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WALLS OF JADE: IMAGES OF MEN, WOMEN AND FAMILY
IN SECOND GENERATION ASIAN-AMERICAN
FICTION AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN AMERICAN STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

A complex combination of forces from within the ethnic community and from the American social and political milieu has influenced second generation Chinese, Korean and Japanese-American writers, both in the number and kinds of works produced. The majority of Asian-American autobiographies and novels dealing with the ethnic experience and published generally between the 1940s and 1960s are the romanticized, stereotypic ones that both fit the expectations of the majority reader about Asians in America and at the same time do not threaten the delicate psychic security of the immigrant, ethnic group.

Among the most significant influences on the interpretations of personal and group experience portrayed in these works seem to be those created by the images and stereotypes about Asian in the American popular culture. Americans continue to have extensive ignorance about Asians from the immigrant periods and into the present and consequently, distorted images about the Asian-American experience.

This work undertakes an analysis of the novels and autobiographies written primarily by second generation Chinese, Korean and Japanese-American writers to illustrate that they also became a part of the complex cycle of distortion. The analysis attempts to show the patterns of these writers reflecting and interpreting, rather than recording experiences. In doing so they were conforming to the American expectations of what Asian-American family life and individual roles should be. To accomplish this analysis, the study
traces the use of the images of men, women and family as they are presented in the works and how they are set against and influenced by the pervasive images and stereotypes of Asians in America. Specific writers included for analysis are Jade Snow Wong, Pardee Lowe, Lin Yutang, Louis Chu, Virginia Lee, Maxine Hong Kingston, Li Ling Ai, Younghill Kang, Monica Sone, Daniel Inouye, James Yoshida, Milton Murayama, Kazuo Miyamoto, Jon Shirota, John Okada, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, Margaret Harada, Shelley Ota, Daniel Okimoto, and Kathleen Tamagawa.
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"Now I leave this house for a long distance
All of my village rejoice with me

Even if walls were jade, they have become a cage"

Anonymous Chinese immigrant poem
on the wall of Angel Island
Immigration Center
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF ASIAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

When Oscar Handlin examined his motivation for writing his classic study of European immigration to America, *The Uprooted*, he recalled that "once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America and then I discovered that the immigrants were American history." In looking for a method to encompass that history he hoped "to seize upon a strand woven into the fabric of our past, to understand that strand in its numerous ties and lineages, and perhaps, by revealing the nature of this part, to throw light upon the essence of the whole."¹

Handlin brilliantly accomplished this study of the immigrants from Europe to America over the periods of the great waves of Atlantic migration from the 1840s to the 1920s, particularly by examining the underbelly of history: the individual human lives, their fears, joys, sorrows, confusions. These stories of the uprooted and the children of the uprooted were best gleaned not from the usual historical sources, but from the expressions of the people themselves. Letters home to one another, songs, newspapers, ethnic theatre, folklore, novels, stories, poems and autobiographies most vividly portrayed the periods of immigration and second generation adjustment in America.

Too few historians have followed Handlin's comprehensive pattern into the area of the Pacific migrations: the stories of the Asian uprooted, the Chinese, Japanese and Korean immigrants. Little has been done to analyze and synthesize the creative expressions they have
left of their experiences during the periods of immigration and later generation assimilation. Only recently, through the efforts of second, third, and fourth generation Asian-Americans, has the work of collecting and evaluating such literary materials begun in earnest.

Working with the literature of the first generation poses difficult problems. Even scholars, immersed in the history of Asian immigrants, who speak the native languages and dialects, have encountered frustration at the dearth of available materials for analysis of the immigrants' responses to their settlement. Writing was sparse because the majority of immigrants were illiterate laborers; those who could express themselves in letters, memoirs, stories and poems did not direct them toward an audience beyond their kin or ethnic enclave. Few were preserved into later generations; most of the writings are probably still in Asian or in American family trunks and attics.

Historians and social scientists such as Roger Daniels, Yugi Ishioka and Lowell Chun-Hoon who have searched for social documentaries and literary source materials from the immigrant and later generations, noted that little exists. In cases when materials have been found and interpreted there has been a peculiar preoccupation among the scholars themselves. They have been interested in Asians as "objects" of immigration or exclusion movements, so studies usually focus on them as "outsiders." As Roger Daniels concludes: "other immigrant groups were celebrated for what they accomplished, orientals for what was done to them." The resulting impression has been an image of Asians as passive and fatalistic toward the conditions
imposed upon them and fearful of expressing their side of the story. Popular stereotyping has also reinforced the images of the Asian as cold, unemotional, fearful and ashamed of expressing personal feelings or articulating inner concerns.

The first temptation, then, would be to conclude that Asian-Americans had little interest in preserving or portraying their experiences in literature. A closer analysis, however, indicates that the social milieu of both the immigrant period of the first generation and the acculturation period of the second generation influenced the kind and amount of writing done by Asian-American writers.

Some of the reticence to use personal experience as the subject for literature clearly springs from the Asian cultural heritage. With the Chinese, for example, literary and social tradition are frequently interwoven. Unlike much of Western literature, the thematic concern is more often on what characters do in their social roles rather than what they do and feel as individuals.³

Jade Snow Wong, for example, although a second-generation Chinese-American, still wrote Fifth Chinese Daughter and much of No Chinese Stranger in the third person in deference to her father and her place in the family hierarchy as a fifth daughter. She explained that "Chinese tradition also deems it unnecessary to sign works of art and unbecoming to talk at length using I."⁴ Wong's parents also objected to the first book on cultural grounds: "that the publicity would be loathsome and the young family member could not avoid disgracing them."⁵ They were interpreting the situation according to
the mandates of the Confucian family hierarchy where specific roles must be maintained. Jade Snow's desire to reveal and interpret the family history was considered unfitting for a dutiful young female offspring. So, often, when Chinese-Americans began writing, the cultural concerns with family honor, defined sex roles and the avoidance of publicity or shame served as strong deterrents to portraying the Asian family and the personal relationships within it. When these subjects were written about, the tendency was to avoid portraying any but the most traditional roles.

Even stronger than cultural reticence are the psychological effects of the Asian immigrant situation that continued to influence later generations and their writers. Having a history of poor public images in America going back to the first immigrant periods, Asian-Americans of later generations still had the tendency to avoid calling attention to the self. Hosakawa, for example, advances this view to explain "the quiet Americans." He ties Nisei reticence in discussing their personal and ethnic experiences to fear of reviving anti-oriental feelings in the American culture:

There remains for many in this group, a fatalistic inherent attitude that the destiny of Asians is tied in perpetuity, not to their own efforts, but to the state of the undercurrent of white racism in America. 6

Among the patterns of adjustment to this situation was a deliberate cultivation of the stoic, withdrawn, inscrutable images that satisfied and intrigued, rather than threatened the majority culture.

For some writers who may have wanted to take the ethnic experience as the subject of their work, this situation became crucial. The
dictates of both the cultural legacy and the necessity of surviving
the milieu of racism and social stereotyping caused difficulty in
finding a sense of literary identity. They were faced with the
problem of reconciling the inner sense of self and the need to
interpret what they felt were the complex realities of Asian-American
experiences within the expectations of the majority culture.

Hisaye Yamamoto, an accomplished writer of short fiction,
expressed her difficulties as a writer carrying the burden of an
Asian cultural heritage and an American immigrant past:

• • a writer needs compulsion to create a vision,
and cannot afford to bother with what people think
• • we Nisei are discreet, circumspect, care very
much what others think of us, and there has been
more than one who has fallen by the wayside in the
effort to reconcile the inner vision with outer
appearances. 7

Author Wing Tek Lum provides another vivid image for the
condition of the Asian-American writer: "in being a Chinese-American,
the hyphen is like a tightrope I walk . . . I draw from both
cultures and yet am part of neither." 8

Daniel Okimoto, a Japanese-American autobiographer and critic,
sees:

• • the odds stacked against writers of originality
or poets of genius. So long as Niseis swallow set
standards of social propriety so unquestioningly, so
long as they are intent on following the well-worn
paths to middle class success, they will probably
lack the raw material of experience, individual
perception, and artistic vision . . . the personal
daring needed to assume the high risk of failure
that are basic ingredients for genuine creative
expression. 9
Jerry Surh uses the same image as Wing Tek Lum in seeing all racial minorities in the United States... are like a man on a tightrope... some lean closer than others to one side or other... too close an examination of the reasons for the wire and the nature of one side or other threatens the loss of footing. It's not surprising that most Asian-Americans prefer to deaden their curiosity, stifle their conflicts, and remain cheerfully absorbed in the immediacies of life.10

In several cases where Asian-American writers have projected what they believed to be a realistic interpretation of their minority status and consequent treatment in the American culture, they have suffered rejection by segments of both the American and Asian-American readers. In this respect Asian-American writers fit into the larger context of the patterns of immigrant literature. They have simply experienced the same treatment as many European immigrant and second generation writers. When an immigrant minority group begins to move from poverty and foreignness, to begin to become rewarded members of a larger community, a frank examination of their past can often prove embarrassing. One common response, born out of the residue of insecurity, may be that the group feels its respectability is threatened and turns against writers who choose these themes.

For example, this point can be seen vividly in the case of Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1929), often called the greatest classic of immigrant literature, which suffered criticism by second generation Jews. They were uneasy with what they interpreted to be the perpetuation of popular anti-semitic stereotypes. Nervous liberals protested that it misrepresented Jewish life and genteel scholars found Levinsky's realistic ghetto environment and
criticism of the bitter fruits of assimilation to "be coarse and revolting." 11

Some Asian-American writers have also encountered similar reactions for the same reasons. For example, the 1976 film version of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's memoir of the relocation period, Farewell to Manzanar, occasioned vigorous discussion in Asian-American communities of the West Coast. Many Japanese-Americans felt a sense of relief that such a story could be openly portrayed on national television. Others, however, still maintained a fearful attitude that such works would revive images of disloyal, complaining Japanese. Others felt that reliving the past in public was a violation of the personal and family privacy held inviolate by Asians. 12

Both John Okada's No-No Boy (1956) whose Japanese-American protagonist refuses induction into the military in World War II and goes to prison, and Louis Chu's Eat a Bowl of Tea (1961) describing the unromantic, coarse side of the male world of Chinatown, were unpopular with Asian-American readers because of the subject matter that seemed to put Asians in a poor light. Charles Tuttle, publisher of No-No Boy, observed the situation in a letter to critic Frank Chin:

... at the time we published it, the very people whom we thought would be enthusiastic about it, mainly the Japanese-American community in the United States, were not only disinterested, but actually rejected the book. 13

One can conclude from these occurrences that a complex combination of forces from within the ethnic community and from the American social milieu has influenced both the lack of development of Asian-American writers and the kind of works that were produced.
The majority of Asian-American autobiographies and fictional works dealing with the ethnic experience are the romanticized stereotypic ones that both fit the expectations of the majority reader about Asians, and at the same time do not threaten the delicate psychic security of the ethnic group. The second generation Asian-American writers have provided a small, but interesting body of work for an analysis of the effects on the creative writers of these groups of the images and stereotypes of Asians in the American culture. As writers they fall into Oscar Handlin's category of the "children of the uprooted," who "have a sense of being adrift between the cultures . . . rather than being transmitters of the first generation experience, second generation writers are mediators and interpreters of it."¹⁴

What makes their literature intriguing for analysis is this record of their transition from recorders to interpreters. Among the most significant influences on their interpretation of their experiences as children of the uprooted seem to be those created by the images and stereotypes of Asians in the society in which they matured. Americans had extensive ignorance about Asians and consequently, distorted images about Asian-American experience.

The images that we carry in our minds of ourselves and the world around us may be real or illusory, a mixture of both fact and fiction. Images, by their very nature are complex, subjective judgments which reflect what Harold Issacs calls our "windows on the world." They are also the mirrors against which we view ourselves, and even the meaning we ascribe to situations.¹⁵ Louis Adamic,
searching for influences on European immigrant writing, found similar patterns: "that writers of history or fiction do not intentionally sidestep the truth; they simply inhale the fallacious cultural atmosphere and exhale it back again." 16

In recent years scores of books have been written about minorities to attempt to recover their lost or distorted pasts. Another needed step is to understand how this distortion influenced the self-perceptions of these minorities. For long periods, knowing little else but myths and stereotypes, they helped contribute to the distortion. With this in mind, I will undertake an analysis of the novels and autobiographies written by second generation Chinese, Korean and Japanese-American writers to show that they also became a part of the complex cycle of distortion. The analysis will attempt to show the pattern of the writers reflecting and interpreting, rather than recording experiences, and that in doing so they were conforming to the American expectations of what Asian-American family life and individuals' roles should be. To accomplish this analysis, the study will show the images of men, women and the family set against the pervasive images and stereotypes of Asians in America.
REFERENCES
CHAPTER I


5. Ibid.


CHAPTER II
IMAGES AND STEREOTYPES OF THE CHINESE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
AND IN SECOND GENERATION CHINESE-AMERICAN LITERATURE

European explorers since Marco Polo left glorious testimonials of China for the Western world that set an early pattern for viewing the East as exotic, rich, vast and sophisticated. The earliest Christian missionaries who visited and settled in the celestial empire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries had been disturbed by its paganism, but also awed by its splendor, culture and power. Otherwise Western contact was minimal; so they were made the first China experts. Even their religious documentaries and personal memoirs were used as sources for Chinese history.

The Chinese aroused continued interest and curiosity in the West, and the ideas gleaned from them were usually based on stereotypes, flimsy shreds of information supplemented by cursory observation. Respect for Peking's administrative system was spread by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century. Crévecoeur, for example, had already internalized the imagery of the emperor father figure, when he wrote in 1782 that "the American father, ploughing with his child to feed his family, is inferior only to the emperor of China ploughing as an example to his kingdom."¹ The "chinoiserie" movement swept Europe and America from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and Chinese art collections were prized possessions of museums and private collectors. Chinese bric-a-brac could be found in colonial houses and frontier cabins of the nineteenth century.²
By the middle of the nineteenth century another set of images began to prevail in the West. Internal rebellion, natural disasters, and foreign wars led to weakness and corruption in Chinese institutions. With China now "carved up by the predatory imperialism of a half dozen foreign powers," she was no longer seen as the epitome of an enlightened civilization. Western missionaries now told tales that were carried to Europe and America of the abuses of concubinage, bound feet, starving peasants and cruel war lords. News of the harsh treatment of Chinese travelers, diplomats, merchants and immigrant laborers in the United States aggravated hostility toward foreigners in China.

The first Asian immigrants, the Chinese, were recruited during the 1850s to provide coolie labor for the construction of the railroads and the development of industry in California. To improve the lot of their families in China, some emigrated after hearing stories of the gold rush and the promise of riches. Going to the "golden mountain" was the sojourner's dream, the contract laborer's escape from the poverty and oppression at home. What he met was a different form of oppression. Although there were many individuals and groups that championed the Chinese, the

... anti-Chinese stereotype was already visible in 1852 among Californians and quickly spread ... the early Chinese immigrants came to the West at the time of the earliest rumblings of chattel slavery in America. In response to the Asian challenge to Anglo-Saxon dominance, America perfected the institutions of modern racism.

Economic competition with white workers in the 1860s and 1870s was real, but the imagined threat of the yellow peril galvanized
all-white labor groups, political hopefuls, race purists and religious sects until an extensive anti-oriental campaign complete with propaganda, violence and questionable laws ended in the exclusion laws of the 1880s.6

Although confined mainly to the West Coast, the early anti-Chinese movement left a legacy of negative images and stereotypes in the American social and racial mythology that could be applied later to groups like the Japanese, Koreans, and even Filipinos. Once established they could be revived under the pressure of economic problems or political expediency. The ethnocentrism of Western culture forces the dichotomy of East and West, and Americans have always been woefully ignorant of the history and culture of Asia. As a result they tended to see Asian immigrants as an undelineated yellow mass.

Many stereotypes of Asians were really interpretations of how they differed culturally from native American norms of behavior. Pervasive stereotyping of the "American myth," particularly of the West, was also at the root of the contrasts. The set of expectations for native Americans was assumed to be impossible for foreigners, especially the racially diverse, to achieve:

For the Eastern United States it was the WASP mythology, the English conceptions of order, decorum, social planning, the free marketplace, consensus on cultural worth. This gave native Americans a sense of reality so integral, so symbolically familiar, so self-validating as the make any other seem insane. The English, the fullest flower of the Teutonic race, had developed the skills of self-government and individual liberty unequalled in other races. This position required they retain authority, distance from inferiors, and direct application of power and force.7
European immigrants from the earliest periods encountered this myth and its seductive images before they left their homelands. The "new" America already had a reputation of exclusivity, and also the promise of status by association. Numerous immigrant autobiographies show the yearning, "I will be made new, I will be made equal [in America]."  

In the West, a counterimage grew even stronger and this one was most crucial to the Asian immigrant. The process of winning the West mythologized incredible mobility:

... the fervid evangelism of the frontier, greed righteousness, free speech, the promise literally of mountains of gold. The stigma of difference, of inferiority, of immigrant status could be wiped out by hard work, cleverness, perseverance, good humor, and just plain guts.  

The new brotherhood of the miner, the pioneer, the gold digger could compete with the heritages of class and a centuries old name. Power and authority came from confidence, newly-won fortunes, the promises of potential status, not past associations. So why did Asian immigrants in the West generate so much resentment from those who ought to have welcomed them? How did the myth of the WASP overwhelm the myth of the golden west?

Only toward the end of the nineteenth century were the "old" Americans themselves beginning to become aware of their special identity. The impact of social darwinism gave even the word "race" a new scientific and social meaning. Differences between the "American" and the "foreign" character were more strongly felt. The prospect of an America populated and possibly dominated by groups as alien as the Armenians, Turks, Jews and Asians was being considered by social scientists, politicians, educators and the public. The
unchecked excesses of industry generated conflict between management and labor, stirrings of class consciousness were heard, and the aftermath of the Civil War occasioned deep guilt and repressions concerning the relations of whites and dark-skinned peoples. Even as a nation grounded in liberal traditions, believing in equality and open opportunity for all men, a crisis of self-identity was brewing.

One panic reaction was to reemphasize nativist concerns against the threat of those who could dissipate the economic promise and pollute the culture so laboriously protected. Those groups, the "new immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe and from Asia that deviated most from the old norms felt the most serious repercussions. The period from 1865 to the 1890s was transitional also, according to Walter Foster in a redefinition of American nationalism. Severely strained by the Civil War,

... a nation facing potential rifts from the arrival of hordes of immigrants tried to reduce the trauma with theories like "the melting pot" and "humanitarianism" toward the less fortunate. Yet assimilation implies that the newcomers assume the "patterns of a dominant group out of their own past, in the present and for the future".

Immigrant groups were analyzed for their "assimilability" in a comparative process that often involved no more than gathering up prevalent racial and cultural stereotypes of the groups and setting them against native American norms. Distinctive images developed for the major Asian groups, particularly the Chinese and the Japanese. Depending on the economic or nationalistic temper of the times, the images could then be applied to the specific group or used indiscriminately. In the public mind, distinctions between Asian groups were
made only when the media favored or rejected a certain group. For example, during World War II, Chinese-Americans were reassociated with ancient culture, Confucian decorum, stable families and filial offspring--meaning they were a loyal model minority. The Japanese-Americans, on the other hand, related physically and culturally to the enemy were transformed into "vicious yellow dogs," clannish, cunning, foreign, promiscuous. These were the very same images foisted upon the Chinese during the first period of oriental exclusion. 13

Frank Chin, literary and social critic, who does work in the area of social imagery and ethnic literature, posits that the general function of racial stereotypes seems to be the establishment and preservation of order between different elements in society. The stereotypes then operate as models of behavior that condition the mass society's perceptions and expectations, and the minority's bounds. As the images mellow with age they become "authenticated" and "historically verified," as the subject minority is conditioned to "become" the stereotype, "live it, talk it, and measure individual worth in its terms." 14

Chinese-Americans have been aware of the heritage of negative imagery from the early immigrant periods. The sojourner was stereotyped far from the American norm of manhood. He was not seen as the head of an intact, stable family. His family was still in China, and he returned to marry, sire children, honor his father, and attend to ancestral duties. Nor was he seen as a moral, benevolent preserver of social virtues. He frequented prostitutes (even some
white women), smoked opium, gambled, and sent his earnings home to
foreigners.

One California congressman warned in 1862 that "the Chinese race
was so deeply sunk in barbarism that mere contact with it was
demoralization." Even Jacob Riis, himself an immigrant who
displayed sympathy for the Jewish and Irish New York ghetto dwellers,
took a different view of the "celestials":

Between the tabernacles of Jewry and the shrines of Bend, Joss has cheekily planted his pagan worship of
idols, among which are the celestials worship of his
own lust. From the teeming tenements come the slaves
of its dens of vice and its infernal drug. He lures
the hapless victim to a passion that demands sacrifice
of all decency to its insatiable desires--even white
girls worship nothing save the pipe.16

In the minds of some Americans, the ancient cultural heritage of
the Chinese was interpreted as a sign of stubborn barbarism, not
superiority. Chinese could never be assimilated because they retained
their loyalty to a "superior culture," to their ancestors. As one
missionary reported:

. . . their habits of custom, language, and mode of
life, their virtues and vices are bred by a civilization
older than our ancient world, and there is nothing in
the human character on the face of the earth so stable
as the character of a Chinaman. To think that our
Pacific coast, green, luxuriant and sappy as it is, can
absorb these polished pebbles from Asia and warm them
into life is a pleasant dream, nothing more.17

The propaganda campaigns were successful and ended with the 1882
Chinese Exclusion Act that restricted laborers for ten years. Similar
acts extended restriction in 1884 and 1892. By 1902 all exclusion
laws relating to Chinese were extended for an indefinite period until
1943 when they were repealed. The refuge of Chinatowns and escape
eastward were the only options for those trapped by poverty and the law from returning home. The propaganda did not cease; it simply became popular entertainment. Travel books, comics, songs, films, and popular literature continued to portray Asians as exotic aliens. Fiction and films through the 1920s and 1930s also continued the lurid stereotypes of Chinese. Dorothy Jones studied Asian characters in the films of the period and showed that the Fu Manchu image dominated and "the mystery of Chinatown became the ominous shadow of an Oriental figure thrown against a wall, secret panels . . . inscrutable faces . . . the opium-smoking, slave-importing tong . . ."

Another figure also emerged--Charlie Chan. The cessation of Chinese immigration, Chinese withdrawal into Chinatowns away from open competition and organized labor, and the arrival of the Japanese as the new racial scapegoats shifted the Chinese images from "fearful strangeness to unfearful oddity." 19 "Cunning, philosophical, full of folk wisdom . . . the good Charlie was a necessary image because the Japanese, by invading the China of the Protestant missionaries, had turned all Chinese into heroes and allies." 20

So American-Chinese, too, took on the qualities of the kind, hardworking Pearl Buck peasants. Chinatowns became exotic, but friendly tourist attractions. The educated Chinese, whose mark of cultural status was a propensity to preface banalities with "Confucius say," was made to represent the ancient cultural and artistic heritage. Chinese-American history was now reinterpreted as Ming vases and Confucian analects. Chinese-Americans were then to gain
ultimate identity in the ownership of centuries of great history and art.

It is crucial to realize that the Chinese-American willingness to identify with this interpretation of their heritage and exaggerate the position it had in their daily lives, was an important part of the immigrant legacy. Early immigrant rootlessness often causes a symbolic return to or a psychological reinstitution of those events, real or imagined which afford optimal gratification. The intensity of nostalgia transmitted to the next generation most often comes from the inability of the immigrant to cope with the new conditions, rather than an attraction for the homeland. 21

Those growing up during the years of favorable images absorbed a sense of identity in this definition of Chinese heritage. Finding it difficult to separate immigrant overcompensation and popular imagery from historical facts, this generation may have lost the ability to distinguish between the mask and the face, so that pretense was soon indistinguishable from character structure. In the face of the negative imagery of the past and the barbaric conduct of Americans against the immigrant Chinese, it is understandable that the first generation Chinese-American immigrants and succeeding generations perpetuated the "cult of the superior Chinese." As a conscious and unconscious survival mechanism they linked their personal and family experiences to images of an idealized Confucian past and projected these images in their literature.

Seven second generation Chinese-American writers have published autobiographies or novels portraying family life and the relationships
between immigrant parents and their assimilating children. A minor but pervasive theme involves the effects of the images and stereotypes of Asian males and females perpetuated in the American culture, on the personal search for satisfying Chinese-American male and female roles. With few notable exceptions these writers, publishing mainly from the 1940s through the 1960s, consistently portray Chinese-American familial and generational relationships based on the patterns of ancient China, particularly as interpreted by the Confucian tradition.

Three autobiographies, Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1948) and *No Chinese Stranger* (1975) and Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943) best exemplify these patterns. Wong is the best known of the Chinese-American authors and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is the most widely distributed Asian-American work. It has been translated into foreign languages and sent abroad as an example of a model minority family in America. The plot of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* revolves around Jade Snow's growth from childhood in the 1920s to college in the 1940s, and particularly her relationship with her father. Father Wong embodies the idealized image of the Confucian father and Jade Snow represents the second generation "growing up between the Old World and the New World in Chinatown . . . caught between the rigid teachings of her father and the strange ways of her classmates," edging a way toward personal identity.22

The twenty-six year old author of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* finished the book under the direction of teachers and publishers eager to produce a favorable, entertaining book. She recalled that
"didn't think the events of my own life would fascinate the white world. ... I felt that a young person should be guided in writing for a world she doesn't know. What the world expected was a version of the traditional Chinese family; so she also "wanted westerners to know that the Chinese had a culture and family values." Popular literature by white writers, such as Carl Eske1und's My Chinese Wife and Carl Glick's Shake Hands with the Dragon had established the public taste during this time for a view of the Chinese female tuned into a traditional family, but with a seductive touch of American independence. Both books also emphasize the relationships within a traditional Confucian family as a symbol of the superiority of Chinese culture. Jade Snow was encouraged to continue a popular theme and she still defends her choice: "some of the things are missing that I would have wanted in ... but everybody has a purpose in mind ... if this is what they want to print and its the real thing ... I don't see what harm it does." From 1953-1954 Jade Snow Wong worked for the Department of State as a traveling image-maker under the Leaders and Specialists Exchange Program. Fifth Chinese Daughter had created an unexpected impact on readers in Asia; so the USAID felt "she would be good for the image of the United States in inspiring Asians searching for identities in a new post-war era." In exchange for "seeing the Orient, that mysterious other half of the world," she felt a moral obligation to interpret "what she knew of the United States to fellow Asians." Her second autobiography, No Chinese Stranger, reports on this period and continues the tale of her adult life as wife, mother,
artist and highlights a trip to the People's Republic of China in 1974. Jade Snow Wong's personal story in both worlds represents the patterns of a model minority which attained economic and social success despite the handicaps of race and immigrant status by adopting the accommodative ethnic of the American system. As a writer she felt mandated to motivate her fellow Asians to adopt American values while maintaining their heritage as ancient, exotic cultures.

Pardee Lowe's autobiography, Father and Glorious Descendant (1943), romanticizes his childhood as the youngest son in a middle class Chinese-American family living in the suburbs of San Francisco in the 1920s to the 1940s. Lowe includes some family history, referring to Father Lowe's immigrant days and memories of China. Thematically the work stresses the harmonious Chinese family, strong kinship ties, and the desire Chinese-Americans felt for entering the melting pot. Both the Wong and Lowe autobiographies embellish the daily lives of Chinese families with an array of exotic banquets, weddings, festivals and folk traditions to give Chinatowns the flavor expected by the popular reading audience.

Life is For a Long Time (1972) by Li Ling Ai fits into the autobiographical genre as the family history of the author. Although she defines it as a pai lou, a commemoration of her parents' lives as physicians and community leaders in Hawaii, it includes her own development as a middle daughter in the family. The work flashes back to the 1890 immigrant period of her parents and interprets both the difficulties and opportunities encountered by the Chinese minority in Hawaii.
The first third of Virginia Lee's novel, *The House That Tai Ming Built* (1963), is devoted to an account of several generations of a Chinese family, beginning with "an illustrious ancestor" who came to the California gold fields in 1850. The central character of the remaining novel is Bo Lin Kwong, a young contemporary Chinese-American woman, who struggles to integrate the idealized interpretation of her ancient cultural roots with practical problems of an assimilated, educated Chinese-American. The central conflict which puts the values of the traditional culture at odds with the Americanized norms for female behavior is an interracial love affair between Lin and a Caucasian at the outbreak of World War II.

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) stands defiantly apart from the earlier works in perspective and genre. She describes it as "synthesis of fact, fiction and fantasy," rather than autobiographical, "although there are portions borrowed from childhood." The difference in perspective can be attributed in part to the 1930s immigration of her parents and her own involvement in the civil rights and ethnic identity movements of the 1960s. With Kingston's work it becomes apparent that considering generation without social milieu would be meaningless. This work, like the others, goes back in time to encompass the pre-immigrant life in China and the immigrant period in America. By the 1930s the anti-oriental stereotypes of the early exclusion period had softened into the more positive images of the Chinese as exotic, inscrutable, harmless foreigners. The parent generation of the Kingston novel would be influenced differently than those encountering other images. Unlike
the earlier Chinese-American authors who matured during the 1940s, Kingston herself had the benefit of the civil rights and ethnic identity movements of the 1960s to develop a different awareness of the racist function of popular stereotyping and its psychological effects on minorities. She is quick to develop the theme that positive stereotypes also carry distortions that effect Chinese-American identity, and is aware that one of the common effects is to encourage ethnic writers to interpret their experience to fit the expectations of the majority.

The Woman Warrior stands apart from the other works in its portrayal of a Chinese-American character caught between the images of both traditional China and popular America. While there is no accommodation, no acceptance of the images, neither is there a denial of the power of these "ghosts" to scar the sense of self. To her compatriots she hurls a pertinent challenge:

Chinese Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?

With these questions Woman Warrior attempts to exorcise the ghosts by recognizing the power of the culture to exploit insecurities of minorities through the perpetuation of certain images of them.

Kingston's picture of Chinese rural peasant life gleaned from the stories of parents and traditional folklore, is totally unsentimental, powerful, and terrifying in its images of peasant fears and hardness. The mystical world of the "ghosts," the characters that people her mother's tales, is out of peasant reality,
not the courts of emperors. Kingston's character focus is on the growing self-consciousness of the young female protagonist as she seeks identity in the vast landscapes of Chinese legends and American culture. The author recognizes the stereotypes attached to the Chinese, and the behavior that results from awareness of them. "We have so many secrets to hold in ... I hated the secrecy of the Chinese," she confesses. These hidden lives are born and nurtured first in a peasant society where all personal and public relationships are so intricately bound that any slight deviance threatens control over the whole. Much secrecy is also demanded of the immigrant to America who must learn ploys to remain unnoticed or become accepted. So one learns "lie to the Americans ... pretend you really live their images ... tell them you were born during the San Francisco earthquake, your birth certificate and your parents burned up in the fire." 29

Two works by first generation Chinese-American writers are included for their thematic contrast and comparison. Louis Chu's novel, *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (1961), stands in stark contrast to the romanticized versions of the Confucian families in the other works. Chu, born in Canton, came to America at the age of nine, attended schools and colleges in New Jersey and New York, and attained degrees in English and Sociology. His background places him closer to his second generation contemporaries than the immigrant generation. As a New York City disc jockey and record distributor until his death in 1970, Chu was aware of the image-making power of the media and the popular stereotypes of the Chinese.
The novel is set in the essentially womanless, non-white world of Chinatown New York from the early immigrant period to the postwar immigrant era. His major character, Wang Ben Loy, gains his sense of Chinese identity from a group of old immigrant men recalling the past and living out their days on the edge of poverty and despair in Chinatown. His own attempts to find manhood in work, friendship and marriage are frustrated by a sense of impotency and self-denigration inherited from generations of Chinese men stereotyped as passive, feminized coolies.

*Chinatown Family* (1948) by Lin Yutang provides similar themes and perspective for comparison with the second generation works. Yutang did not usually take up the American immigrant theme. Despite his thirty-six year residence in America, he never identified with Chinese-Americans by association or sensibility. Seeing himself as an interpreter of China for the Western mind, his preferences were for the traditional Chinese classics and the ancient philosophers. Yutang's glorification of the superior culture of ancient China and his appeal for the blending of East and West has contributed heavily to the popular expectation that Chinese-Americans should have one foot in the Tang gardens of jade and peach blossoms, despite the intervention of numerous less glorious dynasties and the American immigrant experience.

His one novel dealing with Chinese-Americans centers on the efforts of the Fong family struggle to educate its young, preserve family harmony and retain the "superior" culture of its ancestors, while taking advantage of American progress and economic opportunity.
Yutang's interpretation of Chinese family life during the 1920s to the 1940s is consistent with the patterns used by Jade Snow Wong, Pardee Lowe, Virginia, and Li Ling Ai, particularly in emphasizing the cultural and ethical superiority of the Confucian family model.

What all these works contribute is an interpretation of Chinese-American family and personal experience that has been directly influenced by the conditions of the immigrant experience. The majority of the writers tried to fulfill the expectations of the American reader, already steeped in the popular stereotypes of the Chinese. Primarily they chose to link themselves with the romanticized versions of the Confucian tradition and to interpret their American-Chinese experiences in this light.
REFERENCES

CHAPTER II


3. See ibid., pp. 112-113.


8. See ibid., p. 82.


24. Ibid.


29. See Ibid., p. 11.
CHAPTER III
IMAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE FAMILY
AND CHINESE-AMERICAN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Some of the most pervasive positive images of Asians in the Western mind are those associated with the traditional Chinese family. The Chinese family in China is portrayed as following the Confucian ideal in its structure and values. In popular American images the implication is that the Chinese-American family also follows all the ancient practices developed by the vision of the Great Teacher. Modeling society after the structure of the good family, the Confucianists fashioned a well-defined network of familial relations. Under the authority of the oldest male, "sons show filial piety, young brothers respect, wives obedience, younger men deference, and servants loyalty." These deferential roles were matched with appropriate reciprocation from above: "fathers show kindness, elder brothers responsibility, elders humaneness, and rulers benevolence. Such were the requirements for general harmony and true human welfare."¹

Professional scholars, missionaries, popular literature and the media have emphasized this image of the Chinese family and over a period of time have concluded that it is the total reality of the Chinese family in America. Because of the positive thrust of the images, their similarity to the demands of Christianity and some of the patterns of the Western family, they came to be admired by
Americans, and emphasized by Chinese-Americans eager to gain acceptance as a minority in America.

This is certainly not to say that historically or culturally the Confucian vision has been only an image. It always carried the vivid symbolism of an ideal lifestyle even in ancient China. The American popular mind, however, had little knowledge of the realities of the Chinese class system and of the economic situation current in the nineteenth century Asian immigrant period, and could make no fine distinctions between the real and the ideal. One set, perhaps the most dominant, of popular images simply assumed that the coolie laborer, the merchant, the peasant sojourner could achieve the ideals defined by the Great Traditions of Cathay.

As Americanized Asians, the second generation usually accepts the same assumptions as their western counterparts. Strong emphasis on the existence and the superiority of the Chinese family system by Chinese-Americans can be seen partly as a perpetuation of an accommodative pattern that predated the immigrant period. Francis Hsu suggests that to compensate for what they felt to be economic and military inferiority to the Westerners inundating China in the nineteenth century, the Chinese urbanites who came into contact with them offered the way of family relations as a shining example of Chinese "superiority." This accommodative pattern may have been reinforced and further developed during the immigrant period, and well into later generations.

The nineteenth century, "when manifest destiny met the mandate of heaven" was a period of disintegration for China. Before this
time, however, China's imperial attitude toward foreigners was one of self-styled superiority, of ethnocentricity and isolation from barbaric neighbors. The earliest negotiations between China and the West for entrance to China or trade rights were always viewed from this perspective. If the Chinese noblemen and merchants felt resentment toward the aggressive foreigners in China, they could draw on the popular images of Chinese tradition, the classic curriculum and literature that supported an interpretation of Chinese culture and institutions as superior to those of the West. The peasants of China, including those from Kwangtung, the fountainhead of immigration to America, may have lived their lives withdrawn from elitist culture, but they did have a sustaining heritage of their own based in some respects on the Great Traditions. Like peasants everywhere, they celebrated their own festivals, sang their own songs, invented their own images and myths tied to their region and class.

Later, in the process of adjusting to difficult and humiliating conditions after immigration, the peasant Chinese, already carrying ties to traditional ideals, grew to relate more fiercely to an idealized chung kuo. He connected himself more intensely to the admired Confucian tradition. The strongest symbol for this ideal was the Confucian family. For the immigrant there is the appeal to the sense of security and continuity to be found in the image of the superior Confucian family. In addition, being in a depressed situation in America, the immigrants found that the Confucian ideal carried with it implications of class and personal power. The model of the ideal Confucian family is based on the ideals of a wealthy,
elite class. Peasant families were rarely large, extended clans living harmoniously in a household under a patriarch. Peasant men rarely had multiple wives and multitudes of filial sons. Only after a family became better off did it adapt the "large family ideal," perform the elaborate public ancestor rites, and regular marriages for status and economic mobility.4

After many of these peasants and small merchants immigrated to America, the money they returned to China often enabled them to attain a measure of the ideal and to maintain it as part of the "superior" cultural heritage. Others who were kept from reproducing a second generation in America by Chinese cultural demands that they return home to marry and sire children, and by exclusionary and anti-miscegenation laws in America, rarely attained any family system at all. The sojourner who would be able to develop a family in America found acceptance in associating himself with a heritage identified by Chinese and Americans as an ideal of high culture. At the early stages he could bequeath little power or status to his children, but could preserve for them the images of the superior Chinese family already a part of the Chinese heritage and already popular in American stereotypes.

Jade Snow Wong's Fifth Chinese Daughter projects the most consistent image of the strong, harmonious Chinese family and illustrates best the Chinese-American attempt to link the American family with the ancient Confucian heritage. Father Wong embodies the stereotype of the authoritarian Chinese patriarch maintaining family unity through strict discipline, male hierarchy, hard work, and
sentimental wisdom out of Confucian analects and Tang dynasty poems. When he makes concessions to the Americanization of his children, it is to allow development of his Chinese family status, harmony and good name, particularly in the eyes of the American community.

To maintain this image he relies on the traditional Chinese family model as the source for all individual action. When Jade Snow wants to appear in public on American-style dates, for example, Father Wong is angered. He fears for her female reputation in the Chinese and American communities and the loss of patriarchal power. He rails against her, "How can you permit a foreigner's theory to put aside the practical order of the Chinese, who for thousands of years have preserved a most superior family pattern?" He continues, "We are content with proven ways. When Confucius had already established his ethics for civilized behavior, the Westerners were bloodthirstily persecuting Christ."

When young adult Jade Snow publishes her book and gain community respect, Father Wong remains silent. He cannot praise her personally, but she may have recognition in the context of the Confucian order. So he thanks not her, but God, "... that not only a Chinese, but a Chinese from San Francisco; not only a Chinese from San Francisco, but a Wong; not only a Wong from this house, but a daughter Jade Snow, has brought us honor." Even in individual success, she must maintain her place. As a young female she is lowest in the ordered family hierarchy!

Jade Snow internalized this legacy of Confucian familial images from her father and the dual culture in which she matured reinforced
it. When she visits the People's Republic of China thirty years later, she feels like the lowliest member of some ideal extended family. Her deepest fear in China is that she will lose her identity as a "superior" Chinese. She wonders if these native "superior" Chinese will accept an ignorant bamboo node (a poetic simile for stupidity: as water cannot pass through a bamboo node, so knowledge did not penetrate the brains of the Americanized Chinese). 8

Having internalized her personal connection with the ancient Chinese culture and institutions, her travel memoirs recall endless Chinese pottery, poetry, foods, festivals and family rituals. Earlier in Fifth Chinese Daughter these were projected as integral parts of family life in San Francisco to illustrate Chinese-American culture. Despite her observations that "nothing about China matched what I was told," she still sought out the same aspects in twentieth century Maoist China to perpetuate the link between the ancient and modern models of an exotic civilization. New China becomes but the Middle Kingdom updated by tractors and communes. Young Jade Snow's interpretation of life in an American Chinatown and adult Wong's impressions of modern China are both based on a set of images of a China of an older idealized period, transmitted through the immigrant generation's nostalgia.

Wong's inability to separate real and ideal images is related to the larger struggle of the Chinese-Americans as an immigrant group forced to deal with images of the Chinese from both Chinese and American cultures. The strongest influence on Wong's sense of self and her place in the family comes from her immigrant father's claims
to a model Confucian family. His own need to act the mandarin scholar and patriarch in his home was greater because he was a struggling laborer outside it. His own need to be a patriarchal symbol intensified his young daughter's obligation to perpetuate it. It was easier for both parents to cover the humiliation of escape from a collapsing China with the nostalgia for the traditional visions of "fragrant mountains," wise Confucian proverbs, and harmonious families. These were also the predominant impressions transmitted to their children through legends and fairy tales. Chinese language school teachers, usually underemployed classicists caught among peasants in a barbarian land, reinforced this view of traditional and superior culture. Later history and art classes at Mills College reinforced the accomplishments of the glorious Chinese culture.

Wong reports, with some satisfaction, that she could take pleasure in rediscovering the Chinese community only after she was moving with confidence in the Western world. What she had been absorbing is the confirmation of her father's teachings in the West's images of the Chinese. She also learned at Mills a secret to identifying with the positive images: "I knew my Chinese background was my point of distinction."9

The images and expectations for the Chinese learned from the American would loom large in Jade Snow Wong's perspectives on her own experience and their interpretation in her two autobiographies. Her final interpretation of her personal and family identity results from a set of idealized images of what Chinese and Chinese-Americans
ought to be, rather than what experience makes them. From this conditioning the only choice Jade Snow Wong had with No Chinese Stranger thirty years later, was to confirm and update the accepted images of the Chinese family portrayed in Fifth Chinese Daughter that came from a combination of her Chinese heritage and the positive expectations of the American culture.

Compared to the works of Jade Snow Wong, Pardee Lowe's emphasis on the assimilation of the Chinese-American family in his autobiography, Father and Glorious Descendant, somewhat overshadows the desire to portray the Confucian basis of the Chinese-American family. What Lowe still does, however, is choose a set of positive images, that of the Chinese in the melting pot, to gain acceptance for the Chinese-American family. When these images are insecure, Lowe also goes to the images of the "superior" Chinese. When the Lowe family moves into the Caucasian suburbs of San Francisco, Father Lowe becomes intensely aware that he is a "Chinese in an American community." Despite his statements that he has nothing to prove because he is accepted by whites and separated from "the coolie Chinese," he continues to insist that the Lowe family prove to the Americans that they have "superior" strength, moral righteousness, and culture.

Father Lowe works out a revealing situational identity in his own reference to himself as "Chinese" when it will give him status, and "American" when separation from a minority is important. This pattern is common with most immigrant minority groups, and Father Lowe's situational identity takes the particular form of projecting
his Chinese "superiority" to satisfy the images of the outsiders. 
This usually takes the form of Chinese gifts--Chinese vases and art 
objects, symbols of culture and breeding. "Few Americans would ever 
know they came from cheap Chinatown bazaars." II

In The House That Tai Ming Built, Virginia Lee gives several 
generations of the Kwong family as ideal a family life as it was 
possible for immigrants to have. For many generations each male, no 
matter how far he travelled, returned to China to marry and sire sons. 
When away he sent home remittances, and finally returned for good as 
a patriarch at a venerable age. Grandfather Kwong, the reigning 
patriarch in the novel, is the last to return before the last war 
that cut off the American families from the house that Tai Ming, the 
first immigrant ancestor, built in China. Lee's history of the 
patterns of absence and return for the Chinese fathers is historically 
accurate. She realistically portrays the pain of separation and the 
physical and economic hardships these men encountered trying to live 
up to the traditional demands of fatherhood by the standards of the 
ancient culture. Most of these "uncles" or ancestors are vague to 
Lin, the contemporary Chinese-American narrator, and live only in 
remnants of family history.

Two male characters in the novel, Grandfather Kwong and Uncle 
Fook are vividly portrayed in the mold of ideal Confucian paternal 
figures. These two most provide the Kwong family with an aura of 
"superior" Chinese heritage, especially as it relates to the 
aesthetic aspects of Chinese culture. Grandfather Kwong, uneasy that 
his grandchildren will lose their ties with the past, uses Chinese
legends to develop their emotional links. He mixes the folk tales of ghosts and witches, the tales of imperial courts with memories of California gold fields. What he transmits to the children is neither the dynastic history of China nor the history of immigrant California. What he bequeathes to them is a series of romanticized images of a Chinese past that will help them relate to the images that the American culture associates with Chinese-Americans.

He begins the process by giving his granddaughter Bo Lin a secret name, Shui Heung or Fragrance From Books. He recreates her as a Chinese princess, "a beauty with fine clear skin, large long eyes, arched eyebrows out of the novels of the ancient dynasties of China." As Shui Heung, she might become a writer someday, "like the ladies of the Three Kingdoms."12

Uncle Fook emerges as Virginia Lee's most vivid perpetuator of the images of the superior Chinese. Fook is a successful merchant of Chinese art goods, a perfect example of an educated, mannered mandarin dispensing culture and art to tourists and his favorite niece. His long lectures on jade, Shang bronzes and Sung pottery embellish the novel with examples of the superior Chinese culture. "If you know the true arts of China," he tells Lin, "you will know of her greatness and splendor, of people creating works of art centuries before the birth of Christ. You will know of a culture so superior that her conquerors adopted it."13

In the character of Bo Lin Kwong, there is a lot of writer Virginia Lee, a contemporary Shui Heung, who still identifies with Grandfather Kwong's and Uncle Fook's visions of her in a classical
Chinese paradise. They continue to color her interpretation of both family situations and the development of her fictional Chinese-American characters. Bo Lin Kwong, the protagonist of the novel, most frequently takes her cues for action from these legends. She interprets personal and family relationships from their perspective.

Under ordinary circumstances Lin is a quiet, filial, accepted Chinese female. When she falls in love with a Caucasian, her conduct threatens the good image of the authoritarian Chinese family, and she becomes an object of derision. Her parents speak of shame and filial obligations. Even Chinese children in the streets ask her, "Why are you with this man? He has yellow hair. I've never seen one of us and a yellow hair together." Lin Kwong's solution is to escape into the beautiful legends of the great Chinese love affairs of the past to justify her behavior and to recast it into accepted Chinese molds. The whole of Chinatown takes on a colorful splendor that transforms the harsh reality of a Chinese-American girl into a dynastic fairy tale.

Scott Hayes, the object of her love, looks like "a hero performing in a drama of the medieval world . . . walking past the jades and ancient bronzes," although he is in a Chinatown curio shop. At the Chinese opera with him, "she never saw a scene without breathtakingly beautiful costumes of crimson, imperial yellow, silk tassels made by consummate artists in China." An evening walk through Chinatown becomes filled with "the symbolism of flowers, plants and birds, "all cues for stories about emperors and concubines." An ordinary Chinese restaurant provides a lecture hall
for interpretations of bamboo, tea, and chrysanthemums. Only Marco Polo and Sung dynasty scholars are adequate sources for her stories.

Virginia Lee, like Jade Snow Wong, learned the images of Chinese superiority at her Chinese-American family's knees, and found the same myths reinforced by the American educational system and popular culture. Her tendency to overwhelm the action, particularly in the plot of an interracial love affair, shows her tendency to force the images that will give a positive tone to her work.

Conversely, what Lin, Scott and the Kwong family never account for is the legacy of Chinese immigrant history that underlies much of their reaction to the affair. Lin's own actions indicate an inability to acknowledge what is very close to the surface. What her family fears most is the revival of the negative images of Chinese promiscuity and misengenation from the earlier periods. Scott Hayes' mother injects these issues in her anger over a possible marriage. So by transforming Scott into a Chinese medieval prince and in the mask of Shui Heung she takes for herself, Lin hides her fears of fitting the stereotypes of the inferior Chinese. When she perceives that Scott, the Caucasian, is "superior" to her socially, she counteracts by being a "superior" Chinese.

Uncle Fook, her Confucian teacher, has transmitted the subtle art of self-defense along with his lessons on superior culture. The two are intricately interwoven in this case and show the functioning of a minority defense mechanism. Uncle Fook implies that the way to handle racism is to turn inward for an explanation: "Perhaps the Chinese may be at fault... ask did I lack benevolence?" Failing
there, one can become a "superior Chinese" and rise above it in the
tradition of Mencius who said, "should I vex myself about such a wild
beast?" 16

Jade Snow Wong, still in elementary school, reacts to her first
incident of racial discrimination in the same way. A very pale,
round-faced, sandy-haired boy called her "chinky, chinky chinaman."
The memory of his whiteness lingers, as does her response, "everybody
knew that the Chinese had a superior culture. Her ancestors created
a great art heritage . . . made inventions . . . she knew Richard's
grades didn't compare with hers and his family training was obviously
amiss." 17 An astounding consciousness for a child, but a simple
reflex for the author already conditioned to this response. The
little female Confucius knows when to turn the superior cheek!

Jade Snow Wong's autobiographies emphasized the Chinese family
as the symbol of the "superior" Chinese; Virginia Lee focused on the
artistic tradition as evidence of superiority. Both have contributed
to the perpetuation of the images of Chinese-Americans tied to the
goods and values of ancient Cathay, unaltered for centuries despite
geographical distance and generations of Western influence.

Lin Yutang's novel, Chinatown Family, proffers the same images
of the superior Chinese family. Tom Fong, the elder of the family
has thematic power as a reversed image. He often stands the contempt
of the author because he does not retain pride in his Chinese heritage,
nor is it the source of his identity. Tom walls himself off,
indifferent to all but the task of surviving and reuniting his family
still in China. Even after the wife and two children come to America,
his pattern of passivity, isolation and accommodation remains strong. In Yutang's terms, the whole family is demoralized because the father will not assume his paternal role. One son marries a night club floozie who gets pregnant before marriage and is unfaithful after. A daughter prefers the immodest assertive style of American women, even disparaging Confucius for his sexist views. If the strong father, the loyal obedient wife, the filial children are the ideal that gives the Chinese moral superiority, any deviations from the model destroy the very essence of Chinese worth.

However, the novel is not without a model Confucian male. Tom, the youngest son born and raised in China, and already influenced by American movies and Western values, comes to cultivate the traditions his father has put aside. Yutang's character reverses the usual pattern of assimilation. Tom learns to be Chinese in America and will reestablish the patterns of the superior Chinese family. During an adolescent identity crisis, Tom is unable to find satisfying answers to his questions in Western education; so he looks to China for help. Only when he meets Elsie Tsai, a female scholar brought from Shanghai to teach the immigrants the classics, does he confront the purest form of his Chinese heritage. Under her guidance he found Lao Tse and "a dazzling light so blinding, the mind had to stop and adjust itself—the most exciting discover of his life." Since he marries Elsie, the tradition will be reborn in America.

By projecting the novel into the political arean, Yutang added another dimension to Chinese family superiority, that of ethnical superiority. Only at the crucial moment when the Japanese invaded
China in 1937, can Yutang feel entirely comfortable with this strange troupe of overseas Chinese. They and their kind contributed millions to support the Chinese cause. In simple Tom Fong, Yutang now sees "a Taoist philosophy of living," a willingness to "receive the calumny of the world to preserve the state." 19

Jade Snow Wong and Pardee Lowe both played to these shifting allegiances of the majority reader. As models of "good American-Chinese" they provided contrast to the Japanese-Americans identified with the enemy in World War II. The disciplined, loyal Chinese family was touted as the symbol for a strong, loyal minority group. Jade Snow was selected to launch a battle ship to "send trouble to Tojo," as the winner of an essay contest. In the patronizing language of the majority she is "a Chinese lady helping the war effort of the Americans." 20 Pardee Lowe's highly publicized act of enlisting in the army upon submitting his autobiography to the publisher, links his "good Chinese family" training with his patriotic American behavior.

Since the political sentiments of the majority influence minority relations, Le Ling Ai's large Chinese family in Hawaii described in Life Is For A Long Time (1972) is typical for Hawaii, rather than representative of Chinese communities elsewhere. As a small minority, the Chinese in Hawaii suffered less discrimination and were out of touch with the anti-oriental movements in California. The Chinese laborer in Hawaii moved out of agriculture quickly and into services for the Chinese and Caucasian communities, assuring a faster rise to the middle class. Chinese families developed early
among immigrants in Hawaii. The absence of miscegenation laws allowed a high rate of intermarriage between Hawaiians and Chinese, and Asian exclusion laws did not affect Hawaii until 1899. By that time the growth of families, community and kinship organizations was secure. Li Ling Ai portrays her Chinese-American family in the Confucian mold, but seems less inclined to press the images of a superior ancestral past as a protection against negative stereotypes.

The elder Lis, chronicled in their daughter's memoirs, immigrated to Hawaii together in 1896, had children there, and escaped the pattern of separated families. Although the work focuses on the parent's work as physicians and community leaders, Li Ling does develop their familial roles and emphasizes the Confucian family model. The welfare and education of the children, the preservation of family honor are deep concerns of Father and Mother Li. Father accomplishes these through teaching Chinese classics and family obligations, Mother through examples of personal strength and responsibility. Both stress the superiority of the Chinese character rooted in the Chinese family.

This interpretation of the Chinese character evolves primarily through Mother Li, the symbol of the strong immigrant woman accepting hardships to advance her husband and children. Her philosophy of life is "life is for a long time, you must have patience, courage and endurance."

These parents passed on no romantic illusions about the China they left behind. Li was an agitator and rebel against social conditions while in China in the 1880s. His roommate at Canton
Medical College was Sun Yat-sun and Li financed and admired the reform movement. Both Lis came under the influence of German Lutheran missionaries in China, who appealed to what they saw as the "ethical strain in the Chinese temperament." The elder Lis, unlike Grandfather Kwong or Father Wong, seldom harken to the ancient art and culture, but rather prefer the Confucian ethical tradition as the symbol of Chinese personal and family superiority.

Mrs. Li acts like Uncle Fook and Jade Snow Wong in stressing the "naturalness" of Chinese patience in adversity. What emerges again is the function of an effective immigrant survival mechanism. This interpretation of Chinese superiority is often rooted in the immigrant experience. The second generation interpreters, having achieved middle class status and acceptance themselves, often feel ambivalent about identifying with the peasant, immigrant roots. Rather than immigrant stubborness or survival tactics, they prefer to attribute perseverance to Confucian ethics.

Father Li functions as the traditional culture-bearer of his family and this also underscores the unarticulated influence of the immigrant roots. He opens a "Community School For The Arrangement of The Self," run by an imported classics scholar with credentials from the Imperial Court of Peking. Li's bias against the "barbarians" shows in his desire to instruct them in the superior Chinese ways. His Chinese superiority motivates him to save the children of the immigrant Chinese who are exposed in Hawaii to "the indulgence of the haoles and the superstitions and prejudices of the Hawaiians." He indulges in a form of subtle racism when the Hawaiians are set in
contrast to the superior Chinese. They are pictured as friendly, simplistic, pleasure-loving children unable to better themselves because they lack a work ethic, family obligations, and strong paternal figures. This same strain slips into Jade Snow Wong's attitude toward third world Asians and American Blacks. Because the Chinese are lionized as a model minority which attained success through patience, hard work and family unity, these writers may also reflect another popular stereotype of Chinese superiority. Because the American-Chinese are often held as a model for other minorities to emulate, the writers who chronicle Chinese-American life are encouraged to perpetuate their image as a superior group, often to the extent of ignoring their family and community problems.

As a model minority, the Chinese-Americans are seen to gather their strength from the family system. The family and its extension, the community, is supposed to care for its own member's health, education, social and employment needs. As a result the writers tend to fulfill the prophecy: they mention only those activities that fit the positive images.

Standing in stark contrast to these views of the Chinese family life is Louis Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. Chu's portrayal of a Chinatown reflects more accurately the nature of the Chinese-American communities of that time. The selective worlds of Wong, Lowe and Lee with intact families were in the minority in the 1920s. The majority of Chu's males are without wives and families, or separated from them in China. These males have attained a measure of belonging in Chinatown and seem oblivious to the outside world's expectations.
of Chinese behavior. They enjoy a cynical camaraderie of memories and self-effacement. They are more psychically tied to China when they are denied honorable masculine identity in America, yet they have few illusions about their part in any heritage of Confucian ideal families. Women are constantly on their minds and in their conversations--other men's wives, prostitutes, the young *jook sing* girls in short summer dresses. Dependence on prostitutes proves humiliating and develops only self-contempt. When Wang Ben Loy finally marries an innocent farm girl he brings from China, he becomes impotent. His failure is more than sexual inadequacy; it is born of self-deprecation, guilt, fear that he does not deserve her and that he cannot embody the traditional image of the strong husband and father figure.

Like other immigrants their memories of China are colored, but these men have had no contact with the ancient culture and its validating images of superior Chinese. Their memories are not merged with legends of imperial splendor, but of green farms, harvest, drinking, gambling, the pleasures of work and friendship. These Chinese, especially those speaking the sze yap dialect, employ a rich variety of curses and obscenities, and display the bawdy humor of peasant vitality, rather than the philosophical sayings of Confucius.

Chu's portrayal of these Chinese proved too foreign for the popular audience including acculturated Chinese-Americans, already aware of the benefits of emphasizing the popular images of harmonious families and exotic culture. The book sold few copies and quickly
went out of print, illustrating the fate of the Chinese-American author who does not conform to expected versions of Chinatown life. His realistic portrayal of immigrant disillusionment, peasant roots, and the loss of a family system help to underscore the degree of romanticism in the works of Wong, Lowe and Lee.

Chu's recreation of characters such as frustrated bachelors and unattached males serves to point out the fact that in the majority of second generation works they are usually rejected or ignored. When it becomes apparent to the writers that they must be accounted for, an utterly fascinating transformation takes place. They are clothed in the images of ascetic scholars. Li Ling Ai, Virginia Lee, Pardee Lowe and Jade Snow Wong all have such characters. Given little individual identity or worth outside the family patterns, they become the teachers, the transmitters of the very cultural mythology in which they are denied a place.

Jade Snow Wong included Uncle Kwok in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as an "element of humor" when her editor suggested the book was too serious. His immigrant disorientation and poverty are attributed to "his investments that never materialized" and his "unfulfilled desire to be a classics scholar." Dependent on the Wongs for dinners and kinship ties, his passive, self-contemptuous demeanor is interpreted as his desire to be detached from the world. Jade Snow remembers that as a child she "felt a little sad for him, but never found an answer to his significance." Since he does not fit into the popular family images of father, son or teacher, he is too close to the dangerous images of the unattached Chinese male. Wong must then modify his image with a "humorous touch."
Bo Lin Kwong, of The House That Tai Ming Built, encounters an aging opium addict, a friend of her grandfather. He emerges as a kindly teller of Chinese fairy tales, Confucian proverbs, and hints on how the Chinese are superior men. His age and isolation soften the negative imagery of the Chinese opium addict expected in Chinatown stories.

Even recalcitrant young sons who will not settle into the family mold will eventually be brought into the accepted image. The embarrassment of the elders over such men often intrigues the younger generation. The most vivid deviant emerges in Pardee Lowe's autobiography. Uncle Jack, "the little barbarian devil" escaped the influence of Chinatown's demands for meekness, moral righteousness and good name. Knocking about the country as a miner, cowboy and entertainer, famous for his drinking and gambling, he is made the example of the shame of one "who can't think or act Chinese." He is bitterly rejected by the traditional Chinese fathers as a bad example because he is independent, financially irresponsible, and out of touch with the family. Ironically, when he marries a French-American woman who settles him into a frugal bourgeois husband he becomes acceptable. The Chinese community even comes to admire him as a highly paid vaudevillian, a Chinese song and dance man, a shuffler singing Irish songs in Chinese pidgin. Embodying a set humorous stereotype about the Chinese, he is now as safe a character as the Confucian father or scholar.

The most accepted image of Chinese superiority has been the Confucian family under the strong patriarch, tied to the glorious
accomplishments of past culture. The Chinese-American families portrayed in the novels and autobiographies of these second generation writers both embody and perpetuate the popular images of the Chinese in America. By linking the Confucian ethic of family obligation, unity, pride and hard work to the Protestant ethic in America, these works attempt to place the Chinese-American family well within the accepted and admired norms of the majority reader.
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CHAPTER III


8. See ibid, p. 58.

9. See ibid, p. 96.


11. See ibid., p. 79.


13. See ibid., p. 136.

14. See ibid., p. 163.

15. See ibid., p. 174.

16. See ibid., p. 114

17. Wong, Fifth Chinese Daughter, p. 68.


19. See ibid., pp. 148-149.
CHAPTER IV
IMAGES AND STEREOTYPES OF CHINESE MEN AND WOMEN

By casting the Chinese male and female primarily in the irreproachable roles of spouses and parents, and their children in the role of dutiful offspring, these Chinese-American writers counteracted the inflammatory sexual stereotypes of the Chinese that surfaced during the first immigrant period and remained hidden under some later images. The influx of single Chinese males from the 1850s to the 1880s, with their strange appearance in queues, long dresses, slanted eyes, yellow complexions and with an exaggerated fondness for gambling and opium smoking, contributed to the belief that they were an exotic but dangerous people. Their pattern of retaining families in China and substituting local prostitution for the services of the absent wives, would be interpreted by Americans as a sexual threat to accepted moral and family patterns.

In doing so the Americans misinterpreted the Chinese cultural mandate that a wife should remain in the household of her husband's parents even if he went abroad. She served, in a sense, as a cultural hostage, so that he would keep his obligations to his own family. She was expected to perform the mourning and burial rites if they died in his absence. Village headmen often secured the emigrant's loyalty by requiring that he marry before leaving and exacting a promise to support community as well as family enterprises. Remaining in America and sending money back to China was fulfilling serious obligations.
The lonely laborer toiled for large dreams: that he might return home to his wife, sons and community as a respected, wealthy man.

If custom barred Chinese women from emigrating, exclusion laws continued the pattern. A Chinese woman who married acquired the status of her husband; if he was a laborer she was excluded by the same laws. The consequences gave tragic distortion to the images of both Chinese men and women in America that remained the legacy of later Chinese-Americans. The imbalance in the sex ratio was so severe, that in the period of unrestricted immigration there were only slightly over 8,000 Chinese females to 100,000 males. 2

Many Chinese women immigrants suffered the humiliation of forced prostitution. Many were bought and kidnapped in China or sold into indenture by their parents, or promised proxy marriage contracts to merchants by organized secret societies. Once in America, they were placed under contracts to individuals or brothels in Chinatowns, where these "slave girls" lived in fear of being beaten, resold or returned home disgraced. 3

Quick to find any justification for anti-orientalism, the journalists, politicians, missionaries, industrialists railed against the immorality of Chinese men and women. In addition to the male being "an almond eyed Mongolian with his pigtail, his heathenism, his filthy habits, this devourer of soup made from the fragrant juice of the rat," could be added his "polluted system of prostitution . . . like a horrid touch of leprosy." 4

The legal and religious crusades to pass the 1870 Act to Prevent the Kidnapping and Importation of Mongolian, Chinese, Japanese
Females for Criminal or Demoralizing Purposes in California, had as their goal the ending of "this pernicious scandal and injury to the people of the state in defiance of public decency." The reformers strove less to save the Chinese men from degradation, than to "keep them from corrupting young white girls and boys" from a "barbarism so deep that mere contact with it was demoralization." Missionaries like Donaldina Cameron and Margaret Culbertson gained a place in folk history for their fearless kidnapping of Chinese slave girls from brothels in San Francisco and returning them to China as Christian teachers, or to local white employers as servants.

Thus the images of Asian women as prostitutes and Asian men as morally degraded became institutionalized during that century. In California it was a felony to force white women into prostitution, but only a misdemeanor for Asians. The belief that they were "debauched and contaminated," led to the denial of landing and passage rights. The Women's National Industrial League of America testified before a Senate committee on Immigration that "nearly all Chinese women in Boston were prostitutes," lamenting that "educated American-born whites were bought and sold for $2.00 a head, while Chinese women were prized at $1,500 to $3,000 each.

Persistent assaults on the Chinese in motion pictures, newspapers, popular fiction, comics and folklore successfully imbedded the stereotypes of Chinese males as mysterious, sexually-perverted or promiscuous, cunningly after white women. Their Chinatowns were envisioned as filthy, loathsome ghettos full of vice, secret trapdoors, underground passageways, opium dens and brothels. The
mass media still perpetuates the images of Asian women as passive, pliable servant girls or exotic sex objects. The scheming deadly Dragon Lady, the goodhearted whore Suzi Wong, the artful, silk-robed prostitute had their antecedents in the nineteenth century anti-oriental movement.

These Chinese-American authors are sensitive about these male and female stereotypes. As suggested previously, they were careful to maintain that the sexual roles of the Chinese are firmly fixed in marriage, and the deepest source of satisfaction for both men and women is from their activities as parents. Closer analysis of the texts reveals that these writers are very much aware of the negative sexual stereotypes and take pains to see that their characters' actions are not misinterpreted.

All the works stress the traditional nature of parental marriages; if they "loved" on another it was affection born of mutual struggle and sharing over a lifetime of childraising. They carefully stress that the Chinese culture tends to view marriage practically: women marry for support, status, identity from the male and his family; males for heirs and ancestral obligation. The reticence to portray parents in sexual roles is understandable on both Chinese and American cultural grounds. However, these second generation writers feel no freer to give themselves or their younger, non-parental characters a sexual dimension. Only Virginia Lee gives the parents the parents a moment of sexual identity. In a single scene in The House That Tai Ming Built, she allows speculation about Sun's sexual attraction for his wife. Sitting on her bed, she appears as "a
portrait waiting for a western painter" who would see her as an exotic oriental woman. She is predictably dark, "with abundant lacquered hair, alabaster skin calling up images of cold jade and brocade." As Sun caresses her thigh, Fay reveals that he "is a man, who to the world seemed the sternest of moralists, but who possessed an intense passion that was never hers." In a single revelation Sun and Fay both embody and transcend the stereotypes. Sun is passionate, but only secretly and unlike the publically degraded Chinese male of the stereotype. Fay remains the Chinese female sex symbol, but controls her passion like a Puritan wife.

Only Virginia Lee took on a love affair with younger characters, going so far as to present an interracial one. The love scenes between Lin Kwong and Scott Hayes are so veiled in romantic atmosphere that they defy the reader to prove sexual connection. Like the romantic films of the period, the flames leap in the fireplace and only shadows are seen on a silent wall. What is more revealing, however, is Lee's sexual stereotyping. Bo Lin falls in love with Hayes because he appears out of a Western fairy tale: "his hair was yellow . . . he looked like a hero performing in a drama of the medieval period." Lee seldom describes Hayes without emphasis on body imagery: his blond hair, his tall stature, his clear deep voice. Hayes is decidedly not a Chinese male, seen by outsiders as small, dark, passive and feminized. From Grandfather Kwong's stories Bo Lin has already learned that "white men did not think Chinese men were handsome." Tai Ming, her symbolic ancestor, "was a ludicrous figure . . . short, dark . . . his queue was
weakness personified." Through beatings and burnings "the Chinese never retaliated . . . but they never got over the fear of the hulking white men who towered over them." By joining with the towering figure of Scott Hayes, Bo Lin achieves the potency and status that Tai Ming could not reach.

Lee is also acutely conditioned to accepting the popular positive images of Asian women. When Lin falls in love she is transformed for her Caucasian lover into a beautiful Chinese sex object: her cheongsams are colorful, her hair elaborately arranged, her body perfumed. When "a trembling hand searched out the pins to let her hair fall below her shoulders," she quotes aloud an ancient Chinese love poem. Although Scott never overtly plays the white sexist role, Bo Lin's willingness to act out the female stereotype leaves the reader to suspect that his pride in her is partly due to her exotic Chinese differences. Father Wong's and Father Kwong's objections to interracial dating are based on the unarticulated fear that their daughters "would be hurt," meaning that they may not be respected as women. If they are taken as sex objects for white men, they would be considered immoral by both the Chinese and the white communities.

The carefully manipulated love affair suggests an underlying fear of violating the unspoken boundaries imposed on such affairs. Asian women marrying white men have always been more acceptable than the reverse. White men, in American racial patterns, have always had freer access to non-white women as slaves, sex objects, and occasionally wives. Because society puts woman in the lower position in marriage, it seems more acceptable for the lower race to be in the
lower position. When Asian men marry white women, the implication is that they are usurping the superior white male's position.  

Virginia Lee's use of the convenient death of one interracial lover is not new to literature or films. This deus ex machina releases the writer from the risk of offending audiences. At certain times this procedure was public policy. The Hays Office censorship guide (1917) for American films, for example, forbid "miscegenation between white and dark races, including Asians," and the tradition is not quite dead. So strong was the taboo against Asian males encountering white women, that Asian male roles were usually restricted to the sexless stereotypes of Charlie Chan, houseboys, and coolies. Even when the times called for more inflammatory images such as Fu Manchu and vicious military men, they seldom were allowed more than sexual innuendo. Asian women, however, easily fitted the double standard and became erotic prizes for white men: suzi wongs, exotic geishas, classy Eurasians and quiet wives.  

Such images of Asian males and females help perpetuate another sexual myth, that of the white woman on a pedestal, especially for Asian men. As an unattainable symbol of white masculinity which he could not possess, she supposedly hovers between goddess and rape fantasy in the Asian male mind. Chinese-American literature portrays adolescent males, and the predominant images they have of white women are those of angel, mother and goddess. Tom Fong, of Chinatown Family sees his teacher, Miss Cartwright, as "a pale white woman with hair like shining silver," who speaks with "angelic sweetness." When she opened her mouth, "a shimmering light would
come into her eyes . . . her accent was feminine, clear, vibrant, and to Tom she seemed divine. He worshipped her. The feelings go beyond a typical schoolboy crush on a young teacher. Her appeal is in her whiteness; no Asian woman ever figures in his fantasies. Tom is so fascinated by "the golden hair" and "whiteness" of a Park Avenue women to whom he delivers laundry, that he does not perceive her racial and sexual mockery of him. She allows him to see her nude back in the bathroom, while she orders him to collect her soiled underwear and bedclothing. To her he is a neuter servant, but for Tom "something deeper and vague and compelling stirred in him . . . he longed to catch sight of that woman again."

Daiko Fong has already married Flora, an Italian-American, and "he showed a special pride in marrying a white woman. Her western dress, showing her slim, supple body, enchanted him and every time she brushed her hair, it electrified him. Flora found herself worshipped . . . she liked it immensely." His other brother, Freddie Fong, marries a Chinese night club dancer who embodies the worst stereotypes of the "China doll": long green fingernails, lowcut dresses, painted almond eyes, coy gestures that give her "a cute Oriental look." She had, however, "a full bosom," "movements and gestures that were all American."

Pardee Lowe married a white woman, a New Englander, while he studied in Berlin, without telling his father for several years. Upon their return home she becomes an object of curiosity and envy in the Chinese community. His masculine pride is complete when she learns to dress and kowtow like a Chinese wife. By transforming the white
goddess into a traditional Chinese wife, his masculinity is secure biculturally.

The pervasive stress on making the Chinese girls into strict models of traditional wives and mothers in these works must go beyond the old cultural roots into the unspoken images of Asian women in America. As the Confucian basis of Chinese family superiority was called up to contrast Western laxity and unfiliality, so the emphasis on the virtuous, modest, pure Chinese woman, clothed in beauty and nobility contradicts the deeper images of the degraded slave girls. Bo Lin's grandmother gives her a solid, practical name that signifies her duties, not a frivolous one suggesting a writer as grandfather proposes. She writes from China: "remember that in a woman virtue is preferred above talent. The girl child will be sweet and modest and learn the arts to make her a good wife and mother."17

Eva Fong of Chinatown Family is already too westernized for Yutang. With her short skirts, quick tongue and role models out of American movies, she needs to be brought back into the superior roles of the traditional culture. For American readers she needs to be drawn far from any suspicious stereotypes. Eva was a girl,

... a nutsai, the word was impossible to define exactly: it meant vaguely that a girl had to be put in her place. Confucius, in his Doctrine of Female Quietude, had laid down the law that a girl should be quiet, good and hardworking and silent. . . . she had a different role of the female—-to be quiet and soft, to watch, sustain, to influence, to mother and guide.18

Tom, on the other hand, is to be the family scholar, "a learned man who will find a place away from the laundry business." The
images of the feminized laundryman doing women's work will be erased. Tom takes on a male role resplendent with cosmic potency: "To be active, to create, to whisk about like electrons around the quiescent center." 19

Yutang contrasts this ideal woman bred in the ancient traditions by subtly patronizing Flora, Eva's Italian-American sister-in-law. Flora is a faithful, obedient wife, but without flair or dignity. "Her good breasts are a sign of maternity," "she liked Chinese food," and she could cook. After all, "more international marriages have been wrecked on badly done pork chops than on differences of national character." 20 Since she cannot raise herself to the level of an educated, refined Chinese lady, she can at least keep house. Elsie Tsai, the classics scholar who will marry Tom, has sweet speech, womanly dignity, and a lively mind. No one mentions her need to cook pork chops!

The influence of Christianity on converted Chinese immigrants and the example of female missionaries and teachers seems to have modified the interpretation of female roles by Chinese-Americans. Confucian doctrine discourages education for women fearing that it will render them unfit for marriage. Christianity and American educational theory stress that educated women will make better wives and mothers; so these immigrant parents effected compromises in the education of their daughters--to a point. The newly-Christianized Wong came to believe that "according to new world Christian ideals women had a right to some advantages." He sent for his wife in China who had bound feet, writing that "in America I have learned how
shamefully women in China have suffered. I will bleach the blackness
of that disgrace . . . my wife will have the opportunity to do
honest work and my daughters will enjoy an education."21

Wong's ideas cannot be interpreted as a rejection of Chinese
values, but a new strategy for accomplishing the same goals. When
he tells his wife, "do not bind our daughter's feet. Here in America
a different standard does not require that a woman sway helplessly
on little feet to qualify for a good match,22 he is merely looking
for more accommodating images. When he later refuses Jade Snow
further education, she says he "is binding my feet." She mistakenly
thought that "advantages" meant equality with his sons. He meant
only that females should be educated in the essentials so "that
daughters would raise intelligent sons." She even missed the point
of her childhood whippings, "that it was the most effective means of
bringing up credible daughters and industrious sons."23

No literary work portrays an independent, unmarried, professional
Chinese woman. Jade Snow Wong makes one oblique reference to a
"sixth daughter . . . a meticulous draftsman who held an excellent
position in an American firm . . . never found it necessary to
marry. Father Wong periodically prays for an unnamed "her who has
many personal problems."24

Wong, with her education, writing, ceramics and business should
be able to depict herself as a secure, autonomous woman. By limiting
her emphasis to the Confucian model for male sex roles, she cannot
free female roles from that association.
The definition of womanhood transmitted by the powerful patriarch, backed by tradition, looms too large. The matriarch has her worth, but only in relation to the male; even to her sons she is, by virtue of her femaleness, inferior. Asian women face the double dilemma of viewing their mothers in the images of the Confucian tradition and in popular stereotyping as docile, subservient, three paces behind their men. The sexism of patriarchal societies, both Eastern and Western, results in a female self-rejection, internalization of popular opinion against one's own instincts.

Adrienne Rich points out that very few women writers in either Eastern or Western cultures portray mothers as central characters in their literature. "A mother's victimization (and this can mean a fixed role, a restrictive set of images), does not merely denigrate her, it mutilates the daughter who watches her for clues as to what it means to be a woman." 25 Like the foot-bound Chinese woman of the past, the immigrant woman may have passed down her own psychological affliction to her daughters. Patricia Spacks, in an extensive analysis of women writers, concludes that "female autobiographers suggest many shapes of anger . . . they demonstrate repeatedly the special difficulty of female self-discovery and the temptation to ignore what seems impossible to confront." 26

The mothers in these Chinese-American works, tied to the older culture, but wishing their daughters to assimilate, have tried to pass on roles that could serve both. None of the daughters, except the young female of Warrior Woman, reveals any consciousness about her deeper feelings as a woman; none attempts to throw off the
essentially limited roles offered by both Chinese and American cultures. Only Kingston's work makes an attempt to do so, although the changes remain viable only in the girl's fantasy of herself as a warrior woman. Even the fierce, proud warrior functions under the guise of a man. Only her lover knows she is a woman and only when she is a mother does she make known her sex, by carrying the child on her back into battle. The dominant impression of the warrior is strangely muted by the suggestion that she is fully authenticated only when continuing the traditional role of motherhood.

So when second generation Chinese-American writers locate their heritage and identity in the Confucian ideal family, traditional sex roles, and the superior culture, they are playing out a pattern common to their position as an immigrant minority in America. After the anti-oriental movement, the exclusion and miscengenation laws, the Chinese needed a survival mechanism, "a factor of consciousness, an image that could be activated or shelved with the requirements of the historical moment." When family and community life developed, Chinese-Americans began reincorporating and perpetuating the imagery of Chinese culture already part of their own heritage that coincided with positive stereotypes in the American culture. They dignified their withdrawal into a harmonious, superior image by appealing to the appropriate stoic and aesthetic strains in Confucianism which emphasized the ideal family and an ancient tradition. By the time the second generation became "interpreters" of the Chinese-American experience, the mass media and social and educational institutions validated and reinforced these images of their heritage. They came
to reflect in their novels and autobiographies the merit and acceptance they gained when these images replaced the stereotypes of the yellow peril.
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CHAPTER IV


8. See ibid., p. 148.

9. See ibid., p. 65.

10. See ibid., pp. 208-209.


14. See ibid., p. 76.

15. See ibid., p. 54.

16. See ibid., p. 143.


18. Yutang, p. 60.
19. Ibid.
20. See ibid., p. 15.
23. See ibid., p. 60.
CHAPTER V
IMAGES AND STEREOTYPES OF MEN, WOMEN, AND FAMILY
IN KOREAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Korean immigration to America was miniscule compared to the large numbers of Chinese and Japanese who immigrated and were already excluded at the beginning of the twentieth century. Early Korean immigration was limited mostly to merchants and students who usually returned home after their brief sojourns in America. Labor immigration began around 1902 when recruiters brought Koreans to Hawaii and the West Coast for work in agriculture and railroad construction. ¹ Like other Asian immigrants, the laborers came to escape drought and poverty in the 1890s, this time in Pyongan and Hwanghae provinces of Korea. However, the forces operating inside and outside Korea were not as strong as in other cases of Asian immigration.

Chinese and Japanese immigrants were still satisfying the labor needs in the United States, and the continuing anti-oriental sentiment was not encouraging a further flow of Asians. After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Korea became a protectorate of Japan and emigration was halted. By 1907 only about 11,000 Koreans had come to Hawaii and 2,000 to the mainland United States.² From 1910 to 1945, Korean immigration abated, and then resumed in significance only after the Korean Conflict in the 1950s.

In contrast to the Chinese and Japanese immigrant communities abroad, Korean immigrant society was largely lacking in clan,
merchant and benevolent associations. Many of the social functions and services were provided by the Korean Christian churches since missionaries were instrumental in encouraging immigration to America. After the Japanese protectorate was established, there was some resistance to outside control and a number of Koreans immigrated to America to plan and finance resistance activities, and provided a source of identification for alien Koreans.

No Korean-American writer has recorded the earliest immigrant experience, and the transitional second generation has yet to transfer its experiences into literature. Because of the differences in the time of immigration and the political scene in America, when they do, it will differ considerably from the patterns of second generation Chinese and Japanese-American literature.

Among the student immigrants of the 1920s were three young writers: Richard Kim, Younghill Kang and Yong Ik Kim. Richard Kim and Yong Ik Kim set their short stories and novels in Korea, primarily during World War II and the Korean Conflict, utilizing their dual perspectives to analyze how the cultural differences between Americans and Koreans affected the political and military relationships in Korea. Only Younghill Kang took up the themes of adjustment in America from an immigrant's point of view. Kang had studied Chinese classical literature with his uncles and Western education with Christian missionaries in Korea. After winning a scholarship to a small college in Canada, he continued his education in Boston and New York and then wrote and taught a variety of oriental subjects. He began writing under the encouragement of Thomas Wolfe while both were at New York University.
The Grass Roof (1930), his first work, was an autobiography of his traditional family and student life in Korea. From 1933 to 1935 Kang went to Europe on Guggenheim fellowships to work on East Goes West, published in 1937. Kang's cultural background, and the social and academic milieu in which he moved in America, put him closest to Lin Yutang. Among his literary themes in East Goes West, are the immigrant adjustment to American images and stereotypes of Asians. In this he falls closest to the second generation Chinese-American writers, and for this reason he is included in this study. His work helps to underscore the thesis that the social milieu in America, not only generational position, influenced the work of Asian-American writers. He was, however, able to escape both the Chinese elitist view of Yutang and the defensiveness of the assimilated second generation writers. Kang's ability to deal objectively with the debilitating effects of the racial and cultural stereotyping of Asians is much greater than that of the Chinese and Japanese-American writers who grew up too closely conditioned to them to be able to analyze the images.

East Meets West records a Korean student's picaresque adventures in American, Korean and Chinese communities in the 1920s and 1930s. Kang's activities, through his protagonist Chungpa Han, chronicle the "making of an Oriental Yankee." Because he is an unencumbered Oriental male, he finds opportunities for mobility and acceptance both open and restricted depending on what prevailing stereotypes are attached to his status. Set in the world of male, Korean "exiles" in America, the novel is closest in setting and perspective
to Louis Chu's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. Chungpa Han, the eighteen year old protagonist, travels to America to obtain an education and to "escape the crumbling civilization in Korea in the 1920s."³ Chungpa convinces a wealthy merchant with four motherless children to take him to America as "an ignorant coolie boy employed to do errands and child care."⁴

His destination is New York and the Korean Institute, but poverty forces him into a series of jobs as waiter, shipping clerk, laborer and houseboy in the Chinese and Korean communities, before he finds refuge in a college in Nova Scotia. From his arrival in America, Han has difficulty explaining that he is Korean, not Chinese, to an American society that makes no such distinctions with "mysterious racial oddities."

Kang indicates his awareness of the stereotyping of Asians and attributes some of Chungpa's own poor self-image and alienation to his growing recognition of them. Kang's work operates on a more personal, emotional level than the Chinese-American autobiographies, confronting the pain and humiliation that often accompany the survival mechanism of hiding under an accepted image. Han's first attempts to get a job bring a warning that he get his hair cut so that "you do not look like an Indian," and apologies in Harlem that "jobs are not given to a Negro or an Oriental." A classmate in his Canadian college becomes an "irritating symbol" when he complains of "the yellow dog we have to live with." To Han "his words were so wantonly contemptuous that I burned with indignation."⁵
A visit to a tutor in Quebec is turned into another series of humiliations when a wrong train connection leaves him stranded in a hotel in the interior where "... I remained an object of mystery ... the apparition of a Chinaman ... an object of much speculation until they decided that I intended to open a laundry." After a while, Chungpa Han begins to ask himself, "why did I feel myself so lonely and sad, small, lowly and unappreciated?" He begins to refer to himself as "Chungpa Han, the poor boy from the Orient on a charity scholarship." Even his friends' good intentions elicit suspicion from a cynical Han who is now in his own mind, "only the white man's burden toward the dark colonies," whose "shortcomings can be put down as heathen ignorance."

Years after these incidents, when he is in Boston in search of a graduate education, Han still accommodates to images. He is aware "that professors have great sympathy for any adopted oriental child, as long as you are willing to be docile and obedient." This "child" of twenty-four has already spent years as a houseboy learning not to frighten other servants with his inscrutability and to please the mistresses with broad, lowly smiles. When he can no longer accept his own transformed image as the obedient child, he interprets his actions as Oriental wisdom: "morals and manners are greater strongholds than fortifications."

Misunderstood or rejected by the white world, Chungpa gains some temporary identity and validation by accepting the Korean associations with Chinese culture. With this pattern, Kang shows his understanding that the glorification of the past and the homeland, and the
association with the most positive images of the ethnic culture are frequent immigrant identity mechanisms. When Chungpa first arrives in America and lives on the periphery of Chinatown, he can still analyze his feelings: "It was a ghostly world to be lost in, this town that was neither in America nor in China... I found myself still in the shadow of the Confucian world, but the unreality of it in New York and my own helpless immobility filled me with a curious trance-like despair."

To solidify his identity when he feels most weakened by his immigrant marginality, he begins to intensify his connection with his "Chinese heritage" by writing poetry, practicing calligraphy and clinging to Wan Kim, a disoriented Confuian scholar who cannot adjust to the conditions in America. In *The Grass Roof* when he is still in Korea, Chungpa has a different view:

A Korean is unlike either a Japanese or a Chinese. There is no greater insult for him than to be taken for a Chinese or a Japanese. This is a secret others do not know. His national pride is always so great that he will just cry to be misunderstood as anything else but what he is.

Confronted by the complexities of American expectations of Asians and their inability to make ethnic distinctions between them, he adopts the images most acceptable to Americans--those of the "superior Chinese."

From his friend Wan Kim he had a model for retreat into a nostalgic world of the "superior Chinese." Before his suicide, Kim supports his identity by emphasizing the superiority of the Chinese culture over that of the Western world, and Chungpa continues this pattern. While he was in Korea, he "struggled with his father over
every ounce of Western learning in the mission schools, despite his father's belief that they taught those devilish cults that preach divorce of the blood and spiritual kinship." In the latter remaking of himself as "an oriental yankee" he comes to reevaluate Chinese culture. He will only accept Western learning in the perspective of a superior Chinese tradition. He says,

I was distressed by the lack of unifying principles... I could build no bridges from one classroom to another... Confucian education never required more than the study of poetry... but it revitalized the whole field of knowledge to the creative-minded.

When his self-image is lowest, Han's need to associate himself with this image of superior manhood leads him to incorporate the most outrageous misfits into the classical tradition. Like Jade Snow Wong, Pardee Lowe and Lin Yutang who transformed Chinese males out of the family mold into Confucian scholars, Kang follows a similar pattern through the perspectives of Han. Unlike the other writers, he is aware of the deception. George Jum, Han's mentor into the American world of business, drinking, dancing and debauchery takes on the status of a revered teacher. George gives the novel much of its picaresque quality as he leads the naive Chungpa along "the obscenely Westernized streets of New York in pursuit of women, parties, a fast buck, and a sense of confidence covering their shaky exile status. Even George Jum is finally made to settle down in Hawaii, engaged to a steady Korean-American woman, where he plans to "spend all my hours in eating, loving and sleeping... I am still a romanticist." If he cannot embody the Confucian father image, he can at least be a Li Po!
As a young unmarried male, Chungpa Han evokes the least fear in American parents, employers and teachers while he spends a summer lecturing at revival meetings of the Holiness Church, A Black Fundamentalist association under the control of an elegant confidence man and father figure, Elder Bonheure. As an object of laughter, he is safely classified as "a sanctified Chinee" because Bonheure could "never figure out that there was a Korea." Pulled into the troupe by his meekness and fear of alienating these men who "took my importance to be out of proportion to who I am," Chungpa does not know he is being used. He serves as a model of the "Chinee that reads and speaks," as if this in itself was a marvel to the American popular mind. "He has found God's plan," the revival posters advertise, "come and see, Jews and Chinamen to be sanctified." The revival appeals primarily to Negro communities and the implications are clear: Jews, Chinamen and Negroes can be accepted if they fit the positive social images favored by the majority.

In Chinatown, Chungpa discovers a mass of "superior" Korean types with strings of degrees from Korean, Chinese and American universities eking out an existence as waiters, tutors, translators and small merchants. With his strong belief in the superior culture of Asia and the respect due to the learned man, Han cannot fully accept the impotent, stunted lives of these men. Unconsciously he cannot absorb their reality and the chance that he too will end up with them; so he always scratches under the surface until he finds a brighter image. Under Dr. Ko, a small merchant and Korean nationalist longing to be a journalist or minister, he finds another man: "Ko really believed
himself an earnest Christian, but every inch of the man I saw, his mind, his spirit, all his values were those of a Confucian scholar. He had simply changed the letter of his faith.15

Pyun, the head of an employment agency supplying oriental servants, is described "as an interesting type of Oriental successful in America . . . he has learned American efficiency." Kang saves him from the shame of total identification with the stereotype of the cunning, money-manipulating Chinese merchant by noting "that at least he would be ashamed to say he is a good businessman . . . this shows he still has some Orientality about him."16 Unlike Chu's novel, there is no mention of prostitution in Kang's work, although this would exist. Instead, the novel flounders around in the mire of unresolved and conflicting stereotypes that fill the conversations of several characters. On one hand there is the honorable position of the husband, keeper of concubines, father of the traditional family, that implies rigid male and female roles. On the other hand are the seductive images of Western romantic love, but unavailable to Asian men because of the American fear of miscen- genation. Chungpa Han consummates no relations with women at all during his school and adult years in America. He concludes that, "caught between the Confucian and the Christian, love was nipped."

Fictional oriental women in traditional roles, or the few live ones he encounters in America, seem too passive, docile, and burdensome. White women live only as mysterious goddesses and romantic spirits. As coarse and sexist as George Jum, his companion, remains, he too is caught by the symbolic attraction of white women in this oriental mind. He falls in love with a white night club
dancer, a frivolous opportunist who uses George for his gifts and amusements. Her open mockery of his quaint oriental ways ("I'm half Chinese, see—I use chopsticks"), escapes him because he is in love with the Western concept of romantic love: "A beautiful girl can make a man live and make a man recreated ... sex becomes soul absorption, with June beside me ... in me ... around me I drown in the sensation of the spirit." June, her very name suggesting the fertile blossoming earth, becomes the metaphor of George Jum's desire for manhood. To be "drowned," swallowed by a white woman, means to be washed clean of his racial differences and reborn as an accepted white American.

Chungpa has only one brief period of infatuation with a spirited white girl, Tripp, who represents what he feels to be the essence of Western love—intensity, spirituality, and unselfconsciousness. He slowly becomes aware that she considers him no more than "a sensitive Oriental student," an explainer of exotic customs. Hurt by the realization, but fearful of losing the few happy moments afforded by her companionship, he plays out her stereotypes of him. He becomes what her mind makes him, little more than an amusing Charlie Chan. During an evening in Chinatown with Tripp and her girl friends, he "pretends he is a detective who had to protect American girls in fearsome Chinatown ... pointing out dives ... slinking among sinister alleyways ... ." Like his earlier experiences with the revivalists, Chungpa Han takes momentary refuge in becoming a "brother in laughter," accepting even that he is the source of amusement. The need for acceptance is
far greater than the humiliation that will come later when "like the fox ladies in Chinese fairy tales," they vanished by his next visit to New York.

During his more objective moments Chungpa identifies most closely with the sexual dilemmas of the international students at the various colleges he attends. Filipino, Indian and African males are scorned by whites, forbidden to approach white women and separated from their own women. When he "tried to compare the Oriental's position," he saw "his shadowy existence as an outcast in the white man's world." Since Kang allowed Chungpa Han no satisfying relationships with either Asian or white women, the reader must assume that he could not find his way through the maze of ambivalent racial and sexual images.

Younghill Kang is the only Korean-American author who took up the immigrant and later generation adjustment experience as the subject of his work. Kang's immigration in the 1920s at an early age, and his acculturation through the American educational process put him closer to the experiences of second generation Asian writers. In content, his autobiographies are related to the work of Chinese- and Japanese-American writers in showing the effect of popular images and stereotypes of Asians on the self-perception of Asian-Americans. However, unlike these others, Kang was able to objectify through the characters in his novel both the temptation to live up to outward expectations common in minorities and the stultifying effects of being caught up in these images.
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CHAPTER V


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7. See ibid., p. 114.

8. See ibid., p. 276.

9. Ibid.

10. See ibid., pp. 28-29.


12. Kang, East Goes West, p. 27.

13. See ibid., p. 204.

14. See ibid., p. 399.


16. See ibid., p. 49.

17. See ibid., p. 57.

18. See ibid., p. 127.

19. See ibid., p. 345.

20. See ibid., pp. 296-297.
CHAPTER VI
IMAGES AND STEREOTYPES OF THE JAPANESE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
AND IN SECOND GENERATION JAPANESE-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Japanese-Americans inherited a similar set of images and stereotypes due to their ethnic minority status as did the earlier Chinese immigrants. California's anti-oriental tradition had deep roots back to the gold rush days. The Issei's first American legacy was the hatred and fear of orientals from the first anti-Chinese campaigns that were resurrected by economic competition and resistance to organized labor from the 1890s to the late 1920s. After 1900 the Japanese began superseding the Chinese as objects of menace.¹

In 1905 Japan shocked the Western world with her quick victory in the Russo-Japanese war; it was disconcerting that a yellow race could defeat a white people. Ongoing discussions of the assimilability of foreign stocks from Europe and Asia were given new fuel. Social workers, journalists, politicians began in earnest to question the desirability of accepting such an obviously threatening group.

William T. Ellis, an American journalist, published his observations after a three month stay in Japan in 1906 and his remarks carry the typical racial and cultural ethnocentrism of the period:

... will the stolid peasant, brutalized, provincial, wedded to his idols, come off better by Western education? By doing so he cannot escape the thoughts and ideals of civilization. ... Christianity is slowly supplanting the superstition, idolatry and ignorant spirit worship of Buddhism and Shintoism ... but will it elevate the national character as an all-absorbing, inconsiderate, relentless, selfishness of the nation?²
How simple to cross the ocean and project the same imagery on Japanese in America. Popular literature and journalism were rekindling the old fears of the yellow peril:

The Japanese, without meaning any disrespect to the little brown man, does not commend himself to the average American farmer family as a desirable neighbor. He is not overly clean; he is immoral. They have no marriage ties as we know the institution, and women, if scarce, may be held pretty much in common. The whole idea of social intercourse between the races is absolutely unthinkable.³

Further irony abounds in that for a short period at the beginning of Japanese immigration there was favorable family imagery. A San Francisco Chronicle article in 1869 pointed out that Japanese differed from the Chinese because "they brought their wives, children . . . and new industries."⁴ No matter that during this decade many Japanese immigrants were already married. The Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 allowed passports to wives of established residents. During the next decade a large number of picture brides arrived who established families.

The many women who were visible as boardinghouse proprietors, field workers, washerwomen, cooks and seamstresses who came in contact with and served unmarried males, did so in their multiple roles as wives, mothers and wage earners for their families. The plantations in Hawaii and California preferred to hire married men "because the wives helped with the work at lower rates, and the men were more contented, more steady, diligent, and free from venereal disease."⁵ As with any population with a skewed sex ratio, and even under normal ratios, prostitution did exist. The number of "shared" women in this sense, could not have been much higher than in other quarters.⁶
Anti-Japanese novels of the 1920s such as Wallace Irvin's *Seed of the Sun* (1921) and Stratton Porter's *Her Father's Daughter* (1921) translated the mobility of the Japanese-American farmer into Japanese imperial designs. Poor weather conditions, blights, crop failures were all interpreted as sabotage. The Japanese-Americans were massed in California, an area with a history of anti-orientalism and frontier psychology. When they began challenging whites in business, agriculture and some professions, they were objects of what Roger Daniels called "sustained nativist assault."7

The white female protagonist of *Her Father's Daughter* (the title itself suggests an inherited tradition of anti-orientalism), feels it her responsibility to carry on the American spirit of xenophobia against the trespasser even into the classroom. Her wrath is directed against Oka Sayye, a quiet industrious Japanese student. Japanese-Americans, despite their assimilation, cannot conceal their racial differences, so the assault usually begins on a physical level. She says, "In all my life I've never seen anything so mask-like as the stolid little square head on that Jap . . . oily, stiff black hair standing up like menacing bristles . . . they all look alike, so there is a blood brotherhood between them." This remarkable leap from menacing hair style to national cunning later soars into a generalization about a threat against "white civilization." "When men of color acquire our culture and combine it with their own means of living and rate of reproduction . . . they will beat us at any game we start. When they have got our last secret, constructive or scientific, they will get the ascendancy."8
The pique of an exasperated schoolgirl over being bested scholastically by a Japanese expresses itself by a repetition of all the stereotyped sexual, racial, and cultural images used against Japanese-Americans. Her conduct was repeated frequently by Americans unable to squarely face and accept the economic competition from the Japanese-American farmers and fishermen. The discrimination often took the form of vague and not so vague implications of miscenagenation and sexual abuse, always a paranoiac subject in American racial history. Porter's schoolgirl heroine is made to describe her fear of sitting next to Oka in the classroom, and concluding that "from his frame, his eyes, his skin, I could tell he's thirty if a day ... probably graduated from the most worthwhile university in Japan and came to this country to get his English free."9

She is but echoing the popular press and local politicians over a long period. California State Representative Grove Johnson spoke bitterly about allowing school integration early in the decade:

I am responsible to the mothers who have their little daughters sitting side by side with mature Japs with their base minds and lascivious thoughts ... I have seen a Jap of twenty-five sitting next to the pure maids of California ... and I shuddered then and I shudder now!10

The number of mature males attending public day schools was minimal, but why not transfer the popular imagery to his small pimply thirteen year old brother and son?

During World War II, and especially after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the old stereotypes were dusted off and revived in full force. Any "Jap," no matter how many generations separated him from the ancestral land, became part of the imperialist Japanese plot.
The Jap was again bucktoothed, sly, dishonest, dirty, aggressive and sexually promiscuous. Despite a generation of Western education and Americanized behavior, Japanese-Americans became unassimilable again, with attics full of kimonos, samurai swords, and Buddhist shrines that could be brought out the moment Japan won the war with their aid. However, these so-called cunning, inscrutable Asians did not have the opportunity to live up to their reputations. In 1942 over 110,000 Japanese resident aliens and citizens were relocated in "protective" camps for most of the war.

After World War II, a transition took place between prewar and present stereotypes, from images of "Jap" to images of "Japanese-American." What transpired was the elimination of negative images and an evaluation of positive depictions from "a fully false to a partially accurate stereotype."\(^{11}\) Partially this was a result of changing United States-Japan relations, with the Japanese going from enemy to ally. Japanese-Americans "proved" their loyalty during the war and through education and processional development entered the ranks of superior citizens, assimilated immigrants, and middle class workers.

The Nisei found themselves influenced by both sets of images. From their parents they inherited Asian cultural patterns that both aided and retarded adaptations. Decisions had to be made about retaining, modifying or rejecting models from the Asian past that suggested the negative images of the American culture. Often they discovered that the American images were no more than generalizations, superficial expectations from the rich storehouse of the past.
Although ultimately dehumanizing, some Nisei found themselves accepting and perpetuating the images and stereotypes. Evaluating the degree of conscious awareness of these images and the consequent influence they had on individuals remains speculative at best. The distinction between conditioning and collusion is a fine one. In the area of ethnic identity, we are often at the mercy of reflexes found in early experiences and emotions promoted by a tangle of needs that are inaccessible to logic. Lindbergh Sata speaks to this struggle as he "muses as a hyphenated American":

... in the process of unlocking doors to distant memories, hopes, friendships and feelings, and reading both novels and documentaries, I have experienced a sense of incompleteness. Much of what has been written is like an accurate description of ships crossing the horizon, with little mention of the cargo manifest. ... Long after the ships have landed and the cargo dispersed, the process of settling goes on ... My quest for self-identity was best characterized by aimless wanderings down many blind alleys and dead ends. A few of the shadows have become permanently fixed into the dark corners of my mind.¹²

The consequences of such dark corners have been significant for the Nisei generation and its writers. Some found the struggle toward the light so difficult that they grew to indentify with the dark. Sata continues:

My parents, mindful of helping me gain an acceptable place in society, reminded me of the need to coexist with others unlike myself. Without conscious awareness, I began to function as a human chameleon, sensitive and adaptive to the responses and images of others and only secondarily of the feelings within myself.¹³

None of the ten Japanese-American writers in this study has been able to write an autobiography or novel away from the context of the history of negative imagery. For most, it remains the silent backdrop,
the shadow behind the screen of more positive images. Like their Chinese-American literary counterparts, these writers tend to perpetuate the positive stereotypes. This generation matured during the favorable years when social and economic mobility promised larger gains than ever before. To insure the acceptance of their works by both the majority and ethnic reader, they perpetuated a positive image of the Japanese-American family, the relations between parents and children, and male and female sexual and cultural roles. Even the immigrant hardships and wartime discrimination are interpreted as only temporary stumbling blocks on the long road to success and acceptance. Such a perspective underscores an attempt by the Japanese-Americans to adapt to the values and behaviors most likely to be compatible with the position they occupied as "a minority in a society with a history of race consciousness and a legacy of vicious anti-Asian sentiment."

As early as the 1920s and 1930s sociologists such as Robert Park and Everett Stonequist were defining "the marginal man." The subsequent years gave rise to debate whether this condition was permanent or whether ethnic persons adjusted to or transformed their marginality. Japanese-American writers took up this theme as early as 1932 with Kathleen Tamagawa's *Holy Prayers in a Horse's Ear*, depicting the cultural conflicts of a Japanese-Irish-American woman. Born in America of an Irish mother and a Japanese father, Tamagawa poignantly relates the ambiguities of being defined racially and culturally according to the stereotypes of the beholder. Living in both America and Japan in her early years, she experienced being insider and outsider in both cultures. Marrying an American
Caucasian in 1914, in what she considered an "Eurasian marriage," she presents a frank confession about life as "an ultimate international legal absurdity." Tamagawa's early autobiography sets some patterns for later works influenced by the images of Asians in the American culture.

Five later autobiographies by Monica Itoi Sone, Daniel Inouye, Daniel Okimoto, James Yoshida and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston continue to describe the Nisei assimilation process and interpret it mainly through the popular images of minority success stories. Each work develops in the context of an individual's family history, including the immigration period. To one degree or another the literature suggests the influences that the American images and stereotypes of Asians had on the adjustment of the immigrants and their children. Despite their disparate family experiences, no autobiographer can escape dealing with the effects of the most traumatic period in Japanese-American history, World War II and the relocation period, and this theme becomes dominant at some point in every work. The autobiographies of Yoshida, Okimoto and Houston are recent publications, but the social milieu of the books cover only periods from the family's first immigration period to the 1940s.

Monica Itoi Sone's Nisei Daughter (1953) chronicles the youth of a daughter of lower middle class immigrants who have attained a measure of comfort and acceptance. Monica identifies predominantly with American values, and since her parents were quickly assimilating into American ways, she encountered little confusion over cultural differences. The work presents a laconic picture of daily life until
a major focus, the relocation experience emerges to crystalize the inner confusion of the young Monica over her identity as a Japanese-American in a culture where racial prejudice and political actions are interwoven.

Daniel Inouye's *Journey to Washington* (1967), as the title suggests, is an interpretation of the process that allowed the grandson of an immigrant to become a member of the United States Senate. Inouye's work is the most pronounced example of the Horatio Alger theme so dominant in Nisei literature. He traces the history of his family from his great-grandfather in Japan to his own young son for whom he professes to have written the book. By focusing heavily on his complex emotional reactions to Pearl Harbor and the European battlefields, he indicates an awareness of a Japanese-American psyche entangled in the anti-Japanese stereotypes of the period.

Daniel Okimoto's *An American in Disguise* (1971) emerges as an attempt to explain the psychological and cultural identity crisis he finds common in the Nisei generation. Okimoto traces his parents' immigration to America, his own birth and early life in a relocation camp, and subsequent studies in American Ivy League schools and in Japan. He is always in search of a sense of self, groping through the multitude of images about the Japanese-Americans he learned from several generations in both Eastern and Western cultures.

*The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida* (1972) exploits the oddity of Yoshida's wartime experience as an American citizen forced by circumstances and legal problems to serve in the Japanese army and
his subsequent attempts to regain his citizenship and identity as a Japanese-American. In an attempt to shed light on the dual cultural allegiances of some Nisei, Yoshida flashes back to his family's immigrant period and their attempt to transplant Japanese cultural values and behavior to America.

Jean Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* (1974) continues both the themes of Japanese-American assimilation and the psychic remnants of growing up as a Japanese-American during World War II. Focusing on the Wakatsuki family's reaction to their three-year confinement at Manzanar, Jeanne is able to explicate, over thirty years later, the crucial effects of the wartime stereotyping of Japanese of the different generations.

Nisei writers have contributed six works of fiction to illustrate the history of the Japanese in America. Whether this fiction takes the form of novels or short stories, it is highly autobiographical, usually centering on family life from the 1900s to the 1940s. The predominant theme is the second generation's struggle to maintain ties with the parent generation while moving into the American mainstream. The writers tend to create the impression that the process was orderly and quick, abetted by Japanese cultural flexibility and compatibility with American values. Margaret Harada's *The Sun Shines on the Immigrant* (1960), Kazuo Miyomoto's *Hawaii: The End of the Rainbow* (1964), Shelley Ota's *Upon Their Shoulders* (1951), and Jon Shirota's *Lucky Come Hawaii* (1965) and *Pineapple White* (1972) are nearly indistinguishable novels of Japanese-American families in Hawaii from the immigrant period
through World War II. Each is a paean to immigrant perseverance and adjustment and Nisei success through education and hard work.

Milton Murayama's *All I Asking For is My Body* (1974), a series of short stories and an interrelated novella, shows a radical shift in perception about the Japanese-American experience. Set in the same Hawaiian rural plantation milieu as the novels of Harada, Ota, Shirota and Miyamoto, Murayama's uniqueness lies in his frank portrayal of an intense generational conflict between the values of an immigrant father and his acculturating sons, and in an honest analysis of the psychic consequences of acculturation and success as defined by the American system.

John Okada's *No-No Boy* (1957) is the most distinctive novel in theme and character. He centers on the major character's psychological struggle to deal with his conflicting cultural and familial allegiances during World War II that led him to refuse induction into the military and to serve a prison term. Okada is more willing than most writers to confront the problems of poverty and discrimination in the Japanese community and to examine the immigrant roots of such defense mechanisms as retaining a loyalty to Japan in some older immigrants, and in the denial of all things Japanese by some Nisei during World War II.
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CHAPTER VI

1. Daniels, p. 106.


3. Peter Clark MacFarlane, "Japan in California," Colliers (June 7, 1907), pp. 5-6.

4. The San Francisco Chronicle (June 17, 1869).


7. Daniels, p. 106.


9. See ibid., p. 265.


13. Ibid.

CHAPTER VII
IMAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FAMILY
AND JAPANESE-AMERICAN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The thematic emphasis on the Confucian family system, both as a
psychic sustainer and protective image to outsiders in Chinese-American
literary works, has some variations in the fiction and autobiographies
of second generation Japanese-American writers. The ie system, by
which Japanese farmers represented both the contemporary physical
house and the permanent family household, operated through a strong
desire to preserve and continue the family. In Japan's rural
villages, the locus of most immigrants to America, nothing like the
ties of the extended Chinese clan system developed along with its
corresponding cultural mythology.

But the iegara, the reputation of a family, superseded the
personality or social standing of individuals. The ie was more
important than the individuals who composed it and personal needs or
desires were to be sacrificed to the group. This required members to
keep their place under the authoritarian direction of the male head
of the household so that order was preserved and harmony guaranteed.¹

Although it is a simplification to transfer all patterns of
old Japan to America, most social historians agree that the relative
isolation of the Japanese as a minority in America has contributed
to the retention of some older values and behavior patterns. The
shaping of second generation values reflects some of the values of
Meiji Japan that the Issei left, rather than the changes in the new Japan of their contemporaries.²

For the Nisei, family harmony might be emphasized at the cost of smoldering reserve, incompletely repressed desires, and a dubious identification with the past. To outsiders, however, the family must seem strong, loyal, harmonious, in perfect control. A group so abused in earlier anti-oriental prejudice as dangerous, immoral, selfish and promiscuous because of an absence of family patterns, would naturally project this positive image.

The prewar "Jap" eventually became the postwar "Japanese" by casting a favorable image. He was now quiet, conforming, diligent, loyal, achievement-oriented with strong family and group allegiances.³ In his greatest favor was the traditional Japanese reverence for industry, thrift, respect for authority, and allegiance to the family. All were entirely congruent with American middle class models for success.

The Issei parents established standards for personal behavior, family unity, routines of community life from a potpourri of the culture in which they had been reared and which "they remembered with fierce tenacity until the memory was more vivid than the reality."⁴ At some point there is the Bushido ethic of morality, loyalty, racial and national pride, obedience to the ruler and the elders. At another point is the peasant tradition of hard work, identification with the land, and dignity of labor. At still another point, American culture added educational pursuits, competition, and social mobility as requirements for family pride. The result for the Nisei was
. . . a world both secure and confining, comfortable and frustrating, challenging and stultifying, warm and hostile. The shock absorber that enabled them to survive the buffeting of the divergent cultures was the home. It was a place of refuge away from the forces beyond their control.

This idealized image of the Japanese-American home predominates in second generation Japanese-American fiction and autobiographies. The early family lives of such Nisei writers as Margaret Harada, Daniel Inouye, Shelley Ota, Jon Shirota and James Yoshida predated the war images and stereotypes of Japanese-Americans. Those born and raised in Hawaii were removed from the virulence of prejudice that deeply affected the mainland generations from the earliest periods. For the later writers, some born in or raised for a time in relocation camps, the phenomenon of selective memory suggests an interpretation that the camp experience has colored their descriptions of family life. Common disruptive patterns such as separation from parents and relatives, sons and brothers in the military and the breakdown of the patriarchal control system may have been difficult to analyze; so some writers created idyllic youthful days in a secure family environment, particularly in fictional works. For others the transformation of a survival mechanism into a reality has taken place. The self-fulfilling prophecy operates to allow the autobiographer to behave as the stereotype conditions him to act. The strong, authoritarian but supportive, Japanese family becomes not only the Japanese-American norm but is validated by the ancient cultural patterns of Buddhism and Bushido.

In Japanese-American literature the close-knit family operated through a complex pattern of filial piety, reciprocal obligation,
and racial pride. The interaction of family members was based on prescribed roles and responsibilities that assured harmony at home and in the larger ethnic community. Rather than appealing to the images of a "superior culture" like the Chinese, the Japanese controlled family unity by calling up images of obligation.

Mr. Takemoto, the Japanese language school teacher in Milton Murayama's *All I Asking For Is My Body*, typifies the attitude:

> The Japanese had a special spirit called yamato damashi, and they had more patience, perseverance, sense of duty, frugality, filial piety and industry than any other race . . . Be proud you're Japanese . . . Don't bring shame on your family name and your parents . . . The debt to parents is deeper than the ocean. 6

The control mechanism of obligation in the family was through *oyakoko*, or filial piety, the strong reciprocal obligation of parent to child and from child to parent. The idea of almost total parental responsibility for one's children remained strong with the Issei. They emphasized the demands put on the children to return their obligations under the sanctions of guilt and family shame.

In four works, Inouye's *Road to Washington*, Harada's *The Sun Shines on the Immigrant*, Murayama's *All I Asking For Is My Body* and Shirota's *Lucky Come Hawaii*, the first immigrant father or grandfather, immigrated to America and worked from three to thirty years to discharge a family financial debt. Upon the shoulders of the first son lay the centuries old burden of obligation that, if left unresolved, would destroy the family name. The control imposed on the individual goes beyond the family to include the whole ethnic community. "The main bond of the Japanese-American family," as Petersen concludes, "has been neither mutual affection like the
Western type, nor authoritarian control as in the Confucian model. Its strength derives from the fact that the family is solidly imbedded in a supportive Japanese community. 7

The majority of Japanese-American literature illustrates this pattern. The family is always seen in the context of the wider community. "What will others say?" is the most frequent expression of warning or chastisement for deviant behavior. Children of succeeding generations often have little concept of their Asian heritage, yet recognize the demands of parents to be "a good Japanese" and to "honor the family name." The demand operates on multiple levels, from controlling childhood mischief, to motivating excellence in school, to requiring marriage within the ethnic group.

"One cannot stand alone in the world," says Yoshio Mori of The Sun Shines on the Immigrant, when he immigrates to Hawaii to earn money to pay his father's debts and support his neglected mother. The father, a drunken womanizer, causes the family great shame, but this does not absolve the son of his obligations. Even after the debts are paid, Yoshio is still too poor to return home because family pride demands a high return in goods or money to compensate for the violation of the belief "that decent people never leave their beloved Japan." 8

Wasaburo Inouye, the ancestor of the Inouye clan in Road to Washington, is held responsible for a fire in Yokoyama village and he sends his son Asakichi and his wife and child to the plantations in Hawaii to discharge the debt and secure the family honor. "He has no choice ... to a Japanese the word of the father was as immutable
as the unwritten law." Wasaburo himself might have had a fleeting fantasy of escaping the scene, but knew that "fleeing was as unthinkable as remaining without satisfying the debt of honor." The punishment by the community would be more agonizing than the lifetime of work needed to pay the debt. "The elders would scratch out the name of Inouye wherever it appeared. It would be as though an entire family had never lived and no matter how far they fled their shame would follow them. He was Japanese and his home and his name and his family honor were more precious than life... more precious than the first flesh of his flesh."9

Wasaburo's legacy remained for two generations and thirty years of work until the debt was satisfied. Later his great grandson, Daniel, would recall the power of this inherited sense of pride as "a very deadly and expensive thing."10

Two generations of Murayama males in All I Asking For Is My Body bitterly struggle on Maui plantations before a $6,000 family debt can be discharged so that "at least our minds are at peace; even if he [grandfather] should die tomorrow. We've done our filial duty to him."11 Taro Sumida, the immigrant protagonist of Shelley Ota's novel, Upon Their Shoulders (1951), recalls the last vision of his native village. His friend, Sadao, the eldest son of a family of eight, faces a lifetime of "pinching and saving to repay his dead father's long trail of debts." He stands as a symbol for the depressing circle of obligation and feudal fatalism that engulfed the Japanese peasant.12
The most extreme demand to maintain family pride through obligation comes from Mrs. Yoshida to her son Jim, an American citizen stranded in Japan during the war and conscripted into the Japanese army. She pleads with him not to resist:

This is Japan, not America . . . you will be imprisoned or executed for insubordination . . . to die in battle is one thing, but it is another matter to bring shame to the Yoshida name. 13

Kama Gusuda, the patriarch of Jon Shirota's Lucky Come Hawaii (1965) leaves Ginoza village in Okinawa after the death of his father, a debt-ridden chronic alcoholic. As the first son he had to assume responsibility for the family and found in a Hawaiian sugar plantation recruiter's promises an "answer to poverty, hunger and humiliation . . . a chance to return to Okinawa wealthy and respectable." After thirty years in Hawaii as a plantation hand, farmer, pig raiser, Kama was finally able to send his mother fifteen hundred dollars to erect a family burial shrine. Until then the Gusudas had been disgraced for being one of the few families in the village unable to own one. 14

Ko Wakatsuki, of Farewell to Manzanar (1974) was the "oldest son in a family that for centuries had been of the samurai class." He resisted his family's efforts to enroll him in military school; so he bought passage on a ship to Hawaii in 1904. "All his life Papa kept moving," says his writer daughter, "looking for the job, or the piece of land, or the inspiration that would make him a fortune and give him the news he hoped all his life he would one day send back to his relatives: Wakatsuki Ko made it big in America and has restored some honor to the family name." 15
Thus the most effective factor for keeping the family intact, its members in prescribed roles and the community in conformity to traditional values is this literal and emotional commitment to obligation. To the American community these patterns give evidence of a group characterized by conformity, community pride, little social deviance, and strong family patterns. Whether this commitment is the result of Buddhism, Bushido, Christianity or the gathering of strength from various sources as accommodative behaviors, the Japanese-Americans obviously did believe in the crucial importance of ethical standards that promoted family unity, perseverance in adversity, and _kenshin_, or "devotion to the common interest."^{16} The communal projection of the proper "Japanese image" in personal behavior and in literature became a concerted effort both to maintain cultural identity while counteracting the negative stereotypes of Japanese already strong in the American psyche.

Daniel Inouye vividly recalls that his own parents' teachings fit this pattern. Father was a nominal Buddhist turned Christian and Mother was a devout ward of Christian missionaries. "They didn't discuss religion or philosophy with their children . . . they could not explain Bushido concepts, but they knew it was the right thing to do . . . if you did it, good things would happen to you."^{17} Such a philosophy sustained the Issei and gave them an image of moral worth and status in the American community. In Japanese-American literature, in contrast to Chinese-American works, there rarely occurs a need to look to the ancient aesthetic traditions for a sense of superiority.
Despite this nearly universal picture of stable, happy homes and ideal parents shown in Nisei literature, numerous psychological and sociological studies reveal another image of the Japanese-American home and generational relationships. The situations described in these studies are antithetical to the image of the harmonious, secure haven from personal and cultural confusion. The home, in fact, can become the central arena for generational conflict so intense that personal disintegration can occur.

Only one Nisei writer has examined such conflict in his work. The most recent work on the Japanese-American experience, Milton Murayama's *All I Asking For Is My Body*, is a collection of interrelated short stories and a novella about life on the sugar plantations. The central conflict of the stories becomes the intense anger and frustration between Toshio Oyama and his father.

Murayama himself spoke of the work as "something I had to get out of me ... to work out the bitterness and to get it to the point that it could be handled." Although he gave the work a Hawaiian locale, Murayama does not consider the theme of generational conflict to be a local Hawaiian phenomenon. Time and distance have provided him with "additional perspective" and "distancing to absorb the anger of the growing up experiences, that was not confronted while it was happening."19

Autobiographical in setting and content, Murayama directed the work to his Nisei contemporaries. Because he feels the theme is both ethnic and universal, expressing it must be given cultural validity for Japanese-Americans. He singled out his literary models from
Western literature precisely because he felt that traditional Japanese literature had no equivalents for "sons who struggle against, but are intricately bound into identification with their fathers."  

The struggle of Toshio and Kiyoshi Oyama exists because they cannot completely go against the Confucian ideals of filial piety and the position of the father in the hierarchy. They cannot live and perpetuate them either. A frequent theme in immigrant literature of many groups is exactly this literal and symbolic conflict between the American children and the uprooted parents. Open antagonism between the father and son symbolizes the inevitable step: the second generation can find freedom only in escaping the domination of the first generation.  

In traditional Asian literature the pressures of the Confucian ethic and obligation of filial piety militate against overt admission of such conflict. Works such as Murayama's are transitional in that they confront and analyze the anger against the limiting features of the heritage in the Asian-American experience. Murayama's work is unique enough to stand an extended analytical contrast to the majority interpretation of the Japanese-American family.  

The plot and characterization of All I Asking For Is My Body center on the father's demand that his first son, Toshio, give his working life to settle a debt of $6,000 acquired by his grandfather. The average plantation pay in 1936 for forty-eight hours a week was twenty-five dollars a month for adults. So Oyama, himself a first son, flounders under his own lifetime of obligation to his own father and passes it on to his son. He appeals to filial piety, a
concept that Tosh, unlike most sons in Japanese-American fiction and autobiographies, sees as an outmoded device to control his life. He becomes intensely dissatisfied with the poor, inbred, stagnating life of the plantation which promises nothing more than endless circles of debt as obligations to parents, wives and children mount.

Tosh has had a taste of imagined freedom from the lessons of an anti-establishment teacher, who chides the children of the plantation for their passivity. Snooky, as his students call him, means to encourage his bored students to think. He implies that the rigid hierarchy and obligations set by the ethnic culture contribute to the perpetuating of the "pecking order." He explains that:

- . . . the plantation divides and rules and you, the exploited, are perfectly happy to be divided and ruled
- . . . what about fresh air and freedom for the individual
- . . . freedom means not being part of the pecking order
- . . . freedom means being your own boss.22

Toshio is also a promising young boxer who, like ghetto kids of other ethnic groups, dreams his way into the ring and out of poverty. Athletics promise an access into the outer world and the opportunity to earn money to repay the family debt. Yet when the moment arrives, Tosh is too much the filial son. The roots of obligation are too deep, and he refuses "because of family obligations."

Murayama, with an excellent command of dramatic effect, forces the reader to see the inner reality of Toshio Oyama and gives a deeper dimension to the traditional father figure. For all his rebellion, and this is mostly verbal, taking the form of arguments, curses and denigration of the old ways, Toshio is deeply caught in the system. The anger he shows toward his father, the vision he has
of him as a tonosama, a tyrannical feudal lord, "a goddam old futts from Japan," "a dumb Bulahead with no luck," is born of the deeper fear that "guys like Pop and I have no chance." His own anger springs from identification with the father, their shared impotence to escape the cultural burdens, as well as the poverty that envelops them. The elder Oyama's anger stems from his loss of face because of such a rebellious son. He also harbors a secret fear that he will destroy a source of possible pride, his first son. Only to his youngest son Kiyo, can he later open his feelings: "Oya ga ko wo shippai sasetate kana? (Has the parent made the child fail?)"

Tosh seems to be the most physical of all the young males in Japanese-American fiction, and as such becomes another symbol for the transitional generation. He has taken on the aggressive behavior, the physical fight, the verbal argumentation that ally him with the American cultural imagery of the angry young man in the traditional rebellion against the father figure. Outwardly he has changed and challenged the system, even to the point of committing the ultimate shameful act in the Japanese code of honor--he strikes his father in anger! The patterns of physical imagery surrounding the character of Tosh--striking out, fighting against, screaming out, running off--are dramatically juxtaposed to his emotional entrapment. Neither anger nor bitterness can break the centuries-old membrane of the conditioned obligation. At best he can escape into the boxing ring and with an intensity of spirit and his fists, momentarily transcend the limitations of father and culture. The arena of home and family, however, has wider and higher and deeper boundaries that cannot be escaped.
In spite of his rebellion against the father figure and the unquestioned authority of the old culture, Tosh is indeed still his father's son. Although he criticizes his father's insensitivity toward his wife, his preference for a large family, his passivity toward his own working conditions, and his acquiescence to his own father's demands, Tosh displays the same predilections early. His attitude toward his own sisters as "no good useless girls" is tinged with sibling rivalry and the resentment against more Oyamas to support and educate. Yet his attitude that "it's useless to send girls to school, that they are going to get married, that they're not going to help the family," is logic out of the traditional belief in the inferiority of women and in their prescribed roles. Being a first son, he expects the usual indulgence of his mother and the allegiance of his younger brothers and sisters. Upon his own marriage, he expects a submissive and hardworking wife and the early birth of his own first son.

Toshio Oyama provides the short stories and novella with a figure of conflict, but Kiyoshi Oyama provides a figure of resolution. Kiyoshi is the character closest to author Murayama (he is a composite of two Murayama brothers to provide a contrast to the strongly vivid Tosh). He functions as the narrator and the intermediary between the parents and Tosh. Kiyo is more favored by the father, supposedly because he is younger, weaker, and the recipient of more sympathy because of a childhood accident. What Kiyo is not is more important. He is not the first son; so he inherits less obligation, and is less an image of conflict and failure for his father. Kiyo has not his
father's tendency toward gruffness, stubbornness and biting anger, and is closer to Tosh "because he was a second father to me since the folks didn't speak English."

Kiyo is able to be more compassionate towards his father's bad luck, inner conflict, and frustration than his brother can. For him, Tosh is also not the bad son, the shame of the family that his father sees. Tosh actually becomes a role model for Kiyo because he has literally taken the first steps in the second generation journey out of the past, and Kiyo continues them. Kiyo tries the boxing ring, continues in school, joins the army, and pays off the family debt.

In addition to his brother's example, Kiyo Oyama also encounters Snooky and his educational strategy. Rather than experiencing only vague stirrings of discontent like Tosh, he can interpret the meaning of his cautionary tales:

He was the only guy who helped you see things as they were out there . . . he talked of freedom, while everyone else talked of obligation. It was like we were born in a cage and Snooky was coaxing us to fly off, not run away, but be on our own and taste the freedom and danger of the open space. Snook gave me a glimpse of what life could be.25

From Tosh, Kiyo inherits a colorful vocabulary to articulate Snooky's message:

I would have to get out and be on my own even if the old man was successful, even if the plantation made me its highest luna. Freedom was freedom from other people's shit, and shit was shit no matter how lovingly it was dished out . . . shit was the glue which held the group together, and I was going to have no part . . . of any group.26

Snooky, the radical haole English school teacher, stands as a contrasting influence to Mr. Takemoto, the elder, "father of the whole
Japanese Camp in Kahana," who teaches in the Japanese Language school. While Snooky transmits the American ideals of individuality, self-reliance, and ethnic equality, Takemoto teaches the traditional Japanese values of obligation, filial piety, and racial superiority. Even their teaching methods imply contrasting values. Snooky lets down the authority barrier to chide, cajole, amuse, inspire his charges into taking command of their own lives. Takemoto solemnly retells traditional myths of the samurai, sons who save mothers over wives, and mothers who give their lives for their sons, to link the models of the past with the obligations of the present.

With an incredible combination of skill, luck, manipulation and perseverance, Kiyo wins $6,130 in a barracks crap game and with one stroke "made bail money out of the prison of filial piety and family unity . . . out of ten more miserable years on the plantation." What appears to be a contrived deus ex machina, on closer analysis emerges as more than a literary device. Kiyo's symbolism as the savior of his family and himself hinges on seeing him as a transitional link, a product of the teachings of the Snookies, the Oyamas and the Takemotos. Kiyo becomes the unique combination of Horatio Alger, the hustler, and the filial Confucian son.

To wrest a piece of the American dream, his get-rich-quick scheme works as a result of hard work, luck, and a noble cause. He has not totally rejected his obligation, nor has he been crushed by it. Only the youngest member of the second generation could muster the necessary confidence and flair to solve a three-generation family problem with the throw of the cards. Kiyoshi Oyama has
secured himself a place in the American folk mythology of the self-made man, the good-hearted, hard-headed hustler who plays for a good cause. Milton Murayama has added a new realism, a sense of resolved conflict, and an honest appraisal of cultural and generational conflict to Japanese-American literature.

Although the Japanese-American writers may have had less need to identify with and perpetuate an image of their ties to an ancient superior culture to attain ethnic pride and gain acceptance than their Chinese-American counterparts, as a group they have also allied themselves predominantly with the positive images of Asia familiar in the American culture. The postwar images of the Japanese-American family as a strong, unified, filial unit which stressed loyalty, the work ethic and acculturation predominate. While the writers are cognizant of the peasant immigrant heritage of their forebears, they consistently interpret their values as compatible with those of the American middle class. By doing so they attempted to avoid any analysis of the deeper conflicts of values and generations universally a part of the immigrant experience.

Avoiding public confession of familial conflict might be a practical method of coping with divisiveness at home, but avoiding it in literary works published ten or twenty years later indicates a fear of disturbing the popular images. Portraying family conflict or immigrant dissatisfaction may revive the negative racial images and stereotypes only tentatively submerged in American popular culture.

The Chinese-American authors called up the Confucian ideal to validate their view of family life and emphasized the strong father
figure as the potent symbol of cultural identity and control. Besides their symbolic role, the father Wongs, Fongs, Lis and Lowes took an active role in the development of their children. Very few actions escaped the father's notice and, as in Jade Snow Wong's memory, the Chinese offspring literally lived "under the shadow of a great father." In the literature, the Chinese mothers are strong, patient, industrious women, but few emerge as distinctly individual as do their husbands.

The Japanese-American novelists and autobiographers, however, project different images of the parental figures. As symbols of traditional, hereditary male power, the fathers are drawn as formal, distant, feared and respected; as human beings they are vague and stereotypic. As immigrant males, burdened by family obligations sometimes going back generations, often with families to support in Japan and America, they seldom had time for personal involvement in their children's education, manners or cultural development. They provide a vivid contrast to the portraits of Chinese fathers, also tied to long working hours and familial obligations, who took a very active interest in the household activities.

Japanese fathers tend to be excused from such tasks on cultural grounds. The strong image of the dominant Japanese male demands separation from the everyday concerns of wives and children. The pressure to maintain this aloof position allows the larger ethnic community to share in the family responsibilities. This supportive community can also quickly turn into a critical mass to enforce the traditional norms when the individual parent fails. With this wider
sphere of influence operating on their individual and communal lives, the Nisei see their paternal symbol of power diffused and dictated to by others. The adult writers are often ambivalent about the real power of the father figures. Rather than projecting the modifying effects of the immigrant reality, they exaggerate their traditional paternal symbolism.

In some works there is a counter-image. The Confucian ideal father, the symbol for the traditional past is transformed into Horatio Alger, an American ideal, the symbol for his children's future. This father figure, although more easily accepted by the younger generation than the older version, never gets close to his children either. They still owe him unquestioned respect, obedience and obligation, for both his position and his sacrifices. For the Nisei writers caught between cultures, between Confucius and Horatio Alger, a pervasive sense of discomfort appears in the literary portrayals of the father figures.

Both parents become members of a "cult of the exceptional." Their commitment to the work ethic, and their sacrifices for their children are the most common patterns of immigrant parents in any group, but the Japanese-American writers constantly insist on the exceptionality of their own parents. Whether this is a mechanism to repay the huge psychic debt to the parents or an attempt to avoid comparison with them, the Nisei writers apparently find it impossible to identify with the literal position of the parents.

James Yoshida's autobiography, The Two Worlds of Jim Yoshida, gives the sketchiest description of the father, primarily because the elder Yoshida died when Jim was a teenager. His father fits the
pattern of the typical immigrant leaving a small town in Japan to improve his economic lot. After arriving in Seattle in 1911 he spent his life in a series of laboring jobs in lumbering camps, farms, and shops until he bought a hotel in the waterfront Bowery section. Yoshida records his family life as "close knit," "the hard life of oriental immigrants." Both parents were nominally Buddhist, spoke little English, and retained a loyalty to Japanese culture in the guise of foods, family rituals and festivals. Father "banzaied the emperor on New Years, but there was nothing political about it . . . it was just Dad's way of paying respect to an institution that he had been taught to revere . . . All us kids were expected to take part in the rite."

When James refuses, he receives one of the few slaps of his life from his father, who remains in his memory as "gruff and distant," "strict and stern" and "I feared and loved him . . . but he never extended praise, always expected better."²⁷ His lessons to his children were never personal or to an individual child, but vague, awesome pronouncements on the "need for industry, honesty, respect for others, particularly elders." Only after James and his mother go to Japan to return the father's ashes to his family does the young adult son feel an emotional connection with his father. Yet it is still not personal, but cultural and consistent with the symbolism attached to the living man. At the Buddhist funeral, he "felt a link between me and a distant past that gave me roots that helped me feel a kinship . . . [to him] and to ancestors beyond anyone's recall."²⁸
Taro Sumida, the father of *Upon Their Shoulders* and his wife, Haruko, immigrate to Hawaii lured by the labor recruiters from the sugar plantations. They dream of fleeing a life of poverty and struggle at home, but find only more hard work, poor pay, and racial humiliation. Taro is given an exceptional level of consciousness for a peasant by Ota:

Taro had not the expected docility of the ordinary plantation worker for he could read and write, two accomplishments which unfit a man for servility, since he is likely to have acquired a sense of dignity and think himself too good to cringe and grovel in the dust when his master speaks.29

Taro also "caught the germs of the American spirit of independence "to become a labor agitator and he finds himself thrown off the plantation "with wife, brats and baggage . . . and no work certificate."30

From this point Taro Sumida embodies the Horatio Alger myth. He advances through hard work, loyalty, and faith in the American system, from a houseboy and gardener in the home of wealthy Caucasians, to owner of his own home and business. Through financial struggle, racial prejudice and the war period, Sumida retains complete faith in the goodness of America as the hope for his children's future. His personal motto, "upon their shoulders" is the expression of both parental obligation and reciprocal filial piety. His first-born children are twin daughters and, although Sumida is kindly and indulgent with them, he never emerges in more dimensions than as a protective father and guardian of their morals, honor and future.

In *The Sun Shines on the Immigrant*, Yoshio Mori migrates to Hawaii to work out the debts left by an alcoholic father. "There were
only three things he feared—earthquake, fire and his father. These were destructive things that harmed lives and property. "Although he was "a dictator, the sole power of the household ... always right no matter how wrong he appeared, he had to be obeyed."31 Yoshio suffers the hardships of the plantation, becomes literate in English, moves into household service, and finally owns and runs a family laundry. Before he leaves for a visit to Japan thirty-six years after his immigration, Yoshio has seen his son elected to the legislature and his daughter graduated as a teacher. The intervening years are an American success story, a tribute to the work ethic and immigrant accommodation. His face to outsiders is "I am Mori, please keep me in your favor ... he knew what the Caucasians wanted ... their manners were implanted deeply within ... that would be good for business."32 Although Harada expressed the view "that father was an exceptional man," in that he encouraged his children "through education," he is totally consistent with the characterizations common to Japanese-American literature.33

In the transitional period after World War II both the American and the Japanese-American audiences were insecure about the images of Asians in America. Most of these writers projected only those images with positive connotations, and stayed as far as possible from evoking characterizations that might touch the negative stereotypes still in the popular imagination.

Jon Shirota's work takes an indirect route to this end. Gusuda, a "lovable old drunkard" pig farmer who cheers the Japanese to victory and brews sake to toast the Japanese army when it takes Maui,
becomes an amusing comic figure. His "disloyalty" to America simply be interpreted as the ravings of an old man. The kibei, Kenyei Shiroma, shares the Gusuda caricature. He is drawn as a chauvinistic, arrogant traditional Japanese male who pursues Gusuda's daughter, Kimi. His education in Japan has made him unfit to adjust to American social or sexual relationships; so his dream of Japanese victory seems his only hope for status and acceptance.

Gusuda's eldest son is a college graduate in Japan, and his greatest desire is that he remain there to gain a respected position. His insistence suggests some resentment over the job discrimination and social inferiority that he would face as a Nisei in postwar America. Genuine anger, deep feelings against anti-oriental actions in America, could legitimately explain Issei loyalty to Japan. However, Shirota diminishes Kama Gusuda by having him appear only as stubborn, ignorant and ridiculous in his loyalty to the spirit of Japan. By doing so, Shirota did not have to deal with the fact that some Issei did retain their old loyalties, an embarrassment to their Nisei children, who wished to be accepted as Americans.

By contrast, Farewell to Manzanar, written over thirty years after Jeanne Houston's wartime incarceration, has the advantage of the passage of time that allows her to "come to terms with the impact those hears have had on my entire life." By being able to interpret "feelings long pent up in a family separated and harboring a range of memories and hurts," Houston is freer to understand her parents' human dimensions. The portrait of the father, Ko Wakatsuki, is an intensely painful picture of a proud man castrated by situations
beyond his control from his immigration to his death. His personal history as a migrant worker, fisherman, farmer, husband and father of a large family, fits the typical immigrant pattern. Houston's interpretation is an honest appraisal of the complex feelings between a traditional Asian father and an increasingly Americanized daughter. She is less inclined to see him as a symbol, than as a complicated, confused man: "He was not a great man. He wasn't even a very successful man. He was a poseur, a braggart, a tyrant ... but he had held on to his self-respect."34

Ko Wakatsuki is held in a separate male internment camp in North Dakota as a suspected traitor who was to have signaled the Japanese from his fishing boat. At camp he worked as an interpreter for the military and was released after nine months to join his family at Manzanar. He is looked on as an imu, a collaborator, by many Issei on the slimmest grounds of his early release. Rejected by his peers, overshadowed by his sons, Ko becomes a demoralized tyrant and drunkard. Under the tyrant was a broken man:

... for a man raised in Japan, there was no greater disgrace ... and it was the humiliation that brought him face to face with his own vulnerability, his own powerlessness. He had no rights, no home, no control over his life. This kind of emasculation was suffered, in one form or another, by all the men interned at Manzanar.35

Even after release from Manzanar, this proud man, diminished in the eyes of his confused family, felt "another snip of the castrator's scissors." No record remained of his fishing boats, his car; his family possessions in storage had been robbed. Wakatsuki chases scheme after scheme to regain the leadership and respect of his
family, but finally ends up sharecropping on a berry farm until he dies.

Despite this compassionate portrayal, Jeanne did not arrive at it without the pain of confronting the stubbornness and insensitivity of a man who suffered emasculation for the rest of his life. His intermittent drunkenness and intolerance for his daughter's changing needs, led her to feel that "worst of all, I had lost respect for Papa. I never dared show this but it was true." Not until she can "outgrow the shame and the guilt and the sense of unworthiness" that tied her to her father by blood, could she separate the man from the symbol. As a symbol he represented the source of her own rejection and humiliation, the hated Japaneseness. When this scar could heal, Houston could recreate, in the portrait of her father, a dimensional paternal image rarely found in Japanese-American literature. By confronting his image in herself, she could "understand how Papa's life could end in a place like Manzanar. He didn't die there, but things finished for him there. Whereas for me, it was like a birthplace." 36

Kathleen Tamagawa Eldridge's autobiography, Holy Prayers in a Horse's Ear (1923), represents an exceptional variety of Asian-American experiences and the portraits of the parents give contrast to those in later works. Kathleen is the daughter of an unusual interracial marriage between a traditional Japanese male and a fiery, liberated Caucasian woman in the 1880s. Mr. Tamagawa, the son of a prosperous Japanese merchant, was sent to Chicago at age eleven for an education because "it was progressive for young Japan to accept
gratefully the new world." He spends his formative years into adulthood in America, so when he takes his family to Japan to live he embodies a strange combination of Western practicality and Eastern patience.

When his wife, Kate, full of romantic dreams of Japan out of Lafcadio Hearn and Pierre Loti wants to go native, Tamagawa "isn't going to live without a stove in the house . . . ride a rickshaw" or "play Japanese samurai," to entertain the family. Nor will he return to Tamagawa village to assume the familial duties of the oldest male. The author's portrayal of the father is less clearly drawn and remembered than that of the exceptional, dominant mother. Father Tamagawa returned to Japan as a silk merchant and remained there until his death; his wife, fearful of earthquakes, left for America with her daughter and never saw him again.

Tamagawa does not emerge as the traditional father figure in Japanese-American literature, as the literal and symbolic head of the family and the preserver of the traditions. He has been set apart from the immigrant contemporaries of the 1870s and 1880s by his class, education, and westernization.

The author indulges in no direct analysis of the parental relationship, but the father seems completely dominated and fascinated by his unconventional wife whom he married away from home and without family consent. The lasting impression of him is that of a man able to live a life psychically separate from family, friends and the Japanese traditions while he is in America. When he returns to Japan he seems to change, as his daughter reports after a visit,
"back into a quiet Tamagawa, a combination of Japanese self-effacing modesty and strength." His decision to remain separate from his wife suggests a quiet escape from her turbulent personality and certain racial rebuffs that skitter on the periphery of his life because of the interracial marriage.

In Japan his odd family is denigrated by the Tanagawa clan as "crude and boorish," and his "half-breed daughter was a barbarian and blemish on the family." He, in turn, is rejected by the European community in Japan as a "native." Tamagawa is asked not to attend church in the foreign sector with his family and is accused of racial opportunism in the marriage. One ludicrous matron explains to Kathleen that "orientals all want to live like us. They come over and are glad to be as American as possible. We have to exclude them for their numbers. As for marriage—well! He should be eternally grateful for having married such an intellectual, capable, charming person as your mothers." He may have escaped the typical Japanese immigrant situations, but he has not escaped the consequences of stereotypes.

In the majority of Japanese-American literature, of the two Issei parents, the dominant characterization goes to the Issei mother. The popular American stereotypes of the Japanese picture brides, the nameless subservient women, the exotic geishas, have been responsible for creating images of dependent, victimized women. History bears out, rather, that they were the strong force that produced the second generation, marking the transition from a society of single male sojourners to permanent residents. In America quiet and modesty
tend to be equated with weakness, but with the Issei women quiet fortitude, endurance and modesty were signs of strength. Rather than "quaint pictures of white-powdered, kimono clad women trotting meekly a few yards behind husbands," these women were "the living vessels of the culture that preserved family pride and unity by carrying out the rituals of daily life."

As immigrant women they suffered under a triple oppression as women, wives and laborers. Through the long trans-Pacific voyages, the fears of embarkation, the primitive living and working conditions, the ordeals of adapting to life in an alien, hostile world, these women labored beside their husbands and raised their children the best way they knew how within the framework of beliefs and values of Meiji Japan. Possessed of an extraordinary strength of character derived from quiet fortitude, the Issei women found life meaningful. Their selflessness was a response to both feudal customs and to hardships in a foreign land, not the implied stereotypic subservience innate in Asian women.

Tightly knit family units are closely interwoven into the fabric of Japan's social structure, providing cohesion and stability as well as an unusual degree of continuity in the midst of shifting patterns of change. At the heart of this household was the mother. To her fell the tasks of wife and mother, and the father left domestic affairs completely in her hands. His own male status depended on her capabilities and the image of the family she projected to the larger community. With so heavy a responsibility, her whole womanhood, her only fulfillment as a person, often relied on this
role. In the immigrant situation, the decline of paternal presence and her mediation with the outside community on behalf of the family made her the strongest symbol of family power.

Haruko Sumida of Upon Their Shoulders represents the best picture of this archetypal Issei woman. She sails from Japan with her husband to Hawaii gokuraku, "to meet her destiny with courage, like the peace tree which bears its flowers in snow and rain, in adversity." Gokuraku eludes them and she must face suffocating quarters, poor food, the loneliness of an alien land. What sustains Haruko is the inherited strength of her cultural role: "the heritage from generations of Japanese women who uncomplainingly shouldered their burdens . . . knowing that whatever might come to her husband she would accept without tears."41

Through a contrived plot of lugubrious events--poverty, racial discrimination, the near death of one daughter, the bad marriage and near-divorce of another, her son-in-law's suicide, her husband's arrest during the war, and his death--she emerges as an individual, full of self-esteem and strength rather than a caricature of the passive, subservient Japanese woman. Her sacrifices are realistically analyzed and accepted.

She even considers suicide after she is pressured by the Better Morals for Our Children Committee of the Japanese Buddhist Church to reject her two daughters' unconventional marriages. The committee members try to undermine her whole identity, reminding her of her "gimu, your duty to the ancestors . . . the welfare of the entire
Japanese community requires you to remedy this unbecoming and inappropriate action.  

Haruko Sumida's internal confusion over the conflicting pulls of the old and new culture are more genuine than that of the daughters. The traditional role is the only valued one in her mind, while the girls are freer to seek their female identity in a variety of roles. She has a tendency to talk fatalistically, "the gods chastise her for her willfulness," and "destiny cannot be avoided," yet when action is required she can breathe life back into a despair-ridden child and a disillusioned husband. While her daughter speaks melodramatically of her own "lost generation floundering between the old and the new," the matriarch knows that "shouldering the burden of change" begets more success and inner sense of worth.  

Margaret Harada describes Haru Mori's arrival in Hawaii unromantically. The arrival of the picture brides was often a scene of disappointment, indifference or resignation on both sides. With family commitments made and the fate of the women sealed, most brides accepted their duties as wives of plantation workers. Haru, the Issei woman of The Sun Shines on the Immigrant, sets the pattern for her married life by calling her husband anata or master and promises "to take what you face without fear." She, like the other fictional and autobiographical mothers, sees no possibility but that of the traditional role. Haru had been taught "the three-fold duty of a Japanese woman to be obedient to her father while a maiden, faithful to her husband when married and loyal to her son when old and gray. She was ready to share sorrow, misfortune, happiness and good luck with her husband."
According to the stereotypes of her Caucasian employer, Haru is "a little Japanese doll," "pretty as a little flower," "quaint and childlike in her superstitions" and in her devotion to her husband. When Haru is dressed in her kimono, serving food and arranging flowers, Mrs. Dwyer comments on "how fascinating you people are." Haru, however, emerges as anything but a gentle quaint child. She becomes the backbone of a family that attempts to swim the difficult rapids of change while maintaining a strong hold on traditional values.

While the Japanese-American writers have a tendency to draw highly archetypal mothers and to exaggerate their uniqueness, this kind of portrait is fairly common in the immigrant literature of most ethnic groups. Novels and autobiographies of American pioneer women and studies of Jewish women of the early immigrant ghettos, for example, show women in similar roles. These women, like their Asian counterparts, left behind networks of sympathetic and nurturing females and faced the rituals of birth, childraising and death alone in alien lands. Mental breakdown, depression and fear were common. The submission of the female self to the male needs came from necessity, not docility. Attention to the minute details of life sustained these women and gave their lives importance. By supporting their men, raising children, running family businesses, trafficking with the outside world, they literally made possible the survival of their families. Only in the later generations, with greater assimilation and pressure for men to assume social dominance, were these
women reduced to fulltime housewives, a role already invented by the genteel middle class.

Kathleen Tamagawa's portrayal of her mother is unique in Asian-American literature, less because of her racial difference, than for the honesty with which she analyzes the complex female relationship between them. Her mother is the second generation immigrant daughter of "dare-devil Dick Adams, of folkloric fame, for his Irish exuberance, love of romance and work for noble causes." Known as a "woman with flair," Kate Adams Tamagawa reigns as a turbulent, assertive woman no daughter could take as a viable role model. With her romantic character she embraces Japanese culture from the most stereotypic Western view, seeing "flowery kingdoms, quaint lacquered houses out of fairy tales and folktales." The "quiet Tamagawa" she married disappointed her by becoming too Westernized.

Among her motherly obligations is the task of making little Kate "into a Japanese lady." She causes the same resentment in Kate that immigrant mothers brought about in their daughters. Kate is too caught in a multitude of popular images: she cannot be a Caucasian playing Lady Murasaki like her mother, nor a full-blooded Japanese woman of the twentieth century. What Kate inherits is "a mental confusion regarding my ancestry." She resents the freedom of American girls and blames her mother for her "truncated humanity."

Unlike most Japanese-American female autobiographers, Tamagawa can both vent her anger at her mother directly and realize her mother's position. Mrs. Tamagawa continued to ignore the problems caused by her daughter's half-Japanese-ness. Too caught up in the rosy
glow of pseudo-Japanese imagery, she refused to recognize in her
daughter's confusion her own fears for her. Kate can understand her
mother, but into adulthood "cannot quite forgive that she dearly
loved me, and she also feared me and feared for me." By portraying
Mother Tamagawa as a complex woman, both sustained and injured by her
role-playing within the popular stereotypes, the early author
succeeded in a dimensional portrait rare in later Japanese-American
literature.

The most distinctive role of the Japanese-American mother in the
literature is that of the mediator between the traditional roles and
those of the new American system. In the home, this mediation was
usually necessary between the father and the children. More flexible
because of her experience as accommodator to her husband, she
frequently smoothes the passing of her children out of the world of
their fathers. With less to lose psychologically than the male whose
identity and ego are bound in the immutable authoritarian role, the
mothers feel less uncomfortable in dual cultures. They can honor
and obey their husbands in the traditional role, but often guide
them to see similarities in both cultures that will allow changes in
the children's behavior. They can then encourage the children to
liberate themselves from the most restrictive aspects of the older
culture that might interfere with their success in the American
system.

The mothers most often temper the harsh discipline of the
authoritarian father with practical logic. Mrs. Yoshida, for example,
insists that "this is not Japan . . . American children could not be
reared like Japanese children . . . they were products of a new world and required freedom." Mrs. Inouye includes discipline in her belief that "I take from the old ways what is good and useful and from the new what is practical." Adopting what is practical in the new ways usually begins with changing to American clothing, food, names for the children, dating patterns and social activities.

Three mothers, Inouye, Okimoto, and Mori opt for English names for their sons in hopes of providing transitional role models. What might seem a superficial coincidence, strikes the reader as a potent symbol for the mother's hopes for their children in America.

"Daniel" Inouye is named for the prophet Daniel, "revered for steadfast courage." "Daniel" Okimoto is named for the same biblical character of "lion's den fame to commemorate his birth in Santa Anita racetrack when it was used as a holding area for internees." His parents wanted a "name that suggested suffering yet reassurance for the future." Haru Mori names her first son Jack, from the giant killer image of the Western nursery tale, "so he will become strong and brave," but also because it is "an English name that would be easier for Caucasians to pronounce."

For many mothers the role of facilitator from one culture to another can have difficult consequences. When they encourage modification of paternal values while trying to maintain the father's role, they may risk alienating both husband and children. Several women, because of their own family histories, are more educated and socially experienced than their husbands, and must effect a balance between honoring and superseding them. Mrs. Inouye, educated by
Western missionaries, "is almost second generation in her attitudes and experiences" and her immigrant husband "was pretty much in awe of her." She was free to make as many accommodative changes in their lifestyle, including defending her son against the elder Buddhist teacher, as long as she "teaches the children to be good and to bring no shame to the family name."

Benko Itoi was only seventeen when she married Monica Itoi Sone's father "in a western wedding dress and veil, but with a white powdered face of Japanese fashion." She grew to be the major sphere of influence on the Itoi household because of her assertive and emotional nature. "She was a quivering mass of emotions against father's distant unwavering calm of the philosopher." Sone attributes her flexibility to her "energetic and curious age of emigration, before the hard cement of Japanese culture had not yet set." Adolescent Monica's confusion intensifies when her father insists that nihon gakku will make her an ojah san, a definition of femininity much older than her mother's example.

Mrs. Oyama, the mother in Murayama's All I Asking For Is My Body, suffers intense emotional conflict when her husband and son have heated battles over the filial obligations. She must understand her husband's frustration and entrapment in poverty, debt and filial obligation and yet sympathize with Tosh's need for independence. She stands as another tower of strength and risks the wrath of both husband and sons when she insists on equal educational opportunities for the daughters. Murayama has indicated that she is the only character in his autobiographical fiction strong and vivid enough to be portrayed as in real life.
Jeanne Houston's portrayal of an Issei father castrated by the humiliation of the evacuation experience is made more dramatic by the contrasting picture of the mother. Wakatsuki paints water colors of Mt. Whitney visible from Manzanar because they remind him of Mt. Fujiyama. "They represented those forces of nature, those powerful inevitable forces that cannot be resisted, reminding a man that sometimes he must simply endure that which he cannot change." But for Mrs. Wakatsuki, _shikata ga nai_ became a call to action. She endured the camp by working at creating "a sense of things continuing for her disillusioned husband and growing children." After their release she went to work in a fish cannery "with as much pride as she could muster," until Wakatsuki found work that he could accept. Mrs. Wakatsuki is often asked to choose between Ko's ego and the needs of her growing daughter. She accepts Jeanne's need to become an "American" teenager, a prom queen, even a temporary exploiter of the worst stereotypes of the exotic Asian female. Jeanne knew that her father "viewed his daughter only with distaste as if I had betrayed him," while Mama in "her quiet way always supported me alongside, or underneath Papa's demands and expectations. She wanted for me the same things I thought I wanted. Acceptance, in her eyes was simply another means for survival."  

The mother-child tie is closer and more influential than the relationship with any other adult in the daily life of Japanese-American children. A sense of dependency on her can be carried into adulthood and may account for her continued emotional influence on their adult lives. Okimoto estimates that this closeness can also
grow into a "suffocating maternal control." The mother can wield such an immense coercive hold over the child that "the love that binds the two together can become a rein with which to lead the child only in her direction." If the fathers are disciplinarians whose few words are law, the mothers can resort to persuading, lulling and coaxing children into desired behavior at the price of what Yoshida, Ota, Inouye and Murayama all recall as the power "of intolerable uneasiness and guilt."

While the predominant impression of these Issei mothers seems favorable in that they are competent, strong and independent in their maternal role, this interpretation ignores a deeper psychological basis for her actions. The position of women and the role of mothers are intricately interrelated and their seeming strength may, in part derive from their weakness. Maternal manipulation of children can stem from cultural demands and the socialization of women themselves. Asian women, in their traditional society and in the immigrant milieu have not had the luxury of being personally achievement-oriented, but were conditioned to invest their total energies in familial affairs. If they feel repressed or frustrated, manipulation may be the only tool for the helpless, dependent and powerless. The stereotype that "Japanese women walk three steps behind in public, but in scheming are three steps ahead of their men" may, in fact, be another image to keep them "as shadow powers rather than real ones." The Asian woman must appear harmless and powerless and at the same time strong and scheming. Since she cannot reach outward to express anger or frustration, she may direct all her energies toward working them through those in her limited circle.
The most striking example of the female consciousness recognizing the impotence of her position and compensating with manipulation comes from Haru Arata in *Hawaii: End of the Rainbow*. Seikichi, her new husband, immediately establishes his male dominance and demands that she be a "perfect Japanese wife." After the consummation of the marriage,

... as she faced the man she was conscious of an inner metamorphosis. There was a change, subtle but definite. She now belonged to the male to whom she was mated ... but she was no longer afraid of him; in fact she was aware of a desire to monopolize him, to direct him ... and by this, to make him solely hers.57

And so the pattern of her manipulation is established and remains in direct proportion to the power he will assert in the marriage and in the family.

In John Okada's novel *No-No Boy*, Ichiro, the Nisei of the title, returns home to his parents after serving two years in prison for refusing induction into the army in World War II. His own sense of identity is still tied to the powerful image of his mother who inculcated in him a strange love-hate relationship with both America and Japan. She is literally a tiny woman with "the awkward body of a thirteen year old which had been dried and toughened through the years," but the power of her own despair changed the life of her son. By the time of the war she was so bitter, "unable to accept a country which repeatedly refused to accept her or her sons unquestioningly."58 She is gripped by the fantasy that Japan will win the war and send ships to bear the aliens back to their homeland. Ichiro blames her for making him an outcast, for trying to make him Japanese, for
filling him with tales of peach boys and samurai until he cannot define his own reality. She welcomes him home from prison as if he were a hero: "I am proud to call you my son," she says. But Ichiro is

... buried by the anguish which permeated his every pore ... he felt stripped of dignity, respect, purpose, honor, all the things which added up to schooling, marriage and family and work and happiness. It was to please her ... Pa's okay but he's a nobody. Ma is the rock that's always hammering, pounding, pounding in her determined, fanatical way until there's nothing left to call one's self. She cursed me with her meanness and the hatred. It was she who opened my mouth and made my lips sound the words that got me two years in prison ... 58

This strong, possessed matriarch captures her son's devotion by defining his masculinity in the romantic tradition of the samurai and the filial son. As part of this world she too would have worth and status. Pa is so ineffectual that he is unable to provide any balance for his son and Ichiro holds him only in contempt.

Although Okada's portrait of the mother figure is similar to those of other writers in showing the influence that mothers have on their sons, he is unusually honest about the negative consequences of domineering women. But in the final analysis he had to choose between Ichiro's male ego and his mother's female emotion to account for his inability to understand his Japanese-American conflicts. What superficially may seem to be a perceptive examination of the interrelated sexual and racial images influencing the Japanese-American male is only a traditional explanation of female domination.

The majority of mothers are less emotionally troubled that Mrs. Yamada and serve as positive guides for their children. There
is no example of mothers rejecting the standards of the traditional family for unity and good image. In this aspect, the matriarchs continue to perpetuate the image of the family as the haven of stability. In the final interpretation, the patterns indicate that this group of second generation writers felt most comfortable portraying the positive images of the traditional Japanese family that were admired by the majority culture and their own Asian heritage. By doing so they solidified stereotypes into archetypes, further preserving idealized images of parents, children and families.
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CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VIII
IMAGES AND STEREOTYPES OF JAPANESE MEN AND WOMEN

Portraying idealized traditional families and parents became standard for second generation Japanese-American writers, so developing other than traditional portraits of individual males and females proved difficult. The emphasis on the heroic mother figure, defined and sustained in her traditional female role, makes portrayal of women in other roles difficult. Both male and female writers are unable to undercut the role without fear of damaging the individual mother. Japanese-American males receive exceptional nurture, admiration and devotion from their mothers as part of her duties to the male, and they owe her deep gratitude and obligation in their roles as filial sons. As immigrant mothers, these women provided the literal and emotional guidance for their sons to surpass their fathers in educational, economic and social success. This very success imposed obligations to maintain her image. All the male writers, Inouye, Okimoto, Shirota and Murayama, treat the mother figure with exaggerated awe for her fortitude and strength and with gratitude for her sacrifices. Consequently, other female characters such as wives, sisters, friends and teachers, emerge only in the shadows of the mother figures. In fact, in the autobiographies by male writers, there is generally no interaction with sisters and, if wives are mentioned, they are modeled on the exceptional mothers.

With such strong emotional ties to the traditional mothers, these younger Asian males actually illustrate definite ambivalence
toward females of their own generation. They profess to admire and desire liberated Asian-American females, but actually demand traditional female behavior from sisters, wives, and friends. Females who seem to acculturate more rapidly than males often reject them as being too dependent on their mothers, too traditional in their views of women's roles, and too demanding of female attention and docility. Milton Murayama, the writer most sympathetic toward this masculine crisis, dramatizes this regression to the older female roles with Tosh Oyama. He is often more vehement than his father on the worthlessness of girl children and demands that his sister assume the traditional wife and mother roles. His own young wife is expected to commit herself to his needs and the family obligation. As plantation wives they would hardly differ from his immigrant mother.

Younger females bred by such strong immigrant women have role models few can or want to emulate; so they often fall into a pattern of idealizing the mother figures to remove their conduct from the realm of the required. Patricia Spacks' study of female writers concludes that few female autobiographers "can speak of their mothers without superlatives. They attribute to this parent a specialness that cannot be directly claimed for the self." The necessity for such heroic conduct as was demanded of the Issei mother would never occur for the second generation daughters. The rigors of immigration and resettlement alone would never be duplicated. When later difficulties did occur (the internment camp certainly had some parallels with the immigrant situation), they
felt they could never rise to the level of their exceptional mothers because they would not have the sustaining traditional values that the mothers knew.

As younger Japanese-American women transformed the female roles away from housewife and mother to embrace the professions, the traditional woman's image often became tarnished and deprecated as old-fashioned, rigid, and docile. What may have been seen earlier as her very strengths, now could be seen as the worst stereotypes of the subservient, silent, home-bound Asian female.

Nisei females whose immigrant mothers became acculturated to American behaviors were often faced with another variety of image problem: the mothers suddenly had no uniqueness, they no longer fitted the positive stereotypes admired by the culture for older Asian women. Expressions of these feelings are often evident in fiction and autobiographies by Japanese-American female writers. Margaret Harada, for example, confesses that she resented her own mother's "easy role in family life, that she had a life of Riley." So when she came to recreate her in the character of Haru Mori, she turned her into an archetypal symbol of traditional strength and endurance under difficult circumstances. For information she relied on the stories told by the old-timers who admired such women.

In this stereotypic role the woman has more identity and worth than the woman caught between the images of the traditional and Americanized woman. In literary portrayals, daughters caught between these images of mothers often "deprecate themselves by comparison, perhaps in an effort to conceal from themselves the guilt and anger
The most idealized portraits of Japanese mothers do come from the works of female writers, Margaret Harada, Shelley Ota and Monica Sone. They fit the Spacks' conclusion that such portraits may mask resentment or ambivalence felt by the daughters toward the mothers. Like the male writers, they express extreme admiration for women who embody such Asian "feminine" attributes as endurance, faithfulness and self-sacrifice if these are directed toward husbands and children. They cannot, however, perceive their mothers as females away from the mother role and this hinders any portrayal of them as individuals. Consequently there are no close mother-daughter relationships developed.

The emphasis on the differences between the immigrant mothers and their Americanized daughters, particularly in the autobiographies, leaves an impression of indifference. Sure if they like Emily Dickenson could say, "I never knew a mother," it should imply at least a sadness, a certain regret that values and circumstances may have denied them a level of genuine female experience. Although these works are filled with examples of mothers and daughters sharing the common female experiences of defining femininity and seeking satisfaction in feminine roles, they are given such cursory notice in such stereotypic terms that it actually contradicts the portrait of the mothers with strong cultural beliefs. When conflicts arise the mothers and daughters seem only players in a world so personal, so foreign to the other, that any understanding of the other is impossible. This ambivalent point of view in many works tends to diminish the existing emphasis on the strong mother figure and
undercuts the credibility of the writer-daughter's interpretation of maternal behavior.

The experiential differences between the immigrant mothers and the second generation daughters extend to the influences of various images surrounding Asian women in different periods. The parental emphasis on transforming their daughters into traditional Japanese women grows out of definitions of feminine roles from Meiji Japan and of the counterimages prevalent in the early immigrant America.

Most of the early Issei men were drifters and sojourners with little aim in settling down until Japanese women arrived and the responsibilities of married life had a settling influence. Prior to 1900 the sexual balance was severely skewed and the presence of prostitutes played on the real or imagined fears of the populace fired up by decades of anti-oriental campaigns. When brides began to arrive certain images of Asian women were already secure. In 1899 an immigration commissioner announced "that it was a fact, believed by all the immigration officers with whom I have talked, that at least 75% of the Japanese women who come to the United States are lewd, or at least of such low quality that they are easily overcome by the conditions which they find in this country." First criticized for their immoral women and lack of family life, these men and women were later feared for it. Propaganda predicted that the large numbers of foreign offspring would inundate the countryside and the fertile Japs would all seize the best jobs and farmlands.

Immigrant men portrayed in Japanese-American literature display an undercurrent of fear that their wives and daughters would be
identified with these stereotypes of immoral women. Yoshio Mori, in *The Sun Shines on the Immigrant*, "felt like a real man" when he slept with his first woman, a forty-year-old co-worker in Japan, but he refuses to marry her because "she seduced him so he owes her nothing." He thinks geishas are immoral "because they lead men into irresistible immorality." In America Toshio is unfaithful to his wife with a geisha, but continues to perpetuate the images of immoral Japanese women and the double standard of sexual relations. From his wife, a picture bride, he expects obedience, fidelity and virtue. When she discovers his affair with the geisha, he is horrified less than she knows, than that she would be seen near the woman and dishonor the family name. 6

Kama Gusuda arranges for a picture bride in *Lucky Come Hawaii*, and Tsuya is admired for her innocence, purity and shyness. Shirota describes her in the images of a western virgin: she arrives in a white kimono and dainty white tabis, with a light complexion smelling of white face powder, gleaming in the sun. Gusuda's pleasure in her is enhanced exactly because she is so unlike "the dark Kanaka wahines he got for a dollar and a half." When his only daughter, Kimi, falls in love with a Hawaiian, he envisions her purity ruined by another dark-skinned seducer and the shame that will come to his family because of her lowered status.

Seikichi Arara, of *Hawaii: End of the Rainbow*, the most chauvinistic of the first generation males in the entire group of works, constantly implies sexual contrasts between his "perfect Japanese wife" and the wives of other ethnic backgrounds. Haru
represents Arata's definition of the ideal traditional Japanese woman—quiet, submissive, sexually-controlled with her husband and asexual to other males. His friend's Hawaiian wife, "lived childishly from day to day . . . she had no inhibitions." While this "child of nature . . . might be a nice companion when one is young and with no responsibility," the implication is that she would be, by her very nature, susceptible to the "unscrupulous men looking for Kanaka mistresses." A Portuguese wife, also uninhibited, more assertive and emotionally inclined by her religious and cultural background, falls perilously close to the other "kind of woman" for Arata.

Miyamoto's discomfort with portraying female sexuality is evident in his handling of Arata's wedding night. He makes certain that any female sexual behavior is set neatly in the confines of the tradition. Haru's demure, shy behavior with an edge of eroticism is interpreted as "inborn in womankind." His masculinity is enhanced, however, not because she follows this nature, but because he dominates her, arousing and controlling her sensuality as his own possession. Even as a young man with a limited education and experience, Miyamoto managed to give Arata enough Confucian precepts from The Manual For Women to know that a wife "must be trained" because of her "spoiled nature." Japanese girls, he knew, "were different from white women; they were to be trained to be deferential to the male sex. The vital question as to who was to be the master in the house must be declared by act from the very start of the conjugal life."
For Arata, the act will be the consummation of the marriage, and will be reinforced by continued sexual domination that will secure her obedient position as "superior Japanese wife."

On the morning after the wedding night, his pride takes the form of pompous, self-congratulations: "she becomes his wholly." What sends his "blood surging through his body" is not so much his sexual prowess, but the assurance that "she had risen early and completed her toilet. Not to let her husband catch her in a dishevelled condition from the night was one of the virtues of a Japanese wife." This insistence on seeing Japanese women as either wives or whores has many variations.

Both Monica Sone and Jeanne Houston recall the anger of their fathers when they wanted to take dance lessons or participate in school dances. Running a skidrow hotel between a cafe, tavern, burlesque house and mission hall, Itoi's daughters were strictly protected from life-in-the-raw outside. He recalls his own embarrassment when he wandered into a burlesque house thinking it was a kabuki theatre. He would "die of disgrace if a daughter of his were to appear like that in public." He refuses her ballet lessons because of the associations of geishas with dancing.

When Jeanne Wakatsuki wins a high school prom queen contest by presenting herself as an exotic Asian maiden, naively exploiting all the worst stereotypes of dark Asian sensuality, her father is so mortified he will not speak to her. His shame is not lessened when she is transformed by mountains of high-necked ruffle and ruffles into a white fairy princess for the dance. To him it still screams of "that profession."
His deepest fears are that,

... showing off your body that way ... the hakajin boys will look at you ... you become that kind of woman what Japanese boy will marry you? You put on tight clothes and walk around like Jean Harlow and the hakajin boys make you queen. Pretty soon you end up marrying a hakajin boy.11

For Papa Wakatsuki the distinction between girls who marry and the kind who get looked at is still strong, especially Japanese girls who may be used by Caucasians who already harbor the stereotypes of immoral Asian women. His last hope is to effect a safeguard for her virtue; she is to take odori dancing lessons in her mother's borrowed kimono, making a last attempt to "learn Japanese ways of movement."12

The second generation daughters brought up under the influence of images of Asian women projected in popular writing, films and advertising often refuse to identify themselves with the old-fashioned images of the delicate, kimonoed, bowing, tea-serving, cherry blossom closest to their parents' dreams for their Japanese-American daughters. Neither are they comfortable with the exotic imagery of Asian seductresses, deep-breathing, powdered, painted whores luring white GIs into seamy pleasure dens. With both sets of images unsatisfactory, another option for Americanized Asian women is to imitate the white images of female behavior and appearance.

The desire of both Asian males and females to imitate white standards of dress and behavior is usually interpreted as an attempt to overcome racial differences, to joint the majority by rejecting the symbol of minority--an Asian face. With women it must go deeper, into the painful struggle to gain individual identity beyond both race and sex. The popular images of the Asian woman can be seductively
positive; living up to them can gain her attention, exceptional status, and make her an eligible candidate for marriage to a Caucasian male. The Nisei woman, taught from birth by traditional culture and mass media stereotyping, that she is inferior to her male counterpart in ability, intelligence, perception and emotional stability may conclude that to be feminine and desirable, she must be passive and contented with married life.

This requirement of feminine passivity certainly goes beyond race, but minority women carry a double burden of images that may intensify the need to role-play for acceptance. Gunnar Myrdal first referred to women as the "first Negroes of the human race."

Feminine passivity can be closely related to Negro apathy. Having narrowly restricted the participation of the group, the oppressor finds that inactivity becomes an innate group characteristic. Blacks and women labeled as frivolous, passive, incapable, inferior may exploit the resources of the role rather than defying the stereotypes. Indecision, evasiveness, deviousness, the image of the quiet Asian woman manipulating behind the scenes, belies the real impotence of her position while justifying her oppression. 13

Jeanne Houston attributes her early unconscious exploitation of her Japanese female image to an attempt to "overcome the war-distorted limitations of my race through my femininity." One need is set against another, "to look and dress and talk and act . . . to the ideas of male beauty . . . which were Caucasian." As a little majorette for a boy scout band, "I was too young to consciously use my sexuality or to understand how an Oriental female can fascinate
Caucasian men." As a potential high school prom queen, who could be chosen only with the crucial votes of the Caucasian males, she had already learned to act on that early instinct. Only as an adult can Houston understand "that this was just another form of invisibility," a racial and sexual minority pandering to the majority stereotypes.

Under the choice of a Caucasian male may be a deeper longing: to be a man, or specifically to possess the male right to power and individuality. Jan Masaoka speaks of her Asian female confusion fostered by stereotypes. "I think about my position as an Asian woman in a society geared to the needs of whites and men . . . after years of wanting to be white and a boy . . . I am progressing." The major female character in Kingston's Woman Warrior, a Chinese-American, shrugs out of amused awareness: "in Berkeley in the sixties I studied and I marched to change the world, but I did not turn into a boy." When her mother calls her a "bad girl" for not conforming to the housewife image, she gloats, "isn't a bad girl almost a boy?"

When Asian women reject Asian males as social or marriage partners, it may spring from the same need. Media standards for male power and desirability require potent men to be tall, light, hairy-chested, quick-fisted, and assertive. Asian men, with their small, dark, wiry bodies, and self-effacing manner are seen as essentially feminine, not masculine. What these women may be rejecting is the image of powerlessness of both Asian men and women in the American race mentality. For older Nisei women writers this level of consciousness would be unusual. What does occur in their literary
portraits is the female attempt to manipulate husbands and sons to be powerful, masculine and active, since they are not allowed to be so themselves. Their daughters are encouraged in non-competitive roles that do not threaten tenuous masculinity.\(^{17}\)

No writers, male or female, directly confront such a subversive interpretation of Asian masculinity. There does exist, however, a fairly consistent emphasis on body imagery in the works of male writers that suggests a subconscious awareness of the images. Glazer and Moynihan posit in their work, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, "that the one untransferable aspect of group identification is that of the body," and the "function of basic group identity has most to do crucially with two ingredients in every individual's personality and life experiences: his sense of belongingness and the quality of his self-esteem."\(^{18}\) In American social imagery, the male body serves as a badge of identity with the myth of white supremacy.

We have previously observed the extraordinary taboos and sanctions that have been attached to violating the purity of this badge of identity by the intermarriage of the white and Asian races. Yet even though an individual male, in this case a Japanese-American male, can anglicize his name, conceal his origins, change his religion or lifestyle, he cannot alter his body or escape the images attached to it.

Daniel Inouye probably has most reason to be aware of his body, since the loss of an arm in battle in World War II has had significant effect on his sense of identity. Prominent in his autobiography is evidence of the extraordinary strength of the will necessary to
assume a normal life and to accept the loss of a limb. Inouye was able to draw on the resources of the Japanese cultural legacy for strength to endure and motivation to rise above hardship. His experiences as a minority male have also set standards for accepting physical limitations. Aside from his handicap, Inouye's total work indicates a preoccupation with Japanese-American male smallness. Taken as a theme, it suggests the psychological effects of the prevalent imagery of American maleness. Presented quite humorously, the images nevertheless build up into a pattern of acceptance that Japanese-American males "don't measure up to haoles." The battle chapters are full of references to the "little men" struggling with oversized uniforms and matching them with oversized motivation to prove their worth. On the battlefield, the traditional arena for masculine initiation and identification, the Japanese-Americans are tested against the large Aryan enemy and the "lanky, tall Texans." Inouye even attributes to the Issei parents a share in his own preoccupation: Observing the departure of a military unit in Honolulu he sees:

... little soldiers struggling under packs on march to the ships ... I kept my eyes straight in front of me, conscious of the shame ... parents whose last memories of their sons was seeing them under outsize burdens, looking more like prisoners than soldiers ... it was so sad for the old folks.19

Even the political chapters unconsciously focus on size. Inouye set the image of the little Nisei "against the enormous bulk, the 6'5", 250 lbs. of Ben Dillingham." When politicians are given vital statistics, the reader must analyze the symbolic thrust of the description. Whether at McKinley High, the battlefield, or politics,
the humiliation of sexual and racial rejection is worked out by "outhaoleing the haoles." Since the second generation Japanese-American males cannot assume white body proportions, they can secure white male power. Doing so includes the accommodative device of imitating the manners and dress, if not the bodies, of the power symbols. Mrs. Inouye is quite proud that "Danny went off to war and learned how to talk like a haole and behave like a gentleman."20

Toshio Oyama, of All I Asking For Is My Body, who envisions his body as a tool for survival, takes to the prize fight ring to erase the humiliation of poverty and filial obligation. He despairs over his small body and adopts a torturous routine for developing it into a hard, enduring, if not large, instrument of masculinity. On his plantation job, young Tosh prides himself on being able to keep up with the larger Portuguese and more experienced Filipino workers, despite his size.

Jim Yoshida begins his struggle to compete physically in early youth in neighborhood fights and high school football. He never really feels physically adequate until he proves himself equal to the more experienced Karate instructors in Japan. As a Japanese-American his body is larger, more developed, and thus more male, than the Japanese he encounters. In Japan, and engaging in a Japanese sport, his victory as the superior male is all the greater.

The Gusuda boys, Niro and Saburo, are most affronted by the curses against "the goddam little Japs" after Pearl Harbor. When Saburo discovers his haole teacher, the object of his infatuation, compromised with a white sailor, etched in his memory is the
definition of male potency: "he was powerfully built, big arms, big shoulders, hairy-chested; he was big all around." Whites, by contrast sees Asians only as "little nips," "black like niggers," "all gooks"--a vivid compilation of impotent minority men.

When female characters analyze their physical attributes or personalities, the undercurrent of sexual and racial imagery must be tapped also. Many of Monica Sone's descriptions of her repressed adolescent years in Nisei Daughter, must go deeper than her own interpretation that "I knew it was because I was Japanese." Inarticulate, self-conscious, lacking in self-esteem, she is too wrapped up in the racial limitations defined for her by the culture to understand the wider sexual implications:

Something compellingly Japanese made me a polished piece of inarticulation . . . unable to deliver the simplest statement in class without flaming like a red tomato . . . feel it was better to seem stupid in a quiet way than make boners out loud . . .

Being one of the "quiet people" overlays the reality of being a quiet, female person. Her mother, Mrs. Matsui, the female community elder, Mr. Ohashi, the nihon gakko principal, successfully turned her into a psychological ojah-san, "the refined young maiden, pure of thought, polite, serene, and self-controlled." Much of Monica Sone's interpretation of her own accommodative behavior is a result of these unrealized nihon gakko lessons. "The driving spirit of strict discipline that reached out and weighed heavily on each pupil's consciousness," affected her whole concept of feminine self.

After leaving Camp Minidoka, Monica is hired as a dental assistant in Chicago and agrees to early hours and floor scrubbing,
generally not part of the job specifications so "Nisei girls will [not] get a reputation as poor risks." Her father sent her to business school rather than college to learn practical skills, because "if a girl didn't go into business the only occupation that was open was that of a domestic in a home." With such demeaning possibilities, retreat into the positive images of Asian women can save face. "I made up my mind to make myself invisible and scarce," she decides, "but an oriental face in the midwest was a rarity." So when people stared out of curiosity she basked in the image of an exotic alien, amused but not rejecting the fact that "most people took me for Chinese" and "complimented me on my good English."23

Megumi Mori, the young daughter in The Sun Shines on the Immigrant and the character based closely on the experiences of the author Harada, encounters obvious discrimination from a college teacher. Miss Hill, a haole, mocks her conduct because it is too far removed from the expected behavior for a Japanese woman, and gives her a low grade that will not allow her to get a teaching job. She is too independent, will not accept criticism, and seems ambitious. Miss Hill tells her that "you do not have the personality to teach . . . you are too interested in making money." Her attitude suggests both the resentment against an upwardly mobile minority and a woman not accepting the expected images.

When Megumi reveals her problem to her parents, they chide her for her cowardice, for not accepting adversity without complaint. Her own mother, the indomitable Haruko Mori, known for "taking what you must face without fear," can only advise her to know her place,
to look inward, and to change that deviant personality. Megumi accepts her passive female role and concludes, "I am ashamed. I have no one to blame but myself for my grade." Racial accommodation certainly, but no such advice is ever given to her brother Jack, named for the giant killer, who becomes a legislator. Jack, in fact, is the only totally fictional character in the novel. Harada, herself an only child, created Jack in the image of a Japanese-American success symbol. He is articulate, educated, self-assured, accepted and respected as an individual and as an elected public official. Only through a brother Jack could Megumi/Harada accomplish her own female aspirations. 24

Megumi, the girl-child, taught feminine flexibility, is expected to alter even her personality to fit the expected images. Without doing so she will have neither a job nor a husband, the only avenues of respectability open to her. Only a happy accident, a shortage of teachers, allows such misfits as Megumi to get jobs. Harada's seemingly positive conclusion masks the deeper acceptance that such women cannot succeed by their own talents; they must adjust their personalities and hope that the male power structure raises them up.

Margaret Harada, discussing the novel in an interview, emphasized that one of the most influential situations in her own life was, in fact, a student teaching experience that closely paralleled Megumi's. One of the deepest motivations for writing the novel was to relieve the bitterness, the humiliation, and the loss of self-esteem felt by her father as a Japanese immigrant and herself
as a Japanese-American student. Despite her expressed need to deal with this deep resentment over racial discrimination and the conditioned reflex of female accommodation, the novel cannot resist masking them over with cultural interpretations. In the final analysis, she will interpret female passivity only "as a matter of teachings from parents" and accommodation as "Japanese endurance."

From her immigrant parents, she learned and internalized the appropriate racial and sexual images. Despite her best efforts, she continued to perpetuate them in her literary work.

When Kathleen Tamagawa wrote her book at age thirty-six, it was partly out of frustration over her female identity lost in the images and stereotypes foisted upon her half-Asianness. "What were perplexing whirlpools of thought at thirteen, instead of becoming quiet lakes of reflection, had become regular maelstroms," she concludes. The analogy of the title, "holy prayers in a horse's ear"—*una no mimi ni nembutso*—suggests the uselessness of trying to live up to or deflate "the schools of thought," the stereotypes with "which people make their friendly onslaughts on me." 25

As a result of her separation from the traditional Japanese family patterns, and separation from any Asian-American enclave, Tamagawa has a remarkable ability to go outside her own feelings to see how others see her as a Japanese woman. Her work contrasts vividly with that of other second generation writers in its painfully honest admission of the consequences of stereotypes. Neither does Tamagawa propose easy solutions to the problem of identifying herself. When she chooses accommodation to the expected roles, she only comes
to resent it. When she looks to an idealized Japanese past, she is equally unsatisfied: "I wanted to feel a oneness with those people. I found it interesting, but never really loved it." When she tries to link Asian with American experience, she feels inadequate: "when Americans ask about my racial pulls and make me an oriental information bureau." 26

Her position is doubly susceptible to stereotypes when she marries a Caucasian, and reverses her mother's situation. She says, "I wanted to be in the most ordinary American situations and be the most average and usual of American girls." This search for "normalcy" is born of two traumatic influences on her life: the vivid images of Asian women in the popular culture and the influence of an exceptionally dominant mother. The most poignant scenes in her autobiography, given dramatic effect by an overlay of humor, are those in which she is expected to perform as a "little oriental lady."

After her marriage she lives in the South, experiencing a schizophrenic set of racial ambiguities. Southern hospitality prevails in its kindness toward "strangers." No one is stranger than this exotic alien in a close social milieu that "gets very sentimental over Oriental art and religion and finds in my reticence (spelled ignorance to Kate) all sorts of mysterious and beautiful philosophies that I, as an Oriental, reveal." The other side of her Asian exoticism is the ambivalent link with Blacks. As an Asian woman married to a Caucasian man, she is still within the interracial norm, but she fears she will commit some social error, will "mistakenly behave like them."
If so, she risks activating the miscengenation fears so close to the surface in Southern whites.

The occasion of the birth of her first son becomes a racial and sexual nightmare. In great pain and fear, Kathleen hears the nurses mock "those half-nigger girls in labor making an awful to-do-about nothing." Rather than be identified with them, she knows "she must be silent." As a result she makes hospital history: the doctor excitedly announces that "she is a perfectly marvelous case . . . of course these things have been known to be true in the orient . . . a painless birth!!"27

Her racial ambiguity allows even her black scrubwoman to test her by trying to bring down an uppity near-black and get an edge on another possibly threatening minority. She refuses to work in the house with "them idols [some Japanese sculptures] . . . no money gwine make me stay in the dark with those pagan ghouls." While Kate is expected to hold herself above Blacks, she feels an ironic jealousy. They have more emotional freedom because little is expected of them "by way of civilization" while she is expected to embody all the awesome culture of the entire East.

When her family finally settles in Washington, D.C. Kate is exhausted from role-playing as "a curiosity." "I knew I could not spend my life chasing other people's trains of thought and missing one train after another." She gratefully slips into the oblivion of the artificial society of the State Department wives who are "too busy gossipping about who-is-who to bother whether I was a little Japanese lady or a menace." From childhood experience and from her
father's example, she learned that "polite withdrawal was one of the few responses to other people's phantasms about me." Her final thoughts, even after the exorcism of normality and literary confession, are poignantly summed as, "the unexpected, the unaccepted like myself, must remain forever outside it all." 28
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CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

What we remember lacks the hard edge of fact. To help us along we create little fictions, highly subtle and individual scenarios which clarity and shape our experience. The remembered event becomes a fiction, a structure made to accommodate certain feelings. If it weren't for these structures, art would be too personal for the artist to create, much less for the audience to grasp. Jerzy Kosinski

When second generation Asian-American autobiographers and novelists came to interpret their experiences as Chinese-, Korean- and Japanese-Americans, what they " remembered" was a lifestyle complicated by many factors. On one hand were the roots of the immigrant experience; a heritage of the communal memories of the painful escape from poverty and hardship in the homeland and later, the struggle for economic and social status. In America these roots were in some cases stunted by racist propaganda, the negative images and stereotypes developed by a majority culture which feared the great mass of foreigners transplanting onto their native soil. On the other hand, the American society was also generous in its nurture of new groups wanting to link their past with the new American future. If the groups were willing to share the melting pot, there were positive images and respectful interpretations of the minority cultures. Having perceived early the consequences of these different views, most immigrant groups learned to link their fates with the positive images and to perpetuate those behaviors and interpretations of behaviors that fit the expectations of Americans.
The strength of these images imbedded in the American culture has made significant difference to the search for an Asian-American literary identity over several generations. For second generation writers it has been absolutely crucial. With the popular images of Asians set in the minds of the public and the scholars, and internalized by Asian-Americans themselves, perpetuating the images became a complex interaction of conscious defense mechanism and unconscious cultural conditioning.

The writing of many books, particularly autobiographies, was stimulated by outsiders. Publishers saw the timeliness of success stories of model minorities; teachers saw thematic interest in the images of the exotic recreation of Asia in American or the symbol of the melting pot in the blending of the East and the West.

The second generation writers illustrate a phase of minority experience that, according to Gunnar Myrdal's model-making scheme, joins cultural conditioning a psychic collusion toward a common goal. Using Blacks as a minority symbol, Myrdal shows that they have sometimes resorted to mythologizing their history, conjuring up Arcadian visions of great civilizations that flourished before the white man came to sow strife and impose inferiority upon them. Idealization of the past and reinterpretation of the present in the light of it, seem to be an early stage of struggle for decolonization, real or psychic, a form of adolescence that a group must pass through before it can attain a new phase of pride and self-confidence.1

The images and stereotypes, the expectations of Americans about the immigrants, are deeply rooted in the history of American race
relations. So deeply and subtly have the popular stereotypes of Asians been insinuated into the fiber of the average well-meaning American that Asians born and bred in this atmosphere absorb them too. Consequently, when these writers emerged to voice their experiences, they saw themselves reflected in popular images.

The alleged "superiority" of the Chinese culture and Confucian family patterns was among the most positive images held by the popular culture. It was emphasized by the Chinese-Americans most when the individual group was kept outside the boundaries of acceptance by the dominant culture and also felt uncomfortable within the matrix of its own cultural group. The emphasis on the Confucian tradition by the second generation Chinese-American writers springs from two psychological conditions of the periods of immigrant and assimilation. First, the Chinese immigrant generation, like immigrants from other cultures, bequeathed to their children a nostalgic view of the homeland. With it went an idealized connection with the elitist social philosophy of Confucianism that provided an identity not available to them as immigrants in America. Secondly, American popular culture from the earliest periods of contact with China and Chinese immigrants inflicted upon the Chinese a schizophrenic burden of both negative and positive images. On one hand was the "yellow peril," a group of barbaric, pagan, clannish, immoral sojourner coolies. On the other was the romantic "superior culture" of exquisite arts, Confucian ethics, and inscrutable wisdom. Against this complex tapestry of memory and popular stereotypes, the Chinese-Americans were faced with evolving an identity that would allow them
sustaining links with their traditional culture and at the same time would assure acceptance by the American society.

The Chinese-American patterns of linking their personal and family lives in America with the Confucian ideals and aesthetic culture of ancient China also fits into the larger dimensions of immigrant adjustment. European immigrants, for example, like the Germans or the Russian Jews, perpetuated their links with the great cultures of Imperial Germany or Czarist Russia. Their literary and cultural heroes became Goethe, Schiller, Tolstoi and Dostoevski, although as peasants they and their ancestors were most likely illiterates. In America, they preserved these vicarious links through the minority of intellectuals among them who could sustain the images of cultural superiority. The Chinese sojourner in America found identity and acceptance in connecting himself with a heritage associated by elite Chinese and equated by the American public with historical status and high culture. Except in images of an ideal these were denied him both in China and in the land with which he chose to join his destiny.

By the 1940s Chinese-American writers like Pardee Lowe, Jade Snow Wong and Lin Yutang had had a generation or more of conditioning encouraging them to continue to do so by editors and publishers and the reading public anxious to participate in the Chinese experience by reading stories of a model minority, linked to exotic Asian customs, goods and values, but still attuned to American patterns of work and behavior. Even into the 1970s writers like Virginia Lee and Li Ling Ai continued the patterns in their fiction
and memoirs. Other second generation writers like Louis Chu and Maxine Hong Kingston who were influenced by the changing attitudes toward race and ethnicity in the past two decades broke the mold. They tried to shed light on the reality hidden behind the images, to return to and validate the immigrant roots before they were pruned and grafted onto other images. Their works are significant in that they underscore the degree of romanticism in the other works, and the powerful influence of the earlier images and stereotypes.

Japanese-American writers of this generation did not link themselves with a "superior" culture as did the Chinese-American writers. Rather they emphasized the values and behaviors in their Japanese traditions that were totally compatible with American ideals for personal and family behavior. The concepts of family unity and loyalty, social obligation, respect for authority and hard work that underlay the Japanese Bushido ethic were admired by the Protestant ethic. During the late nineteenth century Japanese immigrants bore the brunt of the anti-oriental movement in California. The residue of this prejudice and the survival mechanisms developed to subvert it, were transmitted to the second generation by parents, themselves conditioned to their use. These images were reinforced by popular culture through films, songs, comics and popular fiction. In the pattern of American race relations, minority groups have made better progress when their behavior coincides with the expectations of the majority; the closer the behavior to the American norm, the more peaceful the relations. When particularly difficult periods arose for the Japanese-Americans, such as World War II, that revived racist
stereotypes and Asian minority differences, they emphasized those positive images associated with their cultural heritage that would counteract the negative stereotypes. The "quiet Americans" waited out the conflicts with an image that was both a mask and a reality.

The majority of writers published their fiction and memoirs between the 1950s and 1960s, a period that saw dramatic transition from negative to positive images. Their works illustrate a group attempting to project and solidify the positive images for both the psychic satisfaction of Japanese-Americans and the reinforcement of American readers. By centering their literature on views of stable unified families, with strong mothers, hardworking fathers, and filial and upwardly mobile offspring, they satisfied the positive images set for Asian-American families. This picture of Japanese-American men and women also aids in counteracting the earlier anti-oriental stereotypes of exotic, decorative women and morally degraded men. The women remain feminine and noble if they confine their strength and influence to the home and family. With this image they join the ranks of the ideal figures of American immigrant and pioneer women. Males retain the images of the traditional authoritarian father figures, another image compatible with American definitions of masculinity and fatherhood. The works of Margaret Harada, Shelley Ota, Kazuo Miyamoto, Jon Shirota, James Yoshida, Daniel Inouye and Monica Sone consistently fulfill these requirements. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and Milton Murayama, the writers of the 1970s, have emerged to fulfill Myrdal's prediction that the stage of romanticism gives way to a phase of self-confidence. These writers have broken
the Horatio Alger mold to examine the consequences of image-making and image-perpetuating on a group of people half-conscious of their collusion in doing so. These writers are freer to accept cultural and generational conflict as a normal part of the immigrant and acculturation process.

Younghill Kang, the one Korean-American writer dealing with these themes, is an anomaly. The Koreans, because of their short period of immigration and limited numbers in America, have escaped notice by the majority culture. They have not been victimized by racist campaigns, nor have they been saddled with high expectations. Unfortunately, because they blend in with the Chinese and Japanese in the American mind, they may have alternately suffered or been rewarded according to the prevailing attitude toward those groups. Although Kang himself was a first generation immigrant who lived in a social milieu different from other immigrants, his work fits most of the patterns of the Chinese-American autobiographies. His Korean characters faced the same temptations to link themselves for positive effect, with the idealized Chinese roots of their Korean culture. But unlike the Chinese-American writers, Kang is aware that this remains a survival mechanism, not a character structure.

As a group these Chinese-, Japanese- and Korean-American writers have left a body of work of questionable literary merit, but of significant psychocultural interest. They have contributed to the annals of American ethnic literature a record of the consciousness of the generation in transit between the immigrant fathers and the acculturated children. Themselves part of both worlds, they
have tried to find validity in the genuine heritage of their Asian past and in the new identity as Americans. What intervened the most to disallow an orderly meshing of the best of both, has been the images and stereotypes of Asians in American popular culture that have shifted with political, economic and social conditions in America. To insure maximum acceptance and opportunity, the most logical choice was to project in their literature, a set of positive images that fulfilled the expectations of the majority of Asian-American and American readers.
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