The role women play in the Edo period of Japan is limited in fact only two significant women have popped up they are Izumo no Okuni the female founder of Kabuki, and Princess Kazunomiya.

**Find more about two women above.** It was not until the 1980s and the 1990s when more studies were being conducted on women in the Edo period. This was the time to ask questions such as “How and why did women of the Edo period disappedar? And “What do we see as women’s role in early modern japan?” Another interesting fact is that the disappearance of women was not just in historical studies but also in the fields of literature, art and music.

Important research has been done to rediscover the women of Edo. Such as Takagi’s studies on Mikudari han which is divorce documents in the Edo period. **Look up Mikudari han practices.**

One popular way to understand the role of women is by the use of travel diaries which as been done by Shiba and Yoshi Maeda who examined women’s travel from private schools where they would read and write about poetry. **Akira Hayami** looked into peasant-class families and found that many women would postpone marriage by working outside the family for a few years. An important fact is that women who work outside the home becomes an investment and an opportunity for work and education. **Oguchi and Masuda.**

Edo period women usually worked with Waka poetry and playing instruments such as koto and shamisen. As well as calligraphers. **Kinsei joryu shodo meka shiden** 264 women calligraphers in edo. From **patricia fister.**

The act of looking into women’s written work shows us many things such as women’s growth and education, and roles in the household. An important piece of literature that women read was called the Onna daigaku takarabako or Treasure box of greater learning for women, it had topics that dealt with children’s education, women’s works, annual events, treatises on childbirth and child rearing as well as first-aid treatment. The takarabako went through 14 editions and the total amount of books sold was appromiately 100,000 copies according to Hino Tatsuo. The treasure box was more of a popular almanac filled with valuable information, instead of a **normative model** for female behavior. The reason behind the massive amount of books is because of the idea of early print capitalism that encouraged such growth in the circulation of books. The takarabako is important because it allowed the parents to teach daughters instead of a school system. Many parents would sent their daughters into service at buke yashiki or kuge yashiki **CONNECTION POINT Because parents purchased these books it allowed the women to be more prepared when she would get married and have kids. Private schools such as good wives and good mother schools.**

After the meji restoration Onna Daigaku was criticized for respecting man and contempt for woman (**danson-johi) look up this <-**

Going to a samurai’s house allowed for the daughter to be trained in etiquette and nice housekeeping. Many of those fighting the Daigaku were a group of minken or Keimo thinkers in the democratic movement. Fukuzawa among others said women should be learning math and economics instead of poetry and literature. While the meji period happened there was a change in the preservation of Japanese culture was saved for women by learning utilitarian skills, waka and haiku poetry and music, painting and drawing. Those that fought against the Keimo thinkers was one guy by the name of yanagida kunio (1875-1962) who said women were the holders of oral langague not written language he affirming mother’s culture.

True script

In this video, I will be discussing the idea of Japanese female identity in regards to the Japanese traditional gender role defined by Ryosai Kenbo, as well as examining the role of women starting from the Edo period to the post war era. One of the main focuses will be the study of visual culture specifically Shojo manga/anime that changes the traditional gender role. Finally I hope to challenge Murakami Takashi’s belief that the Kawaii phenomenon actually does not make Japan look weak or effeminate.

Identity is defined as the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others. What does this mean for Japanese women? Why does it make them different? In order to understand these questions it is important to look at the history of women starting with the Edo period. During this time society was separated into multiple hierarchies such as the merchants, peasants and samurai to name a few. Women’s role in the Edo period were defined by Confucianist standards, at least that was true for the upper class. Confucian teachings for women were developed through the distribution of educational guides. One of those guides was known as Onna Daigaku takarabako (Treasure Box of Greater Learning for Women) inside this guide are a code of morals for women that were based on the thoughts of Zhu Xi (a neo-confucian scholar of the Song Dynasty).

Things that are found inside the guide include: practicing filial piety towards the father and mother before marriage and the father-in-law and mother-in-law after marriage. The women must look towards her husband as lord and always serve him. A women must always keep strict watch over her own behavior for example she must be awake before her husband and must go to sleep after her husband is asleep. Finally the woman must keep her husband’s household in proper order. Takarabako was created from the demand of familes who had daughters and wanted them to be educated. Families would also have their daughters sent to private schools or to Damiyo households to teach them how to perform their future duties has wives and mothers. From the findings of Tadashi Takagi, it has been found that peasant women had the ability to initiate divorce. This is through the use of a Mikudari han and it gave both the husband and wife the right to remarry. The divorce proceedings did not have the cause for divorce nor any criticism of either party, Both parties had to submit a type of document called the Rienjo Kaeri issatu (a receipt for mikudari han.)

This changed during the Meiji Restoration for the middle class, women’s identity was not just about being a filial wife and mother but the woman was expected to follow the idea of Good wife, wise mother also known as Ryosai Kenbo. The meiji Restoration itself was time of advancement and evolution for Japanese Society for the males and royalty. The emperor and his wife were symbol of Japanese advancement in the world. The old dress of past courts were changed from Chinese dresses to Western suits, and male hair was cut in a western hairstyle. The empress dressed up as a western beauty, age old traditions such as blackening of teeth and eye brow shaving were also removed from society.

The Japanese nation wanted a way to keep their traditions and the women of the middle class became that tradition. The tradition of Ryosai Kenbo speaks of women staying home and taking care of the house and bearing children for the nation. Education for good wives and wise mothers was the cornerstone to education for middle class females after 1899 because it was based on the idea that properly educated women could prepare children to be good subjects of the Emperor by instilling diligence, loyalty, and patriotism. The middle class woman’s public image was one who attended girl’s higher school in order to gain the necessary education to raise a family, used the postal savings system and spend an appropriate amount of time on organized philanthropic and patriotic activities which will be discussed later. The clothing attire of middle class females were also a part of what gave the idea of japaneseness. For middle class women the clothing was about wearing the Kimono. After the Meiji period there is a time where middle class women are starting to advance outside of the idea of Ryosai Kenbo, these women were known as Shokugyo-fujin. Since this was a fairly new idea for middle class women many of them expressed doubts to their new role as a paid employee and that they had the desire cultivate their accomplishments as a future housewife (shufu) to fulfill their vocation as women. It was due to the rise of Shokugyo-fujin and other events such as the Great Kanto earthquake that led to the Kimono being branded as traditional clothing and western clothing taking its place as the dominant fashion.

One of the more recent events in changing women’s identity is passing of the 1985 Equal Employment Opportunity Law. From its original passage into law there are five areas of employment that were address they were: recruitment and hiring, job assignment and promotion, education and training, employee benefits and mandatory retirement age, retirement and dismissal. In regards to education training, employment benefits, and mandatory retirement age, employers are not allowed to discrimate for any reason against women.

Of course with the prospect of working outside the home, setting comes into play with the relationship between the public and private sphere. It is important to note that the public sphere could also mean the working sphere, while the private sphere means the domestic sphere. Each of these spheres are dominated by a specific gender males for working and female for domestic. What are the reasons for these marginalized spheres? Three things led to the marginalization of women and men. These three things were: Ryosai Kenbo, Cult of Domesticity, and modern workplace practices.

As early as the Meiji period women were expected to be placed inside the home and have no rights. This was viewed in the ideas of Confucian thought that the father was the leader of the household. In the 1970s western scholars named Paulson, powers, and Lebra concluded that the Japanese marriage was a socially valued female career in which a women finds self-fulfillment (Ukigai) in the home. Included inside the private sphere is an idea known as shakai which refers to the environment surrounding each family. Examples of these are neighborhoods, communities, or school districts. This evtually gave women the power to organize and led to the events in the 1970s Feminist movement. This will be discussed later on with its impact on visual culture.

When the 1985 Equal Employment Opportunity Law was passed, it did give women the right to have the same rights and advantages that men had but women themselves still were affected by sexual harassment and were forced to more often rely on the court system for reparations. The causation of this event is from the career track system. The career track system was spilt into two distinct roles: Managerical track and the clerical track. In the managerial track employees are associated with paid vacations, relocations, and advances throughout the corporate ladder. The clerical track usually involves no overtime commitment but it doesn’t allow for vertical advancement through the company. This track assumes that women will quit as soon as they become married or they have a child. After the children are grown up the women may come back to the job and continue working. This give the distinct empression of an M shaped career path. If a female was a part of the managerial track if they had kids or became married they were pressured by the bosses to quit and to perform their duty to society.

In regards to popular visual culture one artist stands above the rest because of his development of the art style Superflat. This was Murakami’s attempt to reanimate a pre-Westernized, putatively indigenous, Japanese artistic perspective in forms that simultaneously accommodates a thoroughly westernized popular culture.

As I said before Murakami Takashi has beliefs that the Kawaii Phenomenon is in response to Japan’s defeat in WW2 and the nuclear bombings that ended it. From an interpreter Murakami stated that the condition of the country and people were neutered and domesticated. I propose that is false because the Kawaii phenomenon and the popularity for anime and manga combine to create Japan’s soft power. Joesph Nye defines soft power as the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion. The famous Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun in 2007 commented that Japan’s economic power has peaked and Japan is now focused on polishing its soft power. Of course Murakami brings a valid point, that because of the Kawaii idea Japan is weak but if we look towards visual culture starting from the Edo period moving into the Post War era we see women advancing in society.

Edo Period visual culture can be defined mostly through Kabuki and U eikyo paintings (wood block paintings.) Murakami’s art is influenced from Edo period painters such as Kano Sansetsu, Ito Jakuchu and Katsuhika Hokusai, by their use of mobility of the gaze. Along with the gaze of the characters depicted on wood block prints many of the characters have androgynous faces. This is especially true for Murakami’s My lonesome cowboy and Hiropon.

As I have mentioned in Identity the Kimono was a major component for what the ideal image of a Japanese female should be. Towards the end of the Meiji period the Kimono became a traditional garment to be worn during special events such as the Coming of Age ceremony and weddings. While the Kimono was becoming an obsolete choice of clothing western clothing was thriving in Japan because of Women’s lifestyle magazines that would show western fashion for the Shokugyo fujin. In 1944 there were only four magazines designated for women. They were Fujin Kurabu (Ladies’ club), Shin Joen (New Women’s space), Nippon Fujin (Japanese Lady) and Shufu no Tomo (the ladies journal of housekeeping.)

After the end of the war Shufu No Tomo started working with the GHQ and SCAP which was an organization that was created to keep tabs on media that was released in Japan. Many of the articles in Shufu showcased an “ordinary” American lifestyle for women. Place example?

In the 1960s a popular mangaka known by the name of Osamu Tezuka released a shojo manga called Ribon no Kishi (Princess Knight). **A summary of princess knight.** Ribon no Kishi was inspired from repeated trips by Tezuka to the Takarazuka Revue which is an all female kabuki troupe with no male actors. In regards to Princess Saphhrine and the setting for princess knight Identity and Setting spring up again, because of female readers.