Imai Utako and Her Contemporaries: 
A Survey into Intellectual Allegiance in the Early Feminist 
Movement in Late Meiji Japan, ca. 1900-1910

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Abstract

The current paper explores the life, writings, and the social milieu of Imai Utako 今井歌子 (1877-1968), a friend of the Heiminsha, editor of Nijū Seki no Fujin, and the leader of the first three petitions for women’s right to political association during 1904-8. Frequently neglected or mistakenly conflated with other Heiminsha members, Imai Utako during her active years was, in fact, a complex amalgam of competing ideas of her era: she is a feminist, pro-militarist, statist, sympathetic to socialist causes, yet unapologetic for her defense of Japan aristocracies. Particularly, the current paper not only unearths Imai Utako’s ideas and achievements but also intends to extrapolate her encounters to the milieu of her contemporary late Meiji intellectuals.

By presenting and accounting for her intellectual allegiance in the formative age of modern Japanese intellectual community, the current paper intends to highlight her seemingly-conflicting intellectual allegiance as an example of a norm rather than an exception amongst Japanese intellectuals in last decade of the Meiji era.
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Perhaps Lady Imai [Utako] and Kawamura [Haruko], both inspired by the commencement of the twentieth century, have discerned [the prospect of a full bloom] in the merest chance of [tiny buds of the flowers] and became exhilarated like spirited cherry blossom viewers.”

Fukushima Shirō, “In Reminiscence of the Past Thirty-Five Years”

When Fukushima Shirō so commented on Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko, he must also have been in a mood of self-mockery – he was also one of those who had been inspired by the coming of a new century. On the day of the marriage ceremony of Prince Yoshihito, who would eventually become the Taishō Emperor, the twenty-seven-year-old Fukushima Shirō gave up his job as a teacher and single-handedly established a journalism enterprise for female audiences that would last until 1942. The turn of a century is, of course, a social construct. Yet just like when people come across tiny buds of flowers in early spring, they would optimistically look forward to a tree of full bloom at the prime of the spring, so were many Japanese intellectuals in terms of the prospect of their nation when the new century commenced. However, whereas the cherry-blossom might be pleasantly invariable every year, competing portraiture of the future of the rapidly transforming Japanese state did exist. Like many early twentieth century intellectuals would do,

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¹ Fukushima Shirō 福島四郎, “三十五年の昔語り [In Reminiscence of the Past Thirty-Five Years],” Fujo Shinbun, May 1, 1935, in Fujinkai sanjūgonen 婦人界三十五年 (1935; repr., Tōkyō: Fuji Shuppan 不二出版, 1984), 1-10. All kanji characters used in the current paper appear “as they are” in the original text. As a result, most of kanji are in kyūjitai.

people Fukushima Shirō founded societies and entered the business of journalism and editorship and to take advantage of the surge in the rate of mass literacy and affordable printing machines to disseminate ideas, to seek audience and allies, and to engage in ideological debates. Many organizational publications of this nature had served its time – however brief, like Meiroku Zasshi 明六雑誌, which was only in circulation for two years³ – in shaping the intellectual landscape of since the embryonic stage of the Meiji State. The debate on the status of women ensued as the early Meiji state struggled towards “civilization and enlightenment” (bunmei kaika 文明開化), its intellectuals began to reflect on how to “modernize” its population, women included, to fit into the overreaching political agenda.⁴ Women, who had been peripheral to the political landscape, also began entering the stage as the national educational scheme had promoted the rate of literacy and as more of them left domesticity to satisfy the appetite for labor force of the engine of modernization. First, they came as workers in textile factories, then teachers designed for girl students, and subsequently myriads of position in service in the urban Japan by the turn of the twentieth century. A bountiful literature has been written in this era and on the topic of female intellectuals of the late Meiji, and it is the hope of the current paper to contribute to a niche in the vast current literature; and to do so, Imai Utako (1877-1968) would be my heroine.

Before reflecting on the rationale of this choice, a glance at the current literature would help shed light on the nature of the contribution the current paper intends to

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make. In the light of the post-war left-wing movement in the 1960s, a large number of compilations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century materials of Meiji political movements, as well as biographical and autobiographical works on related historical figures, went published. Importantly, in the 1960s Meiji Bunken Shiryō Kankōkai 明治文献資料刊行會 has gradually gathered, compiled, indexed and almost every single Meiji publication related to popular movements. This tremendous archival research had greatly benefited the study of Meiji ideologies and popular movements. As a result, drawing from this precious repository, some more authoritative work in English literature in this field was written in the early 1980s. Carol Gluck’s *Japan’s Modern Myths* and Sharon L. Sievers’ *Flowers in Salt* are just two examples in Meiji ideologies and specially Meiji embryonic feminist awareness. Almost as a response to the chronologically expansive materials first came into light, the scholarship of this time was also characteristically inclusive and interested in the *zeitgeist* of the era they studied. Then came the late 1970s and the 1980s, when Japanese academic publishers moved on the next stage. On the one hand, having almost exhausted ostentatiously “political” materials, compilations and reprints of the “less serious,” popular publications of Meiji and Taishō were subsequently produced. As far as the current paper is concerned, Some most pertinent examples as far as the current paper is concerned are Ōzorasha’s reprint of the inaugural issues of one hundred and fifty Meiji women’s magazines and Fuji Shuppan’s reproduction of

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5 Meiji Bunken Shiryō Kankōkai was a government-sponsored group of learned scholars who worked between 1950s to 1970s and have published thousands of compilations of Meiji historical archives. For example, their compilations of *Heimin Shinbun*, *Chokugen*, *Sekai Fujin*, *Nikkan Heimin Shinbun* are used in the research of the current paper.

Fukushima Shirō’s *The Thirty-five Years of Women,* on the other hand, scholarly attention had been given to individuals: Arahata Kanson’s two volume memoir and studies on Heiminsha 平民社, Nishikawa Fumiko’s 西川文子 autobiography, and Suzuki Yukō’s 鈴木裕子 compilation of women of the early twentieth century cohort Heiminsha all came out in the same era. Again, we witnessed another corresponding wave of English literature on Meiji and Taishō women and popular publications in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since the current literature came in two consignments, the former of which had more attention to the political climate and the latter more attention to the popular culture, they have well-served the two fields respectively. However, as historical figures sometimes crossed the artificially carved academic disciplinary back and forth, those who stand “in between” – temporally between the 1900s early socialist movements and 1920s Taishō democracy, and ideologically between the fin-de-siècle nationalism and the 1920s individualism – were left behind. And Imai Utako is an intellectual of this scholarly limbo.

To be more specific, Imai Utako, first of all, lacks a clear political allegiance or substantial biographical work whereas historical figures with either one would attract scholarly interest much more easily. For example, among all early twentieth-century female figures in mass publications and political movements, Hiratsuka Raichō 平塚らいてう and Fukuda Hideko 福田英子 have arguably attracted the most

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spotlights in both popular perception and current literature. However, their image has become susceptible to being conflated with the deeds they were associated with as the result of treading the “landmark” events of their life. Hiratsuka’s position is secured by her editorship of Seišō 青鞜, its bold declaration of “In the beginning, woman was the Sun” compounded by the wide range of readership it attracted.\textsuperscript{9} Alternatively, in short, the profoundness of the historical events Hiratsuka Raichō was involved in. Of course, it is natural for historians to become interested in a historical figure due to the person’s doing – and in fact, Imai Utako first caught my eyes, and presumably also the attention of her contemporaries who wrote about her, by her leadership in the 1905 petition for women’s enfranchisement. However, it confines historical figures like Hiratsuka to the walled enclaves demarcated by the ideas they championed, the organization they belonged to, and the events they are known for. Biographical works on historical figures are more likely to only provide more detailed information along the same timeline in a teleological fashion, putting emphasis exclusively on other events in the light of their relationship to the single most important, if not canonized, achievement of the individual in question. Hiroko Tomida’s biographical work on Hiratsuka Raichō, revealingly named as Hiratsuka Raichō and Early Japanese Feminism, is one example of perpetuating an inadequately generalized portrait of a historical figure. In short, the “event-based,” teleological approach runs the risk of conflating historical figures with historical events. Instead of providing nuanced, multi-faceted characterizations of women in the early twentieth century, individuals become expendable pigments for the sake of

a grand picture of a coherent intellectual history. On the contrary, the existence of figures like Imai Utako greatly complicates the picture of finely delineated borders. Suzuki Yūko, briefly commenting in the introductory chapter of her compilation of archives on women of Heiminsha, neatly characterizes Imai Utako as “a feminist and a statist” (joken shugisha 女権主義者; kokken shugisha 国権主義者).10 To add even more complexity to it, Imai Utako’s most monumental political feat, her 1905-7 petitions for women’s right to political association were only carried out with the assistance of members of Heiminsha. Heiminism (hemin shugi 平民主義), which portrays the Japanese state as an establishment of the privileged few against the “commoners,” as the guiding ideal of Heiminsha, in fact, stands diametrically opposed to the idea of statist, which champions a strong Japanese state for the maximum collective utility. This observation might well be dismissed as the cliché of microhistory that individuals always complicate an otherwise neat generalization. However, this paper intends to show that “complexity” is not the exception but in fact the norm in the arguably misnamed “socialist” cohort of Heiminsha. Although historical figures lived one concrete life, scholars in cultural history and political history tend to contextualize them in different ways. This approach is not only unsettling in principle but also prone to erroneous generalization of historical figures’ milieu. In the case of Imai Utako, for the sake of an example, presumably due to her close relationship with the socialist Heiminsha and her criticism of the state-sanctioned model “good wife, wise mother” (ryōsai kenbo 良妻賢母), has not been duly investigated yet, though a more nuanced approach to 1920s and 1930s feminism was proposed by Vera Mackie and the current paper intends to pursue a similar

We shall return to Imai Utako at much greater length later, but what have been said should suffice to demonstrate how the current literature fails to deliver a nuanced characterization of historical figures of the early twentieth century, or at least for the heroine with whom this paper is concerned.

By and large, the metropolises in Japan, both Imai Utako's origin Hakodate and her later whereabouts Tokyo, in the first decade of the twentieth century have achieved functionalist modernity: Constitution, nominal parliamentary democracy, religious tolerance, and capitalist production mode. Moreover, Perry's black ships also brought competing ideologies of liberalism, imperialism, socialism, communism, and editors and writers of the early twentieth century Japan are aware of it. To make sense of the lived experience of heterogeneity, we cannot recourse to the scholastic tradition of any particular ideology in the uproarious early twentieth century, no matter how monolithic it has been championed by the historical figures in their published writings – as ideologies were themselves open to interpretations in the embryonic era in Japan. We need to reconstruct intellectual allegiance by deconstructing their lives and political undertakings. Therefore, especially for figures like Imai Utako who only left behind a handful of attributable writings – presumably because of her conflicted allegiance such that few neatly self-identified social outlet like newspaper and magazines would lend a voice to them, we need to combine the study of their biographical information, writings, as well as the social milieu in order to reconstruct the complexity of the figures in question as well as the spirit of the time.

11 Vera Mackie, Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labor and Activism, 1900-1937, (Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 59.
Historians have belabored two distinct eras of Japanese women’s magazines: the late nineteenth century or late Meiji model of *Jogaku Zasshi* 女学雑誌 (1885–1904)—publications promulgated by the patriarchal intellectuals to employ the body and public presentation of women either in support of or against the early Meiji “westernization” trend; and that of kaleidoscopic genres of mass publications in Taishō period. Women’s magazines, defined as periodicals catering to female audiences exclusively, began as educational publications in the Meiji period in a way not so different from Edo period’s Neo-Confucian texts that intend to help women cultivate feminine virtues and attend domesticity. As the Japanese state muddling along its way to “civilization,” or what Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 proclaimed as *bunmei kaika*, the “modernization” of its population naturally became a national debate. In the public sphere, competing discourses on roles of women in the Meiji state resulted in a flourishing era of *jogaku zasshi*. Roughly before the dawn of the twentieth century, publications dedicated to *jogaku*, literally “women’s education,” were edited and published by agents of administrations of all levels, religious organization, and political groups, all of which invariably headed by men. The nationwide educational system was established in 1872, but until the 1890s, most women were still educated in a different calligraphy system and were relegated as the repository of tradition and virtues in the otherwise rapidly modernizing Meiji state. It was the era when women could only publish under the auspices of men, and apart from private circulations, had no access to textual materials other than the ones approved by the Meiji state.

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14 The lowercase *jogaku zasshi* refers to the genre of “women’s education magazine.”
Women’s magazines that targeted upper-middle class audience emerged around 1890, and scholar like Sarah Frederick has duly noticed this trend by the turn of the century.16 In terms of the histories of modern Japanese women’s magazines, she forcefully argues that the birth of Jogaku Zasshi in 1885 provides “an appropriate starting point.”17 It was more than just fashion and commercial interests that drove publishers since the late 1880s. Although usually mediated by male editors, starting from the final decade of the nineteenth century, discussions of women’s social status did take place among female readers of magazines like Jogaku Zasshi. Thus, the rise of women’s magazines of this nature constitutes the creation of an embryonic public space of upper-middle class women. This trend would continue into the 1890s and 1900s, and the threshold of the “membership” of this virtual public space also devolved as high school, and eventually, college education became more accessible for women.18 Whereas book lending shops (kashi honya 貸本屋) had been popular in Japan since Edo period the latest, news reading was a modern construct not surfaced as a popular habit until Meiji Restoration. In this sense, Japanese women might have been “readers” for long, but to be able to engage discussions was incontrovertibly a new development. However, debates in this form only took place in the form after the screening and mediation of male editors, who always had their own agenda.

Sarah Frederick’s focus is inclined towards the interwar and postwar period temporally, and literature and modernity in terms of subjects, so this line of investigation is not further pursued. This is exactly where this paper kicks in. Since the mid-1890s, a number of prominent women, like Yajima Kajiko 矢嶋楫子, began to take up leadership in journalism and other social organization. Imai Utako was

16 Frederick, 8-10.
17 Ibid.
18 Walthall, 215–35.
one of such middle-class women who emerged by the turn of the twentieth century and gradually coalesced into a political power that made its own discourse, e.g. the interpretation of *ryōsai kenbo*, and promoted its own political agenda, e.g. the right to political association.

Imai Utako was, however, not the first women to fight for the right to political association. As early as 1880, Kusunose Kita 楠瀬喜多 successfully petitioned the Ministry of Internal Affairs to grant prefectures the autonomy to devise their own local election regulations, and thus attained the right to vote at her indigenous Kami-machi.\(^{19}\) However, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reversed its decision of devolvement four years later, and Kusunose Kita's voting right in local election was again suspended. Like Imai Utako's case, Kusunose Kita’s deed was prominent at the time but received rather little scholar attention. In the case of Kusunose, it is noteworthy that her possession of enough estate and her status as the head of her household – and thus sufficient direct national tax paid under her name – was the basis of her claim. Her claim to political right was in-line with the 1890 Meiji Constitution’s estate-based enfranchisement, and the pushback against her claim signified the retrenchment of the “westernization” effort of the Meiji state after encountering intellectual and cultural repercussions by the conservatives. Similarly, Yajima Kajiko had also led a successful petition for women’s right to observe sessions of Imperial Diet in 1896.\(^{20}\) It is important to bear in mind that it would take decades before a breakthrough in women’s political right was made in the 1920s by Shin

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\(^{19}\) Kumon Gō 公文豪, *Tosa no Jiyū Minken Undō Nyūmon* 士佐の自由民権運動入門 (Kochi: Köchi Shinbunsha 高知新聞社, 2007).

Fujinkyō-kai 新婦人協会, so, as the last section of the current paper will suggest, their historical importance was reconceptualized, and the narrative reconstructed subsequently.

For example, Imai Utako’s writings and ideas appeared to be distant for Ichikawa Fusae 市川房枝, who was a life-long activist for women’s political right and who recognized Imai Utako for her achievement, seemed to be rather unfamiliar with Imai Utako’s deeds.

About the time [when they entered Heiminsha], Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko published Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, but the content of which seems to have nothing to do with the liberation of women; the publication discontinued in about a year due to financial difficulties. When the petition for revising Public Security and Police Law was in progress, [Imai Utako] often went to observe the Imperial Diet sessions. Goto Shinpei and Ebara Soroku of Azabu high school were kind enough to give her tickets for access, but the security was unfriendly and would not let her in.21

Therefore, it is also the self-proclaimed objective of this paper to account for the relative oblivion of Imai Utako by those who immediately succeeded her deeds.

Ichikawa Fusae was, however, only twelve years old when Imai Utako submitted her first petition, and it would be about another decade or two before enough women learned to take advantage of their literacy for purposes other than what intended by the state to amass sufficient social and economic means to form de facto “popular” movement. By the ascension of Taishō Emperor in 1912, the increasingly affluent and commercialized Japanese society fostered a more inclusive social atmosphere that facilitated circulation of diverse mass publications intended for various female audiences of different: housewife (shufu 主婦), “modern girl” (moga モガ), girl

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students (*jogakusei* 女学生), etc. It was an era when the Meiji-era national education finally bore fruits extensively, and the production and consumption of periodicals became commonplace and arguably plebeian.

As mentioned earlier, as much as both eras have attracted ample scholar attention, much less has been written about the transition period in between. Because it is a period featured the rise of the militarist Japanese state from without and civil and socialist movements from within, scholarly attentions to women’s magazines and individuals associated with them are usually obscured and relegated to their instrumental value of reflecting national vicissitudes. I would like to give women’s publications and their leadership proper attention by reconstructing the debates that had then taken place. Imai Utako’s contribution was twofold. First, she attempted to expand the interpretation of the state-sanctioned *ryōsai kenbo* by reconciling the tension between women’s public activities and women’s household duty. Second, she initiated and led three, albeit unfruitful, petitions for women’s right to association. *Nijū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人* (1904–5?), literally “Women of the Twentieth Century,” an organizational publication under her editorship, will be my vehicle of such reconstruction.

To conclude, the ambition of the current paper is thus threefold: 1) to save Imai Utako from historical oblivion by identifying and amalgamating sporadic information about her in different chronicles, biographies, and other publications so as to reanimate her; and 2) to contextualize the biographical information and to account for her ideas and arguments, and 3) to account for the relatively little attention she received in the current literature on late Meiji ideologies and the

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22 Frederick, 8-10. As Sarah Frederick points out, theses metonymic genre is not only descriptive but also normative – as the readers would be expected to meet the characterisation of a certain “type” as prescribed by the editors.
struggle for women’s political right in the early twentieth century. Among the three questions postulated, the first one requires extensive archival research; the second is poised to answer a historical question; and the third one is essentially a historiographical survey. Equally important as accounting for the absence of Imai Utako in the current literature, the focus on Imai Utako and her personal activities during the 1904-8 petitions – some of which are to be termed for convenience sake as “Imai Utako’s” – does not imply a decidedly romantic conceit of historical agency: that the petitions in question are Imai Utako’s personal accomplishment. The current paper hopes to complement the established scholarship on Japanese women’s struggle for political rights, social recognitions, and economic well-beings, and to establish a historical narrative vested in “key individuals” goes against the intention of the current paper. As the nature of a biographical investigation inevitably spotlights Imai Utako more than all her contemporaries, it might be helpful to stress that historical narratives – or any narratives, for that matter – are inevitably selective. It is the hope of the current paper to shed some light on the complex intellectual allegiance of Japanese activists of the late Meiji. In this sense, Imai Utako is not meant to be perceived as an exception of her time. By situating her ideas, especially those seemingly contradictory ones, writings, and actions into the late Meiji milieu, we would be able to reconstruct the competing narratives of the time and how intellectuals were engulfed by them.
The Early Life of Imai Utako

The social and political relevance of Imai Utako’s life and ideas to her contemporary Meiji intellectuals is the raison d’être that underpins the adequacy of the current paper in the established scholarship. As no complete biographical information of Imai Utako has come into the light so far, we shall begin with an investigation into her life in order to contextualize her ideas and account for her political ventures in later sections.

Imai Utako has been mentioned and her leadership in the unfruitful 1904-8 petitions for the revision of the Article Five of Public Security and Police Law (Chian Keisatsuho 治安警察法) duly acknowledged in a number of secondary literature on late Meiji period civil right movements. Her life and oeuvre, however, have received conspicuously much less scholarly attention and hence remain a field rarely explored. Two prima facie factors underpinning such curious gap of attention are 1) the abortive nature of her campaign in political movements and 2) the lack of substantial autobiographical materials. She did not seem to have participated in further political movements, and her last attributable article appears in the last extant issue of Nijü Seiki no Fujin datable to December 1905 whereas she continued to live on to the year of 1968.23 In contrast, three of the most well studied early twentieth-century Japanese suffragists, Fukuda Hideko, Hiratsuka Raichō, and Ichikawa Fusae were all prolific, enduring and vocal critics, and afforded the posterity with abundant autobiographical materials. We know for sure that Imai Utako was a chief contributor to Nikkan Heimin Shinbun 日刊平民新聞 (January –

April 1907), and she might have also contributed to its predecessor *Chokugen* 直言 (February – September 1905) and *Shukan Heimin Shinbun* 週刊平民新聞 (1903-5). However, as many articles are not attributed, none of them can be identified as Imai Utako’s work, making *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* the most credible and important source of studying her idea. The current paper intends to demonstrate that as a pioneering figure of women’s political right movement in Japan, the contribution of Imai Utako to women’s political right was just as prominent as her better-studied predecessors and successors. Therefore, to begin with, the current section will reconstruct her life, with emphasis on her *tours de force* of 1904-1905: when she took up the editorship of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* and championed the aforementioned petition amidst the Russo-Japanese war.

The twofold materials to be used to trace the life of Imai Utako are her own argumentative writings and the related accounts of her contemporaries. The first of which consists of her leaders and articles in six extant issues of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*, dated from February 1st, right before the outbreak of Russo-Japanese War, to October 1st, 1904. The second of which are her occurrence in local news, chronicles, publications, a transcribed police investigation record on her activities in the wake of the 1908 Red Flag Incident (*sekki jiken* 赤旗事件), and a 1966 interview of Imai Utako by Ichikawa Fusae, who herself rose as a prominent suffragist twelve years

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25 As *Shukan Heimin Shinbun* had more organisational overlap with Imai Utako and thus a more important source. Unless specified, all following *Heimin Shinbun* refers to *Shukan Heimin Shinbun*.
26 Orii Miyako 折井美耶子, and Shinjuku Joseishi Kenkyūkai 新宿女性史研究会, *Shinjuku Rekishi ni Ikita Kosei Kyakumin* 新宿歴史に生きた女性100人 (Tōkyō: ドメス出版 Domesu Shuppan, 2005), 32-3. A joint scheme with Endō Kiyoko to revive *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* was taken out in 1906, but it turned out either abortive or short-lived as no issues seemed to have survived.
after Imai Utako’s inconclusive petition. The present paper uses photoduplication of Imai Utako’s articles in *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* in the archive of the Meiji News and Magazine Collection at the Library Affiliated with the University of Tokyo Law School. Ichikawa Fusae’s interview with Imai Utako is drawn from Suzuki Yūko’s 1986 compilation of materials on the women of Heiminsha, a socialist cohort with which Imai Utako was affiliated between 1904-1907. Insofar as the present paper would like to be as precise as possible about Imai Utako’s upbringing and her personal life, some educated guesses are necessitated by the scarcity of biographical record.

Imai Utako was born in 1877 (Meiji 10) and was raised by a family that ran a Buddhist temple (*otera no musume* お寺の娘) in Niigata Prefecture, roughly halfway through between Hokkaido’s burgeoning port city Hakodate and Tokyo, both of which were early entrepôts of foreign cargoes and ideas. Imai Utako did not marry someone and inherit the temple business as what a “daughter of Buddhist temple” would be expected to do, and instead, she eventually went to Tokyo for school and college education. Since Imai Utako was the initiator and a founding member of Women’s Hokkaido Association (*Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai* 北海道婦人同志会), the membership of which is restricted to those hailing from Hokkaido region, either her family or herself should be related to Hokkaido region. Circumstantial evidence suggests that her lineage is presumably of Hakodate, a city forced to open as the one

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28 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.

29 Ibid.

30 “北海道婦人同志會々員募集[Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai Daiin Boshū],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.
of the earliest harbors designated for foreign trade in 1859, after Perry’s visit: all congratulatory notes in the inaugural issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* hail from Hakodate. Regardless, Imai Utako seemed to have spent her childhood and school year elsewhere. She attended a school designated for girls at Tsukiji before she matriculated at Japan’s Women University (*nihon joshi daigaku* 日本女子大学) at Mejiro, Tokyo. She had quit before she completed her second year of study there due to poor health condition.³¹ The milieu of Imai Utako’s upbringing was remarkably cosmopolitan in the light of the radical westernization - campaign in early Meiji.

Naruse Jinzō 成瀬仁蔵, the Christian founder of Japan’s Women University, launched his first female educational enterprise in Niigata Prefecture in 1887, when Imai Utako just entered school age. It is not known if Imai Utako had become one of its students or one of its thirteen graduates before the school discontinued in 1893.³² Nevertheless, Hakodate, Niigata, and Tsukiji – the three places Imai Utako had been strongly attached to, physically or educationally in her formative years – were among the earliest harbors open to foreign trade and residence (*gaikogu kyoryūchi* 外国人居留地) since the May 1859 ratification of the U.S. – Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce.³³ In other words, the trajectory of Imai Utako’s early life coincides with loci of the Meiji state’s exposure to foreign influence. Every extant issue of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* contains one or two articles in English or Chinese without translation, and reference to women of Euramerica are also ubiquitous. It appears that Imai Utako’s

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³¹ Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
upbringing corroborates with the familiarity with foreign language and culture she demonstrated as the editor of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* in her late twentieth.

Imai Utako was exceptionally well educated among her peer women. According to one 1888 compilation of a survey on the status quo of women’s education in Japan, Imai Utako’s female peers of her age receiving some kinds of education in schools across Japan might have exceeded a million, near fifty thousand of whom had completed their respective curriculum by 1884. Given the presence of a considerable number of literate women, Imai Utako has presumably received the best possible education available for women in Japan of her time. Tsukiji was renowned for its numerous educational institutions, both Christian mission schools and indigenous ones, and Ichikawa Fusae remarks in the interview that Imai Utako went to a “girl’s school in Tsukiji (*Tsukiji no jogakkō* 築地の女学校). Although it is not immediately clear if she had enrolled in one of Tsukiji’s mission schools, other private schools for girls in the area were prohibitively expensive and only affordable by wealthy families even with the help of government scholarship. Such ambiguous reference is probably the result of Imai Utako’s senior age (eighty-eight years old) at the time of her interview with Ichikawa Fusae and her deafness that might have impaired communications:

Imai Utako was born in Meiji 10 [1877] and is now eighty-eight years old, living with her disciple in sadō (tea ceremony) who has been adopted as a daughter. Her complete deafness notwithstanding, she gets up at four in the morning and cleans house, apparently in good health condition ... Imai possesses no interest in women suffragist movement after her [petitions], nor in social political status quo of the day. If to borrow her relative Itō’s words, [Imai Utako] hates politics, and now hates socialism as well.

35 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
36 Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan*, 45-46
37 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
One plausible candidate of the Imai Ukato’s pre-college alma mater is Joshi Gakuin 女子学院, a name apparently most easily confused with the generic reference to girl’s school due to the lack of a preceding proper noun. By 1890, Joshi Gakuin was relocated to Chū-rokuban machi in Kōjimachi District – about twenty kilometers north-western-ward from its founding site in Tsukiji and only two kilometers from Imai Utako’s residence. The relocation took place when Imai Utako was thirteen years old and presumably have just started school age. Another circumstantial evidence of Imai Utako’s affiliation with Joshi Gakuin is that Sakura Chika 櫻井ちか, the founder of Sakurai Jogakkō 櫻井女學校 – one of the predecessors of Joshi Gakuin – was the first invited speaker at formal meetings of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai on June 21st, 1903. She would be again invited on July 3rd, 1904 to give another speech on the “noble cause” of women. Imai Utako seemed to be familiar with other instructors at Joshi Gakuin, some of whom had afforded help with Nijyū Seiki no Fujin. For example, the frontispiece (kuchi-e 口絵) was originally a commission from Ōno Shōnan 大野湘蘭, an instructor of art at Joshi Gakuin. Towards the end of the first issue of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, the editor remarks:

Due to the lack of experience and the short time of preparation, there was a lot of difficulties [in publishing this magazine], and there might be inappropriate

38 For instance, Joshi Gakuin was merged from Shin’ei Jogakkō 新栄女学校 (1878) and Sakurai Jogakkō 櫻井女学校 (1890), both of whose names include a proper noun and thus hard to be confused with the generic reference jogakkō.
41 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “北海道婦人同志会記事 [Record on Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, August 7, 1904.
42 Seiki Kuroda 黒田淸輝, Kuroda Seiki Nikki 黒田淸輝日記, vol. 3 (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan 中央公論美術出版, 2004), 714. The profession of Ōno Shōnan is suggested by his diary entry on December 2nd, Meiji 36 [1903].
settings in our typesetting; but [we ask] our readers to look forward to Ōno Shōnan’s cover artwork in our next issue.43

This promise, however, did not materialize. The cover artwork was indeed slightly altered since the second issue, but there was also an apology for “not being able to secure Ōno Shōnan’s cover artwork” in the second issue.44 The frontispiece did change, however, presumably because of the map of Eurasia accidentally places the expansive Russia in the center whereas Japan appears only to be peripheral (See Figure 1) – a dubious design in the wake of the outbreak of Russo-Japanese War after the first issue went public. Since the second issue, motifs become more abstract and cosmopolitan, e.g. the shadow of domes and temples on the horizon and the

43 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “くさぐさ [Miscellaneous],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, February 1, 1904.
44 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “編集だより [From the Editor],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, March 1, 1904.
unintelligible map carrying by the women (See Figure 2). In addition, the term “twentieth century” is *ipso facto* a western term in a society using era names (年号) of the Emperor for chronicles. Importantly, the woman carrying the map is dressed in *kimono* – a strong suggestion of the “Japanese” identity at the core of this temporally and spatially cosmopolitan setting of the frontispiece.

The missionary background of Joshi Gakuin seemed to have fostered Imai Utako’s sympathy for the role of religion in women’s self-cultivation. A 1906 essay of her on *Shin Jidai* is titled “The Necessity of Religious Influence [in Education].” In addition, a few Buddhist priests were among the invited speakers to Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai. Joshi Gakuin was of the heritage of two American Presbyterian mission schools for female students at Tsukiji and was also the alma mater of Fukuda Hideko. Education at Joshi Gakuin, or at any other girls’ school at the culturally kaleidoscopic Tsukiji, had presumably cultivated Imai Utako’s proficiency in English and her international outlook, both of which were evident in her editorship of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*. After her school years in this “a girls’ school at Tsukiji,” Imai Utako went on to attend the recently (1901) established Japan Women’s University in Mejiro District. Along with Kawamura Haruko, who later became Imai Utako’s most intimate supporter for both *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* and her 1905 petition, she was introduced to join Heiminsha by Katō Tokijirō 加藤時次郎, a socialist physician who

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45 The original cover is in bright colors, but as all but the first issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* used by the current paper are in black and white photoduplication, the figure here is also in black and white.
47 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “編輯だより [From the Editor],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* 二十世紀の婦人, August 1, 1904.
48 Reitaku Daigaku, *The Table of Contents for the Magazine ‘Shin Jidai’*. 
was the principal of The Commoners’ Hospital (Heimin Byōin 平民病院) where Imai Utako appeared to be a frequent patient. The early twentieth century had become a metropolis of Asia. Imai Utako had helped establish the Oriental Students Association (i.e. for students of Indian and Burma origins) before the premature termination of her study at Japan Women’s University. The exact year or Imai Utako’s matriculation at Japan’s Women’s University is unclear, but since the inaugural class of Japan’s Women University matriculated in 1901, and Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai was founded in October 1902, and by 1904 Imai Utako was no longer at Mejiro. The foundation of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai should coincide with Imai Utako’s college life.

A little more context may help us appreciate the rare opportunity to attend higher education Imai Utako had been so fortunate to seize. As part of Meiji state’s mission to achieve “civilization and enlightenment,” adolescents of both sexes were required to complete some level of education; however, governmental requirements were usually dismissed or circumvented by families who did not understand the value of education, especially that of girls. By the year 1882, roughly the same time Imai Utako herself would soon attend school, the school attendance rate for girls of appropriate age was under twenty percent. One concern was to have girls removed from household and to be educated by male teachers, and Meiji state responded by creating educational institutions at various levels to cultivate female teachers. The year 1900 was an *annus mirabilis* for higher education for women when the Bryn

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49 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
50 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
Mawr College educated Tsuda Umeko 津田梅子 opened Women’s English College 女子英学塾, Yoshioka Yayoi 吉岡彌生 founded Tokyo Women’s Medical School 東京女子医科大学, Yokoi Tamako 橫井玉子 created Joshibi University of Art and Design 女子美術大学, and the aforementioned Naruse Jinzō inaugurated Japan Women’s University, all in Tokyo. Curiously, it was also earlier in 1900 when women’s membership with political parties and the right to political association were legally suspended. Prior to the establishment of these educational institutions, a handful of women received higher education abroad by Christian missions notwithstanding, Japanese educational establishment for women almost exclusively catered for the demand for teachers for girl students – a measure only to entrench the gender segregation in education. Direct evidence of her educations is her extant writings in and editorial contributions to Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, among which are leaders and editorials of highly flowery style, shichiigon-zekku 七言絶句 poems composed in Chinese, and articles in English. The florescence of higher education for women was yet to come, but Imai Utako was among the first-generation Japanese women who feasted on its early harvest.

It is unclear how Imai Utako’s family managed to fund her education, which is exceptional of her era and proven fruitful as evident by her later editorship; nor it is known what led Imai Utako to leave Niigata for Tokyo. Imai Utako might have

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53 Hara Kimi, 98; Mara Patessio, 49
remained in Tokyo ever since. Both records of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai and the 1908
government survey suggest that she lived at the 5-chome of Iidamachi at Kōjimachi
District (See Figure 3), and Ichikawa Fusae’s 1966 visit to Imai Utako took place at
her home in Ōmori, Tokyo. Her early residence at Iidamachi located in the area
traditionally reserved for “bannerman” (hatamoto 旗本), or samurais in direct

![Figure 3 Map of Kōjimachi in 1900](image)

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62: Shuchin-Tokyo-shi-jugoku-bunkatsu-
z?sort=Pub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No# (accessed April 17, 2017). Imai
Utako’s residence locates at the top of the map. She lives to the north of the Imperial
Residence (the center of the map), and where Foreign Embassies, Japanese
governmental departments, and where kazoku 華族 lives (the right half of the map).
56 Suzuki, “『明治四十一年八月社会党に関する調査』抄 [Copy of August Meiji 41
Investigation into Those Related to Socialist Party],” 328.
57 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269; granted that there
are multiple places in Japan named Ōmori, Ichikawa was serving at the House of
Councilors representing Tokyo when the interview took place. Therefore, it should be
safe to assume that by “visiting [Imai’s] house at Ōmori” 大森のお宅にお訪ねした
without further specification, Ichikawa refers to the district of Ōmori in Tokyo.
service to the shōgun and shōgun’s direct retainers (gokenin 御家人) in Edo period, the inner-most circle around the erstwhile shōgun and then imperial residence. The neighborhood of residence is neither exceptionally illustrious nor gravely impoverished per se to facilitate a conclusive remarks on her socioeconomic status; but it is once mentioned that Imai’s house was capacious enough to hold “more than thirty” members who were present for the third gathering of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai on September 12th, Meiji 35 [1902].

Hitherto the publication of Nijyū Seki no Fujin in early 1904, we know with confidence that Imai Utako enjoyed a variety of educational opportunities rarely afforded by contemporaneous women and resided in a decent and presumably spacious house in the Kōjimachi District of Tokyo. How much she actually took the advantage of the educational resource she enjoyed was, of course, not known; but given that she was the first generation of Japanese women who could receive college education, suffice it to say that Imai Utako had been better educated than most of her peers in Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai and Heiminsha.

Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai was formally launched on November 22nd, 1902 at the residence of Imai Utako with twenty-six founding members. Imai Utako was the apparent initiator and de facto organizer, as her home address is used as both the headquarter of the association as well as the publisher of its affiliated Nijyū Seiki no Fujin. However, the president and the vice president of the association was listed as Matsumae Fujiko 松前藤子, explicitly marked as the wife of a shishaku 子爵, and Katō Yasuko 加藤安子, the wife of Katō Masanosuke 加藤政之助, an erstwhile

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59 Ibid.
60 Shishaku was the fourth level of hereditary aristocracy, or kazoku 華族, awarded to former daimyōs and those who made exceptional contributions in Meiji Restoration. It was conferred to the Matsumae family of Ezo by the 1884 Kazoku-rei 華族令.
member of the House of Representatives, founder of *Hokkaido Shinbun* 北海道新聞, and landlord at Imakanechō. Imai Utako’s title appears to be the chief organizer (*shushō sha* 主唱者). It was a common practice to invite aristocrats or celebrities to head these hometown-based association, and both the nominal presidential members were likely not involved in the operation of this association. Hometown-based associations, often of prefecture or county level, of this nature were ubiquitous in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Tokyo. Hokkaido was an exception. Tokyo-based Hokkaido migrants were organized on a regional level as opposed to on a county level, and it was probably due to its late integration into Japan, its hitherto relative seclusion, and its small number of Japanese population. From year 1875 to 1903, there was about a ten million increase in Japanese population, and as the modernization of the Meiji Japan proceeded rapidly, internal migration to the Tokyo-Osaka metropolitan area was prominent. Such pattern is common among industrializing societies, yet the 1890s internal migration in Japan was different in the sense that immigrants to Tokyo did not predominantly consist of impoverished peasants seeking for urban employment. James White’s study on Japan’s internal migration suggests that interurban, as opposed to rural-to-urban, immigrants were prevalent in the 1890s. In addition to the fact that the Japanese textile industry was not concentrated in urban areas, what is behind such demographical anomaly is arguably Edo period’s Alternative Attendance (*sankin-kōtai* 参勤交代) policy, which required *daimyōs* 大名 and their courts to travel and

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61 Imai, “北海道婦人同志会記事 [Record on Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai].”
62 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
reside in Edo annually or every other year. As a result, culturally, interregional migration was not a novel idea for daimyos and their immediate servant – who would become the upper echelon of Meiji society. More importantly, the Tokugawa Japan became more closely connected and the infrastructure built to facilitate these frequent travels also alleviated the travails of commerce. The urbanization process, i.e. rural-urban migration, ensued, and so increased the demographic fluidity. In other words, Japanese aristocrats and their courts had been *peripatetic* for more than two centuries before Meiji Restoration. It is probably such interurban migration that *helped* Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai recruit more than thirty female members who were willing to pay the ten *sen* (i.e. one-tenth of *yen* [円]) monthly fee and were well-versed in literature enough to read *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*, an idiosyncratic magazine, the discussion of the nature of which we will soon return to.

Imai Utako did not appear to have personally lived in Hokkaido as she was born in Niigata and soon moved to Tokyo for education, so her relationship was presumably ancestral or genealogical. There is no direct evidence for Imai Utako’s personal relationship with Hokkaido that enables her to be the chief organizer of a hometown-based organization of it. However, it is not required for her to be born in Hokkaido. The seventh clause of the Regulations of *Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai* reads:

> To become a full member [of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai], one must be of Hokkaido origin. However, women from other prefectures or counties but concur with this association’s purpose are also entitled to obtain full membership.\(^{66}\)

Although the regulation seems to be very flexible, all founding members of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai were of Hokkaido origin, and by March 1904 – the last time the full list of memberships was published in extant issues – there were 74 members of Hokkaido origin, 20 of Tokyo origin, and one abroad in the United

\(^{66}\) Imai, “北海道婦人同志会記事 [Record on Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai].”
The Niigata’s Imai family was one of the most successful pioneering immigrants in the light of Japanese government’s attempt to internalize southern Ezochi 蝦夷地 to become the “Japanese land” Hokkaido. Such effort was initiated in 1869, the second year since the Meiji Restoration, when the administration of Hokkaido was designated by the Meiji government following the rebellion of the remnant shogunate force which was crashed in the Battle of Hakodate (Hakodate Sensō 箱館戦争), as a part of the Boshin War of the same year. Immigration and business investment were thus encouraged to “nipponise” the land. Imai Tōshichi 今井藤七 (1850-1925), was born in Sanjō of Niigata Prefecture and moved to Hokkaido in the light of family misfortunes when he was twenty. He soon became an entrepreneur who founded the predecessor of Hokkaido Marui-Imai 丸井今井 department stores in 1872, and subsequent Imai family successors would sustain its success and expanded the business to all seven major cities in Hokkaido. Imai family in Sanjō was thus renowned for business success in Hokkaido. Note that there was another Imai family in the neighboring Nishikanbara County, and it was known for its large land holding and later got involved in financial industry, but no evidence suggests its connection with Hokkaido, nor do we know if these two Imai families are in anyway related. As

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67 Imai Utako 今井歌子, *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* 二十世紀の婦人, July 1, 1904.
female decedents are not recorded, Imai Utako’s name is, of course, not found in either of these two families’ genealogy books. All we know for sure is that Imai Utako was “a daughter of a [Buddhist] temple,” and she would later become a fervent advocate of women’s involvement in “productive business,” like Imai Tōshichi’s department store. The prominent status of Imai Tōshichi as a successful entrepreneur also corroborates with Imai Utako’s leadership in the association. Therefore, our best guess for Imai Utako’s relationship with Hokkaido is through Imai Tōshichi, but as none of Imai Tōshichi’s immediate siblings or children appeared to be affiliated with any Buddhist temples, Imai Utako was almost certainly only a peripheral member of the prosperous Imai family.

The attachment to Hokkaido region is a key to comprehending Imai Utako and the association’s pro-military campaign during the subsequent Russo-Japanese War. Whereas it is true that every Japanese has something, ideologically, materially, or personally, to win or lose in this war, people in Hokkaido arguably have, or at least, so they perceive, the most at stake. The entire development plan of Hokkaido region was arguably devised with the war with Russia in mind. The territorial disputes between Russia and Japan preceded the war by decades. And Japan was wary of the encroaching Russian Empire arguably since the latter demanded a staggering six-hundred-thousand square kilometers’ territorial concession, thrice as large as Great Britain, from Qing China in the Treaty of Aigun by 1858. In 1875, the Meiji government signed the Treaty of Saint Petersburg (Chishima-Karafuto Jōyaku 千島

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72 Ibid.
with Russia, ceding Southern Sakhalin peninsula in exchange for the Russian-controlled Kuril Islands. Whereas Japan obtained the entire Kuril Islands, the loss of Sakhalin peninsula exposed the vulnerability of Ezo to a Russian invasion, which was literally just a strait away.\(^75\) It was in the light of the looming threat from Russia that Tokugawa shogunate began its effort to “internalize” Ezo and fortify the region demographically, a policy inherited by the Restored government of Meiji. The competition soon escalated. After the conclusion of Russo-Turkish War in 1878, the Russian Empire devised massive development plans for its Siberian territory, including the trans-Siberian railway which would enormously increase its power projection and colonial enterprise in the Far East. The foundation of the railway was laid in Vladivostok, the recently conquered harbor from China, on May 31\(^{st}\), 1891, and the first line from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk was completed in 1897.\(^76\) Meanwhile, the Meiji government had been vigilant: it promoted the original Kaitakushi 開拓使 administration to respective prefectures and counties in 1881 and began soliciting for the privilege to build railways on Korea Peninsula to pre-empt the strategic transportation advantage falling into Russian hands.\(^77\) For Japanese settlers in Hokkaido, the presence of Russian military might in Hokkaido was also tangible: vessels of Russian Far East Fleet would routinely stay in the harbor of Hakodate for the winter season until 1895.\(^78\) In other words, Meiji government’s Hokkaido policy was an integral part of its Russian policy, the one that was fully aware of the looming war. Hokkaido was deemed the “unexploited treasure” of the nation, and enormous effort was exerted to push, not unusually by force, the native

\(^75\) Ibid.
\(^77\) Tsuchiya, Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi, vol. 16., 195.
Ainu people to adopt Japanese name and customs – which was regarded as an act of national service; the construction of railways to strengthen Hokkaido’s tie with Japanese proper also began in the 1890s. The concerns with Russian invasion would only be relieved by the end of the Russo-Japanese War when Japan once gain acquired Southern Sakhalin as a buffer zone in the Treaty of Portsmouth. Japan’s colonization and internalization of Ezo region since the end of Tokugawa Shogunate could be thus understood as a competing enterprise against Russia, and the Russo-Japanese War was the culmination of which. So those who were ardent supporters, and indeed immigrants themselves, of the Hokkaido development scheme could be reasonably expected to defend the military campaign – which was essentially a continuation of their cause and enterprise in Hokkaido. In conclusion, the ethos among the immigrants to Hokkaido region in the light of the Meiji government’s painstakingly crafted war preparation plan was thus a definitively patriotic one. Therefore, to champion pacifism against the Russo-Japanese War, for Imai Utako and her contemporary Hokkaido women, would be self-defeating. Even if Imai Utako herself might have harbor some reservation for Japan’s expansionism, as the chief organizer and de facto publisher, she would not be able to articulate her doubts of the Russo-Japanese War in the organization’s publication, i.e. *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*. If judging only from her writings and her petitions, Imai Utako’s attachment to Hokkaido might appear tenuous due to her lack of attention and relative agenda. However, the late nineteenth century was also when the cultural conservative’s pushback against the early Meiji’s radical westernization measures was in full swing. It is important to bear in mind that in *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*, Imai Utako was not only

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writing on behalf of but also addressing a cohort of Hokkaido women, so the impact of Imai Utako’s “Hokkaido origin” on her ideas and writings was implicit. Although Imai Utako never referred to the problem of Hokkaido directly, she was apparently under the influence of the patriotic and nationalistic zeitgeist of the late Meiji.

*Nijū Seiki no Fujin* was first published on February 1st, 1904, as the organizational publication of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai. Two more immediate observations of the inaugural issues would reveal the exclusive nature of this publication: 1) articles are presented without furigana, the reading aid of syllabic characters that was prevalent in other contemporary publications for general audiences of both gender; and, 2) the lack of conspicuous pictorial and photographic illustrations accompanying textual content, which is another feature of mass publications of the early twentieth-century Japan. 3) advertisements are predominantly comprised of literature publication, educational institutions, law firms service, high-end cosmetics, etc. as opposed to the quotidian consumptions frequent on other contemporaneous magazines intended for female audiences like the weekly *Jogaku zasshi*. As mentioned above, both Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai and *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* were both Imai Utako’s initiative, and she assumed the editorship from the first day until the demise of the magazine sometime in 1905 due to financial unsustainability. The last survived issue of which is dated by October 1904; and Miki Hiroko 三鬼浩子 identifies a reference to its January 1905 issue in a contemporaneous magazine. The exact termination date is unknown, nor it is clear if how much Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai had outlived, if at all, as an organization its short-lived publication.

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80 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
The publication of Nijū Seiki no Fujin attracted little posthumous attention but was arguably an important women’s magazine at the time of its circulation: its publication was recorded in most contemporary chronicles dedicated to women’s participation in journalism. For example, in the appendix chronicle of The Thirty-five Years of the Sphere of Women (Fujinkai Sanjūgōnen 婦人界三十五年) by Fukushima Shirō, Imai Utako’s magazine was well documented, and her attendance at a 1905 conference of leaders of major women’s magazines was duly noted. Fukushima Shirō’s chronicle is a reliable source as himself had founded the magazine Fujo Shinbun 婦女新聞 (1900-42). In The Thirty-five Years of the Sphere of Women, Fukushima Shirō wrote to document and reflect upon major developments concerning women’s education, political right, and professions during 1900-35 with the written endorsement by Irie Tamemori 入江為守, the former head of Imperial Household Agency responsible for affairs concerning the Teimei Empress Dowager. Fukushima is also endorsed by recent scholars as an informed and relevant figure in the study of women’s status in the early twentieth century. Mara Patessio also lamented on the undue negligence of Fujo Shinbun in the current literature and pointed out that Fujo Shinbun functioned like a platform for readers to get frequent updates on publications of other women’s magazines and to engage in discussion and criticism of them. The value of Fujo Shinbun is beyond the scope of the current paper, but suffice to say that the attention given to Nijū Seiki no Fujin by Fukushima Shirō clears our concerns of Imai Utako’s magazine being only a peripheral publication.

82 Fukushima, Fujinkai sanjūgōnen, 1094.
83 Ibid.
84 Peter F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G. G. Rowley, eds., The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan (Ann Arbor [Mich.]: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2010), 204-212.
One reason for the obscurity of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* in the current literature is the inaccessibility to the source material. As per Miki Hiroko, the editor of the reprint compilation, only six of all its issues are extant and are preserved in the Law School library at the University of Tokyo.\(^8\) In the current literature, *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* is usually perfunctorily juxtaposed with *Heimin Shinbun* 平民新聞, *Sekai Fujin* 世界婦人, or other socialist publications that appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century.\(^9\) It is regrettable that current literature inappropriately conflates *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* with other socialist mass publications, as it neither intends for a popular audience basis nor for people who would normally sympathize with socialist courses. Vera Mackie seems to be the only scholar who has noted that Imai Utako’s pro-military arguments were at odds with Heiminsha’s anti-war stance, but this line of discrepancy is not pursued further.\(^10\) Indeed, Imai Utako turns out to be a maverick, and this might have precipitated her subsequent exodus from *Heiminsha* and contributed to her disappearance from the discourse of later socialist leaders, who in fact inherited and revived her unfruitful suffragist petition.

*Nijū Seiki no Fujin* directly engages with the complex role of women as the Meiji state was undergoing its own fateful transition. *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* began less than a week before the outbreak of Russo-Japanese War and continued throughout. Militarist expansion accompanied the tide of the official rhetoric of *ryōsai kenbo*, or “good wife, wise mother” narrative. Imai Utako challenges the official rhetoric *ryōsai kenbo* by arguing that careers and the participation in other social roles do not

\(^8\) Examples include Ōyasōichi Bunko’s online index of its collection of the inaugural issues of Meiji magazines. Ōyasōichi Bunko is a private Japanese library dedicated to popular magazine archives.

\(^9\) Both Sievers and Mackie discuss *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* in the capacity of being comparable to publications sympathizing with socialist course due to Imai Utako’s membership with Heiminsha.

interfere with women’s role of domestic “helpmate.” Moreover, her argument is carefully crafted as an urbane woman beseeching her peers to observe a “well-examined life.” On the same page, she denounces the indulgence in material plenitude and serene domesticity as a feudal vestige and implores her fellow Japanese women to concern themselves with more than just the cultivation of personal beauty and virtue. We shall see more explicit arguments of this kind in the second issue – when the Russo-Japanese War broke out – and how Imai Utako renders the war as a platform for suffragists align their political demands with patriotism. Clearly, her criticism of ryōsai kenbo is exclusively concerned with the means to best serve the interest of Japanese state. Her argument is to extend the sphere of women’s activity without abandoning their state-designated roles. Issues that would be subsequently picked up by more typical socialist like Fukuda Hideko, such as the legitimacy of Japan’s imperial expansion, the socio-economic disparity between urban and rural Japan, and gender equality in terms of legal status, were not on Imai Utako’s agenda. This is but just one example of her ideological departure her colleagues in Heiminsha. It is not surprising that debates about women’s role among women themselves would first take place among those of privileged social status, which frequently foster better education, cosmopolitan outlook, and an establishmentarian tie with the state.

The audience Imai Utako had in mind when editing and writing for Nijū Seiki no Fujin is a small cohort of well-educated and arguably economically well-off women, a majority of whom were presumably students or young adults. Katō Yasuko’s speech

88「熟慮せる活動」in the Utako Imai’s own words as presented in the leader of the inaugural issue of Nijū Seki no Fujin.
upon her election to the vice president of *Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai* sheds light on the composition of its membership:

Education for women is of vital importance ... Now education for women had been popularized nationwide to the extent we see [it today], Hokkaido follows this trend and sends young girls far away to Tokyo for study. Students [in Tokyo] were originally all men, and the way to educate and guide them is easily mistaken [for that of women], and there are special conditions of women that must be taken care of. Therefore, for the sake of those who left parents’ protection in Hokkaido, my comrades and I established Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai last year.\(^8^9\)

Clearly, as the organizational publication, *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* would share a readership similar to its organizational membership. A ten sen membership fee was required of all formal members of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai, and each member would receive a free monthly copy of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*.\(^9^0\) According to several letters from readers, issues of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* were also available for retails in some bookstores. As subsequent issues include extensive discussions of how women should raise children, get involved in specific business like silkworm raising, how war widows should cope with family bereavement, etc., at least the intended audience is more inclusive than the geographical enclave of Hokkaido students. However, since *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*, like many other magazines, was only in circulation for over a year, its readership might not have expanded considerably from its student cohort. A corroborating observation is found in a 1959 biography for Fukuda Hideko, in which *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* is characterized as a magazine subordinated to an organization “to support girl students from Hokkaido.”\(^9^1\) The reference to female students is explicit in Katō Yasuko’s speech, and the fact that these students’ family could afford

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\(^8^9\) Katō Yasuko 加藤安子, “Speech on August 4\(^{th}\) Meiji 36,” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.

\(^9^0\) “北海道婦人同志會々員募集[Open Application for Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.

to send them to Tokyo for education vindicates their firm economic status. It would be at least another decade before the First World War brought economic prosperity to ordinary urban households, and the “serene domesticity” was by no means a representative portrait of the onerous housework normal Japanese women would have to undertake daily. In addition, Tokyo cosmopolitanism clearly overshadows the hometown-based association’s regional origin. In sharp contrast against the narrow communal scope of its membership, issues and examples invoked are frequently cosmopolitan. One congratulatory article is authored by a Chinese male, who appears to be a law student at the Tokyo Imperial University, and is composed entirely in classical Chinese without accompanying translation. A three-page column is devoted exclusively to the latest news of prominent female figures of foreign countries: Russia, France, India, the United States of America, etc. The supposedly small readership also suggests that whilst compulsory education for women had reached its fourth decade since promulgation, presumably, only women with ease in life could afford an intellectual adventure and international outlook by the eve of Russo-Japanese War. Whereas reference and images to Euromerican women’s lifestyle had been ubiquitous in mass publications since the 1880s, but rarely would the discussions take place in the capacity of women’s role vis-à-vis the state.

Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko, the editor and accountant of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin*, were among the earliest prominent female figures in the 1905 movement for women’s right to political association. An unfruitful petition was staged in the following year of the magazine’s inauguration to demand to abolish the Article Five of the Public Security Law, which prohibits military personnel, police force, clergymen, teachers, and women from participating in political parties and public
demonstrations. As mentioned in preceding paragraphs, current literature frequently takes Imai Utako’s participation in this movement as the evidence for her identity as a “socialist,” or at least her sympathy for socialist movements.

Clearly, the stance she takes in the magazine she edits conflicts with her alleged companionship with most of her companions in Heiminsha. Imai Utako was an ardent supporter of Aikoku Fujinkai, a pro-military national association initiated by Okumura Ioko with the support of women of kazoku origin; and Imai Utako’s endorsement appears before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. The foundation of Nijū Seiki no Fujin demonstrates Imai Utako’s seemingly self-contradictory allegiance. Nevertheless, we know that as much “jingoist” as Imai Utako might appear to be, she will soon be remembered as a pioneer of the suffragist movement. Miki Kiroko remarks in her explanatory notes for Nijū Seki no Fujin that “Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko ... are renown for leading the petition to revise the Article Five of Policy Safety Regulations, Japan’s first suffragist movement.” In a 1935 chronicle of landmark events of Japanese women’s participation in political movements, Fukushima Shirō mentioned Imai Utako by name and regarded the same petition as the kōshi, the arrow loosed off to signify the beginning of a battle, of women’s participation in political movements. Nijū Seiki no Fujin was

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92 The Article Five of Public Security and Police Law bans women’s participation in politics was not abolished until 1922 after unremitting efforts of subsequent activists, including Imai Utako’s contemporaneous Heiminsha comrade Fukuda Hideko, Imai Utako’s 1966 interviewer Ichikawa Fusae, Hiratsuka Raichō etc.
93 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “生ける婦人 [The Living Women],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.
also a pioneer regarding women’s magazine. It was, of course, not the first
publication with an extensive discussion, reflection, and sometimes criticism of the
state-sanctioned ryōsai kenbo model of women – the 1885 Jogaku Zasshi, the 1900
Fujo Shinbun, and the 1903 Heimin Shinbun all preceded it chronologically.
However, articles contributed by women notwithstanding, the editorship of the
predecessors of Nijū Seiki no Fujin was all assumed by men. Written after the
attendance at the Association for Journalists at Women’s Magazines, one reporter
from Nijū Seiki no Fujin lamented:

At four in the afternoon on the twenty-fourth day of the past month, [I] attended
the Association for Journalists at Women’s Magazines which was held in the
teaching building of Japan Arts School for Women. As if it was to make a day of
bad weather even worse, the body of attendees was regrettably small, and the
number of women present was especially disappointing.96

To corroborate with her disappointment, an exhaustive list of attendees of
another meeting in March 1905 of the same association is as follows:

The meeting of the Association of Journalists at Women’s Magazines was at
Tsunohazu Jūnisha, and those who attended are Shimizu Mizuhiro (Mirror of
Women), Kira Yoshinori (same), Tabei Kotaro (Friends of Women), Nagisan
Nishimura (Family Magazine), Sakai Toshihiko (same), Kobayashi Shoichi and
his wife (same), Yamada Yahiko (Ladies Newsletter), Teshima Masuo (Patriotic
Women), Yamazawa Toshio (others), Niōhō Tsuji (same), Imai Utako (Women
of the Twentieth Century), Kawamura Haruko (same), Funahashi Mizuya (Buddhist
lady), Shiichi Shunichi (Everyday News), Matsumoto Junko (Women
Communications), Nakao Goro (The People), Uchida Shigeru (same), Fukuda
Hideko (Heimin Shinbun), the wife of Kōtoku Denjiro (same) Fukushima Shirō
(Women’s News), Shimonaka Yasaburō (same).97

Alas, out of twenty-two participants, only Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko
were women who independently headed a magazine with an all-female
organizational basis. Fukuda Hideko’s Heimin Shinbun was affiliated with
Heiminsha, and other women present were all spouse of chief editors. The same level
of organizational and journalist independence would remain unsurpassed until

96 Imai, “くさぐさ [Miscellaneous].”
97 Katō, “Speech on August 4th Meiji 36.”
Hiratsuka Raichō founded Seitō in 1911. In the subsequent section, we will delve into Imai Utako’s six extant leaders and try to account for the perceived roles and objectives of women in the eyes of Imai Utako and her associates. The case of Imai Utako shall serve us well because it unveils the complexity of an individual’s identity and the competing forces in shaping it.
Imai Utako’s Writings and Allegiance

Japanese intellectuals of the Late Meiji endured an era in which competing political theories and discourses flourished. Whereas doctrines are, of course, normative, it was not at all uncommon for late Meiji intellectuals to switch back and forth between certain “-isms,” or simply to maintain multiple, sometimes seemingly contradictory allegiances. This is particularly the case for parliamentarian political activists, whose means of political undertakings usually pushed them to look for allies instead of making enemies. As Vera Mackie noticed, as late as the 1920s and 1930s, socialist women’s activism and liberal feminism, what in retrospect would have been regarded as mutually antagonistic ideologically, frequently cooperated with each other in suffragist movements.98 Political expediency is only an incomplete part of the answer to the cooperation of this nature, which postulates a more important question of the “fluidity” of political allegiance. Feminism is not inherently pacifist, especially when allied with nationalism. Women in the 1930s who coated demand for financial support for child-bearing mother in military imperative would prove this point.99 Imai Utako is actually an earlier example of the fluidity of political allegiance.

Among the six extant issues of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin (the first, second, third, fourth, seventh, and ninth), five leaders, one op-ed piece, and one poem are explicitly attributed to Imai Utako. Imai Utako might have contributed more articles than formally attributed to her though, as the free use of pen name was the norm among the cohort of Heiminsha women.100 Regardless, since Imai Utako was the de facto

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99 Ibid.
editor and organizer of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, all articles, poems, choices in design, and even advertisements are helpful in uncovering her ideas, social connections, intended audience, and political agenda. For instance, starting from the second issue, the cover features a Japanese woman with *keppatsu* 結髪 in *kimono* carrying a map, walking down a path towards a silhouette of the skyline comprised of architectures of a pavilion, a gothic church, a dome, etc. As we shall soon see, it is an accurate portrait of the model women conceived by Imai Utako. Corroborating examples are numerous, but we will begin our analysis with articles.

As discussed in the previous section, the reader basis of Imai Utako was Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai, which was comprised of about a hundred girl students of Hokkaido or Tokyo origin. As it was not until 1900 and 1901 when a variety of higher educational institutions for women were established in Tokyo, the “students” in this case were likely in their late twenties: Japan Women’s University was founded when Imai Utako was twenty-four years old. In addition to its primary function as an organizational publication, it was also on sale in bookstores. The lack of *furigana* demonstrates the high level of education of the intended readership and necessarily narrows the scope and the size of potential audience. Whereas the specific number of publication is nowhere to be retrieved, a point of reference is the average sales of the contemporaneous weekly *Heimin Shinbun* was between 3,500~4,000.\(^1\) The price of a single issue of *Heimin Shinbun* is 35% of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* and but also contains only about 25% as many pages. *Heimin Shinbun* was in circulation for about 13 months without fatal financial problems, whereas *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* discontinued after a

little more than a year due to insolvency. Fukushima Shirō’s *Fujo Shinbun*, which was also a weekly publication, recruited about 1,000 subscribers in its embryonic era of 1900-1 and it appeared to have become a financially sustainable business.¹⁰² As a monthly publication, *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* should be less prone to the fluctuation of the market but rely more heavily on subscribers and frequent customers. When reflecting upon her life in Heiminsha, Nishikawa Fumiko also remarked that *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* was a “little magazine” (*shō-zasshi* 小雑誌).¹⁰³ Therefore, the size of the readership of *Nijū Seiki no Fujin* was likely to be steadily around some several hundreds. It is by no means an impressive number *per se*, but arguably Imai Utako did not intend to make it a *popular* publication to begin with – otherwise, we would see *furigana* or more illustrations. The audience Imai Utako would like to reach out for was presumably the best-educated women at the time. It might be for this reason that also *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* was dwarfed in terms of the size of circulation; it nevertheless retained its position among a handful publications the editors of which were entitled to attend the Association for Journalists at Women’s Magazines as mentioned in the previous section.

In the wake of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Imai Utako swiftly moved to advise her readers how to serve their country in the time of war. The leader she wrote is titled “women’s conscience in wartime,” where after admonishing her fellow women not to demonstrate too much emotion when male left for war, she comments on the wartime role of women:

> Women who are soldiers’ mothers and women who are wives of those who serve in the military should understand that the strength and weakness of their own mind will directly influence the morale of the army. Like [Otto von] Bismarck once remarked: ‘One letter from his wife will wipe out whatever misery a soldier might

¹⁰² Fukushima, *Fujinkai Sanjūgonen*.
¹⁰³ Nishikawa, 60-1.
face on the battlefield,’ it is, therefore, the obvious job [for women] to send letters to soldiers on the expedition to satisfy them with solace and awards.\textsuperscript{104}

So far in Imai Utako’s discourse, women’s role is no difference from the state-sanctioned \textit{ryōsai kenbo}, where women’s role is evaluated so long as they serve satisfactorily as mothers and wives. Nevertheless, she does not stop here. As what immediately follows is Imai Utako’s praise for women who support Japan’s military campaign through social activities and careers: Nurses and caretakers in the Red Cross, as well as women advocates for saving the expense on \textit{keppatsu} and clothes in support for the military campaign.\textsuperscript{105} She concludes by emphasizing the temporal imperative of their cause:

\begin{quote}
Now the once-in-a-millennium opportunity for women to perform her service to the state has ripened, hence should not those who have enjoyed [the benefits of] the military state to rise on conscience?\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

Whereas the biographical information of Imai Utako uncovered so far demonstrates her deep attachment to \textit{Heiminsha}, her writings in \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin} suggests that she was not ideologically affiliated. As mentioned before, this discrepancy has been noticed by Miki Hiroko, who recognize Imai Utako’s opinions in \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin} astray from \textit{Heiminsha}’s fierce attack on upper-class women and its pacifist posture on Russo-Japanese War.\textsuperscript{107} The inaugural issue of \textit{Heimin Shinbun}, the news outlet affiliated with Heiminsha established on November 15, 1903, vocally supports pacifism and looks forward to the day “when the nations of the world, without regard for differences if race or political systems, will agree to prohibit and abolish military armaments;” such opinion was first articulated in the

\textsuperscript{104} Imai Utako 今井歌子, “戦時に於ける婦人の覚悟 [Women’s Awareness in Wartime],” \textit{Nijyū seiki no fujin} 二十世紀の婦人, March 1, 1904.

\textsuperscript{105} Imai, “戦時に於ける婦人の覚悟 [Women’s Awareness in Wartime].”

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107} Miki, “Fukkoku Nihon no fujin zasshi: Kaisetsuhen 復刻『日本の婦人雑誌』解説編,” 110-111.
1901 criticism of the global surge of imperialism by Kōtoku Shūsui 幸徳秋水, the founder, and leader of Heiminsha:

However, let us look at the consequences of these invasions. Isn’t imperialism derived from patriotism and militarism? These constitute the warp and weft from which the fabric of imperialism is woven. Without a doubt, patriotism and militarism constitute the foundation upon which the imperialism practiced by the great powers of the present day rests ... We aim to establish world peace, but imperialism provokes wars between nations. We seek to foster a universal morality, but imperialism puts morality to death. We wish for the realization of freedom and equality, but imperialism destroys both. We hope for the fair distribution of the fruits of production, but imperialism exacerbates the inequalities in the world. There is no greater danger to civilization than imperialism.\footnote{Kōtoku Shūsui 幸徳秋水, \textit{Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century 十世紀之怪物帝国主義}, translated by Robert Thomas Tierney (Oakland, California: University of California Press), 2015. The emphasis is added by the author.}

This viewpoint was inherited and manifested by Heimin Shinbun, the mouthpiece of Heiminsha, throughout the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). Kōtoku Shūsui bemoaned that the journalism had been converted to wartime propaganda machine, and On the February 14th, 1904 – the first issue since the war began – the editor of Heimin Shinbun laments over the outbreak of war:

[ Russian and Japanese ] governments were both cautious not to be faulted with starting the war and would rather be acquitted of such accusation ... When the peace is disturbed, and catastrophe befalls, it is very likely our commoners who will have to bear with the concomitant misery. Those who created chaos were, however, usually walked away with impunity and blamed the people.\footnote{"戰爭來 [Here Comes the War]," \textit{Heimin Shinbun}, February 14th, 1904, in \textit{Shūkan Heimin Shinbun 週刊「平民新聞」} ed. Rōdō Undōshi Kenkyūkai 労働運動史研究会, vol. 13, 20 vols, Meiji shakai shugi shiryōshū 明治社會主義史料集, Bessatsu 3-4 別冊 3 – 4 (Tokyo: Meiji Bunken Shiryō Kankōkai 明治文献資料刊行会, 1960), 115.}

Despite its unrelenting anti-war stance, Heimin Shinbun was initially countenanced – presumably a gesture to demonstrate the “civility” of Japan as a constitutional government under which the freedom of expression was guaranteed: a diplomatic posture to secure international sympathy.\footnote{Arahata, \textit{Heiminsha Jidai}, 30.} Anti-war protest, public
associations, and public forums were tolerated in the early stage of the Russo-Japanese War. However, as the protracted sieges and the massive adoption of machine guns turned the war into a bloodbath such that the war exhaustion began to pose a tangible threat to the legitimacy of the war, Meiji government’s patience wore out. *Heimin Shinbun*’s publication was eventually proscribed by January 1905 when Kōtoku Shūsui was put under arrest for his insubordination of translating and publishing the Communist Manifesto.111 Where Imai Utako saw opportunities for women, Heiminsha’s collective reaction to the war was, by contrast, staunch pacifist.

Despite the diametrically different attitudes towards the on-going Russo-Japanese War Imai Utako adopted, she and her right-hand companion Kawamura Haruko had been active in Heiminsha’s activities throughout. They frequently attended the society’s panel discussion on women’s role in society, and both appeared in the photograph taken for those who gathered in solidarity when Kōtoku Shūsui was arrested.112 Thus the presence of Imai Utako single-handedly complicates the ideological spectrum within *Heiminsha*. Clearly, Imai Utako’s vision of the empowerment of women, in fact, corroborates with the expansionism of Japan, both the imperial cause *per se* and the fruit of it, as her last proposal goes:

After overcoming [wartime] difficulty and peace descended, [Japanese] government will directly reward our people with immigration to Korea Peninsula and Manchuria ... however, immigrants comprising only men are not optimal ... Clearly, if an immigration policy that includes both sexes [to be obtained], a firmly established country like Anglo-Saxons’ the United States and Canada would come into place. Hence the latter is preferred as the standard of our people’s post-war colonial policy.113

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112 Suzuki, "『明治四十一年度八月社会党に関する調査』抄 [Copy of August Meiji 41 Investigation into Those Related to Socialist Party],” 328-334.
113 Imai, “戦時に於ける婦人の覚悟 [Women’s Awareness in Wartime].”
Imai Utako was not concerned with, if she was aware of it at all, the encroaching state power on civil rights; instead, she deemed the Russo-Japanese War an opportunity for women to become “living women” who lead “examined lives” as she proposes in the inaugural issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*. It is unlikely that her endorsement for the military campaign was the result of wartime censorship, as the socialist and pacifist *Heimin Shinbun* continued its weekly issues until the subsequent January when it was disciplined for publishing a translated *Communist Manifesto*. More importantly, as we shall soon see, her verbal support for the war also translates into actions in her capacity as the chief organizer of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai and the *de facto* editor of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*.

Imai Utako was quick to align the objective of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai with that of the state and launched fundraising in support of Japan’s military campaign with enthusiasm. The outbreak of Russo-Japanese War should not have caught Imai Utako by surprise, as Japan’s conflict of interests with Russian aggression in Manchuria and Korea began simmering years earlier, and Imai Utako must have been well informed of it given her close friendship with Wang Hongnian 王鴻年. Wang Hongnian was a law student at Tokyo Imperial University amidst his self-imposed exile for his controversial political opinions. He later returned to Qing China sometime in mid-1904 and eventually became a diplomat of the Republic of China, serving several posts responsible for Soviet-Japan related issues and eventually Chinese consular at Yokohama between 1933-36. The tension between

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114 Tierney, *Monster of the Twentieth Century*, 98.
116 Wei Qiao 魏桥, and Biography Anthology of Zhejiang Province Editorial Committee 浙江省人物志编纂委员会, “王鴻年 Wang Hongnian,” in Biography Anthology of Zhejiang Province 浙江省人物志 (Zhejiang: Zhejiang People's Publisher 浙江人民出版社, 2003),
Russia and Japan, and hence the Japanese state’s ambition to rival other Great Powers should be not foreign to Imai Utako. Some articles in support of Japanese military campaign or denigrating its Russian opponents soon appeared in subsequent issues.117 Yet prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, she advocated for expanding women’s involvement in social activities in support of both the military and the economy:

If [we] take a look at the gallantry of British women, who not only are always hardworking themselves but also manage to keep men in high spirit. History proves that [English women’s] effort is why Great Britain has achieved its might nowadays. A salient example of which is the unrivalled British Navy, which is the result of the enormous support and fund [by British women]. Nevertheless, I do not have to envy them as we also have Patriotic Women’s Association ... I may not be clever, but I understand that military power alone does not support the stature our country and the twentieth century is also the for economic success or failure. Therefore, I hope the Patriotic Women’s Association would offer solace and support for men in business the same way they support military personnel and families. To keep men [in business] in high spirit is the core [value] of ‘living women’ I along with my sisters aspire to become.118

Immediately after the first issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* went public, Kakizaki Tomisaburō 螣崎富三郎, a male mid-ranking officer (chūsa 中佐) of the First Army Division, was appointed the advisor to the association when he was consulted on February 13th, 1904 by Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko before he went on an expedition around February 17th.119 Kakizaki family, like Matsumae family, were the historical aristocracy of Ezo daimyō, and Kakizaki Tomisaburō made a twenty-yen contribution – a gift worth two hundred issues of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* and fourfold of the second largest contribution the magazine ever received.120 Apparently, his

117 Utsutsu うつす, “露國風俗の暗黒面 [The Dark Side of Russian Culture],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人*, May 1, 1904.
118 Imai, “生ける婦人 [The Living Women].”
119 Imai, “北海道婦人同志会記事 [Record on Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai].”
120 Ibid.
appointment took place in the light of the outbreak of Russo-Japanese War on February 8th. In addition, Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai held their spring gathering on April 3rd, 1904 at Kikinkan, a movie theater at Nishiki-chō of Kandani District, just northwest to the Imperial Residence. Fundraising in support of Japanese army was held by the end of it; out of the thirty-seven yen five sen raised, ten yen went to the army.\(^{121}\) Clearly, Imai Utako was unequivocal in terms of her support of the Russo-Japanese War, both in words and in action. Nevertheless, as suggested above Imai Utako’s chief interest in the war lies in the post-war development as opposed to the internecine warfare or entrenched hostility. In the April 1904 issue, she reflects on how women ought to take care of child education in wartime. After beseeching her peers to pay attention to physical education and take advantage of the flourishing wartime literature and involving geographical and political knowledge to hone children’s memorization ability, Imai Utako advises against patriotism:

> If children’s patriotic enthusiasm were to be motivated to its extreme, the idea that [our] enemies were devils which are not to be tolerated by the heaven or earth would persist through the peacetime after the war. Even if we were to reconcile with our opposing civilization, [our children] might still deem them barbaric. The result is protracted hatred and vendetta between two countries. It is an issue [we] need to keep in mind.\(^{122}\)

It is noteworthy that Imai Utako wrote this passage as early as the second month into the Russo-Japanese War when no conclusive battles had yet been fought.

Although mentioned elsewhere in the article, she was likely writing in response to the nation-wide campaign to mobilize women – including girl students who were organized to hosiery knitting for the army – to support the army through donation

\(^{121}\) Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai 北海道婦人同志会, “会員諸姊へ告げまいらす [To Member Sisters],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, April 1, 1904. Curiously, it was the same Kikinkan where Red Flag Incident took place in 1908, after which Imai Utako seemed to have severed her connection with former socialist colleagues.

\(^{122}\) Imai Utako 今井歌子, “戦争と兒童教育 [The War and Child Education],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, April 1, 1904.
saved from cosmetics and outfit or other means. She apparently had a clear mind of what was expected of the war and what opportunities lied within for Japanese women. If examined against Imai Utako’s enthusiasm for the prospect of men and women together colonizing Korea and Manchuria after the victory in the previous issue, it should be clear that she is opportunistic of the Russo-Japanese war. She is in support of anything that could expand the interpretation of ryōsai kenbo to the public sphere, be it the colonial enterprise – the one not too different from the internalization of Hokkaido – or women’s activism to support the war outside domesticity such as fundraising, or involvement in “productive business.” Her track record of committed efforts in expanding women’s sphere of activity is thus consistent with, if not conducive to, her subsequent petition for women’s right to political association. Imai Utako’s opportunistic approach, nonetheless, engendered more tension between her and her colleagues in Heiminsha. However opportunistic or pragmatic the underlying motivation might be, Imai Utako’s pro-war stance was unequivocal and ostentatiously at odds with Heiminsha’s support for pacifism – arguably the only collective enterprise which could bind the ideologically heterogeneous socialist cohort together at the time.

We shall return to the postwar disintegration of Heiminsha later, but we need to first account for Imai Utako’s accommodation to it, which had lent considerable support for her thrice petitions. In the light of the diametrically opposed viewpoints on the Russo-Japanese War, it is surprising that Imai Utako managed to maintain her position in the socialist cohort at all. It appears that the first factor is, though, Imai Utako her own pragmatic approach in seeking allies and her eloquence. Imai Utako was nicknamed “female

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123 Fukushima, Fujinkai sanjūgonen 婦人界三十五年, 1093.
124 Arahata, Heiminsha Jidai 平民社時代, iii-v.
lobbyist,” and she gave speeches on public speaking and the persuasion on Heiminsha’s Socialist Women Lecture (Shakaishugi fujinkōen 社会主義婦人講演) once in early 1905. Presumably, her eloquence might have downplayed the ideological conflict so long as they shared the common goal of women’s right to association. More importantly, Imai Utako also seems to be an accommodating person who would be willing to embrace unity in diversity, as she proclaims in the leader of the inaugural issue of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin:

_Nijyū Seiki no Fujin_ is born to wake up women in cloistered sleep, adopting the three words – “a global perspective,” so to speak – as its motto. [This magazine is] for cultivating [our] children to obtain global status; for [women] complementing [the role of] their husbands and establishing activities of global influence; for engaging with social careers and for those who commit to singledom in order to undertake careers like scholar and nurses for the world; or for [women committed to] any objectives with a global perspective [even if] these are beyond what this magazine [explicitly] endorses.

Clearly, Imai Utako was interested in peers who have a “global vision,” and disagreement on military issues notwithstanding, figures like Kōtoku Shūsui and Katō Tokijirō are, without a doubt, the pioneers of embracing an international outlook for Japan and Japanese women by the beginning of the twentieth century. In the aforementioned criticism of imperialism, Kōtoku Shūsui reviewed the history of the rise and fall of all major Euromerican powers and their roads towards imperialism. Kōtoku Shūsui was also fond of Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko

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125 Iwanami, _Fukuda Hideko_ 福田英子, 102.
127 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “発行の主旨 [The Purpose of This Publication],” 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, February 1, 1904.
as speakers in Heiminsha, and they were able to maintain personal friendship in spite of their political differences. Likewise, Katō Tokijirō, who introduced Imai Utako to Heiminsha when she was still a patient of his, received his degree in Germany before returning to Japan and serving at Heimin Byōin. Communism, for its concerns for the emancipation of humanity collectively, appeals to Imai Utako. They differ, however, on what the war would bring about. Whereas Kōtoku Shūsui and other editors of Heimin Shinbun sees the inevitability towards the disastrous imperialism, Imai Utako sees the opportunity uplift women from mere attendant to domesticity and enroll them in social activities. The following quote is an excerpt from her pre-war publication:

Especially, this magazine would like to endorse the most prominent trend of the twentieth century – the involvement in ‘productive business,’ and make [our] encouragement for women [to engage in ‘productive business’ activities] like men a salient point [of our magazine]. Today, women have been one-sidedly denied of [opportunities in] careers due to the purported concerns in their body quality and domestic harmony, yet plausible ground for this belief notwithstanding, there is little concrete support for this claim. Undoubtedly, issues such as women’s morality, cultivation, knowledge, and experience are the purpose of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai, to begin with; and if Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai were to be the place to achieve these goals, it is my personal wish to add this trouble [of encouraging women in “productive business”] to the outlook of the current magazine.

This paragraph is arguably the gist of Imai Utako’s self-perceived mission: to extend the interpretation, not to replace, the state-sanctioned ryōsai kenbo. Invoking the potential benefit for the state as justification, she fervently advocates for women’s presence in social activities outside domesticity, i.e. into the public sphere that had been exclusively male. Jürgen Habermas’ thesis on bourgeois public sphere is pertinent to shade light on the rationale of Imai Utako’s agenda. Women were, of course, not shunned presence in public in Japanese society; however, as the Meiji

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129 Sievers, Flowers in Salt, 122.
130 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “発行の主旨 [The Purpose of This Publication],” Nijyū Seiki No Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.
Constitution was enacted and the National Diet assembled, women were excluded from playing a constitutive role in the development of the intellectual and political self-consciousness of the bourgeoisie. Habermas’ thesis was on English coffee-house where news was disseminated, opinions were exchanged, and debates took place.\textsuperscript{131} Japan might be void of a public – and exclusionary – forum analogous to English coffee-house, but the essence of the state-sanctioned ryōsai kenbo was precisely to confine women in domesticity and reify the split between the male public and female private. Journalism used to be a male institution as exemplified by the fact that publications targeting women, either for educational purpose or business promotion, prior to \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin} were all directed and published by men. Women’s involvement in journalism as journalist indeed predated Imai Utako’s \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin}, e.g. Matsuoka Motoko 松岡もと子 in Tokyo and Kishimoto Ryūko 岸本柳子 in Osaka by the turn of the twentieth century; as they lack the editorial autonomy, the field of journalism remained predominantly male nonetheless.\textsuperscript{132} Now that Imai Utako had undermined the artificial construct of this male-exclusive enclave and established a platform for women to play the constitutive role in shaping the intellectual and political self-consciousness of the bourgeoisie collectively, she marched on to the next self-perceived mission: political participation and association. So far, women’s role in political arena had been a passive and ostracized one: they were permitted to observe Diet sessions, but even at the assembly of Heiminsha, women had to sit behind the sliding door to listen to speeches so as not to mix with men or to have their own gathering separately.\textsuperscript{133} Once again, women

\textsuperscript{131} Jürgen Habermas, \textit{The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society} (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999).

\textsuperscript{132} Fukushima “三十五年昔語り [In Reminiscence of the Thirty-five Years]”, 1-10.

\textsuperscript{133} Iwanami, \textit{Fukuda Hideko} 福田英子, 102.
were not invisible in the public sphere before Imai Utako, and they tended to operate either within the branches of established institutions like the Meiji government or Christian missions, or emerged as helpmate to their male colleagues. Notable women’s organizations contemporaneous with *Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai* were Women's Christian Temperance Union (*Kurisuto-kyō Fujin Kyōfū-kai* キリスト教婦人矯風会), Women’s Education Association (*Dainihon Fujin Kyōiku-kai* 大日本婦人教育会), Women’s Hygiene Association (*Dainihon Fujin Eisei-kai* 大日本婦人衛生会), and Patriotic Women’s Association (*Aikoku Fujin-kai* 愛国婦人会).*¹３４ Both Women’s Education Association and Women’s Hygiene Association were headed by women from the imperial family or prominent kazoku families, and campaigned along the state-sanctioned ryōsai kenbo line and celebrated women’s role in domesticity. Women’s Christian Temperance Union was led by Yajima Kajiko and successfully petitioned for women’s right to observe of Diet sessions in 1896,*¹３５ and was campaigning for criminalization of male adulterer in analogy to adultery punishable for women in 1905.*¹３６ As mentioned in a block quote before, amongst all these established women’s association, Imai Utako lavished Patriotic Women’s Association with praise particularly. Patriotic Women’s Association was founded by Okumura Ioko in the light of the Boxer Rebellion and when Japan once again invaded China as part of the Eight-Nation Alliance in 1900.*¹３７ What differentiates Patriotic Women’s Association from other women’s association – also what interests

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¹３４ Fukushima, “三十五年昔語り [In Reminiscence of the Thirty-five Years],” 5.
¹３５ Note that the *Public Security and Police Law* which formally prohibited women’s right to political association was not promulgated until 1900. Women’s Christian Temperance Union was affiliated with National Christian Council Japan, and therefore was not technically a political association.
Imai Utako – is women’s direct involvement in social activities in the public sphere by the agency of their own as opposed to merely serving the domesticity. Okumura Ioko began her career by personally visiting the battlefields and soldiers on the frontline during the Boxer Rebellion, and later assembled women of aristocratic background in Tokyo with the support from the House of Peers.\textsuperscript{138} Patriotic Women’s Association was active in fundraising and visiting soldiers in casualty wards – activities not mediated by their husbands or their families. Imai Utako was an ardent supporter of activities of this nature. She deemed luxurious outfits and exquisite cosmetics debilitating for women: writing another leader in the May 1905 issue to celebrate women’s who initiated fundraising campaigns on their own and urged her readers to join them.\textsuperscript{139} Admittedly, women retained the role of “helpmate” – nor did Imai Utako ever advocated for the renunciation of such designation – but would be able to extend the sphere of their activities to the public sphere.

The encouragement for women to get involved in \textit{jitsugyō} 実業, which I roughly translate as “productive business,” is the heart of Imai Utako’s vision of women’s role in rapidly transforming Japanese state.\textsuperscript{140} Imai Utako herself does not elaborate on what constitute \textit{jitsugyō}, which is a self-explanatory and permissive concept: any careers involving agricultural cultivation, industrial production, and commercial sales can be counted towards \textit{jitsugyō}. In addition, a column titled \textit{“jitsugyō and women”} is set up and in the inaugural issue. Although the articles are not personally authored by Imai Utako, its analysis of \textit{jitsugyō} should shed some light on the nature

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 251-302.

\textsuperscript{139} Imai Utako 今井歌子, “戦争と風俗矯正 [War and the Remediation of Custom],” \textit{Nijyū Seiki No Fujin} 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Jitsugyō} would be more commonly translated as “industry.” However, such translation would be ambiguous in this context as the “industry” does not intend to convey a mode of production but rather a category of economic activities that have “tangible” – in the crudest sense – contributions.
of activity Imai Utako wishes “women of the twentieth century” could pursue and embrace. Hentake Iwai 岩井變竹, the column-writer, answers the question by comparing jitsugyō with kūgyō 空業, or “empty business,” a category consists of careers not directly involving production: economists, theologians, philosophers, educators, doctors, jurists, soldiers, etc.\(^\text{141}\) Such “productive versus empty” dichotomous discourse is not intended to be a denigration of the latter: when enumerating these examples, Hentake Iwai does not forget to attach grave national importance respectively. The argument made here is twofold: that women should be encouraged to engage in “productive business,” and that such activities do not interfere with women’s “manifest obligation” as ryōsai kenbo. First, it fosters an affirmative response to the controversy on whether women should be encouraged to work at all by taking the debate the next level of what careers are preferable. By the eve of Russo-Japanese War, the presence of women in the workplace like textile manufactories and schools had been well-established for decades, making the debate on to what extent should women be further involved in social production a pertinent one. Second, Iwai Hentake regrets that whereas Euromerican women could skillfully attend to career and domesticity, it was still not the norm of the contemporaneous Japanese women, who were “handicapped by the ill-informed time management.”\(^\text{142}\) The lamentable status quo notwithstanding, the fact that Japan was undertaking its modernization scheme after Euromerican powers implicitly lends legitimacy for Japanese women to also model on Euromerican women. Unfortunately, as the Russo-Japanese War completely stole the spotlight and every Imai Utako’s leader following in the inaugural issue was concerned with the war rather than how exactly

\(^{141}\) Iwai Hentake 岩井變竹, “実業と婦人 [Productive Business and Women],” Nijyū Seiki No Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, February 1, 1904.

\(^{142}\) Ibid.
to promote women’s involvement in “productive business.” Though we could not
know it from Imai Utako’s own words, other articles in *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* could be
illuminating. From the second issue on, the “jitsugyō and women” column is devoted
to a series on sericulture – from its economic and military importance for the nation
to technical details on how to raise silkworms. The choice of sericulture is apposite
to the *zeitgeist* of Imai Utako’s era: it was a time-honored enterprise traditionally
performed by women, the production process of which transformed by the Meiji
Restoration, its downstream industry – textile – played a key role in the First
Industrial Revolution and so was in Japan’s early industrialization. Intentionally or
not, *jitsugyō* conceived by Imai Utako is, in fact, a pretext for women’s social
involvement – a conduit through which women could justifiably have their own input
in the formative experience of social production and intellectual and political
debates.

The step taken by Imai Utako was a cautious one, as she did not renounce
women’s duty in domesticity – and in fact, she welcomed it such that women could
enter the public space as the helpmate of their husbands’ careers. In the October
1904 issue, she reaffirms women’s duty as wives to their spouses:

> Wives’ duty to their husbands was threefold: to comfort them, to encourage them,
> and to assist them on pertinent issues ... To be of help of their husbands, wives
> should not stop as soon as domestic duties were fulfilled. The aspects wives should
> be of assistance to their husbands in relation to the latter’s career outside [the
domesticity]. That is to say, if the husband is a politician, the wife could become
> [his] secretary or chief clerk.

Clearly, in the model proposed by Imai Utako, private versus a public model of
Habermas’ persisted. The change she proposed was women’s emergence as

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143 Iwai Hentake, 実業と婦人 [Productive Business and Women].
144 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “妻としての女子 [Women as Wives],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*
二十世紀の婦人, October 1, 1904.
“helpmates” in the public sphere – either as an aid to the masculine state or their husbands directly. Therefore, in addition to her conception of women’s household duty – the one not different from the state-sanctioned ryōsai kenbo – Imai Utako took one more step forward to assert women’s role in society:

Women as the mediators in society: in order to preserve social harmony and inclusion, women could mainly take advantage of their abilities in social occasions. Such as in the advance countries in Euramerica, women could mediate amongst dining occasions and assist occasions in coffee and teahouse.145

The role as a mediator is fundamentally different from that of a helpmate in the sense that independent reasoning and judgment are required of the former. Imai Utako devoted the rest of the article to highlight how the perceived role of a mediator is different – and far more superior – than the hired courtesans (geigi 芸妓) who would frequent social occasions but offered no contributions other than entertainment or ingratiation.146 She also laments on the status quo wherein the legacy of Rokumeikan Era (rokumei-kan jidai 鹿鳴館時代) – the debauched social occasions and degeneration – was an ill-informed adaptation of Euromerican civilization in the sense that women were not effective “mediators” as they were in Euromerican world.147 The fact that women remained entertainment or decoration in social occasions signified the self-defeating nature of Rokumeikan Era – and such regrettable occurrence perpetuated through the rest of Meiji era. Clearly, the capacity of individual agency differentiates the “mediators” conceived by Imai Utako from entertainers. Mere presence in the public sphere does not suffice “the living women,”

145 Imai Utako 今井歌子, “婦人の地位(須らく自重して可なり) [The Status of Women: Must Maintain Self-importance],” Nijyū Seiki no Fujin 二十世紀の婦人, August 1, 1904.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
who would act by their own volition but with the interest of the state and the household in mind.

After the state-sanctioned model of *ryōsai kenbo* was officially upheld, Japanese women became “double subjects” of household and that of the state. Much as this subjugation might be unified theoretically, the most immediate approach to break the yoke of the family is to appeal to the higher authority of the Meiji state – to assert that women were equal subjects of the state. In terms of fighting for the right for women, the Japanese state was a potential – and a powerful – ally, and thus the agenda of nationalist or militarist feminists like Imai Utako appeared pertinent and viable to the late Meiji social milieu. In the time of national emergency, like the Russo-Japanese War, the demonstration of women’s direct service to the state in the form of “productive business” outside household is presented as an argument for women’s equal status. This approach is, of course, susceptible to political naivety, especially when seats of the Imperial Diet, the legislative apparatus of the Japanese state, were all filled with men whose vested interest or simple prejudice might prevent them from welcoming the idea. As we will discuss, Imai Utako carried out her proposal in the spirit of her vision of an expanded interpretation of *ryōsai kenbo*. 
Three Petitions of Imai Utako, 1904-8

Imai Utako’s next political feat was her petition, submitted by 24th January 1905 and recommended for the Ministry of Internal Affairs by the speaker of the House of Representatives by 27th February, to lift the ban instituted in the 1900 Public Security and Police Law that prohibits women from associating and involving in politics.148 Surely Imai Utako would have written on her petitions, but as the last extant issue of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin was published on October 1904, to understand Imai Utako’s volition in her own words became impossible.149 As a member of Heiminsha, she might have also contributed to Hemin Shinbun and the subsequent Chokugen, but none could be identified with certitude as all articles – except for some transcripts of speeches – are not attributed. More importantly, by the time of Imai Utako’s first petition in January 1905, two leaders of Heiminsha – both men – seemed to be attending to other business: a petition for universal suffrage for men and the political repercussions due to its defiant publication of the Communist Manifesto.150 As discussed in the preceding section, the “socialist” cohort of Heiminsha was, in fact, an ideologically variegated confederate – and one conspicuous division was along the gender line. Fukuda Hideko reflected in retrospection of her days at Heiminsha that some female members, including herself, were dissatisfied with the women’s implicit designation as “helpmates” to their male

150 Arahata, Heiminsha Jidai, 229-247.
colleagues within Heiminsha.\textsuperscript{151} Indeed, speakers invited to Heiminsha’s Socialist Women Lecture series were either men or the two male co-heads’ spouse. Imai Utako who spoke on February 1905 was the first woman to address the crowds after more than a year since the lecture series was inaugurated.\textsuperscript{152} Imai Utako also set up her own Lectures for Women series within \textit{Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai} in mid-1904 – which might or might not be a reaction to its Heiminsha counterpart – and extant issues of \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin} include relevant reports which suggest that about half of the guest speakers were women.\textsuperscript{153} Towards \textit{Heimin Shinbun}'s late issue on February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1905 – about a month after Imai Utako’s petition was submitted – there had not been a single line of reporting on this political endeavor. In fact, reflections one this petition in the biographical or autobiographical works of other women in Heiminsha suggests an “escapade” nature of the petition: Fukuda Hideko, the most senior female activist, excused herself from the petition,\textsuperscript{154} no reference to Imai Utako’s conception of such petition appeared in all extant issues of \textit{Nijyū Seiki no Fujin}, and an unpleasant encounters between Imai Utako with the Diet’s guards seemed to have prompted the idea.\textsuperscript{155} Be it a blessing or not, as the supporters were “surprisingly” numerous the campaign was devised and submitted within days.\textsuperscript{156}

Ebara Soroku 江原素六, the sympathetic member of the House of Representatives

\textsuperscript{153} Imai Utako 今井歌子, \textit{Nijyū Seiki No Fujin} 二十世紀の婦人, October 1, 1904, 23-4.
\textsuperscript{155} Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
\textsuperscript{156} Iwanami, \textit{Fukuda Hideko} 福田英子, 104-5.
through whom the petition was presented, also appeared to be Imai Utako’s personal connection through Women’s Christian Temperance Union. An escapade or not, a petition for women’s right to association was clearly not on the prescribed agenda of the male-dominant Heiminsha leadership. Arguably, Imai Utako, along with other women of Heiminsha who contributed, might not have received much help from their male colleagues in the socialist cohort, and the petition for the political association was a political practice – albeit guided by Imai Utako’s rather wistful belief in the goodwill of the political establishment – by the volition of Heiminsha women.

It is not, however, to blame the leadership of Heiminsha of oversight. They were apparently aware of women’s struggle but might not have proceeded with a pertinent plan simply as a matter of priority. The irony between the exorbitant sacrifice required of women and the stringent political rights enjoyed the women did not go unnoticed. The leader on May 5th, 1904 of Hemin Shinbun goes as follow:

When the war broke out, everyone would say that since women are also the subject of the nation, they are supposed to do whatever possible for it. This might be correct, but if Japan really would like women to serve it wholeheartedly, why would it proscribed women from discussions of national issues and listen to political debates, to begin with? Nothing better illustrates this embryonic, “socialist” cohort better than organizational disorientation. After moving back and forth on several wartime issues, it finally settled down on a petition for universal – albeit implicitly all male – suffrage as its first social debut. The threshold of the estate-based right to vote in to stand for the election to the House of Representatives had been lowered from 15-yen

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157 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪れて [A Visit to Imai Utako].” 269.
to 10-yen, but it still precluded the vast majority of the population. Class struggle had been understandably put forward as the top priority of Heiminsha, yet at this time a consensus over the parliamentary road was still attainable. The leader on October 16th, 1904 of *Hemin Shinbun* is tendentiously titled “Takeover the Old Regime.”

Therefore, the first step towards socialism is not a dagger, nor grenades, nor rebellion, nor unionization or strike, but the eligibility of commoners to be elected as members of the Diet. In order to realize our great ideal, nothing is more urgent or pertinent than having the majority of workers’ representatives, the majority of petty businessmen’s representatives standing alongside the bench of the Diet.¹⁵⁹

Such petition, however, never materialized. Just weeks after, Heiminsha fell into an existential crisis as it was censured and threatened to prosecution for publishing a Japanese translation of the Communist Manifesto in defiance of Meiji government’s express warning.¹⁶⁰ Discussions on the current affairs in the subsequent issues of *Heimin Shinbun* were thus devoted to this controversy, and the absence of any coverage of Imai Utako’s concurrent petition is glaring. It is possible that Imai Utako was inspired by this initiation to start one of her own and no one would object to her endeavor, but arguably, female members at Heiminsha were still peripheral to their male colleagues, and so was their collective deed to fight for the right to political association.

Japanese women were no longer proscribed from observing sessions of the House of Representatives since late 1890. In fact, Imai Utako herself had been a frequent observer, and more so since her first petition.¹⁶¹ However, women became one of the seven categories of people who were precluded from political association.

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¹⁶¹ Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
and political assembly in the 1900-promulgated Public Security and Police Law, the fifth clause of which reads:

- The categories of people stipulated on the left are prohibited from associations and assembly pertaining to political affairs:
  1. Military personnel and reserves on-duty of the army and navy
  2. Police officers
  3. Shrine priests, monks, and other personnel with religious responsibilities
  4. Instructors and students at government, public, and private schools
  5. Women
  6. The underage
  7. Those deprived of or have their political rights suspended.\(^{162}\)

Before Public Security and Police Law was enacted, women did appear, albeit infrequently and not without being harassed by authorities, amongst early political activists, like Imai Utako’s colleague Fukuda Hideko who had already been a veteran activist.\(^{163}\) In the spirit of the 1890 Meiji Constitution, legislations of this nature recognized the political interests of the Meiji nouveau riche – urban and rural gentries and businessmen who took advantage of the modernization endeavor to acquire wealth, land, and local prominence. There were, of course, those who were still struggling for political rights, economic well-beings, and social recognition; and Heiminsha was an asylum wherein people dissatisfied with the political status quo gathered. A *pro-forma*, self-proclaimed socialist organization, what united its members was the ideal of Heiminism, i.e. “to abolish all distinction of lineage, inequalities of wealth, social classes based on the distinction of gender, and to eliminate all forms of oppression and restriction on freedom.”\(^{164}\)


encompassing ideal with only the end stipulated and able to accommodate a large chunk of the political spectrum. Hence it was not inexplicable why its member might appear to be acting on their own volition sometimes. A separate petition for women’s right to association was simply one means to the shared end of equality; likewise, Imai Utako’s support for the Russo-Japanese War was also an appropriation of the militarist propaganda through which the case for the agency of women in the public sphere can be argued.

The national archives of parliamentary documents related to Public Security and Police Law suggest that Imai Utako’s petition was the first proposal of its revision since it was legislated five years ago. She was undoubtedly the leader of this petition, as exemplified by the speaker who identifies the petition as “submitted by commoner Imai Utako who reside[d] at No. 37 5-chōmem Iidamachi, Kōjimachi District, Tokyo along with signatures of other four hundred fifty-nine people.” Meanwhile, Nijyū Seiki no Fujin continued its monthly publication for until some time later this year before it sank due to “financial difficulties” according to Ichikawa Fusae’s 1966 interview. To corroborate with it, Miki Hiroko finds a reference to the publication of the January 1905 issue of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin in one contemporaneous magazine. In contrast, the latest survived issue was published on October 1904, yet there is no reference to this petition anywhere in all extant issues. The original petition has not been recovered, but the recommendation of the speaker of the

165 The Cabinet Office of the Imperial Japan 内閣, “治安警察法中女子カ政事上ノ結社ニ加入シ政事上ノ集会ニ従同スルコトヲ禁スル条項ノ廃止ニ関スル請願ノ件【The Petition Concerning Repealing the Relevant Articles in Chian Keisatsuho that Prohibits Women from Entering Political Organization and Attending Political Association】,”

166 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて【A Visit to Imai Utako】,” 269–70.

House of Representatives, which includes a briefing of the content of the petition, reads as follow:

The gist of the petition on the right is that the social advancement and the popularization of education for women are conducive to a variety of ideas on [civil] rights. Clearly, [women’s] opinions on politics have conspicuously developed. [However,] policemen deny [women’s] entry to occasions like gatherings for political speech according to the law; thus comes the scenario which is against the original intention [of social advancement]. [It is petitioned that] the fifth clause of the Public Security Law that prohibits women’s political association and participation in political discussion to be abolished. The House of Representatives recognizes its apposite intention and resolves to send it for further consideration [of the House of Peers] according to the sixty-fifth clause of the National Diet Law.168

This petition, however, was rejected by Katsura Tarō 桂太郎, the erstwhile Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the recommendation of House of Peers on 28th September 1905 on the ground that “[if] women’s freedom to association is recognized, womanly virtues and domestic harmony would be disrupted, bringing harms to society as the result.”169 Imai Utako made another unfruitful attempt in January 1906, this time with two hundred and twenty-seven signatories, only to be once again passed by the House of Representatives but rejected by the conservative House of Peers with only four votes in favor.170 It was also during the campaign where she met Endō Kiyoko 遠藤清子, an educator of shizoku 士族 origin, one of

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170 Fukuda Hideko 福田英子, “笑ふべき貴族院 [The Laughable House of Peers],” Sekai Fujin 世界婦人, April 1, 1908, sec. 2. It is preceded by an article skeptical of the goodwill of the House of Peers in the light of the amendment’s passing through the House of Representatives.
Imai Utako’s political allies and who would again fly her flag to petition for women’s right to political association two decades afterward. The unmaterialized petition effort initiated by Imai Utako in February 1908 was continued by Endō Kiyoko later the same year. This unfruitful attempt turned out to be the last public presence of Imai Utako. The endeavor of her and other women of Heiminsha would be inherited – in spirit and organization – by Endō Kiyoko. According to Hasegawa Shigure 長谷川時雨, who wrote an obituary for Endō Kiyoko in 1938, Endō Kiyoko used to be a journalist of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*. She would become a co-publisher of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* when Imai Utako attempted to resume its publication. Endō Kiyoko later joined *Seitōsha* 青髪社 and became involved in subsequent campaigns for women’s political right. However, no progress was made on women’s right concerning political association until the founding of the *Shin Fujinkyō-kai* whose campaign and petition during 1920-22 finally bore fruits under the leadership of Hiratsuka Raichō, Ichikawa Fusae, and Oku Mumeo 奥むめお. Imai Utako herself, however, was absent among the members of *Shin Fujinkyō-kai* and did not witness the eventual success of the deeds she initiated seventeenth year ago.

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172 Fukuda Hideko 福田英子, “福田英謹んで申す [A Polite Note from Fukuda Ei],” *Sekai Fujin* 世界婦人, February 5, 1908, sec. 5.
175 Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*. 
We have so far taken Imai Utako’s affiliation with Heiminsha for granted, but her relationship with the socialist cohort actually involved some subtleties. Although universally recognized as a member of Heiminsha in the current literature, Imai Utako’s relationship with Heiminsha was, in fact, much more nuanced. Imai Utako herself also said that she became “coming in and out” Heiminsha through the introduction of Katō Tokijirō. She did appear to operate rather independently and could be only loosely affiliated. In both Nishikawa Fumiko’s autobiography and Murata Shizuko’s biography for Fukuda Hideko, Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko were described as “frequenting” Heiminsha with dazzling *kimono*. Nishikawa Fumiko remarks:

A little magazine called *Nijyū Seiji no Fujin* just came out at the time, and Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko would frequent [Heiminsha]. [They] would come with ornament *kimono*. By that time, women would normally dress in plain clothes, so when they appeared with *kimono* that look like wrapping cloth, people in Heiminsha would make fun of them. They would stop by when they were bringing *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* to bookshops in the town or carrying manuscripts of articles around. They look like a couple where Imai is the husband and Kawamura is the wife.

Imai Utako’s autonomy notwithstanding, it would be equally erroneous to regard Imai Utako simply as an outsider – her petitions, as mentioned before, were realized only with the help of women at Heiminsha. Her conspicuous outfit seems to have played in favor of their relationship, which continued to be rapport even after the dissolution of Heiminsha. When Fukuda Hideko proclaimed her resolution to support Imai Utako’s second petition in 1907, Imai Utako was addressed among

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176 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269. “coming in and out” is translated from 出入りする.
178 Nishikawa, 61. “wrapping cloth” is translated from *furoshiki* 風呂敷. In addition, Nishikawa seems to have mistaken Kawamura name as she refers to her as with Kawahara 河原.
other women of the suspended Heiminsha. Therefore, calling Imai Utako a “member” of Heiminsha in the spirit of recognizing her intimate relationship with the organization is apposite — and members of Heiminsha themselves might not be pedantic regarding former membership as it would go against the universal nature idea of Heiminism. However, it is also important not to confine Imai Utako organizationally or ideologically within the cohort of Heiminsha. In this sense, one might also regard her as a close partner of the cohort. The question that which characterization sheds more light on Imai Utako’s intellectual allegiance is, of course, an inadequate one. As it is precisely the relatively fluid political allegiance that reconciles Imai Utako’s pro-military stance and feminist petitions.

Imai Utako briefly joined the re-established Heiminsha and became a contributor of the revived — now daily — *Heimin Shinbun* as a contributor in January 1908. Again, like the original weekly *Heimin Shinbun*, all articles are non-attributed, so reliable identification of Imai Utako’s work is impossible. A group picture of the core members of the revived daily *Heimin Shinbun* also confirms her presence — and likely her last appearance with the socialist cohort. However, followed by Kōtoku Shūsui’s February article which declares his disillusion with the parliamentary path to socialism and new allegiance to “direct action” — a euphemism to revolution as the one took place in the 1905 Russia. As Kōtoku Shūsui had long been a supporter of the parliamentary path, it stirred up intense controversy within

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Japanese Socialist Party – which was set up in 1906 by the first cabinet of Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺公望 to absorb moderate and parliamentarian socialists – and eventually led to the forced dissolution of the Party in February and the collapse of Heiminsha in April, only three month since its ill-fated rebirth. Moreover, Imai Utako seemed to have exited political arena by the 1908 Red Flag Incident and henceforth was not involved any petitions or political activities for the rest of her life.

In fact, Imai Utako was not an exception amongst former Heiminsha members, men or women, who were alienated from political arena after the Red Flag Incident. The Russo-Japanese War ended along with the ostensible harmony among the former Heiminsha colleagues, and the undercurrent of division on over whether socialist ideals were to be obtained through parliamentary elections or “direct action,” i.e. violent revolutions prevailed. However, old camaraderie still united them. Yamaguchi Kogen 山口孤剣, a former journalist at the revived Heimin Shinbun, ostentatiously impugned the value of filial piety in an article tendentiously titled “Dump Your Parents” and was sentenced to a year in prison. Antagonism was expected, but parliamentarian and “direct action” socialists and anarchists all decided to celebrate Yamaguchi Kogen’s release together as a friendly gesture and an attempt to reconciliation between factions. Upon his fulfillment of his sentence on June 22nd, 1908, Yamaguchi Kogen’s former colleagues of Heiminsha welcomed him in a public assembly where flags with anarchist manifestos were flown, and revolution songs were sung. A political incident of this nature necessarily involves competing narratives of what happened – like who started the battering first – but police intervened and as a result ten prominent figures, including four women, were

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183 Arahata, Zoku Heiminsha Jidai, 222-245.
184 Ibid.
detained and found guilty in the trial that ensued. Imai Utako did not appear to be present at this incident, but she was also implicated and investigated in the subsequent draconian crackdown on sympathizers to socialist or anarchist causes.

Two years later in 1910, Kōtoku Shūsui himself would again become implicated in the High Treason Incident (daigyaku jiken 大逆事件), a controversial case wherein he was accused of an attempt to murder the Meiji Emperor and subsequently sentenced to death. For those who were enthusiastic about the vision of a revolution, like the “converted” Kōtoku Shūsui, the Meiji state’s draconian crackdown on individuals who were implicated in socialist, anarchist, and communist activities might have silenced them as their leaders were detained.

Meanwhile, for parliamentarian socialists, the dissolution of Japan Socialist Party signified their exclusion from the political establishment and might have blocked the road to realizing their political ideal. The latest extant article we can surely attribute to her was written in October 1904, whence four eventful years had passed. We do not know which side Imai Utako sided with after her thrice unfruitful parliamentary petition, but either way, there was more than enough reason for her to leave.

Famously termed as “the winter era of socialism” (fuyu no jidai 冬の時代), the execution of Kōtoku Shūsui ushered a decade in which few former activists managed to keep their fervency intact.

According to the governmental investigation dossier, Imai Utako was no longer deemed a member or sympathizer of any socialist cohort by August 1908 when

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Tokyo police raided many households in the light of the Red Flag Incident.\(^\text{188}\) Much as the police might want to convict anyone implicated, Imai Utako was classified as a person with no political affiliation and no sympathy towards the socialist or communist cause.\(^\text{189}\) Towards the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese socialist cohort disintegrated rapidly as the anti-war campaigns could no longer cement factional differences;\(^\text{190}\) however, this theory does not apply for Imai Utako, who had been enthusiastically pro-war all the way through. More importantly, she was still serving as a main contributor to the revived *Nikkan Heimin Shinbun* since January 1907 until its dissolution in April (See Figure 4). Reorganized by Kōtoku Shūsu and

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\(^{188}\) Suzuki, “『明治四十一年八月社会党に関する調査』抄 [Copy of August Meiji 41 Investigation into Those Related to Socialist Party],” 328.
\(^{189}\) Ibid.
\(^{190}\) Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 123.
Sakai Toshihiko 埼利彦 after Kōtoku Shūsui served his sentence for his translation of the Communist Manifesto in defiance against the censors, *Nikkan Heimin Shinbun* soon devolved into an arena of fierce debates between the parliamentarian socialists and those who favored “direct action” and deemed violence and the disruption of social orders justified in certain occasions. Although Imai Utako – as the following section will argue – was not regarded as a “socialist” by the some of the new generation of women activists, her fate in political arena had been closely tied to the embryonic era of Japanese socialist movement.

Clearly, Imai Utako’s own organization – Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai – did not play an essential role in her petitions, and the discontinuation of its organizational publication prevents further investigation on that end. Without a functioning social outlet or an agenda to pursue, Imai Utako thus became politically defunct, yet her legacy would be carried on and her unfinished endeavor accomplished. The political achievements of Shin Fujin Kyōkai – which include a successful petition for women’s right to political association in 1922 – is beyond the scope of the current paper. However, how the subsequent generation of feminists in the 1910s and 1920s reacted to the legacies of their predecessors does. Since Imai Utako had stopped to speak for herself in the rest of her life, the evolvement of different interpretations of her past achievements and faults also constitutes a historiographical element. Having established Imai Utako’s historical contribution, in order to account for the relative little scholarly attention she received, the next section will investigate how Imai

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Utako was represented by her contemporaries and successors – both of whose account are heavily relied upon in the study of the intellectual history of late Meiji.
Contextualizing Imai Utako’s Petitions and Legacies

Like William Sewell and Marc Bloch have forcefully argued, it is important to differentiate the general causes and specific ones when studying historical events and figures in comparison with their contemporaries.\(^{192}\) In agreement with much of the current literature, this paper has so far identified the disagreeable political climate for activists with socialist connections since the Russo-Japanese War as the general cause for the decline in socialist – in the broader sense – activities and the ostracization of related personnel from the political arena. A case of this general trend notwithstanding, there were another two points about Imai Utako that requires accounting for more specifically. First, she appeared to have changed her position as a major contributor to become disenchanted with socialist cause within a short period; second, members of Shin Fujin Kyōkai, which was established in 1919 and eventually succeeded in securing women’s right to political association, seemed to have given disproportionately little credit to Imai Utako for her earlier work.

First, the lack of primary source directly addressing Imai Utako’s activity after her second failed petition prohibits a definite answer, but the study of socialist movement in Japan in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War might help us identify some propellant factors. First, Kōtoku Shūsui, whose friendship was perceivably vital for Imai Utako’s position in the socialist cohort, shifted his position as a parliamentary socialist to a pro-anarchist. After being released in 1907, he had become hesitant regarding his support for Imai Utako’s petition for the right to political association.\(^{193}\) He wrote in the leader titled “Women and Socialism” on the September 1\(^{st}\), 1907 issue of Sekai Fujin the following:


\(^{193}\) Mackie, Creating Socialist Women in Japan, 66.
Male workers in the United States and Europe are entitled to vote, but they were still treated like animals and slaves ... If the economic structure remains as it is today ... we should not be satisfied only by women enfranchisement but to bear in mind that the ultimate answer lies in socialism.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, Katō Tokijirō, the initiator of Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko to Heiminsha, was in Europe during since December 1906 and only to return in September 1908, attending the Seventh Congress of the Second International at Stuttgart.¹⁹⁵ There are conflicting narratives on which figure in Heiminsha first got into contact with Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko concerning their membership with Heiminsha. Murata Shizuko, in her biography for Fukuda Hideo, claims that it was Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko who first invited them to make speeches in Heiminsha and hence initiated them to be members.¹⁹⁶ Speeches at Heiminsha might well be when Imai Utako began closely associated with its activities, according to Imai Utako’s reflection sixty-two years afterward, it was Katō Tokijirō who introduced her to the socialist cohort.¹⁹⁷ Like Imai Utako, Katō Tokijirō is apparently more sympathetic to parliamentarian path and reformism, so his friendship and support seemed to be both personally and ideologically important for Imai Utako to stay within the socialist cohort.¹⁹⁸ However, he was probably out of touch when the consecutive failed petitions further divided figures like Imai Utako, who were interested in a parliamentary solution, and others like Fukuda Hideko and Kōtoku

¹⁹⁶ Murata, Fukuda Hideko 福田英子 (Tokyō: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1963), 102.
¹⁹⁷ Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Iami Utako],” 269–70.
¹⁹⁸ Narita, 87-94
Shūsui who were frustrated and growing more skeptical of the parliamentary path. In conclusion, Katō Tokijirō’s absence during 1906-8 might have contributed to Imai Utako’s eventual exile from Heiminsha. Friendship was the key cohesion for Imai Utako to stay in the cohort. In 1966, when Ichikawa Fusae tried to interview Imai Utako for her involvement in her early life, she appeared to be reluctant to converse with Ichikawa Fusae. The latter then showed her a 1905 group photo of members of Heiminsha convening in solidarity (See Figure 5), protesting the incarceration of Kōtoku Shūsui and Nishikawa Kōjirō. It was not until this time when Imai Utako finally “became apparently touched and started recounting her experience.”199 The subsequent dissolution of Heiminsha and the rise of factionalism drove away the

199 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269.
camaraderie and had arguably estranged Imai Utako insofar as her predilection for communitarian rapport was concerned.

Second, Fukuda Hideko, who had assumed greater leadership when Kōtoku Shūsui was serving in jail, was knowingly more hostile towards women of aristocratic or middle-class origin after the Red Flag Incident, and much more critical of the idea that holds women as “helpmates” of men. After Heimin Shinbun discontinued, Fukuda Hideko on January 1st, 1907 founded Sekai Fujin, a bi-monthly publication solely devoted to women’s issues and it soon attracted many former female affiliates of Heiminsha. Fukuda Hideko famously remarks on the objective of Sekai Fujin in the inaugural issue:

What is the reason [for us] to publish Sekai Fujin? If to cover it in one sentence, it is to disentangle women from [the restrictions of] law, customs, morality, and alike in search for women’s nature and destiny. It is our hope to advocate and advance activism for reforms of this nature based on the real vocation of women.

Contrasted with Imai Utako’s emphasis on self-cultivation, engagement with “productive business,” and alignment with the state establishment, Fukuda Hideko’s objective is conspicuously more radical and populist based. Such discrepancy is also highlighted by choice of design: Unlike Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, Sekai Fujin uses furigana for all articles and the price per issue is also forty percent cheaper, indicating a more plebeian and inclusive readership. As mentioned before, Imai Utako’s then defunct Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, by contrast, publishes multiple untranslated English articles and Chinese poems. The different approaches to the audience are telling regarding two figures disagreement on how to fight for women’s

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200 Fukuda Ei 福田英, “婦人問題の解決 [The Solution to Women’s Problems],” 青鞜附録 Seitō Supplement, 1913.
political right. Fukuda Hideko did not seem to be passionate in Imai Utako’s parliamentary petitions to begin with, as she excused herself from personally lead the campaign in the first petition, and would only lend support to the second one at the very late stage despite being the most senior female activist in the cohort. On the eve of the parliamentary hearing of Imai Utako’s second petition, Fukuda Hideko writes:

About a year ago when my [old] comrades of Heiminsha proposed to petition the House of Representatives for revising Public Security and Police Law and I was supposed to lead this endeavor. [However], I was physically debilitated at the time, and I was not well-versed either, so when my junior brothers and sisters [of Heiminsha] asked me to go out [and lead the movement], I declined their request ... However, now I realized the importance of it and would like to pledge myself to this noblest cause.²⁰²

In the light of the subsequent defeat of the amendment by the House of Peers, an article on Sekai Fujin vows “to face one setback with the twofold courage to live on; to return the twofold defeat with four-time as much effort to continue.”²⁰³

However, on the coming year’s Sekai Fujin there is only a short notice on Imai Utako’s third attempt – the one that carried out by Endō Kiyoko after Imai Utako fell ill – on section five.²⁰⁴ Clearly, the priority of Fukuda Hideko was to “disentangle women from the webs of laws, customs, morality, etc.,” and like Kōtoku Shūsui in 1907, she was not optimistic even in the case of a successful petition, for enfranchised workers in Euromerican regions were still treated as slaves.²⁰⁵ To further illustrate their ideological divide, no single article is attributed to Imai Utako throughout the two-year publication of Sekai Fujin whereas contributions by both Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, the erstwhile leaders of Heiminsha, are

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²⁰³ “吾等が求めの否決 [On the Defeat of Our Petition],” Sekai Fujin 世界婦人, April 15, 1908, sec. 2.
²⁰⁴ Fukuda, “福田英謹んで申し [A Polite Note from Fukuda Ei]”
frequent. Indeed, the repeated defeats of the parliamentary petition had further antagonized social activists like Kōtoku Shūsui and Fukuda Hideko against the culturally and politically conservatives who were in control of the House of Peers and the state establishment in general. No wonder they would have less and less interest in Imai Utako’s lost cause. Imai Utako, on the contrary, was sympathetic towards the deeds of Women’s Patriotic Association and did not reject the idea of ryōsai kenbo, presumably making her smoldering ideological conflicts escalated only sometime after the 1905 petition. It is thus reasonable to conclude that Imai Utako’s exodus took place when she became ideologically alienated and organizationally desolated by her former colleagues.

Third, in the police investigation of Imai Utako in the light of the Red Flag Incident suggests that “[She] lived a humble life when the magazine [of Nijū Seiki no Fujin]; now she has no stable career and could be leading a difficult life.” It is not known if any family or personal misfortune had struck her, making further participation in political movement unmanageable financially. Regardless of the reason, Imai Utako’s fifty-eight-year-long life in political oblivion commenced such that she appeared to be only reunited with quite a few of her 1904-5 comrades sixty-one years later when Ichikawa Fusae managed to locate her and visited her. The contrast between Imai Utako’s historical stature and the scarcity of scholarly works related to her is glaring: when her name indeed comes up, it is invariably recognized as the pioneering figures of women’s participation involvement in the late Meiji

207 Suzuki, “『明治四十一年八月社会党に関する調査』抄 [Copy of August Meiji 41 Investigation into Those Related to Socialist Party],” 328.
208 Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて A Visit to Imai Utako,” 269.
political movement. The premature death of her political life has undoubtedly made its contribution.

Also, we need to contextualize Imai Utako’s petition and the reception of it not as an exception to the rules but in the light of the late Meiji parliamentary politics. Her 1904, 1906, and 1908 petitions were all passed by the House of Representatives with an overwhelming number of members in favor; on March 16th, 1907; it was “passed in a round of applause” in the House of Representatives.209 After the Enactment of Meiji Constitution in 1890, men over age twenty-five had paid a minimum of 15-yen annual direct tax were enfranchised to vote in the election of the House of Representatives.210 An electorate of about 450,000 people voted in the inaugural 1890 election. However, the House of Peers remained unelected, and Meiji genrō, while not holding any official government or parliamentary appointments, continued to wield considerable power as advisors to the cabinet and Meiji Emperor.211 The latter two institutions were considerably more conservative regarding women’s right to political association. The House of Peers’ thrice rejection of the amendment passed by the House of Representatives took place against the backdrop of the feuds between the two Houses of the Diet in the embryonic ages of the parliamentary politics in the late Meiji. As the result of the taxation threshold, Dietmen in the House of Representatives were “predominantly middle class and largely rural” like the electorate, whereas the House of Peers was unelected, usually tenable for life, and formed by members of the imperial family, kazoku, aristocrats, those with exceptional direct taxation contribution, and those promoted by special

209 “吾等の勝利 [Our Victory],” Sekai Fujin 世界婦人, March 15, 1908, sec. 2.
210 Gluck, Japan’s Modern Myths, 67-72.
imperial sanctions. The House of Peers was a designated political bulwark against parliamentary politics and “the public opinion of the people” (*minkan no yoron* 民間の世論). Note that “public opinion” in the late Meiji was different from the commonly conceived “popular opinion,” as both the electorate and the Dietmen in the House of Representatives were people of some sort of estate, either inherited through pre-Meiji privileges or newly attained through industry and business brought about by the modernization of Japanese state. The difference in composition directly translated into their opposing stance in terms of the nature of parliamentary politics.

The parliamentary dynamics of the late Meiji determined that the House of Representatives were enthusiastic in expanding the scope of political participation since the day of its foundation whereas the House of Peers and the Meiji government firmly opposed such. The cabinet of Japan in the late Meiji was not formed by the elected members of the House of Representatives but was instead appointed by the Emperor at the recommendations of *genrō*, former Prime Ministers, and other of personal importance to Meiji oligarchs – most of whom were unsurprisingly also prominent members of the House of Peers. Seiji 政治, or politics, was a stigmatized term the designation of which was inchoate and underpinned many controversies on the parliamentary floor. Politics was put in a position not always in alignment with the perceived national interest by the pre-constitutional era oligarchs, who in turn persuaded the Meiji Emperor to issue imperial rescripts that preclude influence of politics in the field of bureaucracy, national education, and the military and

213 Ibid., 49-60. The House of Representatives, however, retains the authority to block government budget bill in order to force the cabinet to resign.
characterize them as that of “His Majesty the Emperor’s.” For example, the 1882 Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (gunjin chokuyu 軍人勅諭) stipulates that the army and navy’s loyalty to the Emperor “should not be confused by politics or public opinion,” and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo 教育ニ関スル勅語) also puts emphasis on filial piety and the loyalty to the Emperor. Both of these two imperial rescripts were in effect, and the memorization of which required until the end of World War II. The question of kokutai 国体, is the controversy over how the Meiji state was structurally defined by the relationship between the Emperor and its subjects; or in the words of Itō Tasaburō 伊東多三郎, who first studied it in 1936, “the harmonious unity of the ruler and the people, the whole nation as one family under the rule of the emperor, his line unbroken for ages eternal.” Following the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution, Japan formally adopted constitutional monarchy and a political system modeled after Britain’s Westminster style of a two-house Imperial Diet, but the kokutai, the spiritual and moral essence of the organization of Meiji state remained unchanged. Politics and politicians were thus deemed self-centered and sometimes to the detriment of ones’ devotion to the state and the Emperor, and vital national apparatus like the military and education should be protected in an enclave from “political” taints. Therefore, arguments that championed political association as an act of citizenry were welcomed in the House of Representatives but spurned by the cabinet and the House of Peers which believed that those who were either

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215 James L. McClain, Japan, A Modern History, 1st ed., (New York, N.Y: W.W. Norton), 2002, 201-2. As the result, military personnel were also precluded from political association by the same clause that Imai Utako campaigned for the repeal.
psychologically vulnerable (e.g. women and children) or of national importance (e.g. soldiers) should be “protected” from political influence lest to be led astray from their loyal servitude to the Emperor. Participation in politics might cultivate citizenship, but the *kokutai* of Meiji Japan essentialized the loyalty to the Emperor and deemed politics potentially divisive and only favored sectarian interests. Hence almost every bill passed by the House of Representatives relaxing the restrictions on political association and participation was rejected by the House of Peers in the late Meiji;²¹⁸ Imai Utako’s petitions were simply of no exception.

Second, the little acknowledgment of her endeavor by the immediate successors of women’s political right in the 1920s – at the height of Taishō Democracy – postulates a curious selective remembrance, or the lack of thereof, of its recently conceived intellectual and political lineage. The establishment of Shin Fujin Kyōkai and its campaign for the final repeal of the prohibition marks a watershed in how the first three unfruitful petitions during 1904-8 were reconstructed and re-conceptualized. Importantly, in the writings of those who participated in *Shin Fujin Kyōkai*’s campaigns in the 1920s, like Ichikawa Fusae and Hiratsuka Raichō, Endō Kiyoko had been awarded much more recognition in terms of her contribution to the first three petitions. Historical narratives are, of course, selective; and popular movement such as petitions are necessarily a collective work. However, such narrative that privileges Endō Kiyoko had also had itself translated into much secondary literature on Meiji and Taishō women’s movements. The reason for the shift in historical narrative appears to be twofold: 1) Ichikawa Fusae’s personal acquaintance with Endō Kiyoko, and 2) the political expediency of highlighting the role of Endō Kiyoko for her participation in the campaigns of *Shin Fujin Kyōkai*.

For example, writing in *Josei Dōmei* 女性同盟, the organization publication of *Shin Fujin Kyōkai* 証人女性同盟 between 1920 October and December, Ichikawa Fusae referred to the past unfruitful petitions as “the [Petition] Movements of Endō Kiyoko et al.” and had named Endō Kiyoko preceding Imai Utako and all other participants when recounting their contributions. By contrast, Endō Kiyoko’s name was virtually unmentioned in sources contemporaneous to the first two petitions. She was not one of the women at Heiminsha, nor was her name appeared among the list of staffs of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin* or members of Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai. Ichikawa Fusae and Hiratsuka Raichō, however, did seem to be rather unfamiliar with the endeavors of Heiminsha – understandably after more than a decade of silence in Japanese socialist movement, and their source of information regarding predecessors seemed to come through mainly through Endō Kiyoko. When recounting how Shin Fujin Kyōkai set up the right for women to political association as its first target, Ichikawa Fusae admitted that the idea came from Endō Kiyoko personally:

> We quickly started to initiate movements, but we could not commit to multiple deeds simultaneously. When we first decided what to do, Endō Kiyoko was a friend of Hiratsuka [Raichō], and she told me that [Endō Kiyoko] was involved in similar movements before. Therefore, she took me to meet [Endō Kiyoko], and we talked a lot. That was when the story about the movement of [the petition to repeal] the Article Five of the Public Security and Police Law came out. [Endō Kiyoko] stopped there and asked, "please carry on with this endeavor." And we responded, "Then it might be a good idea to start with that first." That is why we first took up the movement to revise the Article Five of the Public Security Police Law.

As a result, Endō Kiyoko became an invited speaker on the first public speech conference organized by Shin Fujin Kyōkai in February 1920 to recount the story and

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mobilize attendees to renew this campaign. However, we do not have the details of their conversation nor have the transcript of Endō Kiyoko’s speech survived, so her version of the story is irredeemable. According to Suzuki Yukō’s compilation of personal profiles of women in Heiminsha, all of them had either died or became disenchanted in social activism by the early 1920s. Nishikawa Fumiko would eventually rejoin the campaign for women’s suffrage after Shin Fujin Kyōkai’s successful petition for women’s right to political association in 1922. Nevertheless, during 1919-20, the formative years of Shin Fujin Kyōkai, the other four major players in the 1904-8 petitions were absent from the scene. Fukuda Hideko was of senior age and Sakai Tameko were secluded from the political arena. Kawamura Haruko had passed away in on September 9th, 1913. The whereabouts of Imai Utako is unclear except for one remark of Fukushima Shirō in 1935 that he encounter Imai Utako at an art exhibition “about ten years ago.” In other words, the 1920s movement for women’s right to political association and suffrage was the initiative of a new generation, and Endō Kiyoko had been the most tangible bridge it retained with the old generation of women’s right movement. Hence it was natural for Endō Kiyoko to receive more recognition than her peers.

221 Itō Tamiko伊東民子, “時代の先覚者として生きた遠藤（岩野）清 —『青鞜』同人遠藤清（岩野清子）の思想とその時代 [− Kiyō Endo (Iwano): Her Thoughts and Her Times — a Pioneer of the Women’s Rights Activist and a Coterie of the Seito—],” 184.
223 Ibid.
226 Fukushima, “三十年の昔語り [In Reminiscence of the Past Thirty-Five Years],” 8.
When Ichikawa Fusae retold the story in the much later age of her life, Imai Utako and her chief assistant Kawamura Haruko did not stand out. As she spoke to a gathering of journalists in 1979 on her reflection on early movements for women’s right to association, Ichikawa Fusae remarked:

In the beginning, it was Sakai Tameko, and later Fukuda Hideko et al. also joined the subsequent petition movements ... Towards the end of the [petition] movement, the leader was a person named Endō Kiyoko, the wife of a fine novelist named Iwano Awaji. I have met this person directly and listened to the story in which she went to the Imperil Diet wearing white roses on her chest ... in the end the campaign ended without success.\textsuperscript{227}

We also do not know if Endō Kiyoko was in touch with Imai Utako after she took over Imai Utako’s last petition attempt in 1908. Nevertheless, we do know that Endō Kiyoko’s marriage was a matchmaking by Imai Utako but did end up happily:

I heard by the end of the movement, Endō Kiyoko, the ex-spouse of Iwano Akira, went to the parliament alone, wearing white roses on her chest. It seemed that Imai Utako was the one who introduced Iwano Akira and Endō Kiyoko to each other.\textsuperscript{228}

Endō Kiyoko would, unfortunately, die in mere nine months, succumbing to syndromes induced by cholelithiasis and not living until the day when their campaign finally bore fruits. Also, Endō Kiyoko joined Hiratsuka Raichō’s Seitōsha in 1911 and had become a fellow of Hiratsuka Raichō ever since. She was later involved in a high-profile and controversial divorce case with her husband.\textsuperscript{229} In other words, either for personal acquaintance or for the theatricality of the story, Endō Kiyoko appears to be a better heroine to whom Shin Fujin Kyōkai’s could attribute its activist and political lineage. As mentioned in the very first section of this paper, this version of the narrative was also translated into much secondary literature on Japanese women’s struggle for political rights in the early twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{227} Ichikawa, “婦人と政治 [Women and Politics].”
\textsuperscript{228} Ichikawa, “今井歌子さんを訪ねて [A Visit to Imai Utako],” 269–70.
\textsuperscript{229} Orii, Shinjuku Rekishi ni Ikita Josei Hyakunin, 32–3.
To conclude, Imai Utako’s former colleagues, like Fukuda Hideko and Kōtoku Shūsui, of Heiminsha gradually become more alienated from the political establishment as the result of the entrenched hostility of the Meiji state, and thus also increasingly disinterested in Imai Utako’s approach to advance women’s right or to fight for civil rights in general. Especially in the aftermath of the Red Flag Incident, those would unrelentingly stay vocal in the political arena were vocally critical of the status quo, and usually more prolific and would spurn the idea of “petition” like Fukuda Hideko and Kōtoku Shūsui. And the lack of mentioning of Imai Utako could be either due to personal estrangement or simply because Imai Utako was no longer politically relevant. Endō Kiyoko, the one who did stay and managed to personally connect the three different generations of feminists – women of Heiminsha of the early 1900s, women of Seitōsha of the 1910s, and women of Shin Fujin Kyōkai of the 1920s, became the new champion. Whether a deliberate choice or not, Imai Utako only assumed a place of little importance in the reconstructed narrative of early feminist movement by her immediate successors.
Epilogue

Four years after the premature death of Endō Kiyoko, Imai Utako’s comrade-in-arms in her last ill-fated petition seventeen years ago, Fukushima Shirō would accidentally stumble across her in a rather informal occasion at an art exhibition in 1925. “[Although] it had been quite a while since I last time saw her, her charm had not aged a day.” So remarked Fukushima Shirō in 1935, ten years after his encounter with Imai Utako in the memoir of his own thirty-five years in journalism with Fujin Shinbun. They had not kept in touch with each other, otherwise, in the chronicles of the same memoir, Fukushima Shirō would not have mistaken the date when Nijyū Seiki no Fujin first went public.230 It was a brief reunion of two old acquaintances – when Nijyū Seiki no Fujin was still in circulation twenty years ago, they would frequent each other at the club for journalists at women’s magazines. However, be it voluntary or not, they had been apparently out of touch for a long time. In response to his compliment, Imai Utako self-mocked as an “obsolete old lady.”231 She might have meant it well: it was the best of time and the worst of time of Taishō Democracy. The same year witnessed the passage of The General Election Law,232 which enfranchised all men over twenty-five years old – the very first agenda Heiminsha had fought for – and the Public Security Preservation Law233 – essentially a carte blanche for the government to prosecute and the court to incriminate anyone sympathetic towards anarchism, socialism, and communism.234 It was not

230 Fukushima, Fujinkai Sanjūgo-nen 婦人界三十五年, 1094. Fukushima Shirō’s chronicle identifies July Meiji 37 [1904] as the month of its birth, whereas the first issue of Nijyū Seiki no Fujin was in fact published in February of the same year.

231 Fukushima, “三十五年の昔語り [In Reminiscence of the Past Thirty-Five Years],” 8.

232 Futsu Senkyo-hō 普通選挙法 passed the Imperial Diet on May 5th, 1925.

233 Chian Iji-hō 治安維持法 was enacted on May 12th, 1925.

mentioned what Imai Utako had associated herself since the Red Flag Incident, but she told Fukushima Shirō that her friend Kawamura Haruko had become a “knitting teacher” before she left behind three young kids and passed away in 1913. It appeared that Imai Utako’s had been leading a life reclusive of public affairs henceforth. Although her appearance as a public figure was brief and twice in her early life was her career disrupted by “poor health condition,” Imai Utako did manage to lead a long life until 1968, when she passed away at the age of ninety-one.235

The impression of Imai Utako framed by her articles, actions, and the images of her is the one of a combatant – her leadership in Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, her petitions, and her gathering with her colleagues of Heiminsha and Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai either in support of women’s right or the war. She wrote no autobiographical works, or none of such had survived; her most intimate and “supporting spouse” (nyō-bōyaku 女房役) Kawamura Haruko died young, and Imai Utako did not seem to have married for the rest of her life.236 As a result, little information about her personal life could be reliably identified. Much as this paper has attempted to salvage her from historical oblivion by putting together bits and pieces of her life and activities, it may well a doomed objective to humanize her: due to the nature of sources used to study her, Imai Utako does appear to be a person of argumentation and action – a “female lobbyist” as she was nicknamed amongst her friends at Heiminsha. Fortunately, we do have one personal writing of her survived.

As a magazine affiliated with Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai, all attributed articles are composed by under feminine names, with Wang Hongnian as the only exception.

236 Nishikawa, 61.
Among the extant issues, he has contributed an op-ed piece in the inaugural issue and another poem on seasonal felicitations.\(^{237}\) It is likely that his opinion on the prospect of women’s role is concurrent with that of Imai Utako such that Wang Hongnian would be allowed to be the only male contributor to *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*. Half a year after the inaugural issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, he finished his degree in law and departed for his home country. Imai Utako marked their parting with her only extant non-argumentative writings:

客中送客上江樓、千里清風冷似秋、
話罷愴然垂別淚、征帆無影水空流、

Ascending the pavilion by the river to send off a guest as *ipso facto* a guest myself; The thousand-li long zephyr echoes the ethos of autumn. The tears of farewell roll down our cheeks as we bid adieu; Stream proceeds forlornly, and the colors of [your] voyage cast no shadow.\(^{238}\)

This poem, composed in Chinese, appears on the seventh issue of *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, which was published in August 1904, by which Japan had already taken over Dalian and besieged the remnant of Russian Far East Fleet at Port Arthur.\(^{239}\) Interestingly, in the first line of this poem, Imai Utako refers to her bidding farewell to Wang Hongnian as “sending off a guest as a guest [herself].”\(^{240}\) The reference to oneself as a “guest” is prevalent in Chinese literati culture to emphasize that one does not belonging to one’s current milieu – a peripatetic life, either led voluntarily or not. Imai Utako was, of course, not native to Tokyo, but nor was she a mere traveler as we know it – both her alma maters were here and arguably so were the majority of her

\(^{237}\) 王鴻年 送王鴻年歸清國 [Seeing Wang Hongnian Returning to Qing China], *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, 1 February 1904 and 觀櫻 [Sakura Viewing], *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, 1 May 1904
\(^{238}\) Imai Utako 今井歌子, “送王鴻年歸清國 [Seeing Wang Hongnian Returning to Qing China],” *Nijyū Seiki no Fujin*, August 1, 1904. My own translation.
\(^{240}\) Imai, “送王鴻年歸清國 [Seeing Wang Hongnian Returning to Qing China].”
colleagues and friends. Thus, her sense of “not-belonging” might also come from somewhere else: that a comrade-in-arms was about to embark a new journey and that she was not in concurrence regarding what the on-going Russo-Japanese War would bring about with her colleagues in Heiminsha. Granted, Imai Utako might have very much enjoyed the heated debates of the prospect of Japan insofar as she as an eloquent debater was concerned. Nevertheless, as the name of her magazine suggests – “Women of the Twentieth Century” – it had been a celebratory fin-de-siècle syndrome in which she and her colleagues were weary with the past, enthusiastic about the prospect of change – all with a composed anxiety to avoid being left behind. Yet the deeds of Imai Utako and her colleagues attest to their commitment to, even only for a tenuous chance of a full blossom, their ideals.
# Appendix: A Chronicle of Imai Utako

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Meiji 3**  | -   | Imai Tōshichi, the head of Niigata Imai family, immigrates to Hokkaido. He established a successful enterprise of retailing two years afterward. | **Meiji 2 [1869]**  
Hokkaido was established and thus began the internalization of the former Ezo region. |
| **Meiji 10** | 0   | Imai Utako was born in Niigata Prefecture as a “daughter to a Buddhist temple.” | **January Ansei 7 [1860]**  
Niigata Prefecture was one of the earliest entrepôt open for foreign trade. |
| **About Meiji 23** | 13  | Imai Utako came to Tokyo and attended “a girls' school in Tsukiji,” presumably Joshi Gakuin. | **November Meiji 23 [1890]**  
The Enactment of The Constitution of the Empire of Japan  
**December Meiji 23 [1890]**  
Under the protest led by Yajima Kajiko, the erstwhile president of Joshi Gakuin, the prohibition against women’s observation of sessions of the House of Representatives was repealed. |
| **Meiji 34/5** | 24  | Imai Utako entered Japan’s Women University as the inaugural or second class of its students. | **Meiji 33 [1900]**  
The promulgation of *Public Security and Police Law*, which proscribed political association for women |
| **Meiji 34/5** | 24  | Imai Utako established Oriental Students Association at Japan’s Women University, where she met Endō Kiyoko who later became an ally of Imai. | **Meiji 34 [1901]**  
Japan’s Women University was established by Naruse Jinzō; like Tsukiji’s girls' school, it had Christian missionary background. |
| **November 22nd Meiji 35** | 25  | Imai Utako, together with Kawamura Haruko, established *Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai*. | **January Meiji 35 [1902]**  
The establishment of Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Tension with Russia escalated. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 4th Meiji 36 [1903]</td>
<td>The first formal meeting of <em>Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai</em>. Matsumae Fujiko was elected the president and announced on February 7th.</td>
<td>Matsumae Fujiko was the spouse of a <em>shishaku</em>, and Matsumae clan was the historical Tozama Daimyō at Oshimano-kuni.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4th Meiji 36 [1903]</td>
<td>The second formal meeting of <em>Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai</em>. Katō Yasuko was elected the vice president. Kawamura Haruko was elected for financial affairs, and Imai Utako was elected the chief organizer.</td>
<td>Katō Yasuko was the spouse of Katō Masanosuke, a politician and prominent landlord in Hokkaido.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10th Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>The fourth formal meeting of <em>Hokkaido Fujin Dōshikai</em>. A scheme for an organization publication, <em>Nijyū Seiki No Fujin</em>, was devised.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko joined <em>Heiminsha</em>, a socialist cohort, via the introduction of Katō Tokijirō.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>The first issue of <em>Nijyū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Imai Utako, as the de facto editor, contributed two articles: “The Mission of Us” and “The Living Women.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5th Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko were invited to give a speech at Socialist Women Panel Session of <em>Heiminsha</em>, where they made the acquaintance of Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko.</td>
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<td>February Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>Nationwide campaign for female students and housewives to support Japanese armies was initiated</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>March 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The second issue of <em>Niijū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The third issue of <em>Niijū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<td>April Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The third issue of <em>Niijū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<td>June Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The seventh issue of <em>Niijū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<td>July Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1st Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>The seventh issue of <em>Niijū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published.</td>
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<td>September 18th Meiji 37 [1904]</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1st</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>The last known issue of <em>Nijyū Seiki No Fujin</em> went published. This issue is now lost.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 38</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Nijyū Seiki no Fujin</em> discontinued sometime in early 1906 due to financial difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>[1905]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>January 24th</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>The first petition for women’s right to political association, led by Imai Utako, Kawamura Haruko, and other women of <em>Heiminsha</em>, was submitted to the House of Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 38</td>
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<td>[1905]</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Imai Utako was present in the gathering to sending off Kōtoku Shūsui and Nishikawa Kōjirō to serve their sentence for “seditious” socialist publication</td>
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<td>Meiji 38</td>
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<td>[1905]</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>The Conference of Journalists at Women’s Magazines. Imai Utako and Kawamura Haruko were invited along with other twenty publishers of women’s magazine in Tokyo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 38</td>
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<tr>
<td>[1905]</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Imai Utako’s first petition was rejected by Katsura Tarō, the erstwhile Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. December 10th Meiji 38 [1905] Imai Utako published an article “On Love Affair Questions” on <em>Kaben</em></td>
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<td>28th Meiji</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>28th Meiji</td>
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<td>[1905]</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>February Meiji 39 [1906]</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Imai Utako’s second petition for women’s right to political association</td>
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<tr>
<td>November Meiji 39 [1906]</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Imai Utako intended to revitalize the defunct Nijyū Seiki no Fujin, and Endō Kiyoko became her co-publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February Meiji 40 [1907]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Imai Utako became a main contributor of the revived Nikkan Heimin Shinbun</td>
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<tr>
<td>March Meiji 40 [1907]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Addition signatures in support of Imai Utako’s second petition were collected with the help of socialist women like Fukuda Hideko, Sakai Tameko, Kōtoku Chiyoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February Meiji 41 [1908]</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Imai Utako intended to launch the third petition for women’s right to political association; due to her sudden exacerbation of health condition, the petition was led by Endō Kiyoko instead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>August Meiji 41</td>
<td>Imai Utako’s home was searched and herself investigated by authorities for her connection with socialist movements.</td>
<td>The investigation record advises that Imai Utako not affiliated with any socialist organizations at the time. She seemed to become alienated from public attention hence.</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji 41 [1908]</td>
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<tr>
<td>June Meiji 41 [1908]</td>
<td>The Red Flag Incident led to a massive crackdown on anarchist, socialist, and communist movement</td>
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<td>5th July Meiji 42 [1909]</td>
<td>Fukuda Hideko’s <em>Sekai Fujin</em> discontinued</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9th Taishō 2 [1913]</td>
<td>Kawamura Haruko, Imai Utako’s most intimate ally in her petition and editorship, died</td>
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<td>Meiji 44 [1911]</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th November Taishō 8 [1919]</td>
<td>Shin Fujin Kyōkai was established by Hiratsuka Raichō, Ichikawa Fusae, and Oku Mumeo.</td>
<td>Hiratsuka Raichō inaugurated <em>Seitōsha</em> and Endō Kiyoko became a member of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18th Taishō 9 [1920]</td>
<td>Endō Kiyoko, who worked with Imai Utako since <em>Nijyū Seiki no Fujin</em> era and succeeded her third petition endeavor, died at the age of 38 because of cholelithiasis</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>February Taishō 9 [1921]</td>
<td>The first petition of Shin Fujin Kyōkai for the Revision of <em>Public Security and Police Law</em> was passed by the House of Representatives but rejected by the House of Peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>25th March Taishō 11 [1922]</td>
<td>Led by Sakamoto Makoto, the second petition of Shin Fujin Kyōkai for the Revision of <em>Public Security and Police Law</em> was passed by both House of the Imperial Diet. Women’s right to political association and attend political assembly was established.</td>
<td>Fukushima Shirō encountered Imai Utako at an art exhibition, where Imai Utako self-mockingly said “[she] had become an obsolete old woman.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>January Shōwa 41</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Ichikawa Fusae interviewed Imai Utako at her home in Tokyo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1966]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Imai Utako was deaf but in good health condition, living with an adopted daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15th Shōwa 43</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Imai Utako died at the age of 91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Works by Imai Utako (Extant and Attributable)

Articles:

今井歌子 Imai Utako, ‘發行の主旨 [The Purpose of This Publication]’, 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 February, 1904.
———. ‘生ける婦人 [The Living Women]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 February 1904.
———. ‘戦時に於ける婦人の覺悟 [Women’s Awareness in Wartime]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 February 1904.
———. ‘戦争と兒童教育 [War and Child Education]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 March 1904.
———. ‘戦争と風俗矯正 [War and the Remediation of Custom]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 April 1904.
———. ‘婦人の地位（須く自重して可なり） [The Status of Women: Must Maintain Self-importance]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 August 1904.
———. ‘妻としての女子 [Women as Wives]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 October 1904.

Poem:

———. ‘送王鴻年歸清國 [Seeing Wang Hongnian Returning to Qing China]’. 二十世紀の婦人 Nijyū Seiki No Fujin, 1 August 1904.
Primary Sources:


https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100620691.


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References in other Languages:


