) Discussed in *Celebration of Voices* 声の祝祭 (Hideto Tsuboi, 1997).

Poesy: Mars' Rose (マルスの薔薇 ろまん・ぼえじい) in 1936, edited by a poet and a book designer Aki Shunosuke (秋朱之介 b?-d?). According to his afterward,³⁵⁾ he has never met her, but she kept sending him her works. One day, it stopped because, he assumed, she became too exhausted of looking after her sick mother and could not write any more. He selected some of them and publishing them on behalf of her. He hopes this book will arrive at her door out of blue, make her mother well and make Teru-chan (Shōhara's nickname) happy.

In 1940, her poems were collected in this *CWSPA*, but her poems are not collected in any other women's anthologies. She totally disappears by 1945. Many believed she has died of illness.

In 1967, Shōhara was re-discovered and told how she 'disappeared' from the poetry scene.³⁶⁾ She was watched by the Special Police (特高警察) after China Incident in 1937, for her prose published in *Mars' Rose* was satirical and had some critical points about Sino-Japan war. She was also severely suffering from tuberculosis. In June 1945, the sergeant officer from the special police who has been watching warned that she would be killed if she stays in Yokohama and helped her to get away from the special police. The plan was to circulate the rumor that she has fled to Sendai, where her relatives lived and meanwhile let her go back to her mother's place in Matsue. It was successful. Everyone seemed to believe the rumor.

In 1957, seven years after the surrender of Japan, one of the major poetry journals, *Poetics* (詩学) published an obituary that Shōhara 'who lived in Yokohama, has moved to Sendai at the end of the war but soon after died of illness'. Many years later, Shōhara confessed she read this obituary in Tottori. Her story proves that there was a woman poet, who published and tried to continue to write anti-war poems during the war, risking her own life.

Conclusion

These war poems demonstrate that women poets approached war in many different ways in their poetry. Hanabusa Yoshiko seems to express women's urgent need to become patriotic in order to fill in or to cope with the loss caused by war. On the other hand, it seems Ema Shoko felt more perplexed towards war and searched the way to express anxiety and uncertainty about their war experiences. Ikuta Hanayo seems to me that she felt determined by the government party line and wrote as if she tried to convince herself as well as others by writing what she tried to believe in, such as a concept of Holy War in Asia. And there were some like Ueda and Shōhara who tried to capture war more objectively and tried to express their belief against Japan's Imperialism.

This reveals that women's war poetry has varieties, and I argue it was a medium and an art form which enabled women to express their

35) <https://cogito.jp.net/library/si/shyoharaterukomarusunobara009.jpg> (last viewed on 14 Feb. 2019)

36) This story was published in the newspaper, *Mainichi Shimbun* (21 August 1967).

thoughts and feelings. Women's war poetry should not be neglected but should be reassessed and reexamined its literary and historical value.

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Early Women's Poetry of the Asia-Pacific War

Poems from *Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology* 現代女流詩人集

Rina Kikuchi

Women's war-themed poetry has been long neglected in Japanese literary studies. Critical essays only started to appear in 1990s, almost half a century after these poems were published, and unfortunately, the study has not been developed much since. I assume the reasons could be: many of the poems were pro-war propaganda; many poets tried to discard the war poems they have written after the surrender of Japan; many poets felt ashamed or embarrassed to talk about their war poems; the post-war Japanese society did not allow them to talk freely about the poetry during the war and as a result, the war-time literature became to be acknowledged as 'white pages' in Japanese literary studies. Many avoided this topic for too long. It seems to me that women's war poetry is unfairly claimed to be propaganda cliché and have no literary value with such little critical attention and analyses.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the importance of women's poetry of the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) by bringing them into light. Many of the war poetry anthologies and poetry collections have been out of print for decades, but some of the women's works started to be reprinted in 1990s, in relation to the feminism studies boom. This paper focuses on the war poems published in *Contemporary Women-stream Poets Anthology* 現代女流詩人集, published in November 1940, and analyses the poems written by two senior poets, Hanabusa

Yoshiko (英美子 1892-1983) and Ikuta Hanayo (生田花世 1888-1970), and three modernist poets of the younger generation, Ema Shoko (江間章子 1913-2005), Ueda Shizue (上田静栄, 1898-1991) and Shōhara Teruko (莊原照子 1910-1999).