THE INFLUENCE OF NITTA SAYURI’S CHARACTER 
TRAITS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GIMU 
AS SEEN IN GOLDEN’S MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 

A Thesis 

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements 
to Obtain the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree 
in English Language Education 

By: 
Tri Ratna Kurniasari 
Student Number: 021214021 

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM 
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION 
FACULTY OF TEACHERS TRAINING AND EDUCATION 
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY 
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September 10, 2007
A Thesis On

THE INFLUENCE OF NITTA SAYURI'S CHARACTER TRAITS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GIMU AS SEEN IN GOLDEN'S MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

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Yogyakarta, September 24, 2007

Faculty of Teachers Training and Education
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Dean,

Drs. Tarsisius Sarkim, M.Ed., Ph.D.
This thesis is dedicated to my GOD, to my family, to my friends, and to my self. 

-naping-
STATEMENT OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this thesis which I wrote does not contain the works or part of the works of other people, except those cited in the quotations and bibliography, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, September 10, 2007

The writer

Tri Ratna Kurniasari
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Yogyakarta, September 10, 2007

The writer

[Signature]
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ABSTRACT


This study analyzes Arthur Golden’s novel, Memoirs of A Geisha. Memoirs of a Geisha is a novel that reveals a geisha named Nitta Sayuri in Gion, a government-licensed pleasure districts in Kyoto, Japan. As a geisha, Sayuri lives in a society that still preserves the concepts of on and gimu. These concepts influence Sayuri’s life and her relationship with others. However, in the implementation, these concepts are hard to do. People need to sacrifice many things in order to repay their gimu to others, such as their feelings and intentions. In the implementation, somebody’s character traits have important roles in repaying his or her gimu. It is because different character traits will bring different result in repaying gimu.

The statement above leads to an analysis about the influence of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits on the implementation of gimu. There are two problems stated in this study. They are: (1) how Nitta Sayuri’s character traits are described in the novel, and (2) how Nitta Sayuri’s character traits influence the implementation of gimu in her life as a geisha.

The approach conducted in this study was socio-cultural approach, which was taken from the theory of critical approach by Rorhberger and Woods. Besides, this study applied two other theories: the theory of character by Henkle and the theory of characterization by Murphy. In addition, this study also applied a review of Japanese culture. It consists of two sections: the socio cultural background of Japanese society and a review of geisha. The first section, the socio cultural background of Japanese society explains about the concepts of on and gimu. Next, the second section explains about history, description and world of geisha.

Based on the analysis result, some conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, Nitta Sayuri as a major character was described as a smart, self controlled, determined and tough person. Secondly, Nitta Sayuri’s character traits influence the implementation of gimu since she was able to understand that repaying gimu was her obligation that has to be done whole-heartedly. Next, she was able to ignore her feelings and repay her gimu as best as she could in any condition and situation. Even, she was able to bear the pain of ignoring her feeling to Chairman in order to repay her gimu as best as she could to others.

Besides the conclusions above, there is a suggestion for teaching implementation that was found during the process of analysis. The novel can be used to teach Cross Cultural Understanding for advanced students since they have a sufficient level of English to understand the novel. Besides, this novel is rich of Japanese culture, including the concept of gimu, which is not easy to be understood by people from different cultures.
ABSTRAK


Pernyataan di atas menuntun pada sebuah analisis tentang pengaruh karakter-karakter Nitta Sayuri terhadap pelaksanaan gimu. Ada dua permasalahan yang dinyatakan dalam studi ini. Mereka adalah: (1) bagaimana sifat pembawaan Nitta Sayuri digambarkan di dalam novel, dan (2) bagaimana sifat pembawaan Sayuri mempengaruhi penerapan gimu dalam hidupnya sebagai seorang geisha.


Berdasarkan hasil analisis, beberapa kesimpulan dapat ditarik. Pertama, Nitta Sayuri sebagai tokoh utama digambarkan sebagai seseorang yang pintar, memiliki pengendalian diri, penuh tekad, dan tangguh. Yang kedua, sifat pembawaan Nitta Sayuri mempengaruhi penerapan gimu karena dia sadar bahwa membayar kembali gimu adalah kewajibannya yang harus dilaksanakan dengan sepenuh hati. Selanjutnya, dia mampu mengabaikan perasaannya dan membayar kembali gimu-nya di segala kondisi dan situasi. Bahkan, dia mampu menanggung rasa sakit akibat mengabaikan perasaannya terhadap Ketua demi membayar kembali gimu-nya sebaik yang dia bisa kepada orang lain.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In order to illustrate what the study is about, this chapter is divided into five parts: background of the study, the problem formulation, the objectives of the study, the benefits of the study and the definition of terms.

The first part, the background of the study is related to the focus of the study itself, including the need of analyzing the topic and the writer’s personal reasons in choosing the topic of the study. The second part, the problem formulation presents the description of the problems that will be analyzed in this thesis. The third part, the objectives of the study present the aims of conducting the research itself. The fourth part, the benefits of the study give the description about the advantages of the study for future researchers and teaching implementation. The last is the definition of terms that provides some particular terms related to the topic of the study itself.

A. Background of the Study

Japan is known for its people’s way of life. In Japan, others will find that Japanese behave differently since they live in a country that has a unique culture. Taylor (28) then similarly stated the same thing that he wrote, “A Westerner has been charmed, mystified, or infuriated by unexpected behavior that he or she later learned was typically Japanese”. Unlike other Asian people,
Japanese not only preserve its culture and values, but also use them as life guidance.

Some of Japanese values that are preserved and used as life guidance are the concept of on and gimu. There are no literal translations in English for the concept of on and gimu because those concepts are strange for many Westerners. Even though there are no clear definitions about on and gimu, Reischauer tries to define the concept of on and gimu. Reischauer (152-153) stated that on is a heavy burden that passively incurred from the benevolence of parents, rulers, lords and close associates in somebody’s life. Then, in its implementation on has to be carried on as good as possible. Next, Reischauer stated that gimu, which is called giri in pre-modern times, is defined as a sense of duty that is caused by the existence of on and has to be done by doing unlimited devotion.

In her book, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Ruth Benedict stated the same idea like Reischauer has stated about the concept of on and gimu. Benedict (99) stated that “on is a load, an indebtedness, a burden, which one carries as best one may.” On is a burden that is passively received from all contacts, no matter their status and class origin in the society, which gives one an uncomfortable sense of inferiority. Next, Benedict (115) stated that “gimu is the limitless repayments on on, both in amount and in duration of repayments.”

As it is mentioned in the previous section that for Japanese, on is a burden and a debt that has to be carried on as good as possible. Then, people have to do gimu in repaying their on that is not getting smaller but getting bigger each time. The repayment of on or gimu takes the highest place over human feelings or
ninjo and ethical considerations. Those who break the rules of doing gimu will be considered as rebels. Next, those people may not only lose others’ trust in expecting reciprocity, but also their supports in the society.

The existence of on and gimu cannot be separated from Japanese life. Those values can also be found in many fictions that take Japan as their setting. One of those fictions is Memoirs of a Geisha written by Arthur Golden. It was first printed in the United States of America and published by the Vintage Books in 1997. The Memoirs of a Geisha is the first novel of Arthur Golden.

In the novel, it is told that Sayuri ran a miserable life in the okiya (geisha’s house). During her journey of becoming a geisha, Sayuri received lots of on from many people around her. Sayuri has received lots of on from Mother, Mameha and Nobu which later have to be repaid by doing gimu. It is mentioned in the previous section that in doing gimu, one has to ignore his or her own feeling. Hence, it can be said that one’s character traits have important role in doing gimu related to one’s ability in taking the responsibility of doing gimu as best as he or she could and managing his or her own ninjo. In the novel, Sayuri’s character traits as a geisha influence the implementation of doing her gimu to Mother, Mameha and Nobu that will contribute to the complexity of the story itself.

The writer chose this novel for some reasons. The first reason is that it is a best-seller novel, which is rich of Japanese culture. Since this novel is a best-seller novel, many people have already read it and put many criticisms about it. Besides, a famous Hollywood’s director, Rob Marshall, filmed this novel with Stephen Spielberg as the producer. Moreover, it is chosen because this novel is full of
controversy. After the novel was published, Arthur Golden was sued by the geisha with whom he worked for defamation and breach of contract. According to the plaintiff, the agreement was supposed to be total anonymity for the main character of his story because there is a silence code shared among the geisha community. Thus, breaking the code can be considered as a serious offense. Once the plaintiff's name was printed in the book, she received numerous death threats and requests to commit seppuku (commit suicide by stabbing her own stomach in front of others) because she made a fatal mistake and dishonoured her profession. However, she opted to sue Golden for putting her name in the novel. The case is currently under litigation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memoirs_of_a_Geisha accessed on September 3, 2007).

For the writer herself, the existence of on and its repayment called gimu is considered as a part of the uniqueness of Japanese culture. Even though in several aspects they tied others’ life into unlimited devotion, their existence should be preserved and respected.

B. Problem Formulation

Considering the background of the study that is mentioned above, the writer will discuss the following problems:

1. How are Nitta Sayuri’s character traits described in the novel?
2. How do Nitta Sayuri’s character traits influence the implementation of gimu in her life as a geisha?
C. Objectives of the Study

Concerning the problems above, this study has two objectives. First, this study is going to describe Nitta Sayuri’s character traits in the novel. Second, this study is going to reveal the influence of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits on the implementation of *gimu*.

D. Benefits of the Study

In making this thesis, the writer expects that the readers will be able to get a better cross-cultural understanding of Japanese culture, especially about the concept of *on* and its repayment called *gimu*. Having a better cross-cultural understanding of other cultures not only means getting wiser in accepting other cultures, but also adapting themselves to other cultures. The writer hopes that this thesis will be beneficial for other students who will become the future researchers and do other studies related to the same topic or source, that is *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

E. Definition of Terms

The writer also presents the explanation of some terms used in the novel to avoid any misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Those terms are:

1. Memoir

According to Abrams (15), a memoir means a biography which emphasizes the people and events that the author knew or witnessed. In this study, a memoir is
defined as a work that is made based on one’s story that is related to events and people who are involved in those events. Yet, there are few things missing in the story since the center character was in no position to observe the events or other people. Even though it is called a memoir, the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* is not a ‘real’ memoir. It is an imaginary work that the author creates to make the readers feel that Nitta Sayuri’s story really happens and has been really told to Jacob Haarhuis, Arnold Rusoff Professor of Japanese History, from New York University.

2. *Geisha*

In her book, Perkins (111) said that *geisha* means women skilled in classical dancing, singing, playing a banjo – like stringed instrument called the *shamisen* and doing witty conversation who entertain wealthy clients at banquets. Hence, *geisha* is defined as “women of arts”. In this study, *geisha* are women who are skilful in many Japanese arts, such as: dancing, singing, playing *shamisen* and doing witty conversations who entertain wealthy clients at banquets.

3. *On*

As stated by Reischauer (152-153), *on* is a heavy burden that passively incurred from the benevolence of parents, rulers, lords and close associates in somebody’s life. Benedict also has a similar definition. According to Benedict (99), “*on* is a load, an indebtedness, a burden, which one carries as best one may.” *On* is a burden that is passively received from all contacts, no matter their status and class
origin in the society, which gives one an uncomfortable sense of inferiority. In this study, on is a heavy burden in somebody’s life that passively incurred from the associates’ benevolence, no matter their status and class origin in the society, which gives someone an uncomfortable sense of inferiority.

4. Gimu

According to Reischauer (152-153), gimu, which is called giri in pre-modern times, is defined as a sense of duty that is caused by the existence of on and has to be done by doing unlimited devotion. Then, Benedict (115) stated that “gimu is the limitless repayments on on, both in amount and in duration of repayments.” In this study, gimu is a sense of duty to repay the favor of on; in which its repayments of on are limitless both in amount and in duration and has to be done by doing unlimited devotion.

5. Characters

Abrams (22) stated that characters are people presented in a narrative or dramatic work, who have their own traits that make them different from others. Their traits can be seen from their dialogues and actions in the narrative or dramatic work. In this study, characters are people presented in narrative and dramatic work, whose traits make them different from others.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is presented in three parts. They are review of related theories, review of Japanese culture and theoretical framework.

In the first part, the review of related theories presents the theory of character, theory of characterization, and the theories of critical approaches. In the second part, the review of Japanese culture contains the socio-cultural background of Japanese society and the review of geisha. The socio-cultural background of Japanese society is then divided into two parts. They are the concept of on and the concept of gimu. Moreover, the review of geisha is also divided into three parts. They are the history of geisha, the description of geisha and the last part is the world of geisha. Last, the writer presents the theoretical framework discusses about the usage of the theories in this study.

A. Review of Related Theories

There are two theories that are discussed in the theoretical review. Those theories are the theory of character and the theory of characterization.

1. Theory of Character

In this part, the writer discusses the theory of character. The writer uses this theory to analyze the type of Nitta Sayuri’s character in the novel.
According to Henkle (87-101), there are two factors that are used to determine the type of characters in a novel. They are the complexity of the character’s traits and the amount of the attention given in a story. Based on those two factors, the characters then can be divided into two types. They are major character and minor or secondary character.

Major character is a character with complex traits. That is why the character gets a full attention in a story. In fact, the attention given by the author to the character makes the character as the most significant figure compared to others.

Minor or secondary character is a character with simple traits. Its character traits are simpler than what the major character has. Generally, minor or secondary character is less important and less complex than the one in major character.

2. Theory of Characterization

In this part, the writer discusses the theory of characterization. The writer uses this theory to analyze Nitta Sayuri’s character traits in the novel.

According to Murphy (161-173), there are nine techniques that can be used by the author to describe the character’s traits in a literary work.

Those nine techniques are personal description technique, character as seen by others technique, speech technique, past life technique, conversation of
others technique, reactions technique, direct comment technique, thoughts technique, and mannerisms technique.

First, personal description technique is a technique in which the author directly and accurately describes the character’s physical appearance related to the shape of the face and body, skin, eyes and hair colors, weight, height and the way of dressing. Second, character as seen by others technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through other characters’ point of view. Third, speech technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the speech of the character, whenever he or she puts forward an opinion and is in conversation with another. Fourth, past life technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits by looking at the character’s past life. Those clues can be seen from the direct comment given by the author, the character’s thoughts, the characters conversation with others and the medium of another person. Fifth, conversation of others technique is a technique in which the author describes the character’s traits through conversation of other characters in the novel. Sixth, reactions technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the character’s reactions to various situations and events. Seventh, direct comment technique is a technique in which the author gives direct descriptions or comments about the character in the novel. Eighth, thoughts technique is a technique in which the author gives the
readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. Last, mannerism technique is a technique in which the author gives a description about the character’s habits and attitudes.

3. Theory of Critical Approach

In this part, the writer wants to discuss the importance of the theory of critical approach. This theory has an important role in determining ‘the way’ to analyze the novel. An approach itself is like ‘a tool’ in analyzing the novel. In other words, it may mean that an approach is the means to achieve the aims that the researcher has. Hence, the researcher must use the most appropriate approach to analyze the novel. For example, when a researcher wants to analyze the development of the character, she or he uses psychological approach to get reasonable results of the analysis rather than uses other approaches.

According to Rohrberger and Woods (3-17), there are five approaches that can be used in analyzing literary work. Those are formalist, biographical, socio-cultural-historical, mythopoeic and psychological approaches.

First, the formalist approach focuses on the techniques and structure used by the author in his or her writing. In applying this approach, the researcher does not need to pay attention to any external factors of the literary work, such as: author’s life and socio-historical background of the author. Second, the biographical approach uses the author’s personal life to get a better understanding of his or her writing. Third, the socio-cultural-historical approach is used to
investigate the social milieu when a work is created and what the work actually reflects. Fourth, the mythopoeic approach is used to discover certain universally recurrent patterns of human thoughts in any literary work. Fifth, the psychological approach directs the researchers’ attention to the psychological situation in the novel in order to understand the character’s aims and intentions.

In this study, the writer only uses socio-cultural approach. It is because the writer believes that taking any references from the society who becomes literary work’s background is one of some appropriate ways to analyze literary work. In this study, the writer thinks that Japanese social milieu needs to be analyzed in order to know its reflection in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Besides, Sayuri’s life as a *geisha* and Japanese culture cannot be separated into two different parts. Both of them are interrelated because *geisha* is a unique part of Japanese society and culture. Besides, *geisha*’s life itself reflects the richness of Japanese culture. The writer thinks that it is important for the reader to know some knowledge of Japanese society and culture through Sayuri’s life as a *geisha* in order to clarify the readers’ interpretation about the novel. The social milieu of Japanese society and its culture in Sayuri’s life as a Japanese woman influence her character traits as a *geisha*. Further, Sayuri’s character traits will influence the way she runs her life based on the culture and values as a *geisha* in the novel.

**B. Review of Japanese Culture**

In analyzing Nitta Sayuri’s character traits and their influence on the implementation of *gimu* in her life as a *geisha*, the writer needs to explain several
things related to the topic discussed. They are the socio-cultural background of the
Japanese society and a review of geisha. In the first section, the writer presents the
concept of on and gimu, while in the second part the writer presents the history,
the description and the world of geisha.

1. Socio-Cultural Background of Japanese Society

The writer regards that the socio-cultural background of Japanese society
holds an important role in analyzing the novel Memoirs of a Geisha. Based on that
reason, the writer wants to discuss some values that exist in Japanese society. The
writer divides the discussion into two parts. They are the concept of on and the
concept of gimu.

a. Concept of On

Even though there are no literal translation in English for the concept of
on, Reischauer (152-153) stated that an on is a heavy burden that passively
incurred from the benevolence of parents, rulers, lords and close associates in
somebody’s life. Benedict also has a similar definition about the concept of on.
According to Benedict (99), “an on is a load, an indebtedness, a burden, which
one carries as best one may.” She also stated that an on is a burden that is
passively received from all contacts, no matter their status and class origin in the
society, which gives one an uncomfortable sense of inferiority.

Perkins (144) stated that, the word ‘on’ originally referred to obligations
passively incurred from the benevolence or favor of one’s parents, feudal lord or
ruler. In Japanese concept, the existence of on has been influenced from two sources; the Buddhist religion and the feudal era of Japanese samurai. Firstly, it is influenced from the Buddhist religion. It is introduced into Japan from China in the sixth century A.D. Furthermore, the Buddhist religion conceives on as the debt a person has to humankind and for the compassion of the Buddha. Even, the Chinese character for ‘on’ means ‘blessing’ or ‘favor’. Secondly, it is influenced from the concept of on developed during the feudal era of Japanese samurai. In fact, on refers to the debt of samurai to their lords. Besides, on also refers to the debt one owes to one’s parents and ancestors for the gift of the life itself.

On are received from the Emperor and all contacts in the course of one’s life. Next, every day-by-day, the existence of the Emperor and contacts with other people will increase one’s on in the present automatically. According to Benedict (101-103), there are three types of on. Those on are: ko on, oya on and nushi no on. First, ko on, which is called the Imperial on, is on that are received from the Emperor. This type of on is the first and the greatest on that one has and it has to be received with a deep gratitude. Modern Japan has used every means to center this feeling upon the Emperor. In every activity, they have their own way in increasing each man’s Imperial on. During the war, every cigarette and every sip of sake distributed to the Army on the front lines in the Emperor’s name were increasing the Imperial on of each soldier. Then, in war, every kamikaze pilot of a suicide plane was repaying his limitless Imperial on to the Emperor. Second, oya on or parental on is on that are received from parents. This type of on is the basis of the famous Oriental filial piety, which places parents in such a strategic position of authority over their children. Even, the Japanese has a saying about on
receives from parents ‘Only after a person becomes a parent, he knows how indebted he is to his own parents.’ Generally, this type of on is related to the daily care and trouble to which fathers and mothers are put in raising the children. Third, nushi no on is on that are received from one’s lord and teacher. In Japan, one has particular on to one’s lord and teacher. It is because they have helped bring one along the way to have some experiences and get knowledge that will be useful for their future. All those people from whom one receives on become one’s on jin or on man.

Japanese people regard ‘the power of on’ as the greatest power in tying one’s life. Based on that statement, Japanese people are always cautious in dealing with on. It is because they do not want to be regarded as people who take advantage from others by doing benevolence. Hence, it can be said that an on to anyone is a serious matter for Japanese people.

b. Concept of Gimu

In the previous chapter, it is mentioned that Reischauer (152-153) stated gimu, which is called giri in pre-modern times, as a sense of duty that is caused by the existence of on and has to be done by doing unlimited devotion. Benedict also stated the same idea like Reischauer. In her book, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Benedict (115) stated that gimu is the limitless repayments of on, both in amount and in duration of repayments.

According to Benedict (116-127), there are three types of gimu. Those gimu are chu, ko and nimmu. First, chu is the repayment of one’s on to Emperor.
This type of *gimu* becomes every man’s repayment to the Sacred Chief – high priest and the symbol of the unity and the eternity of Japan. Japanese people believe that the Emperor is the reincarnation of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, who has to be honored and obeyed. As the reincarnation of the Sun Goddess, the Emperor has blessed Japanese people with so many things. In order to show their gratitude, Japanese people do *chu* to the Emperor to repay all of the *on* that they have received. Second, *ko* is the repayment of one’s *on* to parents, which is also known as filial piety. This type of *gimu* forces someone to obey the parents without questioning all of his or her parents’ decisions. Even after he or she is married, the repayment continues and they must obey all of the parents’ decisions as best as they could. However, Japanese people do not do *ko* to achieve compassion in the family, but to avoid losing face in the society because of the failure of doing the *gimu* to their parents. Third, *nimmu* is the repayment to one’s profession. This type of *gimu* is related to somebody’s commitment to his or her profession and people who are involved in succeeding his or her carrier in the future, such as: the lord and the teacher. For Japanese people, the lord and teacher hold important roles in succeeding their profession. A lord has helped them not only in giving an opportunity to work and earn money, but also in succeeding their carrier by promoting them to the higher level. Just like a lord, a teacher has also helped them in succeeding their profession by giving knowledge to do their work well. Both have helped them in doing their profession and next, the *on* that they have received should be repaid by doing *gimu*.

The repayment of *on* or *gimu* takes the highest place over human feelings or *ninjo* and ethical considerations. As stated by Perkins that in doing *gimu*, a person is expected to ignore the personal feeling or *ninjo* and to remain loyal to the person to whom one is indebted. If somebody failed to show his or her loyalty...
in paying the on, his or her reputation will be threatened. Japanese people are very concerned about keeping up a good image in front of other people. They would like to avoid doing anything that would bring shame to themselves and their families (86).

In doing gimu, one is limited to certain people to whom they have contacts and close relationships. The implementation of gimu itself is unconditional and limitless in amount and in duration of repayments. Those who are not able to do his or her gimu will lose his or her face and others’ supports in the society.

2. Review of Geisha

In order to clarify the understanding about geisha, the writer wants to discuss the existence of geisha in Japanese society. The writer divides the discussion into three parts, they are the history of geisha, the description of geisha and the last part is the world of geisha.

a. History of Geisha

According to Lehmann, geisha is firstly known around the middle of Edo period about 1600’s up to 1858. The term ‘geisha’ is originally applied to the Kyoto court male musicians and other professional male entertainers. In Kyoto, the geisha may be called as geiko. Geisha became very popular in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, and still exist until today, although their number is getting smaller. Today, geisha are exclusively female. The term ‘geisha’ used for calling a female professional entertainer was very first used in Kyoto in 1751 and in Edo, now Tokyo, in 1762 (92-93).
The rise of the geisha’s existence and prostitution could not be simply mentioned as a reflection of men’s desire, but merely because of there were many economic problems in the society. At that time, many poor people sold their daughter for such economic reasons. In her book entitled The Japanese Women, Iwao stated that in pre war periods, very poor farming families were often forced to sell their daughters into government-licensed pleasure districts. The prettier ones might be taken by the okiya, but the less lucky ended up in any ordinary brothels. They would become the properties of the okiya or the brothel. Those girls only could be released if they were bought by another okiya or brothel or by someone who wished to ‘marry’ them or ‘use’ them exclusively. In the okiya, those girls were required to work hard as maids and if the owner of the okiya or ‘the mother’ regarded them as good investments, they would be trained as geisha. It means that they should obey the okiya’s rules and never tried to run away from the okiya. If they run away and got caught, there would be no chance for them to be geisha and they would be maids for the rest of their life (154).

Perkins stated that geisha as an occupational category originated in the 18th century in the ‘floating world’ of government-licensed pleasure quarters of large Japanese cities, such as the Yoshiwara in Edo (former name for Tokyo), where geisha were hired to entertain at parties for courtesans and their clients. By the 19th century, geisha were considered as trendsetters, influenced fashions with their elegant style and described as iki or chic. They also inspired the literary, musical and graphic arts, and were painted by many artists of woodblock prints (111).
As time goes by, the amount of geisha or geiko was getting smaller. In her book, *The World of the Geisha*, Aihara stated that according to the statistic recorded on 31st July 1999, there are only 190okiya remaining in Kyoto, employing 195 geiko and 55 maiko (10).

b. Description of Geisha

According to Aihara (43), the word geisha (the Tokyo dialect) literally translated to ‘art person’ or ‘one trained in arts’ (gei = art and sha = person). It is also sometimes described as ‘woman of arts’, which is exactly described what a geisha is, that is a woman trained in the traditional arts of Japan, such as dancing, playing music and singing.

Perkins also stated the same thing. According to her, a geisha is also known as a geigi or a geiko (the Kyoto dialect); a woman skilled in classical dancing, singing, playing a banjo-like stringed instrument called shamisen and witty conversation who entertains wealthy clients at banquets. A geisha is very knowledgeable about etiquette and the wearing of elaborate kimono (111).

Aihara stated that geisha districts are located in government-licensed pleasure quarters, which are called hanamachi or literally means ‘flower town’. In fact, Kyoto has six hanamachi, they are: Gion-Kobu, Gion-Higashi, Ponto-cho, Kamishichiken, Miyagawa-cho and Shimabara. (referred to Kyoto’s Gokagai or Five Flower Towns); the sixth hanamachi is the oldest hanamachi of Kyoto, which is no longer active (11).

In the hanamachi, geisha live in a house that is called okiya. The okiya is managed based on the system of ie or ‘the family system’, where the address
system then is based on seniority. Aihara then stated in her book that *okiya* is managed by a woman, usually a former *geisha*, who is called ‘mother’ or *okasan*. A *geisha* has to respect the ‘mother’ as if she were her own mother. The relationship with the ‘mother’ creates some duties and obligations for the *geisha*. The *geisha* should obey the ‘mother’ without questioning her and be able to hide her true feeling (21).

Furthermore, being a *geisha* means mastering various Japanese arts. A *geisha* has to master some musical instruments, traditional dancing, *Noh* theatre, *ikebana* or flower arrangement and *chanoyu* or tea ceremony. In order to master those arts, a *geisha* needs to practice different arts every day to sharpen her skills (82).

Before a woman is considered to have the ability to become a *geisha*, she has to be an apprentice *geisha* or *maiko*. A *maiko* is an apprentice *geisha* who must undergo a period of training that generally takes five years, where she learns the various *gei* or arts, such as dancing, singing, playing music instruments, arranging flowers and doing tea ceremony. Usually, a *maiko* is tutored by an older *geisha*, a senior successful *geisha* who is willing to adopt the *maiko* as her sister. The senior will tutor her in walking in kimono, holding a fan, pouring *sake*, doing witty conversation, accompanying clients and learning to do tea ceremony. Yet, the *maiko* should obey her senior *geisha* before and after they are tied as sisters. Next, the senior has a responsibility to introduce the *maiko* to famous teahouses and help them to learn the rules and customs in the world of *geisha*. 
Aihara stated that the training period for maiko is called minarai or learning by observation. During minarai, a maiko does not speak too much at the banquets; but only observes the ‘sister’- a senior geisha who becomes her sister. She observes her sister to learn about the proper social behavior in a banquet. Generally, a maiko wears brighter colored kimono with long sleeves or furisode that reach her ankles when they are held to the side. Her sash or obi reaches the back of her knees and it is wide around her waist (66).

The older the geisha, the better she is. It is because an older geisha is the best conversationalist and the real master of geisha skills. The most important quality of a geisha is her trustworthiness. Any information about and conversation with the clients must be kept as a secret. A geisha even has some code names for her favorite clients and if she tells a story about them, she will never reveal their names. A geisha who reveals her clients’ secret will be requested to commit seppuku (commit suicide by stabbing her own stomach in front of others) since she is considered for dishonoring her profession.

c. World of Geisha

According to Perkins, the geisha world is poetically known as karyukai or ‘the flower and willow world’. It is supported by the fact that geisha still wear beautiful and expensive kimono, elegant hairstyles and stylized heavy white make up known as o-shiroi or ‘honorable white’. It is because for the Japanese, a geisha’s face is a gentle guardian of the Japanese tradition (203).
*Geisha* are different from prostitutes. They do work together in *hanamachi* but do different things. The women who work as prostitutes are divided into many ranks. The courtesans (*oiran* or *tayu*), women who sold their sexual favors to wealthy or aristocratic clients, take the highest rank. The *joro* or *yuna*, prostitutes who work in public bathhouses, take the lowest rank. *Geisha’s* profession is based on preserving the traditional arts such as dancing, singing, playing music instrument and entertaining in a non-sexual manner. A *geisha* will hint at her sexuality, but she will never flaunt it. Hence, *geisha* do not engage in sex with all of the customers.

Arthur Golden said that the role of the *geisha* is to provide female companionship as men and women do not socialize freely in Japan. The companionship here means performing music or dance, pouring *sake*, telling stories and in some cases involving sexual activity. However, the sexual activity only happens with certain people; they are the *mizuage* patron and the *danna*. ([http://www.bookbrowse.com/reviews/index.cfm?book_number=332 accessed on September 3, 2007](http://www.bookbrowse.com/reviews/index.cfm?book_number=332))

An apprentice *geisha*, a *maiko*, has to undergo the sexual initiation which is called *mizuage*. *Mizuage* is the deflowering process, where the *maiko*’s virginity is sold to the highest bidder. After a *maiko* undergoes the *mizuage*, she later can be called as a *geisha*.

Aihara (51-55) stated that a *geisha* is considered as a successful geisha if she has a wealthy *danna*. The word ‘*danna*’ is actually translated as husband, but
in this context it means a geisha’s financial patron; with whom she is involved emotionally, sexually and economically. The relationship between a geisha and her danna starts when a man proposes himself as the geisha’s danna and then hold a ceremony as ‘husband and wife’ in a teahouse. When a man becomes a geisha’s danna, he has many obligations toward the geisha and her okiya. The man is obliged to pay the geisha’s debt to the okiya, pay her schooling and cover her expenses of make up, kimono, jeweleries or even apartment.

Perkins stated that Japanese social customs differentiate between wives, who were dutiful mothers and home managers, and women who provided sensual pleasures. Men are not stigmatized for seeing prostitutes, unless they fall in love and neglect their family duties. Geisha are not considered as a threat to marriages in the Japanese culture. Actually, the relationship between a man and his geisha is not based on love and is not meant to disturb the man’s marriage and family. Generally, a wife knows who her husband’s geisha is, and in fact, during the Obon Festival and New Year’s celebration, a geisha will visit the house of the important customers and bring presents for the wife (58-59).

C. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses three theories and a review of Japanese culture to answer the problem formulation in this study. The theory of critical approach is used to find an appropriate approach to analyze the novel Memoirs of a Geisha, which is
socio-cultural approach. The theory of character and characterization are used to describe Nitta Sayuri’s type of character and Nitta Sayuri’s character traits in the novel. In addition, a review on Japanese culture is used to help the writer in describing Nitta Sayuri’s life as a geisha that influence her character traits and the implementation of gimu in her life.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology that is used in the study. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is the subject matter of the study. The second part is the approach that is used to do the study. The third part is the procedure of doing the study. The subject matter discusses the content of the novel and the focus of the analysis. Then in the approach, the writer discusses the approach that is used and applied to analyze the study. Last, the writer discusses the procedure that focuses on the procedures of gathering data and arranging the data in writing this thesis.

A. Subject Matter

As the subject of the study, the writer chose Golden’s novel Memoirs of a Geisha. This novel was first published by Chato and Windus in Great Britain in 1997. In fact, this novel has been published for several times. In 1998, Vintage Books published this novel in London. The Second Vintage Contemporaries Edition was published by Vintage Books in August 2000. The novel has also been translated into more than 21 languages. The edition that is used in this study is an edition that was published by Vintage books in 1998. The copyright was the year of 1997 by Arthur Golden.

Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha consists of 453 pages, which is divided into 35 chapters. The central character in this novel is Nitta Sayuri, an
extraordinary female figure in the culture and world of *geisha*. After reading the novel, the writer was very interested in Nitta Sayuri and her life as a *geisha* in a society that still preserves and uses its culture and values as life guidance. However, in this study, the writer wanted to focus the analysis on the influence of somebody’s character traits on the implementation of *gimu* in his or her life. The most interesting thing in this novel was even though this novel tells about the world of *geisha*, Golden provided a lot of information about Japanese culture which were useful for the readers (particularly for those who have thought that *geisha* was the same as prostitute). In fact, this novel was based on the experience of one of the most well-known *geisha* in Japan, Mineko Iwasaki.

**B. Approach**

In this study, the writer applied socio-cultural approach to help her in analyzing Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The writer used socio-cultural approach because the writer believed that one of some appropriate ways to analyze literary work was by taking references from the society who became literary work’s background. The writer thought that the Japanese social milieu needed to be analyzed in order to know its reflection in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Besides, Sayuri’s life as a *geisha* and Japanese culture could not be separated into two different parts. Both of them were interrelated because *geisha* was a uniqueness part of Japanese society and culture. Besides, *geisha*’s life itself reflected the richness of Japanese culture. The writer thought that it was important for the reader to know some knowledge of Japanese society and culture through Sayuri’s life as a *geisha*.
in order to deepen the readers’ interpretation about the novel. In addition, it was necessary to know some knowledge of Japanese society before one could understand the whole part of the novel.

Somebody’s character traits were influenced by the social milieu where he or she lived. A Japanese woman was never being as liberal as a Westerner woman was because she always tied to her culture and values as a Japanese woman. Her character traits would influence the way she run her life based on the culture and values in the society. It could also be found in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, in which Nitta Sayuri character traits influence the way she run her life.

**C. Procedures**

The writer conducted library research in order to compile data by taking notes and having discussions. The primary and the secondary data were gathered by reading some books that deal with the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The writer has already read the novel and used several books to compile the information about *geisha*, Japanese culture and values that were used as life guidance for many Japanese. The analysis of the data was conducted to answer the problem formulations that have been mentioned in the previous chapter. The writer used some sources about the Japanese culture and the concepts of *on* and *gimu* in the Japanese society. Those sources were taken from encyclopedias, articles, journals, Internet websites and many kinds of books. Then, the writer reread the novel and focused on her attention to the main character, Nitta Sayuri, and the society where she lived in. Next, the writer also collected references that could help the writer to
comprehend the novel much better. Then, the writer also took notes of some important information that could support the analysis of the study. The next steps were arranging the data, classifying them and putting them into the right parts. The last step was analyzing the data by finding out the relationships between the data and the topic of the study.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer presents the answers to the questions stated in the problem formulation. This chapter consists of two sections. The first section reveals the character traits of Nitta Sayuri as the major character in the story. The second section discusses the influence of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits in the implementation of gimu as a geisha.

A. Description of Nitta Sayuri’s Character Traits

According to Henkle’s theory about character, there are two factors which can be used to determine type of characters in a novel. Those two factors are the complexity of the character’s traits and the amount of attention given in a book (87-101). Based on Henkle’s theory, Nitta Sayuri can be classified as the major character in the novel because she gets the fullest attention in the novel. She appears more often in the novel than any other characters. Besides, she is described as a complex character, in which her traits are described in details by the author.

Further, Murphy (161-173) stated that there are nine techniques that can be used to describe the character’s traits in a novel. Those techniques are personal description technique, character as seen by others technique, speech technique, past life technique, conversation of others technique, reactions technique, direct comment technique, thoughts technique, and mannerisms technique.
However, in revealing Nitta Sayuri’s character traits, the writer only applies some of those techniques. They are character as seen by others, speech technique, reactions technique, thoughts technique. It is because the writer regards that those techniques are the most appropriate techniques to analyze Nitta Sayuri’s character traits since the novel uses first person point of view.

The character traits of Nitta Sayuri as the major character in the story are as follows:

1. Smart

As it is mentioned in the previous section that according to Murphy (171), in thoughts technique, the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. The writer applies thoughts technique to analyze Sayuri’s thoughts in associating things around her with people or vice versa. Then, her thoughts have proved her as a smart person. Some people even have to admit that her thoughts about those things are true. Sayuri’s thoughts about her house, her father’s head and her mother’s illness have proved her as a person who is able to associate things around her and her feelings in a smart way.

Long before she is known as Sayuri, she is just a girl from a poor fishing village, Yoroido, who is always called Little Chiyo. She is so smart in associating things around her with people or vice versa. She even calls her house ‘a tipsy house’ because it leans to the side. She thinks that her house must be offended by the ocean sneezing from time to time, which takes the house leaning back. Next, her father cuts a timber from a wreck fishing boat to support the eaves, which makes the house looks like a tipsy old man leaning on his crutch.
I lived in what I called a “tipsy house.” It stood near a cliff where the wind off the ocean was always blowing...
I decided our tiny house must have been offended by the ocean sneezing in its face from time to time, and took to leaning back because it wanted to get out of the way. Probably it would have collapsed if my father had not cut a timber from a wrecked fishing boat to prop up the eaves, which made the house look like a tipsy old man leaning on his crutch. (8)

Sayuri even says that her father’s head looks like an egg when she meets Mr. Tanaka. She says that the back of her father’s head is as old as the front, but it is as smooth as an egg. Even though Mr. Tanaka says that it is not a respectful thing to say about her father, he thinks that it is true.

…“The back of his head is as old as the front, but it is as smooth as an egg. “ “That is not a respectful thing to say about your father,” Mr. Tanaka told me. “But I suppose it is true.”” (17)

Besides thoughts technique, the writer also applies reactions technique. As stated by Murphy (168) that in reactions technique, the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the character’s reactions to various situations and events. Reactions technique is applied to analyze Chiyo’s reactions when Chiyo hears her father’s conversation and Dr. Miura about her mother’s illness. Sayuri feels so panic since she knew that the illness would finally lead her mother to death. Then, she associates her panic and sad feeling as a bird that is trapped inside a temple, trying to find a way out.

“A few more weeks, perhaps. She is in terrible pain. Death will release her.”
After this, I could not hear their voices any longer; for in my ears I heard a sound like a bird’s wings flapping in panic…
But if you’ve ever seen a bird trapped inside the great wall of a temple, looking for some way out, well, that was how my mind was reacting… (13)
Next, the writer also applies thoughts technique in which, according to Murphy (171), the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. Thoughts technique is applied to analyze Sayuri’s brilliant thoughts in finding some tricks to overcome her difficulties in doing tasks as a maid and a geisha in the okiya. As a geisha to be, Sayuri has to learn many arts. As Aihara (82) stated that being a geisha means mastering various Japanese arts, such as musical instruments, traditional dancing, Noh theatre, ikebana or flower arrangement and chanoyu or tea ceremony. Sayuri runs a hard and hectic life since she has to undergo her training period and work as a maid in the okiya in the same time. Yet, she is able to find some tricks to overcome her difficulties in doing both things in the same time. One of those tricks is a trick of practicing shamisen. Then, once again, she proves herself as a smart girl.

Then after that, I began to discover little tricks that made everything go more smoothly. For example, I found a way of practicing the shamisen while running errands. I did this by practicing a song in my mind while picturing clearly how my left hand should shift on the neck and how the plectrum should strike the string...

(176)

Further, the writer applies character as seen by others technique. According to Murphy (162), it is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through other characters’ point of view. This technique is applied to analyze other characters’ point of view about Sayuri. During her journey to be a geisha, Sayuri meets some people who regard Sayuri as a smart person. Those people are Mrs. Fidget, Auntie and Teacher Mezumi or Teacher Mouse. Those people regard that Sayuri is a smart person from her physical appearance.

Mrs. Fidget is a fortuneteller that is ordered by Mr. Tanaka to examine Sayuri and her sister, Satsu. They meet Mrs. Fidget in Mr. Tanaka’s office, Japan
Coastal Seafood Company. Before Mrs. Fidget examines Sayuri, she says that Sayuri has unusual eyes. Even, Mrs. Fidget says that she is a clever girl, which can be seen from her forehead. “This one is rather pretty, is not she? Such unusual eyes! And you can see that she is clever. Just look at her forehead.” (27)

When Auntie, a senior maid in the Nitta okiya, introduces Sayuri to Mother and Granny, Granny says that Sayuri looks like a fool to her. Next, Granny says that she does not need another fool person around her. However, Auntie defends Sayuri and says to Granny that she thinks Sayuri is a very clever girl and adaptable, which can be seen from the shape of her ears.

“Oh, I am sure you are right,” Auntie said. “Probably she is just as you say. But she looks to me like a very clever girl, and adaptable; you can see that from the shape of her ears.” (49)

Teacher Mouse, a shamisen teacher in school, says that Sayuri is a clever girl when Pumpkin introduces her as her sister. When Teacher Mouse sees her, she says that perhaps Sayuri can help Pumpkin with her lessons.

Teacher Mouse did not speak for a long while, but just looked me over and then said, “You are a clever girl. I can see it just from looking at you. Perhaps you can help your older sister with her lessons.” (65)

2. Self – controlled

Sayuri is a person who has a good self-control. She has proved it in many events during her lifetime. Some of those events are when she has to give a big beautiful red ruby to Mother, even though she does not want to give it and when she has to hide her feeling related to every decision that is made for her. Actually, deep in her heart, Sayuri has an intention to refuse Mameha’s intention and every decision that is made for her. Yet, she has a good self-control to hide her true
feelings and intentions in dealing with others’ intentions and decisions related to her life.

The writer applies thoughts technique to analyze Sayuri’s thoughts of obeying Mameha’s intention to give the ruby to Mother. It is because according to Murphy (171), in thoughts technique, the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. It is said that one day Nobu gives Sayuri a big beautiful red ruby. Then, when she wants to keep it, Mameha asks her to give the ruby to Mother. Actually, Sayuri wants to refuse Mameha’s intention. She has a thought that giving the ruby to Mother will be like dressing up a badger in silk. When she writes a note of thanks to Nobu, her mood is getting worse. She thinks that if Mameha herself had asked her for the ruby, she could give it to her cheerfully. Yet, she has to obey Mameha and give the ruby to Mother. Therefore, it can be seen that Sayuri is able to control her feeling and behavior to obey Mameha’s intention to give the ruby to Mother.

...well, it seemed to me that giving this jewel to her would be like dressing up a badger in silk. But of course, I had to obey Mameha. When I sat in my room later, grinding an ink stick to write note of thanks to Nobu, my mood grew darker and darker. If Mameha herself had asked me for the ruby, I could have given it to her cheerfully…but to give it to Mother!

... In any case, I finished the note and went to Mother’s to speak with her.

(315)

In the previous chapter, it is stated that according to Aihara (21), a geisha has to respect the ‘mother’ as if she were her own mother. The geisha should obey the ‘mother’ without questioning her and be able to hide her true feeling. It also happens to Sayuri. She has to be able to hide her true feeling and never
questioning every Mother’s decision that is made for her. It can be seen when Mother wants Sayuri to have her *danna* for the first time and make Nobu as her *danna* to-be.

In addition, the writer applies reactions technique to analyze Sayuri’s reactions when she has to obey Mother’s intention to have a *danna* for her and when Mother tells her about Nobu’s proposal to be her *danna*. As stated by Murphy (168), reactions technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the character’s reactions to various situations and events. It is said that Mother tells Sayuri that she is going to have her *danna* soon. Even though Sayuri says that Mameha wants her to establish her reputation first, it seems that Mother does not want to understand. Finally, Sayuri has to hide her feeling, obey Mother’s intention and apologize for being so troublesome.

Nowadays young girls, even in Japan, are accustomed to jumping up from the table and shouting at their mothers, but in my day we bowed and said, “Yes, ma’am,” and apologized for having been troublesome; and that was exactly how I responded. (340-341)

Once again, Sayuri is also able to hide and control her true feeling when Mother tells her about Nobu’s proposal to be her *danna*. It is said in the previous chapter that according to Aihara (51-55), the word ‘*danna*’ is actually translated as husband, but in this context it means a *geisha*’s financial patron; with whom she is involved emotionally, sexually and economically. By having Nobu as her *danna*, Sayuri is involved emotionally, sexually and economically with Nobu.
Then, it will create a big obstacle for Sayuri to achieve Chairman’s affection because Nobu is Chairman’s best friend and it is impossible for them to have the same affection to the same woman. When Mother tells her about Nobu’s intention to be her *danna*, Sayuri realizes that it is the end of her dream to achieve Chairman’s affection. However, she has to obey Mother and never questioning her decision.

“It is no wonder we have heard so much from Nobu Toshikazu these past few days. You must know he has proposed himself as your *danna*. I was thinking of turning him down. Who wants a man with an uncertain future? Now I can see why you have seemed so distracted these past few weeks! Well you can relax now. It is finally happening. We all know how fond you have been of Nobu these many years.”

I went on gazing down at the table just like a proper daughter. (456)

From Sayuri’s reactions above related to Mother’s intentions to make Nobu as Sayuri’s *danna* to-be, it can be concluded that Sayuri is able to control her feeling. It is because for the Japanese, the parents are important people that have to be respected and have a powerful role in the family.

3. Determined

Everybody wants to have a better life and so does Sayuri. It is said that after she failed to run away with her sister, Satsu, Mother stops her training as a *geisha* and makes her work as a maid, who has to work hard every day. Sayuri lost her opportunity to be a *geisha* and feels that her life is leading nowhere. Actually, Sayuri does not want to be a *geisha*, but certainly does not want to remain a maid for the rest of her life. Sayuri is determined to be a *geisha* because
she has a thought that becoming a *geisha* is like a stepping-stone to something else; a better life. In this section, the writer applies thoughts technique to analyze Sayuri’s thought to have a better life. As it is mentioned in the previous section that according to Murphy (171), thoughts technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about.

For a year and half now, I had been condemned to the drudgery of a maid. I felt my life stretching out before me like a long path leading nowhere. I will not say I wanted to be a *geisha*; but certainly did not want to remain a maid. (126)

... Now I understood the point was not to become a *geisha*, but to be one. To become a *geisha* … well, that was hardly a purpose in life. But to be a *geisha* … I could see it now as a stepping-stone to something else. (131)

After Sayuri failed to run away from the *okiya*, she becomes a maid and has to stop her training as a *geisha* to-be. By becoming a maid, she has to forget her dream to have a better life. Yet, that dream comes again when she meets Mameha, a famous *geisha*, in Granny’s funeral. Next, Mameha offers Sayuri an opportunity to be a *geisha*. She even wants to talk to Mother to continue her lesson as a *geisha* to-be. Later, Sayuri tells Mameha that she has tried to run away and is caught. She says that she will give anything to undo her mistakes and she has waited so patiently that the opportunity will come again. In this section, the writer applies speech technique. As stated by Murphy (164), speech technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the speech of the character, whenever he or she puts forward an opinion and is in conversation with another. Speech technique is applied to analyze Sayuri’s speech in getting second chance to be a *geisha*. 
You do not look to me like a girl who wants to live her life as a maid.”
“Oh, ma’am … I would give anything to undo my mistakes,” I said. “It has been more than two years now. I have waited so patiently in the hopes that some opportunity might come along.” (144)

From Sayuri’s speech, it can be said that Sayuri has a strong determination to be a geisha. She wants to have a better life than what she has at that time. Even, she will give anything that she can to undo her mistakes and have that opportunity once more. She thinks that by becoming a geisha, her opportunity to have a better life and have a man’s affection like Chairman has opened. It is related to the existence of danna, the geisha’s financial patron. It is mentioned in the previous chapter that according to Aihara (51-55), a danna means a geisha’s financial patron; with whom she is involved emotionally, sexually and economically. When a man becomes a geisha’s danna, he has many obligations toward the geisha and her okiya. The man is obliged to pay the geisha’s debt to the okiya, pay her schooling and cover her expenses of make up, kimono, jeweleries or even the apartment. So, basically when a woman becomes a geisha, she will have a better life because all of her life expenses are covered by her danna.

After she becomes a geisha, Sayuri has a strong determination to have Chairman’s affection. However, at the same time, Mother wants Nobu to be Sayuri’s danna. Then, Sayuri realizes that having Nobu as her danna will create a big obstacle in reaching Chairman’s affection because Nobu is Chairman’s bestfriend. Based on this reason, Sayuri has a thought to betray Nobu’s trust by having a sexual encounter with the Minister. The writer applies thoughts
technique to analyze Sayuri’s thought to betray Nobu’s trust by having a sexual encounter with the Minister. As it is mentioned in the previous section that according to Murphy (171), thoughts technique is a technique in which the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about.

Then, Sayuri will let Nobu to find out her sexual encounter with the minister and finally cancel his proposal. By letting Nobu find her with the minister, she does not only put her reputation in front of Nobu and the Minister, but also puts her friendship with Nobu at stake. Even, Nobu says that if Sayuri is a kind of woman who easily gives herself to the Minister, he will never speak to her again.

....

I did not want to lose his friendship; but in my efforts to reach the Chairman, Nobu was an obstacle I would found no way around. And yet I could cause him to be consumed by the flames of his own anger; Nobu himself had told me how to do it, just a moment after cutting his hand that night at the Ichikiri Teahouse only a few weeks earlier. If I was the sort of woman who would give myself to the Minister, he has said, he wanted me to leave the room right then and would never speak to me again. (460)

Based on the proofs above, it can be concluded that Sayuri is a determined person. She has a strong determination to have a better life, an opportunity to be a geisha and Chairman’s affection.

4. Tough

In her life, Sayuri has to deal with many heart-breaking events and difficult times. Next, those events and difficult times have proved her as a tough person.
The first event is when Sayuri has to live separately from her sister, Satsu. When they arrive at the okiya, Mr. Bekku tells Satsu to stay inside the rickshaw because she is going elsewhere, to the brothel. Even only a moment, Sayuri and Satsu are able to understand each other’s feeling that they are going to live separately and may not see each other again. Both Sayuri and Satsu are afraid of losing each other. Yet, they suddenly realize that it happens to them.

…and then as if the day had not been difficult enough, the worst thing of all happened. For when Satsu tried to get out as well, Mr. Bekku turned and pushed her back with his long arm. “Stay there,” he said to her. “You are going elsewhere.” I looked at Satsu and Satsu looked at me. It may have been that the first time we had ever completely understood each other’s feelings. But it lasted only a moment, for the next thing I knew my eyes had welled up with tears so much I could scarcely see. (41)

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter that according to Murphy (168), in the reactions technique, the author gives the reader clues about the character’s traits through the character’s reactions to various situations and events. Therefore, from Sayuri’s reaction above, it can be concluded that actually Sayuri is afraid of living separately from her sister, Satsu. It happens because both Sayuri and Satsu know that they may not see each other again for the rest of their life. Sayuri tries to overcome her sadness because she may not want to make her sister worry. Therefore, she follows Mr. Bekku and let her little body being dragged by him. Yet, it can be said that Sayuri is a tough person.

Sayuri has to live separately from her sister because she is prettier than her sister is. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter that according to Iwao (154),
in the pre-war period many poor families sold their daughters for economic reasons into government-licensed pleasure districts. The prettier one might be taken by the *okiya*, while the less lucky ended up in any ordinary brothels. Later, Sayuri will become a *geisha*, while Satsu will become a prostitute.

According to Murphy (171), in thoughts technique, the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. The writer applies this technique to analyze Sayuri’s thoughts of losing her family and home. After Satsu’s leaving, Sayuri tries to survive and run her life in the *okiya* as a maid. She feels that she cannot live without her family and home. Her thoughts of losing her family and home make her feeling numb. Even, she thinks that she cannot feel worse if she had lost her arms and legs. In fact, she can survive.

During those first few days in that strange place, I do not think I could have felt worse if I had lost my arms and legs, rather than my family and my home. …

I was without my father, without my mother - without even the clothing I had always worn. Yet somehow the thing that startled me most, after a week or two had passed, was that I had in fact survived. (51)

As stated by Murphy (168), in reactions technique, the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the character’s reactions to various situations and events. This technique is applied to analyze Sayuri’s reaction when she receives Mr. Tanaka’s letter that says both of her parents have died. Mr. Tanaka writes that Sayuri’s parents have just passed away a few weeks after Sayuri and Satsu left. Mr. Tanaka’s letter ruins her heart and causes a big loss in her life. She grieves for her parents and feels that she has nothing in life since she lost her family forever. Sayuri’s first reaction is that she feels lost. She
cannot think at all. Then, she feels like a broken vase that would not stand. Even, she feels lost within in the room around her.

Long before Auntie had finished reading this letter, the tears had begun to flow out of me just like water from a pot that boils over. For it would have been bad enough to learn that my mother had died, or that my father had died. But to learn in a single moment that both of my mother and my father had died and left me, and that my sister too was lost to me forever … at once my mind felt like a broken vase that would not stand. I was lost even within in the room around me. (120)

Besides those heart-breaking events, Sayuri has to face some difficult times in her life as a geisha during the training period and the war. As stated by Murphy (164) that in speech technique, the author gives the readers clues about the character’s traits through the speech of the character, whenever he or she puts forward an opinion and is in conversation with another. This technique is applied to analyze Sayuri’s speech about geisha’s life during the training period. It is said that during the training period, Sayuri has to be able to do the entire household tasks and run her training period as best as she can. She says that she only sleeps no more than three or five hours every night. Even, she says that during those years, if she had been two people her life would probably still have been too busy. As stated by Aihara (82) that being a geisha means mastering various Japanese arts. A geisha has to master some musical instruments, traditional dancing, Noh theatre, ikebana or flower arrangement and chanoyu or tea ceremony. In order to master those arts, a geisha needs to practice different arts every day to sharpen her skills. A geisha has to be tough in running her training because it is so hard and difficult. It is not only because the arts that she must learn, but also her hectic life
in the okiya. By running a hectic life in the okiya both as a maid and a geisha to-be, she has proved herself as a tough person.

What makes a geisha’s training so difficult is not simply the arts she must learn, but how hectic her life becomes. After spending all morning in lessons, she is still expected to work during the afternoon and evening very much as she always has. And still, she sleeps no more than three or five hours every night. During these years, if I had been two people my life would probably still have been too busy. (167)

Next, the writer applies thoughts technique to analyze Sayuri’s thoughts about her life during the war. As stated by Murphy (164) that in thoughts technique, the author gives the readers direct knowledge of what the character is thinking about. During the war, Sayuri lives in difficulty with the Arashinos and works with them sewing parachutes. They lack of charcoal to warm their body at night and food to eat every day. She even thinks that others cannot imagine some of the things that they learn to eat during the war because those things are usually given to livestock. Yet, Sayuri still can survive in that difficult condition and prove herself as a tough person.

I work with them sewing parachutes…
We had so little charcoal, we burned compressed leaves for warmth—or newspapers and magazines; anything we could find…
You cannot imagined some of the things we learned to eat, such as soybean dregs, usually given to livestock, and a hideous thing called nukapan, made by frying rice bran in wheat flour. It looked like old, dried leather, though I am sure leather would probably have tasted better. (403)

B. The Influence of Nitta Sayuri’s Character Traits on the Implementation of Gimu

As it is mentioned in the previous section that Sayuri is described as a smart, self controlled, determined and tough person. Next, as a Japanese woman,
Sayuri has a life concept of repaying her on to others who have helped her by doing gimu. As stated by Reischauer (152) that gimu is a sense of duty that is caused by the existence of on and has to be done by doing unlimited devotion. Besides, Benedict (115) also stated that in repaying gimu, the repayments are limitless, both in amount and in duration of repayments.

As a smart person, Sayuri sees the concept of repaying gimu to others as an appropriate thing that has to be done as a gratefulness of others’ benevolence to her. Besides, Sayuri sees this concept not only as a necessity, but also as her obligation to repay others’ benevolence. Sayuri’s point of view toward the concept of gimu is different from others, who regard the repayment of on as an irrational necessity rather than a part of their life concept that has to be done as their obligation to others. Sayuri sees an on as a karmic bond lasting a lifetime because others’ benevolence to her will always be part of her life and in which their traces cannot be erased from her life.

I knew even that she was right. An en is a karmic bond lasting a lifetime. Nowadays many people seem to believe their lives are entirely a matter of choice; but in my day, we viewed ourselves as pieces of clay that forever show the fingerprints of everyone who has touched them. (345)

Sayuri’s smartness in seeing the concept of gimu can also be seen in the way Sayuri repays her gimu to Mameha. She has to do anything that has been told to her without asking or arguing. As stated in the previous chapter by Benedict (103) that Japanese has an on to their teachers and lord, which is called nushi no on. This kind of on has to be repaid by doing a kind of gimu, which is called nimmu. Nimmu is related to somebody’s commitment to his or her profession and
people who are involved in succeeding his or her carrier in the future, such as the teacher. As teachers, Mameha has helped Sayuri in succeeding her profession by giving her knowledge to do her work well. In order to repay Mameha’s benevolence to her, Mameha asks Sayuri to obey Mameha without questioning or doubting her in any condition and situation. By doing Mameha’s order, Sayuri is repaying her *gimu* to Mameha in the same time. It is shown in these following sentences: “Now, as I say, I have very strict terms. To begin with, I expect you to do what I ask without questioning me or doubting me in any way.” (162).

Her trait as a smart person cannot be separated from her traits as a self controlled and determined person. In seeing the concept of *gimu*, Sayuri tries to obey it and not break it in any form. Then, in order to repay her *gimu* as best as she could, Sayuri ignores her personal feeling or *ninjo* and does what has been told to her by her mother, teacher and patron. Therefore, it does not matter what she feels at that time, she always tries to do her *gimu* as best as she could.

During her training as an apprentice *geisha*, Sayuri has to work hard because she has to visit so many *okiya* and teahouses and attend various banquets. Though she feels extremely tired, she cannot tell her that she feels too tired to go to another banquet. Therefore, she just follows Mameha whenever she goes. “I could not tell her I felt too tired to go; so I swallowed my real feelings and followed her up the street.” (200).

Yet, the most difficult thing is that she has to ignore her feelings in repaying her *gimu* to others. It can be seen when she has to ignore her feeling to Chairman because Mameha ask her to get Nobu’s attention in order to trick
Hatsumomo. Even though, it is Sayuri’s first meeting with Chairman after a long time; Sayuri has to control and ignore her feeling and do exactly as Mameha has told to her. Actually, Sayuri wants to ask the Chairman about their meeting a few years ago, but she cannot do it because it will ruin Mameha’s plan to trick Hatsumomo. Besides, the only way to repay Mameha’s benevolence to her is by doing unlimited devotion and ignoring her true feeling.

... I felt such a longing to turn to the Chairman and ask if he recalled a day several years ago when he had shown kindness to a young girl … but of course, I could never such a thing. Besides, it would be disastrous for me to focus my attention on him, while Hatsumomo was watching. (239)

As a geisha, Sayuri has to undergo *mizuage*. As stated in the previous chapter, *mizuage* is the deflowering process, where the *maiko*’s virginity is sold to the highest bidder. Actually, Sayuri is frightened with the process of *mizuage*, but she has to hide her feeling and do it as best as she could without complaining. “Everything seemed so strange and frightening to me, I could not have been comfortable no matter what I had done.” (328)

It is stated by Benedict (103) in the previous chapter that Japanese has an *on* to their teachers and lord, which is called *nushi no on*. Nobu Toshikazu is Sayuri’s patron; a man who has helped her in succeeding her career as a *geisha* by giving her chance to accompany her in many banquets. Besides, Nobu has helped her in many events during her apprenticeship. Sayuri has received lots of benevolence from Nobu. Thus, Sayuri cannot refuse Nobu’s proposal to be her *danna*. Even, Sayuri does not have choice when Nobu asks her to take the rock
that he gave because it is time for him to be her danza. She even thinks that if Nobu spoke to her about becoming his mistress, she was not at all sure she would damp up her feelings. Yet, Sayuri is able to ignore her true feeling to refuse Nobu’s intention and pretends not to look upset in front of Nobu.

I made my way back to the Ichikiri Teahouse, holding that heavy rock in both my hands. I do not know whether it was really heavy, or whether my arms were simply heavy from too much too drink. But by the time I joined Nobu in the room again, I felt I had used up all the energy I had. If he spoke to me about becoming his mistress, she was not at all sure she would damp up her feelings. (454)

Sayuri tries to hide her feeling in front of Nobu because hiding her feeling is part of doing her gimu to Nobu. She wants to repay Nobu’s benevolence by doing unlimited devotion, though in repaying it, she has to ignore her true feeling about Nobu and Chairman. In fact, she is able to control her feeling and intention in order to her gimu as best as she could.

As a self-controlled person, Sayuri tries to do her unlimited devotion in any situation and condition. Therefore, she tries to hide her feeling at that time and always does her unlimited devotion. It is because Sayuri knows that it is her obligation that has to be done in repaying her gimu.

Next, as a determined person, Sayuri takes any risk in repaying her gimu as best as she could. No matter what the consequences are, Sayuri tries to do her gimu to others. Even though it creates conflict, she tries to avoid it and repay her gimu as best as she could.

Her trait as a determined person in doing her gimu to Mameha can be seen when she has to let her leg to be cut by the cook based on Mameha’s order. Even
though Sayuri has never been good at the sight of blood, she has no choice at all. She does not want to ruin Mameha’s plan for her, so she just do it without complaining. Besides, it is part of repaying her gimu to Mameha as best as she could.

I have never been good at the sight of blood. You may recall how I fainted after cutting my lip the day I met Mr. Tanaka. So, you can probably imagine how I felt when I twisted around and saw a rivulet of blood snaking down my leg onto a towel Mameha held against the inside of my thigh. I lapsed into such a state when I saw it that I have no memory at all of what happened next-of being helped into the rickshaw, or of anything at all about the ride, until we neared the hospital and Mameha rocked my head from side to side to get my attention. (250)

Besides on to the teacher and lord, it is stated by Benedict (102) that the Japanese also have oya on or parental on. They are on that are received from parents. This type of on is the basis of the famous Oriental filial piety, which places parents in such a strategic position of authority over their children. As an adopted daughter of the okiya, Sayuri also has on to Mother. As it is stated by Aihara (21) in the previous chapter, a geisha has to respect the ‘mother’ as if she were her own mother. The relationship with the ‘mother’ creates some duties and obligations for the geisha. The geisha should obey the ‘mother’ without questioning her and be able to hide her true feeling. Yet, sometimes a geisha has to repay her gimu to different people in the same time. This condition may create conflict in geisha’s life. This condition can also be seen in Sayuri’s life when she has to repay her gimu to Mother and Mameha in the same time. At that time, Sayuri has to choose Mother’s or Mameha’s side. However, Sayuri is able to
avoid the conflict and repaying the *gimu* to Mother and Mameha in the same time. Finally, Sayuri decides not to take both sides and just tell them the truth without insulting one of them. Sayuri realizes that she may make one of them angry, but she takes the risk and determines to repay her *gimu* as best as she could to Mother and Mameha in the same time.

... Of all the women in Gion, Mameha and Mother were the most two influential in my life, and it was clear to me I was going to make one of them angry. I had no doubt in my mind of the truth; but on the other hand, I had to go on living in the *okiya* with Mother. Of course, Mameha had done more for me than anyone in Gion. I could hardly take Mother’s side against her.

“Well?” Mother said to me.

“As I recall, Mameha did accept half wages. But you agreed to pay her double earnings in the end, Mother. I’m sorry, but this is the way I remember it.” (350)

Then, Sayuri shows that she is a determined person in repaying her *gimu* to Nobu. As it is mentioned in the previous section, Nobu has helped Sayuri during her apprenticeship as a *geisha*. So, it is Sayuri’s turn to repay him back. However, Nobu does not want to talk to her since she has General Tottori as her *danna*. Actually, Sayuri does not want to hurt Nobu’s feeling, but she wants to resume her friendship with Nobu since she does not want to lose it. Besides, Sayuri will not be able to repay her *gimu* to Nobu if Nobu is still angry with her.

So, she takes all the risks to find Nobu and resume their friendship.

Now that I knew where to find Nobu, I was determined to go and see him. I felt terribly sorry I had made him angry with me; and of course, I might never see the chairman again without him. I certainly did not want to cause Nobu’s pain, but I thought perhaps by meeting with him I could find some way of resuming our friendship. (363)
Besides those traits above, Sayuri is also told as a tough person. She is able to survive even in the most difficult situation in somebody’s life. She is able to survive even when she has lost everything; her family, home and freedom, which has been controlled by Mother. In repaying her gimu, she has to control herself and ignore her feelings. As a common human, she has some difficulties in ignoring her feeling, especially ignoring her feeling to Chairman; a man who she loved. However, she is able to survive in doing her unlimited devotion as best as she could with all its consequences, including the possibility of losing Chairman’s affection for the rest of her life if she became Nobu’s mistress.

It happens when Mother asks her to accept Nobu’s proposal to be her danna. Sayuri cannot refuse Mother’s intention since she has to repay her gimu to Mother by doing everything that has been told to her. On the other hand, Sayuri does not want to do it because it will close off her life from the Chairman forever.

My heart nearly stopped when I heard this. I suppose it was obvious that Nobu would one day propose himself as my danna. …

I do not mean to suggest I disliked Nobu. Quite the opposite. But to become his mistress would have closed off my life from the Chairman forever. (341)

Sayuri thinks that she will lose Chairman forever, especially when Nobu helps her during the war. She owes Nobu a great deal of help since she has rescued her from working in the factory. Therefore, her on has to be repaid by doing gimu to him; by becoming his mistress. In fact, she cannot think anything else but Chairman. Yet, Sayuri also realizes that her life will be miserable if she drew her thoughts back from him.
What unbearable sorrow it would be, to realize I had never really tasted the things I had eaten, or seen the places I had been, because I had thought of nothing but the Chairman even while my life was drifting away from me. And yet if I drew my thoughts back from him, what life would I have? I would be like a dancer who had practiced since childhood for a performance she would never give. (406)

Hence, it can be said that as a tough person, Sayuri is able to bear the pain of ignoring her feeling to Chairman to do her gimu as best as she could to Mother and Nobu. Even though it is hard for her, she tries to do it with all the consequences; including losing an opportunity to get Chairman’s affection forever.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The last chapter consists of two parts. The first part is the conclusions and the second part is suggestions. The conclusions present the answers of the analysis of the formulated problems. The suggestions contain the suggestions for further studies on Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha* and some suggestions which are related to the English teaching and learning activity.

A. Conclusions

Before stated the conclusion, the writer would like to restate the problem formulation. There are two problems: how Nitta Sayuri’s character traits are described in the novel and how Nitta Sayuri’s character traits influence the implementation of *gimu* in her life as a *geisha*.

The first problem formulation is the description of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits in the novel. Nitta Sayuri is a major character in the novel. She is a *geisha* who lives in Gion. She is described as a smart, self-controlled, determined and tough person. As a smart person, she is able to associate feelings and things around her with people or vice versa. Besides, Sayuri is able to have brilliant thoughts in finding some tricks to overcome her difficulties during her apprenticeship in the *okiya*. As a self-controlled person, she is able to hide and control her true feeling and obey everything that is told to her by Mother, Mameha and Nobu. Next, as a determined person, she has a strong determination to be a
geisha, to have a better life and to achieve man’s affection like Chairman has. Last, as a tough person, Sayuri has faced so many heart-breaking events and difficult times, such as living separately from her sister, losing her family and home, grieving for her parents’ death, having hard training during her apprenticeship, and living in difficult condition during the war.

The second problem is the influence of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits to the implementation of gimu in her life as a geisha. As a smart person, Sayuri sees the concept of repaying gimu to others as an appropriate thing that has to be done as a gratefulness of others’ benevolence to her. Besides, Sayuri sees this concept not only as a necessity, but also as her obligation to repay others’ benevolence. As a self-controlled person, Sayuri tries to hide her feeling at that time in order to do her unlimited devotion as best as she could. Next, as a determined person, Sayuri takes any risk in repaying her gimu to others no matter what the consequences are. Last, as a tough person, Sayuri is able to bear the pain of ignoring her feeling to Chairman in order to do her gimu as best as she could to Mother and Nobu. Even though it is hard for her, she tries to do it with all the consequences; including losing an opportunity to get Chairman’s affection forever.

B. Suggestions

This part consists of two parts. The first part is suggestion for future researchers and the second part is the suggestion for teaching implementation.

1. Suggestion for Future Researchers

Arthur Golden’s novel, Memoirs of a Geisha, is an interesting novel that reveals geisha’s life through Nitta Sayuri’s experience as the major character. In
this study, the writer only focuses on the description of Nitta Sayuri’s character traits and the influence of her character traits on the implementation of *gimu* to her life as a *geisha*. Therefore, it can be said that this novel is still widely opened for future researchers to analyze. They can analyze and focus their attention to other minor characters in the novel, such as: Hatsumomo, Nobu, Pumpkin, Chairman or Mameha. Besides, future researchers can analyze the role of certain characters to Nitta Sayuri’s life and the way they influence her life as a *geisha* or vice versa. In addition, they can also analyze the cultural aspects, such as: the existence of *kimono* and its role in *geisha*’s life and the *geisha*’s rituals during their apprenticeship. In applying the approach, they can apply socio-cultural approach or psychological approach in analyzing the novel. Further, they may relate the study to the Japanese culture, tradition or custom, which shape certain characters in the novel and create personality development to the characters.

2. Suggestion for Teaching Implementation

Some people regard literary works as objects to gain pleasure when they have spare time. In fact, the literary works have some benefits for education. The teacher can use the literary works in the teaching-learning process in class. The literary works can help the students to enrich their vocabularies and improve their language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, the students can get the moral lesson from the story and apply it in their daily life. Moreover, the students can get some new knowledge from the literary works. They can learn about different cultures (arts, customs, traditions), which people have in different countries.
Based on the statement above, it can be said that literary works have an important role in teaching English language since they help students to improve their language skills. Besides, the literary works reflects the reality of life that happens in the students’ life, such as: birth, death, love, hatred and war. Therefore, the students will be able to absorb new knowledge from the literary works and improve their language skills at the same time.

The literary works can be used to teach English for all level of students. However, the teacher should consider the students’ ability in reading literary works as the material for teaching language. Besides, the reading material itself should be appropriate for the students. As stated by Lazar (52-54), that in order to make the students interested to read a literary work, the reading text must be suitable with the age of the students, the students’ emotional and intellectual maturity, the students’ interest and the students’ hobbies. A teacher must select appropriate texts. In this study, the writer wants to apply the novel Memoirs of a Geisha to teach Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) for fifth semester university students since they have a sufficient level of English skill to understand the novel.

The teacher may use the novel, Memoirs of a Geisha to teach Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) for fifth semester university students. The teacher uses a discussion method to discuss about the differences and similarities of the concept of gimu between the Japanese culture and Indonesian culture. The material will be taken from the novel, especially the part that is related to the concept of gimu. The material that is taken from the novel is distributed one week
before the class, so that the students have enough time to read it. The meeting will
be conducted in 90 minutes.

The procedures are stated below:

1. The students are divided into groups of five and each group is given
   some scene of the work to discuss a week before the class.
2. The teacher asks the students what they know about Japanese culture
   and ask them whether they have known about the concept of *gimu* in
   Japanese culture or not.
3. The teacher asks the students to discuss about the existence of the
   concept of *gimu* in Japanese and Indonesian culture.
4. The students discuss the differences and similarities of the concept of
   *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture in a group.
5. After the discussion, each group has to present the result of the
   discussion in front of the class.
6. The teacher asks the students to ask questions and then gives comments
   on the teaching and learning activities.

6. At the end of the class, the teacher and the students should draw conclusions on
   the differences and similarities of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and
   Indonesian culture.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Electronic Sources:


APPENDICES
Appendix 1 : The Summary of the Novel

Memoirs of a Geisha

This is a story about a famous geisha named Nitta Sayuri. Nitta Sayuri was born as Sakamoto Chiyo, a fisherman’s daughter from Yoroido, Japan. Chiyo and her sister named Satsu were sold to the government-licensed pleasure district in Gion. Yet, they had to live separately since Chiyo was sold to Nitta okiya, while Satsu was sold to a prostitute house in Miyagawa-cho.

In the okiya, Chiyo lived with Mother, Granny, Hatsumomo, Pumpkin and Auntie. As a new comer in the okiya, Sayuri had to work hard as a maid with Pumpkin and to attend school as a geisha to be in the morning. Later, Mother stopped Chiyo’s training as a geisha to be since Sayuri tried to escape and were caught. Since that time, Chiyo was threatened to be a maid for the rest of her life.

One day, Chiyo met Chairman Iwamura Ken, a man who treated her nicely when she was crying on the bank of Shirakawa River. Since that time, she wanted to be a geisha in order to have a better life and find a man like Chairman. Then, on a Granny’s funeral, Chiyo met a famous geisha named Mameha, who offered her an opportunity to be a geisha. After two years of training, Mameha took Chiyo as her sister and changed Chiyo’s name into Nitta Sayuri. As Sayuri’s older sister, Mameha introduced Sayuri to many wealthy men. Some of them were Chairman Iwamura Ken and Nobu Toshikazu; Chairman’s best friend who loved her.

Later, the relationship between Chairman, Sayuri and Nobu became complicated because of Sayuri’s on to people who had helped her, such as Mother, Mameha and Nobu. Her gimu that had to be repaid to Mother, Mameha and Nobu created many obstacles for her to reach Chairman’s affection. Afterward, Sayuri won his affection. Chairman became her danna until he died.

(Summarized by Tri Ratna K. from Arthur Golden’s Memoirs of a Geisha)
Appendix 2: The Characters in *Memoirs of a Geisha*

**EARLY CHILDHOOD IN YOROIDO**

Sakamoto Chiyo: the youngest daughter of Sakamoto Minoru, who later
known as Nitta Sayuri

Sakamoto Satsu: Chiyo’s older sister, who later sold as a prostitute in
Miyagawa-cho named Tatsuyo

Sakamoto Minoru: Chiyo’s father, who works as a fisherman in Yoroido

Mrs. Sakamoto: Chiyo’s mother

Mr. Tanaka Ichiro: a man who sold Chiyo and Satsu to Gion

Dr. Miura: a doctor who examines Mrs. Sakamoto

**NITTA OKIYA IN GION**

Hatsumomo: a mean geisha who lives in Nitta okiya

Pumpkin: a maid who later becomes a geisha and Sayuri’s rival in
Nitta okiya

Mother: the manager of the Nitta okiya, who later becomes the
owner after Granny’s death

Granny: a cruel old woman who owned Nitta okiya

Auntie: a senior maid who always helps Chiyo in Nitta okiya

**OTHERS**

Chairman Iwamura Ken: a man who later becomes Sayuri’s danna

Nobu Toshikazu: a man who likes Sayuri and wants to be Sayuri’s danna

Mameha: a famous geisha who trains Sayuri to be a geisha and
later becomes Sayuri’s older sister

Dr. Crab: a man who ‘bought’ Sayuri’s virginity
Yasuda Akira: a man who has a love affair with Sayuri

General Totori: Sayuri’s former *danna*

The Minister

Mr. Bekku

Mrs. Fidget

Baron Matsunaga Tsuneyoshi

Uchida Kosaburo

The Arashinos
Appendix 3: Biography of Arthur Golden

Arthur Golden

Born: Chattanooga, Tennessee, United States
Occupation: Writer
Nationality: American
Writing period: 20th Century
Genres: Historical Fiction

Arthur Golden (born in 1956 in Chattanooga, Tennessee) is the writer of the bestselling novel Memoirs of a Geisha. He is a member of the Ochs-Sulzberger family (owners of the New York Times). Golden was educated at the Baylor School (a private coeducational school for both day and boarding students) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He attended Harvard College and received a degree in art history, specializing in Japanese art. In 1980, he earned an M.A. in Japanese history at Columbia University, and also learned Mandarin Chinese. After a summer at Beijing University, he worked in Tokyo. When he returned to the United States, he earned an M.A. in English at Boston University. He currently lives in Brookline, Massachusetts. After its release in 1997, Memoirs of a Geisha spent two years on The New York Times bestseller list. It has sold more than four million copies in English and has been translated into thirty-two languages around the world. The novel Memoirs of a Geisha was written after interviewing a number of geisha, principally Mineko Iwasaki, for background information about the world of the geisha. The work is a novel and as such is entirely a work of the imagination. Given his family history in journalism, Golden
chose to create a fictional world as close to the truth as he possibly could and strove diligently to get the details right.

After the Japanese edition of *Memoirs of a Geisha* was published, Arthur Golden was sued for breach of contract and defamation of character by Iwasaki. The plaintiff claimed that Golden had agreed to protect her anonymity, if she told him about her life as a geisha due to the traditional code of silence about their clients. The case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. In 2005, *Memoirs of a Geisha* was made into a feature film starring Ziyi Zhang and Ken Watanabe, and directed by Rob Marshall, garnering three Academy Awards.

Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Golden

APPENDIX 4

CRITICISMS

Arthur Golden’s novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* has taken so much attention from the readers all over the world and drawn many praises from many critics. The richness of Japanese culture has amazed many people. Some famous magazines and newspapers gave wonderful reviews to this magnificent novel.

Some interesting media reviews proved the Golden’s success in revealing Japanese culture. *Philadelphia Inquirer* stated, “A first novel with stunning effect. …. Lovely and lyrical.” *People* wrote, “Remarkable … elegant … In this lyrical, evocative debut novel, Arthur Golden unlocks this hidden world of complex rituals and machinations.” Even, *Houston Chronicle* and *San Francisco Chronicle* stated similar things. *Houston Chronicle* stated “*Memoirs of a Geisha* is nothing short of astonishing…. Elegant and spare, but wonderfully evocative.” Then, *San Francisco Chronicle* stated, “Readers are likely to come away from Arthur Golden’s breathtaking first novel … feeling as if they have just spent several hours with the most gifted *geisha* in Kyoto … beautifully detailed.”

APPENDIX 5

LESSON PLAN

Subject : Cross Cultural Understanding

Class/ Smt. : 5th semester

Topic : The Differences and Similarities of the Concept of *Gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian Culture

Time Allocat. : 2 x 45 minutes

I. General Instructional Objective:

At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to have knowledge about the differences and similarities of the concept of *gimu* between the Japanese and Indonesian culture.

II. Specific Instructional Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the students are able to:

1. state the differences of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture

2. state the similarities of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture

3. give opinion about the differences and similarities of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture
III. Material:

Taken from a scene in novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden.

IV. Teaching and Learning Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Activity</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time Allocat.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pre-Teaching     | ➢ Greet the teacher  
                    ➢ Listen to the teacher’s introduction | 5’ |
| While-Teaching   | ➢ The students are divided into groups of five.  
                    ➢ Each group discusses about the existence of the concept of *gimu* in Japanese and Indonesian culture.  
                    ➢ The students discuss the differences and similarities of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture in a group.  
                    ➢ Each group has to present the result of the discussion in front of the class. | 5’  
                                                                                  15’  
                                                                                  15’  
                                                                                  35’ |
| Post-Teaching    | ➢ The teacher asks the students to ask questions and then gives comments on the teaching and learning activities.  
                    ➢ The teacher and the students draw conclusions on the differences and similarities of the concept of *gimu* between Japanese and Indonesian culture. | 5’  
                                                                                  10’ |

V. Evaluation:

The students’ activities in the classroom
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MAMEHA MAY already have won her bet with Mother, but she still had quite a stake in my future. So during the next few years she worked to make my face familiar to all her best customers, and to the other geisha in Gion as well. We were still emerging from the Depression at this time; formal banquets weren’t as common as Mameha would have liked. But she took me to plenty of informal parties, not only parties in the teahouses, but swimming excursions, sightseeing tours, Kabuki plays, and so on. During the heat of summer when everyone felt most relaxed, these casual gatherings were often quite a lot of fun, even for those of us supposedly hard at work entertaining. For example, a group of men sometimes decided to go floating in a canal boat along the Kamo River, to sip sake and dangle their feet in the water. I was too young to join in the carousing, and often ended up with the job of shaving ice to make snowcones, but it was a pleasant change nevertheless.

Some nights, wealthy businessmen or aristocrats threw geisha parties just for themselves. They spent the evening dancing and singing, and drinking with the geisha, often until well after midnight. I remember one of these occasions, the wife of our host stood at the door to hand out envelopes containing a generous tip as we left. She gave Mameha two of them, and asked her the favor of delivering the second to the geisha Tomizuru, who had “gone home earlier with a headache,” as she put it. Actually she knew as well as we did that Tomizuru was her husband’s mistress, and had gone with him to another wing of the house to keep him company for the night.

Many of the glamorous parties in Gion were attended by famous artists, and writers, and Kabuki actors, and sometimes they were very exciting events. But I’m sorry to tell you that the average geisha party was something much more mundane. The host was likely to be the division head of a small company, and the guest of honor one of his suppliers, or perhaps one of his employees he’d just promoted, or something along those lines. Every so often, some well-meaning geisha admonished me that as an apprentice, my responsibility—besides trying to look pretty—was to sit quietly and listen to conversations in the hopes of one day becoming a clever conversationalist myself. Well, most of the conversations I heard at these parties didn’t strike me as very clever at all. A man might turn to the geisha beside him and say, “The weather certainly is unusually warm, don’t you think?” And the geisha would reply with something like, “Oh, yes, very warm!” Then she’d begin playing a drinking game with him, or try to get all the men singing, and soon the man who’d spoken with her was too drunk to remember he wasn’t having as good a time as he’d hoped. For my part, I always considered this a terrible waste. If a man had come to Gion just for the purpose of having a relaxing time, and ends up involved in some childish game such as paper-scissors-stone... well, in my view he’d have been better off staying at home and playing with his own children or grandchildren—who, after all, are probably more clever than this poor, dull geisha he was so unfortunate as to sit beside.

Every so often, though, I was privileged to overhear a geisha who really was clever, and Mameha was certainly one of these. I learned a great deal from her conversations. For example, if a man said to her, “Warm weather, don’t you think?” she had a dozen replies ready. If he was old and lecherous, she might say to him, “Warm? Perhaps it’s just the effect on you of being around so many lovely women!” Or if he was an arrogant young businessman who didn’t seem to know his place, she might take him off his guard by saying, “Here you are sitting with a half-dozen of the best geisha in Gion, and all you can think to talk about is the weather.” One
me when I happened to be watching her. Mameha knelt beside a very young man who couldn’t have been more than nineteen or twenty; he probably wouldn’t have been at a geisha party at all if his father hadn’t been the host. Of course, he didn’t know what to say or how to behave around a geisha, and I’m sure he felt nervous, but he turned to Mameha and bravely said to her, “Warm, isn’t it?” She lowered her voice and answered him like this:

“Why, you’re certainly right about it being warm. You should have seen me when I stepped out of the bath this morning! Usually when I’m completely naked, I feel so cool and relaxed. But this morning, there were little beads of sweat covering my skin all the way up my body—along my neck, and on my stomach, and... well, other places too.”

When that poor boy set his sake cup down on the table, his fingers were trembling. I’m sure he never forgot that geisha party for the rest of his life.

If you ask me why most of these parties were so dull, I think probably there are two reasons. First, just because a young girl has been sold by her family and raised from an early age to be a geisha doesn’t mean she’ll turn out to be lovely, or have anything interesting to say. And second, the same thing goes for the men. Just because a man has made enough money to come to Gion and waste it however he chooses doesn’t mean he’s fun to be around. In fact, many of the men are accustomed to being treated with a great deal of respect. Sitting back with their hands on their knees and big rolls on their faces is about as much work as they plan to do in the way of being entertaining. One time I listened to Mameha spend an entire hour telling stories to a man who never even looked in her direction, but just watched the others in the room while she talked. Oddly enough, this was just what he wanted, and he always asked for Mameha when he came to town.

After two more years of parties and outings—all the while continuing with my studies and participating in dance performances whenever I could—I made the shift from being an apprentice to being a geisha. This was in the summer of 1938, when I was eighteen years old. We call this change “turning the collar,” because an apprentice wears a red collar while a geisha wears a white one. Though if you were to see an apprentice and a geisha side by side, their collars would be the last thing you’d notice. The apprentice, with her elaborate, long-sleeved kimono and dangling obi, would probably make you think of a Japanese doll, whereas the geisha would look simpler, perhaps, but also more womanly.

The day I turned my collar was one of the happiest days of Mother’s life; or at least, she acted more pleased than I’d ever seen her. I didn’t understand it at the time, but it’s perfectly clear to me now what she was thinking. You see, a geisha, unlike an apprentice, is available to a man for more than just pouring his tea, provided the terms are suitable. Because of my connection with Mameha and my popularity in Gion, my standing was such that Mother had plenty of cause for excitement—excitement being, in Mother’s case, just another word for money.

Since moving to New York I’ve learned what the word “geisha” really means to most Westerners. From time to time at elegant parties, I’ve been introduced to some young woman or other in a splendid dress and jewelry. When she learns I was once a geisha in Kyoto, she forms her mouth into a sort of smile, although the corners don’t turn up quite as they should. She has no idea what to say! And then the burden of conversation falls to the man or woman who has introduced us—because I’ve never really learned much English, even after all these years. Of course, by this time there’s little point even in trying, because this woman is thinking, “My goodness... I’m talking with a prostitute...” A moment later she’s rescued by her escort, a wealthy man a good thirty or forty years older than she is. Well, I often find myself wondering why she can’t sense how much we really have in common. She is a kept woman, you see, and in my day, so was I.

I’m sure there are a great many things I don’t know about these young women in their splendid dresses, but I often have the feeling that without their wealthy husbands or boyfriends, many of them would be struggling to get by and might not have the same proud opinions of themselves. And of course
he same thing is true for a first-class geisha. It is all very well
or a geisha to go from party to party and be popular with a
great many men; but a geisha who wishes to become a star is
completely dependent on having a danな. Even Mameha,
who became famous on her own because of an advertising
campaign, would soon have lost her standing and been just
another geisha if the Baron hadn't covered the expenses to
advance her career.

No more than three weeks after I turned my collar, Mother
came to me one day while I was eating a quick lunch in the
reception room, and sat across the table a long while puffing
on her pipe. I'd been reading a magazine, but I stopped out of
politeness—even though Mother didn't seem at first to have
much to say to me. After a time she put down her pipe and
said, "You shouldn't eat those yellow pickles. They'll rot
your teeth. Look at what they did to mine."

It had never occurred to me that Mother believed her
stained teeth had anything to do with eating pickles. When
she'd finished giving me a good view of her mouth, she
picked up her pipe again and took in a puff of smoke.

"Auntie loves yellow pickles, ma'am," I said, "and her
teeth are fine."

"Who cares if Auntie's teeth are fine? She doesn't make
money from having a pretty little mouth. Tell the cook not to
give them to you. Anyway, I didn't come here to talk with you
about pickles. I came to tell you that this time next month
you'll have a danな."

"A danな? But, Mother, I'm only eighteen..."

"Hatsumomo didn't have a danな until she was twenty.
And of course, that didn't last... You ought to be very
pleased."

"Oh, I am very pleased. But won't it require a lot of my
time to keep a danな happy? Mameha thinks I should estab-
lish my reputation first, just for a few years."

"Mameha! What does she know about business? The next
time I want to know when to giggle at a party, I'll go and ask
her."

Nowadays young girls, even in Japan, are accustomed to
jumping up from the table and shouting at their mothers, but

in my day we bowed and said, "Yes, ma'am," and apologized
for having been troublesome; and that's exactly how I
responded.

"Leave the business decisions to me," Mother went on.
"Only a fool would pass up an offer like the one Nobu
Toshikazu has made."

My heart nearly stopped when I heard this. I suppose it was
obvious that Nobu would one day propose himself as my
danな. After all, he'd made an offer for my mizugе several
years earlier, and since then had certainly asked for my com-
pany more frequently than any other man. I can't pretend I
hadn't thought of this possibility; but that isn't to say I'd ever
believed it was the course my life would really take. On the
day I first met Nobu at the same tournament, my aunt's
reading had been, "A balance of good and bad can open the
doors to destiny." Nearly every day since, I'd thought of it in
one way or another. Good and bad... well, it was Mameha
and Hatsumomo; it was my adoption by Mother and the
mizugе that had brought it about; and of course it was the
Chairman and Nobu. I don't mean to suggest I disliked Nobu.
Quite the opposite. But to become his mistress would have
closed off my life from the Chairman forever.

Mother must have noticed something of the shock I felt at
hearing her words—or in any case, she wasn't pleased at my
reaction. But before she could respond we heard a noise in
the hallway outside like someone suppressing a cough, and in
a moment Hatsumomo stepped into the open doorway. She
was holding a bowl of rice, which was very rude of her—she
never should have walked away from the table with it. When
she'd swallowed, she let out a laugh.

"Mother," she said. "Are you trying to make me choke?"
Apparently she'd been listening to our conversation while she
ate her lunch. "So the famous Sayuri is going to have Nobu
Toshikazu for her danな," she went on. "Isn't that sweet?"
"If you've come here to say something useful, then say it,"
Mother told her.

"Yes, I have," Hatsumomo said gravely, and she came and
knelt at the table. "Sayuri-san, you may not realize it, but one
of the things that goes on between a geisha and her danな can
cause the geisha to become pregnant, do you understand? And a man will become very upset if his mistress gives birth to another man's child. In your case, you must be especially careful, because Nobu will know at once, if the child should happen to have two arms like the rest of us, that it can't possibly be his!"

Hatsumomo thought her little joke was very funny.

"Perhaps you should cut off one of your arms, Hatsumomo," said Mother, "if it will make you as successful as Nobu Toshikazu has been."

"And probably it would help, too, if my face looked like this!" she said, smiling, and picked up her rice bowl so we could see what was in it. She was eating rice mixed with red adzuki beans and, in a sickening way, it did look like blistered skin.

As the afternoon progressed I began to feel dizzy, with a strange buzzing in my head. and soon made my way to Mameha's apartment to talk with her. I sat at her table sipping at my chilled barley tea—for we were in the heat of summer—and trying not to let her see how I felt. Reaching the Chairman was the one hope that had motivated me all through my training. If my life would be nothing more than Nobu, and dance recitals, and evening in Gion, I couldn't think why I had struggled so.

Already Mameha had waited a long while to hear why I'd come, but when I set my glass of tea down on the table, I was afraid my voice would crack if I tried to speak. I took a few more moments to compose myself, and then finally swallowed and managed to say, "Mother tells me that within a month it's likely I'll have a danna."

"Yes, I know. And the danna will be Nobu Toshikazu."

By this time I was concentrating so hard on holding myself back from crying, I could no longer speak at all.

"Nobu-san is a good man," she said, "and very fond of you."

"Yes, but, Mameha-san... I don't know how to say it... this was never what I imagined!"

"What do you mean? Nobu-san has always treated you kindly."

"But, Mameha-san, I don't want kindness!"

"Don't you? I thought we all wanted kindness. Perhaps what you mean is that you want something more than kindness. And that is something you're in no position to ask."

Of course, Mameha was quite right. When I heard these words, my tears simply broke through the fragile wall that had held them, and with a terrible feeling of shame, I laid my head upon the table and let them drain out of me. Only when I'd composed myself afterward did Mameha speak.

"What did you expect, Sayuri?" she asked.

"Something besides this!"

"I understand you may find Nobu difficult to look at, perhaps, but..."

"Mameha-san, it isn't that. Nobu-san is a good man, as you say. It's just that..."

"It's just that you want your destiny to be like Shizue's. Is that it?"

Shizue, though she wasn't an especially popular geisha, was considered by everyone in Gion to be the most fortunate of women. For thirty years she'd been the mistress of a pharmacist. He wasn't a wealthy man, and she wasn't a beauty; but you could have looked all over Kyoto and not found two people who enjoyed each other's company as they did. As usual, Mameha had come closer to the truth than I wanted to admit.

"You're eighteen years old, Sayuri," she went on, "Neither you nor I can know your destiny. You may never know it! Destiny isn't always like a party at the end of the evening. Sometimes it's nothing more than struggling through life from day to day."

"But, Mameha-san, how cruel!"

"Yes, it is cruel," she said. "But none of us can escape destiny."

"Please, it isn't a matter of escaping my destiny, or anything of that sort. Nobu-san is a good man, just as you say. I know I should feel nothing but gratitude for his interest, but... there are so many things I've dreamed about."

"And you're afraid that once Nobu has touched you, after that they can never be? Really, Sayuri, what did you think life
as a geisha would be like? We don’t become geisha so our lives will be satisfying. We become geisha because we have no other choice.”

“Oh, Mameha-san… please… have I really been so foolish to keep my hopes alive that perhaps one day—”

“Young girls hope all sorts of foolish things, Sayuri. Hopes are like hair ornaments. Girls want to wear too many of them. When they become old women they look silly wearing even one.”

I was determined not to lose control of my feelings again. I managed to hold in all my tears except the few that squeezed out of me like sap from a tree.

“Mameha-san,” I said, “do you have… strong feelings for the Baron?”

“The Baron has been a good danna to me.”

“Yes, of course that’s true, but do you have feelings for him as a man? I mean, some geisha do have feelings for their danna, don’t they?”

“The Baron’s relationship with me is convenient for him, and very beneficial to me. If our dealings were tinged with passion… well, passion can quickly slip over into jealousy, or even hatred. I certainly can’t afford to have a powerful man upset with me. I’ve struggled for years to carve out a place for myself in Gion, but if a powerful man makes up his mind to destroy me, well, he’ll do it! If you want to be successful, Sayuri, you must be sure that men’s feelings always remain under your control. The Baron may be hard to take at times, but he has plenty of money, and he’s not afraid to spend it. And he doesn’t want children, thank heavens. Nobu will certainly be a challenge for you. He knows his own mind much too well. I won’t be surprised if he expects more of you than the Baron has expected of me.”

“But, Mameha-san, what about your own feelings? I mean, hasn’t there ever been a man…”

I wanted to ask if there had ever been a man who brought out feelings of passion in her. But I could see that her irritation with me, if it had been only a bud until then, had burst into full bloom now. She drew herself up with her hands in her lap; I think she was on the point of rebuking me, but I apologized for my rudeness at once, and she settled back again.

“You and Nobu have an en, Sayuri, and you can’t escape it,” she said.

I knew even then that she was right. An en is a karmic bond lasting a lifetime. Nowadays many people seem to believe their lives are entirely a matter of choice; but in my day we viewed ourselves as pieces of clay that forever show the fingerprints of everyone who has touched them. Nobu’s touch had made a deeper impression on me than most. No one could tell me whether he would be my ultimate destiny, but I had always sensed the en between us. Somehow in the landscape of my life Nobu would always be present. But could it really be that all the lessons I’d learned, the hardest one lay just ahead of me? Would I really have to take each of my hopes and put them away where no one would ever see them again, where not even I would ever see them?

“Go back to the okiya, Sayuri,” Mameha told me. “Prepare for the evening ahead of you. There’s nothing like work for getting over a disappointment.”

I looked up at her with the idea of making one last plea, but when I saw the expression on her face, I thought better of it. I can’t say what she was thinking, but she seemed to be peering into nothingness with her perfect oval face creased in the corners of her eyes and mouth from strain. And then she let out a heavy breath, and gazed down into her teacup with what I took as a look of bitterness.

A woman living in a grand house may pride herself on all her lovely things; but the moment she hears the crackle of fire she decides very quickly which are the few she values most. In the days after Mameha and I had spoken, I certainly came to feel that my life was burning down around me; and yet when I struggled to find even a single thing that would still matter to me after Nobu had become my danna, I’m sorry to say that I failed. One evening while I was kneeling at a table in the Ichiriki Teahouse, trying not to think too much about my feelings of misery, I had a sudden thought of a child lost in the snowy woods; and when I looked up at the white-haired men
I was entertaining, they looked so much like snowcapped trees all around me that I felt for one horrifying moment I might be the sole living human in all the world.

The only parties at which I managed to convince myself that my life might still have some purpose, however small, were the ones attended by military men. Already in 1938, we'd all grown accustomed to daily reports about the war in Manchuria; and we were reminded every day of our troops overseas by things like the so-called Rising Sun Lunch Box—which was a pickled plum in the center of a box of rice, looking like the Japanese flag. For several generations, army and navy officers had come to Gion to relax. But now they began to tell us, with watery eyes after their seventh or eighth cup of sake, that nothing kept their spirits up so much as their visits to Gion. Probably this was the sort of thing military officers say to the women they talk with. But the idea that I— who was nothing more than a young girl from the seashore—might truly be contributing something important to the nation... I won't pretend these parties did anything to lessen my suffering; but they did help remind me just how selfish my suffering really was.

A few weeks passed, and then one evening in a hallway at the Ichiriki, Mameha suggested the time had come to collect on her bet with Mother. I'm sure you'll recall that the two of them had wagered about whether my debts would be repaid before I was twenty. As it turned out, of course, they'd been repaid already though I was only eighteen. "Now that you've turned your collar," Mameha said to me, "I can't see any reason to wait longer."

This is what she said, but I think the truth was more complicated. Mameha knew that Mother hated settling debts, and would hate settling them still more when the stakes went higher. My earnings would go up considerably after I took a donna; Mother was certain to grow only more protective of the income. I'm sure Mameha thought it best to collect what she was owed as soon as possible, and worry about future earnings in the future.

Several days afterward, I was summoned downstairs to the reception room of our okiya to find Mameha and Mother across the table from each other, chatting about the summer weather. Beside Mameha was a gray-haired woman named Mrs. Okada, whom I'd met a number of times. She was mistress of the okiya where Mameha had once lived, and she still took care of Mameha's accounting in exchange for a portion of the income. I'd never seen her look more serious, peering down at the table with no interest in the conversation at all.

"There you are!" Mother said to me. "Your older sister has kindly come to visit, and has brought Mrs. Okada with her. You certainly owe them the courtesy of joining us."

Mrs. Okada spoke up, with her eyes still on the tabletop. "Mrs. Nitta, as Mameha may have mentioned on the telephone, this is more a business call than a social call. There's no need for Sayuri to join us. I'm sure she has other things to do."

"I won't have her showing disrespect to the two of you," Mother replied. "She'll join us at the table for the few minutes you're here."

So I arranged myself beside Mother, and the maid came in to serve tea. Afterward Mameha said, "You must be very proud, Mrs. Nitta, of how well your daughter is doing. Her fortunes have surpassed expectations! Wouldn't you agree?"

"Well now, what do I know about your expectations, Mameha-san?" said Mother. After this she clutched her teeth and gave one of her peculiar laughs, looking from one of us to the other to be sure we appreciated her cleverness. No one laughed with her, and Mrs. Okada just adjusted her glasses and cleared her throat. Finally Mother added, "As for my own expectations, I certainly wouldn't say Sayuri has surpassed them."

"When we first discussed her prospects a number of years ago," Mameha said, "I had the impression you didn't think much of her. You were reluctant even to have me take on her training."

"I wasn't sure it was wise to put Sayuri's future in the hands of someone outside the okiya, if you'll forgive me," said Mother. "We do have our Hatsumomo, you know."

"Oh, come now, Mrs. Nitta!" Mameha said with a laugh.
Hatsumomo would have strangled the poor girl before she’d have trained her!”

“I admit Hatsumomo can be difficult. But when you spot a girl like Sayuri with something, a little different, you have to be sure to make the right decisions at the right times—such as the arrangement you and I made, Mameha-san. I expect you’ve come here today to settle our account.”

“Mrs. Okada has been kind enough to write up the figures,” Mameha replied. “I’d be grateful if you would have a look at them.”

Mrs. Okada straightened her glasses and took an accounting book from a bag at her knee. Mameha and I sat in silence while she opened it on the table and explained her columns of figures to Mother.

“These figures for Sayuri’s earnings over the past year,” Mother interrupted. “My goodness, I only wish we’d been so fortunate as you seem to think! They’re higher even than the total earnings for our okiya.”

“Yes, the numbers are most impressive,” Mrs. Okada said, “but I do believe they are accurate. I’ve kept careful track through the records of the Gion Registry Office.”

Mother clenched her teeth and laughed at this. I suppose because she was embarrassed at having been caught in her lie. “Perhaps I haven’t watched the accounts as carefully as I should have,” she said.

After ten or fifteen minutes the two women agreed on a figure representing how much I’d earned since my debut. Mrs. Okada took a small hank from her bag and made a few calculations, writing down numbers on a blank page of the account book. At last she wrote down a final figure and underscored it. “Here, then, is the amount Mameha-san is entitled to receive.”

“Considering how helpful she’s been to our Sayuri,” Mother said, “I’m sure Mameha-san deserves even more. Unfortunately, according to our arrangements, Mameha agreed to take half of what a geisha in her position might usually take, until after Sayuri had repaid her debts. Now that the debts are repaid, Mameha is of course entitled to the other half, so that she will have earned the full amount.”

“My understanding is that Mameha did agree to take half wages,” Mrs. Okada said, “but was ultimately to be paid double. This is why she agreed to take a risk. If Sayuri had failed to repay her debts, Mameha would have received nothing more than half wages. But Sayuri has succeeded, and Mameha is entitled to double.”

“Really, Mrs. Okada, can you imagine me agreeing to such terms?” Mother said. “Everyone in Gion knows how careful I am with money. It’s certainly true that Mameha has been helpful to our Sayuri. I can’t possibly pay double, but I’d like to propose offering an additional ten percent. If I may say so, it seems generous, considering that our okiya is hardly in a position to throw money around carelessly.”

The word of a woman in Mother’s position should have been assurance enough—and with any woman but Mother, it certainly would have been. But now that she’d made up her mind to lie... well, we all sat in silence a long moment. Finally Mrs. Okada said, “Mrs. Nitta, I do find myself in a difficult position. I remember quite clearly what Mameha told me.”

“Of course you do,” Mother said. “Mameha has her memory of the conversation, and I have mine. What we need is a third party, and happily, we have one here with us. Sayuri may only have been a girl at the time, but she has quite a head for numbers.”

“I’m sure her memory is excellent,” Mrs. Okada remarked. “But one can hardly say she has no personal interest. After all, she’s the daughter of an okiya.”

“Yes, she is,” said Mameha; and this was the first time she’d spoken up in quite a while. “But she’s also an honest girl. I’m prepared to accept her answer, provided that Mrs. Nitta will accept it too.”

“Of course I will.” Mother said, and put down her pipe. “Now then, Sayuri, which is it?”

If I’d been given a choice between sliding off the roof to break my arm again just the way I did as a child, or sitting in that room until I came up with an answer to the question they were asking me, I certainly would have marched right up the stairs and climbed the ladder onto the roof. Of all the women
n Gion, Mameha and Mother were the two most influential in my life, and it was clear to me I was going to make one of them angry. I had no doubt in my mind of the truth; but on the other hand, I had to go on living in the okiya with Mother. Of course, Mameha had done more for me than anyone in Gion, could hardly take Mother's side against her.

"Well?" Mother said to me.

"As I recall, Mameha did accept half wages. But you agreed to pay her double earnings in the end, Mother. I'm sorry, but this is the way I remember it."

There was a pause, and then Mother said, "Well, I'm not as young as I used to be. It isn't the first time my memory has misled me."

"We all have these sorts of problems from time to time," Mrs. Okada replied. "Now, Mrs. Nitta, what was this about offering Mameha an additional percent? I assume you meant ten percent over the double you originally agreed to pay her."

"If only I were in a position to do such a thing," Mother said.

"But you offered it only a moment ago. Surely you haven't changed your mind so quickly?"

Mrs. Okada wasn't gazing at the tabletop any longer, but was staring directly at Mother. After a long moment she said, "I suppose we'll let it be. In any case, we've done enough for one day. Why don't we meet another time to work out the final figure?"

Mother wore a stern expression on her face, but she gave a little bow of assent and thanked the two of them for coming.

"I'm sure you must be very pleased," Mrs. Otada said, while putting away her abacus and her accounting book, "that Sayuri will soon be taking a danza. And at only eighteen years of age! How young to take such a big step.

"Mameha would have done well to take a danza at that age herself," Mother replied.

"Eighteen is a bit young for most girls," Mameha said, "but I'm certain Mrs. Nitta has made the right decision in Sayuri's case."

Mother puffed on her pipe a moment, peering at Mameha across the table. "My advice to you, Mameha-san," she said, "is that you stick to teaching Sayuri about that pretty way of rolling her eyes. When it comes to business decisions, you may leave them to me."

"I would never presume to discuss business with you, Mrs. Nitta. I'm convinced your decision is for the best... But may I ask? Is it true the most generous offer has come from Nobu Toshikazu?"

"His has been the only offer. I suppose that makes it the most generous."

"The only offer? What a pity... The arrangements are so much more favorable when several men compete. Don't you find it so?"

"As I say, Mameha-san, you can leave the business decisions to me. I have in mind a very simple plan for arranging favorable terms with Nobu Toshikazu."

"If you don't mind," Mameha said, "I'd be very eager to hear it."

Mother put her pipe down on the table. I thought she was going to reprimand Mameha, but in fact she said, "Yes, I'd like to tell it to you, now that you mention it. You may be able to help me. I've been thinking that Nobu Toshikazu will be more generous if he finds out an Iwamura Electric heater killed our Granny. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, I know very little about business, Mrs. Nitta."

"Perhaps you or Sayuri should let it slip in conversation the next time you see him. Let him know what a terrible blow it was. I think he'll want to make it up to us."

"Yes, I'm sure that's a good idea," Mameha said. "Still, it's disappointing... I had the impression another man had expressed interest in Sayuri."

"A hundred yen is a hundred yen, whether it comes from this man or that one."

"That would be true in most cases," Mameha said. "But the man I'm thinking of is General Tottori Junnosuke..."

At this point in the conversation, I lost track of what the two of them were saying; for I'd begun to realize that Mameha was making an effort to rescue me from Nobu. I certainly hadn't expected such a thing. I had no idea whether
she'd changed her mind about helping me, or whether she was thanking me for taking her side against Mother. Of course, it was possible she wasn't really trying to help me at all, but had some other purpose. My mind went on racing with these thoughts, until I felt Mother tapping my arm with the stem of her pipe.

"Well?" she said.

"Ma'am?"

"I asked if you know the General."

"I've met him a few times, Mother." I said. "He comes to Gion often."

I don't know why I gave this response. The truth is, I'd met the General more than a few times. He came to partake in Gion every week, though always as the guest of someone else. He was a bit on the small side—shorter than I was, in fact. But he wasn't the sort of person you could overlook, any more than you could overlook a machine gun. He moved very briskly and was always puffing on one cigarette after another, so that wisps of smoke drifted in the air around him like the clouds around a train idling on the tracks. One evening while slightly drunk, the General had talked to me for the longest time about all the various ranks in the army and found it very funny that I kept mixing them up. General Tottori's own rank was sho-jo, which meant "little general"—that is to say, the lowest of the generals—and foolish girl that I was, I had the impression this wasn't very high. He may have played down the importance of his rank from modesty, and I didn't know any better than to believe him.

By now Mameha was telling Mother that the General had just taken a new position. He'd been put in charge of something called "military procurement"—though as Mameha went on to explain it, the job sounded like nothing more than a housewife going to the market. If the army had a shortage of ink pads, for example, the General's job was to make sure it got the ink pads it needed, and at a very favorable price.

"With his new job," said Mameha, "the General is now in a position to take a mistress for the first time. And I'm quite sure he has expressed an interest in Sayuri."

"Why should it matter to me if he's expressed an interest in Sayuri?" Mother said. "These military men never take care of a geisha the way a businessman or an aristocrat does."

"That may be true, Mrs. Nitta. But I think you'll find that General Tottori's new position could be of great help to the okiya."

"Nonsense! I don't need help taking care of the okiya. All I need is steady, generous income, and that's the one thing a military man can't give me."

"Those of us in Gion have been fortunate so far," Mameha said. "But shortages will affect us, if the war continues."

"I'm sure they would, if the war continued," Mother said. "This war will be over in six months."

"And when it is, the military will be in a stronger position than ever before. Mrs. Nitta, please don't forget that General Tottori is the man who oversees all the resources of the military. No one in Japan is in a better position to provide you with everything you could want, whether the war continues or not. He approves every item passing through all the ports in Japan."

As I later learned, what Mameha had said about General Tottori wasn't quite true. He was in charge of only one of five large administrative areas. But he was senior to the men who oversaw the other districts, so he may as well have been in charge. In any case, you should have seen how Mother behaved after Mameha had said this. You could almost see her mind at work as she thought about having the help of a man in General Tottori's position. She glanced at the teapot, and I could just imagine her thinking, "Well, I haven't had any trouble getting tea, not yet... though the price has gone up... ." And then probably without even realizing what she was doing, she put one hand inside her obi and squeezed her silk bag of tobacco as if to see how much remained.

Mother spent the next week going around Gion and making one phone call after another to learn as much as she could about General Tottori. She was so immersed in this task that sometimes when I spoke to her, she didn't seem to hear me. I think she was so busy with her thoughts, her mind was like a train pulling too many cars.
During this period I continued seeing Nobu whenever he came to Gion, and did my best to act as though nothing had changed. Probably he'd expected I would be his mistress by the middle of July. Certainly I'd expected it; but even when the month came to a close, his negotiations seemed to have led nowhere. Several times during the following weeks I noticed him looking at me with puzzlement. And then one night he greeted the mistress of the Ichiriki Teahouse in the curtest manner I'd ever seen, by strolling past without so much as a nod. The mistress had always valued Nobu as a customer, and gave me a look that seemed surprised and worried all at once. When I joined the party Nobu was giving, I couldn't help noticing signs of anger—a rippling muscle in his jaw, and a certain briskness with which he tossed sake into his mouth. I can't say I blamed him for feeling as he did. I thought he must consider me heartless, to have repaid his many kindnesses with neglect. I fell into a gloomy spell, thinking these thoughts, until the sound of a sake cup set down with a tick startled me out of it. When I looked up, Nobu was watching me. Guests all around him were laughing and enjoying themselves, and there he sat with his eyes fixed on me, as lost in his thoughts as I had been in mine. We were like two wet spots in the midst of burning charcoal.

Chapter Twenty-Six

During September of that year, while I was still eighteen years old, General Tottori and I drank sake together in a ceremony at the Ichiriki Teahouse. This was the same ceremony I'd first performed with Mameha when she became my older sister, and later with Dr. Crab just before my mizage. In the weeks afterward, everyone congratulated Mother for having made such a favorable alliance.

On that very first night after the ceremony, I went on the General's instructions to a small inn in the northwest of Kyoto called Suruya, with only three rooms. I was so accustomed by this time to lavish surroundings that the shabbiness of the Suruya surprised me. The room smelled of mildew, and the tatami were so bloated and sodden that they seemed to make a sighing noise when I stepped on them. Plaster had crumbled near the floor in one corner. I could hear an old man reading a magazine article aloud in an adjacent room. The longer I knelt there, the more out of sorts I felt, so that I was positively relieved when the General finally arrived—even though he did nothing more, after I had greeted him, than turn on the radio and sit drinking a beer.

After a time he went downstairs to take a bath. When he returned to the room, he took off his robe at once and walked around completely naked toweling his hair, with his little round belly protruding below his chest and a great patch of hair beneath it. I had never seen a man naked before, and I found the General's sagging bottom almost comical. But when he faced me I must admit my eyes went straight to where... well, to where his "eel" ought to have been. Something was flapping around there, but only when the General lay on his back and told me to take off my clothes did it begin to surface.