

TEXT

Manchu Girl

KOIZUMI KIKUE

CONTEXT

Manchuria

CRITIQUE

Imperializing Motherhood:
The Education of a “Manchu Girl”
in Colonial Manchuria

KIMBERLY T. KONO

ACCOMPANYING her army officer husband to Manchuria in early June 1935, Koizumi Kikue lived in Mukden (now Shenyang) and later Shinkyō (now Changchun) until 1938. Little is known of her personal life, but the works Koizumi published during the war reveal a woman of varied interests. After *Manchu Girl* (*Manshūjin no shōjo*, 1938), featured in this chapter, Koizumi wrote *Revealing Women's History* (*Joseishi kaiken*, 1941)—an examination of the roles women played in Japanese history. She also engaged contemporary political debates in *The East Asia League and People of the Showa Era* (*Tōa renmei to Shōwa no tami*, 1940), which advocated economic and military cooperation among Japan, China, and Manchuria. Deeply influenced by Nichiren Buddhism, Koizumi also penned *What Are the Doctrines of Nichiren Priests?* (*Nichiren shōnin no kyōgi to wa donna monoka*, 1941) and *Tales of the Lotus Sutra* (*Hokekyō monogatari*, 1944).

Koizumi's *Manchu Girl* is based on letters she sent to a friend in Tokyo during her stay in colonial Manchuria, which coincided with a period of heightened anti-Japanese sentiment and resistance, particularly following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937. In this narrative, “Manchu”

maid Guiyu learns the Japanese language and customs under Koizumi's tutelage and not only changes her critical attitude toward Japanese but eventually wants to "become Japanese." Early sections of the work, translated here, describe the linguistic, cultural, and ideological barriers that complicate their developing relationship. At the end of the text, Koizumi relates that their relationship has deepened to the point that both she and Guiyu refer to her as Guiyu's "Japanese mother" (*naichi no okāsan*).

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TRANSLATION BY KIMBERLY T. KONO

"I have decided to buy a young Chinese girl."

When my husband spoke those words, I was shocked. He then explained that a co-worker who was going to be transferred to Harbin wanted to pass on to us the fourteen-year-old girl that he had bought from rural Andong three months ago.

"Did you just say that he 'bought' her?" I exclaimed in surprise.

We discussed the details such as how much to pay each year within a three-year contract. Although it is rare nowadays, there are people in Manchuria who sell their children. Of course, you may think that as a Japanese subject who silently allows the practice of daughters being sold off as mistresses, I am hardly one to talk. And yet, this point is brought home by the fact that, here in Manchuria until recently, people walked along the streets with infants in baskets hanging at each end of a pole and tried to sell them. The year before last, along Kasuga Street, the main thoroughfare in Mukden, a cute boy around six years of age sat wearing a "Kid for Sale" sign that explained in detail why he had to be sold for 100 yuan. When purchased, the boy would have worked as a servant for the rest of his life. With those images in mind, I interpreted my husband's utterance—*katttekita*—as meaning "bought." However, upon closer consideration, I realized that the word *karitekita* (rented) is rendered *katttekita* in certain dialects, and perhaps such phrasing was meant to imply hiring the girl. Nevertheless, I was shocked to hear such words.

Some time before our conversation, I had hired a twenty-one-year-old Manchu woman. Three years earlier, she had married her nineteen-year-old husband, who had left her in the countryside and gone to Mukden to work as an errand boy in a government office. The young woman had never encountered a Japanese before and did not understand a word of the Japanese language. She said she had never gone to school. Even so, because I was exhausted from stoking the fireplace and taking care of the housework by myself every day, I hired her. I thought that since she didn't understand Japanese, I would try to learn Manchu. Because I had to rely on books and physical gestures in my attempts to communicate, this was a period when I sometimes felt like bursting into laughter. Yet, I started to feel as if I

would be better off without any household help. It would have been easier if she had been literate in Chinese, but we could not even communicate by writing Chinese characters. Also, since my husband and I were the first Japanese she had ever met, she had no way of understanding our lifestyle. I could tolerate her stepping into the entryway with her indoor slippers, but she would do things like spit and blow her nose into the kitchen sink, the bathtub, wherever she happened to be. She would pull out the rice chest to sit on it. And because she could not even distinguish between a sponge and a mop, I was about to have a nervous breakdown and she—Suishi was her name—she grew increasingly silent at each reprimand. In cases where she would do things like cut corners while mopping the floor or take off the lid while cooking rice, I carefully and patiently taught her the correct methods. As for her unsanitary behavior, however, I could not tolerate any of it. For Suishi, working here must have been like a silent religious practice, an intensely painful time because she could not express her feelings or thoughts.

During our time together, she gradually came to understand my strange attempts to speak Manchu, and in the evenings with a Japanese-Manchu dictionary between us, we even began to have comical conversations. Yet, she increasingly took on a strange attitude close to hysteria and inexplicably would pick quarrels with me. As a result, by the eighth day, I sent her home. I realized that I too had felt anxious, because afterward I thought to myself "At last!" I felt utterly exhausted.

Not one month had passed since this experience with Suishi. So, when my husband mentioned a new girl, I told him, "I have had enough of hiring Manchus when I don't even understand the Manchu language." Upon hearing these words, he gave me a surprised look and said, "This one has attended high school. While working for Mr. O, who is quite skilled at Manchu, she has become familiar with the Japanese lifestyle. He said that she's got a good head on her shoulders and most important, unlike the other maid, she is still a child. I think that our efforts will have a great effect upon her. By taking care of this child and helping her to understand the proper viewpoints of Japanese through our way of living, isn't this working for goodwill between Japanese and Manchu and the practice of what you call 'faith'?"

After hearing him out, I was speechless and bowed my head. I was truly ashamed of myself.

In this way, Li Guiyu came to our home on November 27, 1936. Due to these initial conditions, my feelings toward this young girl were resolute, something much more than the usual feelings toward a Japanese maid. I

understood quite well that the work was too much for someone like me, a mere housewife awkward with even the fundamentals of everyday life. Yet, I vowed to present myself as I am and convey to this child the faith of an average Japanese housewife. I would try to offer my immature faith without forcibly demanding success, or rigidly glossing over the differences in customs and language.

Guiyu was a cute young girl. Since July she had spent five months at the O household, and had taken care of their two- and three-year-old daughters. When O brought her to our home for an introduction and said it was her "debut," Guiyu wore Japanese clothing and looked exactly like a Japanese. O said, "She learned the basics of Japanese in high school, and can write all her *katakana*. Her mother is a Christian employed by the church and is a solid, reliable person, so this girl is also bright and remembers what she has been taught." Sitting properly next to O, she bowed politely and said in Japanese, "Thank you very much," when I offered her teacakes. Her excellent manners made it difficult to believe that she had spent all of her time taking care of the children. Mr. O only complained that she tried to do everything on her own because she was quite stubborn.

On the evening that Guiyu finally came down the snow-covered path to our home, she wore a small thin Manchu dress. When our former maid Suishi lived with us, she prepared and ate her food on her own. In contrast, I was relieved to hear that Guiyu ate Japanese food. But on the first night that she arrived, she cried and refused to touch the meal that I cooked for her. After fretting over what to do, I tried to make a fried dumpling with wheat flour by drawing upon my memory of watching others prepare this traditional Chinese dish. I served it to her saying, "I'm not very good at cooking and probably can't make something as delicious as your mother's food, but please try a little."

She sobbed, saying in broken Japanese "My mother no prepare such food for me. We not even have one grain of wheat flour. My mother just eat sorghum. We not even eat a grain of rice. My mother's hands, thin. Aiya! Father small too. He's always ill. Japanese all eat rice. Japanese all fat. Big. Japanese forty or fifty years of age, not old. My father fifty, very very old. My mother ate little sorghum. Church gave mother four yen a month. Father went to mountain, boss give him two yen per month. We no eat rice with meals."

Soon thereafter, she said, "Madam. Japanese people, many don't know, rice delicious. Aiya. Rice IS delicious. Rice smells good. In the beginning,

when I ate rice and sweets, and then everything, I thought of my father, mother, older sister, and younger brother.”

She cried when she first arrived at our home because she was saddened by thoughts of her parents. In the same way that Koreans add the phrase “Aigo” in speech, Manchus readily say “Aiya.” They say it at times when Japanese say “Ara ma” or when one says “Ahhh” in admiration. I can see the influence of her mother in each instance of Guiyu’s honesty, her filial behavior, and her determination to improve herself. I can see the influence of her mother’s mother, who was the first family member to convert to Christianity. When Guiyu did not have any tasks at hand, she would read the Bible in her room. I have never seen her pray, however.

Her home was in a rural town called Huanren. Trains do not yet pass through this town, which is in the heart of the mountains on the eastern side of the Andong-Mukden line. It is said that the area around Huanren, Donghua, and Kuandian is a region with many rebels, but I can’t imagine what sort of place it must be. In that small town, there has been a church for over thirty years, and an instructor (a priest, perhaps?) travels between churches in Donghua and Kuandian and educates the citizens. Guiyu wrote on a piece of paper that the priest was a person from Tankoku and showed it to me. Certain Chinese characters are used to signify Germany, but where is this country that Guiyu calls “Tankoku”? When I showed her the globe, she pointed to Belgium and said “I think it is here.” She also explained that the instructor had a frightening expression with which he gazed at everyone. “If you tell lies, smoke opium, or steal, you will become a devil after you die.” Hearing this, Guiyu was afraid.

These Christian beliefs and the anti-Japanese sentiment she had learned in school had both become fixed in her mind. Sometimes it was clear how these beliefs overlapped. As a result, I felt that I must always directly confront the strong ethnic consciousness that had been cultivated in her.

Gradually, she came to understand the workings of the household, and by the end of the year, when she grew accustomed to her chores, I began to teach her how to knit socks. In the afternoons, winding balls of yarn, we racked our brains and awkwardly tried to speak to each other. As the days passed, Guiyu, who had already taken her first steps in learning the Japanese language, became quite skillful in conversing in Japanese. My husband frequently traveled to the countryside on military expeditions, and I also went out on occasion to do things like visit wounded soldiers, welcome the returning troops, and mourn the deaths of those killed in action. Consequently,

such activities naturally became topics of conversation. Also, because she came from the Huanren region, where there were many rebels, and I wanted to know her feelings and the attitude of the local community toward the Japanese army, there were times where I consciously shifted the conversation toward these topics.

The term “traveling bandits” refers to, well, spies who informed the rebels about the movements of the suppressing Japanese forces. In these parts, one often hears the phrase “separation of the rebels and people” but to the extent that such efforts must be made, there seems to have been no distinction between rebels and good people. If a person is starving, he will join the rebel army. And if he doesn’t profit as expected, he will return to being a farmer. Others are coerced into joining the bandits or drawn by greed, and there are probably those who take on the role of a spy without any difficulty. But even if a person does something bad, all his misdoings are erased once he is punished. Since neither the person himself nor his acquaintances have problems with this practice due to their cultural background, someone who had been a bandit one day could go work in the fields the following day, and everyone would pretend not to know. The work of subduing the bandits is an extraordinary challenge, or so I have heard.

Some time ago, I read a newspaper article about a noble-looking young man about twenty years old who walked through the town of Andong holding a cat in his arms. When a sensitive official caught and interrogated him, it turned out the young man was the deputy leader of the rebels and had come to survey the condition of the Japanese subduing forces. This winter, while we were staying at a dormitory in Mukden, we were surprised by the sound of five or six gunshots in the middle of the night. The next day I heard that rebels had appeared at a nearby Manchu home and set the house on fire. Since Mukden is just like a bustling, miniature version of Osaka, it seemed strange and I was skeptical, but I had no idea about how to find out the true identity of the rebels. For the first six months we were in Manchuria, I was troubled at my inability to figure out who the rebels were. But recently, I have come to understand that there are many types of rebels. The rebels who suddenly interrupted my dreams with gunshots in Mukden are like thieves in Japan. A few of those who are generally called former rebels and have been caught by the Japanese military or left for other reasons, disappeared into the cities. Some became cooks at dormitories and for half a year or so hid from the public eye. Others became rickshaw drivers or chauffeurs, but in reality they were the violent leaders of the rebel groups.

One rebel leader, who posed as a lady, was arrested in the middle of the city, surprising everyone. However, compared with the infiltration of thieves and other extremists through every part of Japan, the presence of rebels throughout the cities is not surprising in the least.

I'm sure you've heard of Fujiwara Yoshie's record, "Subdue the Rebels." One lyric notes, "The mud that seems to be everywhere." The words were written by the poet Yaginuma Takeo, who grew up in Manchuria and actually hid in the muddy swamps near the Xing'anling Mountains with Japanese troops. For those of us who live in Manchuria and are affected by the hardships of the imperial army, hearing that record causes tears to roll down our cheeks. At the point in the song that says, "No food for three days, two nights, perhaps it is the cold of a night of hunger," anyone in the Ginza district in Tokyo must perceive these to be the events of a faraway dream. For myself and others born in Tokyo, pleasant images of our homeland sometimes appear to us, and we can see the bright eyes of cheerful and carefree young men and women amidst the various crowds of the Ginza. To me, they all are as innocent as babies.

And yet, when I think that there are natural limits to that carefree attitude, I am somehow saddened. "The soldiers have returned from the battlefield!" shouted children gripping the *hinomaru* flags of Japan as they rushed to the front of the nearby military office. On that day, I too rushed behind them, my heart filled with emotion. The soldiers, their skins tanned to deep brown, were wearing their soiled uniforms with pride. When I saw them marching in time to a bugler, I felt I could hear the formless sound of the footsteps of the many young people who were not of this world anymore. Moved by the thought of the war dead, I screamed with all my heart, "Thank you. Thank you for your efforts!" The young lieutenants and other officers grew beards like the samurai Katō Kiyomasa and laughed that they were souvenirs from their military service. After their laughter, an air of refinement seemed to linger. When I think that around that same time of year, other young people were in college or caught up in dancing, those carefree attitudes weighed heavy on my heart. Even so, Japan will grow larger and take on a new shape. Those of us in Manchuria believe that we should not force these hardships onto them. And knowing that those in Japan have such luxuries would be a comfort to those living on the deadlocked frontlines.

Since the China Incident, the world has been quickly transformed. Today while it is appropriate for someone to sing "Subdue the Rebels" in the middle of the Ginza district in Tokyo, other things weigh down the hearts of those going off to war. One can hear on the radio the intense support of the Tokyo residents on the home front! Someone said that these days, the people coming to observe Manchuria would be surprised at how quiet it seems compared to Japan. As I reflect back on the past years, I have many different thoughts and emotions.

Manchuria is a foreign country. Moreover, it is a young, newborn nation. It must develop into the bond that links Japan and China together. The more challenges Japan faces in Manchuria, the more it uses all of its passion and strength to work for the complete construction of Manchuria. Aren't they showing respect for the Emperor as well as love for the motherland? Even during the period before the China Incident when Tokyo was radiant, here in Manchuria the tension of the frontline became the basis for building "the imperial way, the peaceful land." Until the day that Japan, Manchuria, and China become unified, until true peace is established in East Asia, even if Manchuria seems tranquil, the importance of Manchuria as the frontline in this effort and the duty of Japanese who work in Manchuria will not change. Even for an unimportant person like myself, when the North China Incident expanded into the Sino-Japanese Incident, and then transformed into the China Incident, I felt Japanese should join our spirits with the people of Manchuria, and we all should open up our hearts to each other.¹ It is my strong belief that we must begin to support each other in a much deeper and more solid manner.

However, forging such bonds is difficult. I could bring up young Guiyu! Considering even that impulse, I briefly became exhausted. I thought I couldn't do it. There were two or three nights when I was unable to sleep because I was immersed in thought. There were days when I prayed in front of the Buddhist altar and could do nothing but cry. There were times when I lost all confidence; I was told that my way of doing things was bad, and nodded my head in agreement. I was tormented by these thoughts for many days. Told that my ideals were too high, I could not respond. Those who know it is in my nature to go to the limits of all my strength can certainly imagine how I was at that time. But, please do not worry. Nowadays, I am filled with the exaltation that comes after such pain. I have traversed a high peak. My heart that moves on the waves of emotion has arrived at a place where I have the leisure to look back thankfully and see that I was merely

an ordinary person among other ordinary people. Being ordinary actually enabled me to do the difficult work of assimilating a Manchu; I could convey the true feelings of the heartfelt friendship of Japanese who tried to embody the ideals of nation-building. But our destination is still far ahead, and there are many peaks we must climb. Although the end is still far, it has become clear that my desire to assimilate Manchu people to Japanese ideals would be challenging but not impossible. I won't become disappointed or exhausted like the last time.

Let's return to my story and continue on.

I knew that Guiyu had lived in and around Huanren, Donghua, and Kuandian in Andong province where many rebel groups with especially strong leaders were reputed to be hiding out. One day, when I spoke of the ideological rebels (Communists), she said "They are not rebels." I was surprised by her solemn interjection. When I inquired what they were and she responded, "They are patriotic troops," I was startled. I'm embarrassed to say this but my hand began to tremble in fear. I then asked her to explain how to differentiate them from the rebels, and why they were patriotic troops. Guiyu replied, taking a firm, and what I would even call proud, attitude.

"The rebels steal things from good people. They wear dirty clothing and don't have good guns. The patriotic troops don't steal from good people. They even give money to the poor. They have splendid uniforms like the Japanese army. They also have guns. They are not rebels."

This conversation occurred about a month after she had come to live with us. I became so frightened that I considered dismissing her. However, to do so would be a mere stopgap, like putting a lid on something giving off a foul odor. On the one hand, I was overflowing with the passionate feeling that, without making an imperial subject of this one girl, how could I as a Japanese subject reciprocate the precious trust of the Emperor? It is said that when one leaf falls, we anticipate the approach of autumn. Yet, on the other hand, my mind cries out, doesn't this young girl's proud attitude signify the existence of solid roots? If she were a spy, I wondered, could she change from poison into medicine? I could not deter my single-minded wish to affect this child and respond to the influences that caused her to feel this way. While I gazed at my trembling hands, I reminded myself that I must not be hasty. Every day after that, we spoke of such things as the bandits, the significance

of building Manchuria, and the existence of countries trying to prevent the growth of Manchuria. We also discussed the source of the advanced weapons that the ideological troops possessed and what their source is demanding in return for that supply. During one of our talks, Guiyu, smiling meaningfully, said, "But Manchuria, just three years old. China, very old." When we spoke of such things, this cute young girl's eyes filled with doubt, and she became silent. She transformed into a cool, hard being who, like a human made out of steel, would rebuff one's advances. Her behavior puzzled me, and later on that night I secretly told my husband that this kind of child could become a member of the anti-Japanese female military.

Another time, she stood in front of a map of East Asia hanging on the wall, and laughing, said, "Aiya, Japan so small!" Her words made me want to say, "You little brat!" This matter was different from others. When I thought my country was being laughed at, my competitive spirit appeared on my flushed cheeks. I tried to hold back and wait until the appropriate moment instead of giving in to the temptation of a temporary victory. With feelings of regret sinking into my flesh and bones, I felt even more determined to carry out my intentions until the very end.

Gradually, she became used to her daily chores of cleaning the house, doing the laundry, and cooking. Yet, in terms of spiritual beliefs, as she grew increasingly familiar with me, she exposed her true character, the seeds of which lay in her anti-Japanese education. Because she was smart, she bombarded me with questions. However, since she asked without hesitation, no matter how frank the question, I was happy that I had succeeded in taking the first steps to becoming closer. Nevertheless, because Guiyu was the kind of person who would grow up and fight for a cause and I am a person who is a devout believer in the "Faith" sect of Nichiren Buddhism, we were able to have conversations that were like serious competitions where sparks flew from our hearts. If we had limited our discussions to things like cleaning and cooking, I would have only come to see her as an adorable young Manchu girl. If she were the type of girl who did not ask direct questions, I too would not have made an effort to speak about anything. I find that thought to be quite frightening. The coolies filling up city streets, the children clad in tatters—I was unable to overlook these things even for a moment. In addition to the surprising words that came out of her innocent mouth, the thoughts behind those words, and her manner which absorbed, like blotting paper, all the things that Japanese say and do, her observations of the contradictions between Japanese words and deeds and her unsparing cri-

tiques made me believe completely that each and every Japanese who comes to Manchuria must live according to the purely divine spirit that long ago accomplished the great feat of founding our nation. I told my friends as many of these ideas as I could. We must watch our speech and our actions, as if each Japanese lived in a crystal palace, because even a young girl—no matter how ignorant she may seem—pays attention to every action of the Japanese. What burdens do those who work for the building of Manchuria immediately face? Many Japanese who came simply to make a profit will hinder the “good work” of others. All this became clear to me.

Because Guiyu was to a certain extent faithful to her anti-Japanese education, she was a difficult child in terms of ideology. But, due to the goodness that she gained from her Christian mother, Guiyu felt ashamed of the belief that thievery was common among Manchu. Also, because she was just a child, her own budding faith had not been damaged through contact with the faith of others. I have heard that the faith of humanity does not get through to the Manchu and Chinese peoples who suffered corrupt politics for hundreds of years. But this child has a pure heart. I believe that her mother's religion prevented the corruption of Guiyu.

I thought about cultivating her innocence and helping her to experience the sincere faith of Japanese. At first, before and after attending memorial ceremonies, I began discussing the loyal and patriotic actions of those who died in battle. It wasn't as though I planned such topics beforehand and then discussed them with her. Rather, I was so moved after paying my respects to the soldiers who had died at the battlefield that these feelings somehow transformed into words. Because I had to inform her of these activities, the words came out in quite a natural way. Once able to talk to her about these matters, I was surprised to learn of the difference between Japanese and Manchu-Chinese attitudes toward soldiers.

I said to her, “In this way, I too will try my best to bring up my son Yoshio. When the mothers of those who died on the battlefield think of their sons' lives of twenty odd years, it will all seem like a dream. Oh, what good Japanese mothers. Even today telegrams were sent that say ‘Rejoice that your child could be helpful in the war effort. Respectfully wait for his ashes to be sent home.’” Guiyu responded by asking, “Your son won't be sent off to war, will he?”

I replied, “Well, we need to raise him to have a healthy body, so he can become a soldier.”

“Why do the sons of rich families become soldiers?” she asked in a puzzled voice.

I remembered hearing that only desperate and hopeless individuals join the military in China, and thought, “I see!”

If she could not comprehend the honor and splendid nature of the soldiers, how could she understand the gratitude I felt toward those holy young men who died on the battlefield? I thought she could not understand the hearts of Japanese who get dressed up and go to honor the wartime deaths of soldiers. From that time on, I began telling her stories about the most exceptional people joining the military and the dignity of the imperial troops.

“The soldiers who are chosen for the imperial forces have all attended elementary school. There are many who graduate from high school and university.”

Guiyu exclaimed, “Aiya!” and made a facial expression typical of Manchu and Chinese showing surprise. “University graduates joining the army—In Manchuria, there aren't any soldiers like that,” she sighed.

Then, a while later, she pointed at a soldier who was bringing horses to a neighboring house and escorting officials in an automobile and said, “Is that soldier the son of an important man? Did he go to university?”

Due to the passion and interest with which she stared at the figures of the soldiers covered in dirt and sweat, I began to wonder whether such cases of elite or educated Japanese soldiers were unusual and reconsidered the true character of the imperial troops.

Afterward, when I went out to a memorial service, she furrowed her brows and said things like, “The rebels are bad. Did the Japanese soldiers die?” Another time, she waited for me to return home and asked, “Did the father and mother come to the service? The bride, did she cry?” I told her that nobody cried at a memorial service when we visited the parents and the young wife of a deceased soldier from Mukden. In surprise she said, “Aiya, why no one cry!”

I've heard that in Korea there is a custom of hiring men and women to cry and yell out “Aigo!” at funerals. I've also seen a female crier once before. Here in Manchuria they don't seem to have this custom, but it is viewed as beautiful when the parents and the couple cry loudly on top of the coffin. Even if I explained the deep sensibility of Japanese who internalize their emotions, she probably would not have understood. I thought “If we continued to follow our Japanese lifestyle, won't she naturally understand the feelings that come out of this way of living? Even if she cannot have the same feelings as a Japanese, she will probably understand how and why Japanese

express such feelings." Therefore, I treated her as if she were an uneducated Japanese and decided that I wouldn't simply assume "She can't understand because she is Manchu." No matter what I say, with the difference between our long histories, and because we are of different ethnic groups affected by our varying geographical environments, and because even hereafter we cannot eliminate these historical and geographical differences, I understood it would be unnatural to treat her the same as a Japanese person and would in fact be unnecessary. In order to teach the Japanese spirit to this young girl, who has deeply internalized an anti-Japanese education under a certain plan, I had to make her learn through experience with a pure Japanese lifestyle so that she could become Japanese by sharing those Japanese feelings of daily life. And without such a process, no matter how much I talked or corrected what she had already learned in school, I thought it would be impossible to teach her the Japanese spirit. I didn't know how long we would be in Manchuria, but in the short time she was in our household, I would try as much as possible to have her become Japanese. I didn't know how this child would view her current experiences as she grew up. That is, of course, her own free choice, but I worried that this was the only means I had for teaching her about Japan. Also, as for basic beliefs, everyone has a heart and a Buddha nature like the Buddha. This stemmed from my belief in the Buddha's teaching that the faith deep in people's hearts is equal. There was also the Nichiren belief that Buddha nature and that faith are not at all abstract entities, but take shape and exist in our daily lives.

[Translator's Note] *Several months pass with Koizumi and Guiyu growing closer. Koizumi arranges for Guiyu to take Japanese lessons and continues to "educate" the young woman in the Japanese lifestyle. Guiyu begins to criticize individual Manchus and specific Manchu cultural practices (e.g., arranged marriages, attitudes toward money). The death of her father prompts her to ponder her place in the world and in Manchuria, and to further question her education.*

This smart girl began to sigh at how her previous education differed from her actual experience with Japanese. She listened to me talk about my own experiences in Japan—learning how to sew a kimono in elementary school, how schools in the countryside gave vocational guidance, and how junior high and high schools taught cooking and childcare.

As the days passed Guiyu came to have a strong trust in me. While sometimes feeling a burden that was difficult to endure from this child who was upfront about everything, I also began to have a soft spot for this naughty child as if she were my own.

In March, because we were moving to Xinjing, I offered to have some simple Manchu travel garments made for Guiyu. She responded that she didn't like Manchu clothing.

"Japanese kimono are pretty. Warm, too. Manchu clothing is inexpensive, but it's not pretty at all."

Upon her saying this, I gave a pained smile, and because we had made her a kimono for New Year's Day, I decided to give her a kimono overcoat and undergarment, thronged sandals, tabi socks, a shawl, and gloves in order to complete the outfit. She was thrilled, of course, and kept asking me how much each item cost.

I taught her the proper way to fold a kimono. When I would return home from errands, she would sit by my side while I changed clothes and took pleasure in folding everything. Then she would say, "Aiya, so pretty it makes my eyes hurt. It's expensive, right? How much is it?"

When I would tell her how much the garments cost, she would shake her head and exclaim, "Aiya, madam! Japanese are scary. Do you really wear such expensive things? There aren't Manchus who would do that!"

"That's not true. Some rural Manchu are frugal, but the wives of elites wear beautiful new clothing every spring and every autumn. Unlike Japanese, they make quite expensive earrings and rings and bracelets. This kimono was made ten years ago and this kimono coat has been re-dyed twice already. My *obi* is from when I was a young girl."

Once I explained this to her, she was wholly impressed and the soft touch of the silk and the beautiful unique hues of the Japanese fabric all must have given her a girlish pleasure. She would carefully smooth down the fabric and fold it for me.

The pleasure that she seemed to derive from possessing the red muslin kimono, *haori*, and the felt slippers—it was something I could not understand. She would stare at the items lined up in the corner of the room and sleep with them beside her pillow.

Around that time, she grew irritated at being seen as a Manchu when taking orders. She declared that her current hairstyle didn't look good with Japanese clothing and began to grow her hair out. She pinned up her bangs with a comb even though she was ashamed of her wide forehead. Since that

was how she felt, I thought it was fine. I let her do what she wanted, but then one day, she said to me, "Madam, I will be Japanese in three years!"

I laughingly replied, "Oh, really?" It seemed as if she had her own plans.

Because she was an adorable child with a continental nature and a boldness borne from a clear ethnic consciousness shaped by poverty, and her trust in me was such that nothing could come between us, people often mistook us for mother and child. This was probably a delight for Guiyu. Sometimes I would go out with her and Yoshio and sometimes with my husband too, and we played the Corinth Game for relaxation in the evening. At those times, she would say, "Well, now it's mother's turn. Hurry!" or "Father, the red ball went in again. Too bad, ha ha ha." Together with Yoshio, she would call us father and mother.

Because she was this kind of child, she was cool and collected even when we were riding on the "Asia" observation car or going to the dining car, and when we fed her Western food at the Yamato Hotel, she would quietly watch what I would do and then calmly use a fork. There was no comparison to the restless subservience of Japanese girls who had just come from the countryside. I admired her attitude, which came from taking her education seriously into her soul, whether the education was correct or incorrect. Indeed, the way she marveled at her new experiences was more intense than the average person. She would stop cleaning and tell me that she planned to write a letter to her younger brother and tell her friends about the dining car in the express train or the dazzling hotel chandeliers. Moreover, she would wait until we returned home to express these feelings.

Shortly after arriving in Xinjing, when my husband was out of town, I took Yoshio on a field trip from Dalian to Harbin. Because we had a secure, corner apartment on the second floor, I had Guiyu stay by herself to house-sit for three days. I didn't have any concerns except that she might be lonely. Guiyu must have felt that we left her with the entire household. When we returned home, she asked me to read a letter she wrote to her mother. Since it was a custom from her previous house, I read it aloud to her with curiosity. It turned out that Guiyu wrote that the entire family was absent and she was left to protect the entire house. Within that letter, I discovered the Chinese characters, "Japan and Manchuria trust each other." Although Guiyu was a little shy, I felt intensely shocked. Truly, there is no greater virtue for a child than trusting others. During the three days of solitude, this girl shared in the delight of this expansive trust. She even cleaned up the entire house.