SAMURAI *and* SILK

A Japanese and American Heritage

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Preface

This book is the product of a search for my heritage—my roots in Japan and America. It is basically made up of the biographies of my two grandfathers and shorter accounts of some of their descendants and relatives. Since both my grandfathers were prominent participants in the building of modern Japan, it also amounts to a personalized family view of modern Japanese history and Japanese–American relations.

The biography of my paternal grandfather, Matsukata Masayoshi, which constitutes the largest part of the book, is based on research I did some four decades ago, together with new materials I have obtained more recently, as well as extensive interviews with uncles, aunts, and friends who knew my grandfather. He was a major architect of the modernized Japan of the late nineteenth century, one of the small group of oligarchs known as the elder statesmen. His greatest achievements were in the field of Japan's financial and economic development, but, with little knowledge in these matters, I must leave it up to specialists to do justice to his financial career. Instead I have concentrated on a personal account of my grandfather, emphasizing the feudal background that formed his character, and on his broad career as a leader in government.

Unfortunately I have not been able to recapture my grandfather as a living, feeling human being. I personally met him only on formal occasions, when he seemed a remote godlike being to a small girl. Even his own sons and daughters regarded him with awe and never felt fully at ease with him. He had been a public figure ever since the

oldest of them was born, and he considered himself as belonging more to the nation than to his family. He had grown into a venerable and revered statesman—a figure in history—long before I was born. There was little family lore that brought out his human side, at least as far as I could discover. He left no family letters, probably because he never wrote any. His biographers, as is all too common in Japan, have written pure hagiography or else have simply dealt with his official policies. Except for his own memoirs of his childhood, there is nothing that brings him alive as a person. Still, his life allows a penetrating look into the great transition Japan underwent in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the view of his career from within his family makes the cold facts of history a little more alive through the experiences of real people.

Originally I intended to write only about my Matsukata grandfather, but some ten years ago my uncle Yoneo Arai, then of Greenwich, Connecticut, but since deceased, sent me a copy of a booklet he had privately printed. It consisted of one chapter taken from a larger publication, *East Across the Pacific: Historical and Sociological Studies of Japanese Immigration and Assimilation* (Clio Press, 1972), edited by Hilary Conroy and a personal friend of ours, Scott T. Miyakawa, now deceased, who was a professor of sociology at Boston University. The book is a study of first- and second-generation Japanese in America—the so-called issei and nisei—and the chapter reprinted from it, written by Miyakawa, was about my maternal grandfather, Rioichiro Arai, and some of his issei contemporaries; it was based in large part on my grandfather's letters and documents as well as extensive interviews with my uncle. I remembered my grandfather as a cheerful, wonderfully kind old man, but I had no knowledge of his coming to America in 1876 at the age of twenty to start direct Japanese silk exports to the United States or of his important achievements in the development of economic relations between the two countries. The account of his life was an eye-opener for me, and I readily agreed to my husband's suggestion that I include his biography with that of my other grandfather.

Miyakawa's short biography started with my Arai grandfather's departure for the United States in 1876 and dealt only with his development of the silk trade. My search for background material led me to Hoshino Yasushi, professor emeritus of Tokyo Kogyo Daigaku (Tokyo

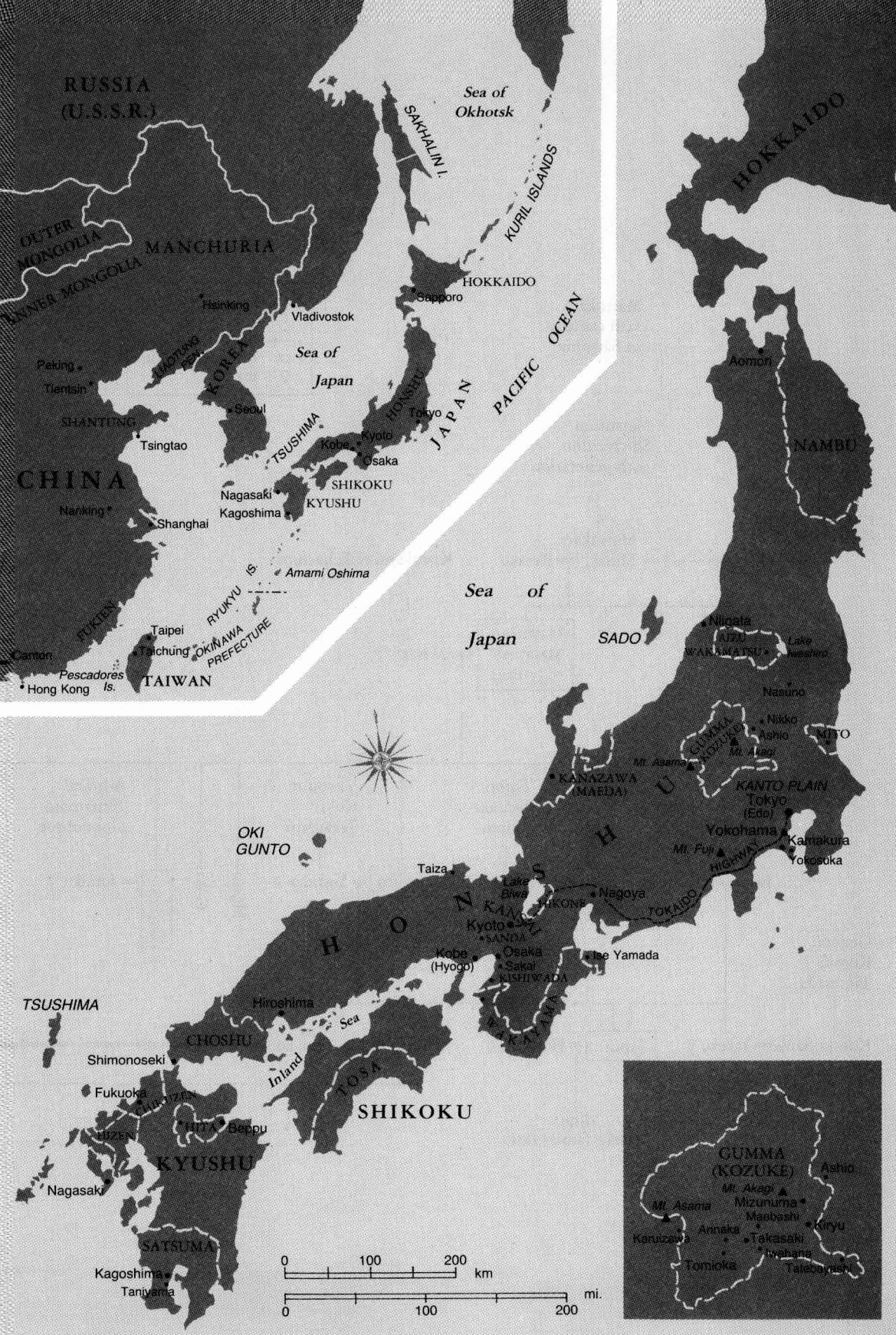
University of Engineering), who is an authority on electrical engineering and is known in Japan as the "father of magnetic tape." Professor Hoshino is the grandson of my Arai grandfather's oldest brother, Hoshino Chotaro, and the present head of the Hoshino family. My grandfather was born a Hoshino but had been adopted into the Arai family: hence the different surnames. He started the export of silk to America under the guidance of Hoshino Chotaro, but the two had a falling out, which lasted the rest of their lives. So I grew up knowing nothing about the Hoshino family and met Professor Hoshino for the first time only about ten years ago. He welcomed me with enthusiasm and offered his full cooperation in my undertaking. He also told me of well-kept family records dating back several centuries and of early records of the silk trade, all of which were kept in an old family storehouse in Gumma. He promised to start looking through them and to send me copies of relevant materials. A thorough researcher, he sent most of the documents that enabled me to write the first three chapters of my Arai grandfather's biography. Professor Hoshino realized the historical significance of the documents, which up until then had lain about in a dusty and inflammable storehouse, and has started to have the materials microfilmed, catalogued, and placed in a special archive.

The lives of my two grandfathers dovetailed beautifully, giving a fuller picture of Japan's economic success in the modern world than an account of either could if taken alone. My Matsukata grandfather was the leading figure in establishing modern Japan's financial foundations, but my Arai grandfather typified the private entrepreneurship that took advantage of these foundations to build a thriving economy. Without the foundations the one laid, the success of the other would have been impossible, but without Arai's sort of entrepreneurship, the statesmanship of Matsukata might have created only an empty shell. Their careers represent the two sides of the coin of modern Japanese economic history. They also illustrate the national and international dimensions of Japan's development. Since some of their descendants and relatives further broadened these themes, I decided to include a section on them as well. To help orient the reader I have added an introduction where I briefly recount my own life.

I wish to express my thanks to those who aided me in this project. I am particularly indebted to Professor Yasushi Hoshino for the materials on my Arai grandfather's early life and to my uncle Yoneo Arai, who made available my grandfather's documents, letters, photographs, and personal possessions, which he had kept in storage in his Greenwich home. I feel a great sense of relief to know that all his papers have since been sent to special archives in the University of California at Los Angeles, where they are safely kept with other materials about the early Japanese in America.

My gratitude goes to many of my relatives on both sides of the family and to various friends for providing helpful information, criticism, and aid. My cousin Matsukata Mineo, the present head of the Matsukata family, gave me access to documents, photographs, and personal possessions of my paternal grandfather kept in his country home in Nasuno. I am grateful to Matsumoto Shigeharu, Matsukata Saburo, Ushiba Tomohiko and Nobuhiko, and my aunt Mitsu Arai for the supplementary oral information they all gave me. I have also found helpful the recent publications by some of my informants, such as Matsumoto Shigeharu's *Shanghai Jidai* (Shanghai Period), published by Chuokoronsha, Tokyo, 1975; letters and articles of Matsukata Saburo, compiled and published in several volumes by the Matsukata family; Ushiba Nobuhiko's personal history, *Gaiko no shunkan* (A Moment in Diplomacy), published by Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, Tokyo, 1984; and the section by Okabe Nagaakira in *Katarizuku Showa shi* (Tales of Showa History), published by Asahi Shinbunsha, Tokyo, 1977. My cousins Matsumoto Shigeharu and Ushiba Tomohiko were good enough to read and correct parts of the manuscript. Albert and Teruko Craig kindly read and commented on the whole text. Finally, my deepest thanks go to my husband for all his encouragement and help. His advice in shaping this book has been invaluable, and I have always been able to count on him for guidance with the historical background and for a great deal of editorial assistance.

H. M. R.
Belmont, Massachusetts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Mt. Akagi
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KANAZAWA
(MAEDA)
KANTO PLAIN
Tokyo
(Edo)
Yokohama
Kamakura
Yokosuka
Mt. Fuji
HIGHWAY
OKI
GUNTO
Taiza
Lake
Biwa
KAWACHI
IKOMA
Nagoya
TOKAIDO
Kyoto
SANDA
Kobe
(Hyogo)
Osaka
Sakai
ISHIWADA
Ise Yamada
KATSURAGI
TSUSHIMA
Hiroshima
Sea
CHOSHU
Shimonoseki
Inland
TOSA
Fukuoka
SHIKOKU
CHIKUZEN
CHIKUGO
Beppu
BUZEN
KYUSHU
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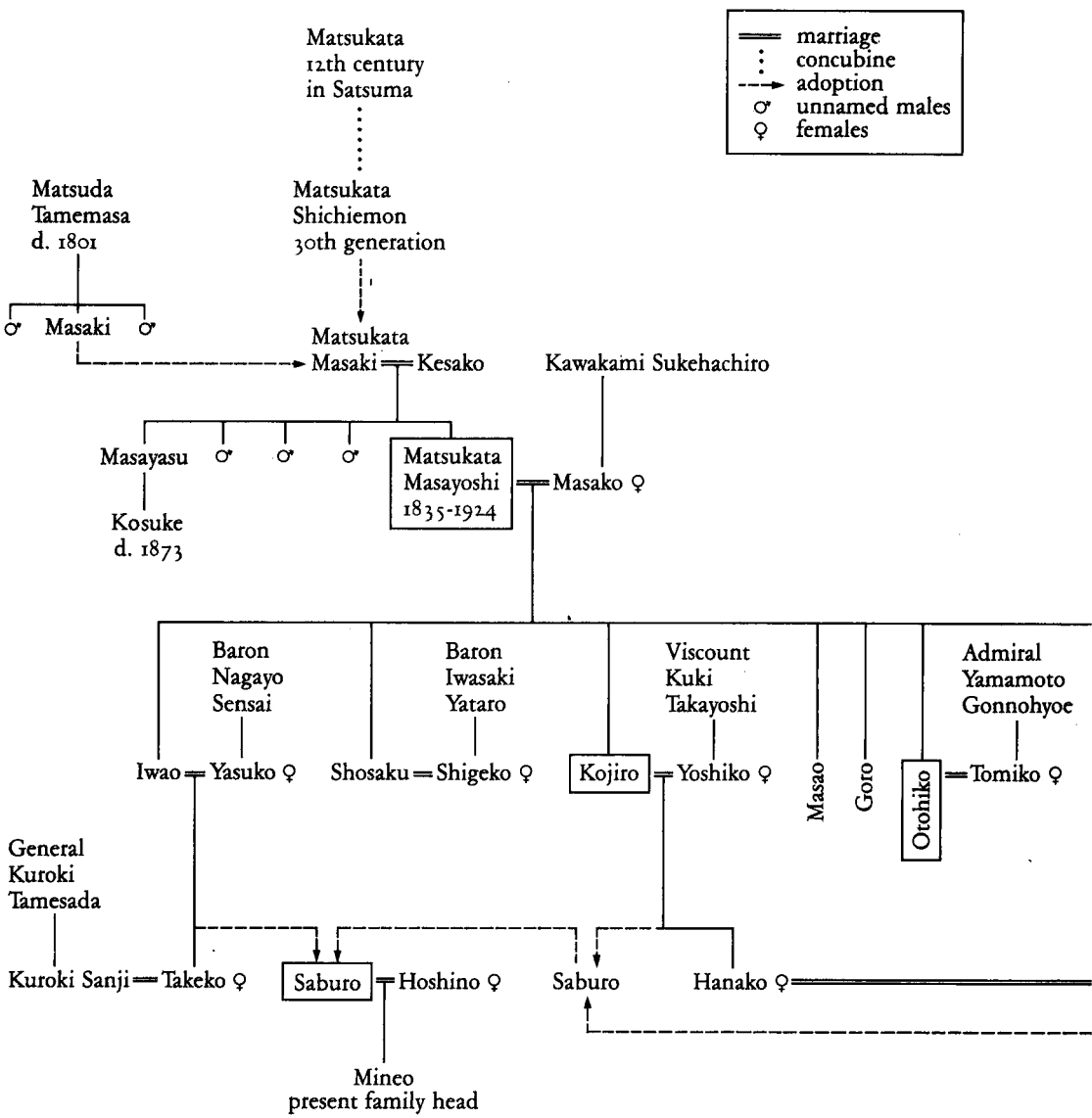
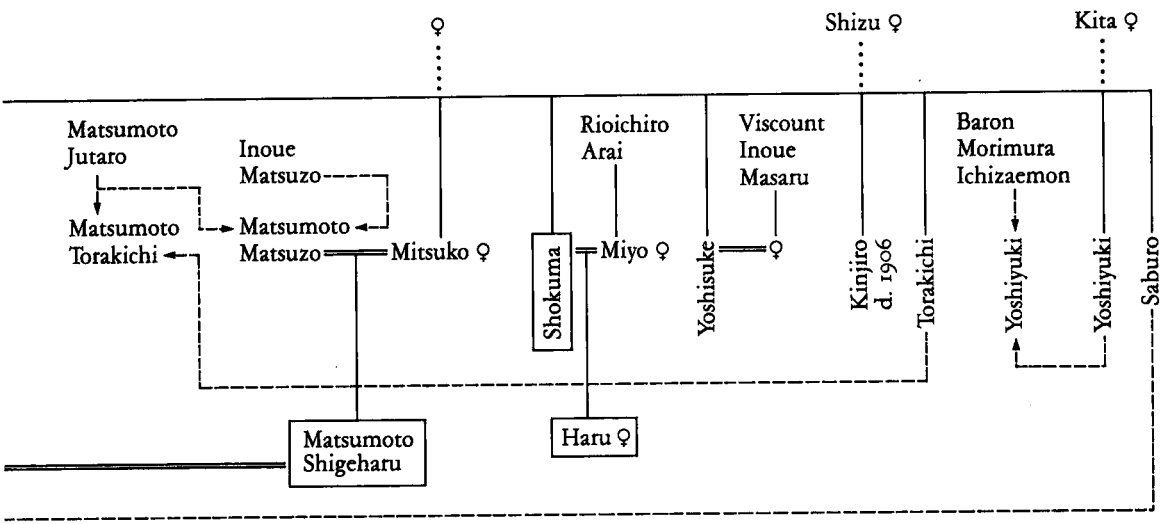
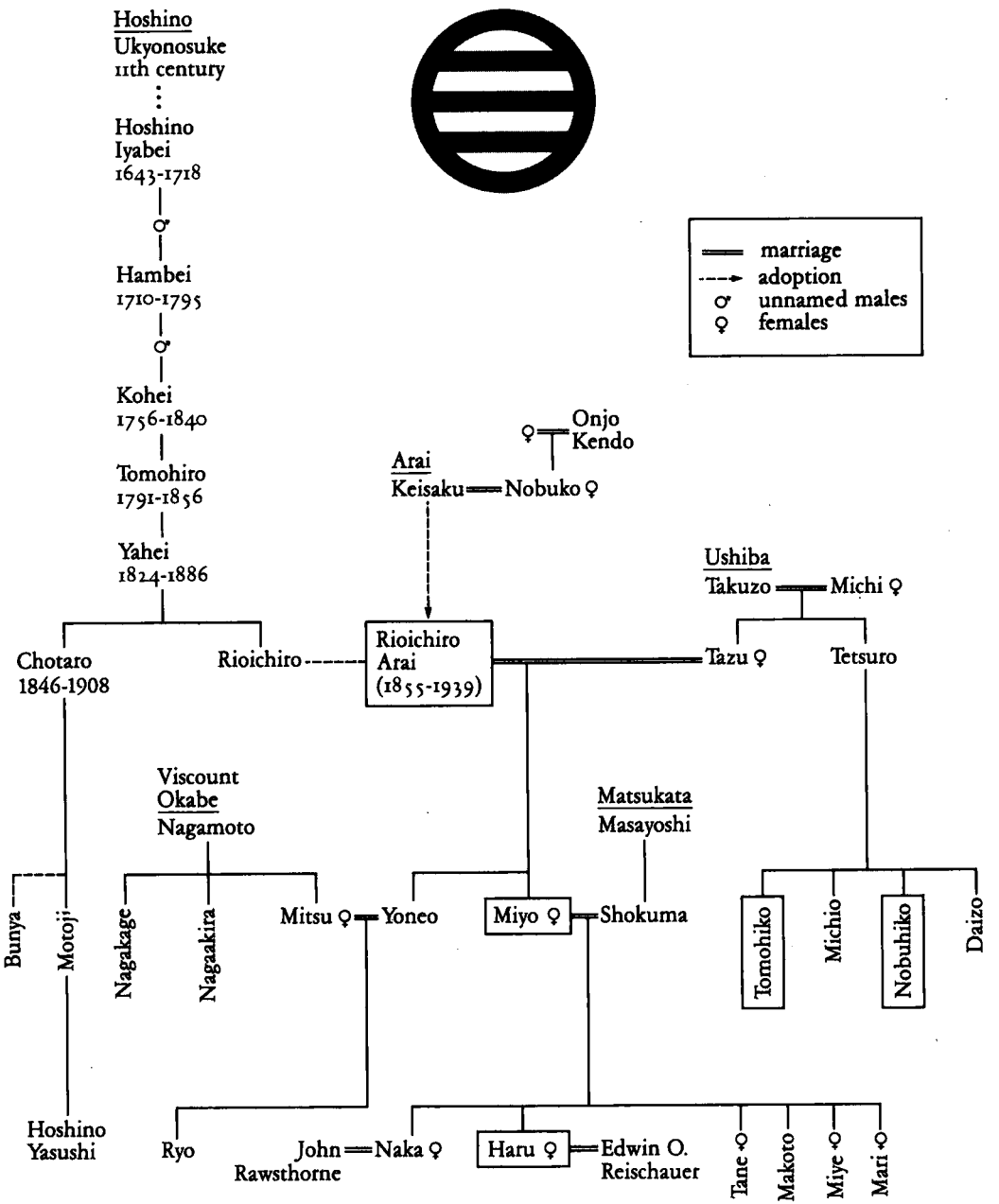
Kiryu
Annaka
Karuizawa
Takasaki
Iwahana
Tomioka
Tatebayashi


marriage
concubine
adoption
♂ unnamed males
♀ females
Matsukata
12th century
in Satsuma
Matsuda
Tamemasa
d. 1801
Matsukata
Shichiemon
30th generation
♂ Masaki ♂
Matsukata
Masaki = Kesako
Kawakami Sukehachiro
Masayasu ♂ ♂ ♂
Matsukata
Masayoshi
1835-1924
= Masako ♀
Kosuke
d. 1873
Baron
Nagayo
Sensai
Baron
Iwasaki
Yataro
Viscount
Kuki
Takayoshi
Admiral
Yamamoto
Gonnohyoe
Iwao = Yasuko ♀
Shosaku = Shigeko ♀
Kojiro = Yoshiko ♀
Masao
Goro
Otohiko = Tomiko ♀
General
Kuroki
Tamesada
Kuroki Sanji = Takeko ♀
Saburo = Hoshino ♀
Saburo
Hanako ♀
Mineo
present family head

THE MATSUKATA FAMILY



THE ARAI FAMILY



Contents

DESCENDANTS AND RELATIVES

Introduction · My Dual Background

I was born a Japanese citizen in Japan and of purely Japanese ancestry, but there was one thing that set me apart from most of my compatriots. My mother's father, Rioichiro Arai, had gone to New York in 1876 at the age of twenty to set up a business exporting Japanese raw silk directly to the American market, and he lived the rest of his life in the United States, except for annual business trips back to Japan. My mother, Miyo, was born in New York and grew up there and in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, becoming at heart and in her ways much more American than Japanese. But when it came to marriage, Japanese custom prevailed. It was arranged for her to marry Shokuma, a younger son of Marquis Matsukata Masayoshi,* one of Japan's leading statesmen. There was some concession to American ways, however, since my parents had at least a small share in the marriage decision. They had met and were attracted to each other while my father was studying for a short time at Yale, and he was invited on occasion to my grandparents' home in Greenwich.

When my mother went to Japan in 1912 for the marriage ceremony, she was determined to make every effort to adjust to her new life. As she wrote her brother at Harvard, she would do her best "to do in Rome as the Romans do." In the phrasing we see the influence of

* The family name always comes first in Japan, and I have followed this practice except for Japanese who became permanent residents of the United States—as did my Arai grandfather—and Americans of Japanese origin.

her American schooling at Miss Low's Finishing School in Stamford. The transition to living in Japan was no easy matter, since life styles in the two countries were vastly different in those days. But she was fortunate in marrying into the Matsukata family, which was somewhat less traditional and formal than most of the other prominent families of the time. Her father-in-law was a broad-minded man who had sent most of his sons abroad to Europe or America for their higher education. He himself was entirely at home in Western clothes, sitting on a chair in a Western-style room or hosting a large dinner party in the occidental manner.

Still, my grandfather was thoroughly Japanese. At home he preferred to dress in a kimono and sit and sleep on the thick tatami mats covering the floor of the one Japanese room in the Western wing of his residence. I remember him as a venerable figure, presiding over a huge patriarchial family. He was in fact one of the last surviving members of the group of young samurai leaders who had been largely responsible for building the new Japan and had come to be known in the West as the "oligarchs" and in Japan as the *genro* (elder statesmen). He had proved the financial genius of the group, serving for more than fifteen years as finance minister and twice briefly as prime minister. As a reward, he had been given successively higher noble ranks. At the time of my mother's marriage, he had attained the second highest rank of marquis, and later he was made a prince.

My grandfather's house, where my mother spent her first married year, had a large staff of more than twenty servants. The unifying force in the household was not my grandfather but his wife, Masako. She brought up the children strictly but with affection, whether they were her own children or the offspring of concubines. She was responsible for creating a warm atmosphere, always comfortable and cheerful. She expected her sons to respect their sisters, and when they married she saw that they treated their wives with consideration and courtesy. It was not without reason that all the daughters-in-law loved Masako dearly.

Masako treated my mother with special understanding and kindness, making no attempt to change her ways and not expecting her to conform to strict Japanese social custom, as she did with her other daughters-in-law. Masako's attitude, together with my mother's conscious effort to conform, greatly eased my mother's transition to her

new life. Nevertheless, she found the complex relations within a large aristocratic family quite constraining and unfulfilling. She became determined to bring up her own children to be strong, independent individuals. But this ran counter to the accepted Japanese system of raising children and was no easy task. She had to stand alone to carry out her resolve, with no understanding, much less help, from her relatives, though my father always gave her full and sympathetic support.

Naturally my mother often became despondent, but in 1917, when she was feeling particularly low, two things came into her life which proved a turning point. An American friend, the wife of the American naval attaché in Tokyo, invited her to attend a Christian Science lecture in Yokohama. Greatly inspired by it, she began to study Christian Science and ultimately found in it the spiritual strength with which to carry out her resolve. She became deeply involved in the Christian Science movement in Japan, and a mainstay of the church.

The other factor contributing to this turning point came with the introduction of Florence Boynton into her life. A schoolteacher from California, Miss Boynton had come as a tutor for the children of an American family and stayed on in Tokyo after their departure, teaching English at a municipal middle school. She also conducted private English classes, attended by my sisters and me as well as the children of some family friends. Through these English lessons, Miss Boynton taught us Christian Science. Her house was seriously damaged in the great earthquake of 1923, and my mother invited her to stay temporarily with us. The stay lasted nearly twenty years, and she took charge of the children's education, since my mother found Japanese education completely inadequate for her purpose. Except for a year in a Japanese kindergarten and another as a first-grader in a Japanese school, my whole early education was conducted along American lines under Miss Boynton and Japanese private tutors or at the American School in Japan. Besides Miss Boynton, my mother employed a succession of English governesses to take care of the younger children.

It was not surprising that our relatives gave up trying to influence my mother and her children. They found our family just too eccentric to be amenable to reason. They tended to treat us with friendly aloofness, thus sparing us the intricate relationships and psychological

pressures common in large Japanese families of that time. This suited us well, since we had our own circle of friends bound by mutual interests. As time passed, my mother attended fewer and fewer family gatherings, where her sisters-in-law talked incessantly about arranging marriages for their daughters and preparing elaborate trousseaux. My mother scandalized the relatives by insisting that, instead of preparing her girls for early marriage, she would see to it that we received college educations, to prepare us for fuller lives. All six of us children were sent in turn to Principia College, a Christian Science school located in rural Illinois on a beautiful bluff above the Mississippi River, a few miles north of St. Louis. My mother considered education to be of more value to us than any trousseau.

Our upbringing thus made us different from other Japanese in many ways. As a small child I dreaded the daily walks we took around our neighborhood, dressed quite oddly by Japanese standards in sailor suits and high-laced boots and accompanied by a tall, gawky English governess. Foreigners were rare in Japan in those days, and Japanese children would stare at us, sometimes making derisive comments. Still this did not make us insiders at the American School, where we were of course considered "Japanese girls" by the predominantly occidental student body, and the same was true at Principia. The atmosphere there could not have been more cordial, and many of my college friends are still close to me. But we were outsiders—girls from a far and alien land. I had my share of dates and social life, but I remember looking enviously at happy couples among my schoolmates, realizing that their relationships might lead to marriage while I belonged to a different world. At times I felt almost bitter that I had been raised to be so different from other Japanese. Why couldn't I have been brought up the ordinary way, I would think, since being different didn't seem to make me a real American either?

These, however, were not my everyday thoughts. On the whole I was fairly oblivious of being caught between two cultures. My school and college days were for the most part a very happy time. The years at Principia passed pleasantly and with a quickening pace of excitement. The summers I spent with my maternal grandparents and my uncle and aunt and their son in their big comfortable home in Greenwich, overlooking a lovely cove on Long Island Sound.

In the summer of 1936 my one older sister Naka and I had the