

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Based on the Wordpandit.com states that “calligraphy is the art of beautiful handwriting, words personified by the beauty of illustration.” The art of calligraphy is very famous before the invention of the typewriter because all books were written and produced by hand. The people who have skill of the art of beautiful handwriting called calligraphers.

The Calligrapher's Daughter is the first Korean novel written by Eugenia Kim. Kim develops fascinating stories of her parents' lives in their country before her family moved to United States after the Pacific War. This novel is published in 2009, *The Calligrapher's Daughter* which won, among others, the 2009 Original Voices Award and a best book of 2009 award by *The Washington Post*.

Eugenia Kim chooses the genre fiction and writes this novel dramatically. Eugenia Kim is inspired by her mother's life, Alice Hahn Hyegyung Kim. Kim's mother life is under pressure. As a woman, she cannot enjoy the opportunity to go to school and she cannot get freedom to know many things about the outside because at that time, the women cannot go anywhere.

Eugenia Kim writes *The Calligrapher's Daughter* novel by raising the Korea's condition during colonialism of Japan in Korea since 1910 until 1945 besides, *The Calligrapher's Daughter* contains of colonialism issue. The title of this novel also shows that there is a problem behind the title. The daughter is the main character and she does not gets a name from the calligrapher but, she gets a name from the

missionary named Gordon. She gives Najin as the name of the daughter. Since then, the daughter is called as Najin.

Najin comes from *yangban* or an aristocratic family in Korea. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica states that “*Yangban* is the term of social class in Korea.” The *yangban* is the highest class in Korea. *Yangban* is divided into two parts such as *munban*, the literary class such as calligraphy and *muban*, the martial class such as military. As the *yangban* family, her family is more respected than the ordinary people in her society because their class is the highest in the society.

Najin lives with her parents. Her father is named Han. He is a well-respected person in Korea. He is recognized as a *yangban* in that family. He is a famous calligrapher who dedicates his life for art and Korean culture. He is an adherent of Christian, but he still upholds the value of Confucian in his life. On the other hand, Najin has a mother named Haejun. She is a good housewife.

Based on the Oxford Dictionary defines “Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.” This patriarchal system creates inequalities between the rights of men and women. Men are more dominant in social life. So, people focus more on fulfilling the rights of men than women.

As a man, Han learns more about Korean culture and he makes efforts to survive for Korean tradition because at that time Japan was ruling over Korea because Koreans society are no longer cares about Korean culture due to arrangement of Japan rules at that time in Korea.

Han is a conservative man because he grows in the family who also is conservative. According to the Cambridge dictionary states that “Conservative is a process to preserve existing conditions, institutions, to restore traditional ones, and to limit change.” It can be seen from Han’s family who taught Han to be faithful to hold and to practice the ritual and cultural traditions, Han ancestors left the talent and honor to his descendants such as expertise in science and art. Han's family was as an Aristocratic, *yangban* and educated family. That is the reason why Han is a conservative man.

The life of Najin from the *yangban* family is different with the life of the ordinary family in Korea. Najin’s family usually have privilege as the *yangban* because they are respected by her family and her society but Najin’s life is different with the other woman, since the she born she is not only does not get a name from her parents but, she also have many discrimination as a member of *yangban* family in Korea.

Women's struggle is a form of women's movement to fight discrimination relate to gender. Najin arises for against the discrimination that she experiences. Najin does not get a name from her parents but she gets a name from a missionary in her church, and she has to struggle to become a woman who can go to school. She has achievements and she could find a life partner who matches her.

The Calligrapher’s Daughter contains some themes such as identity, women discrimination, woman’s struggle, self-determination, etc. Based on the Oxford dictionary defines “Discrimination is the unfair treatment of a person or a group

that is generally triggered by several things such as race, age, gender, etc.”

What makes this novel interesting is how Eugenia Kim describes the life of a *yangban* woman in a Korean family which is different from the others. Generally, every family especially father as the family leader will give more effort to keep the good name of each family member, but in this novel it is quite clear how Najin is part of *yangban* family or aristocratic family. She is the victim because of the unfair treatment received by Najin from her father and the people around her.

1.1 Statements of The Problem

This *skripsi* attempts to answer these following questions:

1. What was the portrait of *yangban* women in *Calligrapher's Daughter*?
2. What kind of discrimination does Najin experience in this novel?
3. How does she struggle against the discrimination?

1.2 Purpose of The Study

The purposes of this research are:

1. To know the portrait of *yangban* women in *Calligrapher's Daughter*.
2. To know the kind of discrimination that Najin experiences in this novel.
3. To know how she struggles against the discrimination.

1.3 The Significance of The Study

First, the writer hopes that this research will help the reader to understand about *yangban* class as class structure in Korea. Second, the writer hopes that this research will give the reader understanding about kinds of discrimination in the

novel *Calligrapher's Daughter*. Third, the writer hopes that this research will help the reader to understand kinds of struggle for against the discrimination in this novel.

1.4 The Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this analysis, there are some *yangban* women characters in this novel such as: Najin, Yee sunsaeng-nim, Unsook, Haejun but this *skripsi* will only analyze Najin's character as the main character. There are some extrinsic theories such as: identity, woman's struggle, self-determination, love but, the writer limits the analysis on woman's struggle in the calligrapher's family in this *skripsi*.

1.5 The Status of the Study

There are some people from the other universities do the research about Calligrapher's novel. They have analyzed this novel such as transculturation (Ng Wen Lee in 2015), cultural identity (Manimangai Mani in 2007). Therefore, there is no one has discussed about Najin's struggle against the discrimination. So, the writer will fill this gap.

1.6 The Organization of the Study

The writer divided this research into four sections. The first chapter is the introduction, consisting of background, statements of the problems, purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter is a review of related literature that will be used to analyze the novel. The third chapter is analysis of the novel and the fourth chapter is conclusions and suggestions.