Three Kinds of *Ie* (Houses) In Modern Japanese Literature

Yuko Nishikawa

Chubu University

1. Introduction

Novels in any country's literature are often set in houses. It is difficult to find a novel in which a house is not described. Novels describe political problems or social incidents. In addition, they describe a person's life, illness, old age, death or interactions with other people. If everyday life is described, then its container, *ie* in Japanese , in English a house, a home or a residence, (one of the problems of our study is finding a suitable English word that corresponds to *ie*), is also described.

In general, people seek happiness for themselves and their families when they are looking for a new house. Architects promise happiness to the people whose homes they design. However, novelists choose to express the unhappiness that is caused by changing housing style. People who feel dissatisfaction in their present state try to find some way out of it. In modern Japanese literature, there are many novels which describe people who try to improve their lives by moving or building a new house, only to find that they have more troubles than before.

Japan has modernized so quickly that there has been a drastic change in housing style over a short time. We often have difficultly adapting to the situations. Every time, we have done our best to choose a suitable life style. And, the language reflects more or less this social change. For example, in order to describe the new type of dwelling and also the new life style, we need to give the old word a new meaning or else change the word itself.

I will investigate through some novels how the authors choose words to express the container of the every day life and show how the actual meaning of the Japanese words *ie, uchi, katei, sumai* and *heya* has changed over time. I would also like to show through the study of the use of these words by the novelists what changes in a family or in an individual's life occur when the physical form of the family home changes.

First, I will explain briefly about the way that Japanese private houses have changed since the beginning of the Meiji period, about 120 years ago. I will describe three styles of private houses which have been built during this period.

I shall call the first one as "a house with a Japanese style fire-place (*irori bata no aru ie*)", the second one as "a house with a Japanese style dining room (*chanoma no aru ie*)", and the third one as "a house with a Western style living-dining room (*ribingu no aru ie*)".

The transition from one form to another has been very widespread, but that does not mean that there are no old houses left. We can see examples of all three types of houses at the present time. Regional differences in housing styles remain due to differences in climate, custom and class. Yet it seems that the average Japanese in each age shares the same image of the ideal house as well as a similar style of living. It goes without saying that the design of the living space is greatly affected by changes in the Japanese family system.

"The house with a Japanese style fire-place" is the kind of house where someone who is about 80 years old today might have been born. In the beginning of the Meiji period, farmers made up about 80% of the population. Most houses were made of wood and had earthen walls, a thatched roof, and an iroribata, or central fire-place. Today it is difficult to find a village of thatched roofed houses, even in remote mountains. Thatched roofed houses are preserved in museums. The central fire-place was used for cooking and also for warming the house.

In "a house with a Japanese style fire-place", the patriarch holds sovereign power. The members of the household can include the parents of the patriarch, the patriarch and his wife, their children, brothers and sisters of the patriarch, their partners, children, servants, and lodgers who are only vaguely related to the family. The house is a container which can include an extended collateral family.

All of the members of the household are engaged in some hereditary business, and the house is also the place of business. The patriarch has the power of life and death over the members of the household, and is also entrusted with the worship of the ancestors. The members of the household are further bonded by a common meal around a central fire-place. The seating arrangement around the fireplace is fixed according to status. Upper seats are clearly separated from lower seats. Middle-aged and older males of the immediate family occupy the high status seats. Women, younger males, and members of the peripheral family occupy the lower status seats. Servants sleep in separate quarters, either in outside huts or in tiny rooms inside the big house, but they must eat with the family around the fire-place.

"A house with a Japanese style dining room" is said to be derived from separate retainer's houses of the Edo period. It is the kind of house where a person who is about 50 years old today might have been born. This type of house is still very common in Japan. The house is built of wood and has a tiled or shingled roof. Tatami mats are laid on the floor. Since the beginning of the 20th century, it has been fashionable to have one room built in the Western style for entertaining guests. There is no fire-place, and the families eat in the Japanese style dining room.

Here again there is a distinction between the upper and lower seats. The father is still the head of the household and is treated deferentially. This house is not a place of business. The father, who is the family breadwinner, works near his house or commutes to a distant office. He supports his parents, his wife, and his children, but does not help to maintain his married brothers. This house is designed to accommodate three generations of the same family. In upper-income households there was a maid, who had her own room.

Since Japanese census-taking began in 1920, the average number of people per household has continued to decrease. One reason for this is that women are having fewer children. The main reason, however, is the trend towards the nuclear family. The son no longer expects to live with his parents after he marries.

Nowadays, most houses for sale are "a house with a Western style living-dining room." This house has fewer tatami rooms. The Japanese life-style, where families kneel and sleep on the floor, has changed to a way of life where families sit in chairs and sleep in beds. Most of the rooms in the house are Western style, although at least one tatami room remains. Modern kitchens and flush toilets are common. However, when people come into their houses, they always take off their shoes. Since 1955, there has been a vast increase in the Japanese economy, and an increase in Western style houses. ln the cities, there are many new highrise housing complexes which often include Western style apartments.

This house is a container for the nuclear family consisting of mother, father and one or two children. Grandparents live elsewhere. Salaried workers comprise 80% of the population, farmers less than 10%. The number of nuclear family households has increased along with the increase in the number of salaried workers. Theoretically, the husband is the breadwinner, but housewives are also engaged in part-time work to augment the family income. There are few full-time housewives these days. Nevertheless, the husband is the legal head of the household and as such may exercise power over his family.

But when wives begin to work full time and have their own careers, what will happen? When the equality of sexes is realized, the family must become a gather of individuals. The nuclear family where the father has all the authority, and the gathering of individuals have the same constituent members, but their relationship is different. Naturally, the former family cannot easily change to the latter one.

Here three novels are introduced which have the theme of the change of style of dwellings. The three novels are, "The Family (*Ie*)" by Toson Shimazaki, "The Embraced Family (*Hoyo Kazoku*)" by Nobuo Kojima, and "The Sunlit Corner (*Hikari no Ryobun*) by Yuko Tsushima. Shimazaki's novel is translated into English by Cecilia Segawa Seigle as "The Family" and into French by Suzanne Rosset as "Une Famille", and Tsushima's novel is translated into French by Anne et Cécile Sakai as "Territoire de la Lumiere ". Kojima's

novel has not yet been translated.

The reasons why I chose these novels are as follows:

1. These three novels present in common the struggle and the pain of changing life style. The first novel, "The Family", written by Toson Shimazaki, describes the upheaval that occurs when "a house with a Japanese style fire-place" is changed for "a house with a Japanese style dining room". The second novel, "The Embraced Family" by Nubuo Kojima describes the struggle of a man who tries in vain to reestablish his troubled family living in "a house with a Japanese style dining room" by building "a house with a Western style living room". The third novel, "The Sunlit Corner" describes a year in the life of a young woman living with her little daughter in an apartment on the top of a building. She ran away from "a house with a Western style dining room" and from her husband, and was trying to decide what to do.
2. Each of the three novelists is conscious of his precursors. The three novels I will introduce next describe families who change their style of house. The three novels are set inside the house, and the characters are members making up a family. In Japan, these three novels are called *watakushi shosetsu*, "the private life novel", or "confessional novel". Sometimes the main character is the author himself. The authors of the three novels know that they belong to the same tradition. But sometimes, the later authors are conscious that they are parodying earlier works.
3. These three novels are perennial best sellers, and copies are easily available.

The following are charts of the main characters in the three novels. Because the three novels deal with families, the charts also function as family trees. The family trees become progressively smaller in each novel, reflecting the aforementioned changes in Japanese demography.

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2. "The Family" by Toson Shimazaki.

The first novel, "The Family" by Toson Shimazaki, was published in 1911, and describes life between 1898 and 1910. This novel describes the upheaval that occurs when "a house with a Japanese style fire place *irori*" is exchanged for "a house with a Japanese style dining room". The hero, Sankichi Koizumi leaves Tokyo for a visit to his home village, which is the home of his dead father and ancestors, in psychological preparation for his marriage. But as his only family house had been destroyed by fire long before, he visits his sister Otane and her family the Hashimotos who continue to live in "a house with a fire-place" in a little town in the mountainous Kiso area. The novel begins as follows:

> "The kitchen of the Hashimoto house was full of activity with lunch preparations. Ordinarily, six male employees, from head clerk to office boy, had to be fed; but now there were Tokyo guests too. Including the family, thirteen had to be served. It was not easy for Otane, mistress of the house, to

> cook three times a day for such a large number but she had gradually become accustomed to feeding so many, and managed quite well with the help of her daughter and maid. The spacious *irori* room had polished cupboards and a spotless wooden floor.The prepared food was carried from the kitchen and served at the *irori*, where a fire burned even in summer and over which hung a soot-covered bamboo pot-hanger suspended from the ceiling." (Shimazaki Toson;"*Ie*", Shincho bunko, vol. 1, p.5) ["The Family" by Toson Shimazaki, translated into English by Cecilia Segawa Seigle, University of Tokyo Press, p. 1]

The Hashimoto house was old and big and was built in typical country style. As we indicated by the chart of the main characters or the family tree, a large family often lived in this type of house. The novelist vividly draws the scene of the communal meal around the fire-place.

The Japanese title of the novel is "Ie". Contemporary Japanese dictionaries list 'house' as the first definition. But *ie* is one of the words that is abundant in meanings as we are going to see. We agree with Cecilia Segawa Seigle's English title "The Family", but we also want to explain that *ie* has other meanings in the novel. In his novel, Toson Shimazaki skillfully chooses his use of the five words which we deal with in this article: *ie, uchi, katei, sumai* and *heya*.

2.1. ***ie***

> "The Hashimoto house (*Hashimoto no ie*) stood on a hill at the edge of town, near an old turnpike." (p.8) [p.3]

This is the example in which *ie* means the building itself. But in this novel this sort of employment of the word is rather scarce. The word *ie* signifies the contents rather than the container in this novel.

> "Before they could think of the union of the young people, they first had to examine the marriageability of the two families (*ie to ie no kekkon*). " (p. 21) [p. 12]

As this example shows, *ie,* meaning "family", is employed in the novel when the marriage of Shota, the son of Otane and the family heir of the Hashimotos, is discussed inside the family. They thought that a good marriage for Shota "is best for the family's solidarity." (p.21) [p.ll] A bride must be chosen from among the families with social status equal to that of the Hashimotos. But for Shota all these things were a heavy

burden.

> "Shota often wondered why he should be concerned about what happened to the family (*ie*)." (p. 28) [p. 17]

Shota's father Tatsukichi thinks of his own youth when he worries about his son. He also had once left Kiso to work in Tokyo but had returned to the village after failing in business. In Kiso, he is engaged in his hereditary business and he runs a successful pharmaceutical company. His son, Shota, must succeed to this hereditary business.

> "In his youth Tatsuo, like his own son, rebelled against the family (*ie*) restrictions." (p. 23) [p. 13]
> "But the son was even more a dreamer than the father and was on the verge of destroying the root of the family (*kono ie o kowashikaketeiru*)."(p.24) [p.l3]

In these cases *ie* is translated as 'family' and there is no alternative translation, but correctly speaking, in this context *ie* signifies the family and the family business, so the translator iserts the word 'root', a wise solution.

So when Shota talked to hinself: Why does the whole family (*ie no mono*) worry about me all the time?"(p.27) [p.l6] , "whole family" means an extended family not only with servants and relations but also the clerks and apprentices of the pharmacy. The life of all these people depends on the head of the family.

Ie signifies far more than the extended family. It means their ancestors also. It was the ancestors that founded the family business.

"*Bon* came in mid-July. Since Tatsuo's father's time, the Hashimotos had made their offerings to the spirits of their ancestors (*ie no mitama*) in Shinto, rather than Buddhist style."(p.38) [p.24]

Thus *ie* in the novel of Toson Shimazaki signifies not only 'house' building but also its contents as household, extended family and the ancestors and also a family fortune and business. In other words, *ie* signifies all the things that comprise the *ie seido* , the feudal family system of Japan.

2.2. *uchi*

In this novel *uchi* signifies the interior of the house territory where Otane, housewife of the Hashimoto lives. Here things are left to her discretion. In the novel the same Chinese charactor is also used as *ie* and *uchi* but when the author wants it to be read *uchi* he indicates the pronunciation *uchi* by the *kana*, phonetics.

> "I haven't been to town many times since the day I came to this house... I'm always tied to the place. (...) I don't usually leave the house (*uchi*). Women are supposed to be this way, you know." (p.ll) [p.5]

Here, by the word *uchi*, Otane expresses her emotional attachment to the household where she came as a bride.

In another way the Chinese character *ie* is followed by a sort of possesive adjective 'my'(*waga*) and wanted to be prononced *uchi*. In this case, *uchi* means family or my house.

> "Of course, I'm sure we have some. I'll get it for you (*uchi ni aru kara kureru*.)" (p.32) [p.20]

2.3. *sumai*

The hero Sankichi, after spending his summer vacations in Kiso, returns to his elder brother's home in Tokyo. His elder brother Minoru is the patriarch of the Koizumi family, and rules over his wife, his daughlers and his three brothers. All of them live in Tokyo. Shota, the heir of the Hashimoto family and Tatsukichi, the patriarch also came to Tokyo one after another to work and ended up failing. Morihiko, the second brother of the Sankichi, lived in an inn for more than ten years. The other family lived in a house but they did not call it an *ie* but *sumai*, which means 'dwelling'. For them, *ie* means not only the house but also a family place or a lot and a paddy field. *Ie* must be rooted in firm ground and contain the ancestors' graves. In spite of the fact that their ancestral home in Kiso was destroyed by fire, they retrace in their conversation the memory of the lost house. But to translate from Japanese into English, it seems difficult to distiguish *sumai* from *ie*. The translator of the novel has translated *sumai* as 'city house' or else omits this word as in the following sentences.

> "Words reached Minoru in (the city house *sumai* of) Tokyo that his brother Sankichi was returning."(p.44) [p.29]
> "Okura (in this last house *nagori no sumai de*) began to reminisce about the house in the country (*kuni no hou ni aru ie*)." (2e volume, p. 122) [p. 229]

In the last exemple, *ie* (the house in the country) and *sumai* (the city house) are in the contrast. And for them, the city house is always a temporary dwelling and not a true home.

However, as my collegue Mr.Yoshikawa has explained, nowadays, the word *sumai* is preferred to the word *ie* especially in advertisements; The two words seemed to have reversed their values.

2.4. *katei*

Among the Koizumis and Hashimotos, only Sankichi uses the word *ie* , not *sumai* , for the house he lives in with his young wife and later with their children. He wants to build his own house in the new place far from the ancestors' land and establish a new relationship which is different from that of the old family system and its network. He wants to have his own *ie* but that *ie* must not be the same *ie* as the *ie* system. So we must pay attention to the adjectives attached to Sankichi's *ie* . In the following text, a sentence is omitted by the translator.

> "(Sankichi decided to leave the Koizumi family [*Kare wa Koizumi no ie kara hanareyou to shita.*]) He resolved to establish his own (new) house on a simple scale. (*betsuni kare wa karedakeno atarashii somatsuna ie wo tsukuroutoshita.*) (p.65) [p.43]

The three adjectives 'his own','new' and 'on a small scale', used by the novelist are not suitable for describing the *ie* as we saw in 2.1. First the youngest son of the Hashimoto family should not have 'his own' *ie* . That was the right of the first son. Then 'old' *ie* was esteemed more than the 'new' *atarashii* one, because the old *ie* meant not only the ancient-looking house but also a long genealogy and a good family. Lastly, good families lived in magnificent houses. But the author dared to use these three adjectives. A new type of family needed to live in a 'new' house.

> "It was after dark when they reached their new home *atarashii ie*."(p.73) [p. 50]
> "The couple's lives began to grow together. (...), the new dwelling began to take on the air of a home (*ikurakazutsu atarashii ie no katachi wo nashite itta*)." (p.81) [p.55]

The translator chose the word 'family' to translate the old *ie*, and the word 'home' for the new *ie*: a suitable translation. At that time the novel was written, the English word 'home' was translated into Japanese as *katei*. People adopted this word as the container of a new family, in other words, a nuclear family. There existed a movement to destroy the feudal family system and substitute an occidental modern type family. The leader of the movement was Zenji Iwamoto who was young Toson Shimazaki's mentor at the Meiji Gakuin. Zenji Iwamoto is the model of the Professor Oshima, one of the characters in the novel "The Family". He introduced Oyuki, a girl graduate of that school, to Sankichi as his bride. Sankichi tried to establish his home based on his professor's theories. The container of the new family was generally a city house which had a Japanese style dining room.

But in spite of the Sankichi and Oyuki's efforts, it was very difficult to make a new type of home and family. At first it was because Sankichi could not cut off the network of the old family system. His brothers and nephew asked his help every time when they failed in business. But secondly, the new type of the family and home had its own problems. Sankichi believed in the possibility of perfect comprehension and equality between wife and husband, but the couple eventually discovered that they did not understand each other.

> "'I wonder why you are so unhappy when you're home (*ie*),' Oyuki sighed as she approached her husband with the child in her arms. [...] 'I've never expected to have an especially happy home *katei*.'" (p. 117) [p. 80]

In addition to the poverty which destroyed the health of the family, Oyuki gave birth to three daughers whom she lost one after the other. She continued to bear three sons. And at the end of the novel she was frightened by the foreboding of her own death during her seventh childbirth. The wife wrote to her girlhood lover that she should never have married. She also surprised her niece by saying that she didn't want so many children.

In this novel many deaths were described. Shota, heir of the Hashimoto family, worked too hard to rebuild his old *ie*, so he died young. He was a victim of the old *ie* as Oyuki was that of the new *katei*. And three little grave stones were raised for the three daughters of Sankichi and Oyuki.

2. 5. *heya*

In contemporary Japanese language, *heya* means room in English. In fact, "a house with a Western style dining-living room" or a modern style apartment is composed of several rooms, and rooms are separated by walls. But in the traditional style Japanese house, in principle, there are no rooms in the Western sense. A house was only one big unseparated space, which was occasionally divided by light partitions, a sort of sliding screen.

According to Kunio Yanagida, the great folklorist, *heya* was a synonym of *koya* which means a shed or a hut. *Heya* or *koya* was a place to sleep for the artisans, for the laborers, for the young boys or for the young girls, in other words, the surrounding members of the extended family. They ate their meals in the large patriarch's house. In later years, *heya* began to be built inside the patriarch's big house. But in a "house with a Japanese style fire-place", a *heya* is persistently situated inferior to the rest of the house. *Jyochu beya(heya)* means the room for the maids who had to be set apart from the patriarch's family. This pejorative nuance of the word *heya* rests in such expressions as *heyaz(s)umi* which means a person who lives in a room of patriarch's house and who

cannot be independent.

It is after the advent of "the house with a Japanese style dining room" that the word *heya* began to lose the pejorative nuance. The appearance of such expressions as *benkyo b(h)eya*, study room, or *kodomo b(h)eya*, children's room, indicates a new status for the word.

In the novel of Toson Shimazaki, *heya* and *koya* keep the pejorative nuance.

> "Then he tied his father's hands behind his back, and Tadahiro was carried into a locked room that had been prepared in a woodshed *ki koya*." (p. 123) [p. 230]

Tadahiro, previous patriarch of the Koizumi family, who was the father of Sankichi and Otane went crazy and was locked in a *koya*. He died there. Otance, Sankichi's sister dwelt on the memory of her father's last days in *koya,* and eventually went crazy also. In another novel of Toson Shimazaki, "A History of a Woman" in which Otane is the heroine, she dies in a room (*heya*) of a mental hospital.

And in "The Family", the patriarch Minoru, who is Sankichi's older brother feeds the invalid second brother Sozo in his home.

> "The anteroom near the entrance was occupied by his invalid brother Sozo." (p. 46)[p. 30]

In this case, the invalid brother cannot be independent. Thus, the pejorative nuance of *heyaz(s)umi* remains.

The only case where the word *heya* is employed in the modern meaning; room, is in the Sankicki's city house, which has a second floor. Sankicki's study room is on the second floor.

3. "The Embraced Family" by Nobuo Kojima

The second novel in this study is written by Nobuo Kojima and describes life in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The hero, Shunsuke Miwa, is a professor of American Literature. He tries to reconstruct his home which had been destroyed by the love affair between Tokiko, his wife, and George, a young American soldier. The novel begins as follows. There is no English version for this novel, so the following is our own translation.

> "Shunsuke Miwa thinks as follows: This house (*ie*) became dirty since the arrival of Michiyo, the house maid." ("*Hoyo Kazoku* [Embraced Family]", Kodansha Bungei Bunko, p. 7)

Normally a house becomes cleaner when a maid is hired. But it is Michiyo the maid, who initially brings the American to the home. Even before Shunsuke is aware of his wife's infidelity, he senses something dirty each time he enters his house. Soon the love affair is discovered and the young American loses interest. The husband and wife confirm their solidarity by the humiliation they shared. They attempt to build a super modern American style house with a bright living room and central heating in place of their house with a Japanese style dining room to get over their inferiority complex about American culture.

But his wife eventually dies of breast cancer, and leaves him and his children behind in the house. The bright living room is already stained by a leak in the roof. In one scene, Shunsuke attempts to make umeboshi, Japanese pickled plums. Umebohi are a traditional food, said to ward off illness. In the novel, the hero tries to recover his lost Japanese spirit after his defilement by American culture. His umeboshi go bad, however, indicating that more than mere escape to the past is needed.

The hero's wife Tokiko is a cheerful, modern woman, who can express her needs to her husband. He tries hard to be the old-fashioned patriarch who embraces his family and takes care of everything, but each time he fails and disappoints his wife.

After writing his novel, Kojima noticed that his novel resembled Shimazaki's "The Family" in that they are both set entirely inside the house. Both novels deal with the "melancholy" (*yuutsu*) caused by the oppresive family network, but Kojima's novel contains elements of humor and irony which are entirely absent from Shimazaki's work.

In his novel, Nubuo Kojima uses the words *ie*, *uchi*, *katei*, and *heya,* but he seems to avoid using the word *sumai*.

3.1. *ie, uchi*

In this novel, it is difficult to distinguish *ie* and *uchi*. As we have mentioned, in modern Japanese language, the same Chinese character is used to express these words. When Toson Shimazaki wanted to use this Chinese character for *uchi*, he clearly indicated this with phonetic symbols. But Kojima does not make such distinction. *Ie* and *uchi* are sometimes interchangeable in Kojima's novel. We can translate *ie* or *uchi* into English as house or home.

> "'I am the head of the household (*kono ie* [or *uchi*] *no shujin*) so I suppose have a kind of responsibility,' he said, shrugging his shoulders.
> 'But Michiyo, isn't it true that in America the housewife is responsible for household matters (*uchi* [or *ie*] *no naka no koto*)?'" (p. 9)

> "'Did you bring your lover into our home (or house) (*uchi* or *ie*) because you

are still angry at me for not bringing you with me to America?'" (p. 41)

Ie or *uchi* signifies in this novel, a building, a family's private space, a family itself or a household but not a lineage, nor ancestors nor family businesses nor family fortunes. Shunsuke Miwa is the head of the nuclear family, but not that of the family of two or three generations nor that of the extended large family. In this novel, the parents of Shunsuke or Tokiko do not enter the stage. Shunsuke wants to embrace and protect his little family because they are isolated as are all other nuclear families. For him, *uchi* or *uchi no naka* signifies the inside of the house, *ie*, the house also signifies something more than just the building, it is the metaphor for his beloved family and dearest wife.

> "'I want to build a bigger wall around the house (*ie* or *uchi*),' said Shunsuke.
> [...]
> 'I want to build a higher wall.'
> 'Perhaps,' said Tokiko, her face brightening a little, 'it would be better just to move to another place.'" (p. 93)

Eventually they decided to build a new house to make over the inside of the house and to reaffirm the solidarity of the family.

> "The architect's plan for building a house on their hillside land in T. town 40 minutes by train from Shinjuku was of a glass-panelled house (*ie*), fully centrally heated and air conditioned." (p. 95)

When the house is finished, the husband and wife invite the American soldier to demonstrate their new American-style life.

> "George kept a straight face as he walked into the living room, looked around and, feigning a look of complete surprise, announced that the room was just like a California country estate. Ryoichi (their son) immediately translated this for his mother." (p. 113)

In this novel, when the wife suffers from cancer, the new house is also damaged.

> "After his wife (who is seriously ill) had fallen asleep, Shunsuke came down stairs and sat in the room he had built, not as a guest room, but as a family room. Sitting down by himself he began to cry for the first time in his long married life. A large drop of water appeared on the coffee table in front of him. Staring at it, more drops of water gathered at spot. Looking up, he

> could see that water was coming in through the ceiling. It wasn't raining. Probably yesterday's rain had collected there." (p. 133)

The image of a house dropping tears is almost a metaphor of a weeping woman.

3.2. *katei*

Shunsuke Miwa, outside of his work as professor or writer, gives a lecture on "home life (*katei seikatsu*) in foreign countries" (p. 49). This shows that for the listeners and for Miwa, there is an ideal of home (*katei*) and its model is an American home. Shunsuke and his wife Tokiko do their best to realize the ideal *katei*, but the more they try, the more their own home breaks down.

After the discovery of the love affair between Tokiko and the young American, Michiyo, the house maid tells Shunsuke what Henry, George's (the lover's) commanding officer, says about the affair. According to Michiyo, Henry said that if they were in America, Shunsuke, the wronged husband, could shoot George and that he should call his wife to account. That is perhaps what an American husband would do. But Shunsuke could not take a decisive measure. Tokiko encourages Shunsuke to be a dignified patriarch (*kacho*). But Shunsuke is no more a patriarch of the old Japanese family system that a head of a modern American style family. At last in desperation, he yells this cliche which unexpectedly contains the word 'home'.

> "Unexpectedly for himself, Shunsuke shouted (to George): Go back home Yankee! Go back home Yankee!" (p. 60)

During the allied occupation, many Japanese people used to yell this at American Army jeeps. This novel describes a later period, but it describes well the love-hate relationship Japanese people felt toward American culture after the war.

3.3 *heya*

After her cancer operation, Tokiko is hospitalized many times, so many hospital rooms (*heya*) are described in the novel. As she becomes sicker, and begins to doubt whether she will recover, she asks her husband to let her move to the most luxurious room (*heya*) in the hospital with a private bath. And in the new house, a luxurious modern bathroom is prepared for Tokiko.

The new house built by Shunsuke is composed with many independent rooms. Every member of the family has his own individual room. *Heya* has lost its pejorative nuance. But the visitor criticizes the inconvenience of this house:

> "'As I told everyone before, this house (*uchi*) is just like a hotel, all separate

> rooms.'
> 'That's why it was designed so everyone could gather in the living room.' Still more talk of the house.
> 'But really, this is a great place to spend one night, but I've been here for a week. I don't feel comfortable here. I feel suffocated inside these glass walls.'" (p. 201)

After Tokiko dies, every member of the family is separated in his own room. At last Ryosuke, the son, runs away from home. This novel describes the last moments of "a house with a Western style dining room" or Japanese style home (*katei*), which will be dissolved before long into individual rooms.

4. "The Sunlit Corner," written by Yuko Tsushima

The third novel which was written by Yuko Tsushima, describes his life in the middle 1970's. The heroine "I" had been living with her husband and her little daughter forming a small nuclear family. At first it was the husband who wanted to leave the family to live his own life. The young woman with her little daughter learns to live by herself. At the end, it is the heroine who refuses to let her husband return home. The novel describes twelve months in her life with her daughter, spent in a flat on the top of a little building of Tokyo. The position of the flat in the air shows the instability of the transitional state she and her daughter live in until the divorce is settled. The novel begins with a simple and correct depiction of their little apartment. The title of the novel is inspired by that of the music by Debussy: "Children's Corner." As there is no English version, the following quotations are translated by us referring to the French edition. The novel begins as follows:

> "It was an apartment (*heya*) with windows on all four walls, on the top floor of an old 4-story building. I lived there with my baby daughter for twelve months." (Yuko Tsushima; "*Hikari no Ryobun* [The Sunlit Corner]" Kodansya Bunko p. 8)

The apartment is full of sunlight, and the young daughter thrives happily in the sun's rays. The heroine, who has no family except for her daughter, must go out and make new relationships. This novel describes work colleagues, friends, friends of her daughter in the kindergarten and their parents, and people in her neighborhood. For her, like many urban dwellers, these people take the place of her family.

Nevertheless, this novel can be situated in the main stream of modern Japanese literature on the theme of the family and its container. Tsushima herself says, "I realized that it was time for me to write truthfully a novel about my family." (Yuko Tsushima;

'The thing which must be written now' 1973)

But Tsushima's novel differs significantly from the other two novels we have looked at, because she is a woman. Oddly enough, many of the modern novels dealing with the individual's struggle against the Japanese feudal family institution were written by men. During the period where men novelists were writing family sagas, women novelists wrote rather about women escaping from the family home or from the husband's house. It is interesting to think that, while men were observing and discussing the family institution, women were writing about fleeing from the house altogether! Tsushima's novel is thus a completely new event. She observes and writes about one year in the life of a new kind of family, one that is founded and run by women.

The style of the novel also changes. "The Sunlit Corner" written by Tsushima contrasts with Shimazaki's "The Family." Shimazaki's novel had numerous characters and their relationships are very complex. On the other hand, Tsushima's novel has only two main characters and the plot is simple. It is written in a frank, concise and simple style. Shimazaki's novel, by contrast, is very heavy and difficult. When the heroine of "The Sunlit Corner" shut out her ex-husband on the opposite side of the iron door, she does not feel "melancholy" (*yuutsu*) like the hero of "The Family" or that of "The Embraced Family". She feels only "sadness." This is because she knows that her ex-husband will be able to survive on his own. Tsushima belongs to the leading generation of 1970's Japanese feminists. "The Sunlit Corner" describes everyday places that are familiar to them.

In her novel, Tsushima uses the words *ie*, *uchi*, *sumai*, and *heya* and avoids *katei*.

4.1 *ie*

The heroine does not live in an *ie* (house), but she knows several types of *ie* in the novel. In this novel, a dwelling needs two things to be called an *ie*: first, it is a house with land not an apartment in a multistoried building, and second, it seems necessary to be lived in by an ordinary family.

At first, when she was looking for an apartment for her and her daughter, she found a house (*ie*) which is suitable for a nuclear family.

> "It was a two-storied house (*ie*). The downstairs had a Western style room with a bow window, a dark room of 6 tatami mats, and a dining-kitchen. The second floor had two Japanese-style rooms and a place for drying laundry." (p. 15)

The heroine looked at that typical "house with a Western style dining room" with her husband who was going to leave her. If they continued to live together, that would be their home.

Her daughter's friends' young parents generally live in flats in modern style. In the novel, an apartment where a single mother and her children live is always called *heya* and not *ie*. But when that same flat is lived in by an ordinary nuclear family, it seems that the author uses the word *ie*.

> "There was a home (*ie*) where my daughter spent one night a week. It was the home (*ie*) of her friend in the kindergarten." (p. 182)

On that night of the week, the daughter of the heroine behaves as if she were a sister of her friend and calls the friend's parents Papa and Mama. The little girl plays a nuclear family and perhaps *katei* (home sweet home).

Incidentally, Tokyo is a big modern city, but there are many old houses with land (*ie*), which are lived in by an old couple or by an old woman or an old man. They are called *ie* as follows.

> "I lived in the old part of town where there were many houses (*ie*) lived in by only old people" (p. 181)

The heroine's mother also lives in a house (*ie*) in another neighborhood not far from hers.

Next door to the 4-storied building on the top of which the heroine lives is a little old one story house, where an old couple live. The heroine's little daughter had invented, without her knowledge, a game of throwing her toys and dolls out of the windows. One day the old man comes up to the heroine's apartment on the 4th floor to complain about the game.

> "You don't seem to care about our poor little house (*ie*) there. We are two old people living peacefully. My wife is down with an illness. Suddenly something falls down from the sky with a thunder sound on the bed." (p. 115)

This old type of house must have been once "a house with a Japanese style dining room" with a family of three generations: grandparents, parents and their children. But already by that time, the nuclear family has left that type of house to live in "a house with a Western style living room" in the suburbs or in a flat, and only the old parents remain in the old *ie* (house).

4.2. *heya*, *uchi*

The novelist uses here the word *heya* to signify the heroine's apartment which has three rooms. The same word *heya* is employed for the dining room and two other rooms.

Contemporary Japanese language does not yet have a word which means apartment. So the novelist uses the same word for an apartment and also for the rooms in a flat. We must point out the fact that in neither case is there pejorative nuance in the word *heya* as we found in the first novel, written by Toson Shimazaki.

In the novel that *heya* is the container of an irregular family: a single mother with her daughter. I think that the novelist intentionally avoided using the word *katei*, home sweet home, which involves the ideology of a modern family. Certainly the pleasures of a happy home are missing in the apartment of the single mother with her daughter, but the heroine and her daughter have become attached to their apartment *heya*. The daughter uses the word *uchi* with a baby talk prefix *o*: *o-uchi* to indicate their dwelling, their apartment, their *heya*, their private space. In this novel, *o-uchi* is used in the meaning of 'home.'

> "My daughter began to boast to her friends and teachers in the kindergarden. 'I can see buses and trains. My home (*o-uchi*) shakes (when a train passes).'" (p. 11)
> "When I scolded her, she cried loudly in the restaurant: 'I want to go home (*o-uchi*)! I want to go home (*o-uchi*)!'" (p. 158)

The heroine and her daughter do not have their *ie* nor *katei* but they have their *heya* and *uchi*.

I would like to call attention to the fact that in the two preceding novels, the houses are personified by the characters. In the case of Toson's novel, "a house with a Japanese style fire-place (*irori*)" is personified by the character Otane, the elder sister of Sankichi. Her mental illness symbolizes the decadence of the old *ie*. The character Oyuki, Sankichi's wife, personifies "a house with a Japanese style dining room." In the Kojima's novel, "a house with a Western style dining-living room" is personified by the character Tokiko, the wife of Shunsuke. Her cancer is a metaphor of the family disruption and the breakdown of the family's home. But in Tsushima's novel, it is in *heya* that the herione can find her own image.

In her building, there is an apartment which remains vacant during the twelve months the heroine lives upstairs. The apartment is not locked. The heroine loves the empty space. At midnight, after her daughter has gone to sleep, she goes and sits in the vacant room and thinks about things:

> "My daughter goes to her friend's home and spends the night there. I wander from place to place on the street to find someone to speak. We have begun to pass our night in this way. Nevertheless, we never forget one another and always seek what can make the other happy. I think that this vacant room is

very adequate for us to live in." (p. 201)

If it were an *ie* or inside space *katei*, container of a family, it would be crammed full of furniture and destinies. But the heroine loves this vacant room (*heya*) as if it were himself.

4.3. *sumai*

In the Tsushima's novel, *sumai* figures only one time.

> "Fujino (her husband) after leaving me, changed his dwelling (*sumai*) twice." (p. 165)

Sumai retains yet the meaning of temporary habitation.

5. Conclusion

We studied the frequency of employment and the extent of the meaning of these five Japanese words concerning the dwelling: *ie*, *uchi*, *katei*, *sumai* and *heya* in the three novels.

In the modern Japanese language, *ie* has been the principal word to indicate a dwelling for a long time. Today we still use this word, but the meaning of the word has changed. If we look back on our three novels, the semantic domain of the word *ie* has gradually become narrower and simpler.

The title of the first novel, Shimazaki's "*Ie*" is translated into English as "The Family" and not "The House". I agree with this translation. In this novel I can see that the Japanese word *ie* shows various semantic connotations related to the traditional family system: house, home, household, family, ancestors and lineage, work place of the hereditary business and the family property. But in the second novel, "The Embraced Family", written by Nubuo Kojima, *ie* signifies: house, home, household and family but not ancestors. And in the third novel, Tsushima's "The Sunlit Corner", the author hesitates to use the term *ie*. At first she believes that *ie* is a house on a land and secondly the inhabitants of the *ie* must be a normal family. The mother and her baby daughter make a small family household but not a home sweet home. At the end of the novel, the heroine finalizes her divorce and leaves the room, the sunlit corner to find another room in another apartment house. The reader of the novel and the author herself do not know if the heroine will someday live in an *ie*. If she chooses an *ie* for residence, with whom and what form will her new household take? The container of that new family of household would still be called *ie*, but the meaning of the word itself might be changed.

In contrast with *ie* which has reduced its meaning and connotations over time, *heya* has become more popular along with the increase of the rooms in "a house with a

Western style dining-living room" and of the multistoried residence in cities.

The word *heya* has lost the pejorative nuance of a space to segregate servants or indesirables of a family, and now has the meaning of 'room', a respectable private zone. Nowadays *heya* is used, as we saw in the Tsushima's novel, to indicate an apartment or a flat.

Among the five words, *sumai* has the most concrete meaning: residence or building and is used as a synonym of both *ie* and *heya*. It retains the nuance of *kariz(s)umai*, temporary residence, but nowadays even *ie* does not always signify a permanent domicile. Temporary residences are no longer a bad thing.

It is true that *katei* is the abstract space to contain a nuclear family and it presupposes an ideal model. But as we saw in Tsushima's novel, in the new generation, there are women and men who begin to escape from the domination of the ideology of *katei*, the nuclear family.

Uchi is the word which conserves the most invariable emotional meaning: close to the English word home. "A home with a Japanese style fire-place," "a house with a Japanese style dining room," " a house with a Western style dining-living room" and even a *heya* contain inside themselves *uchi*, a private zone necessary to everybody. *Uchi* is used sometimes as an infant word or dialect, but it is widely used by people. It is possible that the word will be around a long time. Whatever changes will take place in the family system and dwellings, the word *uchi* will exist because we need some way to express our private zone.

Nowadays many women authors, beginning with Yuko Tsushima, Taeko Tomioka, Agata Hikaru, Mizuko Masuda, and Banana Yoshimoto write novels of which the subject is families, household and housing. This is something new in the history of Japanese Modern Literature. The housing vocabulary will continue to be changed by women and their partners who are concerning themselves in creating a new life style.

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