“One Drop of Happiness” was first published in the journal *Shinjoen* 新女苑 (New women’s garden) in March 1938.¹ A striking feature of this short story is that the opening parallels Tamura’s famous short story “Onna sakusha” 女作者 (A woman writer), written in 1913.² “A Woman Writer” begins with a description of a young woman who is struggling to write:

The head of this woman writer was filled with refuse. She had squeezed all the wits out of her brain, and no matter how hard she wrung it, her bag of wits offered not so much as a single word that was alive nor half a phrase that smelled of warm blood. She had been trying to write a story commissioned by a magazine ever since the end of last year; she pushed an idea around but found it unmanageable. All day long she sat behind her desk, yet produced nothing but a pattern of flax leaves and vertical lines to fit the squares where letters ought to be written.³

In “One Drop of Happiness,” the protagonist Tōko is also struggling to write. The subtle difference is that the nameless woman in “A Woman Writer” is trying to write a novel and is doing so in her house. Her inability to write is due in part to an abusive marriage. In “One Drop of Happiness,” Tōko is trying to write a speech for laborers and is doing so in her office. Her struggle to put words down on paper is due in part to her grappling with how to articulate her social ideals. Marriage is not an obstacle for her the way it is with the nameless woman writer in Tamura’s other story. In fact, in “One Drop of Happiness,” Tōko is victorious in bringing about some change. Thus we see that Tamura’s writing has expanded beyond her personal experience of the domestic space to her work experience in the political sphere. Moreover, her female characters seem to be acquiring more effective voices in her stories.

This story was published in *Shinjoen* with accompanying illustrations by Fujikawa Eiko 藤川栄子 (1900–1983), a famous artist of the Shōwa period known mainly for her nude paintings of women in her early period and her

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later postwar Cubism style. She is considered one of the leading Japanese women artists of her time. In 1927, she entered a still life entitled “Sabo no aru seibutsu” サボのある生物 (Rebellious life) in the fourteenth art exhibition of the Nikakai 二科会 (Second Division Society). This society was formed in 1914 by a splinter group of young artists rebelling against the government-run Ministry of Education’s Fine Arts Exhibition (Monbushō Bijutsu Tenrankai 文部省美術展覧会). By 1930, she had become a member of the Nikakai and under their training her career as an artist soared. In 1936, two years before her illustrations for Tamura’s story would appear in Shinjoen, Fujikawa submitted a painting entitled “San nin no rafu” 三人の裸婦 (Three nude women) for the twenty-third Nikakai exhibit. This launched her twenty-year period of painting nude women. In 1946, she established the Joryū Gaka Kyōkai 女流画家 協会 (Society of Women Artists), which at the time included eleven female artists. The illustrations included with Tamura’s story are of Western-looking men and women. There are three illustrations in this twelve-page story. The first is of a Western-looking woman sitting in a café with a drink in front of her as she leans on her hand, looking off wistfully into the distance. The second is of a Western-looking man and woman who are standing, engrossed in conversation. Both are wearing suits. The man’s back is toward the reader, while the woman stands against the wall. One of her hands lies gently on her hip. The third illustration is of a flamenco dancer.

One item to note about the original text is that it includes furigana (the phonetic Japanese spelling of words printed next to the Chinese characters). This is probably an indication of the editors’ expectations of the reading level of their young women readers. All of Tamura’s other stories appeared in established literary journals. This is the only one that appears in a journal meant for perhaps a less intellectual audience.

Shinjoen ran from January 1937 to July 1959. According to Odaira Maiko, the magazine’s goal was the “cultivation” (kyōyō 教養) of young women and it adhered fairly strictly to fulfilling this goal. There were many articles encouraging the young women readers to begin looking for jobs and teaching them how to balance marriage and work. There were also articles giving advice about the lifestyles of single women. Odaira states that the early years of the magazine