

All She Was Worth is a story based on the dark-side of society and relates to the financial problems that are currently occurring in Japan. A policeman named Shunsuke Honma is begged for help by his distant relative whose fiancée, Shoko Sekine, has disappeared without a trace. When Honma investigates the incident deeper, he is astonished to find that Shoko Sekine has two different identities. Either she has had plastic surgery or someone else has stolen her identity.

The story is set during a time of financial crisis resulting from the burst of the “Japanese price bubble.” The main catalyst for the story is Japan’s economic collapse, during which most families have to deal with the innumerable debt. The writer depicts the catastrophic results of misusing credit cards and borrowing money from illegal private banks in order to pay back debt. Similar to the old saying “rob Peter to pay Paul,” the novel depicts a vicious circle that keeps on going resulting in unhappiness for everyone involved.

The author portrays a negative depiction of credit card users and people who borrow money from the bank, with debt quickly spiraling out of control and driving borrowers into a corner from which they cannot escape. The novel’s characters expect that by borrowing money they can live a better life, but ultimately it is shown that even with increased wealth, the characters of the novel are unable to find happiness.

People who rely on material possessions to find happiness are living a hollow life. When I read about Shoko Sekine and witnessed her life gradually decline in quality, I felt empathy towards her. The book says that a girl like Shoko who does not truly understand herself is unable to

understand her own thoughts and desires. Shoko only uses money to decorate her appearance and to protect herself, and in the end she loses everything.

In contrast to Shoko's character, the character of Tamotsu Honda is able to satisfy herself without using money. He is able to find happiness because his desires are simple and natural rather than expensive and materialistic. Honda's character always knows what he wants.

Capitalist society utilizes advertisements and mass produced goods to sustain itself. Advertising is used to stimulate the desire of consumers and people equate possessions and social status with happiness. In this way, advertising causes society to develop the wrong sense of values.