

Makiko's New World



TRANSCRIPT

1. OPEN & 2. SET-UP

DIARY: February 23rd, Wednesday, clear. It was the first time in my life that I went in a rubber-tired rikisha. What a comfortable way to travel! Every time we met pedestrians the driver rang his bell to warn them. They would turn and look up at me which was very embarrassing but I tried as hard as I could to look important because I was riding in a rubber-tired rikisha. It was bothersome.

NARRATOR: This is Makiko's diary for the year 1910. She's 20 as the year opens. Three years ago she was married into the Nakano family a family that for two centuries has been running a pharmacy and drug store in Japan's old capital city, Kyoto, her hometown.

Already 1,000 years ago here in Kyoto ladies in the imperial court were writing down their own lives. Their diaries and records remain among the world's great literature of all

time. But reading those records we learn almost nothing about the lives of ordinary people, people living in ordinary neighborhoods...

like this around me places like Gojoo where the Nakanos lived. It's only in the last century that the lives of ordinary women as recorded by themselves become available to us women like Nakano, Makiko.

The diary is not about what is old in Kyoto but what's new. What's new for Makiko herself is learning to be a good member of the Nakano household. What's new for her and everybody around her is that waves of 20th century consumer goods are washing across old Kyoto. This evocative little book almost got lost.

3. RESCUED MEMORIES

NAKANO: Our house was right below where I'm standing and the store was over there facing Yamato-Oji Street. The war ended in August 1945.



That spring, however, everyone living on the south side of Gojoo Avenue was forced to evacuate. All the buildings were pulled down to make a fire break because allied air raids were expected.

My parents were ordered to move out in four days. Of course, in only four days you can't carry out everything a family had been accumulating for 200 years. They appealed to the authorities but only were given 10 days more.

MORIMOTO: I think it was April 16th when men in uniform went around posting notices "move out in three days." When I asked about my house they said your place will be spared. I collapsed and sat here in the street like I didn't have any bones to hold me up. I was so relieved.

NAKANO: When I returned from the combat zone in north China in May of 1946 there was no house. I asked at the noodle shop across the street and was told that my parents had moved to the northwest corner of the city.

MORIMOTO: The evacuation was really hard on your family but thanks to your sacrifice

Gojoo and other avenues were widened. That gave a big boost to Kyoto's post-war economic growth.

NARRATOR: Makiko and her husband had to abandon many heirlooms but they saved family records and journals that spanned two centuries. Among them was Makiko's diary from 1910. The prize winning English translation by Kazuko Smith was issued in 1995.

SMITH: I think I liked her personality. She was so upbeat and lively and we tend to think when we look back at our past things are so gray and dark and it's true. They had hard life but they had good life, too. And it shows through her diary.

4. NEW URBAN LIFESTYLES

DIARY: January 12th, Wednesday, clear. Stayed all day in Nijoo and came home at night.

NARRATOR: Nijoo is the area where Makiko grew up. It's near the old imperial palace on the north side of the city about an hour's walk from Gojoo.



DIARY: I was relieved when the rikisha dropped me at the house but when I went inside something was peculiar. The reason was that an electric light had been installed in the kitchen and there gas lamps in the family rooms. How bright it was. I felt as though I had walked into somebody else's parlor.

NARRATOR:

Japanese have been walking into different houses for more than three centuries but those were the houses of European and Asian merchants stationed in Nagasaki. What was new in Makiko's time was the Japanese were putting western style rooms into their own houses creating a new mode of entertaining at home on chairs. This Victorian looking parlor was built in Kyoto in 1879 for Nijima, Jo.

NARRATOR: A leading Christian in 19th century Japan, Dr. Nijima was the founder and first president of Doshisha University. Western popular culture was just as influential. Everybody was singing new Japanese tunes written to western musical scales. And the machinery of industrial consumer comfort pushed into almost every sector of daily living. There also were cosmopolitan touches. The new Daimaru department store in downtown Kyoto had a



rooftop that looked like the red fort in Delhi. DIARY: February 25th, Friday, clear. Tonight was accounting night. I was surprised at how quickly we got it done. Probably because I was half asleep through it all. Since it was only 11:00 when we finished my impetuous husband as usual had an urge to start a project. This

time he put hinges in the western style door to the music room. Little by little the room is getting to look modern.

DIARY:

June 29th, Wednesday, clear. In the evening my father came here to pay us what he owed for expenses incurred dur-

ing my brother's wedding. We went modern tonight and served bananas and Munich beer.

NISHIKAWA: When you see the Nakanos trying out one new thing after another you're impressed by their eagerness to be explorers. One of the great pleasures of reading the diary is to feel how they bubble with curiosity when they're taking up something new.

DIARY: January 26th, Wednesday, clear. Because my husband and Mr. Matsui are such good friends the party got a bit animated. It began when Mr. Matsui let fly with his objections to western clothing. "What do you mean? You don't think Japanese should wear western



clothes?” said my husband. And they started arguing back and forth. Finally when Mr. Matsui clearly had lost the great debate things calmed down. Mr. Matsui really is good natured, It didn’t seem to phase him to be yelled at like that.

NARRATOR: The old imperial palace still covers a large tract of real estate in Kyoto but it hasn’t seen much use since the 1860s.

TANAKA: When the capital was moved to Tokyo Kyoto went into a steep decline. This city’s first and second mayors of the Meiji Period did all they could to get the city moving again. They built resorts, founded a medical college, helped the weaving trades to prosper, and by about 1890, the recovery was a success. The Nakano family chose its own role in the move

ment to revive Kyoto’s sagging economy. They were in the Vanguard of those who worked to modernize the profession of pharmacy.

DIARY: September 16th, Friday, rain. Workmen are in the neighborhood these days laying water pipes underground. There are huge piles of dirt in the streets so it’s difficult for pedestrians to get through and delivery carts are overturning all the time. It will be wonderful to have city water but what a big nuisance to everybody if the job isn’t finished soon.

DIARY: April 20th, Wednesday, clear. Five of us, my father and I plus three others from the Wakasa family went from the Nijoo house to visit Kitano and Hirano shrines and several other temples and then onto Arashiyama all places I haven’t been for a long time. We went in rikishas all day long. By the time we left Arashiyama, it was getting dark and there were arc lights on the bridge across the Hozu River. Too late in the season for cherry blossoms but the lights reflecting on the river were so beautiful. I wished I could stay forever. Coming home on the Sanjoo highway, our rikisha man raced a trolley, sometimes falling behind and sometimes pulling out ahead.

5. DIARIES AND WOMEN’S LIVES

NAKANO: The fifth head of the house kept a journal he called Nisshin Zasshi or record of daily events. He provides a wealth of detail but he never writes down what he’s thinking and he doesn’t comment on his personal life, so it’s not a very interesting document.

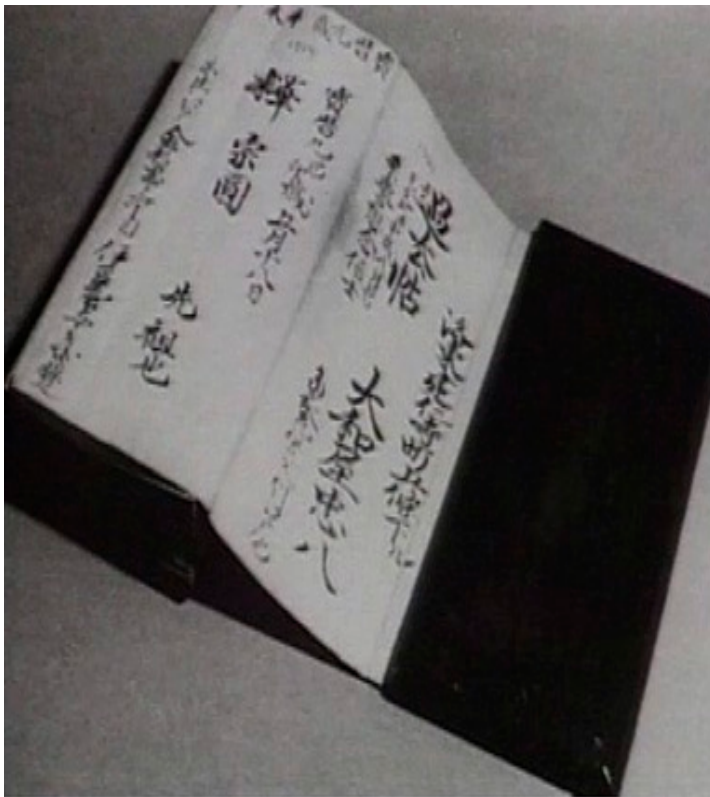
In college I decided to investigate the household system among merchant families. I began by studying my own family’s records. I read the journals of Chuuhachi V and Chuuhachi VI and then my mother’s diary. She writes

about private life in the family and that makes for good reading.

NISHIKAWA: All the diaries formatted for the housewife were already on sale. That's not what Makiko uses. She uses a so-called standard diary. My hunch is it that it was one her husband happened to have on hand.

WALTHALL: It is a diary not just of her own individual self. It is a record of her household. These are the ceremonies we perform. These are the foods we eat when we perform these ceremonies. These are our connections. These are the people we get along with. These are the people we don't get along with.

DIARY: January 6th, Thursday, clear. Today at lunch we celebrated the 6th day of New Year's. We had the customary dishes of red beans and rice, broiled sardines and soup with young radish leaves.



Tomorrow on the 7th day of New Years the practice is to have a breakfast of rice gruel mixed with leaves from the seven spring vegetables. In the evening as we chopped the leaves and salted them down, we kept time by singing "Todo No Tori Wa."

NISHIKAWA: When the big publishing companies such as Hakubunkan began to issue printed diary books about a century ago, masses of Japanese took on writing diaries on a scale never seen before. The diary became a kind of instrument for popular education.

Before printed diary books were available diaries typically were made of Japanese paper sewn together like this. You wrote in them with a brush and India ink.

It seems to me that Makiko's diary falls right in the middle between the old and the new types of diaries. Makiko's diary is in the so-called standard diary format. The day's date is preprinted but there's a blank space for recording the weather. Then there are blank spaces for listing letters received and letters sent. Also there is a space where you can record anything that needs special mention.

WALTHALL: The diaries that are kept in the west are oftentimes kept by people who are trying to understand themselves and they move from externalities of daily life to a search for who am I as an individual. Makiko's diary also moves from externalities to the self, but in her case, the self is the housewife.

DIARY: March 3rd, Sunday, clear. Today my family in Nijoo will celebrate the doll festival, but in the Nakano household we do it a month from now on April 3rd which is closer to March 3rd by the old calendar. So all that we did today was to hang a painting of a pair

of dolls in the parlor. I did bring out my dolls, however because I thought it would be nice to offer them yomogi dumplings.

NISHIKAWA: In Makiko's time a woman wasn't likely to own a set of girl's day dolls unless she belonged to a merchant family that had a store house. Later on the dolls became very popular, so even a woman in the family of a salary man had her own personal set of them.

But a salary man's wife didn't learn from her mother-in-law how to display the dolls. She learned from instructions in the new women's magazines. Here's how you should fold a kimono. And here's how to hang up your laundry. Then back here it shows the correct way to display your girl's day dolls.

WALTHALL: Makiko's diary is unusual in the detail it gives for what was going on in the household and the recipes that she provides. Her diary is unusual in the number of people that she records in it. And that kind of wide ranging network of acquaintances and relatives, I think, is perhaps characteristic of the kind of business her husband and her father are in.

DIARY: February 11th, Friday, clear. It's National Founding Day when ceremonies are held in the schools. We also had a ceremony here around 10:00. Kuniko came home with two friends and I served them rice cakes and sweet bean sauce. They left about 4:00 P.M.

Because the store received a money gift from a customer, the manager suggested that it be used to buy meat for a sukiyaki dinner.

DIARY: My husband was over at the Matsui's again. I feel sorry for them. He didn't come

home until 1:00 in the morning. He announced that he has invited five guests for dinner tomorrow and wants a special meal for them. Once again I had to consult Mother about an appropriate menu.

Correspondence in: Sister Tanii wrote to ask us to buy a set of dolls from the Ookii store for her daughter Toshiko's first doll festival.

Note, made a half-cask of turnip pickles using 1.5 shoo of salt. They should be ready to eat in May.

6. THE NAKANO HOUSE

DIARY: March 1st, Tuesday, clear. In the afternoon Mr. Suzuki came here again about Kuniko's marriage to Matsui. He asked us to make up our minds since today is an auspicious day. To agree to accept the betrothal gifts on March 3rd and to hold the wedding in April, but my husband is not happy about it. It's all moving too fast.



NAKANO: Suzuki, Kichinosuke was a long time friend of my father.

NAKANO: This was Suzuki's house. It's a typical Kyoto town house of that period. I used to live in a house like this.

From the shop you passed under a long curtain and you entered the kitchen area. Here was the indoor well and next to it the sink and drain board. The stoves were here. Their smoke went up and out through holes in the roof.

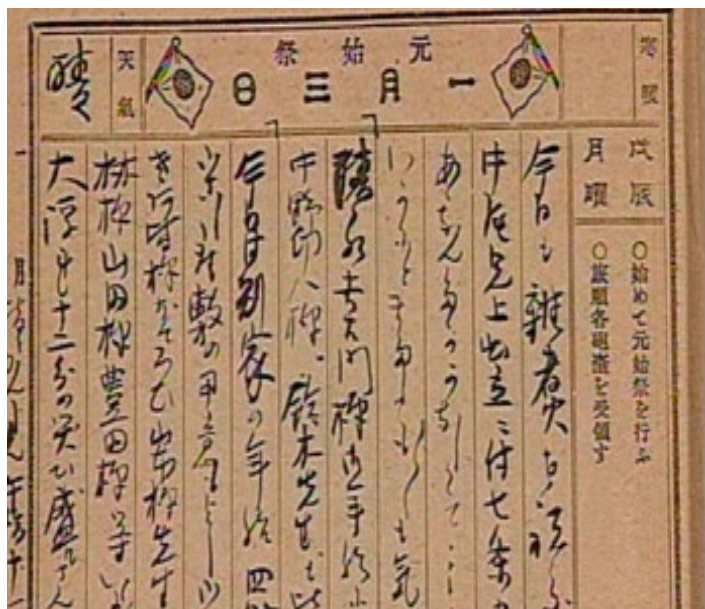
NARRATOR: These old Kyoto town houses are narrow but they run deep. There's an alleyway from the front entry through the kitchen and out to the backyard. Back there are the workshops, the toilets, the bath and the private garden plus a fireproof storehouse for family records and valuables. In a neighborhood crammed full of wood-framed buildings fire prevention is everybody's business.

NAKANO: These are for protection against fires. The lower ones pasted on the wall are from Daigoji temple.

DIARY: January 5th, Wednesday, Around 11:30 at night I heard a fire bell and I immediately thought about my father and the Nijoo family. I woke up one of the employees and sent him to inquire at the police station.

DIARY: I couldn't relax until he came back with word that the fire was in Nishiki. My husband went to the site of the fire to watch and didn't come home until around half past 1:00, so he is no different from the others. I hope he didn't hear me say this. Went to bed after the clock struck 2:00.

DIARY: April 19th, Tuesday, clear. There was



nothing special today. Everything was routine except that we are short one housemaid. Because the store urgently asked us to help them make medicine bags, I did the folding and creasing of the material and Mother ran them through the sewing machine. We all worked hard.

NAKANO: What they have turned into an entryway here would just have been part of the kitchen in my house and in the front was our store where this family has its western parlor.

NISHIKAWA: Production and reproduction take place under the same roof. The duties of a wife in a merchant household are very different from the duties of a wife in a salary man's household.

Here you have nine family members and eight employees all living in the house. Relatives are dropping in all the time and the heads of the business branch houses are coming routinely to pay their respects to the head of the main house.

What attracts your curiosity as you read the

diary is that women's duties can't be separated neatly into work done for the business and work done for the family.

DIARY: January 3rd, Monday, clear. Today we had the New Year's party for representatives from each of the business branch houses. They were invited to come at 4:00. We had the parlor ready. Harisei catered the food for 90 sen per person and we hired a waitress to help serve. Everybody got drunk and had a good time. Laughs every minute. All of us were impressed by Mr. Moriguchi's Genroku dance. The party went on until after 11:00.

NARRATOR: Moriguchi was an apprentice who had worked his way up to become a manager. Later he was named a head of business branch house. On the first day of every month he came as did the heads of the other business branch houses to pay a formal call on the head of the main Nakano house who, at the time of the diary, was Makiko's husband.

DIARY: September 3rd, Saturday. Because it's the first Saturday of the month we had our usual sukiyaki dinner for all the employees. Everybody ate and drank and later we sang the old time railroad song. We named every station from Tokyo to Kobe without missing a one. The whole room shook with the sound of the chorus. I think even the people in the cotton batting shop across the street -- they're always making noise -must have been surprised by the volume of sound coming from this house tonight.

7. SIGNS OF CONTINUITY

DIARY: May 8th, Sunday. We held a memorial service for the ancestors today. In the morning I cleared the parlor and placed offerings on the altar. The service honored six ancestors

-one for the 100th anniversary of the death, two for their 50th, two for the 7th, and one for the 13th.

We couldn't easily have provided food for everybody after the service, so we arranged a dinner at the Nakamura-Roo. That way we and the relatives all could eat together. Cost, 1 yen 50 sen per person. Number of guests, 26.

NARRATOR: As the junior wife Makiko has to serve food to the dead as well as the living members of the household. It's a reminder that if she does her duty then one day she, too, will be an ancestor and a relay of other young wives will serve her for generations to come.

DIARY: October 4th, Tuesday, clear. A perfectly splendid day like we haven't seen for a long time. The Tanii's arrived around 9:30 this morning looking cheerful. Toshiko has grown so much and though she can't walk yet, she can stand by herself. When I pointed to his picture on the wall and said, "That's your grandfather," Toshiko pointed her tiny finger



and went, “ah, ah, ah.” She’s truly adorable.

NARRATOR: Individual portraits of the dead came into use in the Meiji Era as new symbols of family continuity. They’re placed on the altar or hung on a nearby wall. Photo albums offered a new visual record of family membership with evidence about who was present on what occasion.

DIARY: January 16th, Sunday, sleet failing. Hidesan usually goes to Otsu on Sunday for rowing practice but it was canceled

because of the weather. Since everybody was home today, it seemed like a good time to go have a family photo taken. We decided on the Narui Studio and went out after lunch. Posing for photographs made me nervous, but as soon as the photographer said, “Hold it,” it was all done.

PLATH: Something else was new that year. That year the Nakano family bought its first snapshot camera. We don’t know what model it was. It could have been an import like this British model. It could have been a domestic

make. What we do know is that they paid 23 yen for a used camera. For 200 years the family had been able to record its life verbally in its diaries. Now for the first time they could begin to record their lives visually.

DIARY: July 7th, Thursday. A little while after lunch, we had the shop boys take pictures of us in the back garden. I felt guilty about asking them to do anything during their break time. We had them take



separate shots of the women of the household. I sure hope they will be developed soon. I wonder how they’ll turn out.

DIARY: July 8th, Friday, clear. In the evening younger brother Hidesaburo came back sunburned and with blisters on his hands from four days of crew rowing practice on lake Biwa. Tired as he was, he worked until 1:30 A.M. developing pictures but not even one of them was useable. What a disappointment.

PLATH: Makiko also had an ongoing disap

pointment. She had not yet given birth. Her first child was not born until 1913. Eventually she and Chuuhachi had three sons and a daughter.

DIARY: January 11th, Thursday, rain. In the afternoon, Elder Sister Kooshima brought her daughter, Furnichan along for a visit. Because Elder Sister hadn't been feeling right, she had gone to see Dr. Adachi, the gynecologist. The good news is she's pregnant. I'm so jealous because I can't seem to get pregnant.

WALTHALL Why is it not a crucial issue that Makiko hasn't had children? The role of a housewife in these old middle class families is to manage the household and that is her most important responsibility--I say even more important than having children.

If she has children, that's good. If she doesn't have children, they can be adopted. I mean, if you look at the front part of the book, you see that people are adopting heirs right, left, and center. It's not absolutely crucial for a woman to be a breeder. It's absolutely crucial that she be a good manager.



8. THE TRICKY TRIANGLE

DIARY: December 29th, Thursday, clear. I got scolded this evening. I was told that I'm too ready to let Mother do the work that I bury myself in my crocheting and if I don't want to do something myself, then I should at least supervise the servants while I have them do it. It shook me to be in the wrong, and I worked so hard grinding miso that I finished the job before 9:00.

PLATH: Makiko isn't always comfortable supervising maids, but for a young wife in a merchant household, the trickiest relationship is the triangular one that connects her, her husband, and his mother. The young wife came as a stranger. If she's not careful, the other two could ally against her.

NISHIKAWA: In those days the young wife had to get permission from her mother-in-law or her husband when she wanted to leave the house. That was standard practice. But Makiko also asked because she knows she has an important role on the household team. There may be work for her to do.

WALTHALL: Remember that her new family has a responsibility for her. When she marries into that family, they then are responsible for her behavior and for her reputation. And if she started getting a reputation of being a gadabout, as someone who is off hither thither and yon all the time, her father might start wondering exactly how his daughter was being treated.

DIARY: May 26th, Thursday. It's a sad night for me--not just because my brother and his wife have left, but because I could not go with them to Manchuria. I begged and begged my husband to let me go, but he said that there's

no good reason why I should be away at this time. But I know I will never have another chance to travel by ship with the two of them. It just about broke my heart.

SMITH: I think she likes to travel. That's very clear. She wanted to go to Manchuria with her brother and his bride. That was a little odd, but I think mostly she just wanted to get out get out and see the world.

PLATH: For the next three weeks, the diary seldom records Chuuhachi's activities and then without emotion. The rest of the year Makiko tracks him continually. Sometimes she teases him on paper the way she probably also teased him directly.

DIARY: June 20th, Monday, rain. My husband left early this morning to serve as an observer at an election about land prices or something like that. He was back home by 7:30 this evening, very early for him. Inevitably it rained.

PLATH: Makiko uses a line of Japanese whimsy that says stormy weather comes when somebody is behaving oddly. For example, on February 17th...

DIARY: I think it rained because my husband got up so unusually early this morning.

PLATH: The next day...

DIARY: He was up so early again this morning that he brought on today's snow.

PLATH: And then on the 19th...

DIARY: Since my husband was out of bed so early again, it should have rained, but it turned out to be a glorious day.

WALTHALL: Makiko's husband is right there. He is part of the family. They're part of his life. I think that's a major difference between the life of the old middle class and the life of the new middle class.

PLATH: And for several days in January Makiko shows how much she cares for him.

DIARY: January 29th, Saturday. Around 3:00 this morning, my husband was nauseated and had chills. And I got more and more concerned about him. His temperature still was around 100. I did what I could to make him feel better and he fell asleep for a while.

DIARY: January 30th, Sunday, rain. This morning about 11:30 Mother had gone over to help the eastside family make radish pickles and I was writing a letter to the Nijoo family about details of the hiring of a housekeeper for them. All of a sudden I heard my husband yelling from the toilet. I jumped up and rushed to him. It turned out that he had passed a really long tapeworm which had been the source of his discomfort all this time.

PLATH: Tapeworms were endemic then. Six months later passed another one.

DIARY: July 26th, Tuesday. Mr. Matsui phoned to ask how my husband is. When I told him about the tapeworm he laughed and said, oh, so he gave birth again.

WALTHALL She has been brought up to be a housewife. And in the course of the diary, we see her trying to learn to be a good housewife and she enjoys it. She has a lot of fun being a housewife. Almost, you could say, playing house. I know that in traditional Japanese stories the mother-in-law is always demonized as this horrid old witch who is resentful of the

daughter-in-law for stealing her son's affections. Remember that for both Makiko and her mother-in-law their major concern is the success of the Nakano family. And insofar as the two women have the same goal, they know that they need to work together to achieve it.

DIARY: November 17th, Thursday, clear. I bought 20 big radishes from a street vendor so we could make takuan pickles for the winter. Mother said that the ratio should be two shoo, five goo for one pickling cask and two shoo, eight goo for the other. "What do you mean by the ratio," I said? "The ratio of salt, of course," she said. And I realized how little I know about such things.

WALTHALL Makiko has a lot to learn from her mother-in-law and perhaps because she has recently lost her own mother, she looks up to Mine with remarkable respect.

9. HER BIRTH FAMILY

DIARY: November 22nd, Tuesday, clear. Mother came home about 4:00 this afternoon. While she was away, it was lonely inside the house. Chilly and cold just like the weather the last few days. But now the place is alive again.

PLATH: On the 22nd of November the house probably felt even colder without Mine because the 21st had been the anniversary of the death of Makiko's own mother.

DIARY: November 20th, Sunday, clear. Went to Nijoo this morning with my husband for the first anniversary service for my mother. A year ago this morning, I raced to Nijoo to see her but by the time I got there, she already had left this world. I only could hear faint breathing.

PLATH: Her mothers death promoted Makiko

into new adult responsibilities. Often she rushes to the Nijoo house to look after her widowed father and to help her younger sister and brother who are in middle school. The day she first went in a rikisha with rubber tires, she was responding to an urgent call to help prepare the Nijoo house for a memorial service.

DIARY: February 23rd, Wednesday, clear. I was determined to finish sewing a lined jacket today and had been working hard on it since morning. About 3:00 my sister Eiko phoned and begged me to come. "I know how inconvenient it is for you but we need help," she said. I spoke to Mother and my husband and, of course, they once again urged me to leave right away. I rushed to change my kimono and called a rikisha.

WALTHALL: Mine treats her daughter-in-law with remarkable consideration. She wants Makiko to be happy. She wants Makiko to do what she has to do to help her own family.

DIARY: March 25th, Friday, clear. My father was here to talk about my brother, Manzo, in Manchuria. A letter from him arrived yesterday. He said it would be really difficult for him to come home in April so the wedding will have to be late in May which dampens my mood because now I have no choice but to revise my plans to finish sewing a wedding kimono by early April.

DIARY: April 6th, Wednesday, clear. We had a phone message from Nijoo this morning saying that the Wakasa visitors will pay a call on them today. It meant I would have to be very particular about my clothes and makeup, so I rushed to the hairdressers early and with a lot of hurry, hurry, I made it to Nijoo by 2:00. It turned



out that the bride had not come--only her mother and a granny. It's disgusting. How can she be so haughty? Now I don't even want to see her face.

PLATH: The wedding was celebrated at the Heian Shrine. This, too, was something new for ordinary citizens. Before the 20th century a Japanese wedding was a civil service held at home without clergy. But on the 1st of May, 1900 the crown prince was married in a Shinto ceremony at the Heian Shrine. Japan's political leaders had noticed that European royalty



were married in church. They wanted their own royal family to do the same. Soon the urban upper and middle classes were following the royal precedent.

DIARY: May 1st, Sunday. This was the wedding day and luckily the weather was splendid. The invitations said 3:00, but we rushed to get there early. Little by little the guests arrived, but the bride did not show up until 4:30. It rained during the ceremony but fortunately stopped just as it was ending. A little drizzle again while they were taking the photographs.

DIARY: June 13th, Monday. This morning my husband said somebody had asked him why my father still has not gone to thank the couple who were invited to serve as go betweens for Manzo's wedding. I sent a letter to my father immediately. I also wrote to Yuki asking how things have been since she and Manzo arrived in Manchuria.

NISHIKAWA: For Makiko, as for younger sisters in general, an older brother's bride-to-be is a rival in some way and Makiko makes nasty remarks about her in the diary. But after the wedding Yukiko becomes part of Makiko's own natal family. Makiko seems to be trying to get along with her.

10. WESTERN FOOD

PLATH: Weekly lessons in western cooking became bright spots punctuating Makiko's year. The classes were held in the house of Chuuhachi's artist friend, Matsumiya Hoonen. The teacher who is the head chef from the already famous Miyako Hotel.

Chuuhachi visited the class from time to time, not to learn how to cook, but because he discovered that he liked western cuisine. On days

when he could not go to the class, he had samples of the food delivered to him at the Nakano house.

DIARY: March 12th, Saturday, snow. I went to Mr. Matsumiya's house for my first lesson in western cooking. We began around 2:00 P.M.

and finished about 5:00. We made four dishes and I kept notes about how to fix them. Then Mr. Matsui and Mr. Suzuki joined us and they gave us a little training in the way these dishes should be served and eaten.

PLATH: To eat sitting on a chair was a novelty and with it came unfamiliar ways to serve food to people.

In Japan's western food restaurants waiters and waitresses both were called boy or boisan until the 1930's. One little surprise when I came to Japan in 1952 was to find that porters on the national railways were wearing arm bands printed with the letters B-O-Y.

DIARY: March 20th, Sunday, clear. My assignment was to be a boy, but I just couldn't get the hang of it and there were some really comical moments. It's downright difficult to know what a boy is supposed to do.

PLATH: However, when Makiko tried to serve western food at home three months later, it wasn't funny.

DIARY: June 4th, Saturday, clear. Well, there was an incident tonight. I had saved some of the food we cooked in class this morning, thinking I'd give it to Hide-san if he came home tonight. Since he didn't return, I served the food to Mr. Moriguchi instead.

He got very angry, sat cross-legged, and began telling me off. "Maki," he said, and

I answered innocently, "yes." He spoke slowly and deliberately emphasizing each sentence. "I appreciate your thoughtfulness in offering a sample of your western cooking to a manager, but I am not going to touch the stuff-and from now on when you have a notion to do something for me, please take note of when this 40-something man is enjoying his chazuke."

DIARY: It made no sense to me. The more I thought about it, the more upset I became. When I went to bed, I cried tears of humiliation and just couldn't get to sleep.

This morning I was just waiting for him to



come to work, wanting to see what he would do. He came to the kitchen right into the family quarters and said he was sorry about last night, but I was not in the mood to forgive. I was thinking how next time I go to Nijoo, I'm telling my father about this hypocrite who is so mild mannered when he is visiting pharmacies over there.

I was tempted so many times to tell my husband about the incident, but I thought he would not want to know about it, so I said nothing and cried a lot.

NISHIKAWA: The food she offered to the manager clearly had come from someplace else. Makiko had not cooked it in the house. Moriguchi may have thought she was giving him leftovers. Moriguchi is not a mere servant. He holds a high rank in the family enterprise. In a merchant household a young wife and manager have to sustain quite a delicate relationship of authority.

PLATH: Makiko was furious and her diary shows it. The Moriguchi incident fills the pages for June 4th, 5th, and 6th, the longest single entry all year. By June 7th her anger has escalated.

DIARY: I've been so preoccupied with the incident that I even began to think I should go back to Nijoo permanently. Then my father, struggling along without his wife, would not need to hire a housekeeper. But then I tell myself it's foolish to get so worked up about what Mr. Moriguchi said when he was drunk and anyway, it wasn't my fault. If I went back to Nijoo, I would cause trouble for everybody here. I've even thought it would be better if I just died suddenly like my mother.

PLATH: The diary contains one last little outburst.

DIARY: June 11th, Saturday, clear. I have not forgotten the incident even for a day. I will never forget it as long as I live.

PLATH: But if she never forgot, she never mentions it again that year. Twice in later months she records that Moriguchi got drunk but she offers no editorial comment. She even sympathizes with him.

DIARY: September 20th, Tuesday, clear. Yesterday's rain must have been a disappointment to all the people who were hoping to see the moon. Mr. Moriguchi for one was feeling down today. But the moon tonight is more beautiful than ever. It makes me wonder why most things don't turn out the way you expect.

11. DRAGONFLY IN HEAVEN

PLATH: Kiyomizu-dera, the pure water temple, is only a few minutes walk up hill from where the Nakanos lived on Gojoo Avenue. The temple has been a magnet for pilgrims



and tourists for centuries. To the Nakanos, however, Kiyomizu-dera was just a backdrop to their everyday lives. Water from the famous pure springs runs downhill as Otowa creek which later flows right beside the Nakano house.

NAKANO: Otowa Creek flows through the bottom of this valley. When I was a kid, we'd come here to catch crabs from pools in the creek.

PLATH: Kiyomizu-dera and other famous sights were mentioned frequently in the diary and it's obvious that Makiko likes being able to live in a city that has so many places to visit and to view.

DIARY: April 14th, Thursday, clear. It was such a warm spring day that I felt buoyant and climbed up to the third floor and out on the roof. They were blooming. Cherry blossoms in full glory everywhere.

When I used the binoculars, it was as though I could reach out and touch the blossoms in Gojoo-an and Nishi Ootani temples. It felt like I was looking across an enormous garden right in front of my eyes. While I was mesmerized by the view, it was getting late. I ran down the stairs and went through the house quickly cleaning up a little here and there and then I made dinner.

WALTHALL: She strikes me as someone who enjoys life whether she is performing household chores or going out to visit the cherry blossoms. She is extremely interested in everything that goes on around her.

DIARY: March 5th, Saturday. We woke up to a beautiful world of silvery snow. After the children had left for school I went out and

made snowballs and ate them. I had heard that spring snow is very light and fluffy and so it is.

MATSUI: She was such a gentle auntie. She taught me all sorts of things. "Come here, your hair ribbon is cock-eyed," she's say. And then she'd fix it for me. Compared to other women of her time she was high collared, modern--and yet I never once saw her wearing western clothes.



NISHIKAWA: She had the good luck of being in a position where she could enjoy some of the best parts of what's traditional and what's modern. I think that's why the diary conveys such a sense of pleasure in life all across a full year.

DIARY: November 12th, Saturday, clear. Kuniko and I canceled our cooking lesson for today when it was decided that all of us would go to the Katayama Noh theater. Mother hurried off first. Next my husband left. And then Sister Tanii. I was so excited I could hardly wait for the clock to strike 3:00 when it would be my turn to leave. Finally at 3:00 this house was completely empty.

I'd always wondered what Noh plays are like and discovered that they are beautiful to watch and are very intriguing. I was still hearing the drums and the chanting after we got home.

WALTHALL: If you compare her life to the life of American women in the 1910s, it's not that different. Remember, American women did not have the right to vote. They did not have property of their own. They might not live with a mother-in-law, but they lived surmounted by neighbors who gossiped continually about what they were doing and if they went gadding about as much as Makiko did, I would suspect that the neighbors would have talked.

DIARY: November 9th, Wednesday, clear. When I went over to the eastside house today, O-miki san told me, "you're such a free-spirited one, like a dragonfly in heaven. If you had children, you would be worrying about them all the time." I wonder if there's anybody who is as free-spirited as I am, flitting around outside the house almost every day. I really need to listen to what my elders are saying.

12. AND THEN...

PLATH: Five years later Mine died from blood poisoning. Sooner than she may have anticipated, Makiko was solely responsible for directing operations inside the Nakano house.

A decade later there were four children and the family business was prospering. Chuuhachi had turned his energy to the Boy Scout movement and he attended international scouting conferences in Europe in 1924 and in 1931. Because he was on his death bed in 1949, he was unable to travel to Tokyo where he was to be named chief scout of Japan.

Seven generations of family enterprise came to a halt in the spring of 1945 when the Nakano store was raised. But Moriguchi and the other heads of business branch families came to the new Nakano house on the first day of each month reporting as always to Chuuhachi as long as he was alive. And after that they came and reported to Makiko for another 20 years.

NAKANO: This is the Nakano family tomb. My father was the seventh generation head of the house. He and my mother, Makiko, their ashes are kept inside and one day I'll be inside here myself.

My mother gave me permission to publish her diary and she was looking forward to seeing it in print, but she died before the project could be completed.

PLATH: Makiko lived to be 88, an achievement much honored in East Asian tradition. Three years after she died, her son came to her grave to present to her the first published version of her diary for 1910.

NAKANO: The stereotype of the old Kyoto bride is that she was squeezed and confined into a tiny space. That's not what we see in Makiko's diary. My father was a progressive man, willing to give his young wife plenty of freedom to be away from the house.

SMITH: What most surprised me when I read the diary was how hard Makiko worked. The family she married into was quite well to do, have quite comfortable leisurely life, but she worked very hard. I see all kinds of possibility of her. She could be anyone if she wants to and I think that's why I liked her.

DIARY: November 30th, Wednesday. It rained today for a change. And I can't help feeling

gloomy. Nothing special happened today. Tomorrow is the 1st of December, so the merchants all are rushing around trying to clear their debts today. It's frightening to realize how fast time goes. It's as though time were chasing us from behind. Just to think that I'll be 22 in a month makes me feel awful.

PLATH: Fond as she was of trying new things and of travel, Makiko never left Japan. But 26 years after her first ride in a rikisha with rubber tires, she became the first Nakano to fly in an airplane. She was on her way home to Kyoto.

DIARY: December 31st, Saturday. Snow fell this morning unexpectedly. It should come tomorrow instead, on New Year's Day. I cleaned and decorated the family altar during the morning. Then I went to the storehouse and took out the folding screens and other holiday things kept there. After 4:30 we take baths and then go exchange end of the year greetings with the eastside family.

Then we do the accounting. This year the accounting took a long time. Afterward we ate our customary crossing the year noodles and by the time my husband had finished writing individual names on the envelopes of the New Year's chopsticks it was already 6:00 AM. While I wasn't looking, the 43rd year of Meiji went away like a dream.



Purchasing Information

Color/57 mins/1999
Institution sale \$195.00
Consumer sale \$59.95
DVD/VHS
Contact DER for 16mm
sales and rentals

Film Credits

A Film By

The Media Production
Group

Study Guide Credits

Transcript Provided by
The Media Production Group

Study Guide Design by
Razan Alzayani

Contact Information

Documentary Educational Resources
101 Morse St.
Watertown MA 02472

800-569-6621 or 617-926-0491
<http://www.der.org>
docued@der.org