

## Summary

It is not unusual for a mother, no matter her nationality, to develop a closer relationship with one of her children over the others. In this thesis, the relationship between Ma Joad and her son Tom, characters from John Steinbeck's "*The Grapes of Wrath*" and between Seki Kobayashi and her son Takiji, will be examined. Takiji Kobayashi is the author of "*Kanikosen*" or "*The Factory Ship*." The reason for choosing these two families is the similarity between the mothers, both strong, loving women and also between the sons, both of whom lead strikes in rebellion of poor wages and working conditions. In order to examine these particular mother-child relationships, certain parameters needed to be set. For this the code of virtues set forth in "Bushido" written by Inazo Nitobe has been chosen. Four virtues were selected for the purpose of comparison in this thesis because they best define this parent-child relationship. They are "Rectitude," "Courage," "Benevolence" and "Politeness." "Rectitude" as used here implies a sense of duty.

Using the four virtues chosen, the relationship between both of these mothers and their children can be examined through conversations and actions. First looking at Ma and Tom, it is clear that they both love and respect each other. Their closeness is found to be based on "Benevolence" and "Politeness." There is no sense of duty between them so "Rectitude" does not apply. As for "Courage," the doing what is right and including a sense of valour, Tom shows courage in fighting against unreasonable demands and in leading a strike of migrate workers. Ma, on the other hand, accepts the sadness and pain of various partings but keeps them to herself because she knows the family will fall apart if she wavers or despairs. Though Ma and Tom demonstrate different types of "Courage," they share this common element of Bushido. Ma leans on Tom for support and says that her other children are like strangers to her. In this way it can be clearly seen how much more Ma loves Tom than anyone else in her family.

In Seki Kobayashi's family, the same results can be seen. Seki believes in her son Takiji, therefore what Takiji does is always right with her. Takiji tries to lead a strike through his books and is, as a result, tortured to death by the police. Though grieving and depressed, Seki overcomes her emotions by believing the day will come when what her son has tried to do will be realized. Seki and Takiji love and trust each other. In their relationship, too, three of the virtues can be applicable and there is no sense of duty required between them.

As for Ma's other children, the relationship between Ma and her son Noah is not found to have any elements in common. Noah goes his own way and never shows his

feelings even to his family. Her son Al is selfish and is always grumbling and complaining when he cannot do what he wants. Both of these sons must be persuaded and only do things out of a sense of duty. Compared with these two brothers, Rose of Sharon relies on Ma and respects her. But she is not worried about Ma's health. After Rose of Sharon is delivered of a stillborn baby, she does, however, show courage by offering a starving stranger her breast. These three children do not have as many elements in common as Ma and Tom do.

Looking at Seki's relationship with her other children, a slight different result can be seen. Seki has five children besides Takiji. Of her children, only Takiji assumes full responsibility for Seki and the family. Takiji's brother and sisters instead follow Takiji. In her reminiscences, Seki recalls all that she has done for her children but, with the exception of Takiji, she cannot recall what any of them have done for her. Seki has a stronger tie with Takiji than her other children.

Comparing Ma and Seki, there are a lot of similarities can be seen between these two women. Both have great love for their family, are hard workers, overcome difficulties without complaint, and are selfless where their family is concerned. There are, however, some slight difference between the two women in that Ma is conscious of leading her family and behaves as such while Seki is not. In spite of the differences, the spirits of Bushido is embodied in the attitudes of these two women toward their family.

In conclusion, the ties between Ma and Tom and the ties between Seki and Takiji are stronger than the ties to their other children. They share the virtues of "Benevolence," "Politeness," and "Courage" with no sense of duty between them. In this way it can be seen that mothers often have a stronger relation with one child in their family.