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# JAPAN REVIEW

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## “Let’s Becquerel!”

# The Political Function of Voice in Fukushima Musical Theater

Justine WIESINGER\*

The voice emerged as a repeated motif in the literature of the aftermath of the 2011 disasters in Japan. Many stage works responding to the disasters employed voice and song, especially the works of Fukushima-based theater troupe Unit Rabbits. This article examines why and how a Fukushima-based troupe might use the voice to do the political and social work of staking traumatic claims in the aftermath of disaster. Especially of interest are the ways in which multiple voices are used at once, referred to as “multi-vocality.” Using multiple voices in *Are kara no rakkī airando* (Lucky Island in the Aftermath), playwright Satō Shigenori highlights desires for unity, individual variation, the community-making possibilities of dialect and the voice, and the introduction of harmony as viewpoints pluralize. Only allowing people with connections to Fukushima to sing, Satō inverts the real-life situation in which a totalizing national voice is typically foregrounded while regional voices recede.

**Keywords:** nuclear, performance, disaster, Satō Shigenori, Fukushima, Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, trauma, 3.11, sound, voice, unison, heterophony, stage

In the novella *Isa no hanran* イサの氾濫 (Isa’s deluge), by the Aomori writer Kimura Yūsuke 木村友祐, the protagonist Shōji struggles with his relationship to an embattled Tōhoku region terribly damaged by 2011’s earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident. Although Shōji has left Tōhoku for Tokyo, he is deeply frustrated with what he sees as the shallow and disingenuous national response to the disasters. He also feels compelled to learn more about his troubled uncle Isa, a man who represents Tōhoku’s complex regional identity. In a final fantastical scene melding dream and reality, Shōji’s identity merges with Isa’s, and then with a large force of Tōhoku warriors coming through Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima to attack Tokyo. The final line is Shōji lifting his voice in an intense scream imbued with individual and collective identity: “Shōji had both hands raised as though to stop the angry sounds and

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voices that were rising from within him, but the voice came bubbling forth at full capacity: ‘It’s time to scream! It’s tii-ime to—ooo scree—ea—mm—!’”<sup>1</sup>

Kimura’s work is deeply suffused with a consciousness of voice, particularly that belonging to the Tōhoku region. Not only does the novella end with screaming about screaming, but Kimura also extends the sounds of the words and makes a pointed use of regional dialect.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese, “sakebeee—! Saagaabeeee—...!” shows the characteristic Tōhoku volitional ending “e,” and the repetition of the word shows the transformation of the syllable “ke” into “ga,” accentuating its association with the region. This powerful final scream reverberates from the throats of many who are also one. Its meaning is not boxed in by semantics but gives vent to a multilayered experience of anger, grief, poverty, discrimination, solidarity, and power. In this tale, voice is the focal point for history and fantasy regarding Tōhoku’s relationship to disaster and to Tokyo, the powerful capital.

Kimura’s evocation of voice on these pages (as well as in other post-3.11 novels in which he deliberately incorporates regional dialect) provides one clear example of a sharp awareness of the social and political importance of voice in Tōhoku after the disasters of 2011 left the region mourning, anxious, and in dire straits economically, socially, and environmentally. Nor is Kimura’s story the only post-disaster literary work to handle the theme of voice. Itō Seikō’s novel *Sōzō rajio* 想像ラジオ is another example, in which the voices of the living and the dead reach out through a telepathic radio broadcast after the disasters.<sup>3</sup> Sugie Fumiko 杉江扶美子 reports that both Itō’s and Kimura’s novels birthed vocal performances: radio streaming service Radiko broadcast a dramatized audio enactment of a “Sōzō Rajio” program; while *Sōzō Rajio* publisher Kawade Shobō Shinsha created a dramatic reading performed by Itō for their website. This included diegetic audio effects for atmosphere, transforming an ordinary author’s reading into a character performance, with Itō as DJ Ark sending his voice out over the airwaves.<sup>4</sup> Kimura’s novel inspired Shang Shang Typhoon vocalist Shirasaki Eimi 白崎映美 to form the Tōhoku Mazuri All Stars band and hold a concert.<sup>5</sup> The textual focus on voice in these post-disaster works carries them off the page and toward vocal performance.

Inspired by the attention to voice and its political potential, exemplified by Kimura’s novella, in this article I turn my focus to the stage, and examine musical theater created about and in Tōhoku. Informed by performance theory, collective trauma theory, and other theories of voice and performed music, I will analyze the uses and possibilities of voice to participate in and comment meaningfully on political and social processes in the aftermath of disaster. Engaging directly with voice in embodied performance, my key example for this investigation will be the musical comedies of the Kōriyama 郡山, Fukushima-based playwright Satō Shigenori 佐藤茂紀, composer Tarama Michirō 多良間通朗, and the Unit Rabbits troupe 劇団ユニット・ラビッツ, particularly the play *Are kara no rakkī airando*

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1 Kimura Y. 2019, p. 153.

2 Kimura Y. 2016, p. 95.

3 Itō 2015.

4 Sugie 2018.

5 Sugie 2018, p. 109

あれからのラッキー☆アイランド (Lucky island in the aftermath, hereafter *Lucky Island*).<sup>6</sup> I will investigate the power of voice and what possibilities are offered by the synchronous reverberation of multiple throats, especially as part of bodies living daily through the aftermath of disaster.

### The Stakes of Voice

Kimura's novella culminates by drawing close attention to the crescendo of Tōhoku voices. In the last six pages of the novella, the word "voice" (*koe* 声) appears thirteen times. Other related terms suggesting raised voices proliferate in this short span of pages: "scream" (*sakebu* 叫ぶ) appears five times, "shout" (*donaru* 怒鳴る) twice, "resound" (*hibiku, naribibiku* 響く・鳴り響く) twice, and there are other vocal terms such as "cheering in unison" (*shōwa* 唱和), "chorus" (*gasshō* 合唱), "vocalize" (*tonaeru* 唱える), and "call out" (*yobikake* 呼びかけ).<sup>7</sup> In the written Japanese, the ideographic "mouth" component 口 appears again and again, filling the page visually as well as conceptually with the many mouths intoning the cries described in the scene. The final scream drowns out the smoothly articulated national voice of unity and persistence that Shōji has vented his frustration with earlier in the novel:

Back in Tokyo Shōji had found the whole thing odd: right after the disasters every single person seemed virtuous and upright. All of a sudden the first words of every television commercial referred to our solidarity as a nation, as though just waking up to the concept, all the more obvious since up to this point Tōhoku had not even registered on their radar; now they're sending out rallying cries that played on the over-the-top melodramatic image of an impoverished region. "Are you freakin' serious?" he wanted to shout back at the television. But in such an oppressive atmosphere he could only keep it to himself. Think about it: you can't go around criticizing virtue and goodness, or solidarity. Which was exactly why he was overcome with a disgust that he just couldn't swallow.<sup>8</sup>

Shōji becomes especially frustrated when he returns to Tōhoku and finds his former classmates intoning nationally popular slogans such as "Ganbare, Nippon!" and "Ganbare, Tōhoku!"—*ganbare* meaning "fight on!" or "hang in there!"<sup>9</sup> The scream provides a counterpoint to what a character called Kakujirō describes as a local tendency of optimistic "talk:"

"Ahh, dunno, just everyone being too nice all the time." He went on, "We all got beat up with the earthquake and then the nuclear plant explosion. Everyone chased out of their homes. And then the damage from the malicious rumors and slanderous news stories. 'Rumors on the wind,' they call it, but the thing is, the land and sea really are

6 In what follows, descriptions of the play are based on the live performance, Satō 2015, which I attended. This is supplemented with unpublished materials supplied by the playwright: a script of the play, and an unlisted Youtube video of a performance also recorded at Space Waseda. I consider the live performance the primary text, with the script and video recordings serving to confirm details or provide additional information.

7 Kimura Y. 2016, pp. 90–95.

8 Kimura Y. 2019, p. 123.

9 Kimura Y. 2016, p. 90.

polluted now; this is a seriously dangerous situation. All their damage has fallen on us, and we could be more explicit in arguing our pain and suffering; I mean, if we really thought about it there is all sorts of outrage that would be appropriate. But being people from Tōhoku, it is just something we can't do. So then all those people coming to gather information, *we can't help but try to please and talk about bright futures and shit*. So the folks from the newspapers and television are quite happy to hear those stories and that's what they print."<sup>10</sup>

It is worth continuing to quote the character at length as he connects the historical and contemporary political difficulties of the region with voice:

“So, well, I always thought that all this stuff about people having personalities like this or like that, based on where they were born, was all just bullshit. I mean really, all this talk that comes from people grumbling that ‘it’s not fair’ and all that, it’s bullshit, all of it. People on the losing side when the Emishi were subjugated and turned into a colony of Yamato. In an area not even appropriate for rice cultivation but turned into a society where wet-rice cultivation is standard, like the western part of the country, forced to grow rice whether they wanted to or not. And that led to many, many people starving to death and this long history of lives suffering in poverty and whatnot. The first time the people of Tōhoku joined hands was to fight the imperial forces led by western clans in the Meiji Restoration wars of subjugation, but they lost then too. In other words, again and again losing to the western part of the country. Somebody, I don’t remember who, once talking about ‘north of Shirakawa, one mountain is worth a single dollar’ and that is dark and cold and poor. And we thought of our area the same way, living our lives burrowing around silently in the dark. . . . That’s been us, always keeping to ourselves, *should’ve raised our voices, should’ve made noise about all this*.”<sup>11</sup>

In Kakujiro’s analysis, the region’s political failure appears as a failure to use the full potential of their voice: Tōhoku is hobbled by a tendency to try to please with optimistic “talk” whereas they “should’ve raised our voices, should’ve made noise” instead. His viewpoint reflects the “internal colony” view of Tōhoku’s history, that Tōhoku has long been exploited by central powers in Japan for rice, women, soldiers, and resources such as gold, coal, oil, and nuclear power, to the point that the region is treated like a colony rather than equivalent to central regions.<sup>12</sup> It is only much later in the novel that Isa—whom Shōji likes to imagine as having the blood of the marginalized local ethnic group, the Emishi, running through his veins—unleashes screams, shouts, and cries for himself, Shōji, and the Tōhoku people past and present. These cries create the exhilarating sense that raised voices make change possible.

The scream is the prime condition for the superposition of identity in *Isa no hanran*, and in the climactic dream space, Shōji and Isa merge as one. Shōji-is-Isa-is-Tōhoku; the

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10 Kimura Y. 2019, p. 116 (emphasis added).

11 Kimura Y. 2019, p. 116 (emphasis added).

12 Nathan Hopson summarizes various historical and cultural approaches to the study of Tōhoku, including the idea of it being an internal colony. Hopson 2017, especially pp. 64–115, 251–262.

moment Shōji can fully connect to the historical conditions and the social body of the region he comes from is the moment the scream folds being across the borders of multiple identities, condensing the distance between individuals precisely because it is non-semantic and inarticulate. In contrast to J. L. Austin's linguistic concept of the performative utterance, in which language constitutes an act that changes social reality, this is an illustrative case of how to do things *without* words; with voice pivotal to bringing about a new state.<sup>13</sup> The consolidation and assertion of group identity through vocalization (with or without semantic content, but certainly incorporating non-semantic dimensions) as a social action is a quality shared with many types of performance.

The potential impact of many voices joined as one against a centralized hegemony of disaster recovery is shown by the plethora of musical theater which emerged in the aftermath of the 2011 disasters, particularly during 2011–2016.<sup>14</sup> Using song as a primary component, musical theater prioritizes voice and vocalization as performed responses to the disaster, ranging from the direct to the allegorical. Musical theater offered several possibilities for asserting local/regional identity and experience while critiquing national “consensus” responses to the disasters. Musicals offer both semantic and non-semantic avenues for such assertions and critiques, fronting movement, regional dialect, temporal elasticity, and meaningful arrangements of voices in harmony, unison, or heterophony.

The voices analyzed here belong to the Fukushima-based troupe Unit Rabbits. Founded in 2004, since the 2011 disasters Unit Rabbits has focused on Tōhoku's experience. The troupe performs in various spaces, from the large and well-appointed Kōriyama Cultural Center in Fukushima to the tiny, university-neighborhood basement venue Space Waseda in Tokyo, as well as improvised spaces in the aftermath of disaster. Their work is small scale, noncommercial, and informed by regional and community identity. Playwright Satō Shigenori is a schoolteacher, and most of those who perform with the troupe have occupations outside the theater, although they sometimes collaborate with professional actors. The majority of the group's productions, certainly since 2011, are comic musical theater comprising any number of historical, literary, pop-cultural or fantastical elements, in which characters with ties to Fukushima contend with the threats and challenges engendered by disaster. While the plays toy with gender, language, and absurd situations, they also create space for local anger and anxiety, weaving all these strands together in the short musical numbers—usually performed with live singers against recorded backing tracks—interspersed throughout their multilayered plots.

Why respond to disaster with comic musical theater? The work by Unit Rabbits was among the most fiercely biting political critique performed in the aftermath of the 2011 disasters. The plays criticize both government policy and people's behavior while using fantastical elements of the genre to create juxtapositions between the current situation and

13 Austin presents examples where language is not descriptive but active, in which “the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action,” such as enacting a wager by saying “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” or christening a ship by saying “I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*.” Austin's “performatives” are dependent on linguistic content, “words,” as reflected in the title of his book; see Austin 1975. I argue that some utterances can bring about changes to social reality due to qualities besides linguistic content.

14 Besides the musical investigated in depth here, see Satō's *Kagami no kuni no kajin nijūmensō* 鏡の国の怪人二十面相 (2016), *Gen'eijō no onnatachi* 幻影城の女たち (2016), and Ishida Tarō 石田多朗 and Itō Yasurō 伊藤靖朗, *Akai ryū to tuchi no tabibito* 赤い竜と土の旅人 (2016). See also other dramas incorporating music, such as the work of Watanabe Genshirō Shōten 渡辺源四郎商店 highlighted by Barbara Geilhorn (2017).

Japan's history, as well as its political trajectory stretching into the future. Backed by far fewer resources than big-budget musical theater (as well as the strings to which its funding is often attached), the spectacle in Unit Rabbits' works resides in imaginary elements such as giant robots and radioactive monsters that are never shown, and in an open display of regional rage typically concealed in everyday life. While there are many potential avenues to study why grassroots musical comedy is successful in offering impactful political messages and aiding in the process of collective trauma negotiation, my analysis will pay particular attention to the synchronous use of multiple voices, which I call "multivocality." In what follows, I will examine the politics of voice, focusing on the characteristics of embodied voice and multivocality as these relate to the 3.11 disaster, and to trauma in general.

### **Voice in Politics and Performance: Trauma, Identity, and Song**

The power of voice and song across time and space has been examined under various historical and political conditions, but here the overriding context is trauma—and what musical theater performance offers in the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown. Approximately thirty thousand people are still displaced from Fukushima over a decade after the disasters, unable or unwilling to return to their former homes.<sup>15</sup> Many more live amid uncertainty about their health and safety, the loss of social bonds caused by evacuation, political divisions, collapsing agricultural and nuclear industries, depopulated neighborhoods, and concerns that the national government has not prioritized the lives or health of local people. By 2017, the central government removed evacuation orders in as many areas as possible, classifying those who refuse to return to areas that are now supposedly safe as "voluntary" rather than "mandatory" evacuees and ending evacuee benefits to the "voluntary" category, a practice opposed by the UN on human rights grounds.<sup>16</sup> The experience of nuclear disaster and its long aftermath has created upheaval in the region, raising questions about how Tōhoku and Fukushima relate to Japan as a whole, how people there have been valued or devalued historically, whether the meltdown was "unforeseen" or preventable, who bears responsibility for the meltdown and development of tsunami zones, and how or whether community can continue in areas where hundreds of thousands initially departed and many have never come back. Local communities have been forced to reckon with questions about who they are, what happened to them, and what it means, an ongoing trauma process still being navigated today.

In theorizing trauma, Jeffrey C. Alexander likens the trauma process to "a speech act."<sup>17</sup> Alexander joins a number of other theorists in examining collective or cultural trauma as a state that does not inhere in a certain type or severity of event a priori, but as one that must be constructed, claimed, contested, and negotiated through social practice.<sup>18</sup> The process of working through collective trauma involves not only negotiating the impact of an event on a group's identity, but also conceiving of the suffering collectivity itself, which "must be imagined into being."<sup>19</sup> At stake in navigating the trauma process is not only "the

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15 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2022; Fukushima Mieruka Project 2020.

16 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2022.

17 Alexander 2004a, p. 11.

18 See Alexander 2004a, especially pp. 1–16; Smelser 2004, especially pp. 35–45; Giesen 2004, especially pp. 112–114; Sztompka 2004, especially pp. 168–169; Alexander 2004b, especially pp. 231–233.

19 Alexander 2012, p. 1.

stability of a collectivity in the material or behavioral sense,” but its “identity, its stability in terms of meaning, not action.”<sup>20</sup> When a collective is confronting and challenging its sense of identity, voice is part of that battleground of identification and meaning. Who are the “we” who are victimized? With what sort of a voice do “we” speak? What meaning does the quality of the voice impart to the sense of who “we” are, what “we” have experienced, and where “we” will go from here?

Alexander cites J. L. Austin when likening the collective trauma process to “a speech act,” but without unpacking the vocal component of speech. In Austin’s work, performative utterances, specifically that which is said aloud, are isolated statements that attempt to perform specific changes on social reality.<sup>21</sup> Alexander’s examples of works and acts that progress trauma claims do emphasize media with vocal components, such as theater, television, and live protest. As Alexander and other theorists of collective trauma emphasize, collective trauma is not inherent or instantaneous, but is created as a process of negotiation in which claims can be advanced, resisted, insisted upon, revised, rejected, or accepted. That work takes place on a cultural level, including through performance. In what follows, therefore, I reach beyond the linguistic and examine the role of voice in the potency of a speech “act.”

Reorienting our attention from speech acts to acts of speaking reveals that human beings do not just do things with *words*, but also with *voice*. Here, Mladen Dolar’s work on “The Politics of the Voice” points to the distinction between *phone* and *logos* in the use of voice, making it clear that the capability of voice is not reducible to the *logos* it carries: the voice does work beyond the word, and the voice itself is essential to accomplishing certain acts, beyond the semantic message.<sup>22</sup> As Dolar notes, speech acts owe their efficacy not only to linguistic syntax, but to being voiced. Voice is at play in myriad ways in theatrical performance. Even in song, the role of voice is complex and often uncaptured in the archive. While pitch may be notated and prescribed, many elements of vocal performance depend upon a singer’s training, ability, personal characteristics, interpretation, and mood. Variables may change from one performer to the next, or one performance to the next. In theatrical singing, it is possible to use the sonic qualities of voice to either support or undermine the narrative text, or even the score. This is true of each individual voice, and of voices combined and intertwined in ensemble performance. Voices performing at the same time introduce new layers of meaning and variability in their interactions, reverberating harmoniously or discordantly, blending or standing distinctly apart, synchronizing or offsetting their rhythms.<sup>23</sup>

This leaves open the question of what the echoes and differences of voice itself mean and do in a performed work or action. Ryan Minor convincingly shows that choral singing is not inherently politically potent, and is as likely to be constitutive of majority, nationalized, and oppressive identities as it is of minority, marginalized, or resistant positions.<sup>24</sup> However, Scott McMillin forcefully argues that “the musical is a subversive theater” because it

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20 Alexander 2004a, p. 10.

21 Austin 1975. Alexander also notes the influence of John R. Searle, Jürgen Habermas, and Maria Pia Lara.

22 In fields such as law or ritual, see Dolar 2006, pp. 105–124.

23 Bakhtin’s interest in subversion led him to borrow the concept of “polyphony” from music, but his investigations remained focused on words and discourse; see Bakhtin 1984.

24 Minor 2014, p. 469.

opens up *possibilities* for parody, internal contradiction, and reading against the grain, due to the complex interactions between many collaborators and components.<sup>25</sup> This accords with Takahashi Yūichirō's understanding of cultural performances as Althusserian "interpellations," that "can also become the trigger for overturning systems through raising [*tonae*] differences in a community's position and making rifts apparent."<sup>26</sup> In Althusser, the interpellation represented by the call of the policeman serves as a powerful intervention upon human behavior, a site where power is enacted, and where subjectivity is formed and enforced.<sup>27</sup> Takahashi follows the cultural theorist and translator Nishikawa Nagao 西川長夫 in using "yobikake" to translate "interpellation," which is consequently conceptualized through the metaphor of a vocal appeal, a voice crying out—drawing out the political impact of voice in Althusser's concept.

Takahashi therefore asserts that performance can *insist upon, advocate for, object to, or cry out* about what is missing from the dominant cultural performance, drowning out, clashing with, or harmonizing with the calls issued continuously by dominant society. Likewise, Randy Martin, in *Performance as Political Act*, emphasizes the "polyphonous circulation of human feeling" as part of the political action of performance, which may "instigate a tension in the social body" and create "interventions, ruptures in the conditions of reproduction of dominance."<sup>28</sup> Performance can reveal tensions or gaps in a totalized group, and carries the potential for political impact and action.

Musical theater is a particularly effective means of political performance thanks to the tensions and complexities inherent to its structure, revealed through McMillin's concept of lyric time. This distinguishes the "numbers" (singing and/or dancing interludes) of a musical from the "book" (dialogue and advancing plot), and argues that a number's lyric time offers a suspended temporality in tension with the plot, which advances from beginning to middle to end. It is this disjunction that "gives the musical its potential as major drama."<sup>29</sup> Lyric time may introduce incongruity, particularly through contrasting textual actions and intentions with subtextual cues of "harmony, melody, and rhythm."<sup>30</sup> In lyric time, the social and political pressures that bear on the plot can temporarily be bypassed, creating space for subaltern and silenced voices to hold forth at length and make the audience privy to that which is rarely heard in public. McMillin's theorization of lyric time also hinges on rupture and opposition: numbers break open the linear development of the book with the force of feeling, and musical components can introduce or undermine dominant powers such as the orchestra or a powerful character.

While an analysis of "speech acts" would typically focus on the linear dialogue that develops in "book time," or in the undifferentiated temporal flow of non-musical works, McMillin's lyric time constitutes a special characteristic of musical theater—the ability to dilate time creates opportunities for the expression of experiences that dominant society seems to rush past. In another Unit Rabbits play, a character narrates her sense of being rushed through a recovery process by society at large:

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25 McMillin 2006, p. 145; see also p. 25 on the "aesthetic of disjunction" as exploited by Bertolt Brecht.

26 Takahashi 2005, p. 40.

27 Althusser 1971, p. 174.

28 Martin 1990, pp. 175–176, quoted in Carlson 2018, p. 168.

29 McMillin 2006, pp. 6–7, 25.

30 McMillin 2006, p. 8.



While we were getting booted in the back, pushed forward by the force of sweet words about revitalization, they bluffed about “under control” and the Olympics. And [nuclear power plants] here and there are being reopened; the laws too are being rewritten at a quick pace. I can’t keep up with that speed.<sup>31</sup>

If musical numbers dilate time and suspend dominant temporality, they have the potential to push back against dominant framings of time and tempo. This creates room to vocalize claims to trauma and changed identity that are usually trampled by society’s rush to recovery. This theorization of lyric time also hinges on rupture and tension: numbers break open the linear development of the plot, and musical components can introduce or underscore tension with dominant forces, represented by the orchestra or a powerful character.

The above demonstrates that song in musical theater has multiple registers through which to open such spaces of resistance: by using musical clues to communicate more than is contained in words, by setting up a bifurcated reality that fractures number and book, and by “making” time. I contend that the space of expression opened within the musical number is also where “speech acts,” dependent on language, give way to “vocal actions,” and where human voices are given the room and attention to contribute to or even form the political impact of the work, including claims regarding trauma and collective identity. Voice works powerfully in post-3.11 performance, and especially in the performances of a troupe like Unit Rabbits, which uses primarily Fukushima-based actors and repeatedly foregrounds voice through song. The representation of survivors’ voices is more than metaphor. The use of dialect, unison, harmony, and the unique ludic spaces opened by songs amid performed narratives craft claims on these topics in a dimension inclusive of, but not limited to, semantic content. Through their voices as well as their words, these Fukushima actors repeatedly stage the claim that everything is not, as Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s 2013 Olympic bid infamously asserted, “under control.”

### **Tension in the Social Body: Unison, Heterophony, and Alternative Interpellations in *Lucky Island***

The deeply political tenor of Satō’s Fukushima-based stories goes hand in hand with embodied musical performance, which creates the opportunity for marginalized voices to be fully heard in their own time, with multivalent complexities intact. The 2015 play *Lucky Island* depicts Japan in the year 2085, seventy years after Fukushima suffers a second (fictional) nuclear accident even worse than that of 2011.<sup>32</sup> Partially evacuated, Fukushima is walled off from the rest of the country, and national maps redrawn to replace the province with ocean. Fukushima becomes deeply impoverished, and some of the remaining

31 Satō 2016, pp. 35–36. Trauma theorist Kai Erikson notes the difficulties that survivors of a flood encountered with their experience of time, finding themselves stuck in the moment of the event while the world flows on around them. See Erikson 1976, pp. 204–212.

32 The play was a collaboration with the Tokyo-based production company Ryūzanji Jimusho 流山児★事務所. Unit Rabbits actors played many of the leading *Lucky Islander* roles (including Hatoko and four of the five Hibaku Brothers), but it also featured actors from Ryūzanji Jimusho, one actor from the Ryūzanji affiliated group Rakujuke 楽塾, and the notable stage and screen presences of Narita Kairi 成田漣, Ōkubo Taka 大久保鷹, and Fujii Bin 藤井びん (the latter from Kōriyama, Fukushima).

inhabitants are living with genetic mutations, visibly marked with white streaks on their skin or hair, or total albinism. The government calls any dissidents who leave the walled-off prefecture “Lucky Islanders,” a translation of “Fukushima” made foreign, and brands them terrorists.

In this remilitarized future Japan, the government passes a “New Eugenics Law” (Shin-yūsei Hō) to round up the genetic descendants of Fukushima residents and finally eliminate traces of irradiation, which the government refers to as “Lucky Island syndrome.” Terrorists within Fukushima plot to irradiate Japan or the whole world, while other Lucky Islanders oppose these plans. In Tokyo, characters summoned to appear before the eugenics council instead decide to go to Fukushima in search of the truth. In the end, the government turns machine guns and bombs on the gathered descendants of Fukushima while the people connected to Fukushima fight among themselves. In response to an impassioned radio address by Tsuru, a first-generation Fukushima woman, the bombing stops, at least temporarily. In the script, although not apparent in the video version of the performance, faint voices of American pilots on a bombing run are mixed with the post-blackout music, implying that the peace achieved at the end of the play is false, evidence of a corrupt Japanese government relying on the American military to do its dirty work in crushing a Fukushima rebellion. Despite this intensely dark vision of the future, the play is packed with joy, humor, and pop cultural references, best exemplified by a string of jokes arising from an old-fashioned and heroic Lucky Island resistance operative’s confusion of the *nikujaga* beef dish with the name of rock musician Mick Jagger. The pop culture polyphony this play presents, with references to ninjas, swashbuckling swordsmen, giant robots, and the *Ultra Seven* theme song, punctures the distant pomposity of casually cruel politicians while grounding the production in a powerful sense of jubilation and joy.

Musical theater has tremendous capacity to contain and simultaneously deploy polyphony in every register, sustaining multiple simultaneous voices, multiple registers of speech, song, and dance/movement, and multiple temporalities. It thus holds the potential not only for polyphony, but also heterophony, an “almost oneness” that yet admits variation.<sup>33</sup> Satō’s musical theater in particular makes space for heterophony, since he extensively uses group singing in unison, including nonprofessional and student performers. Their imperfectly-blended voices open spaces for individuality and difference, especially as they are often set in imaginary counterpoint against a louder, dominant nationalized voice, intervening to instigate the “tension in the social body” that Martin highlighted.

The play’s emphasis on regional Fukushima accent and dialect in contrast with the “standard” speech of the capital also resonates with heterophonic rejection of a perfect vocal blend. Dialect in *Lucky Island* is portrayed as inherited, almost genetic, when Hatoko, who does not know that she is descended from Fukushima refugees, unknowingly betrays her connection through speech that is intensely inflected with characteristics of the rejected region. Tsuru, who left Fukushima long ago, is delighted by the rare opportunity to connect with her homeland by hearing Hatoko’s distinctive speech patterns. This marked speech, discussed in more detail below, is especially precious in a capital city where politicians are pressing increasing homogenization and the elimination of those tainted by association with Fukushima. In this play, heterophony is a political act irrespective of whether it is

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33 Wolff et al. 2007, pp. 143–144.



Figure 1. A synchronized movement that has collapsed into individual variation as the exuberant Hibaku Brothers mock the “recovery” Olympics and its five-ring logo. Photographer: Yokota Atsushi 横田敦史.

deliberate, exemplified by voices which do not blend seamlessly with the national standard, or even with one another. People who are not connected to Fukushima do not get to sing. The vivacity, heterophonic discordance, and later harmony, are reserved for people who all have some connection to Fukushima, whether they initially know it or not. The behavior of singing binds this community dramaturgically even before they are consciously aware of one another’s differing locations and positions, including when they disagree.

This is particularly the case with the chorus of the Hibaku Brothers, five Fukushima youths with seasonal names who are visibly affected by radiation. They represent a raucous, messy unison as a political force in the face of unifying pressures from multiple directions. The group’s name translates as the “Irradiated Brothers”; *hibaku* is written using katakana or roman letters but implies the use of the kanji for “exposure” 被曝. The term *hibaku* resonates with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the Hibaku Brothers contrast sharply with the *hibakusha* 被爆者 (atomic bomb survivors, using the kanji for “explosion”), as the latter are conventionally depicted as tragic innocents and often used as symbols of national nuclear victimization. The Hibaku Brothers are rowdy and thirst for regional revenge against a central government that has harmed and abandoned them. These young Fukushima actors perform deliberately messy choreography in full, boisterous voices in general unison, without excessive control or concern for a perfect match of pitch and time. Bursting with youthful energy, they are young terrorists and enemies of the state. In retaliation for the oppressive and ultimately genocidal treatment the irradiated Fukushima area is receiving from the Japanese government, the youths follow the older resistance leader Teru in acting against the central government and the non-irradiated people of Japan.

They take joy in the idea of detonating an explosive full of irradiated Fukushima soil at a fireworks show, scattering contamination over the crowd.

The play depicts a struggle in which two visions of unity stand at opposing poles, but both are incompatible with peace or justice. These visions of unity, desired by the state and by the terrorist leader, both necessitate mass violence and suffering. The government seeks to realize unity through the prime minister's plan for eugenic homogenization, while the terrorist leader Teru seeks instead to homogenize Japan through irradiation. The pursuit of unity dehumanizes, driving joyful youth to demand fear and suffering for all, until the community of sufferers expands to include a multiplicity of experiences of victimization, including older refugees and second-generation displaced people. The diverse needs and visions for the community, articulated in multiplied voices later on, offer alternatives to this violent "unity," making the most of the disorderly Hibaku Brothers' potential for individuality. Ultimately, Teru's vision for violent unity does not suit the boys' exuberant character, and the boys' destructive militant acts are contrasted with their youthful ebullience.

Stultifying unity is undermined, according to Martin, through "a non-symbolic means of totalizing the parts," hinging on the use of the body.<sup>34</sup> In *Lucky Island*, the Hibaku Brothers' loose singing and choreography foregrounds the potential autonomy of each individual body, even as they move together in the service of Teru's violent political project of unification through contamination. Singing for the Hibaku Brothers is a highly-embodied act, each voice marked by individuality rather than precisely-trained homogeneity, and reflecting the efforts of their energetic dancing. The boys' heterophonous presentation, centered on unruly bodies, also bursts with individualized personality and desire in contrast to the disembodied voice of the fascist prime minister, who seeks to excise the radiation-damaged Fukushima genes that cause visible differences in the population. Later, negotiations among a larger community of survivors and refugees offer the Hibaku Brothers alternatives to mirroring state violence, and they gain access to a new song.

Although sympathetic to the energy and anger of the marginalized young men, the play also shows Teru's approach as flawed and villainous. Teru asserts that everyone will need to become irradiated to unify, and the Hibaku Brothers echo this in their unison lyric *Nakayoku hibaku shiyō*, "Let's get together and get irradiated!" In fast-paced, exuberant song, they turn the word "becquerel," which when transliterated ends in a "ru" syllable common to Japanese verbs, into a verb that can be deployed in all sorts of grammatical fashions: "Don't Becquerel, do Becquerel, when you Becquerel, if you Becquerel, let's Becquerel!" This is an intense example of a moment of performance realigning subject and object to challenge a solitary authority with polyphonous human feeling: rather than being passive objects of irradiation that the name "hibaku" (irradiated, lit. receiver of exposure) evokes, in their frenetic singing and dancing, the boys make becquerel not a measure of contamination done to their bodies, but an act that they as contaminated/contaminators *do*. And they do it socially. There is clear tension between Teru's vision of militant unity that violently reproduces *Lucky Island*'s victimization over the rest of Japan, and the "multiplicity of practice" in the Hibaku Brothers' undisciplined bodily performances.<sup>35</sup> While they

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34 Martin 1990, pp. 161–162.

35 See Martin 1990, p. 167.

are united vocally and bodily in this doing of contamination, they are out of step with a government that is taking actions, from eugenic sterilization to genocidal murder, to contain and erase contaminated/contaminating bodies.

The Becquerel number demonstrates Takahashi Yūichirō's idea that performance impels an encounter with subjectivity. In the song of the Hibaku brothers, parts of speech change places; a noun is pressed into the role of verbing, transforming the power relations between the singers, the audience, and the wider world. The work is done by carving out lyric time and space from the ongoing plot of the book to make room for ludic vocalizations undermining typical linguistic usage, as seen in the playful transformation of the word "Becquerel." The exuberant joy of this sung and danced performance compensates for the boys' lack of social power in creating a compelling alternative interpellation.

McMillin's theory supports the idea that "becquereling" depends on a musical structure and suspension of lyric time as the "brothers" sing and dance on the border of meaning with visibly irradiated yet extremely vital bodies. The transformation of object to subject must take place in the suspended realm of possibility that is afforded by lyric time, which makes it possible for ordinarily suppressed voices to do an extended riff on what might be considered "nonsense" by the logic of the book. Repetition, variation, and vocalizations outside of established grammar are permissible, even desirable, within the lyric conventions of the number. Alexander proposes that agency is formed "in the forge of social suffering [and] must be culturally conceived."<sup>36</sup> The song creates space and time for these youths to navigate together from the position of object (passively receiving radiation, irradiated) to the position of subject (irradiating, in a range of grammatical categories). Their violent solution, ultimately misguided, is nevertheless a powerful inversion of the government's actions upon Fukushima. And given the vitality and lyric time of a number, this handful of victims appears more potent than the oppressive government.

Following the Becquerel song, and some playful talk about strontium making the body strong that transforms into a threatening unison chant, the older terrorist leader Teru gives voice to a desire to "blow up the National Assembly," mixed with talk about hunting irradiated feral Fukushima pigs. His cry of "Death to the pigs!" triggers a new song, putting rhetoric that calls for political violence at the highest level together with mobilizing the unique experience of people in the disaster zone: "Oink, oink, irradiated pigs are delicious, yes!/ We're not afraid of internal radiation," the lyrics go. Again, this song is in unison, and while the transformation from object to subject is in one sense hopeful and inspiring, ultimately the young men are performing an inversion of a national song which, while silent, nevertheless reverberates loudly throughout the play. In opposing the totalized, even fascist, nation that excludes them, the Hibaku Brothers' terrorist group ends up replicating that violence as well as a lack of diversity in membership or musical tone. In a contrapuntal derivation of the central government's stated strategy of wiping out the genetic irradiation they call "Lucky Island syndrome," Teru and the Hibaku Brothers plot a reverse homogeneity through mass irradiation.

These heterophonous unison numbers that open the play are the antithesis of the slick and vacuous spectacle ordinarily associated with the apolitical and anodyne image of commercial musical theater. In an era when television commercials and banners on the

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<sup>36</sup> Alexander 2012, p. 1.

street preach national unity, *kizuna* 絆 (emotional bonds), and hanging tough together, these voices cry out in ragged unison in a manner recognizable from the climax of Kimura's novella. The blurring of identity, too, is familiar, as the performers themselves are young people from Fukushima in both futuristic roles and daily lived experience. Satō's young terrorists and their leader are explicit about their anger and violent political intentions to murder the assembly members that have tried to destroy Fukushima, and the multi-throated unison emphasizes that the Hibaku Brothers' reckless and angry words represent one crucial sentiment of a community. When the Hibaku brothers return later on in the play, they reprise some of their earlier unison, joining harmony only for "Exodus." Theirs is not the only voice the musical dramatizes, but their anger, rarely given full vent or attention in the real world, sets the tone and stakes of the rest of the performance. Satō and Tarama also ingeniously deploy dramatic and musical conventions to show that while it is easy to be swept along by this intensely felt and expressed unison singing, there are other voices and notes missing from these early unisons. When harmony is introduced for the first time for the next song, "Exodus," reprised later as well, the presence of women's voices and singers with a diversity of relationships to Fukushima complicate the political picture. The result is a harmony that folds in greater nuance and subtlety, pointing the way towards a political position that does not necessitate the absolute obliteration of difference through violence.

In this section, I have analyzed tensions that voice induces in social bodies in search of dominance through unification. The tuneless national voice opens the play with a vision for totalizing unification through eugenics and genocide: the domination of Asia and the erasure of Fukushima and all its people. Teru attempts to organize a response that reproduces the same logic of unifying violence in the opposite direction. However, voices destabilize these projects of unification. In the lyric space, they play with subjectivity, inverting who calls and who is called, who irradiates and who is irradiated. The instability they evoke is echoed in the qualities of their voices and movements, which often begin in unison but tend to collapse in energetic entropy. More voices subsequently join the story, introducing a multiplicity of experience, sound, and desire that bring survivors and refugees into conflict, then accord, as they seek a more nuanced vision of a just future.

### **"Furusato no sono kotoba!" Identity, Dialect, Harmony, and Plural Localized Voices in *Lucky Island***

Hatoko, introduced after the harmonies of "Exodus," expands on the significance and capability of voice in this musical. Hatoko believes herself to be from Hokkaido but learns that she is a Fukushima descendant through two means: receiving a eugenic summons from the government; and being teased about her accent by her coworker Momoko, who turns out to be another diaspora descendant. Hatoko's speech is intensely marked with Fukushima characteristics, even more so than the speech of characters currently living in Fukushima/Lucky Island. She voices consonants that go unvoiced in other regions, with "kubarikata," for example, coming out as "kubarigata." Among many other examples, she uses "da bai" instead of "deshō," and "-gai" instead of "[desu] ka" to end a question, the latter of which Momoko remarks on, only for Hatoko to do it again and again.

When first asked about her speech patterns, Hatoko claims to have spent time overseas and to therefore have a "standard returnee accent," a line that gets a big laugh out of the



Figure 2. Hatoko holding a map from which Fukushima has been erased. Photographer: Yokota Atsushi.

Tokyo audience in the video recording of the play.<sup>37</sup> Hatoko's speaking voice betrays her at every turn. As she passes out tissue packs carrying ads about the central government's new eugenic policies, her accent marks her as a target of the same policies. Yet no matter how often this is pointed out by other characters, she seems unaware of it herself. It turns out that Hatoko's parents were refugees. The voice of Fukushima seems to have attached itself to her DNA much like the inherited effects of radiation, visualized through white makeup on other characters in the play.

Momoko teases Hatoko lightly about her distinctive accent, but the first-generation Fukushima/Lucky Island refugee Tsuru greatly values her speech patterns. Tsuru is an older woman who fled the 2015 accident, and her speech is not obviously accented. She lovingly asks Hatoko to repeat phrases heavily marked by regional speech patterns. Some of Hatoko's regional linguistic differences are written directly into the script, but others, such as nuances of pronunciation, only live in the performance, voiced by Suzuki Noriko, a leading Unit Rabbits actor from Fukushima. Hatoko's regionally accented voice itself binds together a handful of different characters with various connections to Fukushima as Hatoko, Momoko (the granddaughter of a refugee), Kana (a Lucky Islander), and Kameko (Tsuru's granddaughter) lead the charge to travel to uncover the truth of the secret forty-seventh prefecture, Fukushima, erased from the map. Regional voice is the catalyst for the formation of a group that can articulate a sense of loss in its identity. This group is then able to pursue

<sup>37</sup> She later attempts to get her conflicting story straight by arguing that Hokkaido, being another island, is technically "overseas."

redress for this loss by taking action. The young women independently pursue information about Fukushima's erasure. They then become embroiled in the sometimes violent negotiations between Lucky Island factions. Ultimately, they are caught in the crossfire of the violent rebels against the genocidal government. As in Kimura's *Isa no hanran*, Tōhoku oppression, Tōhoku dialect, powerful vocal expression, and violent conflict with Tokyo are closely linked.

Voice is also used to make a community legible onstage to an audience through dramatically structured combinations of voice, and to forge a community of performers who negotiate trauma through the writing, rehearsal, and performance of musical theater rooted in their individual lived experiences. Victor Turner points out that stage drama and social process feed one another in a matrixial fashion.<sup>38</sup> This claim resonates with the socially engaged drama of artists such as Berthold Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski, who famously integrated song and music into many of their processual works aimed at political activation or therapeutic engagement with recent history. In the case of 3.11, voice is a powerful vector for the forming of community, and of taking political action in opposition to dominant groups and ideologies, whose relentless monotone otherwise drowns out local experience at the national and international levels.

Satō's plays show people and communities traumatized not so much by events as by social responses to events, usually repressive responses by dominant groups associated with Tokyo. These performed experiences echo Kimura's novel; in *Lucky Island*, those living with differences due to radiation and marginalization have the vital energy to sing, dance, plot, and fight. Yet those who live in "Lucky Island" and those with family connections to Fukushima are all threatened by the attempts of the central government and its hostile agents to eliminate all traces of the nuclear accident not through cleanup and medical support but by suppression, marginalization, eugenics, and violence. While Satō's staged Fukushima communities find alternatives to retaliatory violence against Tokyo and its government, the fantasy of unifying violence of their own, especially when celebrated in vocal unison, is an essential step to solidify their identity, though it is not the final step in the process of navigating collective trauma. When negotiating their understanding of events and desirable actions, unison alternates with solos and harmonizing groups to add complexity and nuance to their reckoning with their identity, and their desires as part of a community. It is as a community that the characters work through their rage towards a recovery defined on Fukushima's terms rather than Tokyo's.

The sympathetic villains in Satō's musicals seek a leveling justice that would erase Fukushima's and Tōhoku's difference by inflicting the same fate on the rest of the country. But Satō and Tarama's dramatic strategies and vocal choices make it clear that to do so would reduce Fukushima's particular range of voices, and thus the opportunity to work through its trauma; not the event itself, but the ripples the event makes in a community's past, future, and identity. In the end, Fukushima's people retain their voices, in musical and social relation with one another, but allowing for voices within a community to diverge. Unison, therefore, is neither totalizing unity nor atomizing individuality, and the self is neither silenced nor forever submerged in unity.

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38 Turner 1990, p. 16.



Unison is almost always imperfect and fragile in this performance. Solos, mostly quite short and sung by villains and heroes alike, are interspersed with longer harmonized songs sung in duet, trio, or quintet, mostly from Hatoko's less violent faction. Some solos are passed from one character to the next, highlighting individual voices that disagree yet share similar sentiments and a collective identity. Hatoko's accent stands out and draws other "Lucky Islanders" to her, but not all of them always speak with obvious or homogenous Fukushima dialects. The characters commune through the voices they lift in song, but the resultant community is not reductive or totalizing. Individuals retain the ability to break out in songs as individuals or smaller groups.

The community those connected to Fukushima share in song does not exist for dominant "Japanese" society in the play, represented by acts of writing (the eugenics law and the redrawing of maps) and the single, non-melodic offstage voice of the prime minister. Although the Lucky Islanders sometimes disagree virulently among themselves, they share an ability, as a community who see their identity threatened, warped, and erased, to raise their voices as they seek truth and a path forward. Raising these multifaceted voices publicly in opposition to a singular, nationalized narrative is one "collective means for undoing repression."<sup>39</sup>

At the end of the play, the voices of a radio reporter and the first-generation refugee Tsuru go out over the airwaves. Both refer once again to the erased prefecture, now a battleground, as "Fukushima." The reporter calls it, "Fukushima, which has never once been lucky for seventy years." Tsuru makes a plea to the heads of fractured Lucky Island factions and the helicopter pilots bombing Fukushima people assembled for their eugenics summons: "Fukushima is here. Japan's heartland (*Nihon no furusato* 日本のふるさと), Fukushima, is right here. Right now, the country is trying to burn that Fukushima to the ground. Is that something a nation does? Is that something humans do?" As the fighting on all sides stops following Tsuru's invocation of Lucky Island's pre-stigmatic name and admonitions for those attacking on behalf of the country to think for themselves (*hitori hitori ni*, individually; one by one), Hatoko praises Tsuru as "tsuru no hito koe" 鶴の一声 (lit. the single voice of a crane), an idiom that puns on Tsuru's name and an authoritative voice that cuts through debate. Although she holds no physical or political power, Tsuru's powerful voice asserts the value of Fukushima itself, and as a part of Japan's identity.

This efficacious assertion of Tsuru's "lone voice," is followed by everyone coming together to sing *Inochi mijikashi koiseyo otome* いのち短し恋せよ乙女, also known as "The Gondola Song" (ゴンドラの唄).<sup>40</sup> This popular tune from 1915 has been passed among a few characters as solos earlier in the play, and exhorts the young to enjoy themselves and fall in love because life is short. Even the Hibaku Brothers join in. While the script undermines the perfect unity of the ending by including the ominous voices of the U.S. military, Tsuru's voice brings about the end of the violence, the restoration of Fukushima's proper name, and the return of unison singing that now includes everyone instead of just the violent faction.

39 Alexander 2004a, p. 7.

40 The song, with music by Nakayama Shinpei 中山晋平 and lyrics by tanka poet Yoshii Isamu 吉井勇, has been used in a number of Japanese movies and TV dramas, most notably in *Ikiru* (1952), directed by Kurosawa Akira 黒澤明, where it poignantly emphasizes the bittersweet weight of mortality. It was originally written for the great Taishō actress Matsui Sumako 松井須磨子 to sing in a 1915 stage version of Ivan Turgenev's *On the Eve* (その前夜). Aizawa 2008, p. 1.

Her voice urging combatants to think of the lost, shared significance of “Fukushima” and of “nation” (*kuni* 国 and *kokka* 国家) achieved this resolution. Factions have lost leaders in the conflict, but the Fukushima people who remain seem closer to compromise without totalization or obliteration. Hearing Tsuru’s voice asserting the name and value of Fukushima, they draw together willingly.

### **Conclusion: Voicing a Claim**

Certainly, voice is not the only vehicle for performed political action. Gesture, movement, and acts of silence have political potency across the fields of theater, dance, performance art, protest, and the tactics of daily life. Deaf theater companies worldwide produce impactful works using language and expression not predicated on voice and sound. Even within musical theater, voice is only one dimension of a multivalent work that operates, as noted above, on many registers simultaneously. Still, the voice itself operates as a political and social mechanism, and in examining that mechanism, we can see the potential that playwrights in post-disaster situations may themselves be seeing when they mobilize musical theater as a performance to imbue with post-disaster absurdities, anger, critique, and the negotiation of new identities. I have argued in this article that the particular functions of the voice include the ability to center regional experiences of culture, belonging, and un-belonging, to register the diversity of a group that sings the same song differently, to foreground what or who is missing, to emphasize and manipulate experiences of time, and to renegotiate the boundaries of subjectivity. These are all acts that constitute the work of claiming and working through collective or cultural trauma.

Both classical and collective trauma theory have identified silence as a common obstacle in trauma processes, that silence having both individual and social dimensions. For Tōhoku, and especially Fukushima after 2011, silencing has taken many forms. In *Radiation Brain Moms and Citizen Scientists*, Aya Hirata Kimura pointed to many ways in which women with concerns about radiation were bullied, ostracized, and suppressed, and labeled as irrational rumor-mongers harming local industry.<sup>41</sup> People experiencing thyroid cancer in themselves or their children have reported difficulty in speaking out, both due to community pressure to present the area as safe and due to worries about personal stigmatization as irradiated persons.<sup>42</sup> Within Fukushima, acknowledging worries about radiation led to community worries about *fūhyō higai* 風評被害, reputation damage that could cause discrimination and economic collapse.<sup>43</sup> People voicing concerns faced blame for supposedly spreading rumors that created bad publicity. For refugees, the ability to connect with new communities has been hampered by embarrassment about receiving reparation payments, the loss of accustomed patterns of close-knit small-town life, as well as differences in dialect.<sup>44</sup> The branding of the “recovery Olympics” and the cancellations of evacuation orders in most areas increasingly advanced a narrative of the disasters being over and done with. Alexander notes both state and social forces “imposing ‘the veil of silence’ in the aftermath of suffering.”<sup>45</sup> While this “silence” may encompass all forms of communication,

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41 Kimura A. H. 2016.

42 *CNBC* 2016.

43 Miura and Aritsuka 2021.

44 Miura and Aritsuka 2021.

45 Alexander and Breese 2011, p. xix.

voiced and unvoiced, the use of the voice in performance to break the inertia of silence as part of a collective act like creating and attending theater offers an opportunity to jump-start trauma processes stalled by social and political pressure. Performed songs and cries show commitment through the investment of large stores of energy, the deliberate exposure of vulnerability, and the model of joining voices, intentions, and actions while recognizing multiple characters, experiences, and goals.

McMillin points to vulnerability as a special quality of theater over film, one especially evident in musical theater performance. The ability to display and share vulnerability at length and in a communal space offers opportunities to confront collective crisis and identity.<sup>46</sup> In theater, actors inhabit roles that may be somewhat or totally different from their daily lived selves, creating fluid layers of identity. Further, in musical theater, layers of significance are stratified through instrumentation, book, voice, lyrics, harmonies, and movement. Combining the vulnerability and the layered signification of the medium creates the political possibility, subversion, resistance, and the visualization of power structures that McMillin repeatedly asserts. McMillin's vision of the power inherent in the layering of musical theater aligns with Takahashi's understanding of the power of theater and ritual: "The kind of performances carried out are indicative of the points that verify the grounds of identity for the self or for the self as a constitutive member of a community. Further, rites and theater temporarily suspend order and social values, creating a state of betweenness that holds multiple meanings at once."<sup>47</sup> Multivocal performance staged in front of an audience uses the layering of voices and identities to do the work of confronting group identity and challenging the accepted social order by creating pockets for difference, dispute, discord, irony, and even harmony. As an audience member, it felt exhilarating to be in the room for Unit Rabbits productions of the 2010s, to hear full-throated engagement with the ugly, angry, and painful sides of the post-disaster so frequently discouraged in polite everyday discussion or prepackaged nationalized discourses on recovery and togetherness. Although the precise import of the performances felt different in Tokyo compared with Fukushima, each audience composition and performance setting felt imbued with its own meaning and set of possibilities.

A few months after seeing *Lucky Island*, following a performance of *Kagami no kuni no kaijin Nijūmensō* by Unit Rabbits in Kōriyama, I spoke to a performer who had also appeared in *Lucky Island*. She was passionate about some of the absurdities of living in Fukushima five years after the disasters and took me to see one of the radiation monitoring stations I had just seen spoofed in the musical. The performance created a space to stay engaged with the larger meanings of daily frustrations, to express them not just once, but to keep expressing them, on and off stage, within the troupe, for the community of local viewers, and later for Tokyo viewers when the show traveled to the capital, and also to foreigners like me. That same performer appeared in quite a number of Unit Rabbits' post-meltdown works. This stubborn raising of voices in performance after performance and work after work is informative for viewers, but it is also constitutive of that collectivity that has a stake in defining what happened, who the perpetrators are, and who the "we" suffering the greatest threat to existence and identity actually is. Performers' collaborative

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46 McMillin 2006, p. 174.

47 Takahashi 2005, p. 32.

work also seeks, experiments with, and models potential paths forward for those insisting on the significance of what has been or is being done to them. In spite of social pressure to hang in there, be positive, fade into a tapestry of national experience, this musical theater troupe gives vent again and again to cries, grumbles, growls, laughs, and songs both onstage and off. They remain their own unit while sometimes collaborating with others, retain their own voices, local dialect and all, and in the continual process of show-making, keep raising noisy critiques in the face of a national rhetoric of unity, bonds, and sameness in adversity.

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## **Evolutions of Ethical Paradigms and Popular Fiction: The Case of Late Edo Tales of Vengeance**

**Mario TALAMO\***

Tales of vengeance were a popular Edo literary genre published in great numbers from the end of the eighteenth century. From the outset, tales of vengeance (*katakiuchi mono*) were informed by the neo-Confucian orthodoxy promoted by the military government in the immediate aftermath of the Kansei Reforms (1787–1793), and constituted ideological productions marked by consistent structures and *dramatis personae* with specific functions. With the passage of time, the intellectual paradigms—moral rules and sets of ideas governing everyday life—that underpinned these tales shifted. The present article explores the interaction between this broader ethical context and the tales of vengeance, arguing that the evolution of ethical paradigms from the immediate aftermath of the Kansei Reforms to the last part of the Edo period drove alterations to the tales.

The article sheds new light on the possibilities for philological and structural analysis to reveal fundamental structures and transformations in literature. The application of structuralism and morphological analysis to late Edo tales of vengeance provides us with information on the ideas, worries, and beliefs relevant to the people of the late Edo period. Changes over time—in the morphology of the tales, their structure, and their range of characters—reveal that their transformations reflect changes in reality. The article demonstrates the potential structuralism offers for the study of literature more broadly.

**Keywords:** *katakiuchi mono*, late Edo period, structuralism, morphology, functions, *dramatis personae*, intellectual paradigms, social context, nature, invention

This article examines *katakiuchi mono* 敵討もの (tales of vengeance), a popular Edo 江戸 literary genre which recounts the exploits of pious sons and faithful vassals to restore the names of their fathers or lords and regain lost social privileges. It focuses on the tales in this genre that were published in the aftermath of the Kansei 寛政 Reforms (1787–1793),

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when Confucian virtues such as filial piety and loyalty were emphasized through the ideological propagation of neo-Confucianism by the *bakufu* 幕府. The Kansei edicts led to the silencing of the preceding generation of *gesaku* 戯作 (playful fiction) writers, the suppression of *sharebon* 洒落本 (frivolous books), and the disappearance of realistic elements and instances of contemporary life from the plots of the *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 (lit. “yellow cover” picture book) tales. Tales of vengeance remained popular, though, because the practice of blood revenge was justified as an act of filial piety and loyalty. Authors were thus free to write about a wide selection of material while respecting the new censorship protocols and “Vendetta fiction was a safe and appealing endeavor for popular writers as it presented moral acts that provided plenty of room for lurid and morally questionable scenes that sold well.”<sup>1</sup> The result was a plethora of tales of adventure set in historical settings, with their plots dominated by ideology and doctrine. The article analyzes the connection between the changes that occurred in the form and structure of these tales and the broader social and intellectual environment.

While there is a wide variety of research on the theme of vendetta in theatrical genres like *jōruri* 浄瑠璃 (puppet theater) and *kabuki* 歌舞伎 (Japanese dance-drama), the narratives produced in the aftermath of the Kansei Reforms have never been studied in depth. Scholars such as Hirade Kōjirō 平出鏗二郎 and Ujiie Mikito 氏家幹人 offer exhaustive descriptions of the vengeful acts performed during the Edo period, but they have not paid sufficient attention to the social and ideological context within which these tales were produced.<sup>2</sup> The textual approach adopted here combines the precision of philological and paleographical work with a structural treatment of the selected materials to recover the social and political environment that influenced their production. Many of the texts examined here only exist as woodblock prints rather than in modern print editions, and require a supplementary process of transcription and translation, which makes this kind of sociocritical research on the literary domain of the Edo period particularly rare.

This article adopts a multidisciplinary approach based on the analysis of specific literary productions. It draws on the structuralist theories of Vladimir Propp (1895–1970), and on the models elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), Algirdas Greimas (1917–1992), and Denise Paulme (1909–1998) relating to the interpretation of tales.<sup>3</sup> These constitute a methodological tool for dividing the plot and the range of characters in the texts of the corpus into minimal actions and basic roles, and for connecting structural transformations and changes in the range of actions of the *dramatis personae* to the evolving social milieu. As Propp states, “We need to take into account the tale in relation with its milieu, the situation in which it is created. Here, real life and religion—in the broad sense of the term—play a determinant role.”<sup>4</sup>

The first section of this article provides details of the corpus of texts analyzed and explains the methodology utilized. The rest of the article is divided into two parts: the first, consisting of three sections, is purely structuralist, and outlines the morphological

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1 Atherton 2013, p. 185.

2 See Hirade 1909; Ujiie 2007.

3 With Vladimir Propp’s work, literary studies began shifting from formalism, which set aside subjective interpretation, to structuralism, which studies tales as a series of indivisible narrative units belonging to reality. Structuralism is appropriate for analyzing tales of vengeance due to their schematic yet formulaic structure.

4 Propp 1965, p. 176.



and functional structure of the tales of vengeance, and the changes they undergo. The second half of the analysis, the remaining four sections, reads these changes against a series of intellectual evolutions in the late Edo period. This approach is inspired by Simondon's theory of *transductivité* that recognizes the mutual relation existing between reality and writing, with a circuit of interactions resulting in an exchange between objects and mental reproductions. Reality is thus part of narrative material, which is, in turn, a part of reality, reflecting ideas and mentalities.<sup>5</sup> I assert that the transformations in the tales are external to the narratives themselves, and argue that it was new socioeconomic values, along with the loss of authority of the edicts imposed during the Kansei (1789–1801) and Tenpō 天保 (1830–1844) eras, which caused the reconfiguration of the morphological structure and *dramatis personae* of the tales of vengeance.

### Sources and Methodology

Vengeance, of course, has a long history in the Japanese literary tradition. The oldest vendetta tales date back to the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), when Prince Mayowa 眉輪 avenged his father by murdering the twentieth emperor Ankō 安康; other famous episodes include the vengeance exacted by the Soga 曾我 brothers, who killed Kudō Suketsune 工藤祐経 in a famous story from the Muromachi 室町 period (1336–1573). While many works dealt with revenge, though, these tales of vengeance were not considered a genre: the revenge fiction by Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693), for example, was considered as a branch of *ukiyozōshi* 浮世草子 (tales of the floating world), while Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653–1724) wrote *jōruri*. It was only in the late Edo period (1603–1868) that stories about this practice diffused widely, and the number of tales expanded rapidly down to the Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912).<sup>6</sup> As Saeki Shin'ichi 佐伯真一 argues, it is at this point the term *katakiuchi mono* comes to designate a specific literary category.<sup>7</sup> Moral values, virtues, and ideology play a pivotal role in their narrative, and like Bakhtin's tales of challenges (*prüfungsromans*), tales of vengeance recount a series of tasks performed by the hero, which test them through suffering and temptation in order to cultivate loyalty, courage, virtues, and sanctity.<sup>8</sup>

The sources for this article are drawn from two subsets of the macro-genre of *gesaku* published in the city of Edo: the shorter *kibyōshi* and the longer *gōkan* 合卷 (bound volumes). These are literary works in which illustrations occupy most of the page, with narration and dialogue written around them (see figures 1 and 2).

My corpus spans the Kansei to Ansei 安政 (1855–1860) eras and comprises seven tales of vengeance (see Appendix 1). These texts were all written in the aftermath of the reforms instituted by Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758–1829), from 1787 the chief senior councilor of the Tokugawa 徳川 shogunal administration. The Kansei Reforms sought to respond to uprisings during the Tenmei 天明 famine (1782–1788) by mandating both government and personal austerity—samurai were to abandon frivolous hobbies like poetry composition and return to serious literature (*bun* 文) and martial arts (*bu* 武). Criticism

5 Simondon 1989.

6 Yamaki 2002, p. 24.

7 Saeki 2004, p. 7.

8 Bakhtin 1988, pp. 197–198.



Figure 1. The *Sumiyoshimōde*, as the villain Taema kills the head of the Usami clan. In this *kibyōshi* tale of vengeance, illustrated by the author, most of the page consists of illustrations, with the text of the tale above. Dialogue would sometimes appear below the illustrations. Jippensha Ikku, *Sumiyoshimōde*, pp. 4 *ura*, 5 *omote*. Courtesy of the Waseda University Library “Kotenseki Sogo Database.”



Figure 2. The *Teijokagami*, showing the moment when Osayo’s loyalty enables little Otsuyu, daughter of Hayanoshin, to see a peony for the first time. Illustrated by Utagawa Kunisada, this page shows the characteristics of the *gōkan* tales. Text and explanatory sections surround the illustrations, which would also contain dialogue boxes. Santō Kyōzan, *Teijokagami*, volume 3, pp. 1 *ura*, 2 *omote*. Courtesy of the Waseda University Library “Kotenseki Sogo Database.”

of these measures published in 1788–1789 resulted in the punishment of a number of popular writers, and restrictions were applied to the publishing sector from Kansei 2 (1790) onward. Sadanobu decreed that “all scabrous contents must be banned from books, that new publications must be registered with the city magistrate, and that all anonymous works should be withdrawn from the market.”<sup>9</sup>

Following these reforms, Confucian virtues such as filial piety and loyalty were emphasized through the *bakufu*'s ideological propagation of neo-Confucianism.<sup>10</sup> The texts in my corpus demonstrate how the tales evolved after the Kansei Reforms. The work of Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚滿人 (1749–1807) shows the morphological peculiarities of the first tale of vengeance issued after the Kansei Reforms. The texts by Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 (1765–1831) and Santō Kyōzan 山東京山 (1769–1858), issued after the two reforms of Kansei and Tenpō (1841–1843) respectively, illustrate the influence of political edicts on the functional evolution of these productions. The remaining texts, those belonging to the first decade of the nineteenth century by Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816) and Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822), and the one dating to the beginning of the Tenpō era signed by Goryūtei Tokushō 五柳亭徳升 (1793–1853), show the ethical evolutions occurring in Japanese society.

The texts examine various stages in the production of revenge fiction. When researching on ethical paradigms and their influence on literary productions, it is necessary to allow for sufficient time to pass between the different texts selected to observe how new ideas circulated widely among the populace. These helped to shape new perceptions of reality that the authors, voluntarily or involuntarily, conveyed in their works. The collation of primary sources dated from Kansei to the Bunka 文化 (1804–1818) period was simple due to the popularity enjoyed by tales of vengeance, but from the third decade of the nineteenth century onward, when vendetta fiction was supplanted by other productions, minor works had to be examined.

I adopt a twofold methodology: paleographical and philological, as most of the corpus is still written in *hentaigana* 変体仮名 (non-standardized variants of *hiragana*) and needs to be reconstructed, and structuralist, based on the “functional reduction” proposed by Vladimir Propp in *Morfologija skazki* (1928), and on other theories adapted to tales of vengeance. Edo fictional genres have formulaic structures that suit the application of Proppian studies. Propp was the first narratologist to reconstruct a common code concerning functions—basic actions constituting indivisible units that form the plot of tales—and characters, and aimed to find historical developments reflected in folklore and literary production.<sup>11</sup> This methodology enables me to outline a recurring list of functions in the plots of tales of vengeance and to identify a fixed range of characters. The results of my analysis, in turn, enabled me to understand the evolution of functional structures and the influence of social developments and changes in the intellectual environment.

Two previous studies, by Koike Masatane 小池正胤 and Konita Seiji 小二田誠二, have drawn on Propp's theories to develop structural classifications of tales of vengeance based on Proppian binaries/oppositions (see Appendix 2). Koike examined Ikku's *kibyōshi* and *gōkan*

9 See Ooms 1975, pp. 129–141.

10 See Ooms 1975, p. 55.

11 Propp 1965.

to develop a very simple classification of the plot of tales of vengeance, showing how these changed from the beginning to the end of the Bunka period. Konita sought to break down the tales of the Soga and Ishii 石井 brothers into their constituent elements based on their phases of tribulation. I accept Konita's claims for the importance of the *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語 in the Japanese vendetta tradition, but in contrast to Koike assert that the tales were constituted by a common code, one that does not change over the period. I therefore draw on their models while establishing a link between the structural transformations of the tales and the social and intellectual milieu within which that transformation occurs.

The article's primary contribution is the adoption of a philological and paleographical approach that, through the examination of characters and morphological structure, reveals the broader context shaping these literary productions.

### Functional Structure and *Dramatis Personae* of the Early Productions

Tales of vengeance are fundamentally melodramatic productions. They begin and end in the same idyllic or social space; the succession of events which spans the tales are the attempts of the protagonists to return to the original "world of innocence."<sup>12</sup> This return to origins is the main aim of the tales.

The plots of the tales of vengeance in my corpus can be divided into ten recurring functions:

1. The idyll;
2. The end of the idyll;
3. The death of the father-figure;
4. The identification of the culprit;
5. The decision to avenge;
6. The tribulations and financial struggles of the hero;
7. The meeting with the auxiliary;
8. The journey to the final battle;
9. The final vendetta;
10. The return of the hero.

The initial situation, the idyll, represents the life of the protagonists before the loss of their social status. Uncontrolled passion results in murder and brings the first function to an end. The identification of the culprit is a pivotal phase of the plot. When it cannot take place through a rational event (a search for evidence), authors often resort to magic. In Kyōden's *Katakiuchi Magotarōmushi* 敵討孫太郎虫, the victim Kaname, killed by Hitokaku, returns into the world of the living as a ghost to reveal the identity of the murderer to his wife Sakurado.<sup>13</sup>

While the functions may vary in order, generally the first four and the last three are fixed. The central three functions, constituting the tribulations of the avenger, are freer, depending on author and audience. Indeed, this central set may be repeated more than once. *Magotarōmushi*'s morphological structure, for instance, comprises more than one cycle

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12 Greimas 1974, p. 219.

13 The names of most of the characters were originally written in *kana*.

of privations. After the death of her father Kuranoshin, the protagonist Sakurado becomes a beggar, loses her husband Kaname, and risks being the victim of sexual violence. The duplication and triplication of misadventures is a “recognizable trait which heightened the suspense”<sup>14</sup> and emotional engagement of readers. These struggles end through a meeting with an auxiliary, who gives strength to the avenger.

Initially, the characters are part of a Manichean conflict between good and evil: the hero is a positive character while the antagonist represents pure evil.<sup>15</sup> In his work on folktales, Propp points to seven different categories of characters: the antagonist, the donor, the helper, the princess or the king, the dispatcher, the hero, and the false hero.<sup>16</sup> The texts of my corpus provide four categories of characters as recurring typologies of agents: the hero (or the avenger), the antagonist, and the auxiliaries (the helper and the donor).<sup>17</sup> In addition, while the victim does not figure among the *dramatis personae* identified by Propp, the actions of Propp’s princess and king comprise the same functions as that of agent in the tales of vengeance. These five types—avenger (hero), antagonist, helper, donor, and victim—constitute the *dramatis personae* of my study.

The avenger is key, as their quest to regain the initial social idyll provides the central motor for the plot. Their trajectory—initially losing status before returning to a position of strength—is made possible by meeting the auxiliary. Male avengers in late Edo tales of vengeance are always aged fifteen, on the cusp of becoming an adult samurai, when they can be useful to the nation. Their age remains constant throughout.<sup>18</sup> Another peculiarity of the avenger is their celibacy; love stories find very limited space in the plots.<sup>19</sup> Heroes in tales of vengeance are paragons of virtue, but also liminal figures positioned between two ages—childhood and adulthood—and two states—human and divine. Late Edo tales of vengeance aimed to instruct readers by presenting examples of virtue.

It is difficult to outline the peculiarities of the antagonist, as their numbers and personalities vary. Most of the villains in this article’s corpus are *rōnin* 浪人, samurai without master or dwelling. Antagonists are stronger than avengers, and, often accompanied by a group, initially overcome them. This victimization of the avenger has two main purposes: to demonstrate the avenger’s moral integrity through their ability to withstand pain and suffering, and to cause the reader to identify with the avenger. The antagonist is named, but after the murder they sometimes live in obscurity.<sup>20</sup>

The auxiliaries—helpers and donors—have similar functions. The helper assists the avenger, while the donor endows him with a magical weapon or skill, acquired after extensive physical training and a binary series of questions to test the avenger’s state of

14 Dundes 1964, p. 81.

15 Konita 1989, p. 77.

16 Propp 1965, pp. 96–97.

17 The terms “agent,” “*dramatis persona*,” and “character” are nearly synonymous. However, “*dramatis persona*” refers to the characters or actors of a play or novel; the term “agent” represents the role a character plays, determined by their actions (the avenger avenges, the helper helps).

18 Females function as avengers in some of the tales, but are always accompanied by a boy able to carry out the actual act of vengeance and regain lost privileges. After their heroic exploits, female avengers often enter religion.

19 In his essay on the theory of the mythic tale, Greimas proposes another model to decompose the narrative. Among the peculiarities of the hero, he lists iron celibacy; see Greimas 1969. In tales aimed at women, however, relations between avengers and courtesans are the main attraction.

20 In Ikku’s tale, Iwafuchi Motoemon, after raping Osechi, stops using his surname; see KSM 2, p. 7 *ura*.

virtue; this Propp defines as “the sequence of the donor.”<sup>21</sup> Avengers and helpers are linked by blood ties and working relations, but the encounter with the donor depends on chance and virtuous behavior. Donors appear as part of the Buddhist pantheon, like the *Jizōbosatsu* 地藏菩薩 (Jizo Bodhisattva) in Kyōden’s *Magotarōmushi*; as an animal, like Koyuki the cat in Sanba’s *Katakiuchi Yomeodoshidani* 復讐娶嚇谷 or even as a creature of local folklore, such as the *tengu* 天狗 in *Katakiuchi aiyadobanashi* 復讐相宿噺 by Tokushō.

The final agents are the victims. Their death drives the entire plot, from innocence to absence. The main peculiarity of the victim is their moral integrity and capacity to foresee and understand future events.

Each of these *dramatis personae* are defined by specific, formulaic descriptions. The victim, for instance, is generally presented as an honest man (*monogatari* 物堅い). Standard expressions reoccur, such as “clenching fist and grinding teeth” (*kobushi o nigiri, hagami o nashi* 拳を握り、歯噛みをなし), which shows an agent’s sense of impotence. These descriptive formulae usually refer to Confucianism. Avengers are loyal, gentle, possessed of filial piety, and chaste (in the case of female avengers); while villains are evil, false, and lacking in any sense of justice or loyalty. Extrapolating the common code structuring the tales of vengeance allows for transformations in the morphology of these texts to be analyzed.

### Narrative Structures and Stylistic Remarks

In addition to the functional structure and character types of late Edo tales of vengeance, my analysis concerns their narrative structure and style. Denise Paulme proposes that there are seven main plot structures in tales from sub-Saharan Africa, typically based on two fundamental movements: ascending and descending. The former starts with a lack and, through a series of improvements, leads to a satisfactory condition; the latter is the opposite as it starts from an idyllic situation but ends in poverty. These two movements are defined by Paulme as the “Simple Forms” of far more complex structures.<sup>22</sup> This kind of morphological analysis is suitable for both oral and written texts, since both verbal and textual narratives can be divided into many functions, each with determined types of agents.<sup>23</sup>

The texts of the corpus offer two narrative structures: the first resembles an hourglass while the second is cyclical. In the first, avenger and antagonist enter the scene together. After the murder, the avenger experiences various vicissitudes while the antagonist ameliorates working and financial problems; the situation reverses when the avenger meets the helper, which gives the hero the strength to fight while jeopardizing the future of the villain (see figure 3). In the second, the future avenger joins the narrative from a privileged position—as a member of the military aristocracy—and goes through a descending phase of tribulations and financial struggles. These vicissitudes end with their meeting the auxiliary,

21 Etienne Souriau argues that the difference between the two roles is based on the contribution of each agent to the final plan. See Souriau 1950, p. 79.

22 Paulme 1976, pp. 26–44.

23 In addition, one of the main differences between formalism and structuralism concerns the applicability of their theories to form and content. In formalism, the two parts should be separated, as only the *forma* (the oral element) is intelligible—ergo analyzable—while the content is devoid of any significance. According to the structuralist perspective adopted here, this opposition does not exist because *forma* and content have the same nature and therefore can become object of the same analysis. See Lévi Strauss 1966, pp. 163–199.

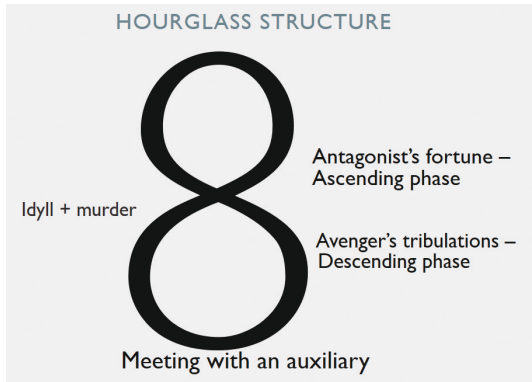


Figure 3. Hourglass Structure of the tales of vengeance, designed by the author. Based on the early texts of the corpus, this highlights the actions of the two main characters, avenger and antagonist, in relation to one another.

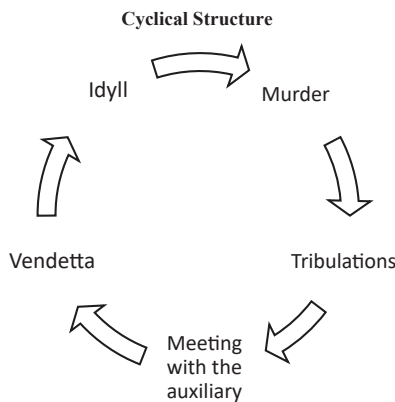


Figure 4. Cyclical Structure of the tales of vengeance, designed by the author. This schematizes the journey of the avenger on the basis of tales from the latter half of the corpus.

which enables the hero to ascend to the final vendetta (see figure 4). The hourglass structure characterizes the tales in the early part of the corpus, those issued from the Kansei to the Bunka period, while the tales from the Bunsei 文政 (1818–1830) era onward adopt a cyclical structure.

Late Edo tales of vengeance are chronocentric productions. Heroes, warriors, and enemies appear at full strength, endowed with incomparable skills. However, readers never witness a real learning process, or the physical growth of the protagonists. The tales alternate between static moments, in which the protagonists lead their lives, and dynamic periods, marked by the pursuit of avengers and villains. The dynamic tempo of the narrative is enhanced by the “syntax of enchainment,” in which sentences end with verbs in the continuative form (*ren'yōkei+te* 連用形+て) and adjectives in the suspensive form (*ren'yōkei*), sometimes spaced out with *izenkei+ba* 已然形+ば (causal nexus) that directs the action.<sup>24</sup> This style appears mostly in passages narrating fights and movements, instilling a rhythm to the sentences. The tempo of the vendetta is extraordinary: daily life is unexpectedly interrupted by an adversative preposition, introduced by “*ga*” (but), followed by the verb

<sup>24</sup> Jacqueline Pigeot showed the syntax of the enchainment in the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語. According to her, this endows the discourse with an inner dynamism. See Pigeot 2009, p. 252.

in the *rentaikei* 連体形 form (attributive form) and *tokoroni* (right when) or other temporal expressions such as *orifushi* (in that moment), *arubi* (one day), *arutoki* (once), and *orishimo* (right then). Their occurrence marks the beginning of an extraordinary time, signaling vicissitudes, misadventures, natural disasters, and divine epiphanies.

The tales are also vectorial: the author supplies information enabling the reader to understand the roles of *dramatis personae* and crucial passages of the plot.<sup>25</sup> The vectors in Edo tales of vengeance usually concern characters and are extremely helpful for understanding aspects of the intrigue. Initially, readers identified agential roles by when they join the narrative. The first tales of vengeance provided a fixed and recurring scheme, as Koike Masatane demonstrated in his functional model: first we meet the antagonist, then the victim, and after the murder we get to know the avenger(s).<sup>26</sup> That tripartite structure was fundamental, for it enabled readers to understand the role of every single character. From Kyōden's *Magotarōmushi* onward, however, the audience cannot necessarily distinguish between the various agents who join the narrative in the prologue; the additional information provided by the vectors substitutes for Koike's tripartite structure. Also, tales of vengeance immediately reveal the age of the characters, pivotal to understanding who could aspire to become the male hero: fifteen years marked the official coming of age for a samurai, and for avengers—former samurai excluded from their social class due to an injustice—represents the *terminus ante quem* by which privileges should be reacquired through vengeance.

The structural analysis of tales of vengeance allows for their plot structures to be elucidated. In examining the evolution of these tales through the nineteenth century, I distinguish structural particularities (functions and characters that appear throughout the corpus) from temporary characteristics, the latter of which reflect literary fashion and authorial choices. These functions allow me to study the influence of the ideological and social context. Functions constitute the standard pattern of a production. Changes and new elements show the original scheme altered by new ideas. Dialogues (particularly between avengers and auxiliaries) reveal ideology and social problems. The evolution of *dramatis personae* and their functions is connected to ideas in society, and structural changes in the narrative demonstrate shifts in the surrounding social milieu reflected in the production of these tales of vengeance.

### Morphological Evolution of Tales of Vengeance

The tales of vengeance early in the corpus have a very simple structure and limited ensemble of characters, as Koike shows. The five types of agents typical of tales of vengeance appear in one iteration in the narrative. The narratives themselves are linear functional structures, lacking any kind of subplot. For instance, Somahito's *Katakiuchi gijo no hanabusa* 敵討義女英 offers three victims, one hero, one antagonist, a donor, and a helper, with a narrative structure that comprises the punctual performance of the ten basic functions. From the Bunsei era onwards, though, the morphology of the tales of vengeance changes: the authors

25 Gérard Genette, in his essay titled "Auteur impliqué, lecteur impliqué," deals very briefly with the vectoriality of the literary production, the information that each author shares with his model reader. See Genette 1983, p. 417.

26 Koike 1968, pp. 25–36; see also Appendix 2.



prolong the central “phase of tribulations” and add several subplots. Tales of vengeance in this period show a greater range of characters, with new types of *dramatis personae*, including a mediator and Propp’s dispatcher. We also observe single characters fulfilling multiple roles, which, following Greimas, we will refer to here as the archi-agent.<sup>27</sup> This is true of Gōsuke in *Magotarōmushi*, for instance, who initially acts as helper and subsequently as donor, or Hayanoshin in Kyōzan’s *Katakiuchi teijo kagami* 敵討真女鑑, a donor undertaking a role usually performed by the mother (or the dying victim) in conferring the role of avenger on Osayo. This expansion in the numbers and roles of characters is also reflected in the morphological structure through multiple rounds of “meeting with the auxiliary” and an extended “movements and phases of tribulations.”

Change also occurs through the disappearance of elements formally central to the tales. One peculiarity of the morphology of late Edo tales of vengeance is a function referred to by Propp as “the lack filled,” which is ever-present in the tales issued from the Kansei to Bunka periods. After the murder, the antagonist steals something precious (usually a sword or money), the restitution of which is crucial for the avenger to restore their lost privileges: Ōyanagi Hitokaku, antihero in *Magotarōmushi* by Kyōden, steals a precious sword after the assassination of Kuranoshin; in *Yomeodoshidani* by Sanba, Kensawa Gonpei steals one thousand *ryō* 両; Tetsudō, in *Aiyadobanashi* by Tokushō, does the same with the victim’s sword; and Yokoshima Akuzō, the villain in *Teijokagami* by Kyōzan, steals the money from the victim Jūsuke. However, this function subsequently disappears—in the tales of vengeance issued from the Bunsei era onward, we no longer read of the restoration of a precious object as being crucial to the storyline.

There is another pivotal function of the morphology that loses its centrality over time. Initially, after the murder, the avenger had to go through an extensive phase of tribulations and financial struggles, but in later tales, the hero’s suffering disappears from the story. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, his troubles and pains are no longer deemed to be important, and several authors narrate how the avengers, although deprived of their guarantor of prosperity (their father-figure), continue to lead stable lives. While the heroine Sakurado in *Magotarōmushi* is forced to live as a beggar after the death of Kuranoshin, in later tales we see that Kichinosuke, the avenger in Tokushō’s *Aiyadobanashi*, moves into the house of his swordmaster, while Shizuma, the hero in *Iga no adauchi* 伊賀之仇討 by Donteï Robun 鈍亭魯文 (1829–1894), continues to act as a vassal. Tales of vengeance from the Bunsei era onwards relate a history of (psychological) suffering in which financial and other troubles do not affect the protagonists.

The application of structuralist theories allows for the classification and division of the texts into minimal units. They reveal the stable elements which constitute the tales of vengeance of my corpus and highlight transformations in the structure and *dramatis personae* of the tales. As I will show below, these morphological transformations are expressions of the ideological paradigms underpinning the production of late Edo tales of vengeance. These tenets and their alterations will constitute the core of the analysis below.

27 According to Greimas, the archi-agent represents “two roles covered by one single agent.” For example, the helper and the donor occurring in one character, or the dispatcher and the donor. Greimas 1968, pp. 210–215.

### Ideology and Tales of Vengeance

The remainder of this article highlights evolutions that occurred in late Edo thought and connects them with transformations in the morphological structure of the tales. Tales of vengeance of the late Edo period are commercial productions, but ones with a strong ideological and philosophical background. In the texts of my corpus, the ethical structures introduced by the tales largely belong to a neo-Confucian orthodoxy that sought for individuals to order society and to accept the system in several ways, particularly through exhorting people to respect the preestablished social order, and promoting the Confucian virtues mentioned in the titles of the tales (*teijo* 貞女 chaste woman; *gijo* 義女 righteous woman). Vengeance was an expression of two of the most important Confucian virtues—loyalty and filial piety—and the names of many characters explicitly reference proper Confucian attitudes (such as Misao 操 for chastity).<sup>28</sup> Murders in tales of vengeance are always a consequence of uncontrolled feelings; a negative view of human emotions directly reflecting neo-Confucian orthodoxy. The tales also emphasize the social relations of each character (*kyōdai* 兄弟 brothers; *fūfu* 夫婦 husband and wife), reflecting a social order in which “every individual had an identity certifying his status, lifestyle, behavior and relations.”<sup>29</sup> Finally, the presentation of the natural environment—the frame for every murder and destructive event—comes straight from the Confucian understanding of nature.<sup>30</sup> Late Edo tales of vengeance also reference Buddhism: the Jizo Bodhisattva serves as donor in Kyōden’s *Magotarōmushi*, protecting and healing the future avenger Magotarō, while *zense no mukui* 前世の報い (punishment for sins committed in earlier lives) allows the characters in my corpus to justify events.

It is the paradigm of natural creation (*shizen* 自然), reflected in the Kansei Reforms, which provided for a society based on rules, relationships, and productive activities rooted in nature. This upheld the immutability of the social and feudal order and invoked the five relational virtues and four social groups to claim all should respect the social position they inherited by fulfilling the obligations that came together with their *mibun* 身分 (social status). The Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) neo-Confucianism of the Kansei Reforms sought to respond to social crises by fostering these “natural” Confucian virtues, which had supposedly characterized Tokugawa society in its earlier years.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, this effort to return to nature would prove unsuccessful, as it failed to account for the shift towards a proto-capitalistic economy, characterized by new employment relations and an increasingly monetized society.

28 During this period, Matsudaira Sadanobu stressed filial piety (*kō* 孝) and loyalty (*chū* 忠) as the central virtues, and called filial piety “the basis of all virtue.” See Ooms 1975, p. 33. After the Kansei Reforms, in Kyōwa 享和 1 (1801), the government published *Kōgiroku* 孝義録 (Records of filial piety and righteousness), whose aim was to educate the populace by collecting all the meritorious deeds that took place in the country. The *Kōgiroku* comprised fifty volumes and detailed the good deeds of almost eight thousand six hundred individuals, without distinguishing their class. Deeds of filial piety represented 60 percent of the total. For further information, see Sugano 1999, pp. 3–5.

29 This short excerpt from the *Dialogues* by Confucius comes from Ansart 2014b, p. 162.

30 In addition to that, several tales of vengeance present characters appeasing wild horses. This animal appears also in a number of Confucian texts as a symbol of human passions. The act of pacifying the horse would thus represent the capacity of individuals to overcome violent sentiments.

31 According to Zhu Xi, the real order is feudal and hierarchical; see Thomas 2001b, p. 23.

In his work on Tokugawa intellectual history, Maruyama Masao 丸山真男 (1914–1996) argued that modernity happens when humanity overcomes nature.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it is often thought that the denaturalization of society corresponds to its modernization.<sup>33</sup> Modernity here is defined by three points: a positivist metaphysics, the doctrine of freewill and personal responsibility, and a vision of society as contractual in its relationships. For Maruyama, the development of a modern society coincides with the passage from the paradigm of natural creation to the idea of artificial invention (*sakui* 作意). The two paradigms of nature and invention describe two sets of social relations in tales of vengeance: natural and voluntary.<sup>34</sup>

In natural relations, “typically governed by pre-determined sets of traditions, where individuals are glued to these structuring habits which discriminately assign goods, positions, and identities,” the clan and the family occupy the center of social life.<sup>35</sup> These ties characterize the first group of tales of vengeance, those published between the Kansei and Bunka periods. Here, auxiliaries have social ties to the hero, as long-standing vassals or faithful servants, and are not randomly encountered during the hero’s long journey. This is the case with the Adachi brothers, the helpers in the texts by Jippensha Ikku, or the faithful servant Nadeshiko in *Magotarōmushi* by Kyōden, who tries to soothe the pain of the heroine Sakurado. In these early texts, there is no seventh function, that of “meeting with the auxiliary,” as the auxiliary role is naturally constituted. This contrasts with later texts, in which this relationship is a voluntary one.

### ***Sakui* and Its Manifestations**

The Kansei Reforms attempted to restore a traditional vision of society, economy, and productive activities, and asserted a concept of natural creation that shaped the early part of the corpus of tales of vengeance. Between the Kansei and Bunka periods, natural relations were central to the tales of vengeance, with hierarchies (and respect for them) clear in relations between the agents. These tales maintained social harmony with even vengeance itself only carried out once the necessary bureaucratic procedure—the authorization to undertake revenge—is completed.

However, the structure of the tales comes to reflect the idea of artificial invention, namely that society and its institutions are not natural, but stem from wise men and sage kings.<sup>36</sup> As with nature, this idea of *sakui* is expressed in the tales of vengeance through their *dramatis personae*. Early in the corpus, the helpers all have natural ties to the hero. From the Bunsei era onward, this gives way to voluntary relations, in accordance with the

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32 Thomas 2001b, p. 16.

33 Thomas 2001a, p. 20.

34 The first is constituted before the birth of each individual (family, clan); the second is associations that individuals form according to their personal will and interests (syndicate, political party), see Maruyama 1974, p. 224. Weber refers to this dichotomy of human relations as traditional and rational authority, Durkheim to mechanical and organic solidarity, while Louis Dumont argues only two kinds of human societies exist, the holistic and the individualistic.

35 Ansart 2014a, p. 185.

36 The idea of artificial invention was based on the hypothesis that institutions, and even the five elements and the five virtues, had been created by the sages (the legendary kings of the first Chinese dynasties). They were thus products of political leadership. The opposition between natural order and artificial invention was understood to date back to the age of Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 313 BC–238 BC) and the Legists, the Chinese philosophical school whose speculation focused on how to maintain social order, security, and political stability.

paradigm of artificial invention. Voluntary relations are not blood or preexisting social ties but are based on a contract reflecting convenience and personal interests: avengers come to meet individuals useful to their plan of revenge, thus enlarging the range of characters they interact with. Atherton argues that this proliferation of characters and actions are matters of genre. *Kibyōshi* were shorter, with a limited page count, and could not provide a greater range of characters and plot developments, which was why the longer *gōkan* were created.<sup>37</sup> However, an increase in the number of characters and functions is already evident in the morphology of the last two *kibyōshi* of my corpus, *Magotarōmushi* and *Yomeodoshidani*. The former lists a larger range of agents—thirteen, including three auxiliaries, two donors, one dispatcher—and a far more elaborate functional structure, while the latter offers the same number of characters divided into those who support the avenger and those who side with the antagonist. It is therefore argued here that the number of characters does not increase solely due to the appearance of new genres, for it reflects the fact that interpersonal relations between the characters become more functional and contractual.

Santō Kyōden's *Magotarōmushi* marks the point at which relations change. This work can be divided into two sections, comprising different relations between auxiliaries and avenger. The first part of the tale is dominated by natural ties to the helper Nadeshiko, who belongs to the protagonist's family. In the second part, there are two other auxiliaries: Gōsuke and his wife, and the Jizo Bodhisattva. The former are natural relations, for the couple previously worked for Kaname's family, but that with the Jizo is a voluntary relationship resulting from Sakurado's virtuous behavior and desire for repentance. In the texts of the corpus from *Magotarōmushi* onward, auxiliaries are no longer connected with the family of the avenger.

The effect of *sakui* on my corpus is particularly clear in the appearance of two new *dramatis personae*: the dispatcher and the mediator. The dispatcher—a character that sends individuals and objects from one place to another—is a perfect expression of the idea of invention in the Edo sociocultural milieu. Dispatchers appear in *Magotarōmushi* and *Yomeodoshidani*, where two characters, Masauji-kō and Midori no mae, take part in the vicissitudes of the protagonists at the outset and conclusion of the tale. Their function is to dispatch vassals to the place of vengeance in order to recognize the virtuous exploits of the avengers. In Tokushō's *Aiyadobanashi*, dispatchers play an influential role in the narrative and are now actively involved throughout the text. The prime example is Horikoshi Minbu, an archi-agent serving as both auxiliary and dispatcher, who sends the antagonist to Imagawa, exploiting his ambition to become a vassal, and enabling the avenger to locate the villain in the process. Mediators—agents who seek to foster consensus between characters—also increasingly come to lead the action and drive events. They first appear in the *Iga no adauchi* by Robun after a specific function of “meeting with the mediator.” Dispatchers and mediators show the impact that *sakui* exerted on Japanese society; they are a product of political leadership that directly acts to solve problems.

The loss of authority of the Kansei Reforms reflected the decline in the natural paradigm, and the diminution of the role of agriculture in economy. With the advancement of the idea of *sakui*, entrepreneurship came to be celebrated, together with activities of

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37 Atherton 2013, pp. 185–186.

creation and invention through a vision of individuals as “animals producing tools.”<sup>38</sup> This is visible in the tales of vengeance. In the early texts, avengers—after losing their social status—live humbly and make their living through agriculture, but later tales tend to have merchants as the main actors. This is clear in Kyōzan’s *Teijokagami*, where the auxiliaries of the protagonist Osayo are all merchants. The example of Osayo’s brother, Tōsaku, who lives in the countryside, emphasizes that now farmers are associated with poverty rather than serving as the quintessence of virtue:

In the province of Musashi, in the district of Usu, near the village of Kine, lived Tōsaku, a peasant who owned only one horse. . . . His life was sad and he lived eating taros.<sup>39</sup>

In their valorization of entrepreneurship, and the emergence of collaboration through personal skills and contracts, the tales increasingly reflected a more positivist vision, together with a contractual attitude depending on freewill and self-interest.<sup>40</sup>

### Social Utilitarianism

A vision of society as contractual meant that social ideals no longer reflected the presumption that society was natural. This made Confucian social and economic theories anachronistic and led many intellectuals to question the values imposed by the *bakufu*. One key thinker here is Kaiho Seiryō 海保青陵 (1755–1817), who envisioned a contractual society in which every social agent played a productive role.<sup>41</sup> Seiryō’s theories reveal the new mindset in late Edo society, and reinterpret Confucian virtue (*toku* 徳) as a means to achieve specific aims.<sup>42</sup>

The changes captured by Seiryō are also reflected in the tales of vengeance; and particularly through meetings between archi-agents and avengers. Early in the corpus, auxiliaries were part of natural groups (family), and avengers did not need to demonstrate virtue to be aided. In later texts, though, with helpers and donors being drawn from outside the avengers’ families, virtue becomes the currency that buys their help. The role of the archi-agent in these late-period tales of vengeance is patterned: they meet the protagonist as a helper, but after testing the hero’s virtue through a series of questions and answers, they become a donor. The virtue of the protagonist is thus the means to facilitate the passage of the archi-agent from the role of helper to donor. The first multi-role character appears in *Magotarōmushi*, where Gōsuke debuts as a helper but, due to the future avenger Magotarō’s filial devotion, becomes a donor teaching Magotarō the secrets of martial arts. In *Teijokagami* by Santō Kyōzan, the character of Sonowaza Hayanoshin, who joins the plot as

38 Maruyama 1974, p. 302.

39 KTK, p. 931.

40 Ansart 2014a, p. 200.

41 An acute observer of Tokugawa society, Seiryō was born in Edo, where he spent the first thirty years of his life, before traveling around the country advising lords and vassals on economy and politics. Seiryō’s speculations reevaluated productivity and the active contribution to society of every single member. Chief among his works are two discourses: *Keizaiwa* 經濟話 (Discourse on the pacification and administration of the country, 1806), and *Keikodan* 稽古談 (Lessons of the past, 1813).

42 According to Seiryō, who employs the term *utsuwa* 器 (instrument) borrowed from the *Analects* by Confucius, all virtues are instruments of prosperity. See Ansart 2014b, pp. 118–119.

helper, becomes a donor thanks to the healing of his blind daughter Otsuyu by the heroine Osayo. The transition takes place after recognition of Osayo's loyalty (*chūsetsu* 忠節), with Hayanoshin exclaiming that "This time, thanks to your loyalty, I got my daughter back."<sup>43</sup> Virtue is the basis for avengers to receive help, unlike in the first part of the corpus, where natural relations guaranteed the support of auxiliaries belonging to the familial milieu.

Another consequence, already highlighted, of the structural changes brought about by this new mentality is the lack of suffering and financial troubles of the hero. In the first part of the corpus, after the murder, avengers go through hardships and tribulations. The "phase of tribulations and financial troubles" begins with the death of the head of the family and ends after vengeance has been realized with the reacquisition of old social privileges. The emphasis on financial vicissitudes follows the pattern established by the *Soga monogatari*, where the Soga brothers, after the assassination of their father, spend the rest of their childhood in poverty.<sup>44</sup> This pattern was retained in the early tales of my corpus, but then alters, as noted in the first section. Towards the end of the Tokugawa period, the value of a single person becomes measurable through success, and the wisdom (*chie* 知恵) of an individual is reduced to an ability to acquire good things and avoid the bad.<sup>45</sup> Poverty and difficult financial conditions were blamed on those who suffer them, for "if the poor people are poor, it is their fault. Laziness, lack of skills and stupidity bring them to this condition."<sup>46</sup> This negative vision of poverty is reflected in the morphology of the tales of vengeance. Avengers, members of the higher social strata, no longer suffer hardship, as this would suggest a lack of skill. This removes the tribulations of the avengers from the plots of the tales. This transition from tears of pain to the disappearance of suffering is already clear in *Yomeodoshidani* by Sanba, where the avenger Kazuma, even after the loss of his status (he was a samurai), lives in a hut but gives no indication of economic hardship. He gets help from Yukino—the archi-agent performing the role of helper and donor—and together they live as lovers in an extra-temporal dimension.

The characters of the tales, and the conceptions of traditional Confucian virtue underpinning them, were influenced by the contractual society represented in Seiryō's writings and redefined by ideas that placed profit and exchange at their foundation. These were no longer compatible with accounts of the poverty of the protagonists, which consequently disappeared from the tales of vengeance.

### Understanding Good and Evil

Initially, tales of vengeance were primarily informed by Confucian and neo-Confucian traditions. These tenets reflected right and wrong through a strict division between hero and antihero. As time passed, the loss of influence of the edicts of the Kansei Reforms was reflected in the texts of the corpus by the increasingly ambiguous relation between good

43 Original text: 扨此度、其方が忠節にて一人の娘を拾ひたり; see KTK, p. 961.

44 This work influences late Edo tales of vengeance in many ways. A couple of examples: the mother, who always reminds the two boys of the name of their enemy and their final mission, is recapitulated in many *katakiuchi mono* of the corpus; the adjective *monogatai*, applied to victims, describes the virtuous attitude of the father in the *Soga monogatari*.

45 Ansart 2014a, p. 201.

46 This excerpt from the *Keikodan* comes from Ansart 2014b, p. 203.

and evil. This affects the narrative structures of the tales: the hourglass structure of the early tales shifted towards a cyclical structure.

In the early tales, revenge fiction exhibits an hourglass structure. The narrative follows the vicissitudes of both the avenger and the antagonist, and their contrasting destinies. After the murder, the avenger goes through hardships, while the antagonist enjoys good fortune. Subsequently, however, their trajectories invert, leading to the moment of vengeance. The hourglass structure is the result of a clear opposition between good and evil; its didactic role is to show that no matter how rich and strong an individual (the antagonist) becomes, if his behavior is not ethically sound, his success will prove illusory and turn to dust. Conversely, those who conform to notions of virtue will achieve their fortune.

From the Bunsei era onwards, however, the tales adopt a cyclical structure that focuses solely on the actions of the avenger; the antagonist is depicted only at the very beginning, when he kills the victim, and at the end, when he is killed by the avenger. This indicates the shift from a society strongly influenced by the Confucian tenets imposed by the Kansei Reforms—*kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡 (incitement of virtue and chastisement of vices) and a clear vision of good and evil—to a more fluid ethical environment. In addition, another shift marking this ethical transformation is the disappearance of “restitution of the lack” from the tales. Although the entire corpus has the antagonists stealing an object of value from the hero’s family, only the early texts emphasize the object’s restitution as a sign of what is right, and through which old privileges are reacquired. Later, this becomes a nonstructural optional element, and some texts end without the restitution of the precious object (for example, *Aiyadobanashi*, *Teijokagami*, and *Iga no adauchi*).

The distribution of the characters also alters. Tales of vengeance initially featured helpers and donors solely on the side of the hero; readers never encountered a meeting between villains and these agents. However, this changes from the beginning of the Bunka period in Sanba’s *Yomeodoshidani*, where there are villains with helpers, blurring the boundaries between avenger and antagonist. The absence of Manichean opposition in the structure of the tales is maintained through the rest of the corpus. By the final text, Robun’s *Iga no adauchi*, the Sakurae brothers aid both the avenger and the antagonists, in a role that I term the “involuntary donor.” Over time, ethical remarks also issue from the mouths of the antagonists, not as pedagogical remarks, but instead combining humor and Propp’s *oduračivanije* (deception).<sup>47</sup> In *Yomeodoshidani*, the antagonist Takashina provides the first example of subjective morality by misjudging the victim Hanasaki. In Tokushō’s *Aiyadobanashi*, Horikoshi Minbu tricks the antagonist, enabling the avenger to find him easily.<sup>48</sup> In *Iga no adauchi*, Kanda Kanbei admits that the antagonist Sawai Matagorō is disloyal (*fujitsu* 不実), feigning sincere repentance before a pact to exchange hostages.<sup>49</sup>

These transformations in narrative structure, the disappearance of “restitution” from the plots of tales of vengeance, the appearance of helpers and donors on the side of the antagonists, and the deceptive use of morality are all new elements in the tales. Their emergence shows how the invocation of Confucianism in these plays, which had been

47 Propp 1976, pp. 89–96.

48 KAB, pp. 18 *ura*–19 *omote*.

49 INA, p. 10 *omote*.

socially central in the period immediately after the Kansei Reforms, subsequently altered the distinction between actions praised and condemned.

### Conclusion

The above demonstrates how a corpus of tales of vengeance evolved in the wake of a series of ideas and events that had a profound impact on late Edo society. Tales of vengeance published after the two periods of reform show two common features: a morphological linear structure, without subplots, and the partial loss of the functions of the dispatcher. These changes resulted from a perception of political stability among the populace because of the reforms. The subsequent affirmation of the idea of invention was reflected in the development of *dramatis personae*. The impact of social utilitarianism and of new socioeconomic structures was clear in the role of Confucian virtue and in the new conception of poverty as a fault of individuals. The transformation of narrative structure, the diffusion of auxiliaries among villains, and the deceptive use of morality should be interpreted as consequences of the ambiguous relationship between good and evil in the later tales. What remained unchanged, though, was the restorative function of vendetta and the role of the avenger, who was still a model and whose existence was “based on action.”<sup>50</sup>

This article shows through a combination of descriptive practice and a speculative approach the potential of philological and paleographical analysis. This survey of tales of vengeance clearly demonstrates that the entire literary tradition inspired by vengeful practice shows the same morphological structure and the same range of characters, regardless of the historical era in which it was written and the literary genre to which it belongs. It was therefore the theme of vengeance that shaped literary productions with plots containing the ten typical structural functions and the five typologies of agents I highlight here. The article opens new avenues for scholars interested in a structural approach, which may determine the morphological classification of literary genres and single texts alike.

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50 Jolles 1972, p. 34.



APPENDIX 1

Text	Title	Abbreviated Form	Author	Date	Genre	Source
KGH	<i>Katakiuchi gijo no hanabusa</i> 敵討義女英 (Flower garland for a virtuous woman)	<i>Hanabusa</i>	Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚満人 (1749–1807)	Kansei 寛政 7 (1795)	<i>kibyōshi</i>	Koike Masatane et al., eds. <i>Edo no gesaku ehon</i> 4. Tokyo: Shakai Shisōsha, 1983, pp. 87–120.
KSM	<i>Katakiuchi Sumiyoshimōde</i> 敵討住吉詣 (The vengeance to the pilgrimage of Sumiyoshi) Part 1	<i>Sumiyoshimōde</i>	Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 (1765–1831)	Kansei 11 (1799)	<i>kibyōshi</i>	Waseda University Library “Kotenseki Sogo Database”: <a href="https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0129/index.html">https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0129/index.html</a>
THA	<i>Tengajaya homare no adauchi</i> 殿下茶屋誉仇討 (Revenge of honor in Tengajaya) Part 2	<i>Tengajaya</i>				<a href="https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0130/index.html">https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0130/index.html</a>
KMM	<i>Katakiuchi Magotarōmushi</i> 敵討孫太郎虫 (The saving worms of Magotarō)	<i>Magotarōmushi</i>	Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816)	Bunka 文化 3 (1806)	<i>kibyōshi</i>	Waseda University Library “Kotenseki Sogo Database”: <a href="https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0089/index.html">https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_01961_0089/index.html</a>
KYD	<i>Katakiuchi Yomeodoshidani</i> 復讐娶嚇谷 (Revenge in the Yomeodoshi valley)	<i>Yomeodoshidani</i>	Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822)	Bunka 4 (1807)	<i>kibyōshi</i>	Waseda University Library “Kotenseki Sogo Database”: <a href="https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_02946_0150/index.html">https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_02946_0150/index.html</a>
KAB	<i>Katakiuchi aiyadobanashi</i> 復讐相宿噺 (Bloody night at the inn: A tale of vengeance)	<i>Aiyadobanashi</i>	Goryūtei Tokushō 五柳亭徳升 (1793–1853)	Tenpō 天保 3 (1832)	<i>gōkan</i>	Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University “ARC shozō, kitakuhin kotenseki database”: <a href="https://www.dh-jac.net/db1/books/results-thum.php?f1=Ebi1421&amp;f12=1&amp;-sortField1=f8&amp;-max=40&amp;enter=default&amp;lang=ja">https://www.dh-jac.net/db1/books/results-thum.php?f1=Ebi1421&amp;f12=1&amp;-sortField1=f8&amp;-max=40&amp;enter=default&amp;lang=ja</a>
KTK	<i>Katakiuchi teijokagami</i> 敵討貞女鑑 (Lessons for a chaste woman)	<i>Teijokagami</i>	Santō Kyōzan 山東京山 (1769–1858)	Tenpō 15 (1844)	<i>gōkan</i>	Takagi Gen, ed. <i>Santō Kyōzan denki shōsetsushū</i> 4. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2003, pp. 906–975.
INA	<i>Iga no adauchi</i> 伊賀之仇討 (The vengeance of Iga)	<i>Iga no adauchi</i>	Dontei Robun 鈍亭魯文 (1829–1894)	Man'en 万延 1 (1860)	<i>gōkan</i>	Union Catalogue Database of Japanese Texts <a href="https://kokusho.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/200015295/1?ln=en">https://kokusho.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/200015295/1?ln=en</a>

## APPENDIX 2

Morphological structure by Koike*	Morphological structure by Konita**	Morphological structure put forward by this article
1. The presentation of the antagonist ( <i>akunin</i> 悪人)	1. The childhood of the hero ( <i>kodomo</i> 子供)	1. The idyll
		2. The end of the idyll
2. The death ( <i>shi</i> 死)	2. The murder ( <i>bisatsu</i> 被殺)	3. The death of the father-figure
		4. The identification of the culprit
3. The decision to avenge ( <i>katakiuchi no idetachi</i> 敵討の出立)		5. The decision to avenge
4. Financial struggles ( <i>konnan</i> 困難)	3. The powerless hero ( <i>muryoku</i> 無力)	6. The tribulations and financial struggles of the hero
	4. The meeting with an auxiliary ( <i>enjo</i> 援助)	7. The meeting with the auxiliary
	5. The powerful hero ( <i>yūryoku</i> 有力)	
		8. The journey to the final battle
5. Final vengeance ( <i>katakiuchi</i> 敵討)	6. Final vengeance ( <i>katakiuchi</i> 敵討)	9. The final vendetta
6. The return of the hero ( <i>kisan</i> 帰参)	7. The hero reaches adulthood ( <i>seijin</i> 成人)	10. The return of the hero

\* Koike 1968, p. 35.

\*\* Konita 1989, p. 81.

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- KAB *Katakiuchi aiyadobanashi* 復讐相宿噺. By Goryūtei Tokushō 五柳亭徳升. Sanoya, 1832.
- KGH *Katakiuchi gijo no hanabusa* 敵討義女英. By Nansenshō Somahito 南仙笑楚満人. Izumiya 和泉屋, 1795. In *Edo no gesaku ehon* 江戸の戯作絵本 4, edited by Koike Masatane 小池正胤 et al. Shakai Shisōsha, 1983, pp. 87–120.
- KMM *Katakiuchi Magotarōmushi* 敵討孫太郎虫. By Santō Kyōden 山東京伝. Tsuruya, 1806.
- KSM *Katakiuchi Sumiyoshimōde* 敵討住吉詣. By Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九. Iwatoya, 1799.
- KTK *Katakiuchi teijokagami* 敵討貞女鑑. By Santō Kyōzan 山東京山. Kinjūdō 錦重堂, 1844. In *Santō Kyōzan denki shōsetsushū* 山東京山伝奇小説集 4, edited by Takagi Gen 高木元. Kokusho Kankōkai, 2003, pp. 906–975.
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## Like Dust in the Wind: A Critical Introduction to Takagi Kyōzō's Manchurian Literature

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What would it mean for the politically-dominant parties in a colonial or semi-colonial context to produce a minor literature? Is it even possible? This article seeks to address these questions in the context of Japanese-language literature in Manchuria and Manchukuo by introducing and analyzing the Manchuria-period writing of Takagi Kyōzō (1903–1987), focusing on his short story *Fūjin* (Dust in the wind), and by bringing to light the literary and political complexities associated with his self-perceived “minority.” The article provides essential background to both Takagi as an individual and the Japanese-language Manchurian literary community in general, including a variety of earlier approaches to Japanese-language Manchurian literature. After establishing Takagi’s literary upbringing by Fukushi Kōjirō (1889–1946) and the regionalism (*chihōshugi*) and “dialect poetry” (*hōgenshi*) movements of the 1920s and 30s, the article uses close reading of his literary and autobiographical work to argue that—despite his position of privilege on the continent as an ethnic Japanese national—Takagi both lacked agency as a historical subject and was well aware of his resulting complicated status in Manchuria. He demonstrated this understanding through the deployment of plant, animal, and other natural images, often literally de-humanizing his Japanese protagonists by reforming them into aspects of the continental landscape. The article concludes by gesturing toward resonances between Takagi’s writing and the place of his Japanese contemporaries in Manchuria, as well as his representation of non-Japanese subjects in his writing.

**Keywords:** Minor literature, Takagi Kyōzō, regional literature, Manchuria, Manchukuo, Japanese imperialism, place, Japanese literature, settler-colonial literature

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Literature of place is sometimes described in Japanese as *dochaku* 土着 (attached to the land) or *tsuchi kusai* 土臭い (stinking of the earth). This equivalency between the literal, physical dirt of a geographic *space* and the sociocultural elements informing lived *place* is thematized throughout the works of Takagi Kyōzō 高木恭造 (1903–1987) and features prominently in the title of his most critically successful short story, *Fūjin* 風塵 (Dust in the wind, 1940). Set in Manchuria 満洲 (Jp. Manshū), it features the heavily autobiographical protagonist Saruwatari Heisuke 猿渡平助 being tossed about by the winds of historical circumstance, lifted from his provincial home in northeastern Honshu and ultimately deposited within the quasi-colonial state of Manchukuo 満洲国 (Jp. Manshūkoku), reversing the trajectory of the yellow loess seasonally blown from northeastern China all the way to the Japanese archipelago.

Takagi's story is not about grand historical narrative and the formation of the Japanese puppet state in northeastern China, but rather about the formation of himself as a subject of imperial Japan. This perspective is crystallized through Saruwatari's reaction to an embarrassing encounter with the local police concerning his son's truancy and social delinquency. In defense of his failures as a parent, Saruwatari declares that, "It's the environment where we live [that has malformed my son], and we can't change it," before reflecting more honestly that, "I suppose this environment has had an effect on me, too."<sup>1</sup> This effect derives from the specificity of Takagi's experiences of continental Asia: in a sense, the Japanese Takagi lived in "Manshū," whereas a Chinese migrant laborer might be better described as a resident of "Manzhou," which would differ from a Western perspective on "Manchuria." It is essential to remain cognizant that this article leans heavily on the perspective of the Japanese settler-colonist. Place can be experienced in vastly different ways depending on the intersectionality of one's identity, and the language of place—such as place names—can be used to reflect those differences.<sup>2</sup>

Takagi's literature thus offers us an opportunity to explore the reciprocal relation between writer and place in a semi-colonial context—a critical approach which has been lacking in Takagi studies despite the clear importance of the theme of place throughout his career. In the following pages, I argue that Takagi was not up to the literary task of exceeding his circumstances, that he fundamentally viewed himself as lacking historical agency, that he occupied the ranks of so many so-called "minor writers"—and, crucially, that his minority sprang in a large part from the land that he so precariously occupied. His writing offers an important and complicated perspective on Japanese settler-colonialism more broadly as well: that of the settler-colonist himself.<sup>3</sup> In her seminal study of settler-colonists in Korea, Jun Uchida describes such people as "liminal," as existing in an "in-between space from the perspective of the colonizer . . . [an] ambivalent, interstitial, and marginal condition of being 'in between' (or being 'neither nor'): in between Japan and Korea, state and society, subjects and citizens, colony and metropole."<sup>4</sup> This liminality

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1 Takagi 1983a, p. 84.

2 In the following pages I default to convention, largely using Chinese place names, and offer the Japanese readings only referentially.

3 I use the male pronoun here to emphasize both the strongly patriarchal nature of early settler-colonialism in Japanese Manchuria, wherein advance units would often be entirely comprised of men, as well as Takagi's misogynistic tendency to marginalize female characters throughout his writing.

4 Uchida 2011b, p. 25, n. 62. Throughout this article, I use "metropole" in reference to the seat of imperial Japanese power—the parent state—located on the Japanese archipelago, and describe Manchukuo, the satellite state, and other dominated territories as "colonial." While Japan never officially annexed Manchuria, and

applied to settler colonists across the board in Manchuria, many of whom were forced to abandon their homes in rural Japan by a combination of economic hardship and government initiative, while simultaneously benefiting in the colonies from an elevated status guaranteed by their “Japaneseness.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the settler-colonists were more often than not “subalterns of a modernizing nation” who became “agents of foreign domination.”<sup>6</sup>

Of course, the innumerable abuses of this Japanese system—which included exploitive economic practice, kidnapping and sexual slavery, medical experimentation by the infamous Unit 731 and others, and population control via the intentional spread of illicit drugs, in addition to outright violence and warfare—were overwhelmingly directed at non-Japanese. However, many Japanese living within that system recognized that they suffered and benefited from it in complicated ways. It is important to consider the various facets of the liminality of these “brokers of empires” who mediated between alien institutional power and domestic life. I argue that petit-bourgeois Japanese writers in Manchuria like Takagi often perceived themselves as occupying a minority position within the literary and political field. However, this minority status hinged on a metropole-centric worldview, which must additionally be relativized vis-à-vis Japanese privilege in Manchuria and Manchukuo.

In the following pages, I shall introduce the literary works of Takagi Kyōzō as an early case study in a project exploring this complicated liminality of Japanese-language literature in Manchuria.<sup>7</sup> I begin by introducing “Dust in the Wind,” Takagi’s important biographical context, and the general status of Japanese-language literature in Manchuria, including approaches to it in recent scholarship. Next, I offer the concept of minor literature as a useful tool for understanding the writing of Takagi, as well as many of his contemporaries. Takagi’s minority status as a writer links to his perception of having a fundamental lack of historical agency, which he expressed both explicitly and via the use of nature metaphors. The invocation of such imagery reinforces the connections between identity and environment. Takagi was not a modern subject—liberated from nature—but was irrevocably shaped by place, both in terms of his immediate physical surroundings and the history, culture, politics, and language of the Japanese and Manchurian landscapes he inhabited. Finally, I bring the article to a close by stepping back from the close reading of Takagi to reemphasize the liminal positions of Japanese writers in Manchuria, and how this complicated their literary production.

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Manchukuo technically remained a sovereign state, Japan did maintain a position of political and military dominance. Furthermore, even in the more conventional cases of the colonization of Taiwan and Korea, the distinction between “metropole” (*naichi*) and “colonial territory” (*gaichi*), definitions of the Japanese “national land” (*kokudo*) in official discourse, and imaginings of the categories of subject and citizen were often ambiguous and subject to change; see McDonald 2017, pp. 1–7.

5 Driscoll details the tragic circumstances of rural Japanese men who were forced to turn to human trafficking (“peripheral pimps”) and the sexual slaves they forcibly exported to Manchuria and elsewhere; see Driscoll 2010, pp. 57–80. For a more general discussion of Japanese immigration to Manchuria, see Young 1998, especially chapter 8. For discussion specifically of village-division-based immigration plans, whereby entire villages would be divided into units for relocation as settler-colonists, see Kawamura 1990, pp. 28–55. For contemporary literary depictions, see Wada 1964; Yuasa 2017.

6 Uchida 2011b, p. 36.

7 For an alternative perspective, on an ethnic Korean writer seeking the political capital of Japaneseness, see Solomon 2022.

### “Dust in the Wind”: A Bleak Tale of Japanese Manchuria

“Dust in the Wind” first appeared in 1940 in the pages of the coterie journal *Sakubun* 作文 (Compositions), one of the most established literary journals in Dalian 大連 (Jp. Dairen), Manchuria. The story draws on heavily autobiographical elements, including a Japanese protagonist who practices medicine while living with his second (in this case, common-law) wife in Manchuria around the time of the Manchurian Incident. The central character’s name is Saruwatari Heisuke, and the story begins with him reluctantly lowering the sign advertising his unlicensed clinic due to increased pressure from the military police. With his primary means of subsistence gone, Saruwatari will turn to some petty money lending and black-market morphine sales. However, throughout the story, his only reliable income is the rent he receives from two of the three families to which he lets his house.

The three families are represented by their Japanese patriarchs: Makino Torazō 牧野虎三, Samejima 鮫島, and Oana 小穴. Torazō is a decadent with a classical education who was run out of Japan after disgracing his first wife’s family and ruining their fortune. He settles down with a Chinese woman and ekes out a living selling insurance in Manchuria.<sup>8</sup> Samejima specializes in manufacturing firecrackers, and his most remarkable feature is a face scarred through a mishap with gunpowder. Oana raises guinea pigs in the apartment for medical research at a local university; he has features and a personality similar to the timid creatures. He is also the meekest of the four men; indeed, his whole family lives in the closet while the rodents get free reign of the hall.

Saruwatari’s family is fractured. He has abandoned his first wife and child in the metropole, and resides in Manchuria with a common-law wife named Kiku キク with whom he absconded on his way through Korea 朝鮮 (Jp. Chōsen). They have two children: Shōzō 正造, a middle-school-aged boy, and Yaeko 八重子, a maturing young woman. Both children reflect Saruwatari’s lack of authority over the world around him: Shōzō has fallen in with a band of young (non-Japanese) delinquents, and Yaeko has willfully left home to pursue a career as a professional dancer, being hired out by clients for western-style social dancing in a seedy dance hall. Kiku, on the other hand, is portrayed as a stingy, nagging, ineffectual consumptive. Her husband calls her the *shirobuta* 白豚, or “White Sow,” in reference to her corpulent appearance and suffocating mannerisms.<sup>9</sup>

The story of “Dust in the Wind” is ultimately one of the submission of a protagonist unwilling to fight the forces of history and nature piled up against him. The narrative is divided into six episodes: the night Saruwatari shuts his clinic, a flashback to a disastrous drinking party he joins with the three other men, Saruwatari being summoned by the police to collect his truant son Shōzō, an emasculating visit with his daughter Yaeko at the dance hall, a calamitous Chinese New Year’s during which Saruwatari’s apartment is accidentally

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8 Like Saruwatari and Kiku, Makino is likely not formally married to the Chinese woman he lives with. In the text, she is merely referred to as “his woman” 彼の女 (*kare no onna*).

9 A theme running through several of Takagi’s works involves the protagonist remarrying in less than fortunate circumstances, sometimes to a non-Japanese or uneducated woman. This is perhaps a shadow of the tension created by the place of Takagi’s first wife, Fuji, in his literary legacy: his magnum opus *Marumero* takes the form of her “requiem.” After repatriating to *naichi* in the postwar period, his modest literary fame began to grow based on this initial publication. The constant presence of *Marumero*, a work dedicated to his deceased first wife, apparently caused a certain amount of friction with Nobori, his second wife and mother of his children; see Takagi 2005, p. 182.



burned down, and the denouement, in which he bids farewell to Torazō and sets off for distant northern Manchuria.

The climax of the story comes the night before Chinese New Year. Samejima and Oana have both been enjoying great prosperity in their respective professions, and the former has even taken on Manchu laborers to cope with increased demand for his product. (The increased demand for guinea pigs also gestures toward the expansion of Japanese scientific activities in the region following the founding of Manchukuo.) During the middle of the night, however, there is an explosion in his apartment. Samejima is seriously injured, the guinea pigs are baked alive, and half of Saruwatari's property is reduced to cinders.

The final pages of the tale recount Saruwatari's reluctance to abandon his property and move on to new ventures. One day, Yaeko arrives with a propitious offer: a job as a doctor in distant northern Manchuria with a decent salary and no questions regarding his qualifications. Saruwatari nonchalantly accepts the offer before giving a curt farewell to Makino, whom he leaves in an offhanded way with his standard diagnosis of syphilis: in this case, fatal.

### Placing Takagi Kyōzō in Manchuria

The little scholarship that exists on Takagi glosses over the nearly two decades he lived in Japan's quasi-colony on the continent. The focus has been on psychoanalyzing his early-period "dialect works," or drawing on his early and postwar writing as examples of mainstream modernist experiments with poetry.<sup>10</sup> The latter are admirable for beginning to open up the work of Takagi and his regionalist-writer peers to broader contextual concerns, and it is my intent to continue in that vein by broaching two more categorical issues: those of Takagi as a writer of Manchuria, and of Takagi as minor writer. In the process, I intend to offer an argument through practice, via a performative reading of "Dust in the Wind," for the translation, reading, and academic appreciation of so-called minor literature.<sup>11</sup> Yet it is imperative to first understand Takagi's early influences and origins as a writer to appreciate this minority.

Takagi was born to a family of physicians in 1903 in Aomori City, located at the center point of the prefecture's northern coast and on the threshold between the Tsugaru and Nanbu regions. He left his native Aomori Prefecture to seek greater fortunes in Tokyo in 1927; however, unable to settle properly due to a nationwide recession, and prodded by his wife Fuji, he took off in short order in December 1928 for the most enticing frontier of the Japanese empire, Manchuria.<sup>12</sup> There, he would earn a medical degree and work as a physician while penning several poetry collections and long and short fiction. After repatriation, he established a small clinic near his hometown and continued his literary activities on the side.

10 See Yamada 1979; Shinozaki 1995; Sakaguchi 2007; Arito 2006.

11 There are English translations of Takagi's work by James Kirkup and James Westerhoven. The former first introduced Takagi's poetry to English-reading audiences in the late 1960s, emphasizing his modernist tendencies, before publishing a book-length hodge-podge of Takagi's poetry and prose works; the latter has recently published some of Takagi's short stories in an anthology of translations and scholarship related to Aomori. See Takagi 1997, "Grannies' Lodge" and "Yasaburō's House" in Westerhoven 2009.

12 Shinozaki 1995, p. 11.

Takagi Kyōzō's current literary recognition stems almost exclusively from his work as a writer of place. Under the mentorship of the poet Fukushi Kōjirō 福士幸次郎 (1889–1946), he pioneered the so-called *hōgen shi undō* 方言詩運動 (dialect poetry movement) of Aomori Prefecture. Takagi penned his first book, *Tsugaru hōgen shishū: Marumero* 津軽方言詩集: まるめろ (Marmello: Poems in Tsugaru dialect, 1931), entirely in his esoteric local vernacular, and it remains the most well-known work in that genre. Yet, Takagi wrote many Manchuria-based works in standardized Japanese which also reflect Fukushi's teachings.

Fukushi was a guiding force in the early Shōwa-period literary community in the Tsugaru region. The goal of Fukushi's regionalism, heavily inspired by French nationalist Maurice Barres, was to reorient Japanese subjects toward the place (or environment) which defined them and encourage them toward its cultivation.<sup>13</sup> This system of thought was anti-modern and anti-cosmopolitan, nationalistic, and perhaps even fascistic. Its message was clear: humans are the product of their environment, and it is incumbent upon Japanese subjects to embrace their localized differences and act as stewards to the land and its traditions in order to cultivate for their nation a deep cultural history resilient in the face of imposing foreign values and modernization.<sup>14</sup> It seems ironic therefore that Takagi's best-known work of regional literature, *Marmello*, was written during his most itinerant period, as he moved between areas of Tsugaru, Tokyo, and Manchuria. On the other hand, Takagi's literary activities during that period might better be thought of as participating in the construction of Tsugaru-as-place and a Tsugaru-based identity, regardless of his geographical location.

By 1928, Takagi was out of a job and struggling to survive in Tokyo. Inspired by utopic descriptions of life with the South Manchuria Railroad Company (SMR; Mantetsu 満鉄), which boasted modern amenities such as steam heating in every apartment, he decided to move to the continent in December of that year. Thus, his emigration predated the founding of the “independent” state of Manchukuo and mass Japanese-government-sponsored agricultural emigration. Yet, he was still unable to secure gainful employment, and turned to the SMR for sponsorship to attend Manchuria Medical University. His wife, Fuji, passed away as a charity patient in the university hospital in December 1929 from military tuberculosis, as recorded in the emotionally gripping short story “Nikutai no zu” 肉体の図 (An anatomical diagram).<sup>15</sup> Takagi married another Tsugaru native named Nobori soon after and worked in Manchuria as a physician and optometrist until Japan's surrender and the mass repatriation of 1946. Nobori would give birth to five of their six children on the continent. Throughout this time, Takagi faced a series of harrowing experiences: social upheaval, anti-Japanese persecution by Chinese police, outright violence, and ultimately forced repatriation from Manchukuo following Japan's defeat.<sup>16</sup>

13 This concept of regionalism is regularly referred to by Fukushi's corpus as *kankyō* 環境, often also rendered as “environment” in English, as in my translation of the “Dust in the Wind” quotation above. Less commonly, Fukushi referred to “local color” (*chihōshoku* 地方色 / *kyōdoshoku* 郷土色), “locality” (*chihōsei* 地方性) and the “local” (*kyōdo* 郷土), as well as “indigeneity” (*dochaku* 土着).

14 For a more detailed examination of Fukushi's philosophy, see Kawanishi 1986; Solomon 2017, chapter 3.

15 Takagi 1983a, pp. 38–51.

16 One concrete episode is described in his autobiography in a chapter entitled “24 Hours in a Basement,” in which, immediately following Japanese defeat, the Chinese army shot at and ultimately destroyed the house he and his family were hiding in; see Takagi 1990, pp. 159–161. Anti-Japanese (*han'nichi* 反日) bias appears in multiple poems and short stories from his Manchuria period, with Chinese police conducting

Takagi's generalized experiences of place imbricated with more personal episodes contributed to forming his character and literature throughout his life. These included deaths in his family, social pressure and stigma related to his idiosyncratic lifestyle, and other family traumas. These compounded with the sociocultural, environmental, religious, ethnic, and other elements which constituted a milieu for the literature not only of Takagi, but of his peers as well.

### A Place for Japanese-Language Literature in Manchuria

Takagi published his first major work, *Marmello*, in 1931, about two years after settling in southern Manchuria. The pace of his literary activities subsequently increased; he published consistently until the last year of the war, and actively participated in the fledgling Manchuria literary establishment. This community was a complex organism whose members at times supported or critiqued the colonial project from a variety of perspectives, and at others were largely apolitical and deeply committed to aesthetic goals.

The early literary community was concentrated within the southern SMR zone, particularly in the port city of Dalian and in the modern southern city of Mukden 奉天 (Ch. Fengtian, Jp. Hōten), subsequent site of the Manchurian Incident. The cutting-edge poetry journal *A* 亜 (1924–1927) was succeeded by *Sakubun*, a coterie journal started by Aoki Minoru 青木実 (1909–1981) in 1932, as representative of this “Dalian Ideology.”<sup>17</sup> Following Aoki's example, Takagi and other contributors emphasized realism, their works often containing depictions of everyday life, (non-Japanese) laborers, and victims of history and government policy. They also engaged in criticism of governmental slogans like “Kingly Way” (Jp. *ōdō* 王道, Ch. *wangdao*) and “Harmony among the five races” (Jp. *gozoku kyōwa* 五族協和, Ch. *wuzu xiehe*), the former referring to the supposed Confucian values of Manchukuo, and the latter signaling the ideal of Japanese, Manchurian, Han Chinese, Korean, and Mongolian people peacefully cohabitating in the region. By the founding of Manchukuo, this cohort of writers had been living on the continent for a decade or more and had already developed strong attachments to the place.<sup>18</sup>

The establishment of Manchukuo and its capital in Xinjing 新京 (Jp. Shinkyō) in northern-central Manchuria in 1933 brought a new wave of intellectuals and literati from the metropole to the continent, and a new style of “Xinjing ideology” literature. Annika Culver argues that recanted leftist artists migrated there to demonstrate their political conversion, to seek the formation of a proletarian-run society, or to pen

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raids and invasive searches, Chinese figures threatening the poet and his family with weapons, and so forth. See the poetry collection *Wa ga chinkonka* (My own personal requiem) in Takagi 1983b, pp. 11–51.

17 *A* is now best remembered as the spiritual ancestor of *Shi to shiron* 詩と詩論 (Poetry and poetics), in which Anzai Fuyue 安西冬衛 (1898–1965), one of Japan's leading avant-garde poets, also participated. It has been described as the “convergence of modernist poetics from both Japan's colony and its mainland”; Peng 2010, p. 197. *Sakubun* become a mainstay Manchuria publication until the end of the war.

18 Kawamura 1998, pp. 64–73. The aspect of identification—describing colonial spaces as “home”—is introduced by Jun Uchida as a problem of “sentiment.” It is for her a reminder that the perpetrators of colonialism, many of whom were either born on the continent or forcefully removed from their homes on the Japanese archipelago due to food shortages, were “emotional beings” subject to complex networks of power beyond their control. Uchida 2011a, pp. 706–708.

“unofficial propaganda” for the state.<sup>19</sup> Proletarian and avant-garde artists pointed to local underdevelopment as the rationale for Japanese guidance.<sup>20</sup> The literature created in Xinjing, represented by the journal *Manshū rōman* 滿洲浪漫 (Manchurian romance) founded by Kitamura Kenjiro 北村謙次郎 (1904–1982) in 1938, has been broadly characterized as reflecting such a nationalistic consciousness.<sup>21</sup> The journal’s eponymous orientation toward romanticism was amenable to the state’s aims: by eschewing the realism of *Sakubun*, these writers created more eulogistic studies of Japanese pioneers and soldiers heroically defeating lawless bandits, or narratives emphasizing ethnic harmony between the five races.<sup>22</sup> The journal also platformed other forms of *kokusaku bungaku* 国策文学 (national policy literature) and articles on cultural development. In Kitamura’s words, this was a “productive literature” for a “productive state.”<sup>23</sup>

Then, in 1941, the Manchurian state sought to dictate the politically acceptable bounds of literary production via the *Geibun shidō yōkō* 芸文指導要綱 (Prospectus for the guidance of arts and culture). Publications like *Sakubun* and *Manshū shijin* 滿洲詩人 (Manchurian poets) reprinted the *Geibun shidō yōkō* in their own pages, or otherwise parroted similar ideals in manifestos of their own.<sup>24</sup> Both *Sakubun* and *Manshū rōman* were thus theoretically reformulated into pro-Manchukuo mouthpieces, now run by the major metropolitan publishers Bungei Shunjū 文藝春秋 and Shinchōsha 新潮社, respectively. The pages of these magazines became littered with patriotic verse and have been described as having the character of a “total war.” Writers from the metropole like Niwa Fumio 丹羽文雄 (1904–2005) and Ibuse Masuji 井伏鱒二 (1898–1993) began to be promoted over Manchuria-based literati in their pages. During the final years of the war, Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899–1972), Satō Haruo 佐藤春夫 (1892–1964), Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路実篤 (1885–1976), Hayashi Fusao 林房雄 (1903–1975), and other big-name metropolitan writers made regular contributions to these Manchurian magazines, suggesting a lack of division between “Japan” and “Manchuria.”<sup>25</sup>

Of course, not all writers in Manchuria were Japanese. Works by Chinese and White Russian writers can be found translated in the pages of *Manshū rōman*, and Manchuria accommodated a community of Chinese-language writers more broadly as well. As Norman Smith’s study of female Chinese writers of the period demonstrates, some were able to thrive by virtue of their liminal positions as partial collaborators. Women in particular were able to fly under the radar of state surveillance and produce modernist literature of resistance inspired by the May Fourth Movement.<sup>26</sup> These writers all occupied the same literary field as Japanese writers, although direct intercourse between the two groups was largely

19 Culver 2013, pp. 2, 33. Not only petit-bourgeois artists, but many rural farmers and other proletarians faced political pressure to emigrate to Manchuria—both to demonstrate loyalty to the imperial project, and also to alleviate the issue of food shortages on the archipelago; see, for example, Wu 2019.

20 Culver 2013, p. 74.

21 The strictness of this north-south division has been credibly challenged. See Kono 2010, pp. 131–132.

22 Nishida 2002, p. 20.

23 Cited in Kawamura 1998, pp. 43–47.

24 However, some scholars suggest that these proclamations amounted to little more than lip service; see Ino 2004, p. 63.

25 Nishihara et al. 2004. The unclear division between the metropole and nascent colony, with roots as far back as the Treaty of Portsmouth, has been discussed in depth in O’Dwyer 2015.

26 Smith 2007, chapter 3.

hampered by linguistic and social divisions. Like most of his peers, Takagi surely consumed the few translated works which appeared in *Manshū rōman*, *Geibun*, and elsewhere, but lacked the language skills to engage with them further.<sup>27</sup>

Given that context, what framework can we effectively apply to the diverse Japanese-language literary field of Manchuria in general, and that of Takagi specifically? There are a plethora of schematic interpretations of continental literature: some divide by author status (traveler, settler-colonist, repatriate), by publication venue (southern versus northern), or by relation to metropolitan writing (derivative versus original).<sup>28</sup> Nishimura Shin'ichirō 西村真一郎 offered nuanced contemporary observations in the pages of *Manshū rōman* itself, for example, delineating *shuryū* 主流 (mainstream) writers, who followed metropolitan Japanese writers; *kensetsu ha* 建設派 (constructionist) writers, who were politically motivated to build a new literature for Manchukuo; and *genjitsu ha* 現実派 (realist) writers who generally ignored mainland Japanese influence and deployed a proletarian-literature style realism.<sup>29</sup>

Trying to place Takagi Kyōzō within these schematizations reveals some of their imprecision. Takagi was a settler-colonist, but an urban petite bourgeoisie, as reflected in characters like Saruwatari, rather than a pioneering adventurer or farmer. He was most strongly affiliated with the SMR-sponsored groups in the south, but also lived and published for several years in Xinjing in the north. In addition to dialect literature, he also wrote modernist prose and poetry inspired by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 (1892–1927) and Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) that does not align with southern realism. Bungei Shunjū and Shinchōsha's forays onto the continent further complicated the Manchurian literary landscape, as they brought with them the political dynamics of metropole versus periphery. The *Geibun shidō yōkō* and increased involvement of metropolitan writers certainly squeezed the space afforded their continental compatriots. Takagi's 1943 publication of an uncharacteristically patriotic untitled poem commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of Manchukuo, discussed in more detail below, perhaps speaks to these shifting forces in the literary field.<sup>30</sup> The literary community of the Japanese metropole was older and wielded more cultural capital than that of its colonies, although even into the 1940s Manchurian writers enjoyed significantly greater access to paper and resources for publishing, as well as more freedom to produce non-propagandistic materials, when compared with those in the homeland.<sup>31</sup>

### A New Approach: Minor Literature

This imposition of the metropolitan authority suggests the possibility of an alternative framing of the Manchurian literary community through an Oedipalistic struggle, one which sought to establish itself—a self-conscious offspring of the Japanese metropolitan

27 This was a widespread issue, as few Japanese writers were proficient in Chinese. Even Kitamura Kenjirō is forced to admit in his ostensibly nation-building tale "An Environment" (*Aru kankyō*), which describes a roundtable meeting between Japanese and Chinese literati for the purpose of debating the development of Manchukuoan literature, that language poses a massive barrier between the two communities. The solution, however, is apparently for Chinese writers to learn Japanese, not the other way around. Kitamura 2002, p. 106.

28 Kawamura 1990, pp. 23–25; Nishihara et al. 2004; Xiong 2014, p. 296.

29 Kono 2010, pp. 131–137; Nishimura 2002.

30 Cited in Ino 2005, p. 144.

31 Kawamura 1998, pp. 41–42.

community—through its assertion of independence from the authoritative center. On the other hand, propagandistic and “national myth” writing *within* Manchuria, including for example the “national foundation literature” of *Manshū rōman*, reproduced dominant political discourse. It also bears remembering that Japanese-language writers—Japanese immigrant-settlers in particular—held positions of economic, cultural, and political privilege throughout the Manchurian state, making them the de facto majority when compared with the many Chinese, Mongolians, Koreans, and others who inhabited the same region. This complicated matrix of power located Takagi Kyōzō and others in a liminal space between the metropole and the subaltern.

I propose that much Japanese-language literature in Manchuria, and Takagi’s writing in particular, can be fruitfully understood as a kind of minor literature. Minor literature has been defined in many ways, but here I primarily borrow Bloom’s concept of Oedipal minority.<sup>32</sup> For Harold Bloom, the personal and psychological aspect of minor literature occurs in the experience of the author himself. His main thesis is clearly stated upfront: “Poetic history . . . is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong [major] poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves.”<sup>33</sup> Writers aspire to some kind of poetic ideal (in his view, Shakespeare) but achieve only a creative “misprision” of it. Misprision—misreading—is their necessarily failed attempt to “translate” this aesthetic ideal into their own forms, an enactment of Oedipal rebellion against one’s literary forefathers. The inevitable family resemblance is the cause of an Oedipal-like anxiety.<sup>34</sup> The self-consciousness of the major (“strong”) writer of their place within the literary tradition and resultant anxiety are what distinguishes them from the minor (“weak”) writer, who is either imitative or lacks the artistic ambition to pursue their ideal. Bloom thus posits that literature is in a continual tug-of-war between past and present, between strong and weak writers.

How does this inform Takagi’s minority? Takagi’s oeuvre is uneven, split between tonally and technically disparate regionalist dialect literature and modernist Manchuria works. A true, “strong” Bloomian Oedipal majority would demand that Takagi attempt to additionally kill his (literary) fathers, as it were, through misprision. Yet Takagi himself seems to have been in a continual dependency on proxy father figures through much of his adult life and was unabashed in his borrowing from major writers before him.

Takagi had a poor relationship with his biological father. Young Takagi’s initial refusal to attend medical school was a refusal of his father. This moment represents Takagi’s one honest act of rebellion. After leaving his natal home, however, Takagi attached himself to the poet Fukushi Kōjirō, who offered paternal guidance and even material and spiritual support during his times of need. When he moved to Manchuria, Takagi took to the locally renowned poet Anzai Fuyue 安西冬衛 (1898–1965), mimicking his prose poetry style and dedicating his second poetry collection *Wa ga chinkonka* わが鎮魂歌 (My own personal requiem) to him. His mimicry was so great that Takagi eventually earned the moniker Sumōru Anzai スモール・アンザイ (small Anzai) from fellow Tsugaru native

32 For a broad introduction to different theorizations of minor literature, see Renza 1984, pp. 1–42.

33 Bloom 1997, p. 5.

34 For a simplified overview, see Bloom 1997, pp. 14–16.

Ichinohe Kenzō 一戸謙三 (1899–1979) and others.<sup>35</sup> His next poetic foray borrowed from Ichinohe by mimicking his use of alliterative quatrains 聯 (*ren*), while its title, *Karasu no sue* 鴉の裔 (Descendent of the raven), is likely an homage to Edgar Allen Poe.<sup>36</sup> Takagi was an unabashed fan of Poe and Akutagawa. His prose, on the other hand, also rarely deviated from a straightforward combination of southern Manchuria realism and Fukushi's regionalism, and was almost exclusively written in a quasi-autobiographical mode. In his professional persona as an optometrist, Takagi was furthermore beholden to his medical mentor, Funaishi Shin'ichi, who held his hand through all of Takagi's research and academic writing while in Manchuria. Takagi developed such a dedicated aversion to subjective action—what I interpret as his Bloomian minority—that he took the title of his autobiography, *Maboroshi no chō* 幻の蝶 (Phantom butterfly), from a childhood episode in which a hypnotist tricked him into chasing after an illusory insect. He uses this example of being hypnotized in conjunction with several others to conclude that

From [these experiences] it became crystal clear that I was particularly susceptible to being hypnotized. I made a firm promise in my heart never to tell a soul about this. If, for example, a strange beauty appeared before me and said “You are my lapdog. Bark for me!” I couldn't guarantee that I would not immediately fly to her side. I can't tell anyone about this because it's so frightening. But, conversely, if some respected leader would stand before me and say “Do this thing: I know you can do it!” I would be able to do just about anything. That's what I felt upon this realization.<sup>37</sup>

It is this sense of passivity and self-abasement which characterizes Takagi's as a minor literature, never succeeding in Bloom's Oedipal rebellion, maintaining its status as a marginal art.

One would be hard pressed to characterize Takagi as a politically major writer. He rarely acted as a mouthpiece for either Manchuria or Japanese state ideology, and therefore could not easily be described as a regular producer of informal propaganda. While he did spend several years (1933–1937) in Xinjing, he spent the majority of his continental sojourn in southern Manchuria and most of his writing appeared in *Sakubun*. There are two notable exceptions to this rule of apoliticality, but given their publication late in the war, they would seem to suggest Takagi's caving in to environmental pressures, such as the promulgation of the *Geibun shidō yōkō*, mentioned above, and gradual depletion of valuable materials for publishing as the war drew on. There is no evidence that Takagi's late shift in message was a subjective decision to raise the banner of the Manchurian Empire, and his most nationalistic poem—the second exception discussed below—does not appear in his collected works.<sup>38</sup>

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35 Takagi 1990, p. 130.

36 His third book-length poetry collection; see Takagi 1983b, pp. 55–83.

37 Takagi 1990, p. 115.

38 Several of Takagi's poems, and at least one other short story, portray a Japanese protagonist suffering some indignity at the hands of Chinese police, and other works portray continental Chinese in a somewhat disparaging light. The two works I discuss in this section explicitly raise issues of Manchukuo (Japanese) institutional power, whereas the others focus on the Japanese protagonist as individualized victims. Although one may read both as examples of Manchurian state propaganda, I view them as categorically divided between what Okada Hideki and others have called “Xinjing ideology” and “Dalian ideology.” The former was often characterized by a Romantic aesthetic deployed to bolster support for Manchukuo and Japanese imperial interests, whereas the latter focused on individualism and realism, sometimes in critique of the state. Notably,

The first exception is the short story *Nogusa* 野草 (Wildflowers) which was his last major continental publication, appearing in the pages of *Geibun* in 1944.<sup>39</sup> The story stands out, both for adopting the voice of a female narrator and for aping romantic portrayals of Manchurian pioneers battling native bandits. The contemporary setting takes a back seat, however, to the narrator's reconstruction of Tsugaru festival culture. This results in a work somewhat in the vein of Takagi's earliest regional literature, pushing the open propaganda into the background. Thus, the portrayal of a heroic samurai-like figure battling lawlessness in the Manchuria frontier—with a sword—feels more like lip service paid to contemporary political forces than a full-throated cry of patriotism. The nationalistic discourse instead serves as the literal background to Takagi's primary focus on his home region of Tsugaru, itself a politically and economically marginalized province on the Japanese archipelago. By minimizing the broader issue of national security and focusing instead on Tsugaru festival culture, Takagi may be appealing to his marginalized place of origin, an internal periphery of the metropole.

The other significant exception to Takagi's general apoliticality is a 1943 untitled poem which does not appear in his collected works, written in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of Manchukuo. It is notable that both "Wildflowers" and this poem were published after the announcement of the *Prospectus for the Guidance of Arts and Culture* enforcing a stricter official literary policy:

あれから十年／そのあひだに私は／四人の子の父親になつてゐる  
 子供等はみな若木のやうに健やかだ／丁度この国のあらたな勢のやうに  
 もう十年たつたら／この国はもつと立派になるだらう／そして私は植物のやうに老いるだらう  
 更に十年後には／私はもはやこの地上に居ないだらう／その時は私の子供らよ／私の墓場の上で歌ふがよい

あゝ 父なるニッポン  
 あゝ 母なるマンシユウ

歲月一建国十周年を迎へて

Ten years have passed . . . / In that time, I / have become a father of four  
 The children are all vigorous in body, like little saplings / just like this nation's  
 resurgent strength  
 When ten years more have passed / this nation shall grow even greater / and I shall  
 grow old in the manner of a plant  
 Ten years beyond that / I shall no longer walk upon the earth / At that time, my  
 dearest children / stand upon my grave and sing!

Oh, Father *Nippon!*  
 Oh, Mother *Manchuria!*

Written for the tenth anniversary of the national foundation<sup>40</sup>

Takagi's postwar autobiography and other prose writings do tend to paint the continental Chinese in a warmer light, in an apparent attempt at reparations for his Japanese-centric writings from the war period (Okada 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Takagi 1983a, pp. 193–204.

<sup>40</sup> Ino suggests that this work was aimed at the Japanese propaganda bureau in the *naichi* and intended to be used as an "inroad" from the Manchuria literary establishment into the Japanese homeland literary community. Cited in Ino 2005, p. 144.



This work not only concludes with an emphatic cry to Takagi's now doubled ancestral lands, but also reproduces the trope of the hybrid sons of Japan literally transforming the continental landscape—here, by taking the form of trees growing into a sturdy forest.

On the other hand, the poet himself shall “grow old in the manner of a plant”: he will wither and die and disappear from the earth leaving only his progeny and his grave. These metaphors firmly establish a connection between the Japanese settler-colonists and the land itself, even if the first generation of transplants will not enjoy the grand future imagined for its progeny and the nation. This poem thus contains a shadow of hesitation, doubt, or perhaps even regret about the trajectory of Takagi's life. Indeed, the fatalistic reference to his own death aligns with a particular resignation—a consciousness of a lack of historical agency—uniting much of his oeuvre.

### Environment Versus Agency

“Dust in the Wind” is thematically resonant with Takagi's other works, particularly from his Manchuria period. He articulates frustration through his protagonist Saruwatari's references to “place” or *kankyō* (environment), a keyword borrowed from Fukushi Kōjirō. For Fukushi, place contained a mutable spirit through which the individual's identity was mediated. Inheriting and cultivating this spirit were seen as moral acts through which communal meaning is established via a deep diachronic connection to a geographic location. However, the environment also constructs the individual, just as Saruwatari bemoans his condition and that of his son. Ever the faithful student, Takagi tended to foreground issues of place and environment in his literature, particularly concerning the dialectical nature of their relationship with identity.<sup>41</sup> The transplantation of Saruwatari/Takagi to the continent entailed the loss of their home place (northern Tōhoku/Tsugaru) and a radical encounter with a completely new quality of placeness, resulting in a crisis of identity.

The conflation of place and Takagi's inability or unwillingness to confront it actively is crystallized in his use of often continentally-specific nature metaphors. The title of the short story “Dust in the Wind” evokes an image of the yellow sands which originate on the continent and are carried on the wind to the Japanese archipelago, primarily between the months of March and May. More explicit reference to this phenomenon is made in his poems from *Wa ga chinkonka*, including a poem entitled *Ōdo (resu)* 黄土(レス) (Loess), which is written with the kanji for “yellow earth,” 黄土. It is a double entendre, simultaneously referring to the yellow sands of Manchuria, and the mythological underworld.<sup>42</sup> Other works in the collection make similar references, including *Yo wa koko ni ari* 予は此処にあり (Here, I am), which is set amid a sandstorm; and *Haru no saiten* 春の祭典 (Spring festival), which references “yellow-sand plastered” Mongolian riders.<sup>43</sup> The collection also includes a poem entitled *Fūjin: Are wa futatabi kaeranai* 風塵: あれは再び帰らない (Dust in the wind: Gone forever), again, featuring sandstorms and a Mongolian pony.<sup>44</sup> And there are *Sokō*

41 For more details, see Solomon 2019.

42 The kanji for “yellow earth” are glossed in Takagi's collected works with the katakana *renu* レス. This is most likely an erroneous transcription of the similar-looking *resu* レス, a vernacularization of the English word “loess.” Takagi 1983b, p. 23.

43 Takagi 1983b, pp. 27, 28.

44 Takagi 1983b, p. 32.

廻行 (Rewind) and “Bridal March,” in which the characters are surrounded, respectively, by an oppressive “storm of dust as yellow as the sun” and “yellow dust cloud.”<sup>45</sup>

Each deployment of continental imagery here firmly locates the poet in a desolate continental wasteland, populated with various characters who are enveloped and battered by forces of nature. Indeed, the sandstorm has the paradoxical function of both marking the place as northern Manchuria and of disturbing the solidity and identity of the place *as* place. He describes it in one poem thus: “The only redeeming aspect of this sandstorm is the tonal shades, the light and shadow. That’s because the photographs I appear in will just be definitive proof of the geographic location, a transitory location.”<sup>46</sup> Such descriptions of Manchuria as an oceanic non-place place—unbounded, undefined, and unsettled—can be found throughout the Manchukuo period and repatriation literature.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, the dust-in-wind image is not merely a trick used to signal geographic location or create an oppressive atmosphere. The main force of the image is its allusion to the powerlessness of the individual in the face of grand historical, political, and economic forces, as well as in the face of the “spirit” of place. Borrowing from Michael Bourdaghs, Van Compernelle describes Manchuria as a “dumping ground” coded as “failure in the homeland.”<sup>48</sup> Saruwatari, and Takagi himself, were early-Shōwa “failures,” unable to find stability or success in the metropole, and were cast off into the dustbin of the colonial space.<sup>49</sup> The characters in “Dust in the Wind” are tossed around at the mercy of forces greater than themselves, an image Takagi reinforces in the figure of “dried leaves” blown about by the wind. The meaning of this image is spelled out directly in his heavily autobiographical 1968 novel *Ochiba no mure* 落葉の群れ (A heap of dried leaves), which concludes immediately after the protagonist’s post-defeat repatriation with the words:

That is when it happened. A whirlwind kicked up in the middle of a vacant lot, and the fallen, dry leaves were whipped up to the sky all at once. . . . Aren’t the Japanese today exactly like that heap of leaves, all tossed up into the sky? In the end, we’ll all be scattered about, doubtless never to meet face-to-face ever again. Not Dr. Kataoka . . . not the woman from the kitchen . . .<sup>50</sup>

45 The title “Bridal March” is written in English; see Takagi 1983b, pp. 28, 31.

46 Takagi 1983b, p. 27.

47 For examples of painting Manchuria as a “blank paper” 白紙 (*hakushi*), see Tucker 2005. This trope appears more subtly in literature, such as in the short stories of Aoki Minoru like “Tekkei nikki” 鉄警日記 (Diary of a railway patrolman), “Hōten tsūshin” 奉天通信 (Message from Hōten), “Ajia nite” アジアにて (It happened in Asia), “Manshū nite” 満洲にて (It happened in Manchuria), “Kōya no naka ni” 曠野の中に (In the steppes), and the trope occupies nearly half of the Abe Kōbō novel *Kemonotachi wa kokyō o mezasu* けものたちは故郷をめざす (Beasts head for home). Sometimes the emptiness of the continent works in favor of imperial occupational desires, but in these works it tends to be a more oppressive depiction of isolation, sometimes of a lone Japanese stranded among continental neighbors; see Aoki 1980; Abe 1957.

48 Van Compernelle 2016, p. 22.

49 Mass immigration to Manchuria was an effective method for Japan to deal with undesirable populations starving in the countryside. This phenomenon is not unique to Japan: for example, wartime England originally used the American colonies as a “sink hole” into which to cast vagrants, idlers, and criminals. See Isenberg 2016, pp. 2–3.

50 Takagi 1983a, p. 317.

The same metaphor is deployed in “Dust in the Wind” where Takagi describes Saruwatari and his tenants as “these four men, swept up together like dried leaves in the wind . . .” The vicissitudes of life are portrayed by the capricious movement of wind and dust and leaves; not the subjective actions of an active agent of history. Takagi expresses this lack of agency more literally in a later work entitled “Pachinko Sensei,” in which the titular character offers the insight that, “Well, son—I think all of us, mankind, we are kind of like pachinko balls shot out into the world. Go bouncing off that [telephone] pole, slip right on by the jackpot, and, in the end, every single one drops down into the grave . . . this is just how it is for all men.”<sup>51</sup> In other words, the course of one’s life is random, beyond one’s control, and completely determined by the environmental circumstances into which one has been born.

This non-subjective perspective is realized again and again across Takagi’s oeuvre in the deliberate use of plant and animal images, reinforcing the feeling of subordination of subjects to their environment. Some poetic examples include his untitled poem commemorating the foundation of the Manchurian state above and in the poems “Nenrin” 年輪 (tree rings) and “Jumoku” 樹木 (timber), in each of which the poet becomes a tree.<sup>52</sup> Mobilizations of animal identification by juxtaposition can be observed in the main cast of the short story “Tarubagan” 獺兒 (Siberian marmot), a team of plague experts named “Kameyama” 龜山 (turtle-mountain), “Inukai” 犬養 (dog-rearer), and “Dr. Igari” 猪狩 (boar-hunter) who find their lives shaped by their relationship to the local fauna.<sup>53</sup>

Like “Siberian Marmot,” the main characters in “Dust in the Wind” are strongly identified with animals. The characters of Saruwatari’s name suggest “monkey overseas” and his nickname of “Tanuki” (raccoon dog) becomes a major point of discussion in the story. His suffocating wife Kiku is nicknamed “the White Sow”; Samejima is as shrewd and dangerous as a “shark” (*same*); and Oana and his family have taken on the appearance and mannerisms of the guinea pigs they raise, going so far as to live in the closet while the rodents get free rein of the hall. Makino Torazō, known to Kiku simply as “Tiger” (*tora* トラ) is ultimately branded “Sea Pineapple” (*hoya* 海鞘) by Saruwatari in reaction to the “Tanuki” slur. In short, Takagi deliberately deployed animals and animal language in his literature when depicting characters lacking human agency, reinforcing the notion that these settler-colonists should be seen as simply passive occupants of nature shaped by their environments.

The two exceptions in “Dust in the Wind” are worthy of note. Yaeko, whose name contains the kanji 八重, meaning multilayered, demonstrates the most successful adaptation to the world of Manchuria. She earns a good living in a quintessentially modern setting with enough connections to procure new employment for her father by the end of the tale. Saruwatari views Yaeko as morally compromised, describing the dance hall, her place of employment, as a den of sin even as he gazes lecherously over her revealing costume. Whereas Saruwatari may characterize his daughter—the “slattern”—as degraded by her environment, it is apparent to the reader that she has deftly taken advantage of her place as a young Japanese woman in Manchuria. She breaks her father’s trust by consorting with a young Chinese lover, but in doing so hews closer to the cosmopolitan ideals of Manchukuo than Saruwatari, who has at best a transactional relationship with the local non-Japanese

51 Takagi 1983a, p. 212.

52 Takagi 1983b, pp. 11, 14.

53 Takagi 1983a, pp. 14–22.

people. Yaeko rejects her father's offer to be sold into servitude as a traditional Japanese geisha while begging for the opportunity to work in the modern, Westernized context of social dance. She gains social and financial independence beyond her father's limited means, but only through trading away traditional Japanese values and distancing herself further from metropolitan culture—neither of which she has direct experience with.

On the other hand, Shōzō, his name ironically bearing the literal meaning of “made correctly,” represents Saruwatari's complete failure as a patriarch in the face of overwhelming forces of “place.” Rather than being “made correctly” by his father, Shōzō has been fashioned by the multi-ethnic neighborhoods of South Manchuria, and in the process became a delinquent in his father's eyes. Saruwatari states that it is the negative influence of the environment which has overwhelmed his son's domestic upbringing, resulting in truancy and petty crime. However, Saruwatari himself is no paragon of virtue: he is introduced as having lost one job for keeping false ledgers and being run out of a Japanese neighborhood for cheating customers in another, both soon after arriving in Manchuria. As with Yaeko's dalliance with the Chinese boy, Shōzō's easy association with non-Japanese locals reflects his grounding in the place of Manchuria; not a character flaw, but a natural effect of the context of his upbringing. In this light, Saruwatari's criticisms of his children seem to speak more of his own dissatisfaction with his inability to adapt to the new environment, characterized by modernity and multi-ethnic cosmopolitanism, than the failures of his offspring. This distinction is baked into the very names of the characters themselves.

But animal images in “Dust in the Wind” are mobilized on a level more sophisticated than simply labeling which characters are given agency within their context or not. They are also used to allude to half-baked states of transformation, a physical correlative for Saruwatari and Makino's liminality. This theme is most overtly demonstrated in the teasing exchange of nicknames between the “Tanuki” Saruwatari and the “Sea Pineapple” Makino. The former is first branded a tanuki because of his wizened countenance, contrasting with the surprisingly vital appearance of the latter. But the tanuki is considered magical in Japanese folklore and has the power of transmutation. A true tanuki should be able to adapt to any context through cleverly applying his supernatural ability of disguise. Yet, such a flexible agent of change is not the tanuki of “Dust in the Wind.” Instead, Saruwatari views himself as the creature from the folktale “Bunpuku chagama” 分福茶釜 (Overflowing teapot of luck), in which the tanuki's magical transformation is inexplicably stalled, resulting in a hybrid magical teapot with legs and a tail. The conclusion of this folktale is usually portrayed as auspicious, but in actuality the novelty comes from the tanuki's impairment, its inability to complete its transformation. Saruwatari spontaneously introduces this metaphor on the last page of the story to describe the revelation of his true nature as a physician:

[Makino:] “Good for you. From now on, you'll be a practicing tanuki on the up-and-up.”

[Saruwatari:] “Just like the tanuki-in-disguise fairytale . . . once my tail is out, there's no going back to hiding. It's just as they say, you know—learn a trade, and you'll never starve.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Takagi 1983a, p. 87.

Saruwatari's true nature is discovered, lost, and ultimately rediscovered as the result of a random succession of events. Furthermore, it is completely beyond his ability to change himself, to adapt, or to evolve to meet the challenges of his environment.

The case of Makino is even more straightforward. A sea pineapple is a remarkably ugly ventricular aquatic organism native to Aomori Prefecture. While Saruwatari initially intends to insult his tenant's appearance, Makino deftly turns the attack around, claiming that it is the perfect nickname: first, because it is the perfect dish for a tippler like himself; and second, because in its larval stage it moves around freely before metamorphosing into a plantlike ventricle which permanently adheres to a rocky surface. This mirror's Makino's life, as he traveled freely before ultimately becoming stuck in Manchuria. His cavalier interpretation takes a darker turn in the closing lines of the short story, as he lies immobilized by syphilis, literally transforming into an unsightly lump of flesh—like some Aomori fish unable to adapt to foreign waters. Thus, just like Saruwatari's tanuki, Makino's animal nickname simultaneously represents metamorphosis and stasis, evolution and decadence.

Via their nicknames, Makino and Saruwatari are both juxtaposed with strange transforming animals which ironically find themselves caught in stasis. At first glance, both men may seem to reify the continental adventurer archetype, escaping their native place, abandoning their failed pasts, and seeking new futures abroad—chameleons adapting to new contexts, or perhaps the true metamorphosis of caterpillar-turned-butterfly. However, in reality, they do not achieve any more freedom, evolution, or creativity. Instead, they are caught in a double bind: on the one hand, their identities formed by their upbringing in their homeland—in this example, expressed through the essentialized nicknames derived from Japanese folklore and Aomori marine life—and, on the other, restrained by the contemporary environment of Manchuria and its historical context. The conclusion is that there is no agency, only a liminal, animal-like existence.

### **Conclusion: Takagi in Manchuria**

Takagi Kyōzō's "Dust in the Wind" is characteristic of both his regionalist Tsugaru and Manchurian literature, combining place-consciousness with a liminal point of view. The story expresses, via themes of environment and place, the lack of agency felt by the writing-subject settler-colonist. However, it does not shrink away from acknowledging the opposing side of the settler-colonists' existence: in other words, their relative dominance over their continental neighbors. Saruwatari's exclusion from the SMR zone thrusts him into a "contact zone," a "social [space] where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."<sup>55</sup> There he provides crucial medical services and financial opportunity through his money-lending business to the neighborhood while illegitimately occupying a Manchurian home, exploiting "coolie" laborers through the sale of morphine, and belittling the local Peking opera. In short, Saruwatari represents Takagi's conflicted status, both marginalized vis-à-vis the metropole while also exerting privilege over his Asian subalterns.

Race and ethnicity therefore appear in Takagi's Manchuria-period works in an often self-contradictory and self-abasing expression of the writer's experiences. "Dust in the

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55 Pratt 2008, p. 7.

Wind” contains derisive representations of Korean thugs, Manchu degenerates, obnoxious Peking Opera performers, and “coolie” drug addicts. Kiku, portrayed as lazy and ugly in both appearance and character, is implied to be a Korean-born Japanese, and therefore perhaps of a different social or even ethnic stock from her indifferent, often callous husband. Makino, who shares Saruwatari’s very hometown, is an example of a Japanese who has “gone native,” taken a Chinese lover, and suffers in parallel the most ignoble physical and moral degeneration. Furthermore, his treatment of “his [Chinese] woman” is terribly abusive and exploitive—a pithy critical summation of the relationship between imperial Japan and Manchuria. Elsewhere, particularly through the depiction of Chinese authority in the poetry collection *Wa ga chinkonka* and the short story “Hōtenjō fukin” 奉天城附近 (Near Fengtian castle), Takagi’s writing is colored by a persecution complex reflecting contemporary anti-Japanese sentiment (*han’nichi; hainichi*). Following the conventions of the time, he utilizes the racist term “*Shinajin*” (Chinaman) and does not distinguish between Han Chinese and “Manchus” (*Manjin*).<sup>56</sup> Only in retrospect, in his postwar autobiography, *Phantom Butterfly*, does Takagi reflect on how well the locals treated the Japanese during their occupation, a sentiment which also generally comes through in their depiction in his postwar novel *A Heap of Dried Leaves*.

Takagi’s representation of race and ethnicity is clearly problematic in many respects. Still, the natural and dehumanizing animal metaphors in “Dust in the Wind” are applied to Japanese people arrested in non-subjective states, with non-Japanese characters relegated to the background.<sup>57</sup> Overall, Takagi faithfully reproduces a Japanese-centric literary vision while alternately portraying Japanese subjects along a spectrum of victim to oppressor. And it is no benign thing that Saruwatari conflates the problems he observes in all the characters around him with a poisonous environment (one which he presumes exerts similar forces on its non-Japanese inhabitants).

My reading above thus attempts to grapple with Takagi’s literature as presenting a perspective on the complex relationship between Japanese settler-colonist and Manchuria as place. There is no central ideology driving his work, although there is a through-line of submission to both environment and the father figures in his biography. I argue that it is an example of Oedipal minority, which via either success or failure serves to reaffirm a binary top-down relation between center and periphery, metropole and colonial space. The naturalistic metaphors of leaves and dust arbitrarily blown about strengthen this interpretation by suggesting a non-subjective or animal-like lack of historical agency among Japanese settler-colonists. They are moved between places, and wherever they go, they are passively shaped by both their origins and their new environment. Takagi’s protagonists are not heroes, but victims. Yet simultaneously there is a constant tacit acknowledgement of the inequities between the Japanese and continental people of Manchuria. In its

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56 The Japanese government took census data on people referred to as “Manjin,” which included both Han Chinese and ethnic Manchus. However, various terms for “Manchu” and the less-common category of “Manchukuoan” were both complicated and internally-inconsistent (Manchukuoan was more a racialized category than political nationality). Manchu was sometimes a political category related to the Banner system, sometimes ethnic, sometimes cultural. Thus, there is no way to be sure if Takagi uses “Manjin” in reference to racial or other characteristics; or, if he merely did not distinguish between Chinese-language speakers (Tamanoi 2000, pp. 253–255; Shao 2011).

57 With the notable exception of “Near Fengtian Castle,” in which both Chinese authorities and Europeans emasculate the Japanese protagonist, this applies to his work as a whole.

self-contradiction, Takagi's narrativization of his experience in Manchuria recalls what Jun Uchida calls the "sentimental" narrative of settler colonialism, something infinitely more complex and tortuous than the simple straight-forward stories relayed via state propaganda machines.<sup>58</sup>

Following the realist school of southern Manchuria and the regionalist teachings of Fukushi Kōjirō, Takagi wrote observational works based on personal experiences. These writings never articulated a holistic political critique: he rarely strayed into the territory of blatant state propaganda or an avant-garde misprision of his literary forebears. Takagi's experience within and across the imperial system began in his home region of Tsugaru on the periphery of Japan's domestic front and culminated in a turbulent forced repatriation at the conclusion of the war. This is the context in which the Japanese settler-colonist occupied a dual space of oppressor-oppressed, perpetrator and victim. The contradiction between recognizing Takagi's wartime indiscretions along with his lack of agency—all refracted through the lens of place—is the significance of colonial minor literature, and actively reading Takagi's and other Manchuria writers' works, as I have just begun to do here, is one step toward attaining a better understanding of this experience.

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58 Uchida 2011a, p. 726.

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TRANSLATION

“Dust in the Wind,” by Takagi Kyōzō

Translated and Annotated by Joshua Lee SOLOMON\*

Saruwatari Heisuke 猿渡平助 had been shamelessly practicing unlicensed medicine in Hōten’s South Market (a bustling Manchu neighborhood) right up until the Manchurian Incident.<sup>1</sup> The police started cracking down in short order after the founding of Manchukuo, and now, at long last, he was being forced to take down the fading sign from his establishment. It displayed the now barely legible characters reading Hall of Medical Rejuvenation.<sup>2</sup>

Saruwatari had been in a sour mood since early morning, and he simply could not set his mind to do the deed. He would step out of the front door and turn right around and go back inside. Ultimately, he decided to remove the sign only after dark. Once he had had his evening drink and a light nap, he put on a padded kimono and took to pulling down the sign. The nail affixing the bottom of the sign was broken, and so he went about beating and banging on it with a hammer, relying on the light from the electric lamp under the eaves of the house. A strong, wintry wind whipped up, and suddenly his legs were buried in a swirl of dried leaves. Images of his entire pathetic existence—everything that had taken place before the moment he first raised this sign—subsequently began to flicker, unbidden, across the back of his mind.

The warehouse he was running in his little Tōhoku hometown had ended in failure. That was the beginning of his uprooted existence. Leaving wife and child at home, he meandered up through Hokkaido to Karafuto, but, unable to achieve anything there, he darkened his doorstep once more. Next, he started planning a move to Manchuria, but his wife outright rejected the thought of leaving, charging that “You’re the type of man who would drag me to the ends of the earth, a place like Manchuria, and I just don’t know what you would put me through, or if you would even abandon me out there,” cradling their son in her arms and watching over their medicine stall all the while.

When Saruwatari arrived in Mukden, he first landed a job as an accountant for a sugar refinery. However, overwhelmed by the constant demand to produce capital for the business, he was caught lodging fraudulent numbers in the books and summarily fired. Then, on the advice of some friends, he made a good start running a shop re-stuffing cotton batting, as

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\* Takagi Kyōzō 高木恭造, “Fūjin” 風塵, *Sakubun* 作文 41 (1940). Reprinted in *Takagi Kyōzō shibunshū*, vol. 1. Tsugaru Shobō, 1983, pp. 75–87. Joshua wishes to express his appreciation to Takagi Jun, as well as to Itō Yumiko of Tsugaru Shobō, for granting permission to translate and publish the late Takagi Kyōzō’s work.

1 There are several possible readings of the protagonist’s family name, written with the characters for “monkey” and “traverse.” Hōten 奉天 is read Fengtian in Chinese.

2 Huichuntang Yiyuan 回春堂醫院.

there were none operating at the time in the South Manchuria Railway Zone. However, he quickly lost the trust of his customers because he had a habit of cheating the difference in weight between the original and repaired fabrics. Soon, he no longer felt welcome in the occupied district. He left, and moved to a no-name, inconsequential non-Japanese neighborhood. One day, a local man fell off a roof, grievously injuring his leg. Saruwatari had been a medic during his stint in the military and was able to provide some basic first aid. His actions were reciprocated with great appreciation and awed respect, and so he came upon the idea to take up practicing unlicensed medicine.

While this was all a completely unforeseen turn of events, the practice wound up turning into a stable livelihood. Not only that, but once he had put away some extra money, he even started selling black-market morphine, making cash loans to the locals, and was able to remodel his house into three apartments to let. (He referred to it as “his house,” but in actuality, during the chaos of the Manchurian Incident, he had simply ousted the original owner and claimed the building as his own.) What was really eating at him as he was removing the sign was not that he was simply losing a single business, but that he felt like the silver lining of his life was peeling away, and that for some reason or another, a dark shadow was being cast over his future. Shuddering, he broke out into a violent fit of sneezes.

At that moment, he noticed that a horse-drawn cab had stopped along a nearby street, and that the passenger was wrangling with the driver over the fare. He recognized the large, boisterous, intoxicated man, in Chinese dress and a shaved pate, as one of his tenants: a door-to-door insurance salesman by the name of Makino Torazō 牧野虎三.<sup>3</sup> Saruwatari silently mused to himself as he watched the scene unfold: *Hey, hey! The man must've gotten himself a new client today.* The scene concluded with Makino brandishing his hefty walking stick and hollering a shower of invectives at the driver as the cab drove off. Once the cab disappeared, Makino approached Saruwatari, laughing raucously, without restraint, as he recognized his landlord standing like a bump in the street, the placard tucked under his arm.

“So, Dr. Saruwatari has finally closed up shop, huh?”

“Yeah, a forced retirement,” he replied bitterly.

“Well then, how’s about we have a retirement party tonight? This time it’s my treat!” His breath foul with alcoholic vapors fuming left and right, Makino waltzed through Saruwatari’s front door as if it was his own.

Makino came from the same town in the same prefecture as Saruwatari; they had even been schoolyard chums. Now, though both nearing fifty, Saruwatari was wizened like some dried-up old tanuki, whereas Makino’s alcohol-flushed face still appeared boyish and full of life.<sup>4</sup> His fat neck, characteristic of an apoplexy patient, was swelling with vitality. Times were hard now as he was lowered to selling insurance, although he carried the pride of having graduated from the Imperial University’s humanities department and had made a name for himself as the adopted son-in-law of the popular novelist, Akaiwa Ryūkō 赤岩龍香.<sup>5</sup> However, Makino had squandered the entire Akaiwa fortune and been run out of the

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3 Makino is written with Chinese characters meaning “pasture,” and his given name means “tiger.”

4 Sometimes translated as “raccoon dog,” tanuki often play the part of magical, transmogrifying tricksters in Japanese folktales.

5 This person appears to be a fictional creation based on Kuroiwa Ruikō 黒岩涙香 (1862–1920), a journalist, translator, and writer of popular fiction. Kuroiwa was politically active and a strong proponent of Japanese nationalism and the Russo-Japanese War.

family. He subsequently took up with some Pan-Asianist comrades and wandered aimlessly about northern China for nearly twenty years before finally absconding with some rich Chinaman's second or third concubine and fleeing to Manchuria.<sup>6</sup> Then, by chance, he ran into Saruwatari one day while making his sales rounds and stuck to his side, moving into his apartment for good measure.

Makino now stumbled up into Saruwatari's entry hall, fairly collapsing against the door to the examination room. Facing toward the inner chamber, he called out in a raspy voice, "Madam! Tonight we're having a retirement party for Dr. Saruwatari! We won't trouble you for anything. Tonight, I bring the wine. Hey, Madam!" Kiku キク, Saruwatari's common-law wife, was already lying in her futon, but that did not mean that she was asleep: she simply refrained from responding, lest she be forced out of bed and put through the trouble of serving the men alcohol.

"Hey, Madam! I got a customer today—first one in a while. So I've had a bit to drink here, a bit to drink there . . . I went into a dance hall and, wouldn't yah know it, had a round with your daughter, Missy Yae. But don't let the old ball-and-chain know!"

Kiku reacted strongly to the mention of her daughter's name. Yaeko 八重子 had not come by the house recently, and, wondering how her daughter was doing, Kiku thrust the sheets aside and got up. Saruwatari made his way into the examination room . . . if it could rightly be called that. It was a pathetic display: a single squeaky chair, a table covered in peeling paint, an examination table with straw poking out of its mattress, and a cabinet lined with rusty scalpels and a frayed set of tweezers. The only thing worthy of note was a dust-covered human skull sat up on the highest shelf; a decapitated criminal's head which Saruwatari claimed he had picked up several years prior, somewhere near the Shōsaimon Western Gate, a bustling market district.<sup>7</sup> Makino rolled over onto the examination table, face up toward the ceiling, continuing: "Missy is already a full-fledged woman. Of course, she was still stiff—it was like cradling a wooden pillar in my arms—but, wearing that white evening gown, she really looked the part. I pretended not to notice even as I stood right in front of her, but then she grinned and called me a gross old guy! That grin, it was so completely mature."

"Oh? That slattern?" Saruwatari's eyes blazed as he lowered himself onto the seat. He was about to follow this with another remark, but Kiku appeared in the doorway in her bedclothes and undersash, and so he fell silent.

Saruwatari took Kiku as his own shortly after arriving in Manchuria. He knew nothing of her parentage beyond the fact that she was born in Korea. Her kidneys had been weak ever since they had Yaeko and Shōzō 正造 (currently in his first year of middle school). Her complexion was sallow year-round, and she spent all day sulking in bed. However, she was fiendishly shrewd when it came to the finances, and whenever he tried to spend a penny,

6 China here is translated from *Shina* 支那. This is a period term used to displace the Chinese word *Chūgoku*, which posits China as the "Central Kingdom." Today, *Shina* is considered an offensive slur. The word is used here because Makino was in China proper, rather than Manchuria, at that time.

7 This may be an allusion to an incident in Takagi's real life, around 1935. According to his serialized autobiography, he was commanded by his head clinician to cooperate with the special police and cut the eyes from freshly decapitated criminals for "research purposes." He frames this event in terms of his "character formation," and only confesses guilt and regret over the episode many installments later.

Saruwatari felt like he was being pinned beneath the weight of his “White Sow” 白豚 (the words he himself used to refer to her, in reference to the impression of corpulence she gave).

Last spring, Saruwatari heard a rumor that the son of the Manchu proprietor (who was a regular beneficiary of Saruwatari’s services) of the local barbershop “Fuhai” had engaged in some particularly sinful behavior with Yaeko one evening. In fact, the two had simply been up to some relatively innocent necking, but Saruwatari nevertheless burst into the barbershop screaming bloody murder, and nearly beat the life out of the poor boy. Of course, the barber turned cold toward Saruwatari and quit patronizing his clinic after the incident, and Saruwatari pulled Yaeko out of the Women’s School of Home Economics. Since she had previously expressed a desire to become a professional dance-hall girl, Yaeko used this as an opportunity to nag her mother into letting her give it a try.<sup>8</sup> Her father figured if she was going to dance, they might as well sell her out on contract as a geisha. Yaeko begged her parents, refusing to eat for several days, lamenting that if they would not hear her out, she would be better off dead. Kiku prattled on about how the profession of geisha was so passé, and furthermore that it would be a wretched thing to send a girl off to fend on her own. Saruwatari was eventually worn down and notarized a permission slip.

He tried to steer the subject of conversation away from their daughter when Kiku entered the room, but Makino’s phrase “full-fledged woman” was still echoing in her ears.

“What do you think? Will she get a patron?”

Taken aback by the bluntness of the question, Makino responded: “Madam, that’s out of the question! Wasn’t she apprenticing until just recently? She’s still just a wallflower. You know what *wallflower* means, Madam? She’s there just twiddling her thumbs.”<sup>9</sup> Kiku’s mouth clapped shut at the brusque words.

She had disliked Makino intensely from the start, because he never paid a single cent’s worth of rent, and yet went on pretentiously about his higher education, blowing fanciful smoke about expecting to “receive an invitation to lecture for the Manchukuo legislators any day now,” and even impertinently hanging the arms of his massive frame about the couple’s shoulders as he did so. This got on Kiku’s nerves, and she would use every opportunity that Makino was absent to put his woman through the ringer. One time, they got into a hell-raising row out where she was drying the laundry, Kiku railing at her, “I don’t want you dryin’ yer filthy pajamas out here. This ain’t some grungy fleabag hovel . . . Goddamn unbelievable! And, a woman your age, jumpin’ in the sack every night, disgraceful! Dogshit!” But, when she realized that the subject of her vitriol could not even comprehend her words, she snatched the laundry down, balled it up, and flung it into the dirt at her doorstep.

“It’s a lie when he says he hasn’t any money—because that woman has it all. If he’s really broke, why would the Tiger (that is what Kiku called Makino) stay with such a frail little consumptive? The nights the Tiger’s around, she always sobs out loud, just like clockwork . . . that’s because he’s so cruel to her, beating her for drinking money.” Kiku spoke as if the act had been perpetrated right in the open before her, but in reality, on some

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8 Dance hall girls, technically called “taxi dancers,” were employed by dance halls to be hired out as social dance partners.

9 A *kabe no onna*, literally “wall-woman,” engaged in *ocha-hiki* (tea-leaf milling) is a hostess who has no patron and spends her time waiting in the wings preparing tea.

nights, while on the way to use the outhouse, she would deliberately squeeze herself up next to Makino's window in order to spy on his domestic situation.

When Kiku said something that was simply too much to take, Saruwatari would look her straight in the sallow, puffy face and reply, "Honey, keeping so tense all the time is not doing favors for your longevity!"

Kiku had fallen into sudden silence. Knowing that he had soured her mood, and not knowing what she would throw at him next, Makino raised his head off the examination table, and said,

"You know, Madam, I think your daughter will improve right away. She's got your caliber of looks; hell, better than the top ten percent. Before you know it, she'll be beating off patrons with a stick, and you, Madam, will have nothing to go on worrying about. It's quite a blessing, given that Dr. Saruwatari Heisuke has resigned from his many years of quackery. You see, for this physician, if your head hurts and you have a fever, it's aspirin; if your stomach's in a state, sure enough, it's sodium bicarbonate. For anything else, anything at all, he calls it syphilis and gives you a shot of Compound 606. Utterly naïve. When a human gets sick, if he's gonna get better, he's destined to get better from the start. If he won't, he'll never get better. Er . . . frankly, what made Dr. Tanuki's underground practice so remarkable was how completely he understood that fact, never got distracted by the details. Hey, hey! Tanuki! It's a boon!"

What was Saruwatari thinking, as he sat there listening with a scowl, before suddenly bursting out in a guffaw? It was this: "If I'm a tanuki, then you're like the sea pineapples (*hoya* 海鞘) we used to catch in the ocean back home!" He said this, visualizing the sea pineapple's unsavory mottled reddish orange color, its body like a fat, wart-covered ventricle, and appearing so alien in its habitat, suckered onto rocks beneath the water's surface. For just an instant, Makino's expression turned dour, before snapping back into a mocking countenance, accompanied by a self-deprecating retort.

"Oh, a sea pineapple, huh? That's a perfect dish for a tippler. Too bad I've already forgotten the taste of it . . . it's been twenty years! To say that I remind you of them . . . you know, when they are still larval they have tails and can swim around freely, but later on they turn into something like a ventricle and lose the ability to move. They really are just like me, huh?" For a little while after that, the two aging men sat grinning at each other, while outside they could hear the sound of the wintry wind blowing around fallen leaves.

In addition to Makino, Saruwatari's other tenants were Samejima 鯨島, who handcrafted firecrackers, and Oana 小穴, who raised guinea pigs.<sup>10</sup> The two tenants both ran businesses profiting from residents of the railway zone. Because Samejima dealt with gunpowder all year long, he was always in danger of combustion. Indeed, once the powder did explode, and although it did not become a major incident, it left half of Samejima's face disfigured with burns. As for Oana, one's senses would be assaulted by an animal stench even when standing outside his front door; if it was slid open, the first thing visible would be a room swarming with free-roaming guinea pigs. White, black, mottled . . . all mixed up together, showing off their sleek fur as they raced around; or, they would clump up together,

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<sup>10</sup> Samejima literally means "shark island." Oana could be translated as "little hole," reminiscent of a guinea pig's burrow.

peeking feverishly out from beneath some scraps of straw at the visitor. Furthermore, the Oana family—four of them altogether—had to live out of the closet, such that to anybody's eye it would seem that it was the guinea pigs who were breeding them, rather than the other way around. (Oana used the animals to supply the laboratories of the medical school.) Saruwatari would mutter to himself about how *living things aren't meant to be kept as pets* whenever he saw Oana fidgeting with them. That was because when he was running his failing whorehouse back in Japan, a deadly epidemic one year came and infected his girls, killing them one after another.

Whenever Makino crossed paths with Oana, he would say “Augh, you smell freaking awful!” to which the reply would simply be, “Oh, sorry, boss,” with a bobbing of his head in apology. He would take any abuse at all, and never return a barb. He would always sit with his legs carefully folded under him in the presence of others, appearing more and more like one of his guinea pigs, winking his eyes in his diminutive face, trying his best to simply stay out of the way. It was like he was a person who always chose to live his life out of the way, in a corner.

Samejima spent the whole year trying to devise a way to make the loudest bang with the smallest amount of gunpowder, experimenting with the length of the tube, the amount of stuffing, the way the paper covering was wrapped: he was obsessed. But the look of him as he turned that disfigured face to stare up at the ceiling suggested a man pondering various ways how he might lob his own mighty explosive against society itself.

These four men, swept up together like dried leaves in the wind, did, on one occasion, have a drinking party together. It was two months prior, on the evening of the fifteenth of the eighth lunar month. Makino said he had, for the first time in a long time, brought in a big new client, so he treated everyone to some rice wine for a moon viewing. They spread out a rush mat in the narrow little inner courtyard and sat in a circle. Unsurprisingly, Oana had declined the invitation several times, and Samejima had to practically drag him out by the scruff of his neck. They sat around a pot filled with a jumble of boiled pork and fish, sipping at some Chinese liquor. Although the moon had long risen in the sky, the men could not see it from where they sat in the shadow of the house. The night wind cut into them, sitting still as they were, and so the men warmed their hands on the earthenware brazier and took to their cups in earnest. At one point, someone exclaimed “It's so dark my chopsticks missed my mouth for my nose . . .” But only Makino, gulping down drinks left and right, commented, “I suppose the two of us are both a bit too familiar with working under the shadow of darkness.” He laughed, turning back to Saruwatari, as if the words carried some special significance. The clamorous sounds of a Chinese opera arose from a temporary stage the Chinamen had set up in the neighborhood. Samejima, unimpressed, remarked that it was just as offensive and grating as a Tanuki's “nutty little ditty.” He overheard Makino stifling a chuckle, and, in order to hide his embarrassment, he quickly turned to Oana and offered him another drink. Oana, sitting bolt upright even outdoors on a mat, began muttering, “Oh, I think I've had quite enough. You know, since I've come to Manchuria—and it has been quite a number of years—I have yet to poke my nose into one of those Chinese operas, or however they are called. Listening to other's descriptions, I can only wonder at what exactly could be so interesting about them?” Makino, in turn, began a long-winded discourse on the subject of Chinese opera: “If you wanna know about Chinese opera, ask *me*. When it comes to watching opera, if you don't have a handle on the



conventions beforehand, you'll never have any clue about what's going on . . ." Everyone adopted theatrically sober expressions, and, attending closely to his words, was deeply impressed by how the learned really are somehow *different* than everybody else. The noisy operatic accompaniment clanged and banged on throughout, and Makino arose in the middle of his speech, grabbing a stick from beneath the eaves. The next moment, he was flailing it about like a glaive, gesticulating wildly, he said, in the manner of an operatic fight-scene. Seeing the giant man in his Chinese-style clothing, brandishing the staff, with the moon just now shining over his bald pate, the men simply went giddy with delight.

By the time the moon illuminated the spot where the men were sitting, all save Oana were well into their cups. Then, for some reason or another, the discussion turned to the topic of guinea pigs. Samejima, basking his burn scars in the moonlight, made a strange remark,

"So what the hell are those guinea pig buggers anyways? Are they like rabbits? Or are they kinds of rats?"

"Well, of course they're rats. Right, Oana?" Saruwatari replied with an aloof certainty.

"Hum . . . I think they are rats, yes, but in some ways they do resemble rabbits . . ." Because Oana was pussyfooting around a clear answer, Saruwatari and Samejima took to arguing back and forth as to whether they were really rats or rabbits.

Sneering, Makino said "You two dimwits . . . they're called *rodents*—rabbits, rats, and guinea pigs all belong to the same biological order." In response, Saruwatari and Samejima both shifted the target of their attacks to Makino.

Samejima casually remarked, "Oh, really? Is that really possible? Well, if rabbits and mice are the same thing, then maybe tanuki and hogs are the same as well . . ."

In response to which Saruwatari shrieked back: "Hey, Mr. Firecracker! You son of a bitch, all day it's been tanuki-this, tanuki-that . . . how many times you gonna say it?" Since this terrible mess had grown out of a discussion of his guinea pigs, Oana decided to flee the scene, surreptitiously slipping back into the house before the hot potato landed in his lap again. He bolted the door, but left the closet door slightly ajar, peering out from his hiding spot through the glass window, into the garden. He heard the three of them erupt into a clamor about something, and then saw them suddenly rise to their feet. Startled, he held his breath and watched:

"Yeowch! I guess rabbits'll stamp on yer balls, but a rat will gnaw on you like this!" Saruwatari bellowed as he seized upon Samejima and bit him in the shoulder. Samejima let out some kind of yelp, and the two of them went crashing down. Then, inexplicably, Makino stood straddling the two men like a horse, raining punch after punch down upon them. For the next half hour, all three men lay jumbled together in that cramped courtyard, bathing in moonlight, not saying a word. Throughout the whole scene the blaring Chinese opera continued to ring out. Oana reflected upon Makino's lecture from inside the closet, supposing that Chinese opera—which he had yet to see in person—must look something like this, and let out a stifled chuckle.

After the regular New Year's celebrations, during the approach of Chinese New Year, Saruwatari occupied himself with setting up a money-lending business for the locals. He wore a fashionable astrakhan hat, the authenticity of which he never failed to boast of to every acquaintance he happened upon in the street. He walked his rounds wearing a coat

with an old, worn out collar of sea-otter's fur, and tall boots. However, he despised the notion of anyone witnessing him collecting on debts, and always attempted to appear as composed and professional as he was when he was practicing unlicensed medicine. But he could not stand to let a deadline go even one day late, and so whenever it was time to come and seize the collateral, he threw any semblance of composure to the wind. So unhinged would he become that any bystander would describe him to be in a frenzy. Yet, despite all of this, he was unable to collect from his debtors as successfully as he wished, receiving for collateral once some cheap costume jewelry bracelets and rings; another time, a box stuffed with raggedy old clothes. The only venue he had for procuring even a little profit was by selling black-market morphine.

This was Kiku's job. She was happy enough to do it because all she had to do was sit by the vending window of the old pharmacy and wrap single doses of the stuff in the desk drawer there in some wax paper and exchange them for money without saying a word. Particularly in the evening, when the coolies came swarming in droves, they could actually sell enough to make it worthwhile.

One day, Saruwatari received a summons from the police. Glancing over Kiku's sallow face and restless eyes, he said, "I guess we've been found out," his lips trembling a bit. And yet, when he was stood before the officer in charge, he acted completely nonchalant. His words were excessively humble, but his projected attitude was anything but. "I see," said the officer, with a sharp glance toward Saruwatari, his tone clearly expressing the fact that he had been waiting for quite some time. Saruwatari felt a shiver run up his spine as it dawned upon him: *Now I'm done for*. But to his surprise, the discussion developed in quite an unexpected direction, as the official informed him that his son Shōzō had taken up with a gang of juvenile delinquents in town. Saruwatari was caught completely off guard, but at the same time his momentarily pale countenance flushed red with anger. His pretense of decorum immediately fell to pieces, and, as he had no notion of how to address the subject, began to sputter and stammer out seemingly random nonsense as he feverishly bobbed his head in a series of ungraceful obeisances. According to an article in that morning's paper, some young gang leader named Kim, a Korean waiter working at a café, and his group of hoodlums had been caught shoplifting from a bookstore and an athletics shop. Saruwatari protested that he could never have even dreamed of his boy joining such a group. His lone saving grace was that while Shōzō was affiliated with the gang, he had not been a direct party to the incidents this time around. When the boy, whom Saruwatari always assumed had been properly attending school, was thrust before him, he felt his face burning with rage once more. The moment he recognized his father, Shōzō let out a wail and burst into tears. The unsightly scene of the lanky boy standing there in his middle-school uniform bawling his eyes out stirred a new kind of anger in Saruwatari.

Once they were out of the police station, Saruwatari smacked the boy once on the cheek, and then took off ahead without a word. It was a bitterly cold day. As he walked among the evening crowds of the South Market, he glanced back, expecting to see a somewhat crestfallen Shōzō following behind. The boy, however, had a bald smirk pasted across his face. Saruwatari balled up a fist in his jacket pocket, with instinctual thoughts of violence. But at the same time, he made a stinging realization: *What was it the police official was just saying? Something about discipline in the home? The love of one's parents? And what I said . . .* "Well, yah know, discipline in the home is certainly at fault, now isn't it? After all,

*my wife and I have no education to speak of. But furthermore, that boy's whole life, he's been playing with Korean and Manchu kids, so it's—that's right, I used this really great phrase—it's the environment where we live, and we can't change it."* But what the hell does environment mean, anyways? Gazing up at the turbid winter sky, mixed with clouds of tobacco smoke, Saruwatari muttered aloud, "I suppose this environment has had an effect on me, too . . ."

Around this time, Makino started sleeping in all day, almost never going out to work, although he never complained of being ill. This resulted in an unending stream of bickering between him and his woman day in and day out. Kiku had suddenly felt intimidated by the police, and seemed to want to withdraw from the morphine business, preferring to spend the day sulking in bed. She even started pestering Saruwatari to go to Yaeko just once to ask her to help out with the family finances.

Saruwatari finally decided to visit his daughter at the dance hall one evening. When he first entered the building, he simply stood in the corner, somewhat overwhelmed by the sight of the men and women clinging to each other's bodies, spinning and whirling and dancing along with the raucous music. With an empty laugh, he waited for the girl to come over. When Yaeko approached, she pointedly spat out, "If there's something you want, send me a letter!" Saruwatari ogled his daughter, her oily, thickly made-up face, and her body wrapped in a tight dress that left little to the imagination. Thinking to himself, *Damn girl's looking more and more like her mother*, he delivered Kiku's entreaty. Yaeko knitted her brow into an exaggerated scowl as she listened.

"Are you thinking you can fall back on me again in the future? I can't believe it! I suppose you'll be coming around here a lot, huh? You know, I can only give what I have . . ." With these words, she drew a five-yen note from her handbag, folded it into a minute package, and surreptitiously extended her arm out to her father. After which, she protested, "You shouldn't be bothered to come all the way out here by yourself next time; just send Shōzō in your stead! And don't come here during business hours, it's completely inappropriate!" Saruwatari felt eyes around the room turning in their direction, and wondered what everyone must think of the two of them. For instance, if they thought there was some kind of sexual perversion going on, it would certainly interfere with the hall's business. Even as Yaeko stood there talking to him, she was greeting the young men passing by with her eyes—some of whom would come in close and paw at her near her breasts—and there were also middle-aged men who were up to no good. Saruwatari witnessed all of this, thinking to himself, *I see, this is evidence that my daughter is a full-fledged woman*, while at the same time broiling with a vile anger at the thought that the young men were making a fool of his person, coupled again with a sickening sense of embarrassment. He could not help himself from groaning that *I, too, have come to ruin*.

In contrast to the changes in Saruwatari's and Makino's lives, Oana and Samejima were living the best of times. The price of guinea pigs had risen, and Oana's product had been fruitful and multiplied itself several times over. Thus, whenever he ran into Saruwatari, he would gleefully remark, "If you notice how plentiful the guinea pig brood is, they really do seem like rats, or like rabbits, you know." Samejima in particular was overwhelmed with orders for his stock as the Chinese New Year approached. He even hired some Manchu laborers and worked regular evenings.

It was the last night of the lunar calendar. The houses of the Manchu people resounded with the popping of firecrackers intended to scare away evil spirits. Saruwatari and his wife had gone to bed early, but they both awoke, complaining to each other of the racket. Suddenly, there was a thunderous boom. Concerned, Saruwatari lifted his head, only to see a scene outside his glass window glowing blood-red. The roof over the apartment was roiling with flames. Clad in his pajamas, Saruwatari grabbed a bucket from the kitchen, filled it with water, and ran. Knowing that it was already too late, he splashed the water up at the flames crawling along the eaves—only to have it fall right back down on his head. After that, he simply stood numbly, watching the fire climb higher and higher, letting it do as it would. Inside the house, the firecrackers sounded off *Snap! Pop! Snap! Pop!* Makino hollered out “Samejima has been terribly injured!” And Oana was crying about something else. Soon, they could hear the siren of a fire engine. Saruwatari’s body was overtaken by a fierce shaking as he began to realize *This is really bad.*

The fire only spread through the rental apartments (Samejima and Oana’s were completely destroyed; Makino’s was burned halfway through). Samejima was taken on a stretcher to the Red Cross Hospital, and his wife repeatedly charged that “Those Manchu laborers did the deed. It was because they resented their low wages.” The Oana family were all safe and sound, but the guinea pigs were nearly completely wiped out. The only one saved had been grabbed by Oana’s seven-year-old son as he ran from the house. The whole family stood dumbfounded before the horde of dead animals. Saruwatari dimly mumbled his sentiment that *I said that living things aren’t meant to be kept as pets!* over and over again while stumbling aimlessly about. Makino was picking through the great disarray of tools and other sundries, again bawling out his sobbing woman before striking her in the face. The frigid night gradually broke into day.

Saruwatari knew that he had to give up his house now, but he continually made up reasons one way or another to delay his exit. And he continued, as before, his aimless rounds of collecting on debts.

Around the end of the second month, Yaeko turned up unexpectedly with a surprisingly propitious job offer. It was for an on-site doctor in some far-flung prefecture in northern Manchuria. The job merely required a person with an unspecified level of medical knowledge. They would provide equipment and medicine and offer a stipend of thirty yen a month for syphilis and other regular medical examinations, and he was guaranteed that medical consultation fees would land straight in his pocket. Hearing this, Saruwatari accepted without a second thought.

The night he was about to depart for that distant land, he stopped by Makino’s place to give a final salutation. After the night of the fire, Makino had come to Saruwatari in tears begging him for help, and had stayed in the disused examination room ever since. He had laid his futon out directly in the ceremonial alcove and was wrapped up inside fast asleep. The woman was in the corner of the room, boiling some stew over a charcoal brazier. Without so much as lowering his head in greeting, Saruwatari spoke:

“I’m leaving tonight.”

“Is that so . . . finally taking off? Once you’re gone, I’m certain to be run out of here before long . . . we really ought to have one last drink together, I think.” Makino’s beaming face poked out from beneath the covers.

“You’d better take care of yourself,” Saruwatari said as he searched about the room. All of the medical instruments and other miscellany that had populated the exam room had long been sold off, to the last piece. The only exception was the skull, which he spied mixed in among Makino’s junk.

“Ah, methinks I’ll use this to decorate my new examination room,” he said, taking it into his hands and batting away the accumulation of dust.

“Good for you! From now on, you’ll be a practicing tanuki on the up-and-up.”

“Just like the tanuki-in-disguise fairytale . . . once my tail is out, there’s no going back to hiding.<sup>11</sup> It’s just as they say, you know—learn a trade, and you’ll never starve.”

“That’s true, you’ve acquired quite a useful trade. Speaking of which, before you leave, could I trouble you for a once-over? It’s not that there’s any one specific thing that’s wrong, but . . .”

“Well, it’s syphilis, my friend—don’t you know? It’s started quite recently. The treatment for syphilis is Compound 606. If it’s not taken care of quickly enough, it will enter your brain, and that’ll be it.”

“Oh . . . I suppose that’s it . . .” Makino spoke in an unusually docile manner, without opening his eyes.

“Seems like the wind is pretty rough tonight . . .” Saruwatari tried to signal his desire to take his leave.

“But for you, friend, they are the winds of a new spring. The ice is going to melt soon. Once you’ve settled down over there, find some kind of work somewhere that I can do. Even in this condition, I can still . . . no . . . I was, what, a sea pineapple? I can’t move anymore . . .” Makino fell silent. The woman in the corner of the room fell into a harsh fit of coughing.

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11 He is referring here to *Bunpuku chagama* 分福茶釜 (or 文福茶釜, “the lucky tea kettle”), a story in which a tanuki repays a man’s kindness by transforming himself into a fancy *chagama* teapot and allowing himself to be sold in the local market. A priest buys the pot-shaped tanuki, but when he puts it over a flame, the magic animal’s legs and tail reappear, and it dashes back to its original benefactor. In a common version of the story, the animal is stuck in a half-tanuki, half-teapot state, and becomes a kind of circus attraction. The conclusion is considered auspicious for all parties.



**SPECIAL SECTION, edited by Nobuko Toyosawa**

**Auxiliaries of Empire: Children, Foot Soldiers, and Settlers in Japanese Imperial History**

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## INTRODUCTION

# Imperial Residue: Ambiguous Imperialists and Their Cultural Production

**KATŌ Kiyofumi and Nobuko TOYOSAWA\***

In 2025, eighty years will have passed since the unconditional surrender of Japanese armed forces on 15 August 1945. Today, historians and journalists who narrate the story of the Japanese Empire employ a great deal of historical evidence produced during and after the war, including interviews, memoirs and recollections, monuments, films, and organizational publications, which are deployed alongside primary sources left by the Japanese state, colonial government authorities, and non-state actors in order to narrate the story of this empire.<sup>1</sup> These sources allow us to go beyond the national history of Japan's imperial past, offering cultural representations that provide us with glimpses of how individuals resident in or subject to the Japanese Empire lived their lives. They may also suggest to us how wartime experiences were carried over into the postwar, as the understandings of individuals and communities of their postwar situation were profoundly shaped by both their experiences and memories of what had come before.

This Special Section, entitled “Auxiliaries of Empire: Children, Foot Soldiers, and Settlers in Japanese Imperial History,” looks to shed new light on the “ambivalent imperialists” who, we argue, played a vital role in imagining, materializing, and legitimizing the Japanese Empire, even as they had little awareness of their involvement in such a grand enterprise. The existence of such individuals is rarely foregrounded in national histories, and the individuals examined here do not appear in grand narratives of Japanese history as major historical players. All are characterized by a seeming inability to control their own fate, and their voices and actions remain largely silent in the postwar historiography of the Japanese Empire. In this collection of articles, we bring such individuals under the microscope in order to analyze how they maintained agency while being undoubtedly complicit in Japan's

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1 Katō 2015, pp. 16–18; see also Narita 2020.

imperial enterprise, with the aim of better understanding both Japan's imperial past and how that past is understood today.

This section examines these imperial auxiliaries within an era of war and peace in twentieth-century East Asia in order to trace how these ordinary individuals took advantage of opportunities born out of international geopolitical transformations—war, colonization, and shifting state claims to legitimacy—to enable them to live their lives under the aegis of the Japanese Empire. By underscoring the myriad ways in which these lives intersected with imperialism, the micro-analysis conducted across these three articles foregrounds individuals who could be used to symbolize powerlessness, dependency, or political disconnection, yet whose presence was part of a project of legitimation undertaken by an expanding empire. Focusing particularly on the cultural expression of that presence, this section will contribute to historical understandings of Japan's empire and how it is understood today.

### Imperial History and Its Turns

Knowledge of Japan's empire today is shaped by broader trends within the study of imperialism and empires. The conceptualization of ambivalent imperialists reflects a series of historiographical developments concerning Japan's place within a global imperial history. In the study of imperialism, modern world history from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries is known as the age of high imperialism, largely in reference to the rise and fall of the British and French colonial empires that assembled external colonies for profit and prestige. Imperialism in Asia was not a crucial part of this global history of empires, and, thus, was treated as a response to Western colonial domination. It is now clear that this framework failed to fully recognize Japanese imperialism and the extent of its colonial violence. Japan's wartime aggression was justified in the name of defending the East from Western imperialism, yet it actively sought territorial expansion as a solution to the failures of capitalist modernity at home, with Japan's colonial agenda identified as the solution for the nation's domestic problems. Emerging as a result of unmanageable socioeconomic systems and political structures that pushed its people to support the colonization of Asia, the drive for Japanese territorial expansion and the creation of colonies was, therefore, justified in a similar fashion as in European empires.

In Japan, studies of Japanese colonialism (*shokuminchi kenkyū* 植民地研究) in the postwar era were initially conducted as one aspect of studies of imperialism (*teikokushugi kenkyū* 帝國主義研究), which examines the history of imperialism (*teikokushugishi* 帝國主義史) more broadly. A body of research on Japan's colonialism examining the Japanese Empire and its constituent territories as representing the empirical and historical outcome of imperialism in Asia reached a peak in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> In the first decade of the twenty-first century, studies of Japanese colonialism began to segment into various fields, and the analytical focus shifted from the broader institutional structures of politics and economics to the behavior of individuals within colonized cultures and societies. An analysis increasingly centered on the subjectivity of the colonizers complicates the hitherto mainstream historiography, which largely operates within the binary of colonizer vs. colonized, giving rise to new types of research on empires (*teikoku kenkyū* 帝國研究) and new modes of imperial histories (*teikoku-shi* 帝國史).

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2 Nihon Shokuminchi Kenkyūkai 2018.



This new research on empires grants greater attention to the spaces created and defined by imperial political structures. These were spaces that were not only demarcated and administered by the imperial state, but within which people lived their lives. Scholars working in this mode are interested in observing that the exercise of power is not necessarily or solely top down, but operates in a reciprocal or multi-directional fashion within this imperial space. Such an imperial history signals a shift in the notion of sovereignty, as shown in scholarship on settler colonialism, consumerism, and mass culture in twentieth-century Japan.<sup>3</sup> The field has shifted from the history of Japanese imperialism, and towards a history of Japan's empire, with the emphasis on imperial culture directing our attention to the production of social life within the empire as being to some extent independent of, or at least autonomous from, state authority. This research has shown that the social and cultural spheres played a vital role in the presence and persistence of empire, irrespective of whether particular individuals identified or operated as imperialists or otherwise.

This Special Section is therefore interested in how a broader imperial space intersects with the colonial spaces inhabited by individuals, and how that comes to be reflected in the culture they produced. The attention now paid to these variegated imperial spaces reflects an imperial history that has been inflected through successive "imperial turns" in world history. These turns have sought to push the field to "turn from the study of domestic or national history toward a study of empire, thus complicating the presumed territorial, cultural, and political boundaries between empires and nations."<sup>4</sup>

New research on empires has thus sought to emphasize the actions and activities of individuals as independent of the state, recovering their autonomy. Historians have sought to pay more attention to the ways in which imperial subjects, those implicated within the broader structures of imperialism but not defined by it, pursued their lives. These subjects form social relations, develop networks of production and exchange, and exercise political agency within an imperial space, because empire also serves to frame these dimensions beyond the imperial state's role as the provider of infrastructure and social regulation. The three articles in this Special Section explore how a farmer-artist, writers, and the privileged imperial children of Japan's empire lived their lives within this imperial frame, which inevitably shaped the cultural artifacts they left behind.

### **Historical Background: Imperial Democracy and Imperial Culture**

This Special Section is particularly interested in the lived space of individuals in the Japanese Empire. It focuses on how individuals experienced imperial life, particularly as this experience came to be mediated by and through their cultural activities, and what those activities have left for us today. This is a rich area for further investigation, as Japan in the early twentieth century is vividly associated with a lively consumer mass culture before the rise of militarism.<sup>5</sup> Many Japanese were aspiring "modern" people in the years between the world wars, with modernity having strong associations "with technological progress, mass communication, rapid urbanization, consumerism, cosmopolitanism, self-indulgence,

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance Duus 1995; Young 1998; Harootunian 2000; Sato 2003; Silverberg 2006; Tierney 2010; Uchida 2011; O'Dwyer 2015; Chatani 2018; Uchiyama 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Ghosh 2012, p. 772.

<sup>5</sup> Dower et al. 2012; Uchiyama 2019; Vlastos 1998; Young 2013.

iconoclasm, diversity, and dissent.”<sup>6</sup> The popular obsession with pleasure and consumption in Japan, vividly depicted in, for example, the floating world of *ukiyo-e* in the early modern period, would also find its reflection in the attention granted to pleasure and consumption in the interwar period. Yet this interwar emphasis on popular culture was now one embraced by an ever bigger and broader audience. Cultural producers and consumers now included those considered to have had less access to, or at least less of a role in shaping and producing, the culture of earlier eras, such as women, or those in the countryside. In particular, the emergence of an urban femininity reflecting women’s desires distinguished modern popular culture from that of the previous era.<sup>7</sup> Culture was valuable to many people’s lives, and individuals strove to acquire it as best as they could. This cultural and intellectual vibrancy of prewar Japan was also shared by the ambiguous imperialists addressed in these three articles.

Nevertheless, there remained a significant gap between city and countryside, which gave rise to a proletarian movement in the 1920s that aimed to direct public attention to the socially weak and exploited, as well as to fervent public support for emigration programs, most notably the “Millions to Manchuria” campaign in the 1930s.<sup>8</sup> Different temporalities appeared to exist, and Japanese intellectuals in the 1930s saw the widening socioeconomic gaps in the country as evidence of cultural degeneration resulting from excessive Westernization and the problems of industrial capitalism. They began to idealize a preindustrial past and dreamed of returning to a state before capitalism and modernity. By the late 1930s, modernity meant the “division, disunity, and fragmentation” of society, which would be overcome through territorial expansion and imperial competition. Pleasure-seeking activities, such as cafés, movie theaters, department stores, and the fashions associated with districts like Ginza, increasingly signified threats to the social order.<sup>9</sup> Instead, in the 1940s, fanatical phrases used to characterize the militaristic fervor of the Japanese people began to emerge, most famously the “one hundred million hearts beating as one” (*ichioku isshin* 一億一心).

Phrases like this give the impression that, guided by the state, the populace wholeheartedly supported the war. Undoubtedly imperial subjects did support the war effort under an authoritarian militaristic government, especially after the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War in December 1941.<sup>10</sup> However, as these three articles reveal, imperial subjects were also busily engaged with making their own life decisions, with or without reference to the state. Indifference to state authorities allowed them to focus on their respective careers and lives. However, they continued to operate within a space of empire, meaning that they, too, were ultimately forced to comply with and serve the broader imperial structures within which they were imbricated. The articles in this section therefore engage with questions of how individuals dealt with state-induced violence, what they made out of their experiences, and how their actions might change our perception of the Japanese Empire.

One of the reasons this Special Section is concerned with interrogating the role of involuntary participants in the Japanese Empire today is that scholarly attention to

6 Dower et al. 2012, p. 11.

7 Dower et al. 2012, p. 20; Minichiello 1998; Sato 2003; Silverberg 2006.

8 Young 1998. See also Field 2009; Field and Bowen-Struyk 2016; Tierney 2015.

9 Harootunian 2000, p. 30.

10 Kushner 2005.

the historic role played by people like our ambiguous imperialists remains scant.<sup>11</sup> One explanation for this negligence is the empire's sudden death, which had a profound impact on the consciousness of Japanese people in the postwar era—they were thrown into a state of “*kyodatsu*” 虚脱 (despondency), to borrow John Dower's term.<sup>12</sup> The country came immediately under the authority of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) until 1952, while it was other authorities that determined the future course of the former colonies. Despite the vast numbers of Japanese forced to return at the close of the war, including about 3,500,000 Japanese civilians, of whom 3,000,000 had been residing in Japan's quasi- and official colonies of Manchukuo and Kwantung Province, the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan, and Southern Sakhalin before Japan's defeat, there has been no attempt to officially document the history of returnees (*bikiagesha* 引揚者) in postwar Japan.<sup>13</sup> Plans for a comprehensive history of returnees (including their local history) by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (today the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare) resulted only in a history of the institutional support and policies introduced for them in the postwar era.<sup>14</sup> As with soldiers who returned to Japan from imperial battlegrounds, these evacuees remained present as symbolic reminders of Japan's failure in the postwar era, and consequently their histories and memories were passed over by official attempts to detach the nation's imperial past from its peace-loving present. It goes without saying that their wartime experiences are, however, the vital source of historical investigation today that helps us understand the nature and identity of the Japanese Empire as a colonial and multiethnic empire.

### East Asia's Imperial History Today

The historical circumstances and historiographical shifts outlined above also help us to better understand the persistence and complexity of the Japanese Empire's presence in the present.<sup>15</sup> It has recently been emphasized that it is precisely the complexity of decolonization in Asia that demands further interrogation of Japan's imperial era.<sup>16</sup> That this is an ongoing process is apparent from the Japanese public's amnesia over their imperial past and the political performances of the Japanese government and neighboring nations over Japan's war responsibility that occurs every summer around August 15. The media presentation of debates over war responsibility gives the impression that it has become a diplomatic agenda to be discussed between national leaders. Nevertheless, how do the terms of the debate change if we consider the entire Japanese Empire involved in state violence in one way or another, and, consequently, that everyone's actions had consequences for the existence of the empire? Even if settlers from Japan emigrated as a result of their circumstances at home and were not directly involved in the business of empire abroad, as with immigrants to Manchuria and elsewhere, they were nevertheless imperialists and colonizers who benefited

11 Ōkubo 2023.

12 Dower 2000, p. 72.

13 It is noteworthy that the number of overseas Japanese residents exceeded the number of French or Italian civilians in their respective colonies around the globe. See Katō 2020.

14 Consequently, the local histories of returnees depended on their regional associations, and the experiences compiled remained within a narrow range, epitomized by the twenty-volume publication of the Heiwa Kinen Jigyō Tokubetsu Kikin 1991–2010.

15 Araragi et al. 2022a; Araragi et al. 2022b; Ching 2001; Igarashi 2000; Narita 2001; Yoneyama 1999; Fujitani et al. 2001.

16 Kushner and Muminov 2016; Kushner and Muminov 2019; Kushner and Levidis 2020.

from its existence, and thus legitimized it. These individuals participated in the structures of Japanese control over northeast China, even if they themselves were unaware of their role in wider structures of exploitation.

In this regard, it is worth remembering and emphasizing that the historiographical shift that has taken place in the study of Japan's empire was largely enabled by research exchange and collaboration with foreign scholars. This is the result of better access to historical materials since the 1990s, which occurred following the rapid democratization of politics in Taiwan and South Korea, as well as reforms in China. Particularly in the 2010s, research on the Japanese Empire and imperialism led to international conferences and workshops. This Special Section aims to fit and enrich this genre of imperial history with the hope of promoting further international dialogue about Japan's imperial past.

### **Synopsis of the Special Section**

The contributors to this section show the contradictions that appeared in Japanese society in the first three decades of the twentieth century resulting from its pursuit of capitalist modernity. The respective encounters—a young soldier's experience of the Siberian Intervention, aspiring Japanese writers in Manchukuo, and settler children who were born and grew up in Japan's colony of Korea—are notably ambiguous, and each contributor wrestles with the motivations that prompted their subjects' compliance with the violence that supported and underpinned the Japanese Empire.

The first article, "From the Ground Up: Japan's Siberian Intervention of 1918–1922 from the Perspective of Infantryman Takeuchi Tadao" by Nadine Willems, focuses on a rank-and-file soldier of the Imperial Japanese Army. Willems explores the experience of the conscripted farmer Takeuchi, who was in Siberia for six months in 1920, through the visual narrative he recorded. During his service in Siberia, Takeuchi kept a diary accompanied by vivid illustrations, which is colored by his interpretation of the conflict. Seeing the Siberian Intervention from below, these images display the threats he faced—Russian armies, but also local resistance, cold weather, and a lack of food. While historians have narrowly analyzed the Siberian Intervention as a strategic and political failure of the Japanese Army, Takeuchi's depiction enriches our understanding by revealing both the suffering experienced by soldiers, and their grave skepticism towards the authorities that controlled their fate. The article also notes the particular discordance between peace at home and war abroad, and reveals the cultural capital held by this young farmer soldier, in the form of his artistic techniques, rich imagination, and critical analysis of the military engagement in which he was engaged. These are valuable social and cultural historical findings unearthed by Willems through her interrogation of a major geopolitical event in the early twentieth century.

Willems' analysis of Takeuchi's visual narrative complicates the identification of Japanese soldiers with Japanese colonialism. Obviously, this does not place Takeuchi in the same category as victims of Japanese colonialism, yet like them, Takeuchi was unable to openly display his disagreement with the dictates of the imperial state and its representatives. His pictures clearly reveal a growing skepticism towards his commanding officers, for their lack of military strategic ability and their sheer arrogance, unworthy of respect, and implicates them within the failed actions that took numerous lives of his fellow combatants. They also expose the absence of military vision in a mission ostensibly driven only by the

desire for military prestige, at home and abroad. Willems' contribution rescues the subaltern autonomy of the lower ranks in the Japanese military, with the likes of Takeuchi unable to resist their commanding officers, but keen to document the critical factors that led to the ultimate failure of the Japan's Siberian Intervention, and thus its status as a "forgotten war" in Japanese history.

The tendency to forget failure is also one that runs through the second article, "Culture under Imperialism: *Geibun* and the Production of Manchurian Literature" by Nobuko Toyosawa. This analyzes how a group of Japanese writers living in Manchuria sought to contribute to the development of Manchurian "national" literature, a movement culminating in the publication of the comprehensive cultural magazine *Geibun*. The role of these writers is understudied by comparison with the elite writers, such as Kawabata Yasunari, who closely aligned with official cultural propaganda. Toyosawa explores how writers like Ōuchi Takao and Akihara Katsuji persisted in their efforts to produce a "national" literature that reflected a distinct Manchurian identity, one characterized by egalitarianism, agricultural life, and the unyielding spirit of its inhabitants in the vast yet harsh Manchurian environment.

Despite the initial aims of these writers, it proved impossible for them to remain true to their original goals when mobilization for total war began, and their work increasingly aligned with the imperial state's vision for a Greater East Asian literature. The article argues that their sincere efforts were unable to overcome the mimetic limitations of culture within imperialism, which Toyosawa demonstrates through a textual analysis of a short story published in *Geibun*'s final issue. The impossibility of creating cultural representations not in accord with the structures of Japanese control resulted in the literary imagination of these writers staying within the imperialist ideology of ethnic harmony that valorized the primacy of Japan. The failure of their efforts was subsequently subsumed into the failure of Manchukuo and the Japanese Empire as a whole, and many of these former Japanese Manchurian writers remained silent about their literary careers in Manchuria after they returned to Japan after the war.

Clearly, these writers were complicit with and benefitted from Japanese imperialism, but the article also stresses that their ambivalent relationship with Japanese authority distances them from the state. Perhaps paradoxically, their literary enthusiasm, striving to overwrite official wartime cultural propaganda in the name of Manchurian literature, should also be understood as a means by which imperial culture spread, and Toyosawa's article provides us with insights into how it was that culture operates under imperialism.

The complicated relation between individual actions within the Japanese Empire and their postwar remembrance is also central to the section's third article, Kyrie Vermette's "Not only a Child: The Vulnerability and Complicity of Japanese Settler Girls in Colonial Korea." This focuses on the childhoods of two Japanese settler girls growing up in Japan's colony of Korea, and the remembrance and memorialization of those childhoods in postwar Japan following its defeat. Through her detailed analysis of the two memoirs based on these childhoods, Vermette articulates how settler girls were both vulnerable and complicit in Japan's imperial project. Settler children, and particularly girls, rarely receive scholarly attention as agents of imperialism due to assumptions of their ignorance and powerlessness. However, their entanglements with the structures and mobilities of empire means that these minors were inevitably drawn into colonial systems of power.

This does not make them responsible for Japanese colonialism, but the layers of settler colonial systems that surrounded their lives could not help but implicate these girls within it. Dependent on their parents, and molded by colonial systems of schooling, these girls learned to obey what adults said and decided for them. And yet, as Vermette details, this did not guarantee that their emotions remained in line with imperial demands: the departure of a brother for military service made them mourn, rather than proud of, the separation, for instance. Likewise, being born and raised in Korea, these children developed a strong emotional attachment to Korea as their home, rather than mainland Japan, an attachment fostered by the intense feelings for and memories of the intimate contacts they had with those who took care of them—mothers, nannies, housemaids—all of whom were associated with Korea rather than Japan. As such, they rejected the values and norms that Japanese settler colonialism in Korea sought to impose, which shaped their complex identity as settler children who were both Korean and Japanese, entangled with Japanese colonization.

Vermette's deployment of memoirs allows for an analysis of the ways in which the everyday lives of these children intersected with the broader settler colonial systems, but also reflects their authors' own postwar reflections on these same intersections. It is noteworthy that the publication of personal witness accounts of the war emerged in postwar Japan in reaction to major government decisions and policies about official compensation policies for veterans and expat Japanese. The sheer number of individual and organizational publications in the 1950s and 1960s offers a window into how the postwar legacies of the empire, both in domestic politics and in international relations, included efforts to recover specific aspects of Japan's empire in order to maintain the social and geopolitical order.<sup>17</sup> However, this initial flood of memoirs should also be seen as a form of resistance to the state, a means of signaling an absence of accord with the state's efforts of narration. The recounting of the traumatic events experienced by individuals both during the war and in its aftermath shows the gap existing between personal and official understandings of that experience.<sup>18</sup>

Each of these three articles explores the lives and activities of individuals who have received comparatively little attention in postwar historiography—those forgotten or dismissed due to a lack of authority. By integrating their voices back into the national historical narrative, a more complete understanding of Japanese imperial history will emerge to reduce the gap between official narratives and personal memories. The Japanese Empire had a profound personal impact on people implicated in its structures and on the receiving end of its violence; it is time to direct our attention to individual experience in order to better understand the nature of Japanese colonialism, imperialism, and war.

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17 Katō 2015, pp. 19–24.

18 Bull and Ivings 2019 detail how this gap operates in the case of repatriation to Maizuru.

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Nobuko Toyosawa

Auxiliaries of Empire: Children, Foot Soldiers, and Settlers in Japanese Imperial History

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## **From the Ground Up: Japan’s Siberian Intervention of 1918–1922 from the Perspective of Infantryman Takeuchi Tadao**

**Nadine WILLEMS\***

Japan’s Siberian Intervention was the nation’s most significant strategic and political failure between the Russo-Japanese War and the Asia-Pacific War. While historians have focused on its military and diplomatic aspects, the individual experiences of soldiers in this messy “forgotten war” remain little explored.

This article foregrounds the perspective of ordinary Japanese soldiers dispatched to Siberia between 1918 and 1922. In particular, it draws on archival material left by Takeuchi Tadao, a conscripted farmer who spent six months in the Russian Far East in 1920. A talented artist, Takeuchi produced two richly illustrated accounts, the only examples of non-photographic visual narratives of the Intervention available today. These provide a unique view of the conflict “from below.” For the higher echelons of the Imperial Japanese Army, the occupation of Siberia had the potential to increase Japan’s influence in Northeast Asia, and to showcase the army’s might and efficiency. To the rank-and-file servicemen, however, the rationale for combat was unclear. Their frustrations were compounded by impossible logistics, excruciating cold, and uncertain allegiances in a zone of lawlessness and brutality. Mounting public opposition at home and the failing military strategy in Siberia made 1920 an especially challenging time. Takeuchi Tadao’s records reveal an implicit criticism of the Siberian operations, highlighting the strategic and situational confusion surrounding them, and hence the prospect of a meaningless death that confronted ordinary soldiers in Siberia that year.

**Keywords:** Siberia, Imperial Japanese Army, view from below, Russian Civil War, Bolshevism, strategic confusion

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On 17 January 1920, private Takeuchi Tadao 竹内忠雄 (1897–1955) departed the military barracks of Takada, located in what is now Jōetsu City in Niigata Prefecture, in heavy snow. Following a long journey by foot, ship, and train, Takeuchi arrived at the city of Chita in the Transbaikal region of eastern Siberia, where he would remain until the summer.<sup>1</sup> As an infantryman in the Fifty-Eighth Regiment of the Thirteenth Division of the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA), he was among the over seventy thousand troops dispatched to the region in 1920 as part of the Siberian Intervention. This military campaign lasted for fifty-two months, from August 1918 to October 1922, with the estimated aggregate involvement of two hundred and forty thousand imperial soldiers.<sup>2</sup> A complex and messy military venture, the Intervention flung Japanese forces into the chaos of the Russian civil war that followed the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and ominously laid bare the Imperial Army General Staff's opportunism and territorial ambitions. However, the government and military's official designation of the Intervention as a "stability operation," rather than a war per se, caused confusion among its soldiers, and the Intervention concluded in a strategic debacle, with nothing gained and many lives unnecessarily lost.

Today, there is little awareness of the conflict, or even a willingness to remember it, among most Japanese. When Siberia and war are mentioned together, what generally comes to mind is the grim experience of some six hundred thousand Japanese servicemen and civilians sent to captivity in Soviet camps at the close of the Pacific War in 1945, the repatriation of whom lasted well into the 1950s. Indeed, historian Asada Masafumi 麻田雅文 refers to the earlier Siberian Intervention, or Expedition, as a "forgotten war."<sup>3</sup>

This general desire to forget the Intervention is reflected in studies conducted of it. English-language scholarship on the topic—most recently by Paul Dunscomb—has focused almost exclusively on its diplomatic, political, and military aspects.<sup>4</sup> Japanese scholars have essentially adopted the same top-down approach to the conflict.<sup>5</sup> Works of historical fiction that reverse this perspective exist, such as the celebrated *Habei* 派兵 by Takahashi Osamu 高橋治, but they are limited in scope and number.<sup>6</sup> Virtually forgotten are the experiences of ordinary soldiers like Takeuchi Tadao, who were required to participate in the Intervention with limited understanding of its rationale, and at a time when, ironically, a culture of peace and international cooperation seemed to be flourishing at home.

In his own way, however, Takeuchi was lucky. A farmer in civilian life, he was also a talented artist. Rather than direct involvement in combat, he was assigned the task of chronicling the experience of his regiment through his writing and drawing, records that were possibly intended to be kept as a testament to glorious deeds overseas.<sup>7</sup> Not only did his skills help save him from falling on the Siberian plain like several of his companions, but they also allowed him to document his encounter with war on Russian soil in a very personal and expressive manner. Indeed, Takeuchi's accomplished visual records, which

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1 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 2.

2 Coox 1985, p. 9. Unofficially the conflict lasted until May 1925 as the occupation of North Sakhalin persisted for almost three years after the withdrawal of Japanese troops from the rest of the Russian Far East.

3 Asada 2016.

4 Dunscomb 2011. See also Morley 1957; Humphreys 1995; Linkhoeva 2019.

5 See among others Hara 1989; Asada 2016; Izaō 2003; Hosoya 2005.

6 Takahashi 1973–1977; see also Muneta 1975.

7 Conversation with the Takeuchi family on 7 June 2020.

he produced both on-site in 1920 and after his return to Japan in 1921, constitute the only comprehensive non-photographic accounts of the Intervention available to this day.<sup>8</sup> They depict with raw immediacy the lived experience of members of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment in the Russian Far East.<sup>9</sup> Uniquely, they reveal a view of hostilities from below.

Historians of the modern era have investigated numerous personal accounts of life on the frontline by Japanese soldiers. Naoko Shimazu has scrutinized diaries penned by servicemen during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, concluding that despite ambivalent attitudes towards death and different perceptions of their duty towards the state, soldiers did express feelings of patriotism, fuelled by their participation in the war.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Aaron Moore and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney have examined first-person accounts relating to the Asia-Pacific War, the study of which has succeeded in challenging the idea that the lower ranks of the Japanese military simply consisted of an homogenous mass of indoctrinated men.<sup>11</sup>

By contrast, the Siberian Intervention has yielded only a scant number of personal narratives. The Takeuchi papers complement these, and offer a valuable opportunity to revisit the military venture from the perspective of rank-and-file soldiers. They poignantly illustrate that Japanese servicemen were perplexed regarding the reasons for their presence in Siberia as well as the nature of the enemy. Soldiers were also affected by impossible logistics, compounded by a merciless climate, on a daily basis. Crucially, 1920—the year of Takeuchi’s participation—proved especially challenging as the IJA rapidly became the only foreign power in Russia, even as the political and military situation there and waning support at home increasingly worked against it. If risking one’s life “for the state” persisted as the conventional trope justifying going into battle, death in Siberia seemed particularly pointless. Thus, this article probes the distinctive records produced by Takeuchi for insights into the mindset of recruits like him. It attributes the implicit criticism conveyed in the records to the strategic and situational confusion, and hence the prospect of a meaningless death, that confronted ordinary soldiers in the Russian Far East in 1920.

### The Siberian Intervention

In March 1918, Soviet Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, defaulting on all of the commitments made by Tsarist Russia to the Allies in World War I, which resulted in the collapse of the Eastern front. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s request in July 1918 for a joint operation in Siberia set the stage for the deeper involvement of Japanese forces in a global conflict. The government of Terauchi Masatake 寺内正毅 (1852–1919) had turned down an earlier request from France and Britain that Japanese troops intercept any German advance in the east, a strategy supposed to restore the Eastern Front and therefore

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8 These family-owned papers include one set of 109 drawings made by Takeuchi on-site in 1920 (a first draft, or *nagurigaki* 殴り書き), and another set of seventy-four drawings realized a year later back in Japan on the basis of the first set and colored in. There are also two notebooks compiled by Takeuchi in 1920 and a written narrative of the military operations from 1921. See Takeuchi 1920a; 1920b; 1921a; 1921b.

9 The area concerned in this article is the territory east of Lake Baikal, referred to as Siberia and alternatively as the Russian Far East.

10 Shimazu 2001 and 2006.

11 Moore 2013; Ohnuki-Tierney 2006; see also Yoshida 2020, and Muminov 2022 for studies of the recollections by returnees from Siberia after 1945.

relieve pressure in the west.<sup>12</sup> Although the U.S. was initially opposed to any intervention, by the summer of 1918 there were mounting concerns that stockpiles of ammunition stored in Vladivostok could fall into German hands. The precarious situation of the Czechoslovak Legion—about fifty-three thousand combatants stranded in non-allied territory—also motivated calls for a rescue mission.<sup>13</sup> Pressured by its military, and desirous of an alliance with the U.S., the Japanese government finally agreed to a joint intervention.

Eager to exploit the instability created by the Russian civil war, the Imperial Army General Staff had already envisioned the establishment of a communist-free buffer zone in Siberia under Japanese control, a scheme that could help prevent the infiltration of anti-colonial activists into the Japanese Empire.<sup>14</sup> The IJA therefore pushed for heavy investment in the campaign, with Japan sending more than ten times as many men as suggested in Wilson's proposal. The troops of the Intervention landed in Vladivostok in August, with the stated objectives of rescuing the Czechoslovak Legion and protecting stores of Allied war material.<sup>15</sup> However, the IJA made its presence felt as far west as Irkutsk in Transbaikalia and also sent reinforcements to northern Manchuria, aiming to control the Trans-Siberian and Chinese Eastern Railways. This was in addition to operating in the Russian Maritime Province, the Amur Province, part of Kamchatka and on the island of Sakhalin.<sup>16</sup>

After the end of the First World War in November 1918, the anti-German rationale of the Intervention shifted to a vaguer anti-Bolshevik position.<sup>17</sup> From the start, however, public opinion expressed reservations about the wisdom of the Intervention. The situation on the ground deteriorated following the collapse of the White (anti-Communist) government of Admiral Alexander Kolchak (1874–1920) in late 1919, which had been backed by Allied forces and based in the central Siberian city of Omsk. The U.S. suddenly informed Japan in early January 1920 of its intention to withdraw its troops. By spring 1920, all other foreign forces had departed or were on their way out, including the Czechoslovak Legion.

In the wake of the collapse of the Kolchak regime, the government of Hara Takashi 原敬 (1856–1921) hesitated about the appropriate course of action. One immediate response to the departure of the American troops, though, was the dispatch of Takeuchi's regiment as reinforcements for the Fifth Division already stationed in the Transbaikal region around the city of Chita.<sup>18</sup> There, the Japanese were allied with a local White leader, Ataman Grigory Semenov, or Semyonov (1890–1946), who controlled the strategic railways and fought the eastward progress of the Reds. In the spring, Takeuchi's regiment would participate in the "Chita Operations" in defence of Semenov's base.

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12 Asada 2016, p. 15; Hosoya 1958, p. 93.

13 The combatants were Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war who joined the Russian Army and, after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, for a while fought Bolshevik forces in Siberia. See Hayashi 2018.

14 Korea had been part of the Japanese Empire since 1910 and shared part of its border with the Russian Far East. Japan also feared for the security of its interests in Manchuria. See Izaio 2000; Linkhoeva 2018.

15 Contingents from Japan, the U.S., France, Britain, Italy, Canada, Poland, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, and China participated in the Intervention.

16 Asada 2016, pp. 73–74.

17 Dunscomb 2006, p. 59.

18 Sanbōhonbu 1972a, p. 43.

In early 1920, Hara envisaged the withdrawal of Japanese troops, albeit under conditions.<sup>19</sup> He faced, however, not only internal dissension within the government, but also opposition from the General Staff, which asserted its Right of Supreme Command (*tōsuiken* 統帥権). Developments in Nikolaevsk-on-Amur in early March, which resulted in the massacre of about seven hundred Japanese civilians and soldiers, convinced Hara that withdrawal was not an option.<sup>20</sup> Tokyo soon announced its decision to remain in Siberia, thus marking the start of Japan's unilateral Intervention.<sup>21</sup> The stated objective of Japan's military presence was now to protect local Japanese citizens, whose numbers had continued to rise since 1918, as well to offer assistance to the Russian population and "reestablish order" in East Asia.<sup>22</sup>

In the context of the civil war, however, the presence of Japanese forces galvanised nationalist feelings and ultimately worked in favor of the Bolshevization of the Russian Far East.<sup>23</sup> In the second half of 1920, Japan withdrew its troops, including Takeuchi's regiment, from Transbaikalia and removed its forces from northern Manchuria, but the Intervention persisted in the Vladivostok area.<sup>24</sup> The establishment, on Moscow's initiative, of the Far Eastern Republic (F.E.R), a nominally independent state aligned with the Bolshevik-dominated Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, led to the withdrawal of the remaining Japanese troops, who finally departed by the end of October 1922.<sup>25</sup>

The IJA had hoped that military success in Siberia would enhance its prestige at home and overseas, and this was one of the motivations put forward for intervening.<sup>26</sup> Instead, the Intervention was largely viewed as a senseless waste, encapsulated in the popular wordplay of the time that referred to the *Shiberia shippai* シベリア失敗, or Siberian failure.<sup>27</sup> The ill-conceived military venture cost the lives of over three thousand Japanese servicemen, including 1,717 who died of disease.<sup>28</sup> Violent clashes with civilians involved Japanese troops on several occasions. As noted by a contemporary witness of the Intervention, by the end, the Japanese managed to antagonize both the Whites and the Reds, and when they left, nobody thanked them for having been there.<sup>29</sup>

### The View from Below

Leaving Japan's shores in January 1920, Takeuchi Tadao was thus sent on a mission whose rationale was far from straightforward, albeit one that increasingly reflected anti-Bolshevism.<sup>30</sup> In his 1921 written narrative of these events, he referred to the "subjugation of extremist forces" (*kagekihagun seibatsu* 過激派軍征伐) but provided no details on who

19 Dunscomb 2006, p. 111.

20 Dunscomb 2006, p. 59. For more on the massacre at Nikolaevsk, see later in this article.

21 Dunscomb 2011, p. 119.

22 Izaō 2000, pp. 176–179. The number of Japanese residents in eastern Russia (east of the Urals) was 8,295 in 1919, compared to 4,470 in 1915. See Hara 2015, p. 177.

23 Sablin 2019, p. 133.

24 Dunscomb 2006, p. 59.

25 The Japanese, however, occupied Northern Sakhalin until May 1925, where they had been stationed since 1920 in retaliation for the Nikolaevsk Incident. For the role of the F.E.R., see Sablin 2019.

26 Kurokawa and Matsuda 2016, p. 13; Dickinson 1999, p. 195.

27 This references the Siberian *shuppei* 出兵 (intervention).

28 Tucker 2006, p. 969.

29 Yamanouchi 1923, pp. 5–6.

30 Sanbōhonbu 1972b, p. 610; Kurokawa and Matsuda 2017, p. 3.

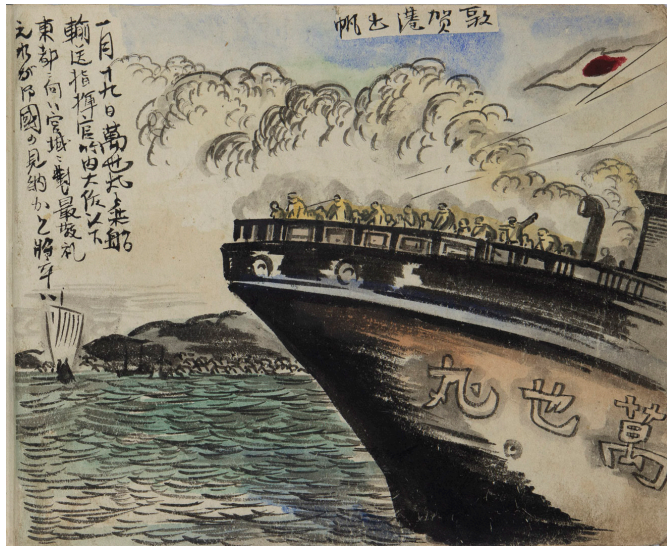


Figure 1. Takeuchi Tadao, *Tsurugakō shuppan* 敦賀港出帆 (Setting sail from Tsuruga Port). 1921. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

these forces were and why they needed subjugation. Most of the time he wrote about the “enemy” in the abstract. Although his status as the appointed chronicler of events may have promoted a certain caution, the vagueness of the term also suggests that he lacked a clear understanding of why he was there. A similar incomprehension seemed to have circulated among other Allied troops.<sup>31</sup>

Soldiers’ accounts of war sometimes express excitement when beginning their journeys to the conflict zone. Young men who embarked for the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905 wrote about their joy and pride in joining the campaign.<sup>32</sup> Some who left for Siberia in 1918 had similar feelings, noting for example the merriness and conviction of “no regret” that prevailed inside the train carriages on the day of departure.<sup>33</sup> Takeuchi’s records, however, produced two years into the hostilities, expressed more ambivalence than enthusiasm. He recalled the departure from the port of Tsuruga on the Sea of Japan as a sober affair. The men aboard the ship “turned toward Tokyo and made a respectful salute in the direction of the Imperial Palace, thinking that it may be the last time for them to see their country” (figure 1).

Thirty members of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment lost their lives in the “Chita Operations” in Siberia in 1920 and over a hundred and forty sustained injuries. Takeuchi, a farmer from the village of Otagiri 小田切 in the Nagano mountains and a conscript at the age of twenty, was aware of the implications of his duty as an infantryman. The letter of welcome into the army he received in November 1917 from the local Imperial Military Association urged him “to be prepared in case of emergency to bravely offer his life to the state.”<sup>34</sup> The readiness

31 Dunscomb 2011, pp. 87–88.

32 Shimazu 2006, pp. 42, 48.

33 Kuriyama 1993, p. 8.

34 Teikoku Zaigō Gunjinkai 1917.



to give one's life "for the state" (*kokka no tame* 国家の為) constituted one of the ideological tenets of the modern army that the rulers of Meiji Japan strove to implement. Even though not all men were called to serve, the conscription ordinance of 1873 defined the blood tax (*ketsuzei* 血税) as a moral obligation for citizens.<sup>35</sup> Similar to conscripts in other modern nations, notably France, young men interiorized the concept.<sup>36</sup> The consecrated formula of *kokka no tame* became part of public discourse and crept into personal records. Stationed in the Russian Maritime Province from August 1918, first-class private Matsuo Katsuzō 松尾勝造 urged his family to rejoice at the event of his death because he would have fulfilled his duty toward the state and the Japanese empire.<sup>37</sup> Takeuchi described the thrill of an upcoming battle in terms of *chi waki niku odoru* 血沸き肉踊る (literally, "the blood heating up, the flesh dancing") and with the understanding that, "the time has come for us to spill our blood for the sake of the state."<sup>38</sup>

Beyond the formula's rigidity, however, lay a transformed meaning. In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, the Meiji Emperor appealed for his subjects to fight Russia in order to preserve Japan's sovereignty, threatened by instability on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>39</sup> In that context, while not all soldiers unreservedly accepted the concept of *kokka*, "dying for the state" carried some significance.<sup>40</sup> The Siberian Intervention was a different matter. Presented as an expedition in support of the allied powers—a "stability operation"—it did not constitute a confrontation between states in which the emperor would visibly act as the Supreme Commander.<sup>41</sup> In any case, the ailing Emperor Taishō was much less of a symbolic presence than his predecessor Emperor Meiji, which diluted the links between state, monarch, and military. Moreover, in 1920, when Takeuchi embarked for Siberia, the Intervention was morphing into a unilateral undertaking, rather than the initial joint operation that had been expected to showcase Japan's commitment to international cooperation.

During his six month stay in Transbaikalia, Takeuchi witnessed about three weeks of actual combat and smaller clashes with Soviet aligned troops and Bolshevik partisan fighters. Two major offensives by the Reds took place in the Chita area between 10 and 13 April, and between 25 April and 5 May, when units of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment assisted Ataman Semenov's forces in protecting the railways and repelling the enemy.<sup>42</sup> All the active deployment of Takeuchi's regiment was concentrated in this specific period in the spring, and involved confrontation with thousands of enemies.<sup>43</sup> How the young recruit chronicled the events tells of much grief and chaos, as the men experienced night fighting,

35 Ōhama 1978, pp. 7, 26–27.

36 See for example Frühstück 2017. France imposed universal military conscription as a condition of citizenship in 1798 and held to the principle of *L'impôt du sang* (Blood tax). The army created in Japan after the Meiji Revolution of 1868 was in part based on the French model. See also Barclay 2021 about the connection between state and soldiers maintained through decorations, ceremonies of enshrinement, memorials, and other means.

37 Matsuo 1978, p. 73. Matsuo was born in 1897. Date of death unknown.

38 Original text: *Wareware no chi o nagashite kokka no tame hataraku aki wa koreru nari* 吾々の血を流して国家の為働く秋は来れるなり. Takeuchi 1921a, p. 2.

39 Nishikawa 2021, pp. 4–5.

40 Shimazu 2001, p. 85.

41 Asada 2016, pp. 61–62.

42 See Sanbōhonbu 1972b, pp. 701–721.

43 Takeuchi 1921b.

surprise enemy attacks, pursuits through deep forests and mountains, and villages caught in the crossfire—resulting in corpses littering the fields in their hundreds. As Takeuchi noted with some pathos, among these scattered corpses were companions who died “an honorable death” with the monthly wage of six yen and thirteen *sen* in their pockets, received just the night before.<sup>44</sup>

The pictorials, however, notably eschew the glorification of death. Instead, they depict the utter misery of war, which is shown to affect the Japanese forces, their Russian allies, the enemy, and locals alike. Takeuchi’s drawings repeatedly depict death on the battlefield, not as the price of victory, but as a tragic yet all-too-common reality, one only loosely related to the IJA’s strategic aims. The young artist represented soldiers picking up the injured and lifeless bodies of their friends and allies on stretchers. He drew combatants falling in action, and fields covered with corpses and red with blood (figures 2 and 3). In his illustrations, heroism hardly held any place, and when it did appear, it was to highlight the bravery of an ordinary soldier retrieving the body of his superior through a rain of bullets, rather than a triumph in battle.<sup>45</sup>

The representation of inglorious and seemingly pointless death is a striking characteristic of Takeuchi’s series of sketches. This clearly contrasts with *sensōga* 戦争画, those illustrations produced in wartime that had been particularly popular during the Sino-Japanese War and, to a lesser extent, the Russo-Japanese War. *Sensōga* possessed a well-established propaganda function that persisted throughout the Meiji era (1868–1912).<sup>46</sup> In the case of the Siberian Intervention, however, the only pictorial rendition commercialized at the time was a set of seventeen lithographic prints produced between 1918 and 1920 by the publisher Shōbidō.<sup>47</sup> These prints shared features with many of their predecessors in the *sensōga* genre that reinforced the narrative of Japanese strength. They depict Japanese combatants contrasted with less valorous and, sometimes, less civilized opponents. Typically, the choice of a bird’s-eye view highlighted territorial control and strategic mastery. Heroic actions that celebrated a specific military figure were meant to appeal to patriotism, and only then was the suggestion of Japanese death acceptable (figure 4).<sup>48</sup> The technological superiority of the Japanese military constituted a theme of choice that the bird’s eye view served to emphasize (figure 5). Takeuchi’s approach was very different. He shows the vulnerability of his comrades to danger from the skies, and some drawings point to the IJA’s inferiority rather than superiority. A caption indicates for instance that, “While we are living in train carriages in Chernovsk, enemy planes come over our heads every day, dropping bombs and firing machine guns. Nothing compares to the fear that people are experiencing” (figure 6).

Takeuchi’s scenes of combat, captured from a position at eye level and in real time, inverted this perspective, both metaphorically and literally. His drawings leave the viewer implicitly questioning the rationale for the war. That the “faces” of the enemy were not

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<sup>44</sup> Takeuchi 1921a, p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> Takeuchi 1920b, p. 67.

<sup>46</sup> Bourke 2017, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> Kyūro Tōdoku Enseigun Gahō 救露討獨遠征軍畫報. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005680037/>.

<sup>48</sup> For propaganda and *sensōga*, see for instance Swinton 1991; Fröhlich 2014; Szostak 2017; Morello and Auslin 2021; and Dower 2008a; 2008b.



Figure 2. Takeuchi Tadao, *Sōretsu no kiwami* 壮烈の極 (Extreme heroism). 1920. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

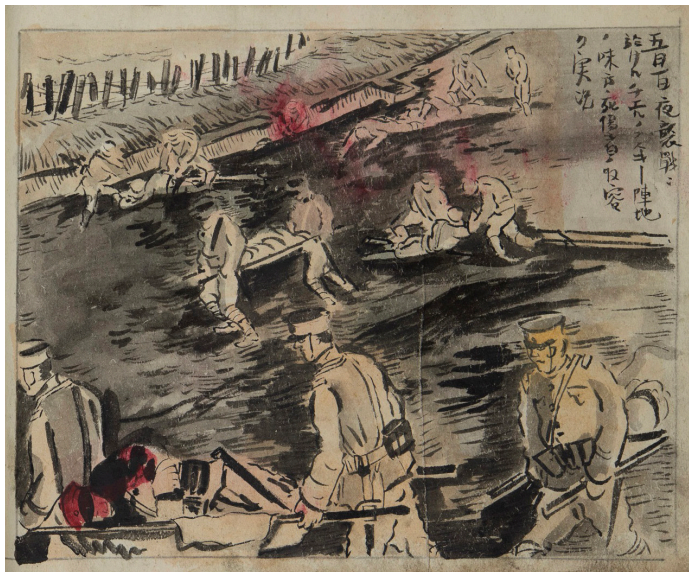


Figure 3. Takeuchi Tadao, *Untitled*. 1921. Japanese soldiers retrieve the injured and dead bodies of their allies. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.



Figure 4. Tanaka Ryōzō 田中良三, *Gōyū musō naru Konomi tairi no fūsen* 豪勇無双なる許斐大尉の奮戦 (Unparalleled Bravery of Captain Konomi's Heroic Battle). The English title given on the print actually refers to another print in the series. Shōbidō Gaten, 1919. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

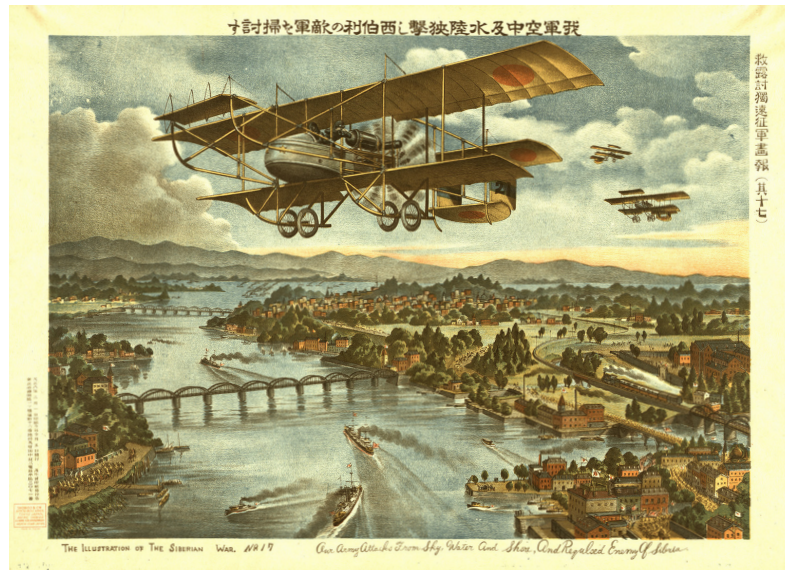


Figure 5. Tanaka Ryōzō, *Waga gun kūchū oyobi suiriku kyōgekishi Shiberia no tekigun o sōtōsu* 我軍空中及水陸攻撃し西伯利の敵軍を掃討す (Our Army Attacks From Sky, Water and Shore, and Repulsed Enemy of Siberia). Shōbidō Gaten, 1919. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Figure 6. Takeuchi Tadao. *Untitled*. 1921. The enemy attacks from the sky. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

easily recognizable became emblematic of the Siberian Intervention and affected military morale.<sup>49</sup> It was never clear to soldiers how much their presence in Siberia related to their country's sovereignty or even who the enemy was. In contrast to the two previous state-to-state conflicts, distinguishing enemy from foe, or "extremists" from ordinary villagers, was not an easy matter. They all spoke Russian, wore similar clothing, most had similar facial features, and did not indicate their political allegiance with colors or a badge.<sup>50</sup> In the words of a lower-ranking officer referring to the Russian "extremists," "It's not as if they have two noses and three eyes."<sup>51</sup>

As the Intervention proceeded and Bolshevism spread into Siberia, the IJA became increasingly aware of the dangers of radicalization among Korean and Chinese nationals, particularly after the 1919 March First and May Fourth Movements. These indicated growing anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist sentiments in Korea and China respectively, and made the subduing of potential rebellions against Japanese rule a pressing preoccupation.<sup>52</sup> In North Manchuria in late 1919, several soldiers of the Fifty-Third Regiment met an "honorable death" in a clash against "insubordinate Koreans" (*futei senjin* 不逞鮮人).<sup>53</sup> In early February 1920, the possible radicalization of Koreans was presented to the United States as a reason why Japan would wait before withdrawing its troops from the region.<sup>54</sup> Thus, if Japanese forces were involved in the "subjugation of extremists," the term covered

49 Hiroiwa 2019, pp. 98–99; Hara 1989, pp. 420–427.

50 Hiroiwa 2019, p. 97.

51 Quoted in Dunscomb 2011, p. 178.

52 Linkhoeva 2018, p. 269.

53 Ōya 1989, p. 837.

54 Linkhoeva 2018, p. 269.

protagonists from a variety of backgrounds and motivations, a situation that further blurred the lines between ally and enemy.

### Army and Society

The contradictions and confusion that characterized Japan's Siberian Intervention largely reflect the opposing societal trends that defined the Taishō period at home. On the one hand, Taishō was about being modern, or *modan*, and all it implied in terms of daily life, including mass communication, consumerism, and cosmopolitanism.<sup>55</sup> A vibrant and diverse cultural scene encouraged self-expression, non-conformism, and dissent rather than group thinking and obedience. A heightened sense of individualism had emerged after the Russo-Japanese War in tandem with waning public sentiment for the institutions of the state. As somewhat derogatively suggested by poet Kaneko Mitsuharu 金子光晴 (1895–1975), “rather than their country, the children of Taishō only thought about themselves.”<sup>56</sup>

Although more prevalent in the cities, the vocabulary of self-expression and self-realization was not absent in the countryside. That a farmer like Takeuchi Tadao, brought up in an isolated mountainous environment, chose to devote time and the limited means at his disposal to the pursuit of his artistic endeavors, attests to the reach of this vocabulary.<sup>57</sup> In chronicling the war experience of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment in Siberia, Takeuchi demonstrated confidence in his skills while conveying his views and impressions. In addition to the drawings, he composed *tanka* 短歌 and variations on popular songs. They not only lamented the loss of life incurred by the military operations in which he had been drafted, but also highlighted the discordance between peace at home and war abroad (figure 7).

A *tanka* poem included in the 1921 narrative of the Chita Operations echoed such sentiments:

My beloved family	<i>Kawaii saishi</i>	可愛妻子
Now abandoned	<i>suterumo</i>	捨るも
For the sake of the nation	<i>kunkoku no tame</i>	君国の為
Corpses are littered	<i>kabane o sarasu</i>	屍をさらす
On the Siberian plains	<i>Shiberia no hara</i>	西伯利の原 <sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, the IJA watched these new societal trends with alarm. In the first instance, the higher echelons were perturbed by the disaffection with military values among conscripts, suggested by draft evasions, cases of misconduct, and suicides among soldiers, both in peace and wartime. These increased after the Russo-Japanese War and corresponded to a general erosion of traditional bonds in society.<sup>59</sup> The reverberations of the vocal nonwar movement that emerged in 1903 and the influence of Tolstoy, perceived in Japan as an

55 Dower 2012, p. 11.

56 Kaneko 2015, p. 8.

57 Conversation with Takeuchi Masayuki on 1 February 2021. Takeuchi Tadao took some drawing lessons from Ogawa Ryūsui 小川柳翠 (1862–1928), an artist and teacher active in the Shinano region. A burgeoning Farmers Art Movement also promoted the work of amateur artists, which for some led to an extra source of revenue.

58 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 2.

59 Tobe 1998, pp. 184–186; Drea 2009, p. 134.

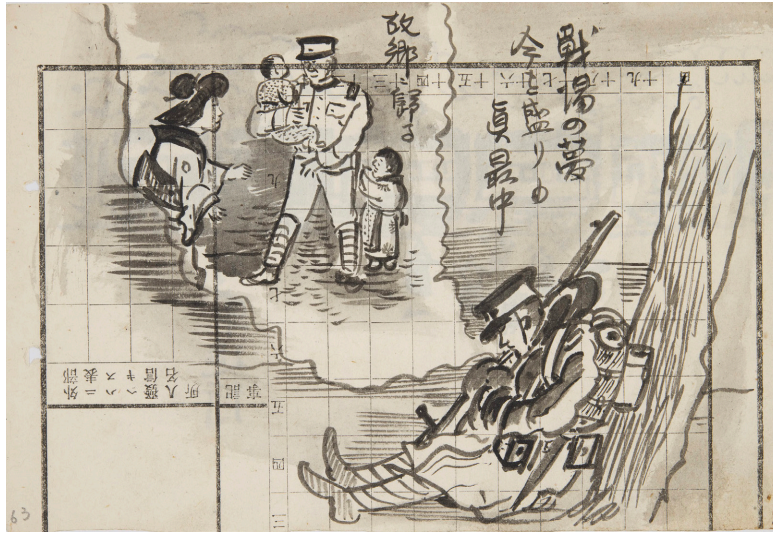


Figure 7. Takeuchi Tadao, *Senjō no yume* 戦場の夢 (Dream on the battlefield). 1920. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

apostle of humanism, persisted long after the peace treaty of 1905.<sup>60</sup> In 1908, Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1872–1930) published *A Soldier* (*Ippeisotsu* 一兵卒), a short story in which a private marches alone away from his barracks while crying in pain because of the effects of beriberi. The book encapsulated in a few pages the disillusion brought about by war and the military that seemed to infiltrate the IJA ranks. At the close of the First World War, Japan's newly acquired status on the global stage as a participant in the discourse of peace and international cooperation also shaped the collective mindset. The country sat at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as a fifth power, and Woodrow Wilson's vision of peace—the Fourteen Points issued in January 1918—concerned Tokyo as well as the main European protagonists of the conflict.<sup>61</sup> The discourse of peace in the immediate postwar was difficult to ignore and constituted a legitimate worry for the IJA.

During those years, *Kaikōsha kiji* 偕行社記事, the journal of the army's main fraternal organization comprising its active and retired officers, dedicated its pages to debating the ills faced by the military institution and referred to worrying changes in people's thoughts. These new ideological threats included anti-militarism and pacifism, ideas of freedom (*jiyū* 自由), equality (*byōdō* 平等), and humanism (*jindō* 人道), and demands for self-realization, democracy, and radicalism.<sup>62</sup> The latter became a serious preoccupation after the Bolshevik Revolution. In Siberia, the military police intercepted revolutionary propaganda material held by soldiers on several occasions, incidents that stoked fears of rebellion within the forces while at war.<sup>63</sup> Although apparently immune to revolutionary influences, Takeuchi Tadao was a youth of his times and the rhetoric of peace seems to have been on his mind.

60 See Konishi 2013, pp. 149–208; Kobayashi 2008, pp. 231–232. For the importance of Tolstoyanism in Japanese intellectual history, see for example Solovieva and Konishi 2021.

61 See Dickinson 2021, pp. 249–252.

62 Asano 1994, pp. 85–89, 99.

63 Kenpeishireibu 1976, pp. 388–389, 411, 432. See also Linkhoeva 2018, p. 267.



Figure 8. Takeuchi Tadao, *Sekai no heiwa* 世界の平和 (Peace in the world). 1920. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

The sketch of what looks like a giant heron, or crane, mounted by a Japanese man dressed in civilian clothes, drawn on-site and captioned as “Peace in the World” (*sekai no heiwa* 世界の平和), illustrates the pervasiveness of such rhetoric (figure 8).

Anticipating a war that would at one point require full mobilization of the population, and long critical of the fighting capabilities of conscripts, the IJA grew determined to counteract the perceived laxity of the times with enhanced discipline and public relations campaigns.<sup>64</sup> More importantly, it started to believe that heightened fighting spirit and the morale of troops would make up for material inferiority and lagging technology on the battlefield.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the Siberian Intervention provided a golden opportunity to tighten discipline and test the endurance of soldiers. Kuroshima Denji 黒島伝治 (1898–1943), known today for his commitment to proletarian literature and his anti-war stance, harshly criticized the IJA. Stationed in Siberia as a military nurse in 1920, he reflected in his diary that the non-officer class were treated “like pigs.”<sup>66</sup> It was all well and good to invoke duty to the state, but he wondered about the individual rights granted by this same state, which the army so evidently trampled.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, the IJA had to contend with public opinion, where dissent about both the military and the Intervention itself were cause for concern. The army’s reputation was reeling from the Ōura Scandal (Ōura Jiken 大浦事件) of 1915, which had revealed vote buying to ensure endorsement in the Diet of higher military spending, a major issue of controversy during the period.<sup>68</sup> In early Taishō, the public increasingly turned hostile to the clique-ridden structure of politics in which the military played a prominent role.<sup>69</sup>

64 Drea 2009, p. 134.

65 Tobe 1998, p. 152.

66 Kuroshima 1955, p. 142.

67 Kuroshima 1955, p. 159.

68 Mitchell 1996, pp. 31–37.

69 Nakamura and Tobe 1988, p. 518.



The Siberian Intervention intensified rather than assuaged this kind of criticism. The dispatch of forces to the Russian Far East did not generate much popular war fever. On the contrary, the planned provisioning of rice for the troops had contributed to a major price hike, which in turn motivated a series of riots around Japan between July and September 1918. The army was called in to suppress the most violent ones, a mission that went directly against the long campaign of gaining ordinary citizens' confidence and support for the institution.<sup>70</sup> The irony of course is that Japanese soldiers in Siberia suffered from empty stomachs most of the time and regularly craved rice.<sup>71</sup> As the presence of Japanese troops dragged on, debates about the benefits and rationale of the Intervention raged in the press.<sup>72</sup>

In March 1919, news reached Japan of the almost complete annihilation of the Tanaka detachment of the Seventy-Second Regiment by Bolshevik partisans. The incident had taken place near Yufta, in Amur Province, leading to the death of over three hundred men hailing from Japan's southern city of Oita, their fate partly caused by their unfamiliarity with the extreme cold and heavy snow conditions at the time.<sup>73</sup> Japanese forces retaliated with the destruction of the Russian village of Ivanovka.<sup>74</sup> The incident motivated intellectual Ishibashi Tanzan 石橋湛山 (1884–1973) to renew in April of that year calls for the withdrawal of the troops.<sup>75</sup>

### Waning Support for the Intervention

What happened at Yufta also suggests that the IJA felt the growing need to bolster its public relations campaign at home. On 18 January 1920, the *Tokyo Asahi Daily* featured an interview with Lieutenant General Nishikawa Torajirō 西川虎次郎 (1867–1944), the head of the Thirteenth Division quartered in Takada. On the eve of his departure for Siberia, he appeared relaxed and self-assured, declaring that he had been composing poetry in preparation for his military duties. When queried about the objectives of the Intervention and the responsibility of the IJA, now that the Czechoslovak Legion was on their way home, he quickly dismissed the question, arguing that he was not qualified to broach such a difficult topic, and that he would rather elaborate on some good news about the Thirteenth Division. According to him, the Takada youth were blessed with good health and hardly affected by the influenza epidemic that was hitting other Japanese troops. Additionally, as mountain men, they were used to the cold and to the rigors of the snow.<sup>76</sup> Nishikawa also rejoiced at the successful fundraising drive in the Nagano area in support of the division, which in his view indicated that the public sympathized (*dōjō* 同情) with the role of the Takada men in Siberia.<sup>77</sup>

Effectively, the division head intimated that military goals and responsibility were an elite affair, which he was not prepared to share with ordinary readers. What mattered in his view was the image of the IJA, and the physical and mental resilience of the young men sent

70 Drea 2009, p. 144.

71 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 26; Kuriyama 1993, p. 43.

72 See Dunscomb 2006.

73 Izae 2017, pp. 169–170.

74 On 22 March 1919, Japanese troops killed 216 villagers in the belief they were Bolshevik partisans, and burned 130 village houses.

75 Dunscomb 2011, p. 90.

76 Unlike the Oita-based unit annihilated at Yufta almost a year before.

77 “Shussei no Nishikawa shidanchō” 出征の西川師団長. *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, 18 January 1920.



Figure 9. Takeuchi Tadao, *Pesuchanka ni okeru tōki* ベスチャンカに於ける冬季 (Winter in Peschanka). 1921. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

to fight in unfamiliar territories for unspecified objectives in the midst of a worldwide flu pandemic! As a member of the Thirteenth Division and chronicler of the movements of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment in Siberia, Takeuchi Tadao, too, endeavored to portray the Takada men as resilient and brave. Nonetheless, despite having been brought up in the mountains, he found it difficult to cope with the Siberian winter. He described the winter uniform worn by infantrymen, part of which was made from animal skin, as essential for survival (figure 9). But it was by no means warm enough. The cold sliced into his body.<sup>78</sup> Siberia—with its relentless snow (*furisosogu kansetsu* 降り注ぐ寒雪)—was a treacherous and desolate plain, one “without east or west and not a bird flying in its sky.”<sup>79</sup> Indeed, newspapers carried regular reports of soldiers afflicted by frostbite and other cold-related conditions, a situation that further affected the morale of the troops.<sup>80</sup>

Kuriyama Tōzō 栗山東三 (1897–1963), a member of the reserve corps, wrote in his diary about a two-month long grueling reconnaissance mission in the winter of 1919 near the Manchurian border, with temperatures falling to forty degrees below zero almost every day. He suffered from frostbite of the nose, which handicapped him for the rest of his life.<sup>81</sup> For soldiers, the cold was indeed excruciating and in some cases was a direct cause of death. Kuriyama, whose diary was only found after his death and who had never even mentioned its existence when alive, expressed resentment about his time in the army. In retrospect, military recruits had come to see such reconnaissance missions as chiefly motivated by the need to test the endurance of ordinary soldiers. With a view to further military campaigns, the idea was

78 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 10. Sometimes soldiers put cotton rags under their uniforms and in their boots in order to better resist the cold.

79 Takeuchi 1921a, pp. 4, 6.

80 See for example “Shiberia shusseigun no kanku” 西伯利出征軍の艱苦. *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, 11 January 1920.

81 Kuriyama 1993, pp. 33–62.

to measure the extent to which Japanese soldiers could withstand extreme temperatures and physical exhaustion.<sup>82</sup> This sinister “experimental dimension” could well have been in the minds of some lower rank soldiers, given the infamous precedent of the Hakkōda Incident (Hakkōda Secchū Kōgun Sōnan Jiken 八甲田雪中行軍遭難事件) of January 1902, in which 199 men out of 210 lost their lives, with 193 of them freezing to death en route during a training expedition across the Hakkōda Mountains in Aomori Prefecture.

The diary of mid-ranking officer Tsukamoto Shōichirō 塚本正一郎, which records thoughts and events during the several months he spent in Amur Province in 1919, highlights the divide between the life of officers and that of rank-and-file soldiers on the front line.<sup>83</sup> It suggests, for example, that the former indulged in drinking and partying on a regular basis, sometimes mingling with their Russian allies while vodka and sake flowed in abundance.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, military hierarchy dictated that the lower ranks routinely carry out hard labor and abide by the whims of their superiors.<sup>85</sup> But the diary also reveals tensions within the officer class itself. Tsukamoto berated the arrogance and petty-mindedness of the commanding officer, who he accused of losing sight of the priorities for the Japanese occupiers.<sup>86</sup>

Stationed in the town of Nikolaevsk-on-Amur, Tsukamoto lost his life in the spring of 1920 in the Nikō Incident (Nikō Jiken 尼港事件) a few months after writing these lines. The incident involved the massacre of about seven hundred Japanese civilians and soldiers, and the obliteration of an entire garrison of the Fourteenth Division. The attackers were guerilla fighters, a motley group of Bolshevik-aligned partisans, including Russians, Chinese, and Koreans.<sup>87</sup> The leader of the group, Yakov Tryapitsyn (1897–1920), ordered his troops to surround the town in February 1920, demanding the surrender of the outnumbered Japanese forces. Instead, the Japanese launched a surprise attack in March but were wiped out. By late May, the Russian and Japanese inhabitants of Nikolaevsk had been slaughtered and the town burnt to the ground.<sup>88</sup>

When news of the fate of the Japanese residents of Nikolaevsk reached Japan, it caused uproar.<sup>89</sup> The frictions that were mounting within the commanding corps—and that Tsukamoto alluded to—suggest that the IJA was disorganized and divided in the weeks prior to the events. The Nikō Incident played an important part in the history of the Intervention, granting the government a pretext for maintaining its presence in the Russian Far East despite growing political opposition and realization that the venture was turning into a quagmire. Tokyo also used it as an excuse to keep troops stationed on the

82 Kuriyama 1993, p. 128. These remarks were made by Kuriyama’s son in a postface to the diary.

83 The birthdate of Tsukamoto is unknown. He died in 1920.

84 Tsukamoto 1978, pp. 256–257.

85 Already in the Meiji period, soldiers were taught that the army was a big family. The cruel treatment of subalterns, referred to as the “whip of love” (*ai no muchi* 愛の鞭), was not uncommon. Ōhama 1978, p. 33. See also Dunscomb 2011, p. 179.

86 Tsukamoto 1978, p. 260.

87 Dunscomb 2011, p. 116.

88 Dunscomb 2011, pp. 115–126.

89 Asada 2016, p. 162.

northern part of Sakhalin, a region rich in natural resources that Japan hoped to exploit to its advantage.<sup>90</sup>

The Nikō Incident is also notorious for the brutality exhibited by Tryapitsyn and his men, allegedly bayonetting victims before trapping them in icy water where they were left to die.<sup>91</sup> The slaughter was indiscriminate too. Like the Yufta Massacre of February 1919, the Nikolaevsk Incident generated a high number of Japanese casualties, hence intensifying the public's calls for the withdrawal of the troops. The comments of Zumoto Motosada 頭本元貞 (1863–1943), publisher of the English-language weekly *The Herald of Asia* and attached since May 1919 to the Press Bureau of the Imperial Expeditionary Force, highlighted the increasingly bitter tone of public opinion regarding Japan's presence in Siberia. Originally, Zumoto welcomed collaboration with the U.S. and the potential establishment of an independent government in Siberia that would enjoy friendly relations with Japan.<sup>92</sup> By early March 1921, however, he had no doubt that supporting the Whites against Bolshevism was unproductive and that local neutrality must be respected. He questioned the “use of stationing an army in Siberia at an enormous cost when its utility is confined to the protection of a few thousand Japanese residents,” and asserted that “(w)ithdrawal was the only rational policy,” a conviction he had held since early 1920.<sup>93</sup>

### No Place for Mercy

In *Imperial Apocalypse*, Joshua Sanborn makes a clear-cut assessment of the Russian Civil War:

The end of the Great War brought the end to whatever restraints had been in place regarding atrocity. The Civil War was marked instead by the valorization of violence and the open practice of terror campaigns. Both Whites and Reds utilized extralegal, arbitrary, and merciless violence to achieve political ends or simply to satisfy their desires in the territories they marched through.<sup>94</sup>

The Japanese soldiers dispatched to Siberia quickly became involved in an unprecedented climate of gratuitous violence and lawlessness. In Transbaikalia, the Fifty-Eighth Regiment encountered the methods of the local White leader, Ataman Grigory Semenov, with whom they were in close contact. A pitiless terror reigned in the Cossack's name, which tainted the Japanese operations in the region.<sup>95</sup> Of mixed Buryat-Mongol and Russian descent, Semenov learned his trade in the Imperial Russian Army. Following the October Revolution, he spearheaded an anti-Soviet rebellion and, after an initial setback, managed to assert his influence over the region of his birth. In 1919, he appointed himself Ataman of the Transbaikal Cossacks, whose support of the White movement became increasingly significant. Because of the need for reinforcement, Semenov had early on encouraged

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90 The occupation came to an end in May 1925 following the signature of the Basic Convention between Japan and the U.S.S.R in January of the same year.

91 Stone 1995, p. 74.

92 Zumoto Motosada. “Situation in Russia and Siberia.” *The Herald of Asia*, 1 November 1919.

93 Zumoto Motosada. “A Siberian Retrospect” and “The Siberian Question.” *The Herald of Asia*, 5 March 1921.

94 Sanborn 2014, p. 252.

95 Youzefovitch 2018, p. 69; Pereira 1996, p. 55.



Figure 10. Takeuchi Tadao, *Shiberia ni okeru Kozakku kibe no gaisō* 西伯利に於けるコザック騎兵の概装 (Siberian Cossack cavalry soldiers in uniform). 1921. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

men from various non-Slavic ethnic groups to join his movement, which included Buryat-Mongols, Chinese, and other indigenous people of the region. Altogether, more than ten different ethnicities were represented.<sup>96</sup>

The Japanese government had from the start given backing to Semenov under strong pressure from the IJA. They hoped he would establish a pro-Japanese independent zone in Eastern Siberia.<sup>97</sup> They also saw in the Cossack Ataman a destabilizing force in the Transbaikalian region, which they could ultimately use to their advantage.<sup>98</sup> And since the Cossacks fiercely guarded the major railway links, they were deemed very valuable. Overall, Semenov was thought by the Japanese as the most strategic among regional leaders in motivating the region's population to form a viable and efficient anti-Bolshevik opposition.<sup>99</sup>

If the IJA had good strategic reasons to side with Semenov, it is also apparent that the Cossacks exerted a strong impression on the Japanese. Their presence in Takeuchi's pictorials is noticeable, as several drawings prominently featured them. Takeuchi depicted the Cossacks as he saw them: tall and with strong shoulders. On horseback and with their trademark head-covering fur toques, they were even taller (figure 10). From a purely iconographic point of view, the drawings convey a faithful image of the physique of Semenov and his troops. By comparison, the Japanese physique was often smaller.<sup>100</sup>

96 Asada 2016, pp. 48–49.

97 Asada 2016, pp. 48–49.

98 Pereira 1996, p. 56.

99 Tairo Dōmeikai 1920, pp. 11–19.

100 Earlier *sensōga* illustrators tended to distort reality by representing Japanese bodies as tall as Western ones. In 1920, a Japanese man was on average 160 cm tall. See Kawata 2013.

But the visuals also suggest that Semenov's personality was itself imposing. The understanding between the Cossacks and the higher echelons of the IJA was based on reciprocity. Semenov relied on Japanese help in terms of men and equipment while the Japanese needed a local ally in order to solidify their presence in Siberia. Yet there was something else at work, more akin to personal affinity, or even affect, that bound the two parties. In his memoirs, Semenov wrote fondly about some of his Japanese counterparts. Referring to his flight from Vladivostok in the autumn of 1921, he claimed to have been deeply moved by the heartfelt farewell address of General Tachibana Koichirō 立花小一郎 (1861–1929), then commander of the Expeditionary Forces in Vladivostok. Interestingly, Semenov attributed this depth of feeling, directed to someone like him who was sent into exile because of his thorough dedication to the fight against Communism, to the spirit of *bushidō* 武士道 (the way of the samurai) which in his view Tachibana's greatness and sincerity embodied.<sup>101</sup> It was not the first time that the samurai and Cossack traditions appeared to fuse. In the Meiji period, Japanese interest in the way of life of the Cossacks as accomplished fighters had already inspired the establishment and training of the *tondenhei* 屯田兵 (farmer-soldiers) of Hokkaido.<sup>102</sup>

Close ties also developed between Semenov and Lieutenant-General Suzuki Sōroku 鈴木莊六 (1865–1940), who headed the Fifth Division's contingent in Transbaikalia. The diary he left at his death makes clear that the Japanese were aware of the plunder and brutality exercised by the Cossack troops, and deemed these actions concerning.<sup>103</sup> Suzuki noted that Russian peasants were more afraid of Semenov than of the Bolsheviks.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the recollections of French General Maurice Janin, the chief commander of the allied troops in Siberia, intimated that the devastations committed in the Transbaikal area by Japanese detachments were guided by Semenov's men giving their allies false information.<sup>105</sup> Although well disposed towards the Japanese, Janin deplored their irrational faith in the Cossack leader and warned Suzuki about antagonizing the local population.<sup>106</sup> Yet, the Japanese officer stood by Semenov. And when the two were about to part in the summer of 1920, Suzuki referred to the Ataman as a friend, also describing his plight in emotional terms.<sup>107</sup>

This kind of affinity with Semenov, however, was not necessarily shared by the lower ranks of the IJA. For his part, Kuriyama Tōzō remarked on the Cossack's arrogance, reporting on an episode in a train carriage where a heated discussion with the Japanese had almost resulted in bloodshed. Violence had only been averted thanks to the skill of the interpreter, who had somehow defused the argument.<sup>108</sup> In Takeuchi's records, the disregard for the life of prisoners during the Russian Civil War is illustrated on two occasions by the summary execution of a Red captive—recognizable by the Bolshevik star insignia on his clothing—by one of Semenov's men (figure 11). Takeuchi neither condemned, nor condoned

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101 Semenov 1990, p. 3.

102 See Hokkaidō Sōmubu Bunshoka 1966, p. 54. See also Youzefovitch 2018, p. 66.

103 Kurokawa and Matsuda 2016, pp. 20, 38; Kurokawa and Matsuda 2017, p. 25.

104 Kurokawa and Matsuda 2016, p. 28.

105 Janin 2017, p. 299.

106 Janin 2017, p. 302.

107 Kurokawa and Matsuda 2017, pp. 25, 36.

108 Kuriyama 1993, p. 29.



Figure 11. Takeuchi Tadao, *Segun horyo o jūsetsu su* 七軍捕虜を銃殺す (Execution of a prisoner by one of Semenov's men). 1920. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

the practice—in one of the drawings a Japanese soldier is standing in the background, watching—but did document the ruthless campaign waged by the anti-Bolshevik troops in Transbaikalia.

Japan's backing of someone like Semenov did nothing to attenuate the endemic brutality that raged throughout the Russian Civil War. That the civilian population of Siberia suffered under the hands of the Japanese for no other reason than being in the wrong place at the wrong time explains in part why the conflict has to a degree been consigned to oblivion.<sup>109</sup> The confusion in the soldiers' minds about who the enemy was provides an element of explanation for some of the summary killings of civilians perpetrated by Japanese forces.<sup>110</sup> Matsuo Katsuzō gave an example of one such incident and expressed incomprehension and distress at the cruelty of the human heart.<sup>111</sup> In personal accounts left by soldiers, there is sometimes palpable anger at the IJA's higher ranks, who expected "subjugation" of the enemy by the troops but did not have to carry out the dangerous and inhumane work of breaking the spirit of the local population themselves.<sup>112</sup> The notebooks left by Fujimori Masatoku 藤森政徳 (1896–1967), who was stationed near Vladivostok for half a year in 1920 as part of the Fiftieth Infantry Regiment of Matsumoto, denounced the unnecessary violence and absurdity of the Intervention (*bakabakashii koto da* 馬鹿ばかしい事だ).<sup>113</sup>

109 For example, very little is devoted to the Intervention in history textbooks, while the Yūshūkan 遊就館, the war museum associated with Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, makes only a passing reference to it.

110 Hiroiwa 2019, p. 104.

111 Matsuo 1978, pp. 202–203.

112 Matsuo 1978, p. 260.

113 Fujimori Masatoku, "Ah sentō wa hisan nari: Kotoshi de hyakunen Shiberia shuppei jūgunhei no nikki" あー戦闘は悲惨なり: 今年で100年シベリア出兵従軍兵の日記. *Shinano Mainichi Shinbun*, 5 July 2018.

Takeuchi's records express the feeling of helplessness experienced by rank-and-file soldiers confronting the misery they inflicted on civilians. In a 1921 picture the young recruit represented the shelling of the village of Popovo, which lay in the line of fire of Japanese artillery during the Chita operations of April 1920. He commented that:

Our artillery does not hesitate to fire over the village while the inhabitants flee in order to avoid harm. I feel sorry for them because they have done nothing wrong. But these things are to be expected on the battlefield. It cannot be helped (*sennaki koto nari* 詮ナキ事ナリ).<sup>114</sup>

For ordinary soldiers like him, the reality of war could only be formulated in terms of unavoidability (figure 12).

Violent clashes were at odds with the appreciation of Russian life and traditions cultivated by the Japanese. Takeuchi reported about the warm and generous welcome received during the same period from villagers in Domno-Klyuchevskaya, who treated the Japanese troops with bread, tea, and milk.<sup>115</sup> Notes also indicate that the young recruit was keen to learn Russian and practised conversation in the language while in Transbaikalia. Since official objectives included restoring peace in East Asia and helping the “good” Russian people, there was some rationale in getting to know the locals, if only to court their goodwill.<sup>116</sup> The government supplied food and medical care to Russians in need during the civil war precisely for that reason, although competing with the United States as provider of assistance constituted a further motive too.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, the affinity with Russian culture—and willingness to explore it—pervades the personal accounts of servicemen.<sup>118</sup>

The disjunction between the need to subjugate enemies—“bad” Russians—and appreciate a rich civilization of the “good” Russians likely compounded the feeling of incomprehension experienced by Japanese soldiers regarding the purpose of their mission. For Takeuchi, the contrast between Russian splendor and sudden brutality was puzzling. He was for example impressed by Chita, the “Kyoto of Siberia” and a highlight of Russian civilization. But in 1920, he could observe scenes of chaos and desperation as “the citizens of the magnificent city, who yesterday enjoyed a carefree and peaceful life, saw their dreams shattered under a hail of fire.”<sup>119</sup> Of the damage done, Takeuchi was both a sorry witness and a participant (figure 13).

The long history of Russian cultural inspiration to Japan could not be dismissed so easily and created the paradox of soldiers fighting against people whose country they respected—one more confusing aspect of the conflict in the mind of combatants. The last words of Ōtani, an interpreter with the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment who fell on the battlefield in April 1919, revealed the depth of this respect: “There are one thousand rubles

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114 Takeuchi 1921b, p. 33.

115 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 32.

116 Izaō 2017, p. 168.

117 Uematsu 2014, p. 2.

118 Kuroshima 1955, p. 148; Tsukamoto 1978, p. 252.

119 Takeuchi 1921a, p. 32.





Figure 12. Takeuchi Tadao, *Popowa no sentō* ホボワの戦闘 (The battle of Popovo). 1921. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.



Figure 13. Takeuchi Tadao, *Jinshin kyōkyō* 人心惶々 (People's hearts are fearful and upset). 1920. Takeuchi probably miswrote 競 for 恟. M. Takeuchi Collection. Courtesy of the Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University.

in my pocket. Please do not send those back to my parents in Japan, but make a donation of half the sum to a Japanese orphanage and the other half to a Russian orphanage.”<sup>120</sup>

### Conclusion

In 1918, the IJA hoped that the Intervention would help restore the image of the military at home and further raise its prestige overseas. Over four years later, as Japanese troops withdrew from most of the Russian Far East, failure and bitterness were the predominant sentiments. The Intervention became for most Japanese a military undertaking better forgotten. Despite the claim of non-interference in the internal affairs of a third country, in reality the IJA took sides in a bloody civil war, which, as time went on, dragged Japanese forces into an ever deeper morass.

Takeuchi Tadao's records illustrate aspects of this messy undertaking and invite us to revisit the Intervention from the perspective of an ordinary soldier. The pictorials he carefully assembled plunge the viewer into scenes of desperation and violence that carried no glory. His sketches, poems, and testimony raise the question of whether sacrificing one's life for the nation and creating so much misery made sense. An ambivalence about the nature of the enemy—the difficult distinction between the “good” and the “bad” Russians—runs through the narrative. And the relentless references to the cold suggest that it was a traumatizing, almost incomprehensible feature of the Japanese soldiers' experience. As a proletarian writer, someone like Kuroshima Denji held leftist beliefs that were uncompromising about what he perceived as the evils of imperialism and militarism. Those beliefs gave a sharp edge to his criticism of the Intervention. In “Siberia under Snow” (*Yuki no Shiberia 雪のシベリア*), a short story first published in 1927, Kuroshima depicts the war as experienced by two hapless soldiers whose humane qualities were no match for the viciousness of the institution that slowly squeezed the life out of them.<sup>121</sup> Dissenting voices like Kuroshima's constituted one form of Taishō self-expression, blunt and critical of the capitalist state apparatus, albeit also at risk of censorship and repression. Takeuchi Tadao's questioning was less ideologically motivated and hence less explicit, but he possessed the means to visualize the incoherence of the conflict. Thanks to his efforts, there exists a powerful and realistic picture of what the experience was like for an ordinary soldier.

The Takeuchi records are significant because they were created at the start of Japan's unilateral phase of the Intervention, which attracted opprobrium both at home and abroad. They give an insight into the mindset of soldiers whose mission received limited public endorsement. Furthermore, a study of the Intervention cannot ignore the growing arrogance of the officer class and tendency to consider young privates as pawns in the service of military self-aggrandizement and experiments. A logical consequence of the chaos that occurred in Siberia is that it sharpened the IJA's determination to bolster the fighting spirit of soldiers at all costs. While the figure of the emperor was more or less absent in this particular conflict, it returned to the center of military life and training a few years later, in an obvious bid to strengthen discipline and prepare for total war.

Over the years, the Yufu and Nikolaevsk Incidents, where many Japanese lost their lives, have tended to define the memory of the Siberian Intervention to the exclusion of the

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120 Quoted in Matsuo 1978, pp. 261–262.

121 Kuroshima 2006.

many other incidents that took place and the complexity of the conflict's global context. It is no coincidence that the records carefully compiled and kept by Takeuchi failed to reach the public eye for so long. That specific military venture made for uncomfortable memories not only because of the victimization of civilians by all sides, but also perhaps primarily because it lacked coherence.

The unintelligibility of the conflict for rank-and-file soldiers remains a striking feature of the Siberian Intervention. Someone like Takeuchi, who was a farmer before being a soldier, could not fully understand why he was struggling against the rigors of the Siberian winter and taking sides in a bloody and savage internecine war with increasingly weak support from the Japanese public. Although the notion of “dying for the state” belonged to his vocabulary, the overriding impression of the deaths he witnessed and sketched is of meaninglessness and confusion. Like many others, he resorted therefore to the idea of inevitability to explain the events he was witnessing. That villagers who had done nothing wrong would find themselves in the line of Japanese artillery fire was deemed “unavoidable.” The expectations of Japan as a modern state shaped Takeuchi's military experience. As a conscript born in a rural setting, he was constrained by his low-level status in the army and the culture of obedience it fostered. It is as far as “complicity” went, but at the very least it set a chilling precedent. The Siberian Intervention deserves to be remembered for all these reasons, and especially because there is much to learn from seeing events “from the ground up.”

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Nobuko Toyosawa

Auxiliaries of Empire: Children, Foot Soldiers, and Settlers in Japanese Imperial History

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## Culture under Imperialism: *Geibun* and the Production of Manchurian Literature

Nobuko TOYOSAWA\*

This article argues that sincere efforts by a group of Japanese writers to give cultural expression to ethnic harmony in Manchukuo were unable to overcome the representational limitations of culture within an imperial system. It examines the debates that took place over the essence of Manchurian literature in literary journals and highlights the publication of the comprehensive cultural magazine *Geibun* as the culmination of efforts of Japanese writers to foster a genuine and distinctive literature for the new “nation” of Manchukuo. Their lively literary production was not restricted to or by official cultural propaganda, but nevertheless it gradually came to align with Japan’s imperial priorities after the Asia-Pacific War broke out in 1941.

A desire for literary realism among Japanese expats living in Dairen in the early twentieth century played a critical role in promoting cultural representations of ethnic harmony as the goal for Manchurian literature, and within the changing political landscape of the period, there were Japanese writers who remained committed to developing a genuinely Manchurian literature rooted in its distinct local soil and communal life. Yet, the impossibility of overcoming the structural and historical forces of imperialism was revealed in *Geibun*’s pages. The article’s final section demonstrates how imperialism intersected with culture through a textual analysis of a short story published in the journal’s final issue, which demonstrates that the cultural production of these writers remained imprisoned by an inability to recognize and represent Japan’s imperial dominance of Manchukuo.

**Keywords:** Akihara Katsuji, Hamazaki Yoshihiro, imperial literature, *Manshū bungaku*, Ōuchi Takao, *zaiman* Japanese writers

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There were two earnest wishes (*higan* 悲願) that occupied Japanese driven out to Manchuria. The first was the hope of returning home someday . . . the second was to reclaim themselves by abandoning their home in Japan and finding one in Manchuria. . . . no matter how twisted this may seem, we wrote to overcome the internal struggles (*naibu no mondai* 内部の問題) of some Japanese in the name of Manchurian literature.<sup>1</sup>

This recollection by the writer Akihara Katsuji 秋原勝二 (1913–2015) expresses the literary ambitions of a group of Japanese in Manchuria in the 1930s and 1940s. These authors moved to, and settled in, Manchuria for a variety of reasons and regarded it as their permanent home. Crucially, they strove to maintain a clear identity as Manchurian writers (*Manshū sakka* 満洲作家), producing a Manchurian literature (*Manshū bungaku* 満洲文学) distinct from the literature of mainland Japan. Their attempt to construct Manchurian literature as a unique genre distinguishes them from the group of elite writers, such as Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899–1972), who actively contributed to the wartime Japanese government’s cultural propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

This article argues that the efforts of these Japanese writers living in Manchuria (*zaiman* 在滿) to foster a genuinely Manchurian literature foundered upon the representational limitations of culture within an imperial system. It does so by exploring the literary activities of these writers and how they positioned themselves within the changing cultural and political landscape of the period. *Zaiman* Japanese writers obviously benefited from opportunities in Manchuria, but they sought to offer a genuine alternative by focusing on Manchuria-related themes. Unlike Kawabata, they resisted central authority and insisted that Manchurian literature should be rooted in the local soil and communal harmony. The *zaiman* writers’ anti-government position complicates the clear-cut distinction of Japan as colonizer and the rest of East Asia as colonized subject. Japanese settlers like Akihara, who went to live with his sister in Manchuria in 1920 after losing his parents at the age of seven, sought to develop a Manchurian “national” literature that would create a sense of community for their egalitarian utopia.<sup>3</sup> Their efforts bore fruit with the publication of the comprehensive cultural magazine, *Geibun* 藝文 (Arts and culture, published 1942–1943). Historians have argued that *Geibun* “offered considerably free space as far as literary works and criticisms were concerned,” despite the war’s impact on the ideological climate.<sup>4</sup> *Geibun*, published by a private press, effectively captures the complexity of Manchurian culture as a project that grew out of imperial Japan’s expansionist agenda.

Through an investigation into the complex literary landscape of Manchukuo, this article first analyzes how the group of *zaiman* Japanese writers emerged. It then examines debates regarding the aims of Manchurian literature taking place in the 1930s, particularly in the pages of *Manshū rōman* 満洲浪漫 (Romantic Manchuria, 1938–1941).<sup>5</sup> Here, I

1 Akihara 1964. Akihara was the pen name of Watanabe Atsushi 渡辺淳.

2 For the role played by Kawabata in advancing the fascist agenda of the state, see chapter 7 of Culver 2013; Cornyetz 2009; Shan 2022.

3 Nishida 2022, p. 206.

4 Zhan 2008, p. 7.

5 The translation of *Manshū rōman* varies by scholar, with *Manchurian Novella*, *Manchurian Novel*, *Manchurian Romanticism*, *Manchuria Romance*, and *Manchuria Romantic*, among others, proposed. As the journal published more than just novels, and its contributors were all fascinated by the vast scale of Manchuria, I opt here for *Romantic Manchuria*.

principally highlight the figure of Ōuchi Takao 大内隆雄 (1907–1980), who translated literary pieces by Chinese authors into Japanese while developing a personal perspective on Manchurian literature.<sup>6</sup> The efforts of Ōuchi and his fellow writers culminated in *Geibun*, the first issue of which appeared in January 1942. The analysis of Ōuchi's *Geibun* pieces shows how Ōuchi's views on the essence of Manchurian literature altered as the debate evolved after the start of the Asia-Pacific War. This shift demonstrates how it became increasingly challenging for *zaiman* Japanese writers to remain true to their initial vision of a Manchurian literature fostered in and for Manchuria itself, as their efforts co-opted the goals of the Japanese state and the historical significance of "Great East Asia." I demonstrate this through the textual analysis of a short story published in the final volume of *Geibun* in October 1943. This piece captures the unconscious prejudices of a writer who adopted the official line that assimilation policy under Japanese guidance was the only way to realize ethnic harmony. The depiction of everyday village life in Manchukuo provided by this piece also reveals what remained invisible, and thus unable to be understood or represented, by these *zaiman* writers. The article sheds light on the way imperialism intersected with culture by revealing the limits of the literary realism and historical consciousness (*rekishi ninshiki* 歴史認識) open to *zaiman* Japanese writers.

### **Zaiman Japanese Writers Down to the 1930s**

Japanese literary communities first emerged in the port city of Dairen 大連 (Dalian) after Japan secured the Kwantung Leasehold as a result of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905.<sup>7</sup> Dairen expanded rapidly after the founding of the South Manchuria Railway Company (Minami Manshū Tetsudō Kabushiki Gaisha 南滿洲鉄道株式会社, hereafter abbreviated as Mantetsu) there in 1907. Its Japanese residents had formed associations for tanka, haiku, and other poetry clubs by the end of the Taishō 大正 era (1912–1926), publishing poetic works, novellas, and literary criticism in local newspapers such as the *Ryōtō Shinpō* 遼東新報 and *Manshū Nichinichi Shinbun* 滿洲日日新聞.<sup>8</sup>

To understand the mindset of many *zaiman* writers, it is important to recognize that for them Manchurian literature predated the 1931 Manchurian Incident. Indeed, the Dairen-based literary movement flourished in a city that never became a part of Manchukuo.<sup>9</sup> For its Japanese residents, their presence there had little to do with military violence.<sup>10</sup> The movement's predominantly aesthetic concerns were reflected in the founding of the journal *Sakubun* 作文 in 1932 by a group of young amateur writers at Mantetsu,

6 Ōuchi was the pen name of Yamaguchi Shin'ichi 山口慎一. He wrote under both names, but below will be referred to as Ōuchi, in line with scholarly convention.

7 Okada 1993, p. 462. The 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth granted Japan "the southern half of Sakhalin, the Kwantung Leasehold on the Liaodong Peninsula, and a narrow strip of rail zone abutting a trunk line that stretched north through Manchuria to Changchun." O'Dwyer 2015, p. 2.

8 Ōuchi 1942e, pp. 180–183; Nishida 2022, pp. 44–45; Nishihara 2016a, p. 407; Okada 1993, p. 473. The *Ryōtō Shinpō* was a weekly newspaper published from 1905 in Japanese and Chinese, and daily from 1906. When Mantetsu established its headquarters in Dairen in 1907, it launched the *Manshū Nichinichi Shinbun*. In 1927 Mantetsu also acquired the *Ryōtō Shinpō* and changed its name to the *Manshū Nippō* 滿洲日報; see Ei 2021.

9 Katō 2012, p. 347.

10 Hayama 2011, p. 252.

which occurred in response to shifts in the literary landscape.<sup>11</sup> After the founding of Manchukuo in 1932 and the designation of Changchun 長春 as its new capital of Shinkyō 新京, Japanese businessmen and settlers flooded north, and the center of literary activity shifted from Dairen to Shinkyō in response to official sponsorship.<sup>12</sup>

As the historian Annika Culver demonstrates, Manchuria would be used to show “the strength of Japan’s civilizing mission and cultural dominance.”<sup>13</sup> Manchukuo was officially not a colony, with treaties like the Japan-Manchukuo Protocol (Nichi-Man Giteisho 日滿議定書, 1932) asserting Manchukuo as a legitimate nation-state to the international community.<sup>14</sup> The new state of Manchukuo sponsored cultural activities, organizing art exhibitions and publications of books to show the ethnic harmony (*kyōwa* 協和) that reflected the state’s founding principle (*kenkoku sengen* 建国宣言) of the harmony of the five ethnic groups (*gozoku kyōwa* 五族協和) constituting the virtuous realm (*ōdō rakudo* 王道樂土).<sup>15</sup> This emphasis on ethnic harmony reflected demographic realities—a Han Chinese population approximating 30 million at Manchukuo’s founding. These were promptly designated as Manjin 滿人 and separated from their Chinese identity and ties with the Republic of China.<sup>16</sup> Those who resisted, like writers Xiao Hong 蕭紅 (1911–1942) and Xiao Jun 蕭軍 (1907–1988), fled.<sup>17</sup> Cultural production thus reflected the unification of Japan and Manchuria (*Nichi-Man ittai* 日滿一体) and the integration of the “pro-Japanese” Chinese. Literature was, thus, a key component of state policies in Manchukuo.

Nevertheless, the character of the literature that would define this new state remained open. After the founding of Manchukuo, Japanese in mainland Japan became increasingly interested in Manchuria as a literary destination in an expanding empire. They eagerly consumed continental literature (*tairiku bungaku* 大陸文学) and writings about the continent (*tairiku mono* 大陸もの).<sup>18</sup> Continental literature reflected the observations of Japanese travel writers who visited Manchuria, often on government- or Mantetsu-sponsored tours or in receipt of financial support from organizations like the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union

11 Inoue 2000, pp. 3–4; In 2010, pp. 38–41; Ozaki 1991, pp. 224–225; Wang 2014, p. 90. The journal initially ran until December 1942. It resumed activities in 1952 to keep track of former contributors and was published as *Sakubun tsūshin* 作文通信 (Composition newsletter) from 1963. According to Okada Hideki, Akihara Katsuji actively edited the revived *Sakubun* until the very end of his life; see Okada 2018, pp. 220–222.

12 The Japanese population of Shinkyō was still absolutely and proportionately smaller than Dairen in 1938; see Okada 1993, p. 462. For a list of cities and their Japanese populations, see O’Dwyer 2015, p. 38, and Ei 2021, pp. 2–4.

13 Culver 2013, p. 42. Culver’s book shows how Japanese cultural producers were sponsored by Mantetsu and Manchukuo government organizations to promote Manchukuo as an integral part of imperial Japan’s cultural sphere.

14 Yamamuro 1991, pp. 129–133.

15 Wang 2022, pp. 76–83. Translations of *gozoku kyōwa* as “harmony of the five races” remain common. Given Manchukuo’s goal of transforming a space inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups into a broader political unit, I opt here for five ethnic groups; see Doak 2012, pp. 2–3.

16 Tamanoi 2000, pp. 253–255; In 2010, pp. 18–21; Katō 2017, pp. 172–180. The Japanese population in Manchukuo had barely reached one million by 1940.

17 Ryo 2003, pp. 6–7; Yamamuro 1991, p. 131.

18 Asami 1940, p. 259. The term “continental” was similarly used in the earlier case of the “continental adventurers” (*tairiku rōnin* 大陸浪人), those active from the Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912) in China and beyond who sought the realization of Japan’s territorial expansion and imperial visions.

(Man-Nichi Bunka Kyōkai 満日文化協会).<sup>19</sup> This genre of journalistic writings represented exoticized Manchurian landscapes, environments, and lifestyles, valorizing the foreign aspects of the multiethnic country.

*Zaiman* Japanese writers were frustrated by this continental literature, in which Manchuria was nothing but a fount of new materials for creative writing.<sup>20</sup> Those who had arrived in Manchuria before 1931 claimed emotional attachment to the land. For them, Manchukuo was real as a place, one which should produce its own national literature.<sup>21</sup> For instance, the founder of *Sakubun*, Aoki Minoru 青木實 (1909–1997), advocated a *Manjin-mono* 満人もの literature that insisted on the depiction of Manjin society as the central theme. Believing that *zaiman* Japanese depended upon coexistence with the Manjin, Aoki was convinced that *zaiman* Japanese needed to understand their cultures and lifestyles.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, despite both Japan and Manchukuo's cultural patronage, efforts to develop a Manchurian literature were not fully under state control. While Mantetsu and the Manchukuo government facilitated the journeys of Japanese travel writers, the resultant continental literature was rejected by *zaiman* Japanese writers. It was the latter who sought to transform the Dairen literary movement into a burgeoning national literature.

### The Essence of Manchurian Literature

In the epigraph, Akihara notes that Manchurian literature reflected the “internal struggles” of himself and others, but it also reflected internal contestation within the *zaiman* Japanese literary community. The key figure for this article is Ōuchi Takao, one of the leading literary figures in Manchuria, an expert in Chinese literature and thought with extensive contacts among Chinese writers and intellectuals.<sup>23</sup> Ōuchi had visited Manchuria as a young man in 1921 but was not part of the Dairen literary movement in the 1920s. Instead, he attended the East Asia Common Culture Academy (Tōa Dōbun Shoin 東亜同文書院), a technical institute in Shanghai, from 1925 to 1929. After he finished school, he was employed by Mantetsu and began working in Dairen in 1930.<sup>24</sup> He compiled and translated a series of Chinese essays as *Essays on Revolution in China* (Shina kakumei ronbunshū 支那革命論文集) in 1930, and his sympathetic attitude toward Chinese communists would trigger his arrest by Dairen Police in 1933.<sup>25</sup> He arrived in Shinkyō to take up a post at the *Shinkyō Nichinichi Shinbun* 新京日日新聞 in February 1935, where he was responsible for the

19 The Cultural Affairs Department of the Japanese Foreign Ministry (Gaimushō Bunka Jigyōbu 外務省文化事業部) established the Manchukuo-Japan Cultural Union in 1933 to vitalize cultural activities in Manchukuo with close association with researchers in the Academy of Oriental Culture (Tōhō Bunka Gakuin 東方文化学院) in Japan; see Xiong 2014, pp. 193–194.

20 Kikuchi 2000, p. 2. For a representative essay critical of writers of continental literature, see Nishimura 1939.

21 In 2010; Chao 2019; Okada 1993; Ryo 2003; Suzuki 2003.

22 Okada 2018, pp. 196–198.

23 Ōuchi 1939b. Besides being an active member of journals, Ōuchi was instrumental in the formation of societies in Manchuria, most notably the Association for Manchurian Writers (Manshū Bungei Konwakai 満洲文藝懇話会 or Manshū Bunwakai 満洲文話会, 1937–1941), a valuable venue for both Japanese and Chinese writers (especially from the Yiwenzhi and Wenxuan schools) to collaborate through symposiums and private gatherings. Chao 2019, p. 168. See also Xiong 2014, pp. 150–151, for a list of the journals he contributed to.

24 Ōuchi 1939a, p. 1.

25 He was interrogated for a week, after which he refrained from being outspoken about the revolutionary movement and instead devoted himself to introducing Manjin literature to a Japanese audience. Nishida 2022, pp. 419–421.

“Arts and literature” (*gakugei* 学芸) section of the newspaper, introducing cultural activities and trends in Manchukuo.<sup>26</sup>

Ōuchi would later argue that “since 1905, the history of Japan’s colonization in Manchuria is over a quarter of a century old. This literary history must be studied separately from Japanese literary history.”<sup>27</sup> He dated the emergence of Manchurian literature to the start of the Kwantung Leasehold, and, although he had not been present, wrote fondly of how eagerly Japanese residents had debated the establishment of a literary journal to represent the multiethnic culture of Manchuria as early as March 1925.<sup>28</sup> In the early 1930s, Ōuchi was arguing that it was necessary to enhance ethnic unity (*minzokuteki kessei* 民族的結成) in a northeast China that had recently experienced the Manchurian Incident and became Manchukuo. Reflecting Manchukuo’s founding principles, he argued that unity could be achieved with Japan through harmony of the five ethnic groups.<sup>29</sup> An essay published in *Manshū hyōron* 滿洲評論 (Manchurian review) in April 1932 clarified Ōuchi’s ideas.<sup>30</sup> Emphasizing the importance of egalitarianism to foster cultural equality among different ethnicities, the government needed to guarantee financial and political support, as well as the protection of the religious rights of all ethnic groups, and exclude policies of aggression (*shinryakushugi* 侵略主義) and xenophobia (*haigaishugi* 排外主義) in Manchukuo.<sup>31</sup>

Ōuchi found a new outlet for his ideas when a cohort of writers including Kitamura Kenjiro 北村謙次郎 (1904–1982), a former member of the Japan Romantic School (Nihon Rōmanha 日本浪漫派), began to publish *Manshū rōman* in October 1938.<sup>32</sup> *Manshū rōman* was critical for the development of Manchurian literature because it provided *zaiman* writers with a venue to publish their creative works for criticism.<sup>33</sup> In a short essay published in its first issue, Ōuchi insisted on a Manchurian literature prioritizing the literature of the workers (*kinrōsha no bungaku* 勤労者の文学).<sup>34</sup> While the ideological climate increasingly mobilized literature as a tool against communism (*bōkyō* 防共) and for the promotion of a vision of Greater Asia (*Dai Ajiashugi* 大亜細亞主義), Ōuchi rejected these abstract notions and argued that it was necessary for Manchurian literature to depict the reality of Manchuria, which was the life of its workers.<sup>35</sup> The following year, he wrote as a member in *Manshū rōman* that:

26 Ōuchi 1939b, p. 171; Nishida 2022, pp. 421–423.

27 Ōuchi 1942a, pp. 140–141.

28 Ōuchi 1942c, pp. 173–174; Ōuchi 1942d.

29 Ōuchi 1932a, p. 9.

30 Ōuchi was a member of *Manshū hyōron* and contributed to the journal frequently. He opined about the place of Chinese arts and culture, economy, and history in Manchukuo and suggested its common languages should be Chinese and Esperanto. The journal’s run began on 15 August 1931 and ended in July 1945. Yamamoto 1982, p. 5.

31 Ōuchi 1932b, p. 24.

32 Hasegawa 1939. The first issue listed the following nine members: Iida Hideyo 飯田秀世, Imai Ichirō 今井一郎, Kizaki Ryū 木崎龍, Kitamura Kenjiro 北村謙次郎, Tsuboi Atae 坪井與, Hasegawa Shun 長谷川澹, Matsumoto Mitsutsune 松本光庸, Yahara Reizaburō 矢原禮三郎, and Yokota Fumiko 横田文子. “Batsu” 1938, p. 274. In the afterword to the second issue, Hasegawa announced four new members, Aramaki Yoshio 荒牧芳郎, Okada Hisayuki 岡田壽之, Ōuchi Takao, and Henmi Yūichi 逸見猶吉.

33 Han 2014, p. 101.

34 Ōuchi 1938, p. 224. See also Ōuchi 1940; Ōuchi 1943a.

35 Ōuchi 1938.



I would like to say that my ideas about literature, especially Manchurian literature in the near future, might be different from other members' views. I personally think that it is totally fine if the title, *Manshū rōman*, does not derive from a specific literary school . . . because I believe that, in essence, its meaning is something like “Manchurian literature” (*Manshū bungaku*). . . . We are all here to pursue literature, and the journal is a venue to present our work . . .<sup>36</sup>

Ōuchi was willing to use his Chinese fluency for cultural exchange (*bunka no kōryū* 文化の交流) and cooperation (*bunkateki kyōdō* 文化的協同) among Japan, Manchuria, and China (*Nichi Man Shi* 日滿支). He understood Manchurian literature in relation to China, as was clear in his 1932 suggestion that Chinese be the common language of Manchukuo.<sup>37</sup> Even in 1940, Ōuchi was arguing that Manchurian literature evolved from Chinese literature as northeast literature (*tōhoku bundan* 東北文壇) and a literature of the north (*hokkoku bungei* 北国文芸). The significance of this “literature of the north” lies in the claim that this is where the modern Chinese literary movement, which helped propel the May Fourth Movement, originated.<sup>38</sup> Ōuchi stressed this “northern” identity as an indispensable characteristic of Manchurian literature. Although he acknowledged the “inappropriateness” (*futō* 不当) of treating Manchurian literature as part of Chinese literature (*Shina bungaku* 支那文学) in his day, he stated that Manchukuo must become the tie (*kusabi* 楔) between Japan and the new China (*shin Shina* 新支那).<sup>39</sup>

For Ōuchi, this northern identity signified persistence and self-transformation, which was imposed onto Manchuria. His analysis of what constituted northern-ness (*hoppōteki na mono* 北方的なもの) is as follows.

Based on my reading of Manchurian literature thus far, they are:

1. The significance of a vast and grand nature
2. The particularly severe climatic impact on human beings
3. The courageous and patient character of the people
4. The role of social structures rooted in a semi-feudal society on the settlers [those from Shandong and Hebei provinces who migrated to Manchuria] . . .<sup>40</sup>

After identifying these four points, he added that:

I usually oppose interpreting literary works in terms of their relationship to climate and environment, but in order to understand Manchurian literature, one cannot overlook the influence of nature, climate, weather, and the resultant conditions on its people and society.<sup>41</sup>

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36 Ōuchi 1939b, p. 171.

37 Ōuchi 1932b.

38 Xiong 2014, p. 229.

39 Ōuchi 1940, pp. 55–56.

40 Ōuchi 1940, pp. 58–59.

41 Ōuchi 1940, p. 59.

In other words, for Ōuchi, as for many writers in *Manshū rōman*, the vast space of Manchuria was its distinguishing feature, fostering a resilient population fighting against this harsh natural environment.<sup>42</sup>

Ōuchi's emphasis on the vastness of the landscape was not as romantic as other members' perceptions, but it still came to signify the core of Manchurian literature for him. In 1939, he published an anthology of translated Manjin writers entitled *Gen'ya* 原野 (The bleak plain), well received by readers in mainland Japan.<sup>43</sup> The anthology was the first to introduce the "real" voices of Manjin authors, and the positive reaction suggests that Ōuchi's selection proved alluring to Japanese readers precisely because the representations of Manchuria he chose met Japanese expectations in terms of romanticism and exoticism. Thus, while Ōuchi's *Gen'ya* presented Manjin writers as authentic Manchurian literature contrasted to continental literature, the anthology did not go beyond "Manchurian literature as the literature of exoticism" because the stories validated ethnic harmony in Manchukuo.<sup>44</sup>

Ōuchi was criticized for his ideas on cultural exchange (*kōryū* 交流) by Manjin writers, as shown in an essay he translated on "Thoughts on Manjin-Japanese Literary Exchange" (Man-Nichi bungaku kōryū zatsudan 満日文學交流雑談). The author, Wang Ze 王則, first expressed his great appreciation for Ōuchi's work as a translator.<sup>45</sup> It was Ōuchi who translated Manjin literature into Japanese and introduced real voices of Manchurian writers, hoping to facilitate better cultural understanding among different ethnic groups. Even so, Wang raised a question about the limits of cultural representation through translation, which depended on the translator's taste for texts. This determined certain cultural information over others to be introduced to the reader. Wang stated as follows:

Due to the lack of translators, only about ten Manjin pieces are translated and introduced to the Japanese reader per year through the hard work of one or two Japanese translators. . . . It goes without saying that the translator chooses what he prefers to translate, and his subjective preference first determines what can become Manchurian literature and what not.<sup>46</sup>

If culture was to be fair and equal to all writers in Manchukuo, as Ōuchi argued in 1932, the works of various Manjin writers needed be translated indiscriminately.

In this fashion, *Manshū rōman* generated lively debates on Manchurian literature and the use of literature to promote ethnic harmony. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm of many authors and readers could not sustain the further publication of *Manshū rōman* in 1941 when official control over artistic expression was tightened and forced the termination of private publications. The Head of the National Propaganda Bureau (Kōhō Shochō 弘報処長)

42 Liu Jianhui 劉建輝 has similarly shown how Kitamura Kenjirō pursued a new literary mode in Manchuria which deployed Manchuria itself "as a vast romantic canvas" (*ōkina roman no kōsei* 大きなロマンの構成) upon which to depict the glorious development of Manchukuo. See Liu 1992, p. 69; Kitamura 1939, p. 168.

43 This anthology was published by Sanwa Shobō in Tokyo in July 1939; on its reception, see Sugino 2000, pp. 5–7. The anthology included twelve novellas by nine Manjin writers; see Ōuchi 1939a, p. 1. For biographical information about Manchurian writers see Ryo et al. 2003, pp. 145–159.

44 Inoue 2000, p. 6.

45 There were a few other translators who contributed to *Manshū rōman* and *Geibun*, but Ōuchi was by far the most prolific.

46 Wang 1939.

of Manchukuo, Mutō Tomio 武藤富男 (1904–1998), also forced *zaiman* Japanese writers to join the state-sponsored Manchurian Writers' Association (Manshū Bungeika Kyōkai 滿洲文藝家協會) in place of the existing Association for Manchurian Writers, which had been the basis of the literary movement in Dairen. The new Manchurian Writer's Association was headed by Yamada Seizaburō 山田清三郎 (1896–1987), who was an active *zaiman* Japanese writer but worked very closely with Mutō.<sup>47</sup> The demise of the old writer's association symbolized the end of an egalitarian literary movement that began among the Japanese expats in Dairen. In spite of the war, however, the debate about the nature of Manchurian literature continued in a new magazine, *Geibun*.

### ***Geibun* as Manchukuo's Cultural Magazine**

Japanese government pressure to integrate Manchukuo into Japan's cultural sphere intensified with the issuance of the "Prospectus for the guidance of arts and culture in Manchukuo" (*Manshūkoku geibun shidō yōkō* 滿洲國藝文指導要綱, hereafter *Prospectus*) on 23 March 1941. Mutō Tomio crafted and launched the *Prospectus* to control cultural production, with the aim of generating pro-Japanese feelings in the country.<sup>48</sup> The *Prospectus* opens as follows:

Arts and culture in Manchukuo (*wagakuni geibun* 我國藝文) adhere to the founding spirit of the country (*kenkoku seishin* 建國精神). In short, arts and culture are the media to express the great spirit unifying the eight corners of the world (*hakkō ichiu* 八紘一宇). [Culture is like a tapestry woven of vertical and horizontal threads.] Japanese arts and culture is the vertical thread, and onto this we horizontally weave in the arts and culture of other ethnic groups. Thus, the arts and culture of Manchukuo will be interwoven with the arts and culture of the world to create an absolutely original culture.<sup>49</sup>

The intended goal was to coordinate all artistic and cultural activities in Manchukuo and to make sure that they aligned with the aims of the Japanese state.<sup>50</sup> Although Mutō stated that this model of culture adhered to the founding principles of Manchukuo, namely, harmony of the five ethnic groups, the relations between these groups were now hierarchical, with Japan as the central thread. This justified the assimilation of the other four ethnic cultures into an "exemplary" Japanese culture as constituting Manchukuo's cultural tapestry.

The *Prospectus* became effective immediately and restricted the creative venues available to artists.<sup>51</sup> All new associations came under the auspices of the League of Arts and Culture in Manchuria (Manshū Geibun Renmei 滿洲藝文連盟), directly supervised by

47 Yamada was a leftist writer who went through ideological conversion (*tenkō* 転向) and became a supporter of the imperial state. He utilized his experience in the proletarian literature movement fully and created analogous structures of various associations to support the League of Arts and Culture in Manchuria (Manshū Geibun Renmei 滿洲藝文連盟). Nishida 2022, pp. 35–43. For more on Yamada, see, chapter 2 of Culver 2013.

48 Ryo 2007, p. 1.

49 Ryo 2007, p. 2. All translations are the author's unless otherwise stated.

50 Ryo 2007, pp. 1–2.

51 Ōuchi 1942e, p. 184; Chao 2019, p. 168; In 2010, pp. 32–34.

Mutō's office.<sup>52</sup> The *Prospectus* imposed new models in order to “facilitate [the] realization of Manchukuo's ‘integrated independent literature,’” and the new state-sponsored Manchurian Writer's Association came to assume a central role.<sup>53</sup> Here again, Ōuchi played a mediating role as Manjin writers such as Gu Ding 古丁, Shan Ding 山丁, Wu Ying 吳瑛, and Yi Chi 疑遲 were forced to join the association.

First published in January 1942, *Geibun*'s stated objective was to represent the culture of Manchukuo's different ethnic groups and to show that culture as a national strength (*kokuryoku toshite no bunka* 国力としての文化).<sup>54</sup> *Geibun* was under the supervision of the National Propaganda Bureau, and, as its title indicates, its appearance was related to the *Prospectus*, as well as to the new League of Arts and Culture in Manchuria. A total of twenty-three issues of the journal appeared between January 1942 and October 1943.<sup>55</sup> Articles in the inaugural issue reflected the state's concerns with Manchuria's ethnic harmony and focused on such topics as the role of Japanese youth in Manchukuo, the function of culture in promoting ethnic harmony, and the development of agriculture and improvement of farmers' productivity to stabilize the country. Another issue published during the same month on the military situation (*jikyokuban* 時局版) reflected the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War in December 1941, with articles asserting the righteousness of Japanese culture and Asian civilization while emphasizing religion, spirituality, and love for humanity. These justifications for Japan's role in the war and world history continued in subsequent issues, especially in the first half of 1942 when the journal reflected a triumphant mood of military success. The year 1942 was also significant as the tenth anniversary of the founding of Manchukuo, which added a celebratory tone to essays on settlers (*kaitakumin* 開拓民) and the youth corps, the Manmō Kaitaku Seishōnen Giyūgun 滿蒙開拓青少年義勇軍, presented as exponents of Japan's pioneering spirit.<sup>56</sup>

While the war influenced the contents of *Geibun*, there was consistent attention to ethnic harmony and how to facilitate greater ethnic cooperation through culture in Manchukuo. The role of literature remained important in these debates, with Ōuchi particularly prominent in the first few issues of the journal. That first issue of *Geibun* saw Ōuchi's translation of “Alkali Zone” (*Jianxing chitai* 碱性地帯) by Shan Ding, pen name of Liang Shanding 梁山丁 (1914–1997), including meticulous “notes by the translator” (*yakusha-ki* 譯者記). Ōuchi retained distinctly Chinese expressions and words, as we see in the title: *jianxing* 碱性 (alkaline soil), followed by the Japanese compound *chitai* 地帯 (zone). The original Chinese term highlights the unique soil in the region, and other

52 For the list of new associations, see Ryo 2007, p. 5.

53 Culver 2013, p. 177.

54 “Henshū kōki” 1942.

55 The journal's initial run as *Geibun* ended in October 1943. That month, the publisher Geibunsha 藝文社 changed its name to Manshū Kōronsha 滿洲公論社 and continued publishing the journal as *Manshū kōron* 滿洲公論 until March 1945. The League of Arts and Culture in Manchuria and the National Propaganda Bureau revived *Geibun* in January 1944 and published it under strict supervision for propaganda purposes until May 1945. Ryo 2007, pp. 7–19; Shan 2014, pp. 78–81.

56 On the role of settler communities and the patriotic youth corps in the colonization of Manchuria, see for example Katō 2017; Tamanoi 2009, pp. 46–49; Tokyo no Manmō Kaitakudan o Shirukai 2012; Young 1998, pp. 377–411.

Chinese terms, such as for a brewery producing unique *sake*, or a salesperson's title, were also retained, accompanied by his translator's notes.<sup>57</sup>

Ōuchi understood Manchurian literature as something nurtured in the local environment, in a culture that developed out of local ideas, religion, food, songs, history, politics, and language (including slang). Ōuchi adhered to the idea that if Manchukuo was to become a utopia for people of different ethnicities, this diversity must be evident, and he sought to preserve the distinct original character (*dokujisei* 独自性) of Manchukuo in Manchurian literature. In this regard, Akihara shared similar intellectual inclinations to Ōuchi. In an October 1943 essay in *Geibun*, Akihara stressed that any lack of an original character in Manchurian literature must be attributed to the lack of awareness of Japanese Manchurians.<sup>58</sup> According to Akihara, *zaiman* Japanese writers could only contribute to the production of Manchurian literature as Japanese Manchurians (*nikkei kokumin* 日系国民).<sup>59</sup> Akihara urged other *zaiman* Japanese writers to regard themselves as “people of this land” (*koko no hito* この人) whose heart was deeply rooted in “this soil.”<sup>60</sup>

The suggestions of Akihara and Ōuchi coincided with the push of critics and intellectuals in mainland Japan to emphasize culture as a bridge between Japan and China. Reflecting this, Ōuchi published a short essay in September 1943 about how Japan could deepen mutual understanding with Republican China through learning more about Chinese culture. Reviewing recent roundtable discussions by Japanese intellectuals on the importance of culture as a unifying force between China and Japan, Ōuchi approvingly spoke of the need to reform Japanese ethnicity (*Nihon minzokusei no kaizō* 日本民族性の改造) so Japanese would be more open-minded to Chinese culture and people.<sup>61</sup> As Ōuchi and other *zaiman* Japanese writers had been studying Manjin culture and history for the past forty years, their expertise could help the Japanese Empire take the next important step towards greater Asian entity.<sup>62</sup> While China lacked people capable of building their own nation, Japanese had to go to China and participate in nation-building along the lines of Manchuria.<sup>63</sup> The essay ends with Ōuchi's request for the Japanese government to develop pragmatic cultural policies emphasizing the practical understanding of different components of culture.

The essay shows that Ōuchi identified himself and other *zaiman* Japanese writers as experts on the culture and history of both Manjin and China. Expertise in Manchurian literature was transferable to Chinese literature, which allowed Ōuchi to argue that *zaiman* Japanese writers should assume a leading role in guiding the literature of Greater East Asia. This shift in Ōuchi's attitude was already visible in an earlier essay on war and literature published in the *Geibun* special issue of January 1942. Assuming that censorship would be

57 It is unclear as to why only this story had detailed notes. Other translations by Ōuchi that year include “Empty Garden” 墟園 by the female writer Wu Ying 吳瑛, published in February, “Demon” 惡魔 by Jue Qing 爵青 in the April issue, “Daling River” 大凌河 by Ge He 戈禾 in the June issue, and “Ten Years” 十年 by Xiao Song 小松 in the January 1943 issue. In these pieces, Ōuchi only provided notes for personal names. See Wu 1942, Jue 1942, Ge 1942, and Xiao 1943.

58 Akihara 1943, pp. 144–147.

59 Akihara 1943, pp. 147–148. For precise definitions of *kokumin* and *minzoku*, see Doak 2012.

60 Akihara 1943, p. 147; see also Akihara 1938.

61 Ōuchi 1943b, p. 37.

62 Ōuchi 1943b, p. 38.

63 Ōuchi 1943b, p. 40.

adopted in Manchukuo, he suggested that *zaiman* Japanese writers like himself could show how “our literature” (*wareware no bungaku* 我々の文学) could direct the peoples of Greater East Asia (*Daitōa no shominzoku* 大東亜の諸民族) in constructing (*kensetsu* 建設) national literatures together.<sup>64</sup> He was certain that *zaiman* Japanese writers could spread the message of Japan’s leading role in the formation of a Greater East Asia better than the official censors, and through constructing a Manchurian literature that embodied the notion of ethnic harmony, provide a template for a future Greater East Asia literature. Ōuchi’s trajectory shows that, despite being initially opposed to the assimilation of Chinese culture, he ended up valorizing what he had rejected. Deeply integrated into the structural constraints of Manchukuo, Ōuchi and other *zaiman* Japanese writers were unable to articulate the limitations on cultural production that imperialism set, if they were even aware of them, and they ultimately envisaged Manchukuo’s new national literature within boundaries set by the Japanese state.

### Literature: A Mirror of Hierarchies and Exclusions in Manchukuo

The remainder of this article engages in a close reading of a short story in order to demonstrate the impossibility of fostering a Manchurian national literature that was based on the egalitarian ideals of *zaiman* Japanese writers under the imperialist ideology of the Japanese state. “Law of the Hamlet” (*Buraku no okite* 部落の掟) by Hamazaki Yoshihiro 濱崎初好 was published in the final issue of *Geibun* in October 1943, and inadvertently exposes the vertical thread within the Manchurian cultural tapestry.<sup>65</sup> I read this story as both artistic expression and realistic representation of life in Manchukuo, one which casts a shadow over the destiny of the nation being celebrated through this new national literature.

“Law of the Hamlet” recounts the experience of Egi, probably a member of the youth corps, working with fellow Manjin officials and assistants in developing agriculture in Manchukuo. No specific details are given about him or where he lives, except that every morning he goes to a public office that used to be some sort of prefectural administrative building for the Chinese residents of the city. Egi has a great deal of respect for Confucian philosophy and proudly identifies his position as a ruling officer with the long tradition of Confucian-style governance in the region. In contrast to the chaotic warlord era prior to Manchukuo’s founding, he aspires to make politics in Manchukuo a source of hope for the people he leads.

Egi is sympathetic toward the villagers, who revere their hamlets (*buraku* 部落) but who “could not care less about the name of the village (*mura* 村)” because those names change with every new administration and are, thus, useless to them.<sup>66</sup> The villagers are poor, with many children and elderly parents to feed, and Egi tries to be understanding when they act recklessly, stealing and violating the planned cotton policy.<sup>67</sup> With the help of Manjin officials who translate for him, Egi teaches the villagers how to cultivate cotton, providing moral guidance so they understand the value of distributing seeds equally to everyone.

64 Ōuchi 1942b, pp. 55–56.

65 Information about Hamazaki is almost nonexistent. His real name is Masaki Tsuyoshi 榎木強. He appeared in the literary world of Manchukuo around the time this story was published. Nishihara 2008, p. 5.

66 Hamazaki 1943, p. 155.

67 Hamazaki 1943, p. 158. In Manchukuo, cotton was one of the major agricultural products shipped to Japan and was strictly regulated to ensure profits for Japanese companies. Dairen Shōkō Kaigisho 1939, pp. 56–78.

One day, one of the farmers, Li, asks Egi for seeds because the chief of the group, Choi, fails to give him any.<sup>68</sup> Through Li, Egi learns that Choi manipulates his position to profit from the unfair distribution of seeds. In spite of his anger, though, Li repeatedly asks Egi not to reveal that he has informed on Choi. Egi, however, feels it is his duty to address the situation, and confronts Choi. Choi denies all the allegations made by Li and demands to face the accuser. To Egi's surprise, at that meeting Li insists that Egi misunderstood his point, and that Li only wanted to get extra seeds. This meeting makes Egi look bad in front of Choi and leaves Li to blame for the incident. Struggling to understand how the entire event has devolved into confusion, Egi feels puzzled, exhausted, and mocked. However, Egi continues to hear from others about Choi's misbehavior, which prompts him to continue to investigate. Egi's sense of compassion does not allow him to assume that Choi is a bad person; he thinks, rather, that the problem is a symptom of a larger issue. As their compassionate leader, Egi keeps telling himself that he needs to know the actual reasons behind the Li-Choi conflict.

The story details Egi's working relations with his serious and diligent Manjin assistants, some of whom are members of the Concordia Association (Kyōwakai 協和会) that embraced unity between Japan and Manchukuo.<sup>69</sup> These Manjin workers are young and committed to cultivating and harvesting cotton. They work closely with Egi, walking around the village farms and instructing farmers how to improve the cultivation of cotton. Through teaching his Manjin assistants how to instruct the village farmers, Egi becomes confident that he is building a genuine, trusting relationship with this community of people. Some of these young assistants are the sons of Egi's friends, and the generational connections he makes with the Manjin also give Egi confidence that he is helping to foster a positive future for Manchukuo.<sup>70</sup>

However, Egi's confidence is crushed one day when he is confronted with the old code of conduct that historically governs life in the hamlet, which a member of Concordia Association refers to as a "limit beyond which we cannot step" (*wareware ga fumikondewa ikenai genkai* 吾々が踏込んではいけない限界).<sup>71</sup> The incident occurs when, after two years away, he returns to the villages and tours the farms. Asking his former assistants how they are getting along with his successor, Zhao, Egi learns that not only does Zhao not inspect the farms but that he rarely comes to the area or offers instruction about cotton cultivation. Egi also notices that the plants need to be sprayed to control the insect population, but the farmers are not inclined to do so. In fact, the assistants and farmers tell Egi that Zhao is a bad person, and that they hate him because he knows nothing about cotton growth, and charges people in his own village more money when he sells seeds to them, because he can sell leftover seeds to others if people in his village buy less.

Egi is hurt to learn that the cotton farms he had cared for have been neglected for two years. What upsets Egi is not that the villagers hid their problems from him, but that, as in the case with Li, the people he trusted were not honest with him. Even though Egi is told

68 Choi and Li are typical surnames for ethnic Koreans, but the characters' ethnic backgrounds are not revealed.

69 The association was directly connected to the Manchukuo Publicity and News Bureau run by Mutō. It was formed in order "to realize a visionary modern polity" and to support the political and cultural ideals of the new state, which was one of the objectives of the Bureau. Duara 2003, p. 75; Smith 2007, p. 25.

70 Hamazaki 1943, p. 161.

71 Hamazaki 1943, p. 164.

that Zhao is a bad supervisor who seeks only his own profit, when Egi asks them to speak in the presence of Zhao, the assistants and villagers disown their statements. All of them declare that Zhao never did anything wrong, and that he is a good man. The presence of “the limit” reappears as the conversation develops, and the community will not trespass beyond it, which destroys Egi’s treasured trust for the Manjin. Feeling betrayed, Egi tells them to go and never come back, as his friendship with them was ended that day.<sup>72</sup> And yet, many of his former assistants repeatedly come by his home, office, and nearby places to talk with him, though none of these conversations come to a satisfactory conclusion.

Shortly after this incident, Egi is transferred to a different community within the same province. A month after he moves, Zhou, formerly one of his closest assistants, comes by Egi’s home with a present. Egi agrees to meet with Zhou because he has traveled a great distance. Confessing why he could not speak truthfully in front of Zhao, Zhou explains:

About Mr. Zhao, I can tell you everything clearly, although you might think it is too late to change anything about our broken trust. However, I want you to know one thing, or else we might regret it for all our life. It is all true that Zhao manipulated seeds, charged more fees, and other things, and he was horribly unkind to the farmers. His tenure as supervisor was so bad and incomparable with your time.

Then why did you not [say so when I asked you], why . . . ?

Mr. Egi . . . it is simple. This is the code of conduct in our society. No matter what, we cannot reveal the wrongdoing of others in public. That is against our ethics (*dōtoku* 道徳). We don’t want to cause a grudge because the grudge will stir a vendetta and further retaliation. Even if we had successfully expelled Mr. Zhao, there is no guarantee that the next supervisor would be a good person.

I want you to know this. You are Japanese, and you probably don’t know the complex conventions and reasons in our society. You were angry on that day and said that we betrayed your trust and destroyed our friendship. But that is not true. We still have the same friendship and respect for you. I came all the way to tell you this.<sup>73</sup>

Egi is moved to hear Zhou’s apology, but he also responds negatively to his remark that there was “no guarantee that the next supervisor would be a good person.” Egi asks Zhou if the same logic applies to Zhou’s son, who is working as a technical specialist on a cotton farm that Zhou and Egi had been responsible for. Zhou rejects Egi’s point immediately and responds as follows:

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72 Hamazaki 1943, p. 179.

73 Hamazaki 1943, p. 182.



I have been telling my son that he owes everything, literally everything, to Teacher Egi. You made him the person he is today. You are right and hardworking, and no matter what happens, he cannot betray your trust . . . I lived a different life from yours, grew up in a convention and ethics that you can never understand. Because I have lived according to my way of life, I invited your mistrust, and it caused us great pain. However, I want to raise my son and teach him to hate injustice and lies as you taught us. My hope for him is what I can call evidence of our friendship.<sup>74</sup>

Egi for the first time feels that he has found the truth. They begin drinking together and celebrate the revival of their friendship. With this moving reunion, the story ends happily.

“Law of the Hamlet” is a story about how a young Japanese man attains a deep understanding of Manjin society. As it unfolds, it offers a detailed portrait of life in Manchukuo. From the outset, the story is about overcoming differences between ethnic groups and understanding different ways of life, ethics, values, and traditions. The author shows us how difficult it is to build trust, even when the Japanese are compassionate leaders and the Manjins eager students. However, the finale indicates the effort is worthwhile, as Egi succeeds in taking the first steps toward understanding “the natives” in the grand project of spreading modern agriculture in Manchukuo.

And yet, we should also be mindful of what the short story does not explore—the larger structure of Japanese control and semi-colonial capitalism, within which Egi was deeply invested. Perhaps Mr. Zhao had good reasons for misusing his position: his people were suffering under Japanese domination, which instituted a corrupt cotton industry that privileged Japanese companies over indigenous industries.<sup>75</sup> Egi is a dedicated officer who works to enrich Manchukuo, but he does not question or oppose the state-induced colonial structures that are in place there. In fact, it is these forces that cause problems in his life. The verdict in the Li-Choi case is never delivered in the story. But their Korean surnames suggest that ethnic disharmony was surging under Egi’s supervision, yet instead of finding a resolution he turns his back on the problem.

We will never know why Hamazaki left certain points unexplored in the story, but the seemingly happy ending brought about by the reunion of Egi and Zhou conceals the much bigger issues that existed in their community. The problems that accompanied the new management system for the cotton industry in the region would foster long-term hostility not only against the Japanese but also against Manjin leaders who collaborated with them. The ambiguities and internal inconsistencies in this text testify to the tensions inherent in Manchukuo society. These gaps had little chance of being noticed by Japanese readers, being left underdeveloped and thus concealed from the reader. The protagonist’s unyielding faith in doing the right thing for Manchukuo, whether “the right thing” meant being benevolent, patient, modest, or honest, would have encouraged readers to see this Manchurian story as part of a nation-building project. Intercultural understanding is possible when Manjins, Koreans, and others have adopted Japanese ethics, like Egi’s assistants. However, the glimmerings of ethnic harmony that Hamazaki depicted were dependent upon a population who wished to become Japanese, a fantasy removed from the realities of Manchukuo.

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<sup>74</sup> Hamazaki 1943, p. 182.

<sup>75</sup> Chō 2017; Young 1998, pp. 347–351. See also Tama 2016, pp. 23–28.

### Conclusion

In the postwar era, the notion of Manchurian literature came under attack. Ozaki Hotsuki 尾崎秀樹 (1928–1999), writing in 1963, dismissed Manchurian literature as “false” (*nise* 偽) because “it was the literature of a pseudo-nation.”<sup>76</sup> It was in response to Ozaki that Akihara defended the authenticity of Manchurian literature by insisting on the existence of *zaiman* Japanese writers, who dedicated themselves to writing in the hope of transforming their internal struggles into the basis of Manchukuo’s national strength. They upheld the goal of developing an autonomous Manchurian literature that could unite the various ethnic groups living there.

As shown in this article, Manchurian literature was unable to represent the essence of a multiethnic Manchurian nation because, in contrast to Akihara’s claims, the Manchurian literature envisaged by the participants in this debate could not emerge from the internal struggles of the Japanese alone. It must be able to incorporate the other ethnic groups in Manchuria, with whom Japanese Manchurians wished to build their nation and produce a national literature. The emergence of literary journals like *Manshū rōman* and *Geibun* had fanned the literary enthusiasm of *zaiman* Japanese by facilitating intellectual exchanges between Japan and Manchukuo, involving *zaiman* Japanese, Manjin, and Japanese on the mainland. These journals did represent an alternative to the propaganda-packed continental literature of the time. Nevertheless, *zaiman* Japanese writers took their privileged status in Manchukuo for granted, with the result that Japanese primacy conditioned the cultural expression open to the new “nation,” and would ultimately transform these putative national writers into imperial writers advocating for the establishment of Greater East Asia under Japanese guidance.

Despite the sincere efforts of Ōuchi, Akihara, and others, therefore, it was impossible for the literature and culture that they produced to overcome the structural dominance of Japanese imperialism as it was implemented in Manchukuo. This impossibility is apparent from Hamazaki’s story, which depicts a Manchurian reality characterized by the tireless attempts of different ethnic groups to understand one another in order to build an inclusive and prosperous community. Yet, Hamazaki’s protagonist remains blinded by his assumption of Japanese superiority to other Asians, and the text celebrates a culturally assimilated ethnic utopia, even while making the case that Japanese linguistic and ethical superiority would not in themselves prove sufficient to overcome ethnic conflict. A harmonious Manchukuoan community was only achievable if all of its members accepted Japanese supremacy and primacy. Consequently, assimilation was only possible if intergroup conflict, Japanese economic exploitation, and other structural inequalities inherent to Manchukuo were overlooked. Constituting a piece of literature imagined within the hierarchical order inherent to Manchukuo, this short story reveals the limitations of what was representable under assumptions of Japanese moral primacy, and thus prefigures the inevitable failure of Manchukuo and its literature to realize the ethnic utopia earnestly yet incoherently desired by these *zaiman* Japanese writers.

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76 Ozaki’s essay first appeared in the February, May, and June issues of *Bungaku* 文學 (Literature) in 1963, and is reproduced in Ozaki 1991.

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Nobuko Toyosawa

Auxiliaries of Empire: Children, Foot Soldiers, and Settlers in Japanese Imperial History

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## Not Only a Child: The Vulnerability and Complicity of Japanese Settler Girls in Colonial Korea

Kyrie VERMETTE\*

There is no such thing as “only” children within colonial systems of power, and it is important to acknowledge the ways in which childhood and Japanese colonization were entangled. This article uses the memoirs *Mother’s Keijō*, *My Seoul* and *Gyeongju is the Sound of Mother Calling* to examine the connections between vulnerability and complicity as experienced by two Japanese settler girls who were born and raised in the Japanese colony of Korea (Chōsen) between 1925 and 1945. Through analyzing their physical and emotional experiences as female children in a colony run by adult men, I show that Japanese settler girls had neither agency over their own life choices nor much awareness of colonial power structures and their own position as settlers. I argue that it was their marginality from structures of power and their ignorance about their positions within the colonial system that caused Japanese settler girls to be unconsciously complicit in colonial power. The experiences of these two girls highlight the ways that settler colonial systems use the vulnerability of children to perpetrate the colonial status quo. Yet, moments of emotional discrepancy occasionally allowed these Japanese settler girls to recognize and negotiate their level of complicity with the Japanese Empire, suggesting that introspection provides some emotional agency to marginalized members of the colonizing class.

**Keywords:** children, settler colonialism, Korea, Japan, women, emotions, *Mother’s Keijō*, *My Seoul*, *Gyeongju is the Sound of Mother Calling*

In her 1978 translated essay, “Two Languages, Two Souls,” Morisaki Kazue 森崎和江 (1927–2022) writes:

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You were only a child, I try to tell myself at times, you didn't live over there by choice, but rationalizations like these don't help either. The fact that I absorbed all the land had to give, that I allowed it to form me without having chosen to do so fills me with irredeemable pain. . . . I cannot talk about Korea without battling that emotion.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Morisaki describes her physical and emotional entanglement with the former Japanese colony of Chōsen 朝鮮 where she was born and raised as a member of the colonizing settler class.<sup>2</sup> Morisaki's guilt-ridden adult self attempts to exonerate her past self as "only a child" who had little choice, but even such dissociative maneuvers cannot fully disentangle her childhood self from the system of colonial power within which she was raised.<sup>3</sup>

Do those who were "only" children of settlers have to take historical responsibility for the goings on in the colony? Perhaps the question of responsibility is not a productive one since, as minors, a type of subaltern self, settler children do not have much authority over colonial systems of power, let alone their own life choices.<sup>4</sup> However, as de Bary says, "To redress colonial crimes requires a constant work of negotiation and interpretation of the relationship between the past and the present, a relationship in which victims, especially those who have died, can never be recompensed in equivalent terms."<sup>5</sup> I will add that it also requires an examination of relationships to the future. Children, as the next generation of colonizing adults, are often envisioned as the embodiment of "Settler Futurity," meaning the aspiration for settler political and social control in the future.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, there is no such thing as "only" children within colonial systems of power. Yet before asking about the responsibility of children who have become adults, it is necessary to first acknowledge and understand the ways in which children, not as "becomings" (adults in the future) but instead as "beings" (children in the present), are implicated and complicit in colonial power.<sup>7</sup>

The value of children for the Japanese Empire lay in their presumed political innocence, moral purity, and vulnerability, all of which could be utilized by political, legal, and cultural institutions to elicit feelings of protection and support from Japanese adults. This "emotional capital," as Frühstück calls childhood innocence, became a tool with which Japanese Empire drummed up support for various war measures, as well as a means with which to obfuscate the violence inflicted by war.<sup>8</sup> The constructed innocence and vulnerability of children was therefore an aid to systems of military violence.

The same can be said for other systems of violence, such as settler colonialism. In their research on early childhood education in the U.S., Templeton and Cheruvu argue that the discourses of settler colonialism and childhood innocence are mutually reinforcing.

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1 Morisaki 1978, p. 13.

2 In this article I use the Japanese names (Chōsen and Keijō) when referring to Korea and Seoul respectively in the memories of Japanese settler girls at the time of colonization. I do this to highlight that these places in which they were raised were colonial sites as experienced and understood by the colonizers. Although the same physical place, they represent different spaces from those experienced by Koreans at the time or post-liberation.

3 Sin 2019, p. 139.

4 Alexander 2012, p. 134.

5 de Bary 2005, p. 247.

6 Ishiguro 2016, p. 15.

7 Alexander 2015, p. 121.

8 Frühstück 2017b, pp. 183, 185, 190.

Under the excuse of protecting the innocence of children, the American education system erases colonial violence from the curricula, and continues to raise the next generation on an inherited settler ideology. Furthermore, the very idea of childhood innocence in settler colonial societies is a colonial fantasy that only applies to members of the settler group who do not directly experience the discrimination and trauma of colonial violence and exploitation. In prompting only a sanitized version of history that focuses on the positives of the settler colonial past, childhood innocence perpetuates colonial systems of knowledge in which a lack of awareness in a child is a hallmark of privileged settler status.<sup>9</sup> Whether in history or contemporary education, it is important to break down the way that innocence camouflages the unconscious complicity of children in perpetuating colonial systems. Far from being “politically innocent,” Japanese settler girls such as Morisaki unknowingly participated in the exploitation of Korean resources, the promotion of assimilation policies, and the support for colonial expansion.

Yet, ideas of innocent children, and of a childhood innocence that needs to be protected, connects the concept of innocence to that of vulnerability and points to a paradox in the position of children in colonial systems. The declared need to protect recognizes the vulnerable position of children in a society run by adults. Children may be implicated in colonial systems, but they are also vulnerable within those same systems. They do not have much agency in terms of life decisions, and what they know largely depends on what the adults who have authority over them wish them to know. Japanese settler girls largely lived under the control of their fathers and teachers, and they had little agency to refuse cooperation with the wishes of these (and other) authority figures.

To understand settler colonialism, it is therefore necessary to recognize that judgements like innocent or complicit, or vulnerable or perpetrator, are not dichotomous. The insidiousness of settler colonial systems is that innocence is also complicit and vulnerable members of the settler class are also agents of colonialism. Japanese settler girls came to participate in the exploitation of Korean resources because they lacked agency. They participated in assimilation policies, normalized the colonial situation, and became agents of “Settler Futurity” due to their ignorance of the Korean language and colonial history. When total war permeated and exacerbated the everyday practice of settler colonialism in Chōsen, it was because Japanese settler girls could not contribute to the war physically that their emotional support was demanded. It was because they were vulnerable that they were also complicit.

While scholarship on children in the Japanese Empire shows the connections between Japanese children in Japan and imperial systems, and scholarship on settlers in Chōsen shows the complicated connections between adult settlers and colonial systems, there is little research focusing on Japanese settler children in Chōsen.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, there is a dearth of research bringing Japanese settler children in Chōsen into conversation with more recent global discourses of children and settler colonialism, such as research examining the ways settler children reinforced colonial claims to land and belonging, the ways in which settler

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9 Templeton and Cheruvu 2020, pp. 131–138.

10 Frühstück 2017a; 2017b; Koresawa 2017; Moore 2017; Uchida 2011a; 2011b; Song 2018; Kweon 2014. Uchida (2011b) looks at settler youth and touches on children. Cohen (2006) uses interviews with second-generation settlers to reconstruct life in Kejiō and argues that settler children were in-between Japan and Korea in terms of their identity as well as their expected future role as a bridge connecting Korea to Japan.

girls were involved in perpetuating imperial ideals, and how settler children's emotions were developed and used during times of war.<sup>11</sup> Such research can augment our understanding of the personal connections between Korea and Japan during the era of Japanese colonization and settlement, while research on Japanese settler children can contribute new perspectives to a research trend largely focused on the settler colonialism enacted by Western powers.<sup>12</sup> In this article I will connect Japanese settler girls in Chōsen to these discourses on children and colonialism, focusing on the connections of vulnerability and complicity that are integral to the place of settler children in settler colonial systems.

The engagement with global scholarship on settler colonialism and children highlights the “both-ness” of settler children, as both vulnerable and complicit. The idea of “both-ness” can also be used to highlight the historical position of Japanese settler girls as part of both Korean and Japanese history. In examining the position of Japanese settler girls as both vulnerable and complicit, this article contributes to Korean and Japanese studies scholarship that seeks to complicate presupposed colonial dichotomies, such as the grey zone of complicity between Korean independence activists and Korean collaborators, and the double identity of the Japanese state as oppressed and oppressor.<sup>13</sup> Only when dichotomies are discarded can the complex history of colonialism between Japan and Korea be understood.

### Records of Settler Girls

Since settler girls, as both children and females in an adult patriarchal society, were placed in a more vulnerable position than boys, their involvement in colonial systems is often less recognized. To bring attention to the position of girls in settler colonialism, I will examine the physical and emotional connections between vulnerability and complicity in the memoirs of two Japanese settler girls. The first is *Haba no “Keijō,” Watashi no Sōru* 母の「京城」・私のソウル (Mother's Keijō, my Seoul, hereafter *Mother's Keijō*), a collection of the stories and memories of Matono Mariko 的野万理子. Matono was born in Keijō (Seoul) in 1925 to a father who worked for the Government General of Korea and lived there until 1945 when she was sent to Japan after the liberation of Korea. Her daughter, Sawai Rie 沢井理恵, wrote down the stories her mother had told of her life in the colony of Chōsen and published them in 1996 alongside her own experiences of being a Japanese tourist in Seoul.<sup>14</sup> This book was translated into Korean as *Eomma ui Geijyo, na ui Seoul* in 2000.<sup>15</sup> The second is *Keishū wa haba no yobigoe: Waga genkyō* 慶州は母の呼び声: わが原郷 (Gyeongju is the sound of mother calling, hereafter *Gyeongju*), a memoir written by Morisaki Kazue, who was born in the Japanese neighborhood of Daegu in 1927. During her time in Chōsen, Morisaki also lived in Gyeongju and Gimcheon. In 1944, at the age of seventeen, she went to Japan to attend university. After graduation, she devoted herself to publishing literary works focused on labor and women's issues. This memoir was originally published

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11 Buettner 2004; Ishiguro 2016; Schulz 2017; Alexander 2015; 2016; 2017; Olsen 2016; 2017; 2020.

12 In addition, most of these scholars research states in which power remains held by the descendants of colonial settlers. The political separation of Japan and Korea allows for a retrospective perspective on the entanglement of children and settler colonialism.

13 Examples include Moon 2013; Bae 2017; Choi 2021; Conrad 2014; Yoneyama 1999; Miwa 2007.

14 Sawai 1996.

15 Sawai 2000.

in Japanese in 1984 but was only translated into Korean as *Gyeongju neun eomeoni ga bureuneun sori* in 2020.<sup>16</sup>

This article is based on the Korean translations of both memoirs to highlight the connections between Korean and Japanese colonial history. Published during a time of increased political focus on colonial era relations between Japan and Korea, *Mother's Keijō* was quickly translated into Korean. While it has become a common source for Korean scholars discussing Japanese settlers, the book did not arouse much interest outside of academia. On the other hand, the translation of *Gyeongju* resulted from the interest of Koreans in their own local history. In 2001, some residents of Daegu decided to compile a local history of their area but were lacking documents that described Daegu during the colonial era. Matsui Rie, who would become a co-translator of *Gyeongju*, encountered Morisaki's Japanese-language memoir in 2006 and introduced it to acquaintances in Daegu. Koreans who could read Japanese discussed the memoir in their reading group about Daegu's modern history, but as others were unable to do so because of the language barrier, the book was translated into Korean. Since the purpose of the translation was the memoir's place in local history, pictures of Daegu during the colonial era were inserted. Despite Morisaki's position as a Japanese settler in colonial Chōsen, residents of Daegu viewed her memories as missing pieces to understand their own local history, demonstrating the connections between Korean and Japanese history and the possibilities for more cooperative scholarship if scholars focus on the colonial realities of settlers being part of both Korean and Japanese history.<sup>17</sup>

Similar to how both *Mother's Keijō* and *Gyeongju* could be read as a connection between the local history of Daegu and the national histories of Korea and Japan, the memories of Morisaki and Matono connect the personal everyday lives of people to the political and economic systems of colonialism. Unlike official documents, media reports, and state-produced materials for children, which position the state as subject and the children as object, memoirs place the settler girls themselves as the subjects of their experiences. Moreover, while official documents may demonstrate how the state wanted children to act and react, memoirs illuminate how children actually acted and reacted on a personal and everyday level. This personal perspective reiterates the personal and ubiquitous connections between children's vulnerability and complicity in colonialism by providing specific examples of the ways their lives intersected with colonial systems and ideologies.

However, like the position of Japanese settler girls themselves, their memoirs exist in a state of "both-ness," being both accounts of personal historical experience and reflections of their authors' perspectives while writing. Over several Japanese editions, Morisaki has corrected factual mistakes and added more historical context to her memoir, two things that the scholar Choe Yeongho has criticized the Korean translation of *Gyeongju* for.<sup>18</sup> Choe views the memoir as a literary work of fiction because it is based on personal and subjective memories; he argues that historical content and factual corrections are merely an attempt to pass literature off as a historical source.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, as Song also remarks, reminiscence

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16 Morisaki 1984; Morisaki 2020.

17 Bak and Matsui 2020, pp. 292–295.

18 Morisaki 1991; Morisaki 2006.

19 Choe 2021, pp. 311, 321.

always involves realizing things in hindsight and adding meaning based on current views.<sup>20</sup> However, both of these memoirs are written in a way that serves to highlight how the perspective of the author at the time of writing differed from the perspective of the subject at the time being remembered. In *Mother's Keijō* this takes the form of Matono's memories and her daughter's comments on them, while *Gyeongju* is divided between what Morisaki remembers and understood as a child and what she knows now thanks to historical research. Rather than merely revising past memories in line with their views at the time of writing, the authors have sought to present both past and present understandings of Chōsen. The separate layers of understanding, along with the authors' obvious discomfort or shame about the perspectives exhibited and their attempts to explain it, offer a unique glimpse into the understandings and feelings of Japanese settler girls growing up in Chōsen. Personal and subjective memories are still a history of that person and their experiences and, while they contain more layers of influence over time than a contemporary diary would, neither are they simply works of literary fiction that have no place in historical studies.

While there is little, if any, research on Matono or Sawai that can shed light on how their lives in Japan around the time of publication may have influenced Matono's memories or Sawai's motive for committing those memories to print, Cohen's interviews with Japanese settlers who were born and raised in Chōsen provide plausible suggestions. Cohen explains that colonial nostalgia was prevalent in Japan in the 1960s–1980s due to the emphasis on Japanese homogeneity, the “native place-making” movement, and the increased attention given to Korea and Korean populations living in Japan. Japanese born and raised in Chōsen were reminded of their childhood while their experiences were marginalized by the discourse on Japan's homogeneity. Cohen claims that they also felt a concern for how the stories of their colonial experiences would be passed down after they died, which presumably manifested itself in the publication of memoirs like the two included in this study.<sup>21</sup>

Since Morisaki is a prolific writer and famous personality who can claim a whole field of research about her life, it is unnecessary to guess at the feelings that motivated her writing.<sup>22</sup> Morisaki was influenced by first-generation Japanese settlers, including her father and his historian friends, which prompted her to seek out historical information about Chōsen after she was sent to Japan following liberation.<sup>23</sup> As an adult, she also developed an interest in women and laborers in Japan. She makes it clear in her writing that her personal experience of colonialism, her interest in Korean history, and her passion for marginalized and oppressed people in Japan influenced her writing and fostered a perpetual sense of conflict between her happy memories of childhood and her knowledge that she had been in the position of oppressor to an exploited colony.<sup>24</sup>

### **Lack of Agency as Complicity**

The influence of Morisaki's father, as an agent of patriarchal power, was central to Morisaki's lack of agency and consequent complicity with colonial power, power that was

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20 Song 2018, p. 233.

21 Cohen 2006, pp. 252–271.

22 de Bary 2005; Kang 2020; O 2021; Satō 2019; Sin 2019; Song 2018; Sorimachi 2021; Sugiura 2021.

23 Kang 2020; O 2021.

24 de Bary 2005; Satō 2019; Sin 2019; Sorimachi 2021; Sugiura 2021.

itself inherently patriarchal. I will use “agency” to mean “individual choice and the capacity to act” on that choice in terms of life decisions.<sup>25</sup> Like girls everywhere, the lives of Japanese settler girls such as Morisaki and Matono were shaped by power imbalances that denied women and children, especially female children, the agency to make big choices.

As Sawai says in defense of her mother Matono, people cannot choose their parents or where they are born.<sup>26</sup> Neither Matono nor Morisaki chose to be born to Japanese settlers in the colony of Chōsen, nor were they able to choose many important aspects of their lives until adulthood. Like most children, Japanese settler girls had very little say in their family, let alone in politics. Instead, they were subject to patriarchal power as represented by the decisions of their fathers. Matono and Morisaki both moved with their families when their fathers changed jobs. For Matono, this move was only to a different neighborhood in Keijō that meant a longer walk to school, but Morisaki was transplanted into a new town and school. When her father was appointed as the principal of a middle school in Gyeongju, the entire family had to move with him. At first Morisaki did not want to transfer schools, but she had no agency in the situation and eventually accepted the move.<sup>27</sup> Later when she enrolled in a girls’ high school in Daegu, her father decided which boarding house she would live in.<sup>28</sup> After graduation, her father gave her the choice of either going to Japan to study or working as a teacher in an elementary school in Chōsen. When she chose further education, he then told her which school to go to, and that she must work in her cousin’s factory if the school was shut down due to the Asia-Pacific War. Morisaki did not want to go where he had decided but she felt she had no choice in the matter, so she merely nodded.<sup>29</sup> Japanese settler girls were vulnerable members of the community and, as children, had little agency to make choices about their lives. Instead, they were dependent on the decisions of their fathers who, as male adults, held authority within the family.

Yet it was this subjection to patriarchal power that also made Japanese settler girls complicit in colonial power. The fathers of both girls were agents of colonialism in Korea in the spheres of government and education respectively. Matono’s father worked in the office of the Government General of Korea and was directly connected to colonial rule.<sup>30</sup> Morisaki’s father was a principal in various schools and, as such, was at the frontline of executing colonial education policies.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, while Morisaki’s father valued independence of thought and action, tried to understand Koreans, and was uncomfortable with discrimination against them, he was also an ardent imperialist who viewed the colonization of Korea as a natural and justifiable opportunity for the two ethnicities to start a new age and pursue the fulfillment of human rights together.<sup>32</sup>

Even their parents’ decisions to have children in Chōsen made Japanese settler girls into tools of “Settler Futurity,” the continuation of settler control in the hoped-for future.<sup>33</sup> Cohen recognizes that Japanese settler boys were being trained as future colonial leaders

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25 Alexander 2015, p. 121.

26 Sawai 2000, p. 216.

27 Morisaki 2020, p. 114.

28 Morisaki 2020, p. 199.

29 Morisaki 2020, pp. 259–260.

30 Sawai 2000, pp. 89, 100.

31 Morisaki 2020; O 2021, p. 422.

32 O 2021, p. 422; Kang 2020, pp. 57–69.

33 Ishiguro 2016, p. 15.

and bridges between the colony and the metropole, but even more pervasive was the fact that, regardless of gender, the very presence of settler children in Chōsen promoted colonization by increasing the population of occupying settlers.<sup>34</sup> In the entirety of Chōsen the population of Japanese settlers increased from 170,000 in 1910 to 700,000 or 800,000 in 1944–1945.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, by 1930 more than 30 percent of Japanese settlers had been born in Chōsen.<sup>36</sup> As the settler population expanded, they demolished city walls and built Shinto shrines, as well as trains, schools, and army barracks, in general appropriating land for settler use. In particular, Japanese settlers took over the houses of Koreans. When her family moved to Gyeongju, Morisaki lived in a beautiful old Korean house.<sup>37</sup> Who had the previous owners been and why were they no longer living there? These are questions that Morisaki never thought to ask, even as an adult, but may be answered by Louise Yim's sad tale of Koreans forced out of their homes by colonial-induced poverty, or simply because a Japanese settler family liked their home and wanted to live there.<sup>38</sup> As a child, Morisaki did not know that she lived on land stolen from Koreans, but as members of the expanding settler demographic, Japanese settler girls took physical space away from Koreans.

As human beings, Japanese settler girls also needed to eat and, as members of the colonizing class, they never suffered for want of food. Yet, the food that they were eating was sustenance that Koreans were being deprived of. Induk Pahk recalls that the yearly spring starvation became more severe following Japan's annexation of Korea and that in the final years of colonial control, this food scarcity was exacerbated by wartime shortages, which caused her mother to die from malnutrition.<sup>39</sup> Morisaki explains this by saying that the Japanese settlers caused both the demand and price for food to increase and, while Japanese could afford these higher prices, Koreans who cultivated the land were left to suffer starvation. Morisaki remembers watching a group of children digging in the ground and pulling up roots, starving and searching for anything to eat. While Koreans labored in the fields and starved, she and her Japanese settler family lived in ease. Moreover, when she was in grade two, Morisaki assisted her father in stealing rice from a nearby farm. She and her father gathered seedlings early one morning and planted them in the dirt pond that he had prepared in their yard. As she was planting, Morisaki felt like she was being watched by Korean children somewhere.<sup>40</sup> While they had abundant food, Koreans rarely got the chance to eat rice themselves. Rice grown in Korea was predominately shipped to Japan for Japanese consumption while Koreans ate millet imported from Manchuria.<sup>41</sup> As another mouth to feed, Morisaki was part of the colonial system that exploited Korean agriculture and deprived many Koreans of adequate food.

Japanese settler girls like Morisaki and Matono could not decide where and how they would live, since patriarchal family structures gave that prerogative to their fathers. The decisions of their fathers positioned these girls as settlers in a colony, and many of their

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34 Cohen 2006, pp. 187–200.

35 Sorimachi 2021, p. 342; Choe 2021, p. 316.

36 Song 2018, p. 236.

37 Morisaki 2020, pp. 37, 46–48, 157–158.

38 Yim 1951, p. 97.

39 Pahk 1954, pp. 202–204.

40 Morisaki 2020, pp. 103–107.

41 Takeuchi 2016.



day-to-day necessities for food and shelter associated them with colonial exploitation and oppression. Their lack of agency within their families therefore implicated Japanese settler girls in settler colonial systems.

### **Ignorance as Complicity**

Morisaki's complicity in the hardships inflicted on Koreans, no doubt obvious from the point of view of the colonized Korean children digging for roots, was unconscious on the part of the Japanese settler girls. In his examination of evacuee diaries, Aaron Moore comes to the conclusion that "children had a weak grasp of the abstract concepts and structures that adults invested so much energy in creating, maintaining and re-producing" and thus "because younger children could not apparently grasp abstract concepts such as economies, governments, and war, they largely accepted what trusted adults told them about these things."<sup>42</sup> Morisaki herself repeatedly admits her childhood ignorance of historic events that were part of the colonization of Korea.

Japanese settlers who were born in Chōsen were taught that the Japanese had saved Korea in the vague and distant past when annexation occurred.<sup>43</sup> Neither Morisaki nor Matono knew anything about the March First Independence Movement of 1919.<sup>44</sup> Matono lived in the area yet never went to Pagoda Park, where the Declaration of Korean Independence had been read, setting off a chain of demonstrations across the country. These were violently crushed, with school-aged Korean girls tortured or killed.<sup>45</sup> Yet this event, which had such a large impact on Koreans of all ages and genders, was not known to Japanese settler girls born only ten years later, highlighting their privileged ignorance of colonial violence, a privilege which most colonized Korean girls did not have. All Matono knew of Pagoda Park was that Koreans lived in the vicinity and met there.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, the Kwangju Anti-Japanese Student Movement, caused by Japanese male students harassing Korean female students, spread all over Chōsen when Morisaki was two years old, but she only learned about this event some ten years after returning to Japan when she read documents from the Government General of Korea. Neither Morisaki nor Matono had any memory of the Manchurian Incident, which would have occurred when they were five and seven years old respectively.<sup>47</sup>

Morisaki's awareness of major events certainly increased as she grew older but this increased awareness did not include much comprehension as to the importance or consequences of those events. She remembers when the military officers established martial law in 1936 because she overheard her parents talking about it and she only recalls the start of the Sino-Japanese War because she and her classmates sent off the local army and wrote letters to soldiers. However, she had no concept of war being bad or dangerous or anything to worry about. Instead, she spent her days playing.<sup>48</sup> Both Morisaki and Matono remember the start of the Asia-Pacific War. At the age of fourteen, Morisaki remembers the moment

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42 Moore 2017, pp. 151, 155.

43 Morisaki 2020, p. 72.

44 Morisaki 2020, p. 66; Sawai 2000, pp. 46–47.

45 Kim 1964, p. 43; Pakh 1954, pp. 59–69; Yim 1951, p. 106.

46 Sawai 2000, p. 47.

47 Morisaki 2020, p. 122; Sawai 2000, p. 50.

48 Morisaki 2020, pp. 123, 143–148.

she heard the news while eating breakfast at her boarding house and feeling dismal. On the other hand, sixteen-year-old Matono in Keijō said that, apart from a vague longing for Southeast Asia, in Chōsen she did not really feel like part of the war.<sup>49</sup>

This ignorance about the history of colonization and their role in perpetuating it served to normalize the system. Japanese settler children were educated to unconsciously accept and internalize the union of Chōsen and Japan.<sup>50</sup> While first-generation settlers were strongly aware of Korean society and sought to Japanize it, second-generation Japanese settler girls who grew up only during colonial rule did not realize that the situation had ever been different.<sup>51</sup> In fact, while enjoying sports day at her father's Korean school in Daegu, Morisaki felt that Japanese and Koreans had lived in harmony like this since the time of the gods. Furthermore, she thought that Chōsen was part of Japan and therefore did not think it strange that only Japanese flags were flown.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Matono took the colonial situation for granted. She thought that Chōsen was part of Japan and that their everyday lives were very normal. She looked forward to going to Changgyeong Zoo on Sunday with her father, without being aware it had once been the palace of an independent Korean kingdom, now subject to Japanese colonial rule.<sup>53</sup> Their ignorance as to the historical context of their lives and their roles within colonialism made them complicit in the exercise of that very power of which they were unaware. Not knowing any different, Japanese settler girls like Morisaki and Matono accepted the colonial situation as normal. Such passive acceptance of the status quo had the effect of normalizing colonization and naturalizing the presence of Japanese colonizers in Korea. Acceptance of colonization as the norm would continue to uphold the colonial system in Chōsen.

This behaviour inadvertently continued to enforce the Japanization and imperialization on the colonized. For example, neither Morisaki nor Matono knew about Ordinance 19, which restructured the Korean family system by mandating the creation of a family name, or Ordinance 20, which allowed Koreans to change their first names to a Japanese-style name. These name change policies became confused and conflated and have been viewed by Koreans as a deliberate attempt to eradicate Korean identity. However, to Morisaki it had only seemed natural when her Korean classmate changed her name, because Japanese women used different names throughout their lives. Morisaki and her classmates praised their Korean classmate for her new name, saying it was a very good name.<sup>54</sup> Matono also recalled that her father's subordinate who used to visit their house changed his name. She never asked why.<sup>55</sup> Ignorance was a privilege for these Japanese settler girls, a privilege that the Korean girls imprisoned in the March First Independence Movement, the Korean girls harassed at the start of the Kwangju Anti-Japanese Student Movement, and the Korean girl who changed her name did not have.

Morisaki's and Matono's use of the Japanese language and their inability to communicate in Korean is another example of how ignorance made them complicit in colonization. Even

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49 Morisaki 2020, p. 215; Sawai 2000, p. 127.

50 Sorimachi 2021, p. 344.

51 Song 2018; Sorimachi 2021; Kang 2020; O 2021.

52 Morisaki 2020, pp. 48, 68, 72.

53 Sawai 2000, pp. 26–27, 53, 189.

54 Morisaki 2020, pp. 217–218.

55 Sawai 2000, p. 99.

though Morisaki's parents were from Kyushu, she did not speak the Kyushu dialect. As a child raised and educated in the colonial school system, Morisaki spoke only *kokugo* 国語.<sup>56</sup> *Kokugo* was standardized Japanese developed for the purpose of consolidating the Japanese nation-state following the Meiji Restoration. Since all regions in Japan had their own unique dialects, Sorimachi argues that *kokugo* only really came into widespread use in the colonies, where no other Japanese dialect was spoken.<sup>57</sup> As Japanese imperial control expanded, therefore, *kokugo* became a tool for colonization.<sup>58</sup> Colonial education, at first only for Japanese settlers and then for all children living in the colony of Chōsen, was conducted in *kokugo*, increasingly forced upon Koreans through policies promulgated in 1911, 1922, and 1938. By the end of 1945, along with the 700,000–800,000 Japanese settlers, Koreans who had been educated since 1911 or worked in an official capacity spoke *kokugo*, which had replaced Korean in all forms of education and official correspondence in Chōsen.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, after 1922, the use of *kokugo* legally separated the colonizers (*naichijin* 内地人), “those who always use *kokugo*,” from the colonized (*Chōsenjin* 朝鮮人), “those who do not always use *kokugo*.”<sup>60</sup> Japanese settler girls like Matono and Morisaki only spoke *kokugo*, identifying them with colonial power and the colonizing class.

More importantly, many Japanese settler girls and their families could not speak Korean. Matono did not know Hangeul or Korean beyond a few words, and, since she lived in the Japanese neighborhoods of Keijō and mainly talked with other Japanese settlers, she did not need to use Korean.<sup>61</sup> Morisaki likewise only knew a handful of words in Korean, not enough to converse in it.<sup>62</sup> This disinterest or unwillingness to learn Korean meant that any Korean they did meet was forced to speak to them in *kokugo*, or just not speak to them.<sup>63</sup> One day when a middle-aged Korean woman began speaking to Morisaki's mother in Korean, Morisaki's mother asked in broken Korean “Japanese language, mother, can't you?” To which the Korean woman responded laughing and shaking her head, “I can't, I can't.”<sup>64</sup> However, those Koreans who needed to interact with Japanese settlers had no choice but to speak in the language of the colonizer. Students at Morisaki's father's school all spoke *kokugo* so well that, to Morisaki, they sounded no different from Japanese settler children. Housemaids also needed to speak *kokugo*. Although Morisaki does not specify that her housemaids spoke in Japanese, the very fact that they held conversations with her and her mother indicates that they were conversant.<sup>65</sup> Housemaids who could speak Japanese were hired more readily and received higher salaries than those housemaids who did not know Japanese.<sup>66</sup> Settler ignorance of the Korean language thereby forced Koreans to use *kokugo* and made Japanese settler girls complicit in the exercise of colonial power through imperialization policies.

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56 Sorimachi 2021, pp. 339, 343.

57 Sorimachi 2021, pp. 344, 358.

58 Lee 2010.

59 Sorimachi 2021, pp. 339–344.

60 Lee 2010, p. 174.

61 Sawai 2000, p. 110.

62 Morisaki 2020, pp. 21, 38, 48.

63 Sawai 2000, p. 110.

64 Morisaki 2020, pp. 48–49.

65 Morisaki 2020, pp. 52, 61–62, 69, 137; Sugiura 2021, p. 82.

66 Seo 2016, pp. 135–136.

### Emotional Complicity

Another way that colonial power implicated Japanese settler girls was through their emotions. Olsen states that emotions in the British Empire were “frequently used as mechanisms of control, of co-option for imperial rule,” and points out that “children, often viewed as more malleable than adults, have been the frequent targets of emotional education that accorded with hierarchies of power and moral precepts.”<sup>67</sup> The Japanese Empire, particularly during the militarism of 1931–1945, also attempted to control and manage children’s emotions.<sup>68</sup> While trying to suppress some emotions, it attempted to incite and nurture those of loyalty and connectivity as part of what Olsen calls “a political struggle for affective belonging.”<sup>69</sup> Japanese settler children developed a strong sense of connection and identity with the land of Chōsen. They clung to Chōsen as their homeland. Even decades after her move to Japan, Matono missed Chōsen a great deal. She referred to Keijō as her hometown and her face lit up whenever she thought of it. When she finally got the opportunity to visit Seoul in 1979, she exclaimed “I am going to visit the place I was born and raised! Is there a greater joy than this?”<sup>70</sup> Morisaki, more poetically, describes Chōsen as the mold within which she had been formed and she cannot let go of the idea that she shares Koreans’ emotional attachment to the land and climate.<sup>71</sup>

This attachment is connected to a nostalgia for the place one was born and raised—for the place of one’s childhood. The colony of Chōsen, like a youth spent in it, was a thing of the past unable to be experienced again. This was further deepened by connections to their mother and maternal love. Chōsen was the only place where Matono and Morisaki knew their biological mothers. Matono’s mother died in 1932 at the age of twenty-eight after giving birth to her fourth child, and was cremated and interred in a Buddhist temple in Honmachi. She was later joined by Matono’s grandparents.<sup>72</sup> Morisaki’s mother died on 2 April 1943, at the age of thirty-six and surrounded by her husband and daughters, when Morisaki was sixteen.<sup>73</sup> Just over two years later, Japan lost the Asia-Pacific War, and all Japanese settlers were expelled from Korea and prohibited from returning until 1965. For both Matono and Morisaki, their homeland was where they had known, lost, and left their biological mothers. Chōsen was a homeland for Japanese settlers thanks to both births and deaths.<sup>74</sup>

For Morisaki though, the connection between Chōsen and maternal love was not limited to that of her biological mother. “Korea nurtured me, formed me” like a mother would.<sup>75</sup> More specifically, she discusses the Korean women whom she referred to as *eomeoni*, a Korean term of courtesy meaning “mother” used to address older women. Morisaki writes that for her, Chōsen was the world of *eomeoni*. Her childhood memories are full of the maternal love of Korean *eomeonis* who raised her, especially that of her nannies.<sup>76</sup>

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67 Olsen 2017, pp. 5–6.

68 Frühstück 2017b, p. 182.

69 Olsen 2017, p. 6.

70 Sawai 2000, pp. 14, 20.

71 Morisaki 2020, pp. 20, 284.

72 Sawai 2000, pp. 49–51, 60, 66.

73 Morisaki 2020, pp. 220–225, 237.

74 Sorimachi 2021, p. 340.

75 Morisaki 1978, p. 13.

76 Morisaki 2020, pp. 284–286.

One of her most visceral childhood memories was of being carried on the back of her nanny. In her 1978 essay, Morisaki says, “The hair of my *omoni* [*eomeoni*] and *neya*, my Korean mother and nanny who carried me as a child on their backs, clings to my lips. . . . There is more of me in each strand of that hair than words will ever tell. Could ever tell. . . . I want to see my *omoni*, but I am not in a position to thank her.”<sup>77</sup>

Second-generation Japanese settler girls such as Matono and Morisaki formed a deep emotional attachment to Chōsen, a part of their identities that had the potential of strengthening colonial control over Korea. The idea that Chōsen was their homeland, to wit, that they belonged in Chōsen, contributed to Japanese settlers’ claims for residing in and controlling Korea. Morisaki says that many Japanese settlers felt as though they cast off the old land and were living in a new Japan.<sup>78</sup> Matono told her daughter that Chōsen had been Japan at that time and that ordinary people did not have any awareness of being in a colony.<sup>79</sup> This was not the land that had been stolen from Koreans, this was their land, the place where they belonged. Clear parallels can be drawn between this sense of Chōsen as homeland and the attachment that American missionary children felt for Hawai‘i, and in that parallel the potential implications for colonial control are exposed. Schulz argues that white missionary children loved their birthplace and believed that their childhoods on the islands had given them an intimate knowledge of those lands. They believed that they belonged there as much as the indigenous Hawaiians did and they grew possessive of the land. This strong attachment to the land and sense of belonging, coupled with their belief in racial superiority, caused them to think that they were the born leaders of Hawai‘i and prompted their revolt against the Hawai‘ian monarchy in the late nineteenth century.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the attachment of Japanese settler children to the land continued to justify Japanese claims of belonging and colonial control over Korea. Even decades later, Morisaki’s strong emotional ties to Chōsen as her homeland led her to envisage a lost future in which Japanese settlers continued to live in Korea:

Had things turned out differently and my generation and the generation of my children had remained in the colonies, I cannot imagine that we ever would have considered Japan our homeland. In an atmosphere not very different from that in which the whites rule South Africa, we would at best have divided ourselves into camps of the good and the bad and spent our time arguing about whether to align ourselves with China and Japan.<sup>81</sup>

Decades after Korean liberation, and despite Morisaki’s expositions of guilt at having been a colonizer, she cannot help imagining a future where Japanese settlers still control Korea. Emotional attachment to Chōsen inevitably led Japanese settler girls to be complicit in visions of the future wherein colonial control of Korea continued.

Children’s emotions were more directly co-opted by colonial power through the demand for emotional labor from girls, particularly during the wars of 1937–1945. Children

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<sup>77</sup> Morisaki 1978, p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Morisaki 2020, p. 131.

<sup>79</sup> Sawai 2000, p. 25.

<sup>80</sup> Schulz 2017, pp. 2, 9, 14, 45.

<sup>81</sup> Morisaki 1978, p. 17.

were expected to play their part to support war through sacrifices and emotional labor, in exchange for decreased economic labor.<sup>82</sup> Such emotional labor fell most heavily on the shoulders of girls due to the gendered conflation of women and emotional care.<sup>83</sup> While schoolboys were expected to participate in military training as preparation for their eventual deployment, girls, those members of society who were not yet old enough to provide much physical labor and would not grow up to be soldiers, were given emotional work to sustain the empire through war. For instance, following the creation of Manchukuo, girls from Manchukuo were mobilized as the “Manchukuo Young Girls Embassy” and were entrusted with the “emotional message” of harmony among people.<sup>84</sup> During the Asia-Pacific War, board games taught Japanese girls that they ought to contribute to the war effort through support on the home front. The pictures on the games show girls constantly happy while doing emotional work like praying, cheering troops, and making care packages.<sup>85</sup>

Japanese settler girls in Chōsen were similarly encouraged to perform emotional labor which made them complicit in supporting a militaristic empire. Morisaki took part in flag and lantern parades to send off the army, and did not imagine Japan could lose, projecting nothing but hopeful enthusiasm.<sup>86</sup> Meanwhile in school, Japanese settler girls were given emotionally charged work. Morisaki and her classmates repaired soldier uniforms and even went to school during vacations in order to sew buttons.<sup>87</sup> Matono went with her class once a month to pray at Korea Shrine, a Shinto shrine built atop Namsan 南山 in Keijō, and every summer was given homework of making care packages and writing letters to soldiers.<sup>88</sup> In doing this, Japanese settler girls were supporting what Olsen calls “the enormous emotional effort of the war.”<sup>89</sup> Another form of emotional work that children sometimes took part in at school was the writing of compositions. Morisaki says, “As a civilian behind the lines, I was given the assignment of writing a composition to further the war effort. I was told that my composition would be used to represent the entire school and so it had better be good.”<sup>90</sup> The composition was titled “Let’s Play War” and was about Korean boys playing war. Morisaki wrote it so well that she received a certificate of merit from the Korean League for Total Mobilization. However, Morisaki continued her reminiscence by saying:

I figured the theme would be a sure-fire success. My teacher had said the essays would be judged back in Japan, so I felt less inhibited about making certain alterations to suit my theme. The song the children sang as they played was an example. “I’ll grow up to be big and strong. I’ll grow up to be big and strong. I’ll join the Korean Independence Movement and it won’t be long!” I didn’t quite understand the gist of the song, so I omitted it. It gave the children too much pleasure to make it compatible with the somber tone of my work.<sup>91</sup>

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82 Alexander 2015, p. 124.

83 Alexander 2015, p. 124.

84 Koresawa 2017, p. 122.

85 Frühstück 2017a, pp. 65, 68.

86 Morisaki 2020, pp. 146–148.

87 Morisaki 2020, p. 147.

88 Sawai 2000, pp. 112, 118.

89 Olsen 2020, p. 655.

90 Morisaki 1978, p. 15.

91 Morisaki 1978, p. 15.

It is clear that Morisaki was primarily concerned with writing what she thought her teachers would want and what would win her a prize. While it is unknown how much she had internalized messages of support for the war, she had at least a good sense of what the adults would want to hear, and she catered to that. She did not fully understand the topic about which she wrote (the games of the Korean boys were obviously anti-Japanese) but she recognized that the emotions of pleasure expressed by the Korean boys did not accord with the somber tone valued by the Japanese adults who would judge her essay. In representing them as expressions of support, she emotionally bolstered the Japanese war effort and erased the emotions of Korean children. Meanwhile, the judges in Japan must have been unaware of the games of Korean boys and not interested enough to investigate the image of devoted Korean loyalty that Morisaki presented.

### Negotiating Emotional Expectations

This composition is an example of the emotional formation that Japanese settler girls underwent. Coined by Alexander and Olsen, the term “emotional formation” refers to a process through which “children learn what is expected of them—what they should or should not say or what they should or should not display.”<sup>92</sup> Encountering the new emotional expectations of wartime, Japanese settler girls learned what emotions they were supposed to feel in these new contexts. Similar to the Japanese teenagers in Moore’s examination of evacuee diaries, Japanese settler girls attempted to understand adult structures and their place within them.<sup>93</sup> Even if they did not fully understand the situation, they learned what authority figures wanted—complicity in promoting systems of military power.

However, emotional expectations were not always clear. Sometimes Japanese settler girls were confronted with an emotional frontier, “affective borders children cross in their daily lives,” upon finding “themselves between competing emotional expectations, not knowing how to feel or how to express feelings.”<sup>94</sup> These discrepancies in emotional expectations and emotional experiences created a slim space within which girls could negotiate their emotional participation in the Japanese Empire. Morisaki was supposed to cheer for and support the military, but she was afraid of the army and never went to the barracks in Daegu. Moreover, when she left the military culture of Daegu for Gyeongju, where there was no military, she ceased to pay much attention to the war.<sup>95</sup> This separation was exacerbated by her mother’s sickness during the war years. As a daughter she was expected to care for her mother. Yet, as a member of the Japanese Empire, she was expected to devote herself and her time to the war and sacrifice her personal emotions to the collective. Facing this emotional frontier, Morisaki prioritized her emotional work as a daughter over her emotional work as an imperial subject. While not renouncing the Japanese Empire and its power to demand labor of her, she nevertheless disappointed its expectations. In her memoir, Morisaki’s memories of the war years take backstage to memories of her mother’s illness. The darkness and despair of wartime is conflated with her

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92 Olsen 2020, p. 644.

93 Moore 2017, pp. 143–144.

94 Olsen 2016, p. 324; Olsen 2020, p. 644.

95 Morisaki 2020, pp. 34, 36, 165.

fears and increasing worry for her mother, while images of the war only appear as they were associated with her mother—her mother wanting to wear *monpe* and her mother’s Korean nurse saying that the war was causing hardships for Koreans.<sup>96</sup> In this context of familial crisis, the conflict between gendered expectations and imperial expectations, between personal emotions and public emotions, gave Morisaki the space to make her own choice about where to invest her emotional priority. The choice she made distanced her from emotional complicity in imperial war.

At other times, Japanese settler girls simply felt differently than they were instructed to and became aware and resentful of the control exercised over them by adults in authority. Although she pledged loyalty to the emperor every day in school and wanted to protect Japan, Morisaki and her classmates did not view the emperor as a god but rather felt some bitterness towards him. They released their non-conforming emotions through jokes about honoring the emperor’s excretion.<sup>97</sup> Matono also felt differently than she was supposed to. While she did not shirk the emotionally charged labor that was demanded of her by her school and the colonial government, she did not harbor the anticipated emotions. When she and her classmates went to Korea Shrine to worship once a month, rather than cultivating devotion and loyalty, Matono focused on the physical hardship of having to walk to Namsan and climb the many stairs. She hated going because she viewed it as a mere formality and a sign that she was being controlled. When there, she and her classmates rebelled by chatting with each other instead of worshipping. Matono likewise disliked making care packages and writing letters. She thought it was pure drudgery.<sup>98</sup>

When she was in grade six, Matono’s brother left for military school, and Matono and her family went to the train station to see him off. This should be a cheerful occasion with families celebrating the devotion and sacrifices of the boys to the empire. However, as Matono stood at the station, she began to cry, sad he was leaving. An older male relative scolded her saying, “Mari-chan, you must not cry. Act like a militant girl.” But Matono shook her head and thought to herself in her heart, “I am not a militant girl.”<sup>99</sup> Matono recognized that the emotions she felt were different from those that the empire and her older male relative demanded that she perform, and while she did not vocalize this conflict aloud, she prioritized her real emotions and refused to perform differently. In this very small way, Matono was able to refuse the demands of emotional complicity with the Japanese Empire.

The most striking emotional discrepancy was the emotional distance that formed between the Japanese settler girls and “Japan proper” (*naichi* 内地). Morisaki wrote that she was Japanese (*naichijin*), but she did not know Japan. *Naichi* was somewhere she only saw through picture books or heard about through her parents’ stories. It seemed a strange place to her—sometimes a sinister place. She and her classmates all agreed that they did not want to marry a *naichijin* man and live in *naichi*.<sup>100</sup> Matono remembered having little interest in Japanese geography in school since *naichi* was not part of her daily life.<sup>101</sup> For these Japanese

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96 Morisaki 2020, pp. 220–225, 229–237.

97 Morisaki 2020, pp. 196, 206.

98 Sawai 2000, pp. 112, 118.

99 Sawai 2000, p. 119.

100 Morisaki 2020, pp. 20, 108, 122, 203.

101 Sawai 2000, p. 120.



settler girls, *naichi* was a distant place that they had heard about but never experienced, making it more of a symbol than a reality.<sup>102</sup>

Chōsen, on the other hand, was their reality and place of origin. They physically knew their Korean nannies, whether by being carried on their backs or by sitting on their knees, and they experienced Korean culture firsthand through them.<sup>103</sup> Morisaki's nanny took her to her house for the Lunar New Year's celebrations, a *kut* (Shamanic ritual) for an ailing relative, and a wedding happening in the neighborhood. However, when she asked Morisaki what weddings were like in *naichi*, Morisaki replied that she did not know.<sup>104</sup> Demonstrating what Uchida and Cohen view as the perpetual in-betweenness of settler children, Matono and Morisaki were neither Japanese nor Korean, making it difficult to reintegrate into Japanese life after being deported from liberated Korea.<sup>105</sup> While the emotions of Japanese settler girls could be nurtured and utilized, and the performance of emotional labor demanded, making them complicit in colonial systems of power, their actual emotions could not be controlled, giving these girls room to negotiate and form divergent emotional connections to colonialism.

### Conclusion

Despite knowing that she had had no choice in the matter, as an adult Morisaki was wracked with guilt that she had been part of colonizing Chōsen. On the other hand, Matono seemed to equate guilt with knowledge, responding to her daughter's gentle criticism by saying that she had not known that Chōsen was a colony and therefore felt no guilt for her role in colonialism. Nevertheless, Sawai feels the need to defend her mother's childhood in Chōsen on the basis that she had no choice, suggesting an expectation that readers would hold her mother responsible for colonization. Yet holding children, as children, responsible for colonization ignores the vulnerable and dependent position of children in society and conceals the ways in which settler colonial systems use the dependence and ignorance of children to perpetrate colonial situations.

As female children without agency, Morisaki and Matono followed the decisions of their fathers, representatives of patriarchal power who were directly involved in colonization. In doing so, they contributed to an expanding settler population taking both land and food away from colonized Koreans. Their lack of understanding led to the normalization and thereby perpetuation of colonial systems of power in Chōsen. Their use of *kokugo* and ignorance of the Korean language meant that they supported policies that enforced *kokugo* on Koreans. Their emotional connection to Chōsen as their homeland reinforced a sense of belonging and created a desire for the continuation of colonization. They supported the war effort through the enactment of emotional labor. Like other vulnerable members of the Japanese Empire, they were mobilized and so became perpetrators of colonialism. However, their unconscious complicity does not mean that Japanese settler girls were blindly compliant. Their emotions were never completely controlled. Discrepancies between what was demanded and what they felt made them aware that they were being controlled by

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102 Sorimachi 2021, p. 348.

103 Sawai 2000, p. 52; Morisaki 2020, p. 21.

104 Morisaki 2020, pp. 59, 61, 73, 75–76.

105 Uchida 2011b, p. 714; Cohen 2006, pp. 1, 185–189.

adults, granting them opportunities to negotiate their level of complicity with the Japanese Empire, which was denied to them in other aspects of their lives. Japanese settler girls were not either/or; they were both—both vulnerable and complicit.

Memoirs such as *Mother's Keijō, My Seoul* and *Gyeongju is the Sound of Mother Calling* bring to light the ways that settler girls are complicit in colonialism. Settler girls across colonies and empires have, and remain, in a similar position: unknowingly complicit. It is necessary for the redress of past colonial crimes and efforts at decolonizing the future between Korea and Japan, and around the world, to recognize the ways this complicity occurs, educate children in awareness of their history and positionality, and give them a certain degree of agency within spaces such as the family and the classroom to express their emotions and follow up on their choices.

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## The All-Encompassing Inclusivity of Exclusion: Kaneko Fumiko's Universalist Tendency

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The subject of this article is the life of Kaneko Fumiko (1903–1926), and how Kaneko's life engendered an all-inclusive universality in her thought. Kaneko Fumiko was a Japanese anarchist and nihilist, active during modern Japan's Taishō era (1912–1927). She and her partner Park Yeol (1902–1974) were arrested in 1923 and convicted of high treason. Kaneko defined herself as an egoist and nihilist, which would commonly give the impression of an individualistic thinker that rejects having her uniqueness subsumed by universal notions. While she was undeniably a staunch individualist above anything else, a universalist understanding of humanity plays a significant role in her worldview. This universality is especially evident in Kaneko's relentless insistence that humans are absolutely equal by nature, a deviation from Stirner's egoism. I attempt to understand the kernel of universality in her individualistic thinking by referring to the philosophy and psychoanalytic theory of Slavoj Žižek and Todd McGowan. This article asserts that the reason for the universal range of Kaneko's thought can be located in her life experiences as an oppressed and exploited outcast of society.

**Keywords:** universality, egoism, exclusion, Max Stirner, Slavoj Žižek, Todd McGowan

This article explores the connection between the life of Kaneko Fumiko 金子文子 (1903–1926) and the universalist tendency in her thought. Kaneko was an anarchist insurrectionist during modern Japan's Taishō 大正 era (1912–1927) with connections to the Korean national-liberation movement, particularly through her comrade and lover, Park Yeol 朴烈 (1902–1974). The imperial authorities arrested Kaneko and Park after the Great Kantō earthquake in 1923, and after three years of interrogations and court hearings charged them with high treason for plotting to assassinate members of the imperial family. Fearing the fallout from their execution, the authorities reduced their sentence to life imprisonment, but at twenty-three years of age, Kaneko was found dead in her cell on 23 July 1926.

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While her actions were perceived as traitorous terrorism by the authorities, Kaneko believed they had solid philosophical foundations. Unfortunately, her written legacy is minimal, and her philosophical outlook must be reconstructed from disparate documents like her memoir, trial records, and letters. Prior research on Kaneko has highlighted the importance of abuse, exploitation, and exclusion for her ideology. However, there has been insufficient attention to explaining how her life experiences engender a universalist position. Deploying concepts from contemporary philosophy, this article examines the connection between universality and exclusion in Kaneko's thought. Specifically, I show how Kaneko's universalist conception of human equality distances her from Max Stirner (1806–1856), her philosophical role model. I draw on the ideas of Slavoj Žižek and Todd McGowan to explain and assert that the primary reason for Kaneko's belief in absolute equality is her awareness of her societal position. Her universalist view originates from her status as an outcast in modern Japanese society and her resulting life experiences. The article demonstrates that Kaneko's conception is not an abstract notion of humanity but one based on the universality of exclusion and non-belonging.

### Thinking with Kaneko

Anarchism in Japan is enjoying a resurgence in the English-language literature. The publication of Sho Konishi's work on how a rich history of Russo-Japanese reciprocal intellectual relations contributed to the development of prewar Japanese anarchism has signaled an uptick of interest over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> The recent monograph of Nadine Willems examines the anarchist thought and activism of Ishikawa Sanshirō 石川三四郎 (1876–1956), honing in on his transnational cooperation and consistent assertion of the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature.<sup>2</sup> Robert Kramm's article studies the activities of the Farming Village Youth Association (Nōson Seinensha 農村青年社), one of the last anarchist groups active during a late prewar era characterized by fascist suppression.<sup>3</sup> Mark Shields explores the Dadaist art movement in Japan and introduces the thought of, among others, Tsuji Jun 辻潤 (1884–1944), who like Kaneko was greatly influenced by the egoist Max Stirner.<sup>4</sup> However, the only recent work which focusses on Kaneko is that of Hélène Raddeker, comparing how Kaneko, Kanno Sugako 管野須賀子 (1881–1911), and Itō Noe 伊藤野枝 (1895–1923) sought to overcome the restricted role allocated to them within libertarian movements.<sup>5</sup>

Japanese studies on anarchism in prewar Japan are obviously more numerous, with recent examples including the works of Umemori Naoyuki 梅森直之, Ōsawa Masamichi 大澤正道, Hiyazaki Masaya 飛矢崎雅也, Kurihara Yasushi 栗原康, Sekiguchi Sumiko 関口すみ子, and Gotō Akinobu 後藤彰信.<sup>6</sup> While these also focus on famous anarchists of the era, though, Kaneko barely merits a mention, with the only partial exception being in a recent anthology of texts by Japanese anarchists.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Konishi 2013.

2 Willems 2020.

3 Kramm 2020.

4 Shields 2020.

5 Raddeker 2016.

6 Umemori 2016; Ōsawa 2020; Hiyazaki 2013; Kurihara 2013; Kurihara 2016; Sekiguchi 2014; Gotō 2016.

7 Kurihara 2018, pp. 132–135, 139–153.



The two most comprehensive studies on Kaneko are from the 1990s, by Yamada Shōji 山田昭次 in Japanese and Hélène Raddeker in English.<sup>8</sup> The former is a critical biography which mentions Kaneko's philosophical influences but does not delve deeply into the connections between these ideas and Kaneko's life. The latter is again a comparative study of Kaneko Fumiko and Kanno Sugako, the female anarchist executed during the Great Treason Incident of 1910–1911. Raddeker explores how the two activists interpreted the meaning of their lives and deaths when faced with imminent execution. The study refers to many influential thinkers and philosophies of the time but does not conduct a rigorous analysis of Kaneko's thought.

Although Kaneko's ideas have not featured much in recent research on anarchism, there has been an upsurge of interest in Kaneko's life, possibly influenced by the 2017 Korean film *Anarchist from Colony* by Lee Joon-ik, which portrays the relationship between Kaneko and Park. An extended essay by Brady Mikako ブレイディみかこ examines the lives of three rebellious women: Kaneko Fumiko, Emily Davison (1872–1913), and Margaret Skinnider (1892–1971), and shows how all three fought class, gender, and ethnic injustices and lived on their own terms.<sup>9</sup> Particularly relevant are Brady's insights that Kaneko and Park's union is an example of a nonhierarchical relationship and that Kaneko's "unregistered" status led to her oppression by the state. Naitō Chizuko 内藤千珠子 draws upon Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha to explore how Kaneko transcended traditional tropes of revolutionary heroines as seductive and voluptuous sidekicks to their male counterparts.<sup>10</sup> Finally, Mae Michiko investigates the demarcation of gender roles as an essential element of the modern nation-building process.<sup>11</sup> She views Kaneko (and Kanno) as examples of women who, through their experiences, rejected this and transcended the social positions prescribed for them by the state.

This article draws particular inspiration from the work and methods of Yasumoto Takako 安元隆子. Yasumoto's studies have investigated the possible influence of Rousseau on Kaneko's memoirs, and how Kaneko's life in Korea and addition to the family register made her aware of the unfairness and brutality of the Japanese imperial state.<sup>12</sup> Yasumoto has also explored how Kaneko's experience of rape shaped her insistence on gender equality, and her escape from fatalism.<sup>13</sup> All of Yasumoto's work is characterized by close attention to Kaneko's life *and* thought. The present article also seeks to bring both aspects of Kaneko's legacy into focus and is particularly indebted to Yasumoto's recent study examining Kaneko's understanding of Max Stirner.<sup>14</sup> The focus here, though, is universality in Kaneko's thought and how this *differentiates* her from Stirner, a topic left unaddressed in Yasumoto's writings.

A letter Kaneko wrote to the court during her trial cites Max Stirner, a nineteenth-century German philosopher and founder of egoism, as her most significant influence.<sup>15</sup>

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8 Yamada 1996; Raddeker 1997.

9 Brady 2019.

10 Naitō 2020.

11 Mae 2014.

12 Yasumoto 2020; Yasumoto 2021a.

13 Yasumoto 2019; Yasumoto 2021b.

14 Yasumoto 2022.

15 Suzuki 2013, p. 345.

Stirner's thought had been introduced into Japan during the Meiji 明治 period (1868–1912), when the dramatic social transformations associated with modernization created fertile ground for the spread of numerous ideas, including Stirner's egoism, a form of radical individualism often associated with anarchism and nihilism.<sup>16</sup> Such ideas were a reaction to the strongly authoritarian and anti-individualistic politics of the period.<sup>17</sup> In 1920, the anarchist Tsuji Jun published the first Japanese translation of Stirner's most significant work, *The Ego and Its Own*, under the title *Yuiitsusha to sono shoyū* 唯一者とその所有, although this was only of the first part of the work on "Man" (*Ningenhen* 人間篇). The following year, Tsuji released his translation of the entire text under the title *Jigakyō* 自我経 (The ego sutra).<sup>18</sup> Kaneko first encountered Stirner's philosophy in 1921 through her classmate Niiyama Hatsuyo 新山初代 (1902–1923). Her extensive engagement with and praise of Stirner's thought, and the fact she does not refer to any other source, suggests she was familiar with Tsuji's translation.

Kaneko left no extensive written legacy, and any attempt to reconstruct, decipher, and systematize her thought must rely on a few sources. The most exhaustive account of her philosophy is contained in two letters she submitted to the court.<sup>19</sup> These are supplemented by sporadic yet essential fragments of her thought in her memoir, interrogation records, and a personal letter to an unknown addressee.<sup>20</sup> Utilizing these disparate materials, I demonstrate how Kaneko's thought diverged from the Stirnerian version of egoism, and argue that this divergence was the result of her unshakable universalist belief in the inherent equality of humans. Together with Slavoj Žižek and Todd McGowan, I argue that the concept of universality in Kaneko's thought was not abstract, but one engendered by her experience of exclusion and non-belonging in society.<sup>21</sup> The article's contribution emphasizes that the status of the socially excluded is not just a particular position that is not and cannot be subsumed by the universal, but is counterintuitively the space where universality becomes manifest. The empirical case of Kaneko Fumiko exemplifies this theory of universality.

### The Roots of Universality: Kaneko's Turbulent Life

Kaneko's understanding of the ideas of Stirner and others was filtered through the prism of her life, and it is crucial to examine her experience of exclusion, abuse, and exploitation to understand how she came to espouse a universalist position. These life experiences clearly shaped her worldviews. In prison, Kaneko would write a memoir posthumously published under the title *What Made Me Do What I Did?* (*Nani ga watashi o kō sasete ka* 何が私をこう

16 Sasaki 1974, p. 48; Yasumoto 2022, p. 62.

17 Raddeker 1997, p. 97.

18 Takaki 1982. This complete version was rereleased in 1929 under the original title, *Yuiitsusha to sono shoyū* (Yasumoto 2022, p. 62). Tsuji translated the 1907 English translation of Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* by Steven Tracy Byington (1868–1958), rendered as *The Ego and Its Own* (Tsuji 1982, pp. 9–10). Kaneko knew English, so it is possible she read Byington's English translation, although it is more likely she read Tsuji's translation (Yasumoto 2022, p. 62). A 2017 translation by Wolf Landstreicher of Stirner's text is titled *The Unique and Its Property*. This article uses the older title, as irrespective of whether Kaneko read the work in English or Japanese, that was the version she was familiar with.

19 Suzuki 2013, pp. 344–356.

20 Kaneko 2013, pp. 9–289; Suzuki 2013; Yamada 1996, pp. 327–329.

21 Žižek 2012; McGowan 2020.

させたか).<sup>22</sup> In the text, Kaneko credited philosophical ideas for helping her understand the twisted workings of society, but also stressed the centrality of her lived experience. For instance, she stated:

Socialism has not given me anything new. It only gave me a theory of the correctness of my feelings that I had acquired from my past circumstances. I was poor. I had been used, bullied, tormented, held down, deprived of my freedom, exploited, and controlled by people with money. Thus, I have always harbored a deep-seated antipathy towards those with such power. At the same time, I have always had deep compassion for those in the same situation as me. . . . It was socialism that ignited this rebellion and compassion in my heart.<sup>23</sup>

Kaneko makes it clear that both ideas and her life experiences were crucial to her rebellious path. Without radical ideas such as socialism, nihilism, and egoism, she would not have acquired a critical conceptual framework to understand the systemic causes of the injustice that plagued her life.<sup>24</sup> Absent such ideas, her hardships may have been seen as fate, against which there is little recourse. Many people led lives of hardship but did not become anarchists.

Both Kaneko's experiences and the ideas she encountered and absorbed must be considered in her intellectual formation. Ideas gave her a framework, but life experience was the raw material which would later be interpreted through it. To paraphrase Kant: lived experience without radical ideas is blind; radical ideas without lived experience are empty. Radical ideas gave Kaneko the tools to understand the systemic causes of her suffering and, by extension, potential solutions, while her experiences provided such ideas with something to work with, namely a purpose. Life and thought are clearly complementary for Kaneko. This article argues for the universalist dimension of her thought, but that universalism is only comprehensible if we understand Kaneko's experience of social marginalization. We must begin, then, with an understanding of her life.

Kaneko was born in Yokohama in 1903 to Kaneko Kikuno 金子きくの and Saeki Fumikazu 佐伯文一.<sup>25</sup> Whereas Kikuno was of humble peasant birth, her father's family was a prestigious sake-brewing household embodying the Japanese ideal of a family-owned business.<sup>26</sup> Kaneko's parents had different surnames because her father did not add her mother's name to his family register (*koseki* 戸籍)—perhaps because he did not want to stain the respected family name by including Kaneko's mother, an ordinary peasant girl, or because he intended to replace her with a younger and prettier woman one day.<sup>27</sup> Thus,

22 The title is a sentence from toward the end of the memoir, which Kurihara Kazuo 栗原一男, the friend to whom Kaneko entrusted the text, thought summed up Kaneko's intentions, see Kaneko 2013, p. 288.

23 Kaneko 2013, p. 250. All translations from Japanese into English of Kaneko's writing and interrogation records are my own.

24 Kaneko eventually distanced herself from socialism and came to see a socialist vision of a post-revolutionary society as untenable, but the socialist critique of modern capitalist society would always stay with her.

25 This summary of her life primarily relies on her memoir (Kaneko 2013), and Yamada's (1996) critical biography of Kaneko.

26 Ueno 2009, p. 81.

27 Yamada 1996, pp. 16–17; Brady 2019, p. 2.

Kaneko's birth was not recorded, and she was officially an unregistered person (*musekimono* 無籍者).

Whereas diverse registration forms existed in earlier periods, the modern *koseki* system was introduced in Japan in the Meiji period to transform the various people of former feudal lands into a modern nation.<sup>28</sup> The registration of all Japanese subjects facilitated public order, allowing for the mobilizing the population for land cultivation or reclamation, the drafting of men for military service, collecting taxes, and enrolling children in primary education.<sup>29</sup> By being excluded from the register, Kaneko could not enjoy basic rights such as attending school. She was marked by exclusion at birth.

Abuse, poverty, abandonment, exploitation, and discrimination were constants throughout her life. Her father was an idle alcoholic, who frequently beat her mother and brought other women home, before abandoning Kaneko and her mother for her mother's younger sister. Kaneko's mother subsequently introduced different men into their lives and, at one point, even considered selling Kaneko off to a brothel. Kaneko would later note her mother's lack of independence.<sup>30</sup> Her mother eventually remarried and moved to her new husband's household, leaving Kaneko behind with her maternal grandparents.

When she was nine, Kaneko's paternal grandmother Mutsu ムツ took her to Korea, where Kaneko's aunt Kame カメ had married into the Iwashita 岩下 family, powerful and wealthy usurers in Bugang 美江 Village (today a part of Sejong 世宗 City). The Iwashitas adopted and officially registered Kaneko as their daughter since they were childless.<sup>31</sup> The family was part of the Japanese elite living amid the newly-colonized Koreans. Kaneko later recorded that while she believed she would finally be able to live a decent life, her hopes were soon dashed. Her adoptive family was apparently appalled by her coarse habits, decided she was unfit for the role of the family's only child, and treated her as a housemaid.<sup>32</sup> Her grandmother was cruel and abused her physically. The constant torment allegedly drove her to the point of suicide, but as she was ready to plunge into a river, the will to live triumphed as the beautiful natural scenery convinced her that life was worth living. This change of heart gave her another purpose: vengeance against not only her tormentors but on oppressors in general: "With that in mind, I started to think, 'Don't die.' I must, together with those suffering like me, take my revenge on those who inflict suffering. I must not die."<sup>33</sup>

As Raddeker points out, this story of her attempted suicide is clearly a retroactive interpretation of past events: Kaneko reflects on her entire life while incarcerated and constructs a narrative of what brought her to that point.<sup>34</sup> Another clear example of this is when, in one of her interrogations, she said that she "witnessed the Korean riots

28 Endō 2017, pp. 99, 101.

29 Endō 2017, pp. 111, 115, 130; Brady 2019, p. 1.

30 Kaneko 2013, p. 41.

31 According to Kaneko (2013, p. 67; Yamada 1996, pp. 26–27), Mutsu, concerned about appearances, requested that Kaneko be first officially registered as a daughter of her maternal grandparents before being registered as the Iwashita's daughter, since directly adopting an unregistered child would be considered shameful and embarrassing. As a result, Kaneko was first registered as the fifth child of the Kaneko household before becoming the only child of the Iwashita family.

32 Yamada 1996, pp. 36–39; Brady 2019, pp. 3–4.

33 Kaneko 2013, p. 124. Many later authors also cite this suicide attempt as the turning point in Kaneko's life; see Raddeker 1997, p. 78; Brady 2019, p. 5.

34 Raddeker 1997, p. 28.

for independence,” referring to the March 1st Movement for which she later expressed deep admiration.<sup>35</sup> Kaneko interpreted her experiences in Korea as foundational for her subsequent activities.

Kaneko returned to Japan in 1919 and lived again with her maternal grandparents for a while, but her father Fumikazu soon appeared back in her life and invited her to move into his household. She later recounts that her father was interested in her because he sought to enrich himself by marrying Kaneko to her uncle Motoei 元榮, her mother's younger brother. Motoei was a Buddhist monk, and Fumikazu hoped to gain access to the temple's wealth through the marriage. However, Kaneko developed a romantic relationship with a local boy named Segawa 瀬川 that Motoei discovered, calling off the wedding. This setback angered her father, and when Kaneko subsequently criticized her father for lying and being a cheapskate when buying shoes for her brother, Fumikazu beat her violently. This confirmed in Kaneko her desire for independence.

In 1920, Kaneko left for Tokyo, working while attending two schools. She experienced labor exploitation and became acquainted with Christian and socialist activists. Initially, Saitō 齋藤 (presented as Itō 伊藤 in Kaneko's memoir), a student and rickshaw puller, introduced her to Christianity and the Salvation Army. Kaneko was fed up with her job and lodgings at a newspaper seller, and Saitō helped her find a new place to stay. She initially sold soap on the streets, but then had to change residence and occupation again. Kaneko moved into a Christian sugar merchant's home as a housekeeper, but the debauchery, greed, and exploitation she witnessed there disillusioned her. Christians preached high morals yet failed to live up to them. This was confirmed by Saitō, who ended their relationship saying that she evoked impure (sexual) feelings in him. For her, it was a contradiction “that ‘Christians,’ who advertise on the street ‘love’ as a banner, are prevented from practicing true love because they are bound and cowardly before the name of God, which they have created themselves.”<sup>36</sup>

When Kaneko had been selling newspapers, some socialists gave her a pamphlet about the October Revolution. After abandoning Christianity, she stayed at the home of Hori 堀, a socialist printer, but soon became disillusioned with socialists as well. Hori was lazy and made others work while he rested upstairs under a *kotatsu*. Kaneko also accused the famous socialist activist Kutsumi Fusako 九津見房子 (1890–1980) of neglecting her children and hanging out with young men, and of hypocritically propagating the system's destruction while seeking fame within it. More materially, Kaneko once lent Kutsumi a kimono, which Kutsumi pawned and never reimbursed her for. Despite her disappointment with socialists, however, their critique of society provided her with theoretical tools with which to analyze modern society's inequality.

At school, Kaneko became acquainted with Niiyama Hatsuyo. As Naitō points out, Kaneko was impressed by Hatsuyo's independence as a woman and indifference to social expectations. Hatsuyo was skeptical of revolutionary idealism and disdained the people involved in such movements, but believed that one could be free and fulfilled if one worked on oneself and found one's task. It was Hatsuyo who introduced Kaneko to the philosophy

35 This was during the fourth interrogation on 23 January 1924; see Suzuki 2013, p. 306. Kameda (2020, p. 39) postulates that the lack of mention of the March 1st Movement is likely due to censorship.

36 Suzuki 2013, p. 301.

of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and Mikhail Artsybashev (1878–1927), as well as Stirner.<sup>37</sup> While Kaneko came to know of many movements, thinkers, and ideas, these nihilist and egoist philosophies solidified her thoughts. With these ideas and the example of Hatsuyo, Kaneko concluded that success in society is an empty, pointless, and vain project.

There is nothing more trifling than being what they call a distinguished person . . . I must have my own true contentment and freedom, must I not? I must be as I am.<sup>38</sup>

Kaneko's life had showed her the cruelty of society and its norms. The exposure to radical ideas enabled her to see the arbitrary, exploitative, and ultimately unnecessary values which shaped success in society. She would even come to reject education as inherently valueless, despite having yearned for it most of her life, as she became aware of education's use as a tool to climb up the social ladder; an inherently vain project.<sup>39</sup> While her understanding of egoism and nihilism must have continued to develop, one can perhaps designate this point as the birth of Kaneko, the nihilist.<sup>40</sup>

### The Path to Terrorism

Socialist activism brought Kaneko into contact with Koreans residing in Tokyo, through whom she came across a poem titled "Pup" (*Inukoro* 犬ころ) by Park Yeol. Something struck a chord with her, and she became determined to meet the poet. After several failed attempts, they met and decided to live together. Before long they were engaged in rebellious activities, such as organizing meetings with other activists and publishing papers. Park introduced Kaneko to the Black Wave Society (Kokutōkai 黒濤会), a Korean socialist study group, and they founded, edited, and wrote for its newspaper *Black Wave* (*Kokutō* 黒濤).

The late 1910s and early 1920s were a fruitful era for socialist and labor movements in Japan, whose numbers swelled owing to the influence of the October Revolution, the rice riots of 1918, and labor disputes.<sup>41</sup> Anarchism gained popularity, particularly among printworkers, who established two anarchist trade unions called the Shinyūkai 信友会 and Seishinkai 正進会. Anarcho-syndicalism, the branch of anarchism that sees autonomous labor movements as the agents of revolution, was the most popular ideology at the time, with Ōsugi Sakae 大杉栄 (1885–1923) as its central figure. Along with his comrades, he published *Labor Movement* (*Rōdō undō* 労働運動), which would, for a short while, print articles by anarchists and communists alike.<sup>42</sup>

Initially, communists and anarchists cooperated, and their efforts culminated in Japan's first Mayday event and the formation of the Labor Union Alliance (*Rōdō Kumiai Dōmeikai* 労働組合同盟会).<sup>43</sup> This alliance was short-lived, and the following year a rift occurred between the two groups, now known as the anarchist-Bolshevik dispute (*ana-boru ronsō* アナ・

37 Kaneko 2013, p. 261; Naitō 2020, pp. 207–208.

38 Kaneko 2013, p. 274.

39 This does not imply that her curiosity or desire to learn were also extinguished. She just no longer equated them with social success or the urge to prove others wrong for doubting her.

40 Raddeker 1997, pp. 225–226. About Kaneko's deepening understanding of Stirner's thought, particularly during her imprisonment, see Yasumoto 2022, pp. 68–69.

41 Komatsu 1972, p. 92.

42 Crump 1996, p. 20.

43 Komatsu 1972, pp. 103, 106.

ボル論争). The Black Wave Society also split into communists and anarchists, echoing the broader dispute.<sup>44</sup> The former established the North Star Society (Hokuseikai 北星会), while the latter reorganized themselves as the Black Friends Society (Kokuyūkai 黒友会), where Ōsugi Sakae lectured.<sup>45</sup> This tension may have contributed to Kaneko's endorsement of the anarchist label.

Stirner's brand of nihilism and egoism informed Kaneko's anarchism; one highly individualistic and skeptical of collectivist ideals for a post-revolutionary society, such as those of anarcho-syndicalism. While Kaneko's rejection of collectivist visions sets her apart from socialist anarchists like Ōsugi, she was also not a Dadaist like Stirner's translator Tsuji Jun, a roaming vagabond who did not involve himself with rebellious activities or organizations.<sup>46</sup> Kaneko by contrast edited and wrote for the Black Friends Society's journal *Cheeky Koreans* (*Futoi Senjin* 太い鮮人), later renamed *Today's Society* (*Genshakai* 現社会).<sup>47</sup> However, the activity which led to her arrest and ultimately her death was Park's failed plot to obtain explosives with which to assassinate the crown prince. Although this plan never came to fruition, that they even considered such a treacherous act would ultimately be enough for the authorities to convict them.

In 1923, the Great Kantō earthquake rocked the general Tokyo area, causing many fires in residential areas. In its aftermath, it was rumored that Koreans were looting and setting Japanese homes ablaze.<sup>48</sup> This led to a massacre of Korean residents and Japanese left-wing activists, resulting in an estimated 6,618 deaths nationwide; among the victims were anarchists Itō Noe and Ōsugi Sakae, both detained and brutally murdered by the military police.<sup>49</sup> The government feared being held accountable for the massacre by Koreans and the international community. To save face, they found scapegoats in Kaneko Fumiko and Park Yeol, whose half-baked plan to assassinate the crown prince was twisted and framed as evidence of the real threat Koreans represented.

The authorities arrested them in 1923 and subjected them to approximately three years of imprisonment and interrogation, during which Kaneko wrote *What Made Me Do What I Did?* and a collection of poems.<sup>50</sup> The two were sentenced to death in 1926, but the authorities, fearing a potential backlash from their execution, commuted the sentence to life imprisonment.<sup>51</sup> Kaneko, though, died in prison that year, although the circumstances of

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44 Raddeker 1997, p. 195.

45 Raddeker 1997, p. 199.

46 Ōsugi was inspired by Stirner, as he makes clear in his essay (Ōsugi 2014), but he was also strongly influenced by collectivist thinkers and revolutionaries like Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) and Georges Sorel (1847–1922). Unlike Kaneko, he believed that a worker's movement could bring about a new society.

47 While primarily meaning "fat" or "thick," *futoi* 太い also means "daring," "shameless," "brazen," "audacious," or "cheeky." "Cheeky" here follows Raddeker's (1997, p. 198) translation. Kaneko and Park initially wanted to name their journal *Malcontent Koreans* (*Futei Senjin* 不逞鮮人), but the authorities did not allow this. However, in the Kantō dialect, the word *futoi* can also be pronounced *futei*, which sounds the same as malcontent (*futei* 不逞). According to Kaneko, an official at the police department called them "cheeky scoundrels" (*futoi yatsura* 太い奴ら), and that gave them the idea for the journal's name; see Suzuki 2013, p. 307.

48 Kitamura 2013, p. 10.

49 Yamada 1996, p. 142.

50 Kaneko 2013.

51 Yamada 1996, p. 351.

her death remain obscure.<sup>52</sup> The theory that she hung herself as a last act of defiance (against an imperial pardon) remains popular.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Philosophy of Kaneko Fumiko**

Many of the better-known anarchists of Kaneko's era, such as Ōsugi Sakae, Itō Noe, Ishikawa Sanshirō, and Hatta Shūzō 八太舟三 (1886–1934), accepted socialist and collectivist ideas like anarcho-syndicalism or Kropotkin's anarcho-communism. They had a vision of how society should be structured. In contrast, Kaneko, who believed that people's real motivations are inherently selfish and self-serving, was pessimistic about the possibility of a more just post-revolutionary society. Her thought came to be inflected by the nihilistic egoism of Max Stirner. This section will detail Stirner's philosophy and show how Kaneko adopted and adapted it.

#### *Stirner's Thought*

Although nihilism is today generally associated with Friedrich Nietzsche, Stirner was a key early figure.<sup>54</sup> While he never used the term in *The Ego and Its Own*, the book's introduction is titled "All Things are Nothing to Me,"<sup>55</sup> which had a double meaning—directed both externally and internally. The former is not limited to material things outside the individual and includes the following ideas:

But, if I say to it, "you will pray, honor your parents, respect the crucifix, speak the truth, for this belongs to man and is man's calling," or even "this is God's will," then moral influence is complete; then a man is to bend before the calling of man, be tractable, become humble, give up his will for an alien one which is set up as rule and law; he is to abase himself before something higher: self-abasement.<sup>56</sup>

It is this denial of any inherent value to morality that marks nihilism. Morality and established values are grounded in raw power, which is arbitrary. However, ideas can exert authority and subjugate people precisely because they need not rely on forceful, physical coercion—Stirner referred to such ideas, essences, and concepts as "spooks."<sup>57</sup> Such signifiers are social; they are not the individual's creation but exist within a broader social structure. The egoist is aware that ideas are just spooks in one's head and does as they please with them, effectively coming to own them.<sup>58</sup>

For Stirner, "ownness" is the essential condition for an egoist. One puts the ego—one's uncompromised, unmitigated, and unmediated self-interest—as one's only criterion and guide:

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52 Yamada 1996, pp. 237–238.

53 Raddeker 1997, p. 69.

54 Paterson 1971; Schiereck 2018.

55 Stirner 1995, p. 5.

56 Stirner 1995, p. 75.

57 "To know and acknowledge essences alone and nothing but essences, that is religion; its realm is a realm of essences, spooks, and ghosts," see Stirner 1995, p. 41.

58 Stirner 1995, p. 17.



Now why, if freedom is striven after for love of the I after all, why not choose the I himself as beginning, middle, and end?<sup>59</sup>

The ego is not an abstract philosophical or psychological concept but a concrete, one-of-a-kind, unique, finite, and transitory individual.<sup>60</sup> Focusing on the self, an egoist “owns” oneself, precluding them from being defined by social signifiers. They do not allow other people or ideas to dictate their desires or interests, and so own themselves.<sup>61</sup>

Stirner contrasted ownness with freedom: “I am free from what I am *rid* of, owner of what I have in my *power* or what I *control*.”<sup>62</sup> Ownness is absolute self-mastery, which returns us to Stirner’s proclamation that all things are nothing to him, and the internal implications of this statement. Stirner describes himself as a “creative nothing, the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything.”<sup>63</sup> The egoist is defined not by social signifiers but as “a construct to be developed.”<sup>64</sup> Egoism aims for individuals to become arbiters of their own fate, and to not sacrifice their personal desires, passions, or self-interests in order to fit into society, receive God’s grace, or adopt a greater cause.

Stirner propagated a radical individualism, but also argued for his preferred form of community, a “union of egoists.”<sup>65</sup> People are involuntarily born into a society, adapt to their allotted social roles, and compromise their desires. However, in a voluntary union, people pursue their self-interests because “only in the union can you assert yourself as unique because the union does not possess you, but you possess it or make it of use to you.”<sup>66</sup> A union enables an individual to achieve impossible things alone; it is “a multiplication of my force, and I retain it only so long as it is *my* multiplied force.”<sup>67</sup> A union helps egoists grow; it is a “means to both validate being and bring about solidarity.”<sup>68</sup> Egoists are free to leave or rebel against a union if they so wish; it is potential for rebellion and the reciprocal “recognition of one another’s power of annihilation” function as a guarantee of fairer relations.<sup>69</sup>

Let us now see how Kaneko adopted these ideas.

### *Kaneko's Nihilistic Egoism*

I argue that Kaneko’s philosophy is summarized by her expression, “living in nothingness.”<sup>70</sup> She criticized how most people lived in pursuit of vacuous material or ideational aims, motives which are not inherently valuable. Things acquire value only because people ascribe it to them. For example, Kaneko states, “the state’s dignity and the emperor’s sanctity are dignified and sacred only when protected by this power.”<sup>71</sup> The state has no

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59 Stirner 1995, p. 148.

60 Stirner 1995, p. 163.

61 Stirner 1995, p. 153.

62 Stirner 1995, p. 143.

63 Stirner 1995, p. 7.

64 Shields 2020, p. 452.

65 Stirner 1995, p. 161.

66 Stirner 1995, p. 276.

67 Stirner 1995, p. 276.

68 Shields 2020, p. 452.

69 Blumenfeld 2018, p. 112.

70 Original text: ニヒルの境に生きること; see Suzuki 2013, p. 347.

71 Suzuki 2013, p. 346.

inherent properties that justify its authority; only through violently imposing its rule does it retroactively endow itself with an appearance of dignity or sanctity.

The same goes for morality in general, which she did not consider divine or natural but instead a tool to legitimate power relations. She denounced filial piety (*oya kōkō* 親孝行) as deployed by parents to rule over their children.<sup>72</sup> The strong (parents, rulers, employers) use morality to “protect their freedom of conduct and force the weak to submit.”<sup>73</sup> This aligns with Stirner’s thinking in which, for instance, church and state are the same, differing only in terms of their tools: whereas the former espouses devoutness as a virtue to its flock, the latter propagates morality to its subjects.

Yamada argues that Kaneko’s anti-hierarchical view was entwined with her critical stance on gender relations and roles.<sup>74</sup> Her experience of being abused, exploited, and mistreated because of her gender led her to rebel against gender norms by, for example, refusing to enter a girls’ school and making a pact for equal treatment and respect with Park.<sup>75</sup> Naitō points out how an imprisoned Kaneko’s rejection of a futon from a friend expressed her desire to be seen solely as a human.<sup>76</sup> She refused to be an object of pity owing to her gender: “I am alive as a human being. I refuse to be seen as a ‘fragile’ woman and for these reasons I reject all the benefits based on this premise.”<sup>77</sup>

As a nihilist, Kaneko rejected the authority of morality, the state, society, and metaphysical ideas. As an egoist, the only authority she acknowledged and followed was herself:

So I declare: therefore, I do not recognize any “vocation” or “mission” above human beings, nay, above myself. In other words, “I want to do this, so I do this” is the only law and command I have to govern my actions. To put it simply, all my actions are equal to just “I do it because I want to,” and I don’t tell others that “you have to do this” or “you should be like that.”<sup>78</sup>

Yasumoto notes that Kaneko became averse to notions of destiny, fate, or luck because people like her detested father regularly evoked fate to explain their misfortune.<sup>79</sup> This aversion stemmed from two intersecting reasons: faith in fate or luck represents faith in the authority of a higher power and rejection of one’s capacity to assert one’s will. For her, evoking such concepts meant passively resigning rather than taking responsibility and actively carving out the life one desires.

An egoist acknowledges no authority above oneself and, therefore, has self-interest as the only compass to guide their actions and judgments. For Kaneko, “it goes without saying that the state and the individual are incompatible. For the state’s prosperity, individuals

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72 Suzuki 2013, p. 299.

73 Suzuki 2013, p. 300.

74 Yamada 2006, pp. 19–21.

75 Kaneko 2013, p. 207. It is important to note that Kaneko comes to describe her desire to prove herself by competing and outdoing men as vanity. Yasumoto (2018, p. 22) argues that Kaneko’s desire to outdo men is internalized misogyny.

76 Naitō 2020, p. 206.

77 Yamada 1996, p. 329.

78 Suzuki 2013, p. 351.

79 Yasumoto 2021b, pp. 53–55.

must not have their own will. The state will fall when the individual awakens to their own will."<sup>80</sup> An individual's strength to assert one's freedom and oneness against oppressors (the state, parents, employers, and so on) is the ultimate weapon. That is why she saw great beauty in rebellion:

Here I cry out: Rebel, rebel! Rebel against all power! It is good to restrain a strong power. To rebel against an oppressor is not only good for the oppressed; it is also good for all humankind. And that alone is the only good and the only beauty in what humans do.<sup>81</sup>

These words resemble those of the collectivist anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), but Kaneko never offered any blueprint for the kind of society these rebellions should bring about, and was skeptical of revolutionary projects.<sup>82</sup> She believed that people were too materialistic to create a society that rejected the importance of private property.<sup>83</sup> This does not mean, though, that she gave up on forming bonds with others:

I have indeed acted and lived as a human being. And based on my being a human being, I have formed relationships with many of my friends. And you also surely see me in the light of my humanity. And only by seeing me as such can we be true comrades. In other words, only a union based on equality can be a genuinely free and personal union.<sup>84</sup>

It was essential for her that her individuality and will are respected in relationships. She offered a vague, short description of how an ideal society should function based on this principle:

I think [that] just as I have my own head and my own feet to think about myself and walk my own path, so should others have their own head and their own feet. In other words, independence and self-governance, where every person is the master of his or her own life and governs it accordingly, would encourage me to begin sketching out my desired society, if only faintly.<sup>85</sup>

Kaneko wanted her partnership with Park to reflect the ideals she described above, so they made a three-point pact for a fair and noncoercive relationship: (1) they would live together as comrades, (2) Kaneko would not be perceived as a woman in their activism, and (3) if one became ideologically corrupted and collaborated with the authorities, they would break up. By adhering to these points, their individualities would be protected, and

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80 Suzuki 2013, p. 351.

81 Original text: ここにおいて私は叫ぶ——反逆せよ反逆せよ! あらゆる力に反逆せよ! 強い力に掣肘を加えることは、それは善である。すなわち圧制者に反逆をすることは被圧制者にとって善であると同時に、それは全人類の善である。しかしてそのみがかただ人間がすることのうちにただ一つの善であり、美である——と; see Suzuki 2013, p. 347.

82 Shields 2020, p. 453.

83 Suzuki 2013, pp. 346–347.

84 Yamada 1996, p. 328.

85 Suzuki 2013, p. 305.

they would “mutually cooperate in their activism for the sake of their ideology.”<sup>86</sup> Kaneko described her relationship with Park as a partnership of “one and one person,” meaning that neither submitted to the other’s will, and they did not form a collective will to which their individual intentions would be subsumed.<sup>87</sup> Their desires and interests were aligned, so they came together to multiply their power as individuals but not to be fused into one will. Thus, their relationship can be considered egoistic. They sought a nonhierarchical, noncoercive human relationship—a union of egoists.

How successful they were is debatable, especially when one considers Kaneko’s lamentation in her second letter to the court (26 February 1926).<sup>88</sup> She confessed how she became involved in one of Park’s plans to acquire a bomb without truly consenting to it and how she should have been egoistic and left Park. Not doing so, she became an unwilling sacrifice in someone else’s plan.<sup>89</sup> Yasumoto argues that Kaneko’s doubts about whether she should have left Park resulted in a deepening of her understanding of Stirner’s egoism which enabled her to free herself from the ideal of rebellion, a “spook” for which Kaneko worked even against her own interest.<sup>90</sup> However, in the very same letter, Kaneko proudly reaffirms her love for Park and valiantly accepts all the consequences brought about by her implication in the plan, apologizing to Park for doubting him, doubts which she describes as “egoistic.”<sup>91</sup>

Another nihilistic and egoistic aspect of Kaneko’s attitude can be gleaned from her utter indifference to a person’s background. In an imperialist and colonial era, where people from mainland Japan considered themselves superior to their colonized subjects, such as Taiwanese and Koreans, Kaneko rejected nationalism and supported her Korean comrades by wearing traditional Korean clothing to the Supreme Court of Judicature (Daishin’in 大審院) for the commencement of her public trial on 26 February 1926.<sup>92</sup> Kaneko believed that everyone is inherently equal, regardless of social signifiers, and that all people are entitled to be treated equitably owing to the simple fact of our common humanity. That is why she saw it necessary to overthrow the state, which artificially imposes hierarchies between people, such as rulers and the ruled, oppressors and the oppressed, and exploiters and the exploited. The state, capitalism, and other oppressive social formations hinder individuals from growing and pursuing their self-interests. Her egoism encompassed individual self-assertion that led to an active anarchist rebellion against such formations.

Nevertheless, one could argue that this unshakable belief in human equality is incompatible with Stirner’s egoism as it ascribes value to abstract ideas, such as “humanity” and “equality,” which have an almost transcendent, metaphysical value. In Stirner’s terms, is Kaneko espousing a belief in spooks?

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86 Suzuki 2013, p. 305.

87 Suzuki 2013, p. 353.

88 Suzuki 2013, pp. 352–354.

89 As Park had not consulted her about the plan to obtain a bomb, Kaneko felt that she had been implicated in events without her consent, which goes against egoist principles. In Stirner’s terms, Park’s unilateral behavior caused their union to degenerate into a society.

90 Yasumoto 2022, pp. 67–68.

91 Suzuki 2013, p. 354. For more on this see Dolinšek 2022.

92 Yamada 1996, p. 205.

### **An Unflinching Belief in the Equality of All**

Despite Kaneko's professed admiration for Stirner, the latter does not share her enthusiasm for universality. Given his emphasis on the absolute, irreducible, and unique singularity of the individual, it is not difficult to understand his aversion to universality, commonly understood as something that transcends individuals in their particularity. He makes this explicit in his negative stance toward the concept of "man" (humanity):

To see in you and me nothing further than "men," that is running the Christian way of looking at things, according to which one is for the other nothing but a concept (a man called to salvation, for instance), into the ground.<sup>93</sup>

Stirner sees the deployment of abstract concepts, such as humanity, as tools to reduce individual uniqueness and enforce ways of thinking, valuing, and behaving. Such universal concepts, according to Stirner, promote conformity by making individuals identify with those terms and, consequently, adopt the prescribed modes of being:

So every opinion must be abolished or made impersonal. The person is entitled to no opinion, but, as self-will was transferred to the state, property to society, so opinion too must be transferred to something *general*, "man," and thereby become a general human opinion.<sup>94</sup>

Stirner is similarly hostile to the notion of "equality." For Stirner, people have striven to overcome inequalities by considering everyone as equal to their fellow human beings and consequently "brought on this last equalization, levelled all inequality, laid man on the breast of man."<sup>95</sup> An egoist is "the unique"—a singular entity whose particularity cannot be defined by any essence. As the unique "no concept expresses me, nothing that is designated as my essence exhausts me; they are only names."<sup>96</sup>

Stirner argues that the individual that has awoken to one's unique self becoming an egoist is inevitably a danger to institutions of power; thus, the authorities deploy abstract concepts to assimilate individuals into a generic mass. He says that "all states, constitutions, churches, have sunk by the *secession* of individuals; for the individual is the irreconcilable enemy of every *generality*, every *tie*, every fetter."<sup>97</sup> Institutions like the state require equalizing and flattening universal concepts to subjugate individuals and keep them from straying from their allotted roles.

Despite Stirner's antipathy toward universalist thinking, however, Kaneko fully embraced the notion of humanity's inherent equality:

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93 Stirner 1995, p. 155.

94 Stirner 1995, pp. 115–116.

95 Stirner 1995, p. 123.

96 Stirner 1995, p. 324.

97 Stirner 1995, p. 192. Emphasis in original.

I have always been a great believer in the equality of human beings. Human beings must be equal as human beings. There is no fool and no genius. No one is strong; no one is weak. I believe that all human beings are completely equal in terms of their value as natural beings on earth and that all human beings should, therefore, enjoy the full and equal rights of human life only by virtue of their qualification as human beings.<sup>98</sup>

For Kaneko, humans were neither equal because of some liberal ideology that would grant people equality through a constitution nor because God said so. For her, human equality was an obvious truth that did not require any legal or metaphysical grounding. She asserted that it was the existing sociopolitical system that divided and allocated people into unequal positions.<sup>99</sup> Only humans remain after the social categories that separate people and make them unequal are removed.

In such a state, Kaneko claimed it is useless to try and separate them into higher and lower, strong and weak, smart and stupid. Her rejection of established values strips the nobles of their assumed superiority. With the sanctity of rulers founded on established values, nihilist insight into the ultimate groundlessness of said values exposes the artificiality, arbitrariness, and gratuitousness of unequal human divisions.

One may consider Stirner and Kaneko's positions on universality incompatible or that Kaneko's universalist position reflects a betrayal of true egoism. I contend that there is a way to think of Kaneko's universality that reduces it to an abstract essence that flattens all particularity and uniqueness into a generic commonality. Kaneko's belief in universality, paradoxically, originates from and is tied to her exclusion from society.

### **Kaneko: The Unregistered, the Woman, and the Worker**

It was Kaneko's social position (or lack thereof) and her resultant experiences that endowed her thought with a universal range. I categorize her trials and tribulations into those she faced as an unregistered person, a woman, and a worker. Her lack of registration meant that she was not legally recognized as a Japanese citizen and consequently denied a citizen's rights. She first noticed discrimination toward her when she could not enter school, although she did not quite grasp the reason for her mistreatment. Although Kaneko was permitted to unofficially attend classes after her mother pleaded to a local school, she was continuously singled out and looked down upon by the school's staff. It was not until she arrived in Korea and became registered as the daughter of the Iwashita family that she became aware of her hitherto unregistered status as the reason behind the discrimination. She describes this realization as the factor that helped her understand the inherently discriminatory nature of the legal system:

Although I exist, the law did not admit I am real because I was unregistered. My presence was ignored simply because the law did not recognize my existence.<sup>100</sup>

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98 Original text: 私がかねて人間の平等を深く考えております。人間は人間として平等であらねばなりません。そこには馬鹿もなければ、利口もない。強者もなければ、弱者もない。地上における自然的存在たる人間としての価値からいえば、すべての人間は完全に平等であり、したがってすべての人間は人間であるという、ただ一つの資格によって人間としての生活の権利を完全に、かつ平等に享受すべきは必ずのものであると信じております; see Suzuki 2013, p. 320.

99 Suzuki 2013, p. 321.

100 Suzuki 2013, p. 301.

It was her acquisition of Japanese nationality (by being included in a family register) which paradoxically enabled her to identify with other excluded persons, such as Koreans.

Yamada notes how Kaneko's mistreatment because of her gender also contributed to her critical outlook.<sup>101</sup> From her mother's intention to sell her to a brothel to her father's attempt to marry her to her uncle, she saw that being a woman meant to be reduced to an object at others' disposal. She lamented how "my uncle freely toyed with me, my father used me as a tool, and then, like a worn-out pair of shoes, they threw me away, trampled on me, and kicked me."<sup>102</sup> While in Tokyo, she dated men but also noticed that they were only using her as a sexual plaything before discarding her. Furthermore, the fact that she was discouraged from pursuing an education and an independent lifestyle and instead pushed to learn sewing and become a "good wife and wise mother" showed her the limited expectations and social roles society assigns to women. This caused her to disidentify with the signifier of "woman" and the manifold disadvantages and limited benefits that it brought.

Her class position also came with many disadvantages in society, with poverty representing a constant struggle until moving to Korea. After moving to Tokyo, life again became a relentless struggle for survival, with her having to work for little pay. Through her experience and acquaintance with socialist ideas, she came to understand the underlying cause of these struggles: exploitation. Despite working excessively and being paid only a pittance, employers expected gratitude for keeping their workers employed. However, Kaneko realized that the hard labor of others kept businesses and lifestyles afloat. Owners exploited them because "there was much money to be gained from students."<sup>103</sup> She noticed how workers, whose work keeps businesses afloat, were excluded from the fruits of their own labor.

This exclusion, marginalization, and exploitation undoubtedly brought her much pain and anguish, but also fostered her universalistic belief in human equality. Her subordinate position in society allowed her to empathize and identify with others who were similarly marginalized, such as Koreans. Social distinctions such as man and woman, Japanese and Korean, or rich and poor lost value in her eyes. Ultimately, she saw people only as human beings beyond the hierarchical distinctions that such social signifiers create.

### **The Universality of Exclusion**

Stirner argued that universality was employed by powerful institutions to ensure their continued existence and to subjugate individuals. Universality imposes ideas or ways of life on others, as universal claims silence particular voices that do not conform, creating excluded subjects. Universality can also be used as a flattening concept—by reducing individuals to generic signifiers, such as citizen, woman, or worker, one reduces their unique, ineffable singularity to something generic.

It is, of course, undeniable that claims of universality have been used to impose and justify the exercise of power. Nonetheless, I argue here that Kaneko deployed universality in her thought in such a way as to avoid Stirner's criticisms. To clarify this, I turn to the

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101 Yamada 2006, pp. 18–19.

102 Kaneko 2013, p. 188.

103 Kaneko 2013, p. 217.

Hegelian-psychoanalytic-Marxist philosophy of Slavoj Žižek and Todd McGowan, who do not merely dismiss universality as an oppressive ideological tool to assert one's hegemony. Žižek contends that universality and particularity are not dualistically opposed but are dialectically implicated in each other. "Actual universality 'appears' (actualizes itself) as the experience of negativity, of the inadequacy-to-itself; of a particular identity."<sup>104</sup>

In short, a universality arises "for itself" only through or at the site of a *thwarted particularity*. Universality inscribes itself into a particular identity as its inability to fully become itself: I am a universal subject insofar as I cannot realize myself in my particular identity—this is why the modern universal subject is by definition "out of joint," lacking its proper place in the social edifice.<sup>105</sup>

Žižek argues that marginalization from system and society does not imply that the excluded one becomes invisible with no effects on the exclusionary order. Excluded subjects are the site of true universality because their exclusion and non-belonging highlight the system's false claim to universality. The empirical example of Kaneko Fumiko can help clarify this abstract idea.

Kaneko is a painful reminder of society's failure to become a complete, holistic totality, that is, to close in on itself and become an organic, harmonious whole in which everyone is in their proper place. Organicist harmony is only a pretense because it must violently exclude someone while striving to achieve this ideal. Therefore, harmony cannot be truly harmonious, as the excluded part haunts it like a perpetual symptom, the vengeful return of inevitable leftovers caused by the necessary process of exclusion.

These leftovers are not just empirical remnants that a more inclusive, open system can someday include. The act of exclusion is structurally necessary because those that seem to be a barrier to the system's completion (the excluded) are, at the same time, a necessary condition of its existence. This barrier brings the system into existence in the first place. Systems exist to regulate and mediate social relations because these relationships are not naturally harmonious but defined by antagonisms. Totality, control, and mastery depend on what they cannot assimilate: "[Its] external barrier is really an internal limit."<sup>106</sup> No matter how hard the system strives to assimilate, include, or eliminate its excluded remnant, a new remainder always appears to bar completion. Therefore, it is appropriate to call this perpetual remnant a symptom of the system.

Kaneko was painfully aware of how imperial Japan was an exclusionary system that did all it could to suppress its excluded symptoms. She understood how harmony was just a facade for a brutal system of exploitation and oppression and actively strived to expose this. Her exclusion was an endless source of pain and suffering, but also gave her the means to distance herself from social determinations. She describes this process in her memoir:

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104 Žižek 2012, p. 361.

105 Žižek 2012, p. 362.

106 McGowan 2020, p. 62.



From the time I was born, my life has been full of misfortune. I was abused all the time in Yokohama, Yamanashi, Korea, and Hamamatsu. I could not come to hold a sense of self. But now, I am grateful for the bullies of the past. I am thankful to my father, mother, grandparents, aunt, and uncle. I am thankful to my destiny in its entirety for not letting me come from a wealthy family, but making me suffer to the fullest everywhere and in every aspect of my life. Why thankful? If I had been raised by my father, grandparents, aunt, and uncle without any tribulations, I probably would have been molded by the ideas, character, and life of those I despise and hold in contempt so much. I would not have finally found my own self. But thanks to what fate has not blessed me with, I have found myself.<sup>107</sup>

I describe what Kaneko is talking about in the above quote as alienation. However, I deploy this concept slightly differently than its common usage, where it is often used to describe an exclusively negative social phenomenon, something undesirable and in need of overcoming. Kaneko was barred from participating in society as a fully-fledged member. While still a part of society, she was never recognized as such, never given a respected place within it. This is how Kaneko was alienated from society.

As the system pushed Kaneko to the margins of society, she became disillusioned with the idea of finding a recognized place in it. For a period, she had wanted to prove herself to others by acquiring an education and achieving success that was seen as available only to men, but her encounters with anarchistic, nihilistic, and egoistic ideas convinced her of the vanity and emptiness of trying to secure a position for herself. This caused her to disinvest from social positions and signifiers, so that rather than trying to conform with the norms such signifiers imposed, she instead sought to shape herself. Her alienation inadvertently opened a space of freedom. Whereas such a space is theoretically available to anyone, it is not easy for a person invested and comfortable in their privileged social position to become aware of this space. Possession of special advantages, regardless of whether these are due to nationality, gender, or class, act as a barrier to not being defined by social signifiers. Kaneko refused to identify with such signifiers, accepting her exclusion and lack of belonging. Her disinvestment from social signifiers enabled her to overlook differences, such as ethnicity in the case of Koreans, and to identify with and feel compassion for different people.

While particular identities (Korean, woman, proletarian) distinguish people from the universal (Japanese), a universal sense of non-belonging unites these excluded, marginalized, and exploited people. Kaneko and Park did not belong to society; the only position available to them was a marginalized one, a non-position. Yet it is precisely in this thwarted particularity that universality manifests itself:

The universal is the stopping point that prevents particulars from realizing themselves fully as particulars. They are universally united through the failure of a full realization.<sup>108</sup>

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107 Kaneko 2013, pp. 197–198.

108 McGowan 2020, p. 61.

Non-belonging is a universal trait that everyone shares. Many people desire to belong, and some go to extraordinary lengths, such as dying for one's nation in war, to ensure a sense of belonging.<sup>109</sup> That is why authorities perceive figures like Kaneko and Park as threats—their existence exposes the fragility of belonging. Kaneko could assert that all people are inherently equal because equality for her implied equality for everyone.

Kaneko's rebellion has a universal scope because to be equal means that everyone participates in the space of non-belonging. Non-belonging, no longer in binary opposition with belonging, comes to mean liberation from social determinations and the freedom to carve one's path. Whereas non-belonging as the opposite of belonging is defined as an excluded and marginalized position simultaneously inside and outside the system, universalizing non-belonging entails abolishing this binary opposition, which would affect everyone. It would mean doing away with institutions that are by their very nature exclusionary, such as the state and the imperial family. It is not surprising, then, that Kaneko's life experiences of exclusion and her acquaintance with radical ideas promoting detachment from social signifiers led her to join the anarchist revolt.

### Conclusions

Kaneko's belief in the universal equality of humanity is not based on some abstract, positive, and describable characteristics (for example, rationality, moral conscience, or soul).<sup>110</sup> If it were so, Stirner could legitimately have accused her of worshiping spooks. Her universality originated from a negative aspect, something everyone lacks in common—the universal absence of belonging.

The non-belonging, the lack of a proper social position, is painful, but it also opens the possibility of detaching oneself from social signifiers. This opens a space of freedom, where one can define oneself freely and actively, instead of being passively defined by the labels assigned to one by society. In this sense, I draw a parallel between non-belonging and Stirner's (creative) nothing, which rejects being a "something," identifying and adapting to abstract social signifiers and adopting their prescribed behavior and values, and instead chooses to create oneself from scratch. Moreover, disinvestment from social signifiers also means that one is not concerned with, and can look past, others' backgrounds and labels, such as ethnicity or gender, and see an equal human that similarly fails to belong. While Stirner remained blind to this universality, Kaneko's life experiences made it impossible to ignore. Kaneko did not worship spooks but was a specter herself, one that haunts Japanese history—the specter of the excluded.

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109 Naoki Sakai (2005) explores the length to which colonized subjects and migrants were ready to go to assure themselves a place in the dominant nation by examining the writings of Taiwanese in imperial Japan and Japanese-Americans during World War II.

110 By positive and negative, I do not mean a value judgment, good or bad. I use positive to denote features that can be described, while negative features can only be described as an absence or a negation of a positive term.

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## **Yanagita Kunio and Agricultural Policy: Finding the Man Behind the Mythology**

**Simon James BYTHEWAY and IWAMOTO Yoshiteru\***

Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) was arguably Japan’s most influential intellectual in the twentieth century, but what drove Yanagita, what was important to him, and ultimately, how can we best understand his life and legacy today? Using writings translated here for the first time from Yanagita’s most significant and revealing works (gleaned from a lifetime of “Yanagita studies” by Iwamoto Yoshiteru), we attempt to uncover his intellectual and ideological foundations, and to argue that Yanagita’s formative education and experiences in agricultural policy shaped the aims, nature, and theoretical development of his folklore studies. Moreover, in exploring such themes as the village, family, rural poverty, urban migration, and pastoral romanticism, we recontextualize Yanagita’s thoughts and actions, and ultimately reevaluate the man mythologized as Japan’s pioneering folklorist.

**Keywords:** agricultural cooperative, agricultural policy, agronomy, anthropology, ethnology, folklore studies, political economy, village, family, parasitic landlordism

As an agronomist, bureaucrat, editorialist, writer, part-time academic, the founder of Japanese folklore studies, and a loyal and highly decorated servant of Japan, Yanagita Kunio’s 柳田國男 (1875–1962) numerous writings—originally released in a definitive thirty-six volume collection with five appended volumes and recently reedited as a thirty-five volume series with four appended volumes—continue to be reprinted to this day.<sup>1</sup> In addition to Yanagita’s voluminous books, articles, reports, and speeches, there is also a tremendous amount of secondary literature on his life and work widely circulating in Japan. Although only a fraction of this huge body of work has been translated into European

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1 TYKS, YKZA, and YKZZ.

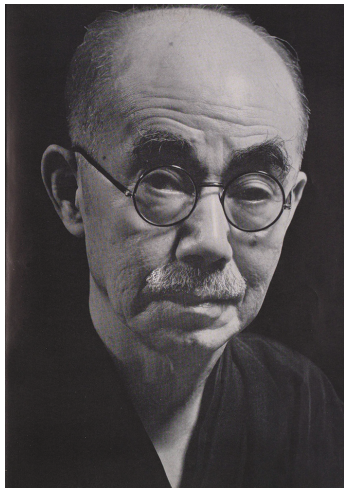


Figure 1. Yanagita Kunio, photographed for the magazine *Fūbō* 風貌 in 1953. Courtesy of Portraits of Modern Japanese Historical Figures, National Diet Library, Japan.

languages, Yanagita has the rare distinction of being proudly referred to as an “intellectual giant” of modern Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Yanagita’s popularity grew during Japan’s imperial heyday (1894–1945), when he started collecting folklore to gain an insight into the world and thoughts of the “original” Japanese people.<sup>3</sup> He traveled widely throughout the various parts of the archipelago and the colonial territories of that time, seeking answers to the question: “Who are the Japanese?” The three pioneering works that initially emerged from these efforts, *Nochi no kari kotoba no ki* 後狩詞記 (Hunting terminology, 1909), *Ishigami mondō* 石神問答 (A dialogue with ishigami, 1910), and *Tōno Monogatari* 遠野物語 (Legends of Tōno, 1910) are all now considered classics.<sup>4</sup> Their publication is said to herald the establishment of the new science of “Yanagita ethnology” (*Yanagita minzokugaku* 柳田民俗学).<sup>5</sup> During the postwar period, anthropologists, ethnologists, ethnographers, linguists, oral historians, philologists, sociologists, and others combined critical aspects of Yanagita’s thinking and pioneering methodology into “folkloristics” or in more neutral, contemporary terms: Japanese (or native) folklore studies (*Nihon/genchi minzokugaku* 日本・現地民俗学).<sup>6</sup>

2 Kuwayama 2004, p. 64. For more perspective, see also Morse 2012; Koschmann et al. 2010.

3 Yanagita’s involvement in the formulation of colonial policy is explored in Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015c. Regarding how his career intersected, colluded, and collided with Japanese imperialism, see Christy 2012, pp. 236–246; also Iwamoto 1992; Murai 1992 and Kawamura 1996.

4 These were all initially self-published by Yanagita for distribution among his acquaintances. For the backstory on Yanagita and his time in Tōno, see Iwamoto 1983b; Iwamoto 1992. On the *Tōno Monogatari*, see Ortobasi 2009; also available in English as *The Legends of Tono*, trans. Ronald Morse (Lexington Books, 2008 [1975]).

5 Privileging spoken over written language, Yanagita used two different Chinese ideograms for *zoku*—族 and 俗—in *minzokugaku*, allowing his work to be translated as both anthropology and/or ethnology. As Alan Christy rightly notes, and we note below in different contexts, Yanagita was inconsistent and undisciplined in his use of terminology. He used the English terms “rural economy” and “folklore” together with “anthropology” and “ethnology,” all alongside the Japanese “national language studies” (*kokugakugo* 国学語), “new national studies (nativism)” (*shinkokugaku* 新国学), “popular traditions” (*minkan denshō* 民間伝承), “native place studies” (*kyōdo kenkyū* 郷土研究), and “native ethnology” (*genchi minzokugaku* 現地民俗学), while arguing for the use of “Yanagita ethnology” (*Yanagita minzokugaku* 柳田民俗学・民族学) inside Japan. See Christy 2012, pp. 6–8.

6 Kawade Shobō Shinsha Henshūbu 2014; Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015c, p. 73.



In the postwar period, Yanagita found a wide variety of new admirers across Japan's political spectrum, from orthodox Marxists on the left to liberal intellectuals on the right. His scholarly investigations into the philology of Japan's early classical literature (*kokugaku* 国学), which sought to ascertain Japan's indigenous values before the introduction of Chinese civilization, dovetailed into the emerging and very popular *Nihonjin-ron* 日本人論 boom of the 1970s. *Nihonjin-ron*, literally the “theory of being Japanese,” is a curious genre of study that discusses—often at great length—issues surrounding Japanese national and cultural identity. Serendipitously, Yanagita's earlier works, such as *Yama no jinsei* 山の人生 (Mountain life, 1925), were viewed as prototypical *Nihonjin-ron*, and his own authoritative *Nihonjin* 日本人 (The Japanese, 1954) was republished in 1976 as a “special edition” while the boom was cresting.<sup>7</sup> Following Yanagita's death in 1962, his extraordinary influence and popularity extended towards the younger dynamic of Japan's disaffected and radical student movements.<sup>8</sup> Tellingly, non-Japanese scholars, such as Kevin Doak, Marilyn Ivy, Gerald Figal, and Harry Harootunian, “discovered” Yanagita in the decade or so from 1990 (just after Japan's long period of high-speed, economic growth had peaked).<sup>9</sup> Today, his Japanese readership extends from social progressives to cultural conservatives, and further right, finding particular favor among nationalist scholars. Almost uniquely, it seems, Yanagita is a man for all political seasons.

The origins of the present article reside in the summation of a presentation on “Yanagita Kunio and Agricultural Policy” prepared by Iwamoto Yoshiteru for symposia related to the one-hundred-year anniversary of Yanagita's birth. Iwamoto's intention was to present Yanagita critically as a man, rather than as a prophet or as the “founder” (*sōritsusha* 創立者) of a new science.<sup>10</sup> The paper sought to reveal the true “student of agricultural policy” (*nōseigakusha* 農政学者) behind the mythic “folklorist/ethnologist” (*minzokugakusha* 民俗学者). Iwamoto rejects the dialectic notion of Yanagita as a young bureaucrat and an old folklorist, which privileges what he became and dismisses what he was, and instead emphasizes the intellectual constancies and continuities in Yanagita's writings.<sup>11</sup> Yanagita was attempting to effect profound changes in the rural life of the Japanese people throughout his entire life, initially as a bureaucrat and ultimately as a folklorist, however decontextualized and deified he later became. Seen in this light, “Yanagita ethnology” was his new way of working within agricultural policy, albeit in a range of new and pragmatic guises that were appropriate for their times.

Bytheway was first asked to translate this project into English sometime in the late 1990s but was unable to pin down the distinctive writing styles of both Yanagita and Iwamoto. Thus, what started out as a straight, uninterrupted translation of Iwamoto and Yanagita's Japanese-language writings necessarily changed over time owing to the needs of its English-language readers.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, making the work more accessible to a non-Japanese

7 Like much of Yanagita's work in the 1920s, the pieces that became *Yama no jinsei* were initially published serially in Asahi Newspaper publications, in this case *Asahi Graph* アサヒグラフ 4:2–5:7 in 1925, and then reprinted as a single volume, see Yanagita 1926. For *Nihonjin*, see Yanagita 1954; Yanagita 1976a.

8 Takayanagi 1974, pp. 329–335.

9 Doak 1994; Ivy 1995; Figal 1999; Harootunian 2000.

10 See Kawade Shobō Shinsha Henshūbu 2014.

11 Iwamoto 1985; Iwamoto 1990.

12 Specifically, the introduction, subtitles, conclusion, references, and footnotes were all added by Bytheway in consultation with Iwamoto.

audience required additional research, explanation, and contextual information: in short, an English-language channeling of Iwamoto's original ideas and thesis. The result is a unique insight into the intellectual formation and socioeconomic underpinnings of the enigmatic Yanagita Kunio, a synthesis hitherto unavailable in any language.

We begin here by discussing Yanagita's endearing conviction that learning reveals powers by which the world may be saved and how rural Japan, with its "vast unknown history" of poverty, was the world that he felt compelled to save. Naturally, Yanagita's personal experience of profound socioeconomic transformation in rural Japan colored his career as an agronomist, bureaucrat, diplomat, and editorialist. We consider how Yanagita's leaning towards the German historical school of political economy shaped his thoughts on the role of agricultural policy in Japan's modern, nation-building endeavors. We also investigate Yanagita's ideological promotion of a "healthy" middle-class peasantry, paying particular attention to how his concept of the village and the family intersected with his spirited belief in the importance of an "everlasting" transgenerational, rural family. We then delve into Yanagita's own experience of childhood to reveal the source of his concern with rural poverty, the "disease of the nation," parasitic landlordism, and the breakup of peasant families. Finally, we address Yanagita's romantic turn, and comment on the present-day relevance of his most used and misconstrued quotes in the coda. Each section stands alone thematically, which entails some chronological cycling. Many of Yanagita's most important insights gleaned from his childhood came to him in middle age. Nevertheless, the order of the sections is presented broadly in sequential, historical order, and our work starts out with a young Yanagita who was patently not afraid to ask, and answer, big questions.

### Yanagita as Agronomist and "Learning is the Salvation of the World" (1897–1902)

Yanagita's iconic phrase, "learning is the salvation of the world" (*gakumon kyūsei* 学問救世) captures his practical attitude toward learning.<sup>13</sup> Against a backdrop of rapid industrialization—and attendant Westernization—threatening to destroy the very basis of traditional Japanese culture, Yanagita declared that it was his lifework to answer the question, "Why are peasants so poor?"<sup>14</sup> The first thing that we must grasp, therefore, is that for Yanagita the study of folklore does not imply some kind of intellectual escape from reality. On the contrary, as the founder of folklore studies in Japan, Yanagita proudly claimed that his new discipline had a practical, useful purpose which set it apart from all its intellectual predecessors and competitors. Moreover, Yanagita believed that research undertaken in such a practical spirit was substantially more useful and meaningful than those studies that originated without it.<sup>15</sup>

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13 The phrase echoes "govern the people for the sake of the country" (*keisei saimin* 經世濟民), from which the modern Japanese word for economy (*keizai* 經濟) is derived. The *keisei saimin* ideology of statecraft was deeply inculcated in Yanagita during his studies at Tokyo Imperial University, as noted throughout Yanagita Kenkyūkai 1988, see for example p. 1054. The first clause of the Imperial University Order (1886) clearly stated their aim as being "to teach the arts and sciences in accordance with the priorities of the State."

14 The questions, "Who are the Japanese?" or "What is it to be Japanese?" were not commensurate in Yanagita's priorities. See Kawada 1993, p. 111; also Iwamoto 1976, pp. 6–12, 106–108; Gotō 1976, pp. 57–60.

15 Yanagita knew that such research might *in reality* provide only the mildest of relief to the poor or indigent; nevertheless, the fact that the research had been done with practical intentions made it substantially more useful and meaningful than it would have been otherwise. See Yanagita 1976a, pp. 33–57.

It is of fundamental importance that Yanagita began his university studies and career as a “hands-on” agronomist, one dedicated to the socially useful study of plant genetics, plant physiology, ethnobotany, and soil science.<sup>16</sup> None of Yanagita’s followers had the same engagement with this deeply humanitarian and scientific calling. Intriguingly, Yanagita did not promote folklore studies as having a specifically agricultural orientation when he laid down its founding principles. Being the only agronomist in the group, however, he emphasized its grounding in agronomy in order to take sole credit for synthesizing folklore studies as a new discipline “born of the soil,” as it were. Consequently, Yanagita’s brand of Japanese folklore studies—conceived and promoted by him in the early 1930s as *Yanagita minzokugaku*—was pursued by his most ardent admirers and acolytes, evolving into the different and variegated schools of Yanagita-inspired studies, some of which are still active and influential today. Nevertheless, it must be said that Japanese folklore studies has devolved into an “unobtrusive interest” (*tōkai shumi* 韜晦趣味) and thus fallen some way short of Yanagita’s original goal of it being a useful and practical science. Moreover, Yanagita’s conception and definition of his ethnology, or folklore studies, was notoriously vague, elastic, and changed quite dramatically over time.<sup>17</sup>

Critical examination of Yanagita’s early career provides important new insights as to why he hoped to promote his new brand of practical folklore studies. Yanagita studied agricultural policy (*nōseigaku* 農政学) as a student of the law department at Tokyo Imperial University (present-day Tokyo University) from April 1897, and graduated ninth in his class of fifty-five students in March 1900.<sup>18</sup> In July of that year he entered the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (Nōshōmushō 農商務省), and was initially involved in the promotion of agricultural cooperatives in accordance with the Agricultural Cooperatives Act of 1900 (Sangyō Kumiai Hō 産業組合法).<sup>19</sup> Right from the outset, Yanagita thought that he was eminently qualified to review and critique political decisions, especially as they related to agricultural and social policies, and he had his own firm opinions on what government policy ought to be.<sup>20</sup> Diagnosing agriculture as suffering from chronic underinvestment owing to the immense labor it entailed, and the low profits it generated, he contributed to the drafting of new legislation designed to foster its development.

The young Yanagita forcibly argued that Japan’s political leaders had to reconsider the old system of agriculture, where the subsistence and self-sufficiency of the peasantry (*nōmin* 農民) were the primary goals. Rather than treat agriculture as an independent industry, the main gist of Yanagita’s thinking—based on the principle of the division of labor—was that expert knowledge should be brought in from outside to introduce and improve new production methods. Critically, Yanagita believed that education was necessary to bring about a radical change in the peasants’ understanding of agriculture. The aim was to foster the growth of a prosperous middle-class peasantry who could make their living exclusively

16 For further discussion of the importance of early career experiences on Yanagita’s subsequent folklore studies, see Morse 1990, pp. 1–22.

17 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 6–10. *Tōkai shumi* may be a little harsh; see Iwamoto 1982 and Iwamoto 1983a.

18 Ishii 1998, p. 44.

19 Please note that Yanagita was inconsistent, contrarian, and permissive in his references to “agricultural policy” which he wrote in many different ways over his lifetime (*nōseigaku*, *nōgyō seisaku* 農業政策, *nōgyō seigaku* 農業政学, *nōgyō seisakugaku* 農業政策学, *nōgyō seisakugaku to kokka* 農業政策学と国家).

20 Nakamura 1967, p. 176.

by agriculture, educated in the latest and best agricultural practices. Henceforth, agriculture was to be regarded as a “vocation” (*shokugyō* 職業), not as an “occupation” (*seigyō/nariwai* 生業), one elevated in status as a *professional* calling. Yanagita’s ideas were formed by his own experience of meeting peasants all across Japan when he visited their villages in order to promote new “agricultural cooperative communities” (*kyōdōtai* 共同体). Most of the people he talked with were very poor, but their poverty was not caused by a lack of intelligence or hard work. Yanagita believed that the penetration of modern commercial agriculture into the villages had all too often led to financial destitution, and even though the rural people were aware of this, they had no way to save themselves from their awful predicament.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of agriculture to the economic life of Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can hardly be overstated, as some two-thirds to four-fifths of Japanese people relied on agriculture for their livelihoods. Until around the time of Yanagita’s birth, rice (*koku* 石) was the standard of value, agricultural taxes were paid in kind, and all economics was essentially agricultural economics (*nōgyō keizai* 農業経済). By the time Yanagita had reached adulthood, the rapidity of Japan’s industrial revolution was such that many flocked to the cities to find work, particularly to the six great cities of the Kantō and Kansai (Kinki 近畿) plains.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the number of “farm households” whose livelihood “was fully or partly depending on agricultural production (crop cultivation, livestock breeding, and sericulture)” remained remarkably stable from 1906 (when national statistical surveys began) to the mid-1960s, and peaked in 1950.<sup>23</sup> It was in these circumstances that the reform of agriculture—supporting agricultural production—thus became fundamental to Japan’s modern economic growth.

In the early twentieth century, parasitic landlordism had become so entrenched across Japan that Yanagita despaired for the prospects of agricultural development. The number of tenants unable to earn their living by working in agriculture would increase, and as a result, agriculture would become a national handicap, the “disease of the nation” (*kuni no yamai* 國の病). In order to avoid this dire situation, Yanagita saw the need for agrarian reform, arguing that proprietary rights in arable land “should belong to the peasants” if at all possible and that continued parasitic landlordism was socially corrosive and politically unsustainable.<sup>24</sup> Many decades later, something like these agrarian reforms—most critically the prohibition of absentee landlordism—were enacted, as a signature achievement of the postwar Allied Occupation of Japan.

Yanagita also pointed out the dire problems caused by rent being paid in kind. His opinions, however, were roundly ignored both in academic and bureaucratic circles owing to the prevailing physiocratic principles (*nōhonshugi* 農本主義) wholly focused on the conservation of the peasantry’s small-scale agriculture (*shōnōgyō hogoron* 小農業保護論). That is, in order to support the growth of Japan’s great cities it was imperative that the peasants

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21 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 23–39. The source material is Yanagita’s “Nōseigaku” 農政学 in TYKS 28, pp. 187–285. Yanagita also wrote the similarly titled “Nōgyō seisakugaku” 農業政策学 in TYKS 28, pp. 287–421; and “Nōgyō seisaku” 農業政策 in TYKS 28, pp. 423–493.

22 The “six great cities” (*roku-dai toshi* 六大都市) of imperial Japan (from north to south) were Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe.

23 Institute of Developing Economies 1969, pp. 109, 114–117.

24 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 35–39; Iwamoto 1978; and Iwamoto and Kunikata 1997.

perform their vital role in basic agricultural production.<sup>25</sup> Critically, the peasants did not share in, or even understand, Yanagita's intentions for them, although his efforts were meant to serve their interests (unrequited understanding was to be a reoccurring theme throughout Yanagita's life).<sup>26</sup> Thus, Yanagita seemingly abandoned his forays into agricultural policy and reform, experiencing a palpable, and self-publicized, awareness of his failures. Chastising himself later, the thirty-five-year-old Yanagita pointedly wrote in the preface of *Jidai to nōsei* 時代と農政 (Agricultural policy and the times, 1910), "How diligently and zealously a man must apply himself to his studies if he is to attain a greatness that can lead his generation or define a new age."<sup>27</sup>

### Yanagita as Bureaucrat, Diplomat, and Editorialist (1902–1930)

After working at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce for just eighteen months, Yanagita was appointed as a Councilor of the Legislative Bureau on 12 February 1902. Distinguishing himself as both diligent and brilliant, he subsequently rose dramatically in rank and prestige, ultimately being appointed as Secretary-General of the House of Peers. Yanagita's decorated career as a bureaucrat, however, ended abruptly after he was accused of being "unenthusiastic in his duties" (*shokumu ni funesshin* 職務に不熱心) in April 1919 by Tokugawa Iesato 徳川家達 (1863–1940), the President of the House of Peers. Despite the (still murky) intervention of the "commoner" Prime Minister Hara Takashi 原敬 (1856–1921) on the "commoner" Secretary-General's behalf, Yanagita was forced to resign some eight months later, on 23 December 1919.<sup>28</sup>

Seemingly unperturbed, Yanagita joined the Tokyo Asahi Newspaper Company in July 1920 as an "associate" (*kyakuin* 客員) or guest writer and devoted his spare time to promoting folklore studies. In May of the following year, Yanagita was appointed as Japan's representative to the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Committee and was dispatched to Geneva, with the glowing recommendation of another one-time agronomist, Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933). Following the Great Kantō earthquake on 1 September 1923, however, Yanagita returned anxiously to Japan on 8 November 1923 and formally resigned from his post in December of the same year. On 7 February 1924, he was appointed, along with the prominent Christian professor-turned-politician Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造 (1878–1933), as joint editor-in-chief to the Asahi Newspaper Company.<sup>29</sup>

As Yanagita won fame in these new positions, people forgot that he had once been a specialist in agricultural policy. On returning from Europe in November 1923, Yanagita apparently thought that owing to the immense socioeconomic changes of the interwar

25 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 23–39.

26 See Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015c, pp. 72–73.

27 TYKS 16, p. 6, first published as Yanagita 1910.

28 Yanagita Kenkyūkai 1988, pp. 24–25. Being unenthusiastic in one's duties was a dire allegation and came at a cost. Apparently, Tokugawa Iesato disliked Yanagita's general dress sense and his penchant for long and frequent "business trips." Or was it simply that Yanagita once refused to carry Tokugawa's briefcase? For more on Yanagita, the "elite bureaucrat," see Ishii 1998, pp. 80–84.

29 Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015c, p. 74; also Burkman 2012. Yanagita was initially an "associate" at the Tokyo Asahi Newspaper Company, but quickly rose through the ranks to become a joint editor-in-chief to the Asahi Newspaper Company (Asahi Shinbunsha Henshūkyoku Komon Ronsetsu Tantō 朝日新聞社編集局顧問論説担当) in less than four years. While "editor-in-chief" was Yanagita's official English-language job title, there was a division of labor between him and Yoshino, and in reality he served as an editorial advisor, as the Japanese job title makes clear.

period, “my earlier study of agricultural policy was useless.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, it was ostensibly for this reason that he left the bureaucracy to become a writer. With this in mind, however, we should pay attention to the editorials that Yanagita wrote for the *Asahi* newspaper, at a rate of between one and three a week from 7 February 1924 to 20 November 1930. By definition, a newspaper editorial should be topical and cover the major (often ongoing) issues of the day. Moreover, the company had specifically hired Yanagita as a legal and political insider to comment on the news of the nation’s capital and premier city. Nevertheless, of the 389 editorials that Yanagita wrote, 68 (approximately 20 percent) were concerned with agricultural policy, on topics such as mountain, fishing, and farming villages, methods of agriculture, the provision of foodstuffs, and, critically, rice and produce prices. Readers may not have thought too deeply about the author of these editorials, but it is clear that Yanagita retained his agronomy-based approach, or in more modern terms a socioeconomic viewpoint, and remained intensely interested in all things agricultural. Among the public at that time, these pastorally themed editorials contributed to the broad-minded, cosmopolitan, and progressive image of the *Asahi* newspaper.<sup>31</sup>

As an unnamed editorialist, Yanagita unstintingly criticized the promotion of monoculture and an agricultural policy which brought about “unnaturally purified agriculture” (*fushizen naru junnōka* 不自然なる純農化) or “simplified production” (*seisan no tanjunka* 生産の単純化). Yanagita thought that Japan’s historic (over) emphasis on sericulture and rice production, along with the rise of parasitic landlordism, meant that peasants were unable to depend solely on agriculture to earn a living, and consistently argued that agricultural policy should reduce the concentration of wealth held among landlords. While these ideas were coached in editorial rhetoric about “keeping a balance” and “the interests of the nation as a whole,” Yanagita should be considered a leading critic of the undue concentration of wealth brought about by absentee landlordism, for, “government policy aims to increase agricultural production, but it serves a still more important purpose, namely, the well-being of the nation as a whole. Production itself, therefore, should never be the ultimate goal for the individual, or the government.”<sup>32</sup> Fine words from Yanagita for a daily newspaper, but with editorial freedoms chastened by the rise of militarism, the formal and informal imperialism that Yanagita had been so deeply enmeshed in now threatened to contain him. In the 1930s, he increasingly pursued new opportunities as a folklorist with his own distinctly “local, hometown” (*kyōdo* 郷土) focus on the village and the family, his days as the voice or conscience of a city newspaper now over.

### **Yanagita’s Inclination Towards Political Economy (1902–1949)**

Even in his earliest days, when he was active as both an agronomist and bureaucrat, Yanagita consciously tried to avoid the indiscriminate or uncritical adoption of contemporary Western theories and theoretical constructs. Yanagita rejected *laissez-faire* capitalism, thought that distribution was more important than production (which “should never be the ultimate goal”), and emphasized the need for state intervention in the economy. Close study of his books, articles, speeches, and editorials show that Yanagita came to be deeply influenced by

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30 Kawada 1993, p. 117.

31 Iwamoto 1976, p. 10.

32 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 108–109; 73–74.

the German historical school of political economy during his university education. That is, Yanagita believed in the importance of empirical and inductive reasoning, dynamic learnings contextualized in a nation's historical experience, rather than the ahistorical “laws” of economic science, deductively reasoned by the classical economists. Japan was a “late developing nation” (*kōshin koku* 後進国) like Germany, not a pioneer of the industrial revolution like Britain, Belgium, or France. Thus, the works of Friedrich List (1789–1846) were much more practical and useful to Yanagita than those of David Ricardo (1772–1823) or John Stuart Mill (1806–1873).<sup>33</sup> Indeed, accepting the German historical school's promotion of protectionist economic policy—as an instrument of nation-building—was an entirely sensible approach to the Japanese paradigm. In this respect, Yanagita was entirely a man of his time.<sup>34</sup>

The “govern the people for sake of the country” ideology of Meiji statecraft was deeply ingrained into Yanagita as a young student, and the vital role played by politics in economic development was a key insight gained from the German historical school, but to this he added his own ideas about the importance of having a practical attitude toward learning. As Yanagita observed in these key quotes from 1929 to 1947:

Though studies are based on thorough research and knowledge, they typically lack a theoretical framework to unify them as a whole. Some people may doubt the existence of some such theoretical framework, but in truth it is indispensable. As evidence we can see that various studies cannot be harmonized [with each other] if they neglect having a theoretical framework to unify them. Theories derived from politics are essential.

*Seinen to gakumon* 青年と学問 (Young men and learning, 1929)<sup>35</sup>

Studies must be directed towards contributing to the betterment of humanity. At present, each study occupies its own ground or field, but this is only a temporary trend, prevailing until studies can better contribute to one another [across disciplines]. Many of today's academics seem to have lost sight of this important goal.

*Minkan denshōron* 民間伝承論 (A treatise on traditional folklore, 1934)<sup>36</sup>

Generally speaking, there is a tendency to think that studies devoted to supplying those things that the world demands are somehow a corruption of learning. Some academics feel that learning is demeaned by the requirement that it be useful in the present context. Frankly speaking, nothing is more ridiculous than this attitude. It is despicable if one has a position as an academic merely in order to earn a living, or to be called an “intellectual” and always be right, but how can one be despised for aspiring to use one's own learning for the well-being of our nation? Those who want to do so [be useful], but cannot, must feel rather guilty.

“Gendai kagaku to iu koto” 現代科学といふこと (Modern science, 1947)<sup>37</sup>

33 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 40–48; Nakamura 1967, p. 212.

34 See Ericson 2016, pp. 106–109; Ericson 2020, pp. 46–47; Metzler 2006; and Pyle 1974.

35 TYKS 25, p. 184, later revised as Yanagita 1976b.

36 TYKS 25, p. 335, first published as Yanagita 1934. Partially available in English as “On Folklore Studies,” trans. Carol Gluck in *Sources of East Asian Tradition. Volume 2: The Modern Period*, ed. Wm. Theodore De Bary (Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 940–941.

37 TYKS 31, pp. 14–15, first published as Yanagita 1947.

Here we may sense something of Yanagita's prodigious drive. From the beginning of his reinvention—his reincarnation—as a folklorist, Yanagita criticized institutional academicism and sought to distance his new social science from other academic disciplines, such as anthropology, which were *in reality* closely related.<sup>38</sup> To put the matter simply, Yanagita believed that no study should be pursued without providing some practical benefit to humanity, for “learning is the salvation of the world.” Scholarship was good only if it was clearly useful, an unsettling and unwelcome thought for many of those who work at universities, then and now!

Yanagita's view of politics as a synthetic study which should contribute to the betterment of humanity seems to have run counter to those of the preeminent Marxist economist Uno Kōzō 宇野弘蔵 (1897–1977) in his discussion on the ideal formation of economic policy below:

The present-day discussion of economic policy seems to be really inadequate as it concentrates on immediate measures to fulfil practical purposes, and it draws on only very general rules derived from the history of economic policy and adopted in the development of capitalism ... this analysis does not help to achieve any immediate practical purpose in and of itself, but only provides as many scientific rules as possible for practical actions. Economic policy is distorted in the process, but, in fact, the social sciences cannot contribute to practical actions without using the above methodology.

*Keizai seisaku ron* 経済政策論 (Economic policy theory, 1954)<sup>39</sup>

The difference between Yanagita and Uno on the usefulness, or practicality, of learning was more than a matter of approach. Yanagita professed to be an advocate of contemporary political economy, while Uno, following Marx's trenchant critique of the capitalist mode of production and classical political economy in *Das Kapital*, was highly critical of it.<sup>40</sup> Marxism represented high-level theory lacking low-level, concrete plans for the way forward. Dogmatically, Yanagita believed that there should be no study without practical instruction.

Moreover, Yanagita always aimed for his learning to be useful, not in the lowly manner of a government-sponsored scholar, but in the elevated manner of a loyal subject working tirelessly for “the wellbeing of our nation as a whole.” He wished to engage in a grand, long-term national project for the benefit of posterity. For that reason, even when he was in a position that allowed him to participate in the policy and planning decisions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, he never yielded to the mainstream preoccupation with the conservation of small-scale agriculture so prevalent in contemporary academic and bureaucratic circles. As a result, very few people took any notice of him when he was a young man. In fact, Yanagita often remarked, and joked with his friends and acquaintances, that he was a failure as a politician.<sup>41</sup> The disappointments of the unelectable agronomist and the frustrations of the middle-aged bureaucrat help explain why Yanagita reinvented himself

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38 Oguma 2002, p. 200.

39 Uno 1954, p. 30.

40 See Marx 2013.

41 Muroi 2010, p. 267.



as a folklorist, and why his reputation was subsequently reevaluated so positively—as it continues to be even now.

In the wider context of the outbreak of financial and economic crises in the late 1920s, and the growing military encroachment on civilian government during the 1930s, Yanagita sought out long-term projects that he thought would be worthy of his talents and beneficial to the nation. The incidence of widespread rural poverty, in particular, caught his attention:

The great challenges of politics end with “the story of poverty.” The causes of poverty are quite complex, but many people have already found the basic reasons for it through exhaustive investigations. Although there is no debate over the truth of these findings, there is, as of yet, no conviction that poverty can be eradicated by eliminating its causes. The reason for this poverty can only be because there is a vast unknown history that remains around the subject.

*Momen izen no koto* 木綿以前の事 (Things before cotton, 1939)<sup>42</sup>

The above quote indicates that Yanagita, with his belief that “learning is the salvation of the world,” recognized that he could not find the key to solving the problem of poverty without first making an exhaustive investigation of its “vast unknown history” (*bōbakutaru michi no rekishi* 茫漠たる未知の歴史). Yanagita plunged into folklore studies as a brand-new discipline in order to learn something of the pressing social phenomena of rural poverty. Indeed, Yanagita’s early brand of Japanese folklore studies staked its reputation on the “collection of empirical data” (*kisodēta no shūshū* 基礎データの収集) in order for it to be seen as being demonstrative and rational in nature.<sup>43</sup> Folklore studies was to be a science, not a mere collection of fragmentary knowledge. Thus, Yanagita made a sharp distinction between “those who gather” (*atsumaru mono* 集まる者) knowledge and those who, like himself, “think about it” (*kangaeru mono* 考える者), and constantly objected to what he felt were casual or offhand references to his research as being “folklore studies,” preferring for his works to be cited as part of his own special (if ill-defined) brand of “Yanagita ethnology.”<sup>44</sup> Yanagita also sought to unify political economy with original Japanese thought and culture through a “new study” of classical Japanese texts (*shin kokugaku* 新国学).<sup>45</sup> Yanagita’s long life of eighty-eight years was not, however, long enough for him to accomplish the work required to reach his aspirational goal. For this reason, Yanagita’s folklore studies are described as “unfinished” (*mikan* 未完) by friends and foes alike.<sup>46</sup>

42 TYKS 14, pp. 196–197, revised forty years later as Yanagita 1979.

43 Kawada 1993, p. 111.

44 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 6–12. See earlier footnotes for discussions of Yanagita’s varied nomenclature.

45 The intellectual and political history of reenvisioning *kokugaku* is detailed in Fujiwara 2021, pp. 97–126.

46 Japanese-language studies also became another of Yanagita’s signature, long-term projects. From the latter part of the 1930s, and against a background of strenuous calls for the national language to be “protected and respected (*aigo to sonchō* 愛護と尊重) across the empire” as the war in China raged, Yanagita recognized that issues surrounding the development of the Japanese language, and especially how it was taught, were vital to the needs of Japan as an “advanced national defense nation” (*kōdo kokubō kokka* 高度国防国家). See Yanagita Kenkyūkai 1988, pp. 911–912. As memories of the war receded, Yanagita even went so far as to argue that failures in Japanese-language education, in how it was taught and specifically in “mouth imitation” (*kuchimane* 口真似), had been responsible for Japan’s loss in the war. See Iwamoto 1976, pp. 98–104, especially p. 102.

Tellingly, the phrase “the story of poverty” (*binbō monogatari* 貧乏物語) in the above quotation came from a famous book of the same title authored by Kawakami Hajime 河上肇 (1879–1946).<sup>47</sup> Yanagita’s observation that “many people have already found the basic reasons for [poverty] through exhaustive investigations” was a glib acknowledgement that Kawakami and other academics who had adopted Marxist approaches participated prominently in the controversies surrounding the introduction of capitalism in Japan. Kawakami, who had been two years junior to Yanagita at Tokyo Imperial University, became a celebrated professor and Dean of the School of Economics at Kyoto Imperial University. Incidentally, both of them had been intensively mentored in social policy by the same Professor of Political Economy and Finance, Matsuzaki Kuranosuke 松崎藏之助 (1866–1919). Nevertheless, when Kawakami published *Nippon sonnō ron* 日本尊農論 (The advocacy of agriculture in Japan, 1905), Yanagita doggedly criticized its “doctrine of the agricultural foundation of the country” (*sonnō kokka ron* 尊農国家論) in an article entitled “Jichi nōsei” 自治農政 (Self-governing agricultural policy, 1906).<sup>48</sup>

Kawakami responded by publishing a revised edition of *Nippon sonnō ron*, making adjustments to accommodate his senior (*senpai* 先輩), especially in his definition of agriculture. Kawakami, in fact, quoted Yanagita extensively throughout the revised edition. Consequently, both Kawakami and Yanagita criticized not only the establishment of the Meiji state for its physiocratic principles (that all wealth flows from agriculture), but also for the agricultural basis of its commerce and industry. In its place they promoted a triangular model of agriculture, industry, and commerce. Before long, however, Kawakami and Yanagita parted ways. Even so, they shared much in common, both in their views of agriculture, and on the role of learning in the life of a nation, specifically the desirability of it having a practical application.

With respect to Marxism, Yanagita remained unimpressed by the application of Marxist analyses of Japanese society and was terse in his criticism:

It does not matter how courageously they argue; present-day communists are opposed to debate. Their theories are not only so unreasonable that they distress people, they are also impossible to realize. They cannot expect to elicit public support if they continue to deny that we Japanese have managed to survive by helping each other in villages for many ages [without communism].

*Toshi to nōson* 都市と農村 (Cities and villages, 1929)<sup>49</sup>

Yanagita attempted to take his study of peasant history to another level when he explained community “spirit” in terms of the village (*mura*) and the family (*ie*), rejecting the use of Chinese ideograms to express what he claimed were essentially Japanese concepts with their own ancient etymologies, and instead employed the *katakana* script for writing village (ムラ) and family (イエ). Yanagita sought to express an essential truth of rural life when he wrote in 1935 that:

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47 Kawakami 1917.

48 Kawakami 1905; YKZZ 23, pp. 423–426, originally in the *Nippon nōgyō zasshi* 日本農業雑誌 10 (1906).

49 TYKS 16, pp. 353–354.

It seems that the oldest forms for the organization of work were the village and the family. The words for village as well as family were synonymous with the organization of work.

*Kyōdo seikatsu no kenkyū hō* 郷土生活の研究法 (A study method of rural life, 1935)<sup>50</sup>

We will discuss Yanagita's theories concerning the twin institutions of village and family below, but note here that *on this key point* Yanagita openly disagreed with the Marxist and communist positions. Significantly, while he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, Yanagita took a keen interest in Fabianism, and discussed the works on public ownership of land by the American political economist Henry George (1839–1897), and Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) a polymath who, among other things, was a pioneering environmental and social activist.<sup>51</sup> Yanagita was, however, critical of their ideas, on the grounds that he thought the private ownership of land impinged on the authority of the “law of the nation.” Greatly influenced by the German historical school of political economy, Yanagita privileged Japan's historical experience over the ahistorical theories of economic science and Marxism and supported the state's authority to shape appropriate and effective national policy. In a most intriguing quote, however, the young Yanagita seemed open to consideration of the issue:

It is quite another matter as to whether the theory of communism, or of the public ownership of land, is correct or not. There may be an argument that private property should be abolished—done away with—and it is not necessarily true that this is such a recklessly destructive discussion as some scholars seem to imagine.

*Nōseigaku* 農政学 (Agricultural policy, 1902)<sup>52</sup>

Yanagita's criticism was particularly directed against those in academia who were intent on distancing themselves from party political communism for immediate personal gain. Coming from a bureaucrat during the Meiji era 明治 (1868–1912), the above remarks might be considered very liberal, perhaps uniquely so.

### **Agriculture as the “Disease of the Nation” (1900–1945)**

As already mentioned, Yanagita disagreed with the conservation of the peasantry as presupposed by physiocratic principles of political economy, which was the dominant school of thought in the academic and bureaucratic circles of the Meiji era. He instead advocated policies designed to foster the growth of an independent, middle-class peasantry (*chūnō yōseisaku* 中農養成策). It is important to consider how Yanagita defined the middle-class peasantry. He pointed out that owing to the growth in parasitic landlordism, large-scale landowners no longer plowed their own fields, but rather chose to rent them out to tenants. As a result, the ranks of the landless tenants were increasing while middle-class peasants seemingly disappeared. Yanagita predicted that under these circumstances, where the countryside was dotted with many small, tenant-worked holdings of arable land, agriculture

50 YKZA 28, p. 289, first published as Yanagita 1935. See also Iwamoto 1978, p. 20.

51 See Barker 1955; Fichman 2003.

52 TYKS 28, p. 223, first published as Yanagita 1902a.

would never really develop or prosper. Yanagita thus argued for a sweeping, nationwide redistribution of land, one that could provide every rural household with propriety rights over “at least five acres of arable land.”<sup>53</sup> Under provisions in the Agricultural Cooperatives Act promulgated in 1900, Yanagita’s proposed agrarian reform was to be funded by the Hypothec Bank of Japan and the Agricultural Bank of Japan, established in 1897 by the imperial Japanese government expressly for the purposes of funding rural industry and promoting widespread agricultural development.<sup>54</sup> Of course, these financial institutions were part and parcel of an extraordinary network of parastatal, national policy “special banks” (*tokushu ginkō* 特殊銀行) that extended from Tokyo all the way out to Japan’s colonies and outposts.<sup>55</sup>

While Yanagita’s proposed land redistribution would increase the land holdings of middle-class peasants, it also implied a sharp reduction in the numbers living on the land as commercialized tenant farmers. Using a proposed Land-Rent Purchasing Law (*Chidai Kaitori Hō* 地代買取法), progressive land-registration taxes (*ruishin tōroku zei* 累進登録税) and progressive land taxes (*ruishin chiso* 累進地租) as the main agents of change, Yanagita hoped to promote an equitable system of land ownership among the middle-class peasantry, and to put a stop to the “land consolidation” (*tochi no kenpei* 土地の兼併) which propelled and empowered absentee landlordism in rural Japan. These reforms, however, would not just redistribute the holdings of the landlords, but in doing so they would also deprive landless tenants of fields to rent, and force the poorest peasants out of the villages and off the land, most likely forever.<sup>56</sup>

Here was the difference between Yanagita and those intent on the conservation and protection of the peasantry. The conservationists thought that migration to the cities would result in the collapse of rural villages, while Yanagita thought that this process was typical of an industrial revolution and not necessarily something to grieve over, especially given the lack of readily cultivable land in Japan. Moreover, Yanagita stressed that it was generally accepted that rural people had to find casual jobs on the side. As they could not live solely on the proceeds from agriculture, Yanagita thought that peasants should be encouraged to offer their surplus labor for employment elsewhere. A most suitable “side job” (*fukugyō* 副業) for peasants was one that allowed them to earn extra income by processing their own produce, thus reducing transport costs, and encouraging them to make good use of agricultural by-products generated from their fields. Off-season work related to sericulture, including silk spinning, along with tasks such as sandal-making and basket-weaving, were all, therefore, acceptable forms of side work. Yanagita, however, vehemently objected to the peasantry working in “secondary occupations” (*dainigyō* 第二業), especially those unrelated to agriculture. Yanagita believed that these secondary occupations, such as those in handicraft manufacturing, the retail and trading of non-agricultural products, and other miscellaneous business should not be done by members of families engaged in agriculture, but by others, because these secondary occupations dispersed and scattered labor, and

53 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 74–76, 296. Please note that Yanagita’s thinking on how much land peasant households needed to work and grow, as opposed to merely sustaining themselves, changed over time.

54 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 52–57.

55 See Bytheway 2019, pp. 85–90.

56 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 29–39; Fujii 1975, pp. 20–52.

distracted rural families from their vocation of agriculture, thus hindering Japan's overall agricultural development.<sup>57</sup>

Yanagita pointedly criticized Yokoi Tokiyoshi 横井時敬 (1860–1927), a professor of agriculture from his alma mater at Tokyo Imperial University, who lamented the fact that peasants abandoned the land because of a “craze for urban life.” Yanagita charged that it was flippant and thoughtless to criticize peasants for “escaping” from rural life without first considering the reasons for their leaving, and without an understanding of the tremendous economic forces driving their migration to urban areas, the pace of which was “probably without historical parallel” in the world.<sup>58</sup> At that time, Yanagita thought that factory workers were in a “much better situation” than agricultural workers, and that something like 30 or 40 percent of the rural population ought to give up agriculture and move to the cities to find work.<sup>59</sup> The core of the middle-class peasantry, “from those families that had lived in the area for hundreds of years, maintained the land for generations, and were the backbone of the country as landowners,” however, had best stay in the villages. These were the “spirited” people of his “everlasting” Japan, the people whose stories and essence fascinated him, the people he would always fight for. Thus, Yanagita championed the protection, or retention, of a prosperous local peasantry in what came to be known as “resident landowner ideology” (*zaison jinushi ron* 在村地主論). Yanagita knew that as a result of parasitic landlordism, which went hand-in-hand with the alarming growth in rural tenancy, a great mass of long-exploited peasants had left the land in the last decades of the Meiji period. Nevertheless, he believed that these people could be brought back as independent landowners, cultivating the land as they had before as mainstays of a middle-class peasantry, providing that each household was able to cultivate approximately “five acres of land” apiece.<sup>60</sup>

Yanagita's optimistic views were based on the assumption that Japan's early twentieth-century industrial growth and development would accommodate those unable to make a living from agriculture, and that the people who remained in the villages would subsequently become more educated and commercially minded in their operations.<sup>61</sup> These views were diametrically opposed to those who wished to “protect and conserve” rural communities so that poor landless tenants and other agricultural workers were forced to offer their surplus labor to the burgeoning factories of the cities, and thus accept very low wages. Sakō Tsuneaki 酒匂常明 (1861–1909), a former superior of Yanagita's at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, who left government service to become president of the Great Japan Sugar Company (Dai Nippon Seitō 大日本製糖), was a leading advocate for the maintenance of a rural “status quo.” In fact, Sakō even gave a lecture at the second meeting of the Japan Social Policy Association (Nippon Shakai Seisaku Gakkai 日本社会政策学会) in December 1908 where the bureaucrat-turned-capitalist was highly critical of Yanagita's ideas and explicitly called for capital formation to be prioritized over the needs of agriculture. Yokoi (the storied Tokyo Imperial University professor mentioned above) was an altogether different type of opponent: a disparager of agrarian reform who refrained from addressing Yanagita's proposals head-on. Yokoi preferred to wear the camouflage of a moralist,

57 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 74–90. See also Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015b.

58 Harootunian 2000, p. 50; see also p. x.

59 See Iwamoto 1973.

60 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 76–77, 296.

61 See Yanagita 1945, pp. 63–74.

apparently anxious and worried about the fate of the healthy young people who left their villages to work in the cities, only to be irreparably harmed, both mentally and physically, by the decadence of the cities—the very same cities where men like Yokoi chose to live and raise their own families.<sup>62</sup>

Yanagita consistently argued that any policy which used protectionism to coddle that part of the peasantry which could not survive independently—without government subsidies and political patronage—would become a cancer on the nation, a “national disease.”<sup>63</sup> That said, while Yanagita’s thinking on the matter was not taken up by, or discussed in, mainstream academic and bureaucratic circles, his ideal of agricultural self-sufficiency for rural Japan was not accepted by the peasants themselves either. It grated terribly on Yanagita that the very people he was fighting for “did not understand” his arguments, and often opposed him, with what he took for silent contempt. Consequently, he had to fight alone and without broad-based popular support during his last years in the bureaucracy.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, his efforts had failed to be socially useful in that they brought about much less practical change to the life of the peasantry, the rural life of Japanese people, than he had hoped for. Henceforth, Yanagita’s outstanding task was to promote agricultural self-sufficiency through different media and means, including a renewed interest in the publication of travelogues and his studies of folklore.

#### **Yanagita on “Domicide,” “Everlastingness,” and Peasant Migration (1902–1935)**

The above has shown that Yanagita championed the creation of a landowning, middle-class peasantry able to prosper from agriculture, and thus stay rooted to their villages. In comparison to his peers, Yanagita held a relatively optimistic view of outward peasant migration in the early part of the twentieth century. And yet a conflicted ambivalence is clearly evident in the introduction to his first book on the subject, published in 1902:

Although some spirited young people try to get ahead of others by leaving their hometown and parting from their relatives to work in a big city or a foreign country, they did not necessarily achieve more comfortable lives, even after a decade or so. In very rare cases, some have made their fortunes, returned home, and then taken up their ancestral occupations again. There has been a tendency for such outward migration to increase dramatically in recent years. Obviously, this is to the detriment of the local economy and disturbs the foundations of our national power. Moreover, most migrant families suffer a deterioration of morals from their reduced participation in traditional religious practices. This is a matter of both sadness and concern.

*Saishin sangyō kumiai tsūkai* 最新産業組合通解  
(A new analysis of cooperative unions, 1902)<sup>65</sup>

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62 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 63–74. Much of Yokoi’s concern for the peasantry was driven by a fear of European-style socialism and communism: “We can only depend on the peasants. The city will forever be a factory of revolution, while the country will always be the protector of social order”; cited in Pyle 1974, p. 159.

63 TYKS 16, p. 159; see also Iwamoto 1976, pp. 34, 107.

64 See Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015c, pp. 72–73.

65 TYKS 28, pp. 3–4, first published as Yanagita 1902b.

Yanagita did not wish to stop poor people from leaving the village for the city if they could not feed themselves, or to make a living from their agricultural earnings, but he did worry, at length, about young adults who left the village never to return. For Yanagita this loss was not only detrimental to the rural economy and Japan's productive power, but it also weakened the core institutions of the family and the native Shinto religion. In the background was Yanagita's own bitter experience of poverty, of losing his family, his hometown, and his childhood identity. Yanagita's family of ten had been split up and separated, owing to their lack of means and material possessions, leaving him with a strong desire to protect the family as a core institution.

The most distinctive aspect of Yanagita's discussion of the family is his emphasis on "domicide" (*iegoroshi* 家殺し), that is, the breakdown of the family into separate individual units. Yanagita's concept of family is a system in which living people, in "contact" with their ancestors through Shinto rituals, feel a sense of responsibility towards their forebears, and are thus duty bound to make the family flourish for their descendants in order to pay homage to the "will of their ancestors" (*ishi* 遺志). Thus "domicide" occurs not only when a family breaks up, but also when the family's intergenerational bonds are disavowed or forgotten. An individual thus has a responsibility to preserve the will of the ancestors for the sake of future generations (posterity). Critically, Yanagita believed that the concept of a relationship between one's ancestors and posterity had become weaker among those who migrated to the cities, and those who no longer saw value in the inter or transgenerational connectedness of the family. This was a serious matter for Yanagita, who had publicly criticized the views of Yokoi and others as being "pessimistic," and constantly refuted the allegation that the "craze for urban life" implied the ruination of Japan's villages.<sup>66</sup>

Yanagita did, however, draw a distinction between those who migrated out of economic necessity, and those "spirited young people" who he thought must stay behind to become the core of a middle-class peasantry. Although the sons of prosperous peasants had a better chance of gaining an education in the city, Yanagita did not want them to leave because of the karmic consequences it would have on the nation as a whole. As he wrote in 1905:

There is a difference in the lifespan of a nation and that of the individual. Human life has but a limited span. The nation, however, ideally has no limitation in time. Though the individual need not work toward a long-term plan to realize the benefits of posterity, the nation must aim to promote the greater well-being of its subjects for eternity. . . .

It must be said that a nation consists not only of those who are alive now, but also our ancestors who have died, and those of our descendants who are yet to be born. We should consider their hopes alongside those of our own. Since the life of the nation is eternal, we need to consider the will of those past generations, and we need to nurture and protect our compatriots in all future generations.

"Nōgyō seisakugaku" 農業政策学 (Agricultural policy studies, 1905)<sup>67</sup>

66 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 400–410.

67 TYKS 28, pp. 292–295.

Here Yanagita reveals his spiritual conception of the nation, and his assumption about it being eternal and transgenerational in nature. The past, present, and future is a function of the “everlastingness” (*eiensei* 永遠性) of the family as an organizational unit in which the descendants have a responsibility to uphold the “will of their ancestors” through Shinto rituals, and to pass on these responsibilities to their own progeny. Once again, Yanagita proposed that the institution of the intergenerational family could best be maintained by a self-sufficient, middle-class peasantry that remained both economically and spiritually tied to their villages. Thus, Yanagita’s seemingly neutral concept of the family as being an eternal, transgenerational, and predominantly rural institution was, from the outset, intensely ideological in its social implications.<sup>68</sup>

Over time, Yanagita’s views on the matter did soften as he studied the history of rural people more deeply, and eventually he formed a more realistic—or practical—concept of what functionally constituted a family in modern Japan.<sup>69</sup> Circumstances demanded as much. The collation of nationwide data during the twentieth century revealed that the number of “farm households” was ultimately in decline and that the demography of Japan was changing irrevocably. In 1920, 53.8 percent of Japan’s working population were engaged in primary agricultural production. Thirty years later in 1950, after the destruction of the great cities through aerial bombing at the latter stages of the Second World War, 48.5 percent were still engaged in agricultural production. The outbreak of war in the Korean Peninsula in late 1950, however, heralded a long and almost continuous period of high-speed economic growth which engendered rapid socioeconomic transformation across the length and breadth of Japan.<sup>70</sup> In 1970, just 19.3 percent of Japan’s working population were engaged in agricultural production. Ten years later in 1980 it had almost halved to 10.9 percent, and by 2000 it had more than halved again to 5.0 percent. That is, in the space of eighty years Japan experienced a 90.7 percent reduction in the percentage of workers employed in primary agricultural production.<sup>71</sup> Arguably at more than at any other time or place in history, Japanese people were economically and spiritually breaking away—or drawn or wrenched away—from their rural identities.

### **Yanagita’s Childhood and his Concept of the Village and the Family (1910–1946)**

In the process of establishing folklore studies, Yanagita developed his own particular understanding of community, in which, as already noted, “the words for the village (ムラ)

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68 Muroi 2010, pp. 262–269; Karatani 1993, p. 163.

69 See Iwamoto 1976, pp. 286–367; and Karatani 1993, p. 134, where Karatani specifically notes Yanagita’s evolving historiography: “It has now occurred to me that Yanagita, rather than being an ethnologist or anthropologist, was a historian in the broad sense of the term and that his methodology as an ethnologist was that of the historian.”

70 For an overview of Japan’s rapid economic transformation since 1945, see Bytheway 2023.

71 Misono and Yoshinaga 2007, pp. 104–105. In the “postmodern” context, the importance of agriculture in the economic development of Japan came to be questioned and challenged, but not decisively until the last decade or so of Yanagita’s long life.



and the family (イエ) were synonymous with the organization of work.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, investigation of the social bonds that exist between the village and the family was of critical importance to Yanagita's research, as highlighted by the publication of his *Meiji Taishōshi: Sesōhen* 明治大正史: 世相篇 (History of the Meiji and Taisho eras: Social conditions, 1931) where Yanagita ruminated, at great length, on the deep, pressing human need for Japanese people to perpetuate life through expanding their families.<sup>73</sup> Thus, in the immediate postwar period, with its attendant boom in marriages, Yanagita's *Senzo no hanashi* 先祖の話 (About our ancestors, 1946) was prioritized for publication as a topic that he and his publishers felt that contemporary Japanese people once more needed to read and understand.<sup>74</sup>

Yanagita's view of the village, family, extended family, and the household were very subjective, and as a result his works on this subject are saturated with a sense of responsibility towards the imagined family of his ancestors and future descendants. Something of the passion with which he wrote is captured in the beautifully descriptive passage that follows:

When I looked down from the northeast edge of the cliff, I could see a common well in the village of Yako. Dozens of girls were working merrily together, heaping up stones behind an old tree, drawing water from the well, washing dishes or rinsing clothes in the spring water, or bathing the horses at the edge of the well. By a stream stood a hut, tiled in the *kanja* (冠者) style by a traveling craftsman. There was a bridge further downstream, and a watermill grinding away, which irrigated a few hectares of rice fields. It looked as if this well was the center of life in the village, designated as the only place from which to draw water in order to foster friendship among the people of the hamlet.

*Kainan shōki* 海南小記 (Notes on Kainan, 1925)<sup>75</sup>

Seemingly accurate at first glance, Yanagita is painting the landscape as a “living legend” here, while glossing over its social relations in a rich, yet abstract manner.<sup>76</sup>

Critically, Yanagita's conception of what constitutes a family was also the product of his formative experiences of rough living and poverty as a child. The sixth of eight sons, with apparently no sisters, his family of ten lost three of their brothers (dying at the young ages of 3, 4, and 19) before they reached adulthood. The young Yanagita Kunio thus strikes us as being undaunted and indefatigable: starting out from the mud of the village paths in

72 YKZA 28, p. 289, first published as Yanagita 1935; see Iwamoto 1978, pp. 3–20; Iwamoto and Ōtō 1996. Contemporary Japanese social anthropologists were more likely to translate the English words “village” (村) and “household” (家) using Chinese ideograms in preference to Yanagita's unorthodox use of “village” (ムラ) and the (extended) “family” (イエ). Yanagita's stress on domicile, ancestral will, and on the “everlastingness” (*eiensei* 永遠性) of the Japanese people's present-day obligations to future, unborn “family” and relatives (rather than more neutral expressions such as “transgenerational continuity”) are even more distinctive, idiosyncratic, and problematic. See Nakane 1990, pp. 216–226.

73 TYKS 24; YKZA 26. Available in English as *Japanese Manners and Customs in the Meiji Era*, trans. and adapt. Charles S. Terry (Toyo Bunko 1969 [1957]).

74 TYKS 10, first published as Yanagita 1946. Available in English as *About our Ancestors: The Japanese Family System*, trans. Fanny Hagin Mayer and Ishiwara Yasuyo (Greenwood Press, 1988 [1970]).

75 TYKS 1, pp. 306–307, first published as Yanagita 1925. See also Iwamoto 1978, pp. 10–11.

76 Ortabasi 2001, p. 89.



Figure 2. Yanagita's childhood home, "The smallest house in Japan." Courtesy of the Fukusaki Municipal Kunio Yanagita and Matsuoka-ke Family Memorial Museum, Fukusaki City, Hyogo Prefecture, where the house is now preserved.

Fukusaki-cho 福崎町, Hyogo Prefecture, to walk the corridors of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and then serve the imperial Japanese government in the House of Peers.<sup>77</sup>

How was Yanagita ever able to make his mark on the world? Perhaps the explanation lies with his eldest brother, the family's first star, who took the eleven-year-old "child genius" under his wing and away to live with him in Ibaraki.<sup>78</sup> Having graduated as a doctor from the prestigious medical faculty of Tokyo Imperial University, Yanagita's eldest brother set the stage for the young boy to follow in his educational footsteps.<sup>79</sup> Certainly, in his own time, Yanagita's readers would have been amazed to learn the dire truth of his family's predicament, of just how poor his parents had been during his childhood. For example, the reality—the particular intensity—of Yanagita's *Mukoiri kō* 婿入考 (The bridegroom who marries into the family of his bride, 1929) was widely questioned by his contemporaries: what could a man like *him* possibly know about the subject?<sup>80</sup> Somehow overlooked (or politely ignored) was that Yanagita Kunio had been Matsuoka Kunio before he married Yanagita Taka 柳田孝 (1886–1972).<sup>81</sup> That is, following the precedent set by his second elder brother, Yanagita was adopted out from the Matsuoka family into the Yanagita family as a bridegroom, and through the process lost his own family's surname to become his father-in-law's male heir.<sup>82</sup> Yanagita's passionate, lifelong investigation into the significance of the

77 Yanagita Kenkyūkai 1988, pp. 5–9, and oral communication with Nakamura Ayane 中村文音, Fukusaki Municipal Kunio Yanagita and Matsuoka-ke Family Memorial Museum, 10 June 2021.

78 Matsuoka Kanae 松岡鼎 (1860–1934); see Ishii 1998, pp. 25–42.

79 Iwamoto 1976, pp. 289–291.

80 TYKS 15, pp. 158–198. For background, also see Iwamoto 1976, pp. 319–322.

81 Yanagita Kenkyūkai 1988, p. 12, and oral communication with Nakamura Ayane, Fukusaki Municipal Kunio Yanagita and Matsuoka-ke Family Memorial Museum, 11 June 2021.

82 His second elder brother was Matsuoka Taizō 松岡泰蔵, but became Inoue Michiyasu 井上通泰 (1867–1941) after adoption. Yanagita's sensitivity regarding the question of his marriage was such that he kept "intentionally silent" (*koi no chinmoku* 故意の沈黙) on the subject, and frequently expressed great reserve and reticence if asked to discuss matters relating to his own adoption. See Gotō 1976, pp. 31–56, especially pp. 31–34.

village and the family, and indeed his idealized reimagining of these institutions, are surely those of a man attempting to come to terms with his own traumatic childhood.

### Yanagita as the Romantic, Wandering Sage (1910–1962)

Returning to the public fascination with Yanagita's pastoral, idealized descriptions of the rural village, many undoubtedly, if uncritically, have imagined that life in Japan was much better in the past. Nevertheless, if we look at the actual state of agriculture, peasants, and rural villages that Yanagita researched as an agronomist in the early twentieth century, we can understand why he called for learning to become a means towards the salvation of the world, and earnestly tried to answer the perennial question: "Why are peasants so poor?" In *Jidai to nōsei* (1910), Yanagita had presciently written that, "In the future, tenant farming . . . will be divided into just two separate sizes: large and small."<sup>83</sup> Land-leasing absentee landlords would be able to live independently owing to agriculture, whereas small-scale, landless rural tenants would need to work in secondary occupations as day laborers, shop assistants, gardeners, or transport workers in order to simply support their families. Thus, Yanagita saw parasitic landlordism for the social calamity that it was, predicting it would end in disaster. Indeed, with the crop failures and famines of the 1930s, small-scale tenant agriculture came to be regarded as a blight on the nation, the "national disease" Yanagita had warned of.

Given Japan's modern predicament, its new material culture, and the relentless nature of its machine-driven, industrial civilization, perhaps it is only natural for Japanese people to imagine that things were "better in the old days," or to feel nostalgia for those things that they had collectively lost. In the latter half of the 1920s, Yanagita wrote several works, like *Kainan shōki* (1925) or *Yukiguni no haru* 雪国の春 (Springtime in snow country, 1928), which are replete with rich, scenic descriptions of pastoral villages, *despite* his deep understanding of persistent rural poverty.<sup>84</sup> Suddenly, the secluded villages depicted in these works lack any of the troubles or violence found in Yanagita's earlier works on rural life. In these beautiful and exotic hamlets, villagers now recast as Yanagita's "ordinary and abiding folk" (*jōmin* 常民) happily enjoy their lives together, unstintingly helping one another and living in a kind of quintessential Japanese utopia.<sup>85</sup> The travelogues, the folklore, and the learned investigations of the earnest agronomist attempted to valorize and transform the rural life of Japan in a way that compensated for Yanagita's earlier failings in agricultural policy.<sup>86</sup> An upshot of this popular fascination with these idealized villages, however, was that it contributed to a broader acceptance of the "renewal" or "restoration" manifestos of Japan's politicians, and for its people to be turned towards new forms of authoritarian

83 TYKS 16, p. 6.

84 TYKS 1 and 2, first published as Yanagita 1925 and Yanagita 1928. These accounts of "typical" villages in the near-distant past are still widely read, and remain among Yanagita's most popular works today.

85 The translation of *jōmin* here is from Harootunian 2000, p. 18.

86 As Oguma perceptively notes: "The Japan he depicted was a narrow world without alien peoples, where all were unified by an homogeneous culture, where a self-sufficient agriculture was practised, and where, as a result, there were no 'difficulties', no struggle, no invasion and no inter-cultural friction" (Oguma 2002, p. 202). In reference to Yanagita's "ideologically charged" use of romanticism, see Ortabasi 2014, p. 12, and especially chapter 2, "Translating Landscape, Rewriting the Travelogue," pp. 57–97; Hoshino 2015; and more broadly, Karatani 2013.

and corporatist rule.<sup>87</sup> The politics of nostalgia, and its attendant romanticization of the rural, has continued well past the postwar period and is still a troubling part of present-day Japan.<sup>88</sup>

In light of Yanagita's reputation today as a fierce advocate of the village, an extraordinary knowledgeable spokesman for the common people, and his well-publicized role in the promotion of self-sustaining, rural communities, his turn towards the romantic and away from reality is puzzling. Yanagita had resigned as joint editor-in-chief to the Asahi Newspaper in November 1930, and thus never commented, even anonymously, on the misery of the famines brought about by unusually cold weather (*yamase* ヤマセ) across the seven prefectures of the Tohoku region during the summers of 1931 and 1934.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, it was exactly at this time that Yanagita established folklore studies in Japan, ploughing ahead with studies on such themes as local religious practices, animism, and ancestor veneration (or formal Shinto worship) while militarism radically transformed Japan's political trajectory. Perhaps his sudden turn towards the mystic meant that deep down Yanagita understood the limitations of his folklore studies as a practical tool for understanding agricultural policy and contemporary political economy.<sup>90</sup>

In conclusion, the themes presented here, of learning to be the "salvation of the world," of Yanagita's preference for protectionist, Listian political economy of the German historical school; his long-held concern that agriculture was a national handicap or "disease;" and especially his belief in the importance of land ownership within the village to provide for the "everlasting" transgenerational family, have been explored with reference to his most revealing works. Our conviction is that without recognition of the fundamental importance of agricultural policy to Yanagita's concept of folklore studies, the rationale underlying it is lost. The historical context and personal background of Yanagita's early life thus help explain the motivations of the young agronomist who became a decorated bureaucrat, who, when obliged to resign from government service, tried his hand as a leading newspaper editorialist, only to read the wild winds of the early 1930s and turn to the promotion of his own, groundbreaking brand of folklore studies.

In Yanagita's later years, Japanese folklorists could not see how he made the connection between tenets of agricultural policy and the ethnology of his folklore studies. His own followers tended to discuss aspects of Yanagita's work in isolation, without reference to any

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87 See for instance Tanaka Kakuei's *Building a New Japan* (1973); Ozawa Ichiro's *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (1994), or Abe Shinzō's *Toward a Beautiful Country* (2006), all of which blithely ignore the progress achieved and the profundity of the changes that have taken place in Japan's rural communities. As Marilyn Ivy writes, "Dominant ideologies in Japan still depend on politics of nostalgia suitable for an advanced capitalist polity: a nostalgia for a Japan that is kept on the verge of vanishing, stable yet endangered (and thus open for desire)." See Ivy 1995, p. 65.

88 We should note that the present-day fears for the future of rural communities are not concerned with the organization of production and collective labor, but are instead wholly concerned with the maintenance of conservative political forces in rural areas.

89 The *yamase* are generally defined as cold winds, caused by the unseasonably violent ingress of cold air from the Eurasian land mass. Evidently, the north-south orientation of the Japanese archipelago allows cold polar jet streams to flow freely across northeastern Japan (Tōhoku 東北) that can seriously impede agricultural production. For more on the formation and study of the Tōhoku region, see Iwamoto 2003; and Iwamoto and Bytheway 2015a.

90 In a sense, the increasing militarism of the 1930s and the early 1940s was not so much formative, but rather represented yet another obstacle Yanagita had to work around. Of course, the significance of Japanese military adventurism, and the war that it engendered, cannot be easily dismissed.

overarching theories or grand framework. In fact, Japanese libraries, even those that hold large collections of Yanagita's works, tend to lack his earlier studies on agricultural policy. And yet, agricultural policy was the medium through which Yanagita developed his style of interdisciplinary folklore studies. It is a deep irony that only researchers who approach Yanagita from fields other than that of his own brand of folklore studies seem to recognize this, and having done so, are able to deliver genuinely new research and synthesize original theories.<sup>91</sup>

### **Coda: Yanagita and Lazy Intellectualism**

Having grappled at length with Yanagita's intellectual proclivities through quoting from his relatively unknown, earlier works, finally something needs to be said in regard to Yanagita's relevance today. Yanagita's most important findings and popular quotations arguably coalesced during the last part of his life. For example, his general observation that in contrast to Japan, European folklore and traditional material culture had largely dissipated, or even disappeared, owing to more than a millennium of Christianity, inter-migration, and the Industrial Revolution, led him to write:

What I fear most is the immediate imposition of unilateral judgments made without consideration of the facts and the idea that only Western theories are suitable for the reality of Japan in common learning. That I am apprehensive about these trends has nothing to do with nationalism. As distinct from Germany, France, Italy, and other European countries, Japan has long had its own peculiar history, and so I do not think that theories born in Western societies adequately suit Japan. Things that we are unable to understand in the present circumstances should be left until later. I think the idea that humans are generally the same and that their problems can be resolved by the application of some universal theory is a most fruitless area of academic inquiry.

“Watashi no shigoto” 私の仕事 (My task, 1954)<sup>92</sup>

The sentiment above, frequently expressed and in many different contexts, allowed Yanagita to become something of a patron saint of peculiar and curious nationalist research—even that which borders on being xenophobic, or racist—and is Japan-centric to the point that it is unable to offer insights into anything outside its immediate Japanese context. Scholarly research that, without wishing to be overly harsh, might be incredibly detailed in its analysis of say “Japanese feudalism,” but has no comparative elements, and has nothing to say about feudalism in other Asian or European contexts. Research that might be the absolute authority on J-pop, but does not reference Canto-pop, T-pop, or K-pop, or any other global, musical trends. Or Japanese education and research on the Chinese language, almost exclusively based on the reading of classical Chinese literature, but (having forsaken its communicative functions) is not used to allow Japanese students to communicate with fellow students in China, Southeast Asia, the international Chinese diaspora, or even with the Chinese students enrolled at their own Japanese universities. The devoted and practically minded super-scholar, proficient in both English and French, the insatiably intellectually

<sup>91</sup> See for example Yamauchi 2009; Hasebe et al. 2022.

<sup>92</sup> YKZA 32, p. 528, first published in 1954 in issue 98 of the journal *Sekai* 世界.

curious man-that-became Yanagita Kunio, however, never promoted uncritical isolationism or lazy, self-absorbed intellectualism.

Similarly, in a roundtable discussion where he was surrounded by his most devoted and fawning (or toadyish) followers,<sup>93</sup> Yanagita waxed lyrical on the Japanese fascination with living closely together in shared communities, of standing by the group, and of the individual's fear of isolation:

I think people were seriously worried about being excluded from their peers, especially on islands or in small agricultural communities. In fact, if you are excluded by other members of the community, all you can do is to go off to sea or leave the village. Human beings have an instinct just like birds, fish, and such like, and they know that they should not stray from their companions. They seem to know that there are fewer dangers when one is among company, although there will inevitably be tensions and incidents. Migratory birds always try to stick together because the bird that is separated from the others is most likely to be the first that falls prey to its predators.

*Nihonjin* (1954)<sup>94</sup>

Devoid of thick context, comments like the above have in recent times made Yanagita an unlikely hero for those who swim in the troubled waters of Japanese uniqueness. Perhaps it is inevitable that people will refer to Yanagita's folklore studies to support their conservative ideas of life being somehow "better in the old days," or use Yanagita's comments to trumpet the necessity of the Japanese people "living together in shared communities," or for the "revival of Japan."<sup>95</sup> That said, Yanagita would loathe the use of his work to promote the idea of some kind of totalitarian rural "restoration." Indeed, Yanagita specifically established folklore studies as an introspective science, as a means of critical self-examination and awareness for all Japanese people, in the past, the present, and the future.

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93 There were many occasions where group discussions were held with Yanagita. See Yanagita 1964 for details.

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REVIEW ESSAY

## Japan's Intelligence System: From Institutional Failure to Grand Strategy

Sebastian MASLOW\*

Richard J. Samuels. *Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community*. Cornell University Press, 2019, 384 pages.

Kotani Ken 小谷賢. *Nihon interijensu-shi: Kyū-Nihon-gun kara kōan, naichō, NSC made* 日本インテリジェンス史: 旧日本軍から公安、内調、NSCまで. Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2022, 296 pages.

Brad Williams. *Japanese Foreign Intelligence and Grand Strategy: From the Cold War to the Abe Era*. Georgetown University Press, 2021, 296 pages.

The reevaluation and adjustment of Japan's security stance following Abe Shinzō's (安倍晋三, 1954–2022) return to power in 2012 can be seen as the culmination of the country's lengthy and disputed transition from an “abnormal” to a “proactive” state in international affairs.<sup>1</sup> Under the Abe Doctrine, Japan adopted a new security outlook known as “proactive pacifism,” leading to significant changes in its national security system.<sup>2</sup> These changes included lifting the longstanding ban on arms exports, allowing Japan's participation in collective self-defense operations through a strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance, forging new regional security partnerships, modernizing the Japan Self-Defense Forces, establishing security institutions such as the National Security Council, formulating a National Security Strategy, and driving global rebalancing against China by promoting the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” vision. Building upon Abe's legacy, subsequent prime ministers, including Kishida Fumio 岸田文雄, have further advanced Japan's recalibration of its security posture. Kishida expanded security cooperation with NATO allies and permitted the development of counterstrike capabilities.

In light of the security challenges presented by China, North Korea, and Russia, Tokyo's policymakers and defense planners have long recognized the imperative to fortify intelligence capabilities. As part of this effort, and in conjunction with the establishment

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1 Hagström 2015; Oros 2017; Gustafsson et al. 2018.

2 Maslow 2015; Hughes 2022.

of the National Security Council in 2013, the Abe government introduced the Specially Designated Secrets Law. This legislation aimed to enhance trust in Japan's management of information and intelligence, thereby strengthening alliances and security partnerships, particularly with the U.S. As Japan embraces the strategic use of intelligence through intelligence sharing, numerous policymakers and defense planners in Tokyo advocate for the creation of a foreign intelligence service akin to the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Additionally, they seek to attain "Six Eyes" status within an international intelligence sharing alliance, completing Japan's security transition.

This raises the question of why postwar Japan initially failed to develop credible intelligence capabilities and what explains the recent push for institutional change that prioritizes the development of such capabilities as part of Japan's security strategy. Despite the extensive scholarly discourse surrounding the history and evolution of Japan's intelligence apparatus since the Meiji era until wartime defeat in 1945, there exists a surprising dearth of research focused on postwar intelligence.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, exploration of the path dependencies and critical junctures that have shaped the transformative trajectory of the intelligence apparatus from the wartime era to the postwar period remains largely unexplored by scholars. The prevailing assumption, both in academia and the public, has been that Japan lacks an intelligence community (Samuels, p. xiv). However, a series of recently published books in Japanese and English rectify this flawed understanding by exploring the historical development and current changes in Japanese intelligence institutions and practices.

### **The Historical Roots of Postwar Japan's Intelligence Community**

Richard Samuels, in his comprehensive history of the Japanese intelligence community, meticulously examines the fundamental catalysts that have driven transformation within intelligence institutions and practices. He identifies three key drivers: evolving national perspectives on geopolitical shifts, advancements in intelligence-generating technologies, and operational failures. The transformative shifts in geopolitics, transitioning from a bipolar world to a unipolar and subsequently multipolar order, have compelled Japan to cultivate its own intelligence capabilities in response to these dynamic changes.

The development and growth of the intelligence apparatus paralleled Japan's emergence as a modern state. Japan embarked on experiments with reconnaissance balloons as early as 1877, utilizing them during the Satsuma Rebellion, before more advanced technology was deployed during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905 (Samuels, p. 4). Throughout Japan's engagement in the Asia-Pacific War, Tokyo effectively employed a combination of human intelligence and signal intelligence to gather crucial information. However, as the Cold War unfolded, there was a notable shift in Japan's intelligence-gathering approach, with a strategic emphasis on the development of geospatial imagery as its primary tool. Samuels thus demonstrates the profound influence exerted by these drivers on vital facets of the intelligence apparatus, encompassing collection, analysis, communication, protection, covert action, and oversight. As a result, Samuels provides a comprehensive framework for conducting a thorough historical analysis of Japan's intelligence community.

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<sup>3</sup> For the prewar era, see for instance Kotani 2007; Satō 2011; Seki 2016.

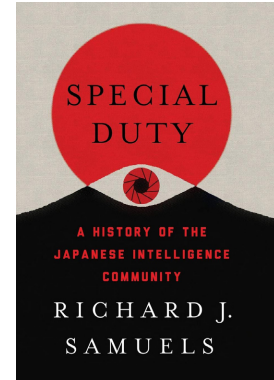
As Japan's imperial ambitions expanded, the nation actively developed its intelligence capabilities. Initially, Tokyo relied on a diverse range of individuals, including "ultranationalist freelancers, military spy masters, diplomats, and corporate sponsors" (Samuels, p. xviii) to gather information. Although there was no formalized professional intelligence service before 1930, Japan made significant investments in comprehensive foreign language training. While not explicitly operating as spy schools, institutions such as the privately operated East Asia Common Culture College (the Tōa Dōbun Shōin 東亜同文書院, although Samuels renders it as "cultural") in Nanjing were established as area studies centers to educate language and area specialists

who would assist the government in managing its empire. The Imperial Army's Nakano School played a vital role in this endeavor too (see Samuels, chapter 2). Remarkable early figures in the realm of espionage included Akashi Motojirō (明石元二郎, 1864–1919), who conducted covert operations in Tsarist Russia, and Doihara Kenji (土肥原賢二, 1883–1948), also known as the "Lawrence of Manchuria," due to his highly effective infiltration of Chinese society (Samuels, pp. 38–41).

During the 1930s, Japan's military and Foreign Ministry established a network known as the Special Duty Units (*tokumu kikan* 特務機関). These units were responsible for carrying out covert operations in China and the Soviet Union's Far East (as chapter 3 in Samuels details). Throughout this period, the primary focus was on conducting covert operations. However, as Samuels illustrates, while information was gathered, Tokyo lacked the requisite expertise to effectively utilize the acquired intelligence. As the war progressed, these networks gradually diminished, and the military and foreign intelligence apparatus faced challenges due to fragmented communication channels within and between various organizations. In fact, in addition to stovepiping and inter-agency rivalry, there were instances where the Foreign Ministry even engaged in espionage against the Imperial Army (Samuels, p. 69).

As Kotani Ken illustrates, after Japan's defeat in 1945, this intelligence apparatus was in disarray. Nonetheless, the surviving military intelligence personnel were integrated into U.S. occupation efforts, with the specific objective of bolstering Japan and the United States against the rise of communism both domestically and internationally. In this regard, General Charles Willoughby, the head of intelligence at General Headquarters and famously referred to as General MacArthur's "lovable fascist" (Samuels, p. 82), enlisted the services of Imperial Army General Arisue Seizō (有末精三, 1895–1992) to counter the spread of communism (Kotani, pp. 16–22).

Both Kotani Ken and Brad Williams offer comprehensive accounts of postwar Japan's foreign intelligence service history, shedding light on the determined efforts made by the Japanese government to strengthen its intelligence capabilities. In 1952, during the early postwar period, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (吉田茂, 1878–1967) laid the groundwork for the nation's intelligence apparatus by establishing the Cabinet Research Office (Naikaku Sōri Daijin Kanbō Chōsashitsu 内閣総理大臣官房調査室, CRO) within the Cabinet Secretariat of the Prime Minister's Office, and the Public Security Investigation





Agency (Kōan Chōsachō 公安調査庁, PSIA) under the Ministry of Justice (Hōmushō 法務省, MOJ). This decision sparked a spirited domestic debate, weighing the options of enhancing the CRO's capabilities or creating an entirely new foreign intelligence service, driven by the emerging security challenges of the unfolding Cold War (Williams, chapter 5; Kotani, chapter 2). Technically speaking, the CRO operates as Japan's CIA, while the PSIA can be likened to the U.S.'s Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Both institutions can be described as "self-contained," as they are integrated into larger organizations.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, "ministry-embedded" intelligence operations exist within the National Police Agency (Keisatsuchō 警察庁, NPA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimushō 外務省, MOFA), and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Tsūshō Sangyōshō 通商産業省, MITI).<sup>5</sup>

Despite these earnest endeavors, Japanese state capabilities during the Cold War remained inadequate, relying heavily on resources supplied by the United States. Fueled by prevalent public and political antimilitarist sentiments and bureaucratic sectionalism, insufficient emphasis was placed on counterintelligence efforts, leading to information leaks and covert operations conducted by the Soviet Union's KGB and North Korean agents within Japan's borders. Noteworthy strides that were made occurred primarily in signal intelligence, thanks to Japan's focused military operations targeted at the Soviet Union.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the dominant focus of Japan's internal intelligence assets revolved around addressing the challenges stemming from the surge in leftist violence, which proliferated during that era with the emergence of radicalized student groups.<sup>6</sup> Assuming the role of Japan's preeminent civilian intelligence organization, the PSIA was originally established as an integral component of the Ministry of Justice. Its primary mandate during its inception was centered on the surveillance and monitoring of Japan's Communist Party (JCP).

### From Intelligence Failure to Intelligence Reform

Academic assessments of Japan's intelligence apparatus during the Cold War consistently paint a picture of a landscape marred by political negligence, deficient leadership, inadequate policy initiatives, financial constraints, and a notable reliance on the U.S. This combination of factors, coupled with what former chief cabinet secretary, deputy prime minister, and former Commissioner General of the National Police Agency, Gotōda Masaharu (後藤田正晴, 1914–2005), referred to as Japan's "intelligence agency allergy" (Williams, p. 159), left the intelligence apparatus vulnerable to recurring instances of failure.

As Samuels (p. xiii) elucidates, although Cold War Japan lacked an equivalent of the CIA, it did have comparable entities, namely the NPA, MOFA, and the Defense Agency (Bōeichō 防衛庁), collectively forming its own "KGB" (although this disregards the MOJ's domestic role and MITI's involvement in foreign intelligence gathering, as addressed

<sup>4</sup> Oros 2002, pp. 4–5.

<sup>5</sup> Oros 2002, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Katzenstein and Tsujinaka 1991.



later). Nonetheless, Japan's intelligence structure remained decentralized, impeding effective information sharing and analysis among domestic agencies and with foreign partners.<sup>7</sup>

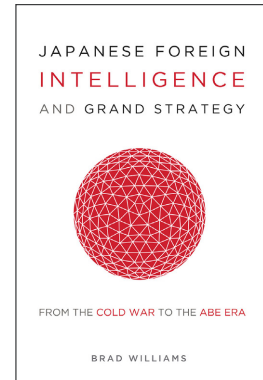
While Samuels' insights shed light on the factors driving institutional change, the intriguing question remains as to why Japan, in comparison to other influential actors in the realm of international affairs, continued to exhibit an “underdeveloped” and “abnormal” foreign intelligence system, warranting further examination (Williams, pp. 12–13).<sup>8</sup> Building upon Samuels' work, Williams presents a novel framework that situates the development of Japan's intelligence system within the context of the nation's grand strategy, as well as the norms and practices that have shaped its national security and foreign policy.

Williams argues that intelligence institutions and practices are shaped by a complex interplay of domestic and international norms, and he identifies four variables—bilateralism, developmentalism, technonationalism, and antimilitarism—that have significantly influenced the trajectory of Japan's intelligence apparatus. The bilateral security alliance between the U.S. and Japan played a pivotal role in the formation of Japan's early postwar intelligence system. The Japanese developmental state's emphasis on economic growth fostered the development of robust foreign economic intelligence capabilities, crucial for upholding Japan's status as an economic superpower. Moreover, the strategic incorporation of technology into national security efforts facilitated the evolution of intelligence capabilities. Finally, a persistent aversion to deploying intelligence as a military asset underscored Japan's sustained resistance and distrust toward militarization.

Collectively, these norms and practices offer a more comprehensive understanding of Japan's intelligence system, moving beyond a simplistic emphasis solely on intelligence as a strategic and military matter. Williams contends that by highlighting economic affairs as a central pillar of the postwar Yoshida Doctrine, we can “normalize” our comprehension of Japan's foreign intelligence system. Unveiling the “hidden dimensions” (Williams, p. 15) of Japan's intelligence apparatus, particularly in the form of foreign economic intelligence, Williams effectively dispels the assumption that Japan lacked foreign intelligence capabilities.

As underscored by Williams, the foreign economic intelligence apparatus of postwar Japan emerged as a pivotal element in the nation's rise as an economic powerhouse. This system gave rise to specialized agencies with distinct functions. One such agency, the Japan Information Center of Science and Technology (Nihon Kagaku Gijutsu Jōhō Sentā 日本科学技術情報センター, JICST), was established in 1957 under the auspices of the Science and Technology Agency. Operating through agents stationed in New York and Dusseldorf, the JICST focused on procuring materials from foreign academic journals and patent specifications (Williams, p. 126).

Even more noteworthy was the establishment of the Japan External Trade Organization (Nihon Bōeki Shinkō Kikō 日本貿易振興機構, JETRO) in 1958, although a precursor



<sup>7</sup> See also Aoki 2000.

<sup>8</sup> See also Williams 2013.

had launched in 1951. Endowed with substantial financial and human resources, JETRO operated in close collaboration with the influential MITI, overseeing “special corporations” abroad through an extensive network of overseas offices (Williams, p. 131). Some even described JETRO as an “Economic CIA” and “the most sophisticated commercial intelligence gathering body operated by a foreign government on U.S. soil” (Williams, p. 134).

Another crucial element of the foreign economic intelligence system was the Institute for Industrial Protection (IIP), established in 1962 with financial support from MITI. IIP was a “highly secretive entity” created for the “training of industrial spies in illegal and covert techniques,” which were provided to Japanese businessmen. In this regard, it earned the moniker “Japan’s school for spies” by Time magazine. Heading the IIP was Kurihara Tadashi (栗原正, 1890–1971), a seasoned diplomat and former ambassador to Turkey, whose involvement indicated a link between the Japanese state and the IIP. Moreover, it is believed that among the IIP’s nine-member staff were former wartime intelligence operatives. IIP’s “industrial espionage” techniques were occasionally employed in dealings with Japanese business rivals (Williams, p. 135).

During the Cold War, Japan’s intelligence activities distinctly focused on economic intelligence gathering, particularly in the field of technology. Driven by the aspiration to outperform the U.S. economically, Japanese spies adeptly disguised themselves in business attire and operated within influential hubs like Silicon Valley. Remarkable instances of industrial espionage, including the notable 1982 IBM spy incident, received significant attention.

At the peak of Japan’s economic bubble and with Japanese companies heavily investing in the U.S., such incidents, coupled with previous reports on Japan’s “industrial spies,” had a substantial impact on how Japan was perceived from abroad. The intensifying economic rivalry between the U.S. and Japan during the zenith of “Pax Japonica” in 1991 led pundits like George Friedman and Meredith Lebard to prominently forecast “The Coming War with Japan.” Michael Crichton’s 1992 novel “Rising Sun” served as a prominent illustration of the cultural resonance of the Japanese threat during this era.

By contrast, it was not until the 1980s that a more extensive dialogue on bolstering Japanese defense capabilities within the context of the U.S.-Japan alliance began to emerge. Key figures, notably Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro (中曾根康弘, 1918–2019), played a critical role in steering this debate and advocating for the development and enhancement of Japan’s intelligence capabilities. As a result, in 1986, the CRO underwent a transformation and became the Cabinet Intelligence Research Office (Naikaku Jōhō Chōsashitsu 内閣情報調査室, CIRO). CIRO is positioned under the Cabinet Secretary and, therefore, reports directly to the prime minister. Serving as the closest equivalent to the U.S.’s CIA, CIRO recruits the majority of its staff from other ministries and agencies, with its top positions filled by career policy officers. The specific objective behind this transformation was to fortify and streamline intelligence gathering and analysis operations in Japan.

Furthermore, the establishment of a Security Council (Anzen Hoshō Kaigi 安全保障会議) was intended to replace the 1956 National Defense Council (Kokubō Kaigi 国防会議) and advise the prime minister on matters concerning national security and military affairs. However, despite these efforts, the literature discussed here underscores that during the Cold War era, these initiatives failed to resolve the sectionalism and bureaucratic competition

among government agencies. This persistent feature of postwar Japan's intelligence apparatus resembles the lack of coordination that existed between the military's intelligence branches and the foreign ministry during the wartime era.

The process of implementing significant changes to this striated system proceeded at a remarkably slow pace. During the early post-Cold War era, the focal point of political and public discourse centered around intelligence failure. Japan's intelligence apparatus demonstrated its ineffectiveness in countering domestic terrorism, exemplified by Aum Shinrikyō's sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995. It also proved inadequate in addressing North Korea's state-sponsored campaign of abducting Japanese citizens throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a matter ironically brought to light by the Japan Communist Party (JCP). Moreover, the intelligence system fell short in responding adequately to the hostage crisis orchestrated by the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement at the residence of Japan's ambassador to Peru in 1996. These failures have once again spurred intense discussions concerning the state of Japan's intelligence community.<sup>9</sup>

In light of these identified shortcomings and amid a broader debate about the need to "normalize" Japan's defense posture, a pivotal transformation in the intelligence system occurred with the establishment of the Defense Intelligence Headquarters (Bōei Jōhō Honbu 防衛情報本部, DIH) in 1997, representing another "self-contained" intelligence institution under the Defense Agency (since 2007, the Ministry of Defense).<sup>10</sup> The North Korean missile tests over Japanese airspace in 1998 further motivated Tokyo to develop national satellite surveillance capabilities and saw the establishment of the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center (Naikaku Eisei Jōhō Sentā 内閣衛星情報センター, CSICE). However, as the literature suggests, the DIH's capabilities were perceived as being inadequate to cope with the geopolitical shifts unfolding at the dawn of the new millennium.

Subsequently, the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the ensuing "war on terror" intensified discussions about the future of Japan's intelligence systems. The targeted killings of Japanese diplomats, journalists, and foreign aid workers by Islamist groups in Iraq, Syria, and Bangladesh during the first two decades of the twenty-first century, coupled with China's economic and military ascent and North Korea's persistent missile and nuclear developments, underscored the need for reforming Japan's national security system. This, in turn, generated numerous recommendations for overhauling the country's intelligence apparatus (Samuels, p. 168; Kotani, pp. 167–178).

### **The Abe Doctrine and Japan's Changing Intelligence System**

Numerous efforts to reform Japan's intelligence system in the 1990s may have been modest in scope, but the scholarly literature leaves no doubt about the profound impact that Prime Minister Abe had on "reengineering" the nation's national security apparatus (Samuels, pp. 248, 252). Intelligence, as a crucial element of the Abe Doctrine, assumed a central role in Japan's shift towards a stance of "proactive pacifism."<sup>11</sup> Of paramount importance was the establishment of the National Security Council (Kokka Anzen Hoshō Kaigi 国家安全保障会議, NSC) in 2013, an idea that had been previously contemplated during Abe's

9 See also Kawabe 2004.

10 Oros 2002, pp. 9–10.

11 See also Chijiwa 2022.

brief initial tenure in 2006–2007. As early as 2007, the Abe cabinet also paved the way for enhancing Japan's counterintelligence capabilities by creating a counterintelligence center within the Cabinet Office.

The primary purpose behind these initiatives and the subsequent creation of the NSC was to address the longstanding issue of sectionalism by centralizing security policymaking under the purview of the prime minister.<sup>12</sup> The NSC is comprised of sixty members drawn from the defense and foreign ministries, with support from the National Security Secretariat (NSS), situated within the Cabinet Secretariat. Notably, the NSS's inaugural secretary general was the former MOFA diplomat and longstanding foreign and security policy advisor to Abe, Yachi Shōtarō 谷内正太郎, who was succeeded in 2019 by the former NPA official and long-term intelligence advisor to Abe, Kitamura Shigeru 北村滋.<sup>13</sup> The NSC works closely with CIRO, ensuring more efficient intelligence sharing across all branches of the intelligence apparatus while strengthening the Kantei's (官邸) role in crisis management and national security policy making.<sup>14</sup>

Alongside the evolving institutional framework of Japan's intelligence system since Abe's return to power in 2012, a new legal framework emerged in the form of the Specially Designated Secrets Act (Tokutei Himitsu no Hogo ni kansuru Hōritsu 特定秘密の保護に関する法律, SDS Act) passed in 2013. The primary objective of this legislation was to curb intelligence leaks and, in turn, enhance confidence in Japan's intelligence apparatus among foreign allies and partners. The act also aimed to facilitate a more strategic use of intelligence, enabling allies and partners to align narratives that advance Japan's national interests. However, despite the establishment of the NSC/NSS, sectionalism within Japan's intelligence apparatus was not entirely resolved. Bureaucratic rivalry continues to persist in its relationship with CIRO, the MOD, MOJ, and the NPA.

The scholarship discussed here provides valuable insights into Japan's intelligence system, but each work offers only a partial perspective. Samuels conducts an extensive historical analysis, tracing the intelligence apparatus back to prewar and Meiji Japan. However, his account lacks a comprehensive exploration of economic intelligence. Williams addresses this gap by delving into the nuances of norms and practices that have shaped Japan's adaptive responses to geoeconomic and geostrategic challenges, aiming to learn from past failures.

Meanwhile, Kotani supplements this body of knowledge by providing missing historical details that illustrate the profound transition from a military-centric intelligence approach to one centered around the civil bureaucracy, highlighting the emergence of institutional centralization through the NSC. Collectively, this new corpus of research offers a multifaceted and highly relevant account of a crucial, yet underexplored, aspect of the Japanese security state. Furthermore, the institutional changes described here illustrate Japan's attempt to reduce its security intelligence dependency on the U.S. throughout most of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

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12 Pugliese 2017a; Liff 2018.

13 For this insider's perspective on the development of the intelligence community, see Kitamura 2021; also Pugliese 2017b.

14 A detailed organizational chart of Japan's current intelligence apparatus is provided by CIRO at [https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/jyouhoutyousa/intelligence\\_taisei.html](https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/jyouhoutyousa/intelligence_taisei.html).

The development of intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities as part of the Abe Doctrine, has gained momentum as Japan grapples with the rise of China. In August 2020, prominent lawmakers within the LDP, including Amari Akira 甘利明, advocated for the establishment of specific intelligence units to counter Chinese industrial espionage and safeguard Japanese intellectual property.<sup>15</sup> In a recent incident of “industrial espionage,” in June 2023, a Chinese researcher working at Japan’s National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) was discovered to have leaked confidential research data to a Chinese company. Simultaneously, allegations of spying have been directed at Japan, leading to frequent arrests of journalists, businessmen, and scholars by Chinese authorities on espionage charges. One example involves the arrest of Iwatani Nobu 岩谷將, a historian of modern China at Hokkaido University, who was accused of possessing classified documents. Furthermore, Japanese companies will need to adapt further to Chinese intelligence activities, as Beijing introduced a new anti-spy law in July 2023. These events underscore the necessity for Japan to invest even more in the development of economic intelligence capabilities across the state-business divide.

Intelligence and counterintelligence serve not only national security purposes but can also be used to manipulate democracy and influence domestic politics. To prevent intelligence agencies from operating with unchecked power, it is imperative to strengthen democratic oversight and protect civil liberties in the face of an expanding intelligence apparatus. This critical necessity is exemplified by a significant incident not addressed in the existing literature.

In October 2010, a substantial cache of documents emerged from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, exposing an extensive surveillance operation targeting the Muslim community in Japan. Known as the “Mosque squads,” this initiative began in 2008 and involved the deployment of forty-three agents. The leaked documents revealed the creation of a comprehensive database comprising more than seventy thousand individuals who had become subjects of this domestic surveillance program. This incident underscores the importance of maintaining democratic checks and balances to safeguard the rights and privacy of citizens.

In response to this revelation, members of the Muslim community in Japan sought legal action, vehemently decrying the program as ethnic and religious profiling. However, in a significant ruling in 2014, the Tokyo District Court upheld the program’s validity, deeming it “necessary and inevitable” to safeguard Japan from the specter of international terrorism.<sup>16</sup> Another incident in 2017 involved former Administrative Vice-Minister Maekawa Kihei 前川喜平 of MEXT, who was allegedly smeared in the media via strategic leaks from the police and CIRO about his interactions with teenage girls in Akihabara. Maekawa was denouncing Abe’s direct role in the Kake Gakuen affair at the time.<sup>17</sup> Such cases starkly underscore the importance of establishing robust checks and balances to preserve civic rights amid efforts to strengthen the instruments and institutions of Japan’s intelligence system. The question of how lawmakers have balanced (or circumvented)

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15 Yusuke Takeuchi. “Japan to establish intel unit to counter economic espionage.” *Nikkei Asia*, 27 August 2020.

16 Asia-Pacific Journal 2014.

17 Reiji Yoshida. “Brewing Kake Gakuen scandal points to alleged Abe favoritism.” *Japan Times*, 29 May 2017.

democratic freedoms with the need to secure Japan domestically and internationally is one that merits careful consideration in future research on Japan's evolving intelligence system.

### **A New Research Agenda**

Focusing on intelligence, the literature discussed here offers new insights into Japan's transformative journey, illuminating its evolution into a proactive and influential actor in international security affairs. The pivotal role assumed by intelligence as a cornerstone of Japan's national security strategy is clarified, highlighting its critical significance in shaping Japan's approach to safeguarding its interests and navigating global challenges.

It is here that the recent work on Japanese intelligence contributes to a broader understanding by placing Japan's institutional developments within the context of national security systems across different nations. By contextualizing Japan's intelligence reforms alongside those of other countries, it enriches our appreciation of the intricacies and commonalities in the evolution of intelligence practices and institutions on the global stage. In addition, new research might address questions that remain underdeveloped in the current body of literature.

First, research should connect debates on intelligence capabilities with Japan's strategic communications approach. Effectively managing complex security threats requires a higher level of integration among intelligence gathering, analysis, and defense operations. Japan's newly developed intelligence capabilities highlight the growing significance of intelligence in shaping international politics through strategic information dissemination. Policymakers and strategists in Japan now acknowledge that intelligence serves not only national defense but also plays a pivotal role in strategic communication. As such, strategic communication serves as a political tool to minimize the risk of misinterpretations through coordinated messaging.<sup>18</sup> Since Abe's leadership, there has been increased attention to strategic communications, especially in countering China while simultaneously enhancing Japan's international standing. This recognition of intelligence as a strategic asset represents a significant shift in Japan's approach to security and diplomacy.

Second, research should account for Japan's shifting security discourse placing greater emphasis on integrating economic and national security. This shift is evident through the passage of new legislation in 2022, focused on enhancing economic security (Keizai Anzen Hoshō 経済安全保障), as well as the National Security Strategy. These developments underscore recognition of the importance of addressing economic security matters and countering economic espionage, which have been key concerns in the past. In light of these developments, it is essential to establish a strong link between economic security and intelligence within Japan's broader national security strategy. This integration will enable a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to safeguard Japan's interests and effectively counter potential threats in the economic domain. By incorporating economic security considerations into the intelligence apparatus, Japan can enhance its ability to tackle complex challenges and protect its economic interests, complementing its efforts in traditional national security arenas.

Third, research should account for the role of intelligence as an instrument used as part of Japan's security strategy deployed to step beyond the confines of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

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<sup>18</sup> Aoi 2017.

A notable milestone in this direction was Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's introduction of a revised National Security Strategy in 2022. This strategic blueprint signals Tokyo's preparedness to proactively address security challenges, as it outlines the development of counterstrike capabilities. Furthermore, Prime Minister Kishida's endeavors to foster closer cooperation with NATO, coupled with an expanding alliance network in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through initiatives like the Quad and AUKUS, have sparked a renewed debate on the importance of intelligence collaboration. As a result, efforts are underway to enhance satellite data sharing with the United States, which will bolster response capabilities during emergencies. These initiatives demonstrate Japan's commitment to forging robust partnerships beyond the U.S.-Japan alliance, and intelligence cooperation plays a pivotal role in this evolving landscape of regional and global security.

Despite Japan's earnest efforts to strengthen its intelligence apparatus and notable advances in SIGINT, Tokyo has yet to be included in the esteemed "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance.<sup>19</sup> As a result, calls have been growing both in Washington and Tokyo to grant Japan access to this multilateral intelligence network. The evolving security landscape and Japan's continuous efforts to enhance its intelligence capabilities highlight the significance of addressing this matter to bolster regional and global security cooperation beyond the confines of the U.S.-Japan alliance. In this context, new research should acknowledge the vital role of intelligence cooperation in shaping regional partnerships and, in turn, Japan's role in managing regional security concerns, particularly concerning China. By seeking inclusion in the "Five Eyes" alliance or fostering closer intelligence collaboration with like-minded partners, Japan can effectively contribute to collective security efforts and navigate complex security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.<sup>20</sup>

Fourth, Japanese economic intelligence has played a significant role in shaping perceptions both domestically and abroad, most notably evident in its impact on how the U.S. perceived Japan as a threat during the 1980s and early 1990s. Therefore, new research should consider the influence of intelligence and tradecraft on cultural perceptions of security threats. The Japanese industrial espionage during that era had a profound impact on how each country viewed the other's intentions and capabilities, leading to heightened suspicions and concerns about national security. These perceptions not only affected diplomatic relations but also influenced public opinion and media portrayals, contributing to a complex web of cultural and political dynamics. Understanding the implications of "spy wars" on cultural perceptions of security threats is essential for comprehending the broader implications of intelligence activities on international relations and shaping foreign policy responses. By acknowledging the interplay between intelligence practices and cultural perceptions, new research can provide valuable insights into how intelligence activities continue to shape international affairs.

In sum, intelligence has assumed a pivotal role in shaping Japan's security strategy, triggering a transformative trajectory driven by institutional failures and geopolitical shifts. Historically, the pace of change in this domain had been sluggish, but the second Abe

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<sup>19</sup> Williams 2023.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Daishi Abe and Rieko Miki, "Japan wants de facto 'Six Eyes' intelligence status: Defense chief." *Nikkei Asia*, 14 August 2020; and Richard Armitage and Zack Cooper, "Japan should be admitted to the Five Eyes network." *Nikkei Asia*, 14 November 2021.

administration catalyzed consequential reforms in the intelligence apparatus, positioning it to play a central role within a centralized national security policymaking system. A burgeoning body of literature on the Japanese intelligence system recognizes the significance of these changes, drawing attention to the heightened importance of intelligence within Japan's grand strategy, rectifying misconceptions regarding the role of Japanese intelligence during and after the Cold War, while offering valuable pointers towards new research agendas. The evolution of the postwar Japanese state, transitioning from pacifism to assume a new and proactive role in international affairs, is vividly illustrated through the valuable lessons learned by policymakers as they grappled with intelligence failures and adapted the intelligence system.

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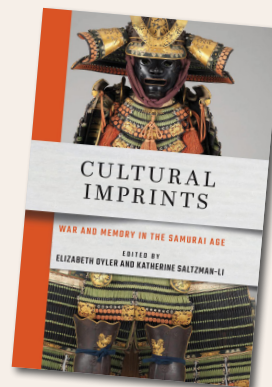


## BOOK REVIEW

### *Cultural Imprints: War and Memory in the Samurai Age*

Edited by Elizabeth Oyler and Katherine Saltzman-Li

Cornell University Press, 2022  
270 pages.



Reviewed by Oleg BENESCH\*

This book addresses a very important issue relating to samurai history. As the introduction points out, historical scholarship has often highlighted significant divergences between the situation of warriors in premodern and early modern Japan, and their portrayal in the modern period. Basil Hall Chamberlain's 1912 essay "The Invention of a New Religion" is a well-known early example of this sort of criticism, by a gifted scholar who witnessed many of the transitions in how the past was remembered in the Meiji period. Perhaps the most important moment of widespread reconsideration of the portrayals of the samurai occurred around the time of the Second World War, as samurai imagery and supposed warrior ideals were first redefined and mobilized by the imperial state, only to be discredited by Japan's defeat.

The postwar decades saw a reassessment of the samurai in both scholarship and popular culture, as part of a concerted effort to understand the "true" samurai past. However, many of the studies undertaken during this period were ultimately unable to overcome the weighty imperial legacy, and continued to rely on primary sources and analytical frameworks that had been carefully selected and established in the decades before 1945. More recently, scholars in both Japan and elsewhere have increasingly succeeded in moving beyond the imperial legacy and have challenged many of the assumptions left over from the early twentieth century. They have often done this through the (re)evaluation of premodern materials, including both known and newly discovered sources. This volume contains some excellent examples of this type of work, adding richness to our understanding of Japanese warriors before the Meiji period.

The aim of this collection is to demonstrate the key role that warfare played in the cultural construction of samurai representation from the 1180s to the collapse of the Tokugawa and beyond. One important contribution of this work is to show the centrality of martial aspects of the samurai throughout the centuries of warrior rule, not only during earlier centuries of conflict, but also during the prolonged peace of the Edo period. While popular images of the samurai held today are the result of modern processes of invention,

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the contributions to this volume demonstrate that Japanese warriors were constantly being reinvented and redefined from the earliest period, with layers of memory combining with fantasy and nostalgia to create new versions of the samurai in different times and places.

The volume brings together a range of case studies that span the whole of what the editors refer to as the “samurai age,” using a variety of approaches ranging from history and literature to material culture and the performing arts. The eight chapters, which range from fifteen to thirty-nine pages in length, further highlight the great diversity between Japanese warriors not only before and after the late sixteenth century, but also during any one period. Several of the chapters are lavishly illustrated, including a number of color images, and these visual materials are used to good effect. Readers will certainly appreciate the wide variety of approaches that are marshalled here to address the core theme of the work, and to see how warfare featured in samurai-related culture that might be beyond our own area or period of specialization. In this sense, the collection is valuable in helping to assemble a picture of how Japanese warriors viewed themselves, and how they were viewed by broader society, as well as how these views were informed by real and imagined memories of past warriors.

While acknowledging the potential significance of this intervention, and the contribution to the scholarship made by several of the individual chapters, there are also a couple of areas where the collection could have been strengthened. I found myself desiring some more extensive direct engagement with the relevant existing scholarship in the introduction, which might have clarified and stressed the importance of this contribution to the literature, in Japanese and other languages. While some significant works by Jan Assmann, Maurice Halbwachs, and Eric Hobsbawm are introduced to good effect in the introduction, the only work specifically on Japan cited is Barbara Ruch’s chapter in John W. Hall and Takeshi Toyoda’s milestone 1977 collection, *Japan in the Muromachi Age*. In this context, it would also have been helpful for the reader if the volume had included some form of bibliography, either at the end of each chapter or even for the book as a whole, which would have been valuable for further pursuing the relevant debates. While there is a somewhat limited index at the end of the volume, at the time of writing this review, there was not yet an openly accessible online preview or similar that could be used to enhance searchability.

Overall, this is a very interesting volume with some fascinating contributions to the cultural history and memory of the samurai over the long period of their existence. It demonstrates the pivotal role that warfare and martial matters played in the self-understanding and representation of the samurai across different cultural spheres, even—or perhaps especially—during the long periods of peace under warrior rule. The volume should form an important reference point for the many further conversations on “war and memory in the samurai age” that are sure to follow.

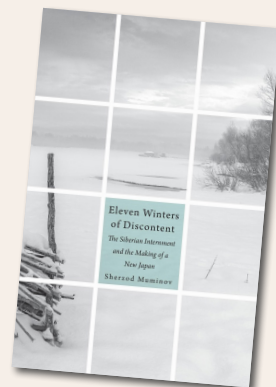
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Eleven Winters of Discontent: The Siberian Internment and the Making of a New Japan*

By Sherzod Muminov

Harvard University Press, 2022  
384 pages.

Reviewed by Jonathan BULL\*



In December 2022 “Fragments of the Last Will” (*Rāgeri yori ai o komete* ラーゲリより愛を込めて) became a major hit with cinemagoers in Japan. The film is based on a semi-fictional story of five Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) soldiers held as prisoners of war (POWs) in Soviet labor camps after the Second World War. The *Japan Times* suggested that audiences would “need tissues for this tearjerker.”<sup>1</sup> Much of the emotional impact came from the contrast between the Japanese prisoners’ efforts to retain their dignity and the brutal treatment meted out by the Soviet camp commanders and guards. In *Eleven Winters of Discontent: The Siberian Internment and the Making of a New Japan*, historian Sherzod Muminov challenges such one-dimensional portrayals. The phrase “Siberian Internment” primarily refers to the capture of approximately six hundred thousand IJA servicemen by the USSR. Transported to labor camps throughout the USSR, an estimated sixty thousand died, largely from a combination of cold, hunger, overwork, and poor living conditions. Most of the survivors had been repatriated to Japan by 1949 but several thousand remained. The last of the prisoners were released in 1956 when the Soviet-Japan Joint Declaration was signed, meaning they had spent eleven years in captivity—the “eleven winters” of the book’s title.

The book has two main objectives: to reframe the Siberian internment as global history and to enable the men who were imprisoned to speak in their own words. To achieve these aims, the author closely read the memoirs of thirty individuals and juxtaposed them with the findings of extensive research in Japanese, American, British and, most importantly, Russian archives. The result is a book which largely succeeds in its objectives and, in doing so, breaks new ground in research on the history of the Japanese empire and Japan’s “long postwar.”<sup>2</sup> Previous research in English has provided rich insight into the mental world of a handful of exceptional writers and artists who experienced the Siberian Internment.<sup>3</sup> It also

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1 James Hadfield. “Fragments of the Last Will: You’ll need tissues for this WWII tearjerker.” *The Japan Times*. 22 December 2022.

2 Gluck 1993.

3 Barshay 2013.

explored the meaning of the cultural representation of former POWs in postwar society.<sup>4</sup> However, lacking Russian archival sources, the research was unable to contextualize Japanese perspectives outside of a nation-centric framework—hence Muminov’s insistence on the importance of global history. As for recovering the POW’s voices, this is complicated by the influence of victimhood discourse which makes many memoirs appear to have a similar message of Japanese suffering at the hands of the Soviet “other.” Such surface reading might make for a tearjerking film but does little to help us understand the men’s sense of agency.

Two of the book’s most important findings come from Muminov’s approach to global history as transnational archival research. First, when taken in the context of the Soviet system of labor camps as a whole, the Japanese POWs received relatively good treatment. Germany had been the main enemy of the USSR and, in general, German soldiers experienced the worst of the camp system. The author takes care not to minimize the undoubted hardship endured by Japanese POWs but persuasively reveals the limitations of relying solely on memoirs for an understanding of camp life. Second, the “Democratic Movement” (to “reeducate” the POWs in Soviet-style democracy) was more complex than the clichéd images of submission or resistance. This point is not new, but Muminov’s insights into the mindset of the Soviet officials in charge and their interactions with the POWs provide clear evidence of the benefits of transnational archival work.

Global history could also include connecting historiographies about different geographical areas. Although the author does link Japanese POWs to their German counterparts, it is mostly through the literature of memoir rather than academic research. Greater engagement with the work of scholars such as Christiane Wienand and Robert Moeller could have clarified the global trends and local specifics of the Siberian internment.<sup>5</sup> For example, how did the very different government policies in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Japan towards the issue of compensation influence the formation of individual and collective memory? This is but one kind of question that could have brought the benefits of applying a global history “lens” into sharper focus.

In reading memoirs and many other kinds of sources Muminov takes care to recognize the POW’s agency. Previous research either minimized the role of the POWs as political actors in postwar Japan or extrapolated it from the actions of a few individuals.<sup>6</sup> As argued in the sixth chapter, after repatriation the former POWs had to adapt to the challenges they encountered, from the ordinary of seeking employment, to the extraordinary of early-Cold War press coverage. By providing the first account in English of the campaign for compensation by former POWs, the book also shows how many men maintained their agency into old age. The author’s pursuit of his protagonists’ agency is a necessary response to the tendency for much of the discourse by and about the former POWs to rely on the trope of victimhood. The larger meaning of locating agency lies in a better understanding of “how and why the Japanese empire was excised from public memory” (p. 16). In his analysis, Muminov mostly concentrates on the individual (the author of a memoir) and the “national” (actions by officials, reporting by national newspaper journalists, and so on).

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4 Igarashi 2016.

5 Wienand 2015; Moeller 2003.

6 Watt 2009; Barshay 2013.

However, might there also be a “meso-level” between the individual and the state which, for example, influenced how individual memory was constructed through memoirs? Veterans’ organizations, repatriate groups, and local journalists (often working together) have been influential in shaping public memory in Japan, but they do not receive much attention in this book’s analysis of agency.

Muminov states in the introduction that “one volume, however comprehensive, cannot do justice to the history of the Siberian Internment” (p. 20). This is true and the discussion above is intended as a prompt for further research. *Eleven Winters of Discontent* contains much of interest to those engaged in Cold War and post-imperial history, as well as for historians of Japan. It is extremely well-written with engaging openings drawing the reader into each chapter. Rather than rhetorical flourishes, however, it is the author’s abiding concern for his protagonists, always tempered through close readings of the available archival evidence, which stayed with this reader. Scholarly texts tend not to be tearjerkers, but when they are as deeply researched and skillfully narrated as this one, they will stay with their audience for longer.

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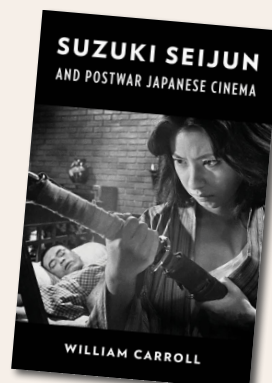
Christiane Wienand. *Returning Memories: Former Prisoners of War in Divided and Reunited Germany*. Camden House, 2015.

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Suzuki Seijun and Postwar Japanese Cinema*

By William Carroll

Columbia University Press, 2022  
304 pages.



Reviewed by Jennifer COATES\*

William Carroll's study of director Suzuki Seijun (1923–2017) makes a series of interesting and timely interventions into scholarly understanding of a filmmaker whose work has received renewed interest from audiences outside Japan as a broader range of his films have become available. Extant scholarship has tended to address Suzuki's work through close analysis of one or two particular films or a focus on perceived career highlights or transition points.<sup>1</sup> Full volumes devoted to Suzuki in English have tended until now to be published in the form of catalogues, often linked to a specific retrospective or screening programme.<sup>2</sup> Carroll's focus is somewhat more discursive, in that his study begins from a description of the competing narratives around Suzuki's career and high-profile departure from Nikkatsu studios in 1968.

Carroll identifies two key objectives which distinguish this volume from previous publications. First, through interrogating the origins of commonly cited descriptions of Suzuki's work, from Nikkatsu boss Hori Kyūsaku's complaint that Suzuki's films were "incomprehensible" (p. 4) to the director's own description of "movies that make no sense and make no money" (p. 5), Carroll perceptively notes that Suzuki's contemporary reputation rests on "a partial translation taken out of context" (p. 5). To remedy this, he proposes a return to the close reading of the films themselves, while attending to the industry practices and viewership of their era, to reveal a more accurate picture of Suzuki's standing in his field and impact on Japanese filmmaking more broadly. Second, Carroll locates this project within recent developments in the field of Japanese studies by connecting discourse around Suzuki's films and practice to recent interest in Japanese-language film theory, much of which is still unavailable in translation. Locating Suzuki as "the object of focus for multiple strands of Japanese film theory" (p. 7), Carroll refuses to categorize the filmmaker as an illustrative example of either New Left social issues or cinephile theorists'

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1 See DiNitto 2004 and Kitamura 2013 for examples of the former, and Domenig 2013 for the latter.

2 Field and Rayns 1994; Vick 2015.



concerns. Instead, he offers a more nuanced picture of the big issues of art and life under discussion at the end of the 1960s in Japan.

A major contribution of the book is therefore the access it provides to as yet untranslated Japanese film theory and criticism. Another is the painstaking appendices, including unfiled projects, collaborative works with the Guryū Hachirō group, and commercials and books authored by Suzuki, as well as a list of his works as assistant director. The framing of Suzuki's persona itself is also nicely nuanced, in contrast to more classical auteurist approaches which can take the construction of the director's public face a little for granted. Carroll insists on a clear distinction between "the figure Suzuki Seijun" and "the true historical figure Suzuki Seitarō" (p. 154) which underscores his point about the use of Suzuki and his public struggles by politically-motivated factions.

This admirable focus on Japanese-language sources has perhaps created one of the few weaknesses of the study—an overreliance on PhD dissertations and other unpublished or non-peer-reviewed works in English. I also felt the absence of certain publications in English, which do not take Suzuki as their central focus but do offer potentially useful readings of his work and broader public significance in Japan in the late 1960s.<sup>3</sup> In some places there are minor editing issues that can impede comprehension, most often where a plot point or character name is mentioned in passing without a full explanation, which follows a few paragraphs later (for example, the discussion of the importance of the "warehouse painting" in *Young Breasts* on p. 126). Lastly, and this is perhaps asking too much of a single study, statements about audience interpretation and understanding could perhaps have been better supported given that many in Suzuki's original audience are still alive today. Claims such as "the films' original audiences would be able to fill in the elided material with comparable scenes" (p. 72) would be more convincing if the voices of some of those audiences could have been heard.

Overall, however, this is a very valuable contribution, not only to the study of Suzuki's work and legacy, or to the study of Japanese cinema of the 1960s, but to the broader project of undoing the domination of English and European film theory within global film studies. Carroll breaks new ground not only in the use of Japanese-language materials but also in his development of an understanding of "the Seijunesque" that refuses to define the director's style according to motifs, traits, and tendencies, but rather insists on "push-and-pull, direct juxtaposition, or synthesis between multiple tendencies that would seem to be irreconcilable" (p. 124) as markers of a cohesive body of work that nonetheless changes over time.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Dream Super-Express: A Cultural History of the World's First Bullet Train*

By Jessamyn R. Abel

Stanford University Press, 2022  
289 pages.

Reviewed by Steven J. ERICSON\*



This wonderfully insightful book, a cultural history of Japan's New Tokaido Line in its early years, focuses not so much on the technology and construction of the line itself as on "the dreams and nightmares" (p. 2) that this infrastructural project inspired or provoked. As the author notes, the work complements studies by Christopher Hood and others that tend to examine the political and economic significance of the Shinkansen.<sup>1</sup> Abel's study instead connects the bullet train to social, cultural, and intellectual developments from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, deploying a variety of discourses surrounding the train to throw new light on those developments. At the same time, Abel also weaves a political dimension through the individual chapters by looking at people's contentious interactions with the state over the "dream super-express" and at the authorities' use of the Shinkansen for their own purposes.

The author has carefully constructed the book, which, chapter by chapter, moves up in geographic scale from local to regional to national concerns and then to international ones, with an additional chapter on the prewar and wartime precursors of the bullet train. Abel writes clearly and elegantly in accessible prose, largely avoiding cultural studies jargon.<sup>2</sup> She makes effective use of a stunning array of sources ranging from national and local government documents to popular journals and magazines, television shows, films, novels, and graphic art. In the chapter on Kyoto, for instance, she expertly draws on Kyoto City Assembly reports, a memoir of a lawyer who advised a group seeking compensation for eviction, and a semifictional novel by a city assembly member; Abel states that she employs these materials to "exhume" a narrative "that was invisible in the official discourse" (p. 21). In other chapters, she examines films that critique the heroic, celebratory view promoted by the government and Japanese National Railways. Some of the illustrative highlights of the book are reprints of a 1965 movie poster showing "the Giant Monster Gamera" destroying a bullet train and recent woodcuts depicting the train itself as an anthropomorphic monster

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1 See, for instance, Hood 2006.

2 A rare exception that confused me appears on page 9: "The bullet train . . . was drawn into a process of self-essentialization that worked to the benefit of the essentializing subject (who, in this case, is also the object)."

and its precursor, the South Manchuria Railway's Asia Express, as a robot standing astride a wrecked Shinkansen (pp. 99, 219–220).

I found particularly engaging the chapters on contestation in Kyoto over the routing of the new line and on memories of the Manchurian super-express and of earlier plans for a domestic bullet train. In the Kyoto chapter, Abel discusses the little-known story of the vigorous, six-year campaign waged by municipal and prefectural leaders to have the Shinkansen—which surprisingly was originally set to bypass the old capital—rerouted to run through Kyoto as part of their effort to rebrand it as an “international culture tourism city.” She then uncovers the struggles of Kyoto communities and businesses that the redirected line was scheduled to displace, presenting their protests as part of a new mode of civic participation “that began in the 1950s and evolved over the following decades into a vibrant culture of small-scale popular activism” (p. 40). In the chapter on “nostalgia for imperial Japan,” the author reveals how the successful building of the world’s fastest train in the 1960s revived memories of imperial and wartime express trains. As she notes ironically, however, those memories “left out empire and war” (p. 141). They did so by focusing on the technical achievement and aesthetics of the South Manchuria Railway’s super express train and on the heroic but aborted endeavors to build a Tokyo-Shimonoseki bullet train line in the 1930s and portraying those projects as laying the groundwork for the New Tokaido Line, without any reference to their connection to Japanese imperialist expansion. In this way, the author makes a convincing case that this form of nostalgia became part and parcel of Japanese amnesia about wartime imperialism.

In addition to the protests of local communities adversely affected by the Shinkansen in Kyoto, Abel presents other examples of challenges to the rosy narratives of official discourse. Whereas planners and officials imagined the New Tokaido Line as a promoter of economic development and demographic redistribution, critics posited alternative views of the bullet train as “a nefarious agent of homogenization and centralization” (p. 101). In particular, the author examines popular fiction and film that offered a dark counternarrative to the positive positions of people like the architect Tange Kenzō and the politician Tanaka Kakuei who saw the Shinkansen as integral to Japan’s emergence as an “information society.” Outside of the country, Abel shows, Japanese leaders sought to use the bullet train as a diplomatic tool to change popular perceptions of Japan, but their efforts to do so at the New York World’s Fair, for instance, backfired to some extent, contributing instead to a new stereotype, a kind of “techno-Orientalism.”

Abel states that the critical view of the official stance in novels and movies was “a minority perspective, but couched in blockbuster fiction with vast circulation, it reached a broad audience, giving it power beyond its immediate scale” (p. 129). I would like to have seen some concrete evidence of that reach as reflected, for example, in opinion polls or in letters to the editor in journals and the like. This minor reservation notwithstanding, Abel’s work is an impressive, multilayered achievement of great insight and sophistication. She deftly applies to Japan themes and concepts drawn from recent literature on the politics and aesthetics of infrastructure and makes a signal contribution to the interdisciplinary study of modern Japanese history, rendering her work of interest to students of technology and culture, transportation and other forms of infrastructure, and historical memory alike.<sup>3</sup>

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3 For an overview of that literature, Abel cites Appel, Anand, and Gupta 2018.

Teachers could productively assign the book or chapters in advanced undergraduate courses on modern Japanese history, such as one I teach on the history of Japan since World War II, or in either undergraduate or graduate seminars on modern Japanese or comparative history.

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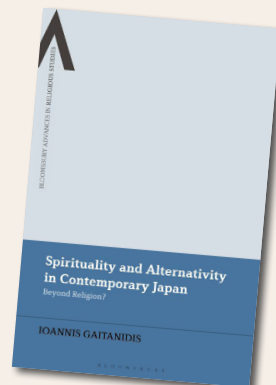
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Spirituality and Alternativity in Contemporary Japan: Beyond Religion?*

By Ioannis Gaitanidis

Bloomsbury Academic, 2022  
240 pages.

Reviewed by Kevin DOAK\*



I looked forward to reading this book with great hope as the topic of spirituality in Japan has been one of great significance recently, all the more so after criticisms of the Unification Church surfaced following the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō in July 2022. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. It is not that a careful reader cannot come away with some valuable information about the phenomenon of spirituality in contemporary Japan. The author surveys the views of some important scholars on the topic: for Shimazono Susumu, spirituality was offered in contrast to “salvation religions” as a means of addressing the loss of meaning that resulted from secularization (pp. 62–63). We find Horie Norichika’s view that spirituality is a replacement for religion, which after the Aum affair was regarded as something dangerous that “should be excluded to maintain the social order” (p. 45). And Haga Manabu’s argument that spirituality promoted an “achievement-oriented individualistic worldview in which everyone has the potential to realize happiness” (p. 96) largely completes the picture of what “spiritual” or “spirituality” signifies in contemporary Japan. The problem comes from the fact that Gaitanidis rejects all these views—and more—and leaves us with far less in terms of understanding what “spirituality” is.

Gaitanidis rejects these views on spirituality not for failing to accord with the reality of what spirituality actually is, but for daring to claim to know what it is. He calls this an essentializing of spirituality, “the -ization of spiritual narratives” (p. 24). In contrast, he offers ethnographies of several Japanese spiritual therapists, but cautions that their experiences also cannot be extended beyond these people’s particular experiences in “Central-West Tokyo [because] . . . in contrast to the abovementioned scholars, I do not claim that my findings are characteristic of a ‘Japanese’ religiosity or spirituality. I do not think that there is or has ever been such a thing” (p. 16). However, Gaitanidis does argue that his spiritual therapists are “functioning in a climate of socializing medicalization” (p. 130), a couple of “-izations” that apparently are not guilty of essentializing. Of course, Gaitanidis himself offers no definition of what spirituality is since, as he says, “my concern . . . [is for] what spirituality in contemporary Japan *did* . . . rather than what spirituality

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is” (p. 182). What did spirituality do? Well, it has something to do with therapy, but this therapy is not necessarily “spiritual” or “religious.” The most Gaitanidis can or will tell us is that “the ‘spiritual’ is not *not-religion*; it is *not-medicine*” (p. 31).

Aside from the postmodern, deconstructionist discourse analysis approach that weighs down Gaitanidis’s study on spirituality, there is a longer tradition in religious studies at work implicit here that needs to be explicitly identified, and by this I mean the pragmatism that William James introduced into religious studies over a century ago. For James, as for Gaitanidis, the key issue in religious studies is not what is true but what works. Indeed, James went so far as to claim that “the true is what works well.”<sup>1</sup> Both James and Gaitanidis ignore the fact that some concept of the truth is necessary to measure whether something works well. What is the goal one is trying to reach? What is human nature and what does it require for human happiness? At least James, freed from the cant of contemporary discourse analysis, made an important point that we should remember when trying to assess this book or indeed the field of spirituality studies. James noted an “antipathy to religion [that] finds an echo within the very science of religions itself . . . The consequence is that the conclusions of the science of religions are as likely to be adverse as they are to be favorable to the claim that the essence of religion is true. There is a notion in the air about us that religion is probably only an anachronism, a case of ‘survival,’ an atavistic relapse into a mode of thought which humanity in its more enlightened examples has outgrown.”<sup>2</sup> This antipathy to religion marks Gaitanidis’s book, but in a more subtle way. He claims he wants to restore a “religion” that is not “religion” by focusing on the business of spiritual therapy and other engagements with what he calls “alternativity” (also left undefined and undefinable) in Japan.

Gaitanidis’s deconstructionist approach to spirituality falls apart when confronting the real issues that have arisen from court cases of *reikan shōhō* (“spiritual sales”). While he notes there have been many complaints about fraud by spiritual therapists, as well as a Supreme Court decision in 2015 that found the Fukuoka-based firm Earth Heart, which ran seminars that would “cure illness with the power of one’s hands,” guilty of fraud, his sympathies lie more with the fraudsters than with their victims. After all, how can anyone be a victim when in the end, we have but “fictitious selves” (p. 179)—and thus fictitious grievances?

Again, we can gain valuable insight into these matters from the past, in this case from the nineteenth century Swiss lawyer and theologian Carl Hilty who wrote over a hundred years ago about what drove people to seek new spiritual answers and what they were likely to find there:

Even among what we call the cultivated people, where education has made a profounder view accessible, the number of those who find the meaning of life is by no means large. After some vain and superficial attempts to save themselves they yield at last, and often far too soon, to the pitiful programme of self-indulgence. And what is their next step? . . . in throngs they make their pilgrimages, the women at the front,

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1 James 1902, p. 458.

2 James 1902, p. 490.

to Pastor Kneipp, or Dr. Metzger, or some other infallible healer, hoping for a quick restoration and a second chance to waste their lives.<sup>3</sup>

At least Hilty—and James—give us some clear sense of what might be going on with this whole phenomenon of “spiritual therapy.” Gaitanidis does not. But to be fair, I am not certain that he feels that is his mission—or even something he would consider possible. His prior commitment to a deconstructionist discourse analysis that rejects any stable concept of truth means that there is nothing he can say about these practices other than some people do them—whatever they are. He is more concerned with staying within the narrow dictates of high academic discourse analysis than with telling us what spirituality in Japan today signifies. In short, what we do not get from this book but get at least a glimpse of from Hilty is what the possibilities and the risks of such spiritual quests might be.

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<sup>3</sup> Hilty 1903, pp. 127–128. Rev. Sebastian Kneipp (1821–1897) was a founder of naturopathic medicine, especially hydrotherapy. Dr. Metzger may refer to Dr. Johann Georg Metzger (or Mezger, 1838–1909) who is credited with the invention of Swedish massage therapy.



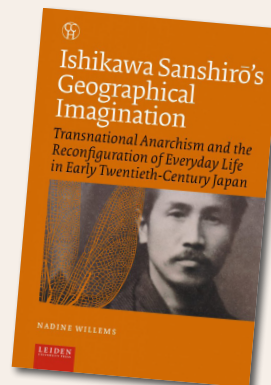
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Ishikawa Sanshirō's Geographical Imagination: Transnational Anarchism and the Reconfiguration of Everyday Life in Early Twentieth-Century Japan*

By Nadine Willems

Leiden University Press, 2020  
291 pages.

Reviewed by Robert KRAMM\*



All too often neglected as immature, failed, violence-glorifying terrorism and naïve idealism, anarchist theory and practice made extensive contributions to our understanding and visions of community, ecology, and the human condition. One of these contributors, and a transcultural mediator of such knowledge in the early twentieth century, was Ishikawa Sanshirō, who published widely in geography, biology, agriculture, society, and human life. Nadine Willems's marvelous book *Geographical Imagination* is the first monograph on Ishikawa in English (or any other non-Japanese language), which provides a thorough analysis of Ishikawa's extensive *oeuvre*. In so doing, *Geographical Imagination* speaks to various trends in recent scholarship and politics. It demonstrates the richness of anarchist ideas, practices, and networks in history, underscoring the significance of border-crossing perspectives beyond nationally confined historiographies.

Moreover, the book, like Ishikawa's ideas and activism, addresses pressing issues at a time of crisis. Ishikawa's criticism emerged at a historically specific moment in the development of capitalism and industrialization, one that had a drastic impact on environmental and social change and therefore the human experience of modernity. Roughly one hundred years ago, before climate change and ecological crises became undeniable issues, Ishikawa and his ilk already understood the human impact on the environment, and took human-nature relations seriously, challenging assumptions of human superiority and instead stressing the interdependent relationship between us and nature. As intrinsic parts of nature, Ishikawa contended, human capacity and agency created possibilities for environmental and social transformation.

In six chapters, Willems details Ishikawa's physical and intellectual transnational journey and the social history of his anarchist-geographical ideas and practice. The very first chapter introduces geographical thought in the late Meiji period. This was characterized by, on the one hand, geography as an integral science for the Meiji state's project of modernizing Japan, through surveys, and map-making and thus as a tool for resource

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extraction. On the other, it also reflected a critical human geographic thought and activism concerned with the lived experiences of the common people (*heimin*). Criticism by Tanaka Shōzō, Ishikawa's mentor, of the ecological disaster at the Ashio Copper Mine in the 1890s belongs to this intellectual scene, in which Ishikawa grew up. Chapter 2 situates Ishikawa in the political and economic crises of his time, namely the Russo-Japanese War, peasant and popular uprisings, and the High Treason Incident. These all highlight imperial Japan's lack of democracy and the ruthless exploitation of labor and resources by states and landlords, revealing the authorities' push for imperial expansion at the expense of people's everyday life and wellbeing. Heavily involved in the antiwar movement and late Meiji socialism, Ishikawa responded by arguing for rural socialism that understood the countryside as a potential site for revolution and liberation through peasant associations and cooperation.

For me personally, chapters 3 and 4 bring Willems's compelling arguments to the fore and thus constitute the most enthralling and inspiring parts of the books. Following Ishikawa's travels to France, Belgium, England, and Morocco between 1913 and 1920, chapter three showcases the Japanese anarchist-geographer's interaction with like-minded intellectuals and activists, including Edward Carpenter and Paul Reclus. They all shared a similar critique of established notions of civilization as well as ideas for a collaborative society and human-human/human-nature relations beyond state authority. Ishikawa's own experience of mobility, connectivity, and networks, as Willems argues, is crucial to the development of his anarchist thought. However, this must not be misunderstood as the story of a Japanese intellectual who matured during his sojourn in the West and later diffused its enlightened ideas in the East. Rather, it shows how Ishikawa was the link and mediator between various, otherwise unrelated, intellectuals and activists, and how that exchange and cooperation generated distinctive anarchist ideas and activism.

Building on these intellectual currents of early twentieth century Japan and Europe brought into conversation by and through Ishikawa, Willems elucidates in chapter 4 Ishikawa's key concept of *domin seikatsu* 土民生活, which translates as "a life of a people attached to the earth." This stresses human-nature relations and conveys a strong notion of mutual aid, cooperation, and non-hierarchical association, in which humans are grounded on earth and live with and from it, but are neither its, nor anyone else's, master. It underscores the significance of space (contrary to Marxism's emphasis on time), and of solidarity, which would constitute the basis for new economic, political, and social relations: a self-sufficient agriculture of grass-root democratic village communes in free association and federation.

The last two chapters discuss Ishikawa's own attempts to implement his concept of *domin seikatsu*. As Willems argues, the circumstances were far from ideal as Ishikawa and other agrarian-anarchists had a hard time resisting state authority and the increasingly nationalist and hostile fascist agrarianism of 1930s and 1940s imperial Japan. Ishikawa made some attempts to search for alternatives, which dealt with issues as diverse as historical time, entomology, and Chinese mysticism, only to come back to Reclus' *L'Homme et la Terre* and an insistence on *domin*-style equality, interdependence, and mutual aid. One might argue that Ishikawa's later work became increasingly inconsistent. Yet, as Willems book highlights, it nevertheless demonstrates that anarchism was and is not limited to a particular line of thought and political activism, being by definition open and diverse. We find anarchist thought and practice in scholarship (geography and biology), work (agriculture),

cultural production (arts and literature) and lived experience seeking alternatives to state-centered modernization, socialist dogmatism, and liberal capitalism.

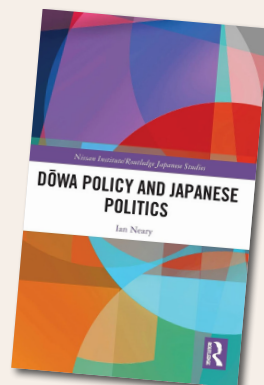
Students and scholars of Japan will find in *Geographical Imagination* many interesting new avenues in which to explore the intellectual history of early twentieth-century Japan. For those who do not focus on the country, too, *Geographical Imagination* serves as a wonderful reminder that Japan must not always serve as an aberration or exception. Nadine Willem's book reminds each and every one of us that a Japan-focused history must not be restricted by Japan's national borders—and that transnational appropriations, interactions, and networks were pivotal to the making of modern Japan, and indeed the world. Additionally, it shows us all how solidarity and caring for one another and the environment were and are key to improving the world in the future.

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Dōwa Policy and Japanese Politics*

By Ian Neary

Nissan Institute / Routledge Japanese Studies, 2021  
276 pages.



Reviewed by Sai Kiet Niki LAU\*

*Dōwa Policy and Japanese Politics* introduces the reader to the policies that were undertaken through the Special Measures Law for *Dōwa* Projects (SML hereafter). Through the SML, the Japanese government sought to improve living conditions for residents of what were termed *dōwa* areas. These were areas inhabited by the *burakumin*, a socially constructed minority population associated with outcast groups in premodern Japan. While the government abolished the premodern status system in 1871, discrimination and prejudice continued against people identified as belonging to these formerly ostracized groups.<sup>1</sup> This exacerbated economic and social issues among *burakumin* communities, resulting in areas characterized by poor infrastructure, inadequate housing, and a lack of access to employment and educational opportunities.<sup>2</sup> Under the SML, most *burakumin* communities became eligible to receive support, and were thus called *dōwa* areas.<sup>3</sup>

From 1969 to 2002, SML policies included the building of improved housing and community centers, provision of job opportunities and support for local industries, implementation of *dōwa* education, and other actions viewed as necessary to overcome the marginalization of these *dōwa* areas. Earlier research into *dōwa* policy in English has been fragmented by sector, examining its effect on education, infrastructure, or its impact at the national level.<sup>4</sup> Neary's book joins comprehensive Japanese-language studies of *dōwa* policies by the likes of Kanai Kōji, Suginozaka Juichi, and Isomura Eiichi.<sup>5</sup> Detailing the policy process through which the elimination of the *buraku* issue (also referred to as the *dōwa* issue) became a state goal, the book offers the first comprehensive exploration of the issue in English. It covers the origins of the SML and *dōwa* policies in prewar *yūwa* (assimilation)

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1 Cangjā 2013, p. 77.

2 Bondy 2015.

3 Teraki 1998.

4 Hawkins 1983; Mizuuchi and Jeon 2010; Bondy 2014; McCormack 2018.

5 See Isomura 1982; Kanai 1991; Suginozaka 2006–2007.

policies, the postwar reemergence of the *buraku* movement, and thirty-three years of policy implementation.

The study points to five themes that help contextualize the origins of *dōwa* policies: the commitment by the Japanese state towards human rights issues, the impact of the “international context” on policymaking, the “domestic context” of Japan as a welfare state, the relations of the national government with local administrations, and the social construction of the *buraku* issue and the resulting “solution” (p. 27). Neary argues that these five factors had a crucial influence on why *dōwa* policies would be actively employed by the Japanese government and who benefited from its procedures and implementation.

The chapters tracing the enactment of SML policies after 1969 unsurprisingly form the core of this book. These look at the implementation of *dōwa* policies at the national and local levels, as well as how policy spending was distributed by the various ministries. Neary focuses his narrative on the development of *dōwa* policies by the advisory councils, the subsequent political and administrative stages through which these were codified, and the fluctuations that occurred as the policies moved from the central government to local administrations prior to actual implementation. Additionally, an examination of the tensions between politicians and civil society groups working on *buraku* issues (and particularly with their leaders), as well as the divisions that existed between these groups, forms another significant feature of the volume.

The chapters repeatedly hark back to the same individuals and locations in their narratives, and thus demonstrate how challenging it is to contextualize the mechanisms behind the *dōwa* policies’ administrative procedures. Throughout the thirty-three years of the SML, the membership of the various councils was in constant flux, and the councils themselves dissolved or changed names, which makes keeping track of the various actors and organizations an extremely complex task.

Throughout, Neary emphasizes the importance of the local level. The laws themselves necessitated the cooperation of those whom they sought to support and “the initiative had to come ‘bottom up’” (p. 7). He lays out three case areas, Osaka, Nara, and Fukuoka, and discusses the reality of the policies. However, beyond providing a few photographs and a discussion of the case of Q city in Fukuoka (pp. 10–13, 191–212), he does not answer the question of how this policy was actually implemented on the ground. As the author notes, it is hard to draw holistic conclusions about the “one thousand local authorities that were involved in devising and then implementing Dōwa Project Programmes” (p. 21), and therefore the book does not dive too deeply into case-by-case implementation narratives (pp. 33, 157).

Providing a streamlined introduction to the issue, Neary enables both experts and those unfamiliar with the *buraku* issue to grasp the range, impact, and effects of the policies, and to realize how fundamental and complex the administrative process for fostering this change was (pp. 16–18). The macro-level approach Neary offers provides firm foundations for further research on the SML, especially at the local level, and to better grasp what changed over the course of thirty-three years of *dōwa* policies.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Origins of the Modern Japanese Bureaucracy*

By Yuichiro Shimizu. Translated by Amin Ghadimi

Bloomsbury Academic / SOAS Studies in Modern and Contemporary Japan, 2019  
288 pages.

Reviewed by Andrew LEVIDIS\*



In *The Origins of the Modern Japanese Bureaucracy*, Yuichiro Shimizu has written a meditation on meritocracy and political power, and an unashamed paean to the bureaucratic elite who forged the modern Japanese nation-state. Using the early-Meiji ideal of *rishshin shusse* or “rising through the world by autonomous will” (p. 2) as his organizing concept, Shimizu explores changing notions of the self and individual success in the Meiji and Taishō eras. The book takes us through a kaleidoscope of institutions, committees, and bureaucratic titles, immersing us in a world of officialdom populated by a rich cast of characters whose lives and careers Shimizu documents sympathetically, and at length. At its heart, this is a work on the relationship between individuals and institutions, between ambition and the systems which enable and curtail it, although the historical contingency of these ideas remains unexamined here.

Positioning the bureaucracy at the center of social and political transformations after the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Shimizu highlights the range of forces that led to the development of constitutional politics. Yet it is the book’s arguments on the temporal experience of Japanese modernization and modernity that are the most controvertible. In a Weberian turn, Shimizu shifts the focus from economic processes and bourgeois order to the agents and institutions of the modern state. His argument begins as follows: the Five Point Charter Oath, which promised “all shall be allowed to pursue their own calling so that there may be no discontent” (p. 23), inaugurated a fundamental break with Tokugawa status society, sweeping aside centuries of restraint to self-development and the maximization of human talent.

This argument is developed over six dense chapters that take in nearly seventy years of nineteenth and early-twentieth century history. Chapters 1 and 2 trace the Tokugawa-Meiji transition. As they razed the offices of the *bakuban* system—shogunate, regency, and chancellorship—Meiji leaders embraced a participatory model of governance guided by public debate (*kōgi*) to win over, and later subordinate, domainal authorities. A meritocratic

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recruitment system (*chōshi seido*) for official appointments was implemented to concentrate human resources into the central government.

To realize the promise of the Five-Point Charter Oath, the fledging Meiji regime developed ambitious plans for education, but initial efforts to cultivate human talent were fraught. The academy quickly became a proxy for tensions over the ethics and scholastic regimen (Western, national, or Chinese) suited to the needs of bureaucratic and political careers. Juxtaposing a series of vignettes with reflections on state and education, Shimizu provides new insights into the process of elite socialization. He documents how distinction and social status based on academic competition were consciously cultivated to foster a cohort of male students welded together by elitism, fraternal camaraderie, and study abroad experiences.

Chapters 3 and 4 serve as a bridge between the early Meiji executive state and the constitutional politics of the Taishō era. The 1870s and 1880s were a period of experimentation as the Meiji regime emerged from crises in 1873 and 1881 transformed: national leadership was consolidated, and a new centralized structure of coordination inaugurated, the centerpiece of which was the Home Ministry (Naimushō) and a nascent cabinet system. To steer “philippic” (p. 112) youth of the 1880s away from the Popular Rights Movement, an examination-based probationary employment system (*shiho seido*) was inaugurated, expanding channels for youthful aspirants to the highest posts in government. Finally, a Prussian-style constitutional monarchy (*rikken kunshu sei*) was adopted to ensure the supremacy of the executive.

In chapters 5 and 6, Shimizu situates the emergence of a new generation of administrative officials, known as examination bureaucrats, within the advance of party government. Through the Keien era (1901–1913) of alternating cabinets organized under the leadership of Saionji Kinmochi or Katsura Tarō, political parties extended their influence into the central ministries, developing working relationships with the nonparty elite, most consequentially the House of Peers and senior statesmen (*genrō*). Likewise, high officials with political aspirations informally affiliated with mainstream parties (Seiyūkai or Dōshikai, later Kenseikai and Minseitō) accelerating the politicization of state officialdom. Unlike their oligarchic rivals, the examination bureaucrats viewed parties as integral to the proper functioning of the Meiji constitutional order: exam bureaucrats made their peace with the parties to weaken restoration officials’ cliques (*hanbatsu*), and used party affiliation to limit partisan influence over personnel decisions and ministerial affairs.

*The Origins of the Modern Japanese Bureaucracy* ends inconclusively in the years around World War I as *risshin shusse* ebbed into social stratification and the bureaucracy hardened into a new hierarchy based on performance in the higher civil service examination, judicious marriage, and administrative specialization. It is a strange terminus, more so when one considers the tremendous transformations in outlook and relationship between parties and bureaucracy with passage of the manhood suffrage act in 1925. Yet, it is precisely the complexities and ambivalences of the 1920s that raise important questions about the author’s assumptions and some of his conclusions.

My principal objections to Shimizu’s work center on two points: transcendentalism (*chōzenshugi*) and empire. In a suggestive conclusion, Shimizu contends the decline of party influence in the 1930s was the result of “bureaucrats who lost sight of the lessons of Meiji Japan” (p. 239). Beyond the obvious objections, this perspective takes for granted the notion



that parties are a necessary component of constitutional politics. In late nineteenth-century Japan, the ambivalent attitudes held by oligarchic politicians around Prince Yamagata Aritomo towards parties reflected a view of empire, constitutionalism, and faction in which the “scourge of partisanship” (p. 238) was damaging to government. Politically, these men adhered to a transcendentalist position which held political life could develop without parties, and government should remain neutral and above private interests. In his failure to take this antiparty position seriously, Shimizu underestimates the grip a refurbished transcendentalism had on bureaucratic thought and conservative ideologies into the 1920s and 1930s. When Hoshino Naoki, who would become the chief civilian administrator of Manchukuo, witnessed the burning of pro-Katsura newspapers during the Taishō crisis in 1912, what he saw was not a new era of party government, but how extreme partisanship can degenerate into violent strife and disorder (p. 226).

The Meiji regime fostered notions of honor, the spirit of competition, and a desire for personal preeminence. These produced not just a constitutional state, but a powerful empire. In conflating personal with national ambition, Shimizu seeks to avoid uncomfortable questions about the relationship between empire and the institutions and ideologies of bureaucracy. Empire is not so easily banished, however. We catch glimpses of it in oblique discussions of the popularity of courses on colonial governance at the imperial universities (p. 210); or in reference to elite students eager to depart the metropolitan core and enter the government-generals of Korea and Taiwan. Yet the author never really comes to grips with the role these imperial domains played as a testing ground for modern conceptions of governance. Nor does he seriously consider colonial institutions such as the South Manchuria Railway Company as formative sites for training elite bureaucrats and researchers, many of whom went on to play major roles in the wartime empire and post-1945 Japanese state. Finally, Shimizu makes no effort to illustrate how development of the modern bureaucracy was enmeshed in various geopolitical reorientations conditioned by two major wars (Sino-Japanese, Russo-Japanese).

Yuichiro Shimizu is a gifted writer and the translation by Amin Ghadimi is elegant, lucidly rendered, and skillfully sustained. Despite my reservations, *The Origins of the Modern Japanese Bureaucracy* is a sophisticated piece of historical research that recasts key questions about the bureaucracy and constitutional politics in Meiji and Taishō Japan. It is a work which will be of undoubted interest to historians of political and intellectual history, one which forces us to reckon anew with meritocracy in modern Japanese history.

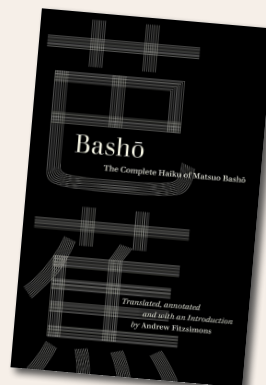
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Bashō: The Complete Haiku of Matsuo Bashō*

Translated, Annotated and with an Introduction by Andrew Fitzsimons

University of California Press, 2022  
472 pages.

Reviewed by Anthony MARCOFF\*



In Zen they say “everything in the world is the cosmic flowering of emptiness.” Out of the emptiness, the world. Out of the world, the extraordinary haiku of Bashō—now made accessible in this new translation by Andrew Fitzsimons. He presents us with Zen and nature and humanity and poetry, the spirit of the earth and of Japan. In this book Fitzsimons gives us nine hundred and eighty haiku by Bashō, many with headnotes from Bashō’s own writings, and annotated to provide their cultural and historical background. There is also a Bashō chronology, a useful glossary providing interpretations of terms, and various indices.

Approaching any new translation, I ask, what will the translator offer that is new, and how will they create, in the words of Borges, their own precursors? I think of previous translations, such as Aitken’s Zen erudition and panache or Reichhold’s informed artistry.<sup>1</sup> I have known the Zen-infused versions of Blyth and Stryk.<sup>2</sup> And I remember Barnhill’s clarity and scholarship, and the care and enthusiasm of Yuasa and Keene.<sup>3</sup>

Fitzsimons draws on “the authoritative edition” (p. xxxiv) of *Bashō Kushū* by Kon Eizō.<sup>4</sup> Fitzsimons writes, “In this translation I have attempted to create an English true to the movement and manner of saying of Bashō’s poems.” His aim is “to bring us closer to . . . Bashō” (p. xliii). He is the first translator to stay with the on-structure of 5-7-5, and to follow any deviation by Bashō, keeping to the exact on-count of the original. This is the framework on which Fitzsimons hangs his flair. It is a portrait of a life too, Bashō the man, “the see-er” rather than “the seer,” not just the haiku saint and Shinto deity but a real man who weathered the wild. Fitzsimons tries to capture the dialogue between past and present.

I tend to see Bashō’s poems as “emanations” (Matisse), or as “realizations” (Cezanne), and I think these terms are helpful too in defining Fitzsimons’s approach. These translations

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1 Aitken 1978; Reichhold 2008.

2 Blyth 1952; Blyth 1994; Stryk 1985.

3 Barnhill 2004; Barnhill 2005; Yuasa 1966; Keene 1996.

4 Kon 1982.

have, by and large, a naturalness to them, and they hint at those dimensions that make Bashō a great poet, even as he wrote about the mundane and the ordinary, and outcasts and misfits. Although not a scholar of classical Japanese, Fitzsimons stays faithful to the spirit of the original, and his versions are accomplished, reliable, stimulating, thoroughgoing, and evocative. They have a freshness to them. They convey the locomotive power of the haiku in quiet, considered essence. Fitzsimons, who is chiefly interested in writing poetry, also tries “to give a sense in English of the puns, word games and sound values of the source poems” (p. xxxv), for example:

The *turbulent* sea  
 Unfurling over Sado  
 the *River* of Stars

*arumi ya / Sado ni yokotau / Amanogawa* (p. 201)

There are some fine renditions of the haiku:

Hear the quietness  
 Entering into the rocks  
 cicada refrain (p. 194)

Compared to others, Fitzsimons uses gentler, less striking language, adopting “entering” instead of Barnhill’s “penetrating” or Reichhold’s “piercing.” And then he ends with the word “refrain.” Why? Why not “voice,” or even “sound”? I think that Fitzsimons’s use of “refrain” brings to the poem all the cultural layers of resonance and complexity that exist in the Japanese, the “vertical axis” of Shirane.<sup>5</sup> So the poem he provides is less strident, and sings quietly with allusion.

Another famous poem is expressed:

Rainy season rains  
 leaving undimmed the brightness  
 of the Hall of Light

*samidare no / furinokoshite ya / Hikaridō* (p. 191)

I like this version very much. The word “undimmed” is perfect, and Fitzsimons has wisely kept “Hall of Light” where Keene gives us “Shining hall of Gold,” and Yuasa offers “This Gold Chapel.” Reichhold has both gold and light. Fitzsimons also points out that “furi” can “also refer to the passing of time: more than five hundred years has passed since the completion of the Hikaridō.”

Regarding cherry blossoms, Reichhold has:

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<sup>5</sup> Shirane 1998, p. 26.

many various  
things come to mind  
cherry blossoms<sup>6</sup>

But it is Aitken (and also Barnhill) who foreshadows Fitzsimons:

How many, many things,  
They bring to mind –  
Cherry blossoms!<sup>7</sup>

Fitzsimons offers the same kind of repetition with:

So so many things  
    open in the memory  
        the blossoms again (p. 139)

It is plain language, workmanlike, unassuming, and it emphasizes the emotion in the poem, which is more stressed than in either Stryk or Reichhold.

In the famous “summer grasses” haiku, whereas Reichhold writes:

summer grass  
the only remains of soldiers’  
dreams<sup>8</sup>

Fitzsimons does away with “dreams” (which Barnhill and Aitken also favor), and offers “aftermath,” with:

The summer grasses  
    For warriors of the past  
        glory’s aftermath (p. 191)

The word “aftermath” occurs in Keene too, and may evoke those cultural dimensions suggested earlier in “refrain.”<sup>9</sup>

One version that has touches of brilliance and traces of dreams:

A lone butterfly  
    aflutter over a field  
        over its shadow (p. 97)

This is real poetry and it chimes with Tanizaki’s “In Praise of Shadows.”

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<sup>6</sup> Reichhold 2008, p. 297.

<sup>7</sup> Aitken 1978, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> Reichhold 2008, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> Keene 1996, p. 87.

I was not always so convinced. In Fitzsimons's

A mist-rain in Fall  
 A no-sign-of-Fuji day  
 Glamoured and gladdened (p. 72)

I found the second line light-hearted and playful (and it recalls Aitken's "Fuji can't see day!"), but the third line for me seems ponderous, awkward, less successful than other versions.

But I welcome this new edition of Bashō translations. It is worldly, vital, scholarly, dynamic, and painstaking. Sometimes it is superbly poetic. These translations let in light and space and strike me as authentic, Zen-like, with wonderful echoes. They let the genius of Bashō shine through. They bring to our attention the scrutiny of the moment, in what George Steiner called "poem into poem." Through them we can recognize how Bashō expressed "the hidden breath of things" (Franz Marc), and wrote the hymn and hallelujah of the world, in the miniatures of infinity, and the reality of dreams.

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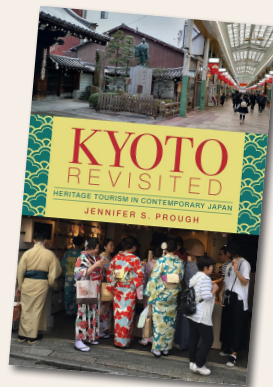
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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Kyoto Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Contemporary Japan*

By Jennifer S. Prough

University of Hawai'i Press, 2022  
240 pages.



Reviewed by Daniel MILNE\*

Though long a prime destination for domestic tourists, the 2010s saw Kyoto explode onto the international tourism scene. In 2018, 4.5 million international visitors stayed in Kyoto, a stunning increase of almost tenfold from the half million of 2011.<sup>1</sup> While welcomed by Kyoto's cash-strapped government and its tourism industry, this led to complaints of overtourism. Growth then came to a crashing halt with the COVID pandemic. With exemplary timing, Jennifer Prough's new book, *Kyoto Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Contemporary Japan*, explores many of these changes by analyzing uses of heritage in Kyoto tourism prior to and during this tumultuous period.

Prough applies theories regarding changing trends in modern tourism, enabling us to both better understand Kyoto's local transformations and see them as part of broader, international trends. Primarily drawing on fieldwork, interviews, and the analysis of policy documents, Prough traces shifts in Kyoto's tourism from a mass "seeing" tourism of the 1960s, to the more independent "encounter"-centered forms from the 1990s, and on to "experience" tourism fostered by online social networking services. In particular, Prough focuses on theories of "encounter" and "experience" tourism to understand trends in contemporary Kyoto: specifically these include the seasonal events examined in chapter 3 in which visitors "experience Kyoto as both new and old" (p. 38); historical contents tourism focused on Sakamoto Ryōma that cultivates tourists' personal encounters with heritage in chapter 4; and, in chapter 5, the "embodied experience (*taiken*) of walking in Kyoto in kimono" (p. 39).<sup>2</sup>

As indicated by the title, the book's primary focus is the role of heritage in contemporary tourism. Heritage here refers not to how the past is preserved but how it is represented, commodified, and consumed. As a "quintessential urban heritage tourism destination," explains Prough, the book's case studies "demonstrate the ways that heritage is

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1 Kyoto City Industry and Tourism Office 2021.

2 Chapter 4 in particular draws on Philip Seaton's work on contents tourism, including that related to the *bakumatsu* era; see Seaton 2014.

complex—at once material and ethereal, nostalgic and personal, national and international” (p. 3). Specifically, the book explores the utilization of traditional Kyoto in city tourism plans and neighborhood revitalization projects (chapter 2), the use of premodern aesthetics in promoting off-season events (chapter 3), personal encounters with the past cultivated through heritage tourism to Sakamoto Ryōma-related sites (chapter 4), and how heritage is embodied in kimono tourism (chapter 5).

The book’s strength lies in its focus on contemporary trends. For example, Prough’s analysis of Kyoto City policy over the last decade highlights the complex relationship between three key stakeholders: a city government keen to increase tax revenue; tourists hoping to encounter Japan, the city’s culture, and welcoming hosts; and locals experiencing a mixture of pride, inflated expectations regarding economic benefits, and fears for overtourism. Another example is Prough’s explanation of kimono tourism as being motivated by tourists’ desire to physically embody, and thus experience, Japanese culture by walking in kimono around the cobbled lanes of Kyoto’s preserved districts. These are just two of multiple interrelated angles through which the book demonstrates the complex workings and utilization of heritage in Kyoto today, and, alongside work by Christoph Brumann and Alice Tseng, contributes to English-language scholarship on Kyoto’s urban heritage.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most important contribution of *Kyoto Revisited*, however, is that while there is work on Kyoto tourism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (for example, research by Kudō Yasuko and Riichi Endō), and on the uses of heritage in Kyoto’s modern development (such as Itō Yukio, and Takagi Hiroshi), this is the first full-length book to examine heritage tourism in twenty-first century Kyoto.<sup>4</sup> Prough’s contemporary lens places postwar developments in the city’s tourism trends in a meaningful sequence, pioneers exploration of experiential tourism in Kyoto, and points to the contemporary significance of more historically-focused studies of Kyoto heritage.

While this book will no doubt become a key text on the topic in English, it is not without shortcomings. First, the diversity of heritage examples covered is a strength but also at times a weakness of the book. Some chapters lack depth of evidence and there is little discussion of differences in tourist types, so that they depict Kyoto’s heritage as essentially uniform for all tourists. For example, interviews could have helped explain why kimono wearing—and the heritage it represents—is especially popular among East Asian tourists; while any estimate of the number of Ryōma-inspired tourists to sites such as the Ryozen Museum of History and Gokoku Shrine would have shown that this is a very niche domestic tourist market. Second, the focus of the book is lost when it strays from contemporary discussions into premodern history. For example, the explanation of Edo-period *meisho* as historical precedents for today’s tourist sites overlooks modern changes, while the ten pages devoted to Heian-period literature, poetry, and traditional gardens distracts from the book’s contemporary focus. Lastly, Prough makes little use of the wealth of previous research about modern Kyoto, especially that in Japanese. Greater awareness regarding arguments over the modern creation of the Heian period as being Kyoto’s golden age, for example, would have enabled the author to take a more critical perspective in the section on traditional aesthetics.

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3 Brumann 2012; Tseng 2018.

4 All of these are prolific, but for instance Kudō 2008; Endō 2018; Itō 2010; and Takagi 2006.



It would also have strengthened Prough's argument that the city's heritage is the product of constant selection, reinterpretation, and recreation.<sup>5</sup>

Considering the long history of tourism to Kyoto, the diverse examples of heritage covered, the contemporary focus, and the fact that fieldwork on this topic was essentially impossible for two years, these drawbacks are understandable and generally do not hinder the book's achievements as a pioneering work in English on tourism and heritage in contemporary Kyoto. *Kyoto Revisited* illustrates that Kyoto is a prime case study for future research in a range of areas, including global tourism, heritage tourism, over-tourism, urban studies, cultural representation, and contemporary Japanese and regional history.

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5 On modern developments in ideas of the "old capitals" of Kyoto and Nara, see Takagi 2006.

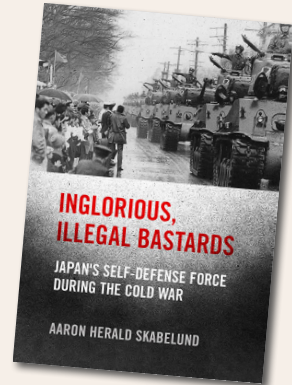
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Inglorious, Illegal Bastards: Japan's Self-Defense Force during the Cold War*

By Aaron Herald Skabelund

Cornell University Press, 2022  
348 pages.

Reviewed by Garren MULLOY\*



This volume boldly addresses in its title the broad disdain Japanese society displayed towards the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) during the Cold War and charts the efforts the JSDF made to gain legitimacy and respect. This may remind readers of Eldridge and Midford's excellent book on the Ground SDF (GSDF) "search for legitimacy," but both works illustrate the rich potential for diverse approaches and fine scholars to produce distinctly valuable contributions.<sup>1</sup> Skabelund's book presents the research of a fine-grain historian, one who has conducted extensive fieldwork over two decades examining JSDF identity, integration, (in)visibility, and organization.

The book highlights four primary research aims. The first is to examine "concepts of military-social integration and Cold War defense identity" for a broader understanding of Cold War Japan (p. 23). The second expands elite-focus research beyond the Yoshida group, particularly examining the influence of Hayashi Keizō and Maki Tomoo, the respective founding heads of the *Keisatsu Yobitai* (the Police Reserve Force, or PRF) and National Defense Academy (NDA). Third, non-elite contributions to force development are recognized, including retired members and associations. The fourth point concerns JSDF organization, including the development of force culture, rules and standards, how they shaped defense roles, and how the forces contributed "economically and socially in myriad ways to the welfare of the people they pledged to serve" (p. 24).

The chapter structure addresses these four aspects through salient periods, institutions, and issues related to the integration and identity of the JSDF. These include the PRF, the NDA, the GSDF in Hokkaido, public representation of the Anpo demonstrations, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the Mishima Incident, and the "Return of the 'Japanese Army' to Okinawa" (p. 203). The author is not presenting a comprehensive force history, but rather offers a series of impressions into the impact the forces had upon Japanese society, and how the forces were in turn shaped by service.

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<sup>1</sup> Eldridge and Midford 2017.

The attention to elites investigates the selection of personnel, the influence of U.S. advisors, and elite ability to forge new liberal, democratic identities and norms that were also patriotic and conservative, cogently expressed in the 1961 *Jieikan no kokorogamae* statement of JSDF ethics that constituted Maki's enduring legacy. The treatment of masculinity is interesting, for the author frequently references PRF/JSDF masculine-deficit concerns as sources of stress, and highlights the significant efforts that were made to create powerful masculine institutional traits. These echoed imperial tenets, reflected the bias towards rural recruitment, and contrasted with the comparisons frequently made between the JSDF and "salarymen," yet also involved efforts to recruit and cultivate the support of women. This seeming contradiction also engages with the Mishima Incident and his projection of "hypermasculinity" (p. 192).

There are insights into JSDF society, including NDA cadets' personal lives and fondness for social dance, which provoked critique from both the right and left wing, including from Ōe Kenzaburō. There are descriptions of nuanced protests against the PRF/JSDF in Hokkaido welcoming the economic benefits while decrying rearmament, the role of matchmakers for troops, defense exhibitions, and post-retirement assistance to settle in Hokkaido. The generally warm feelings engendered in Hokkaido contrast with anti-JSDF protests in Okinawa from 1972, and their doubly unfortunate associations with U.S. and imperial military occupations. JSDF efforts to navigate Okinawan sensitivities is a particularly valuable contribution to the field in English; these included engaging with critical local media and officials despite alarming levels of discrimination against troops and their families.

One possible contention involves references to the PRF as "the country's reconstituted military" omitting prior Japanese requests to SCAP for increased police forces, as French has detailed (p. 27).<sup>2</sup> However, the author provides telling evidence from PRF members. One member's complaint that, "It wasn't quite a police force, nor was it quite an army. It was the incomplete quality that made me sick," emphasizes the reserve's indistinct nature (p. 50). This non-elite participant viewpoint provides rich chapter content, not least providing insight into the emotional aspects of service and how force personnel were received by contemporary society. JSDF in-house newspapers and comic strips provide levels of institutional insight rarely seen, and there is valuable evidence of recruit motivation, and the roles of local officials, educators, and companies in recruitment drives.

The seven-page epilogue attempts to draw lessons from the period for the present but some may wish for a more comprehensive conclusion to draw together the wealth of chapter content and provide greater analytical synergy between aspects of the different cases examined. The extensive notation is certainly an area for scholarly exploitation, but this book has broader appeal for those interested in Japanese society during the Cold War and attitudes towards the armed forces.

Readers should not expect another detailed chronological JSDF history.<sup>3</sup> There are other works in English that focus on JSDF gender, imperial legacy, and legitimacy, issues at the heart of Skabelund's volume, but this is a valuable fine-grain, multi-level historical

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2 French 2014.

3 Mulloy 2021.

examination of many pertinent issues of Japan's Cold War defense history.<sup>4</sup> There are minor rank-nomenclature issues, some may bemoan the GSDF focus, the selection of extreme locations, and particular examples, but there is no equivalent work for its successful execution of historical research into JSDF identity, integration, (in)visibility, and organization, and thereby connecting with broader social, cultural, and political studies within and beyond the target period. It cannot provide the answer to every question regarding the JSDF but can provide unparalleled insight into the early years of the forces and their society.

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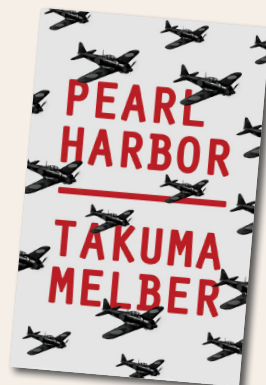
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Pearl Harbor: Japan's Attack and America's Entry into World War II*

By Takuma Melber. Translated by Nick Somers

Polity Press, 2020  
220 pages.

Reviewed by Sherzod MUMINOV\*



In his celebrated history of how Europe went to World War I, Christopher Clark sets out to “illuminate the journeys travelled by the key decision-makers” who “walked towards danger in watchful, calculated steps” but still managed to “sleepwalk” into the conflict as their actions made the war inevitable.<sup>1</sup> Takuma Melber’s shorter account of the attack on Pearl Harbor does not use the verb “sleepwalk” to describe the events that brought the United States into World War II. The shocking audacity of the attack makes any reference to the Japanese lethargically slipping into world war ill-suited (although the sleeping metaphor seems to have worked for Americans, as the title of Gordon W. Prange’s now classic account of Pearl Harbor, *At Dawn We Slept*, suggests).<sup>2</sup> While Japan in Melber’s account does not sleepwalk into the Pacific War it certainly paints itself into a corner from which it could not escape without losing face before its stubborn counterpart, the United States.

Following a prologue that vividly conveys the pilot’s eye view of Pearl Harbor early on the morning of the attack, the book initially recounts the bilateral negotiations that ultimately failed to avert war, despite the efforts of diplomats on both sides. This chapter is the longest, occupying a third of the book’s total length, but it does not feel long-winded or dense. Melber skillfully narrates the gulf between the positions of the two powers and the diplomatic efforts—carried out for Japan by Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburō and the Secretary of State Cordell Hull for the United States—to bridge them. Using memoirs, diplomatic correspondence, MAGIC intercepts, and other sources, the chapter effectively distills detailed historical knowledge into a tight narrative that might occasionally feel rushed for a nonspecialist reader (who can, nevertheless, find books for further reading in the Select Bibliography on pp. 209–212). Crammed full of detail, the chapter sets the scene for the event at the center of the book, but also highlights the unbridgeable differences in thinking between Japan’s military leaders and diplomats (as well as the pressure the former

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1 Clark 2013, pp. xxviii, xxvii.

2 Prange 1991.

put on the latter), the resolve with which Japanese negotiators pursued a diplomatic solution until the last possible moment, and the sense of duty that guided Japanese leaders to pursue war even when they were personally opposed to it.

This age-old conflict between personal beliefs and a sense of duty is clear in the case of the mastermind behind the attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. Chapter 2 details how Yamamoto, despite his opposition to war against the United States, devised the daring plan of attack initially called “Operation Hawaii.” Yamamoto believed that Japan had no chance against the U.S. in a protracted war and thus called for a surprise attack that would knock out the U.S. Pacific Fleet in one blow. Despite opposition, Yamamoto stuck to this plan, combining his knowledge and ingenuity with the skillful selection of able personnel to carry out the attack. Melber does a good job detailing these deliberations, and provides memorable snapshots of some of the key personalities.

These characters take center stage in chapter 3. This chapter is perhaps the most readable; full of suspense, it details the circumstances on the ground as well as the emotions of the pilots, sailors, and soldiers on the mission, their determination to die for a greater cause. But it is not solely about the Japanese attackers; Melber’s research is extensive and includes details of failures on the American side. His narrative takes the reader across the northern Pacific on board the Japanese naval “mobile force” (*kidō butai*), into the skies above the Hawaiian island of Oahu on a clear December morning, and into the cockpits of Japanese warplanes as they descended on the U.S. Pacific Fleet in two waves. They wreaked havoc on the U.S. battleships moored in formation before returning, mostly unscathed, to the aircraft carriers of the mobile force and hastily leaving the area.

Finally, chapter 4 and an epilogue critically analyze the aftermath of the attack, including the hasty retreat that meant the Japanese failed to make the most of the shock created by the first wave of the attack. This was due to their mistaken belief that the attack on Pearl Harbor had been a resounding success, even though the Japanese failed to destroy the aircraft carriers absent from Pearl Harbor, and their determination to preserve Japan’s precious fleet and aircraft from possible pursuit and retaliation.

As the above summary reveals, *Pearl Harbor* has many merits. First, while the cover suggests the book only deals with Pearl Harbor itself, it combines an account of the attack with a clear-eyed analysis of the diplomatic horse trading and inner workings of Japan’s wartime government. This is not purely a military history but one that interweaves diplomatic history into a vivid account of the battle.

Second, *Pearl Harbor* manages to condense major historic events—from tenacious diplomatic exchanges to fast-moving military maneuvers—into effective, economical prose. Tight prose that packs good detail without straying from a taut storyline is difficult to achieve, as many a professional historian will testify. Finally, the book skillfully addresses the self-serving interpretations and conspiracy theories that have multiplied over ensuing decades, showing the failure of the attack to incapacitate the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

If there is one thing that a fastidious reader might find wanting about this book, it is that it has a somewhat narrow scope in the sense that it requires a good understanding of the events of the period and the state of Japanese politics and society in the 1930s–1940s to fully comprehend the complexity of events described in a short volume. Nevertheless, *Pearl Harbor* serves as the most up-to-date, well-researched, and accessible account of the event for the broadest possible readership.

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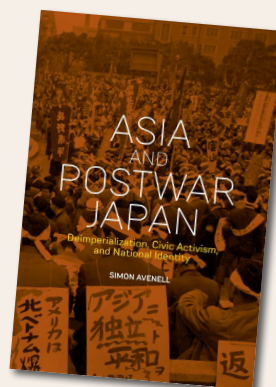
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Asia and Postwar Japan: Deimperialization, Civic Activism, and National Identity*

By Simon Avenell

Harvard University Press, 2022  
450 pages.

Reviewed by Akihiro OGAWA\*



This book directly addresses an important aspect that has been missing in the existing civil society scholarship in Japan. Thus far, scholars have been building up solid research on civic activism in postwar Japan. However, the focus was primarily and exclusively on Japan but not on Asia. Civic activism led by the Japanese progressives, that is, leftist intellectuals and civic activists, has been expanding in the postwar period beyond the national border. According to Avenell, one of the key points in the book is about Japanese “civic activism with, in, and for other Asians” (p. 373).

Avenell locates such civic activism in what he calls “Japan’s Asia problem” (p. 3), which accompanies self-reflexive projects for deimperialization led by progressives. It began by reconnecting Japan and Asia after Japan propagated the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere and faced defeat in World War II. The book points out the Japanese progressives’ attempts to overcome deeply engrained biases toward the region as well as their continual efforts to forge effective new partnerships and regional imaginaries in Asia. The progressives have indeed repositioned Asia as “a symbolic geography, a site of transgression, a space of activism, and ultimately an aporia of identity and the source of a new politics of hope” (p. 3).

As a core argument of this book, Avenell claims that “we need to reposition the issue of Japanese war responsibility and memory in the longer history of Japanese progressive thinking about, and engagement with, Asia” (p. 18). He further states that, “the encounter with the Asia problem and deimperialization also unfolded as a productive and transformative journey (a method, perhaps) pointing beyond the *telos* of one region and national redemption toward a new language and a new self-understanding (p. 375, emphasis in the original).

To discuss Japan’s Asia problem, Avenell charts six phases of the historical transformation of civic activism from 1945 through the early decades of the twenty-first century as follows: (1) the early postwar period; (2) the 1960s’ movements in collaboration with ethnic Koreans; (3) the anti-Vietnam War movement led by Oda Makoto, Honda

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Katsuichi, and others; (4) new solidarity movements in the 1970s; (5) the emergence of international NGOs; and (6) post-bubble Japan.

I enjoyed reading the stories on the new solidarity movements and international NGOs in the 1970s and 1980s, when Japanese intellectuals and activists shifted their focus to Asia in a dynamic manner, thereby leading to productive new thinking about and involvement in Asia. These narratives were seldom discussed as student-led public protests in the 1960s became a socially stigmatized activity following which the student movement was consumed by internal schisms and conflicts.

While Japanese businesses expanded in Asia, Japan simultaneously saw the establishment of a series of new nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that would be active in Asia and collaborate with fellow Asians. The NGOs included Shapla Neer (Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support) founded in 1972, the Pacific Asia Resource Center set up in 1973, the Japan International Volunteer Center in 1980, and Peace Boat, incorporated in 1983. These organizations have been deeply committed to strengthening democratic institutions in Asian countries, even contributing to Japan's Track II diplomacy. At present, this kind of civic activism plays an important role in what Avenell calls "grassroots regionalization," which involves transnational interconnectivity and activism that contributes to the creation of regional civil societies and public spheres within and across Asia.<sup>1</sup>

The detailed investigation of primary Japanese sources and documentation is a great accomplishment that Avenell has achieved through this book. What he has presented is a solid process of the Japanese progressives' engagement with fellow Asians in creating a transnational grassroots alliance, which significantly influenced the subsequent formation of civil society in Japan with the institutionalization of non-profit organizations (NPOs) in the late 1990s. Consequently, society saw the establishment of thousands of new civic groups in the following decades. Japanese civil society has been changing the nature of its activities from merely objecting against the existing political economy to proposing alternatives. This is the legacy of Japan's civic activism since the 1970s.

Civil society has been shaping new terms of social and political debate and framing issues, defining problems, and influencing agendas. The book documents the history of civil society to regionalizing actual problems in the process of solidarity-making in Asia. However, I believe that our civil society project has not yet been completed. Issues on diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as those involving women and gender equality, persons with disability, LGBTQIA+, and indigeneity have not yet been fully addressed. Contemporary scholars like us could be more involved with these issues, as scholars in the previous generations were. In so doing, the existing civil society scholarship on Japan itself could be enhanced. It is also crucial that we ensure that these issues are regionalized across Asia and look to develop another transnational solidarity movement for bringing about the necessary changes, as was done in the past.

I consider this book by Avenell a welcome extension of Victor Koschmann's *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*.<sup>2</sup> As Avenell mentions, this book is "an inquiry into the

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1 On grassroots regionalization, see Avenell 2017; Avenell and Ogawa 2021.

2 Koschmann 1996.

historical dynamics of transformation in thought and activism” (p. 5), and constitutes a long-awaited addition to the field of intellectual history.

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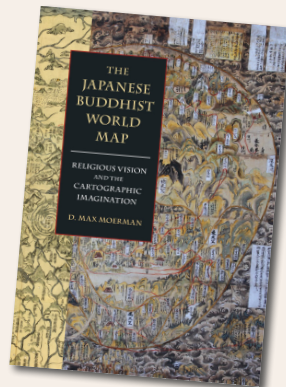
## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Japanese Buddhist World Map: Religious Vision and the Cartographic Imagination*

By D. Max Moerman

University of Hawai'i Press, 2022  
368 pages.

Reviewed by Elke PAPELITZKY\*



In *The Japanese Buddhist World Map*, D. Max Moerman covers half a millennium of Japanese Buddhist mapmaking practices, introducing the reader to a vast number of artifacts and the contexts of their production. Chapter 1 introduces the centerpiece of the book, the earliest extant Japanese Buddhist world map, a fourteenth-century map known as *Gotenjiku zu* 五天竺図. Moerman describes the contents of the map, both in terms of its geographical extent as well as the many annotations on the map. Central to the map is the itinerary of the Chinese monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), marked as a red line.

In chapter 2, Moerman focuses our attention on two landmasses shown on the *Gotenjiku zu* that are unrelated to Xuanzang and his journey: Japan, which appears in the upper right corner of the map; and Mount Potalaka, a mountain paradise, the geography of which merges with the actual pilgrimage site of Putuoshan 普陀山 (Zhejiang, China), well known in Japan at the time. Their addition shows how Japanese mapmakers transformed the geography of Xuanzang in order to situate themselves in the Buddhist world it represented, and emphasizes that the *Gotenjiku zu* is an object comprised of multiple temporal layers.

Chapter 3 further contextualizes the temporality of the *Gotenjiku zu* by tracing its reproduction over time. Replicas would be repeatedly created down to the late nineteenth century, and Moerman identifies thirteen later versions of the *Gotenjiku zu*. Eleven of them are reproduced in the book, allowing the reader to easily follow Moerman's argument. Moerman contextualizes these later versions, highlighting the ways in which they correspond with and differ from each other, not only in terms of the map's text and shape of its landmasses, but also in its material and artistic aspects.

Chapter 4 examines how Buddhist maps interacted with other modes of mapping the world during the Tokugawa period, showing how different world views—Buddhist and Renaissance European—were able to coexist. By the early eighteenth century, Buddhist world maps would also transform the shape of the continent and start to represent Europe in the upper left margin. These representations drew from a variety of sources, including

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written texts and Japanese world maps like the *Bankoku sōzu* 萬國總圖 (first printed in 1645).

Chapter 5 continues the discussion of maps drawing from multiple sources by looking at the print production of such maps, focusing on the 1710 printed world map made by the monk Hōtan 鳳潭 (1659–1738). Like the manuscript maps discussed in the previous chapter, Hōtan’s map extends the extent of the mapped world, but goes one step further by representing the Americas. Moerman again carefully traces the multitude of sources utilized to compile the map, before concluding with a discussion of smaller eighteenth- and nineteenth-century replicas of Hōtan’s map.

In chapter 6, Moerman examines late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century Buddhist cosmology. The nineteenth century saw the construction of mechanical models to illustrate the Buddhist view of the earth. These models aimed to bring astronomical observations in line with a Buddhist worldview. Moerman convincingly argues that the Buddhist scholar-monks who produced these models were not “antiscience” but that they took part in a “self-consciously contemporary discourse articulated through the latest forms of technical knowledge” (p. 276). The conclusion continues the history of the discussion regarding Buddhist world views into the Meiji period.

*The Japanese Buddhist World Map* is well edited, although some minor issues still creep in. In some instances, for example, the *Bankoku sōzu* is referred to as the *Bankokuzu* (pp. 173, 199), the title of another map (the index correctly disambiguates the two). The book is also amply illustrated and fully printed in color, making it easy to follow Moerman’s arguments. Previously, Buddhist maps were known only cursorily (especially in the English-language literature), primarily through a short article published already over half a century ago.<sup>1</sup> With this in-depth examination, Moerman greatly expands our knowledge and brings to light a wealth of new material.

The value of Moerman’s study is not restricted to its wealth of sources, for his approach to examining East Asian maps is refreshing and can serve as the model not only for the study of Buddhist maps but for considering East Asian mapping practices more generally. He does not attempt to measure Buddhist world maps against some “ideal of cartography.”<sup>2</sup> Instead, he argues that Buddhist world maps “present a challenge to positivist models of historical change, in which earlier forms of knowledge and modes of representation are assumed to be abandoned or refined with advance of scholarly and scientific accuracy” (p. 6). Various ways of mapping the world coexisted, or as Moerman puts it, “Cartographic pluralism was no mere anomaly; it was the norm” (p. 202). Instead of dismissing maps resembling previous models as simply copies, he carefully reconstructs the background to each artifact. Moerman shows that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century world maps on screens “embodied a level of invention and experimentation far beyond any simple notion of cartographic reproduction” (p. 145). This applies not only to these screens, but to most of the maps examined in this study. Moerman’s careful consideration of the diverse and global source material leads him to conclude that Buddhist world maps are complex, multilayered objects.

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1 Muroga and Unno 1962.

2 Edney 2019.

Thanks to its innovative methodology and the wealth of new material it introduces, Moerman's book is a welcome addition to the literature. Beautifully written, *The Japanese Buddhist World Map* is a must-read for anybody interested in the history of Edo-period Japan and in the history of (not just Japanese) mapmaking practices and science.

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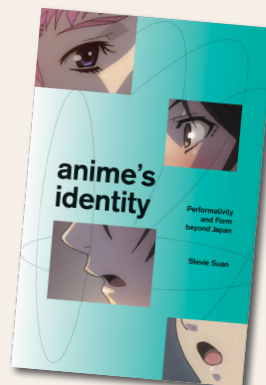
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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Anime's Identity: Performativity and Form beyond Japan*

By Stevie Suan

University of Minnesota Press, 2021  
384 pages, 60 b&w photos.



Reviewed by Marco PELLITTERI\*

Stevie Suan's monograph is an elegantly written work that develops ideas initially set out in the author's earlier 2013 book, PhD dissertation, and subsequent articles. *Anime's Identity* offers a discussion of that enormous subset of animation created in Japan called anime, details their formal characteristics, and sets out Suan's idiosyncratic vision of them as an iridescent, versicolored, almost Schrödingerian object that may be seen as either Japanese or not Japanese, depending on the point of observation and the features of the medium that are stressed.

The book's introduction is a nice piece of scholarship and reveals Suan's approach to anime. The indeterminacy of the author's stance, though, is already apparent here in the ecumenical and undecided attitude displayed towards anime as cultural form and media genre. Ecumenical because it seems to give equal weight to a series of ideas in mutual contradiction; and undecided because it does not provide readers with clearer guidance of what anime should be framed as being.

In the first chapter Suan deconstructs some of the tensions between what he calls "transnational networks" and the implications of nation-states possessing closed borders. Presaging the author's attention to the notion of *trans*-national in the following chapters, here the focus is on the *inter*-national. However, the book's efforts at "defining anime" within the international (pp. 69–75) are restricted, in that the author overwhelmingly invokes scholars from North America, bypassing the rich debate on anime—theoretical, operational, cultural, semantic—and its features that has been going on elsewhere for decades. This reveals a consistent shortcoming of the book, a certain narrowness of the source base being used to evidence global anime.

Chapter 2 draws on Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to offer a study of *Shirobako* (2014–2015). Suan uses the concept of "anime's media mix"—an all-Japanese approach to media exploitation based on the multi-planar coexistence of a franchise's characters in different commercial manifestations—to discuss this concept in connection with

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international trade.<sup>1</sup> The third chapter then seeks to map what Suan calls the transnational nature of the anime industry's history and provides a detailed reconstruction and analysis of its expansion into North America and East Asia. Here too, though, his vision is noticeably selective, with little said regarding Europe and no mention of Latin America, Central Asia, or the Middle East.

Chapter 4 focuses on anime as a peculiar set of “performances” that integrate aesthetic properties, visual codes, and tropes, and is a pleasure to read. However, Suan's approach to the relationship between anime's authorship and conventions seems to suggest that those conventions are so intrinsic to the medium as to assume a quality of immanence, whereas they were and are the outcome of complex artistic work and negotiations among studio staff. This is indeed recognized by Suan at various points (pp. 36, 52, 90, 99, 104), as well as in the work by Ian Condry, which the author cites.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter 5 extends this analysis into the transnational, with the focus being on anime-ish animations created outside of Japan by non-Japanese companies. A key concept in Suan's argument here is the “generative . . . capacity of repetition” (p. 55), and the author praises these imitative animations in the spirit of global dialogue and permutational practices. The following chapter focuses on performativity: How do anime characters perform, look, and act as fictional but realistic personas? They do so in ways that, I would add here, are unique to anime as a creative milieu. This chapter is tightly connected to the notion of “identity.”

Chapter 7 tackles the representation of “local-global forces” inferred from the *sekaikei* narrative subgenre, while the final chapter develops an analysis of two ways of framing “space.” On the one hand, it examines how anime productions deal with the fact that their narratives are frequently set in specific “local” places but are consumed elsewhere. At the same time, it reflects on how the material production of anime frequently occurs in places other than Japan, from foreign animation studios to which Japanese companies outsource technical work (in-betweens, coloring), to animations—sometimes advertised as “anime”—entirely designed and produced outside of Japan, but imitating or inspired by features distinct to anime's production routines and/or representational characteristics. This is the most accomplished chapter of the book; rich in information, contextualization, and empirical work, and detailing the relevant scholarship on the material strategies of multisited anime production and non-Japanese anime-ish animations.

The conclusion successfully summarizes, and enriches, the book's theses. Inexplicably, though, the book does not have a bibliography: the sources only appear in the endnotes, a choice by the publisher that ill-serves scholars and students.

*Anime's Identity* is a generous piece of scholarship, yet at root is one that argues that the obvious and largely coherent genealogy generally invoked for anime should be, if not bypassed (Suan himself often reminds readers how Japanese anime are), then largely dismissed in favor of a perspective which views anime as having always been “transnational.” That is, any actor in the global creative industries could claim the word “anime” and make “anime” with no material connection to Japan. The book's logic is that anime today are not culturally situated artistic/industrial creations and that any animations made anywhere can be commercialized as “anime” if they share with anime a series of codes or traits. As such,

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1 In English, see Steinberg 2012.

2 Condry 2013.

Suan effectively challenges mainstream understandings of anime itself. While this reviewer remains to be persuaded by this claim, the book undoubtedly succeeds in opening up new avenues of discussion regarding the theoretical, empirical, and operational definitions accorded to anime, and their relation to interpretations of the medium's global reach and geocultural situatedness.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Line of Advantage: Japan's Grand Strategy in the Era of Abe Shinzō*

By Michael J. Green

Columbia University Press, 2022  
328 pages.



Reviewed by Giulio PUGLIESE\*

This book is a sweeping and careful overview of Japan's foreign and security policy following Abe Shinzō's 2012 return to the Kantei, the prime minister's office. Aside from his solid academic credentials, the author is one of Washington's best-known U.S.-Japan alliance handlers, a strategist in his own right, and a long-time insider within Japanese strategic circles. He possesses close personal and professional links with the late Abe and his foreign policy team—links which date back to his time on the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) under the George W. Bush presidency.

Green posits that Abe has been a transformational leader and that, under his watch, Japan has effectively abandoned the Yoshida foreign policy line, a claim that echoes recent scholarship by Christopher Hughes and Akimoto Daisuke (not Akiyama as mistakenly written in the book), among others. In contrast to Hughes' critical analysis, which suggests the advent of a politically isolated and less autonomous Japan, Green finds that Japan's embrace of military realism and grand strategy has positioned the country at the center of the international arena. So much so that its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy—Green calls it a strategy and not a vision, as per the Japanese government's common parlance—also influences and informs the substance, as well as the form, of the U.S. government's China pushback. I am partial to Green's take, to the extent that my earlier writings—including my annual year-in-review articles for the journal *Asia Maior* and a coauthored book on Japan-China relations—share their theses and a great deal of common ground with Green's analysis.

Reminiscent of Kenneth Pyle's scholarship, Green frames contemporary Japan's strategic choices within the broader context provided by its geographic location, its bi-millennarian history, especially its interactions with the mainland, and its own imperial interventions in East Asia. He sees Yoshida Shigeru's foreign and security policy as shaped by the specter of prewar militarism and Japan's crushing defeat, resulting in a Cold War grand bargain that traded U.S. basing rights in the archipelago and Japanese strategic dependency for economic reconstruction and light rearmament. The "Yoshida Doctrine"

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benefited from a relatively favorable geopolitical and economic landscape, allowed Japan to retain its primacy as the region's most vibrant industrial center, and was supported by the mainstream conservative consensus within the ruling party, public opinion, business centers and, especially, the bureaucracy.

Green traces back the intellectual and political genealogy behind today's emphasis on military realism and geopolitics to previously minor figures—such as late Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Abe's mentor in foreign and security policy—whose strategic thought was associated with the more hawkish quarters of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As Green rightly notes, the domestic balance of power has now tilted to favor the “anti-mainstream” factions, a process that has been underway for the best part of the past two decades.

Green's emphasis on the role of Abe and his political and, to a lesser extent, bureaucratic allies in overhauling Japan's security regime is a welcome addition to the literature. Still, there's little here on domestic politics, or the oft-noted politicization of the bureaucracy under Abe's premiership, to account for the change. Similarly, there's little on the relationship between the LDP and big business in Japan: examining those traditional veto players would have helped explain the mechanisms behind Abe 2.0's successful leadership, *and* the tenability of said policy outputs following his retirement and premature death. To the extent that there is indeed hardly any trace left of the “Asia-ist” and “mainstream” conservative traditions in the government's foreign and security policy, Green's predictions of continuity seem reasonable. Prime Minister Kishida's muscular 2022 National Security Strategy and defense spending goals are proof that Abe's spirit lives on after his passing. At the same time, a rapid succession of short-lived governments and the enduring allure of welfare over warfare amid public opinion writ large may well yet dent the long-term impact of the “Abe Doctrine.”

Green's account on the poor state of South Korea-Japan relations finds fault on both sides, and the book is very good in recounting Japan's strategizing of the so-called Indo-Pacific. It should be noted, however, that Japan was able to sell its Indo-Pacific strategic visions to Western and Southeast Asian chancelleries (and, through Washington DC, even to South Korea!) precisely because of the concept's ductility: ironically, Japan, despite being the concept's leading advocate, is the one state that has not produced an Indo-Pacific strategic document, at least a public one. Additionally, although mentioned obliquely by Green, there is a dearth of details on the formative role played by the United States in fostering or incubating much of the diplomatic and security agenda that Abe took over. For instance, a genealogy of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy should trace it back to the Asia Strategy produced by George W. Bush's NSC, with which Green was involved, and which entailed close coordination with Japanese counterparts.

The book contains a few errors. On page 35, Green should have highlighted that Nakasone's pledge to be “America's unsinkable aircraft carrier” was—reportedly—a mistranslation by the interpreter that stuck because it caught the imagination. On page 39, he states that by the 1980s “Japan now enjoyed closer commercial ties to China than the United States,” which was clearly not the case. On page 130, Green states that Abe made a landmark speech in Jakarta that fleshed out his strategic vision, except that speech was cancelled because of the Algeria hostage crisis. On page 172, the referenced source does not really link Seoul's democratic backsliding amid Moon Jae-In's populist nationalist

administration with “investigations on conservative policymakers, judges, scholars, and media and industry leaders—often for actions taken to improve relations with Japan.”

Finally, in a couple of passages, I disagree with Green’s analysis. Specific to Abe’s historical revisionism, which Green rightly highlights when he touches upon Japan-South Korea relations, the 14 August 2015 Abe statement was hardly the “most detailed acknowledgment [by a Japanese prime minister] on the damage and suffering Japan had caused” (p. 141). As is clear from the excerpt Green provides, the statement is in the passive tense and does not highlight the agency of Japanese imperialism. Abe walked a tightrope of ambiguity to avoid displeasing his own nationalist camp while not denting U.S.-Japan relations, especially as the new alliance defense guidelines came into effect. Second, Green claims that in 2010 “a Chinese maritime militia boat deliberately collided with a Japan Coast Guard cutter near the Senkaku Islands” (p. 53), but there is little evidence of the boat belonging to the maritime militia. Circumstantial evidence suggests otherwise: the cocky and heavily intoxicated demeanor of the captain, who rammed two Coast Guard boats (not one as written above); and, perhaps more importantly, the fact that he was confined in his home following his return to the mainland.

These minor issues aside, this is a remarkable early historical narrative of Abe’s legacy in Japanese foreign and security policy. It is well worth a read by policymakers and postgraduate students alike.

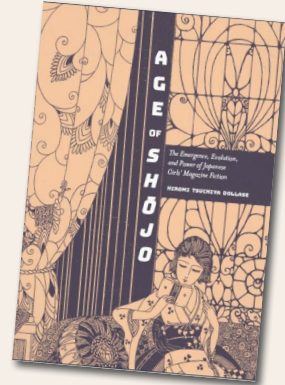
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Age of Shōjo: The Emergence, Evolution, and Power of Japanese Girls' Magazine Fiction*

By Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase

SUNY Press, 2019  
203 pages.

Reviewed by Deborah SHAMOON\*



Study of *shōjo shōsetsu*, or fiction for teenage girls, has historically been neglected in the field of modern Japanese literature, despite the popularity and cultural prominence of the genre. In both Japanese- and English-language scholarship, for too long writing for girls was ignored, or taken out of context and treated as a baffling aberrance, as happened with Yoshimoto Banana in the 1980s. In addition to the bare sexism of marginalizing writing by women addressing teenage girls, there has also been an unfortunate tendency to overlook the importance of magazines in favor of books, ignoring the fact that most *bundan* authors in the first half of the twentieth century published primarily in newspapers and magazines. In the past two decades, there has been a welcome increase in scholarship on *shōjo* studies, and on literary magazines aimed at girls and women.<sup>1</sup> Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase's recent book *Age of Shōjo: The Emergence, Evolution, and Power of Japanese Girls' Magazine Fiction* adds significantly to this scholarship, filling in gaps in previous work and providing new insights regarding major figures like Yoshiya Nobuko.

*Age of Shōjo* is organized chronologically, with two chapters on the emergence of *shōjo shōsetsu* in the early Meiji period, three chapters on the interwar and Asia-Pacific War years, one on the Occupation period, and the final two chapters on the 1980s, when the *shōjo* reemerged as a major cultural topos. This wide scope gives a comprehensive view of girls' literary culture, showing the continuities of reading communities of girls and alternative narratives to the relentless sexualization and objectification of girls elsewhere in the Japanese media.

Some key topics covered include the importance of translation, the development of the magazines *Shōjo Sekai* and *Cobalt*, all areas which have not previously received scholarly attention in English. Dollase makes a convincing argument that the corpus of *shōjo* literature is strongly influenced by the translation of novels for girls which have been perennially popular, such as *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi*. The first chapter is a detailed

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<sup>1</sup> In Japanese, some significant works include Imada 2007; Imada 2019; Saitō 2002; and Watanabe 2007. In English, they include Frederick 2006; Aoyama and Hartley 2010.

examination of the first translation of *Little Women* in 1906 by Kitada Shūho. In the Meiji period, the trend in literary translation was closer to what today we might call localization rather than the faithful reproduction of the original. It was common to set the narrative in Japan, changing the names and cultural details. Dollase examines the changes Kitada made to Alcott's text, to see where she engages with American-style feminism of the era, and what the limits of plausibility were for creating unconventional portraits of girls in a Japanese context. Although this adaptation of *Little Women* has been forgotten and replaced with more accurate translations, it is an interesting glimpse into the literary representation of girls at the start of the twentieth century, and an indication of how central translation is to girls' literature.

The following chapter is on *Shōjo Sekai*, the first magazine for girls (1906–1931). *Shōjo Sekai* has tended to be a footnote in scholarship on girls' magazines, overshadowed by later giants *Shōjo Club* (1923–1962) and *Shōjo no Tomo* (1908–1955). Dollase examines how editor Numata Rippō nurtured a reading community of girls and encouraged young women to become professional writers, similar to the role of Uchiyama Motoi at *Shōjo no Tomo* a decade later. Also similar to *Shōjo no Tomo*, Dollase finds the content of the fiction in *Shōjo Sekai* to be largely conservative, promoting the Meiji-era dictum of “good wives, wise mothers,” but that the encouragement of girls' creative agency and collaborative spirit runs counter to this patriarchal message.

Jumping ahead to the postwar years, another major contribution is the analysis of *Cobalt* magazine. Saitō Minako credits *Cobalt* with creating young women's literature in the 1980s, yet it has not previously been discussed in English.<sup>2</sup> *Cobalt* achieved great popularity with fiction aimed at women in their twenties, addressing the complexities of *shōjo* identity in the years before *josei* manga emerged as a major genre for adult women. Dollase focuses in particular on novels published in *Cobalt* by Himuro Saeko as examples of rewriting “traditional” gender norms for contemporary young women, and quotes Saga Keiko that, “Himuro Saeko brought the motif of *shōjo* to fiction and her novelty as a writer is attributed to the fact that she thematized friendship and struggles among girls.”<sup>3</sup> Unlike the majority of *shōjo* manga, Himuro's novels do not focus primarily on romance. This emphasis on female friendship is an important feature of girls' culture. Making *Cobalt* novels and scholarship on them available in English adds much-needed context to the discourse on girls' literature.

The chapters on Yoshiya Nobuko discuss her work in detail, from her first major publications in 1920, through her increasing involvement in wartime propaganda in the 1940s. Dollase situates Yoshiya in a larger community of women authors, including well-known names such as Hiratsuka Raichō, whom Yoshiya idolized, as well as comparatively obscure *shōjo shōsetsu* authors Kitagawa Chiyo and Morita Tama. Adding detailed analysis of these less well-known authors is crucial for contextualizing Yoshiya's work. Dollase makes a compelling case for what she calls “*shōjo* feminism” in Yoshiya's writing for girls and women, as a compromise between the conservative and radical elements through assertion of selfhood (p. 53). This is most evident in *Yaneura no ni shojo* (1919), but less so in her later work. Dollase characterizes Yoshiya's wartime novels in *Shōjo no Tomo* as containing “mixed messages” (p. 73), similar to her assessment of Kawabata Yasunari's novels in the

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2 Saitō 2002.

3 Saga 2016, p. 102.

same magazine (p. 77). However, there is room for more thorough interrogation of the racist, colonialist ideology of writing by both Yoshiya and Kawabata in this era. Likewise, the analysis of Morita Tama's novel *Ishikari otome* (1940), set in Hokkaido, fails to note the settler colonialism that makes the relative freedom for the *shōjo* protagonist possible. Reference to Michele Mason's book, for instance, is needed to make the connection between the Japanese imagination of Hokkaido as *terra nullius* and the portrayal of the "frontier" as an escape from oppressive tradition at the expense of the Ainu.<sup>4</sup> A more nuanced study would perhaps interrogate the parallel between the *shōjo* as virgin and the colonial appropriation of "virgin" land, both represented as resources to be used by the state.

Overall, however, *Age of Shōjo* is a major contribution to the field of *shōjo* studies. It speaks equally to scholars of Japanese popular culture (particularly *shōjo* manga) and Japanese literary studies. The writing style is lucid and engaging and is accessible to scholars and students beyond the field of Japanese studies. It will also appeal to readers interested in girls' studies and gender studies more broadly.

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<sup>4</sup> Mason 2012.

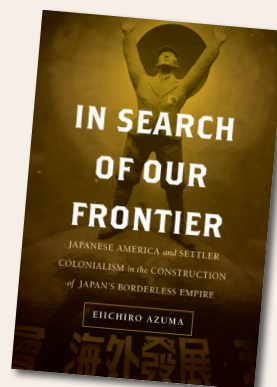
## BOOK REVIEW

### *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire*

By Eiichiro Azuma

University of California Press, 2019  
368 pages.

Reviewed by Yukari TAKAI\*



*In Search of Our Frontier* by Eiichiro Azuma sees a historian of Asian America with an intimate knowledge of modern Japanese history unearth a previously little-known history of Japanese America. Azuma argues that Japanese America played a crucial role in the making of Japanese settler colonialism, which took place both inside and outside its formal empire. He successfully validates his claim as he takes readers on a mesmerizing tour in and around the vast expanse of the Asia-Pacific region from the 1880s to the years leading up to the Pacific War. His discussion ranges widely. It extends from California and Hawai'i to Manchuria, China, Korea, and Australia (Part I); from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to the U.S.-Mexican borderlands (Part II); from Taiwan to Micronesia, Manchuria, and Japan (Parts III and IV), among many other places. Japan's overseas expansion was dual-pronged, consisting of both colonial settlement (*shokumin*) and mass labor migration (*imin*). The line between these two categories was blurry for the Japanese state authorities and their agents, immigrant elites, and settlers, even as they promoted, practiced, and performed the creation of Japan's borderless empire.

Azuma places his analysis within what he calls an inter-imperial framework. This overreaching structure consists of U.S. imperialism and its quest for the building of a white settler society in North America and the Pacific on the one hand, and imperial Japan's "adaptive" or "borderless" settler colonialism on the other hand. American discourse regarding agricultural settlement of the frontier provided a model for imperial Japan's multidirectional settler colonialism. The latter constantly altered as it adapted to specific political economies, different racial and ethnic makeup, and distinct social conditions in various locales around the Pacific basin (p. 262).

Azuma makes the case that what connected Japan's adaptive settler colonialism and U.S. white settler colonialism was the presence of Japanese transpacific migrants and remigrants. These were an eclectic collection of first-generation Japanese, all men, many of whom had initially migrated to the United States. Disillusioned by their status as a racial minority in a white-dominated North America, some turned to what they—along with Japanese policy

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makers, bureaucrats, and intellectuals—considered less racially-constricted new frontiers in Central and South America, Mexico, and Brazil, in particular. Others aspired to become colonial masters in Japan’s expanding empire in north and southeastern Asia (especially in Korea, Taiwan, China, and the Philippines) or the South Seas. Still others chose to remain in the United States and assumed the role of colonial investors and ideological promoters for the expansion of imperial Japan’s new territories. Together, these migrants played a double role, as builders or facilitators of Japan’s formal colonial empire in Asia and parts of the Pacific region, and as pioneers of the Japanese ethnic community in the New World (Hawai‘i, California, and later, the rest of the Americas, and Oceania). Their complicated paths, eccentric ideas, peculiar acts and elusive identities, Azuma writes, reveal how deeply and intricately intertwined the transpacific and trans-imperial context of Japanese history and American history were.

Race mattered profoundly to the making of the Japanese Empire. Azuma connects imperial Japan’s racialized thoughts and attitudes towards its colonized “natives” to the racial exclusion in the United States that former U.S. residents had experienced and propagated. The racialized immigration laws of the United States and exclusionist agitations that propelled them were part of a worldwide phenomenon. The global color line that shaped the American Republic in the late nineteenth century spread rapidly to white Canada and Australia, among many other places. Institutional racism and various discriminatory practices profoundly marked early Japanese America. Rage, frustration, and disappointment drove transpacific migrants such as Satō Torajirō, Takekawa Tōtarō, and Okazaki Nihei to set off for pastures new in their search for frontiers outside white Anglo-Saxon settler societies, places where Japanese could be the masters.

What former Japanese U.S. residents, returnees, and their compatriots in the homeland saw as a peaceful, civilizing, and beneficial national expansion into Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria, the South Seas, Mexico, or Brazil, for example, produced tensions and conflicts with local, non-Japanese residents. To the Japanese colonial settlers and migrants, the source of the clash lay with the racialized others, a logic by which they essentialized differences in terms of race rather than culture, conjunctures, or historical contexts. In their mental maps, Japanese sat at the top, dominating the local population filling the lower orders. These maps mimicked the racial hierarchy of white American settler colonists by which the latter imagined themselves superior to the racialized others. Azuma points out that Japanese settler colonialism was distinguished from the American one by the former’s belief that Japan’s imperial expansion was a form of benevolent assimilation by which Japanese settler colonists would ostensibly uplift and civilize inferior, uncivilized non-Japanese. Moreover, the promoters and supporters of Japan’s imperial expansion juxtaposed its allegedly benign nature to the hostile settler colonialism of the Anglo-Americans. Not surprisingly, though, the problem of race persisted beyond the optimistic discourse of benign assimilation. The problem of race mattered to an extent that it “never ceased to occupy a significant place in Japanese settler colonialism” (p. 20).

*In Search of Our Frontier* makes an enormous contribution to the transnational history of Japanese America, to the history of Japanese colonialism, and to the emerging field of global Japanese studies. It presents a global history of Japanese Americans beyond the geographic and disciplinary confinements of U.S. ethnic studies. In doing so, it opens new ground for a field which has been dominated by two domestic agendas—the claim for



inclusion in the national body politic, and resistance and the fight against injustice and for domestic civil rights, both past and present. The book's emphasis on race as a factor reflects its roots in Asian American studies. Yet applied to the history of Japanese settler colonialism in the Asia-Pacific region, Azuma's intervention marks an important departure for histories of Japan's empire and colonies, where race was and is not among the most notable features of inquiry. The rapid publication of the Japanese-language translation attests to the importance of the book's contribution.

Notwithstanding these strengths, the book leaves readers with both old and new questions. Japanese women have figured only tangentially in most historical writing on Japanese migration until recently and, even then, they do so primarily as wives and mothers. Azuma's innovative work also leaves readers wanting to know more about how women fared in the fascinating history of transpacific remigration. One would have also wished to learn more about what the racialized labor management of U.S. returnees who became Japanese imperial entrepreneurs might have meant to indigenous workers in the pineapple fields and canning factories of Taiwan, for example. These questions might provoke the search for new sources and open fertile ground for future studies.

*In Search of Our Frontier* offers a pathbreaking study of the history of an economically savvy, politically well-connected, and vocal segment of Japanese men on the move. Current and future scholars in the fields of Japanese American history, Japanese history, and global Japanese studies will benefit immensely from it.

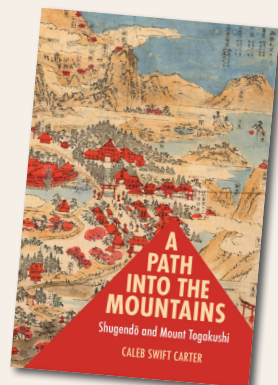
## BOOK REVIEW

### *A Path into the Mountains: Shugendō and Mount Togakushi*

By Caleb Swift Carter

University of Hawai'i Press, 2022  
245 pages.

Reviewed by Sarah THAL\*



The historical study of Shugendō has come of age. Adding a spatial dimension to the burgeoning critical scholarship of Shugendō in recent years, Caleb Swift Carter demonstrates how rigorous historical analysis can transform our understanding of religious change in Japan. In this highly readable study of Mount Togakushi and the history of Shugendō more broadly, Carter masterfully argues for both a rigorous set of methodological approaches and a revised narrative and timeline for the spread of Shugendō throughout Japan.

Methodologically, Carter builds on the exciting approaches recently highlighted by many of the contributors to *Defining Shugendō*, a volume to which Carter also contributed.<sup>1</sup> Taking absence of evidence seriously, as constituting provisional evidence of absence, these scholars do not invoke a lower-case *shugendō* as a timeless tradition of mountain worship, folk religion, or ethnic heritage spread across the archipelago. Instead, they examine an upper-case Shugendō: a self-conscious, self-identifying school or sectarian movement that originated towards the end of the thirteenth century.

Within this critical, historical approach, Carter pays special attention to place and narrative. Focusing on Mount Togakushi in present-day Nagano Prefecture, he highlights the changing relationships of that mountain complex with political and religious centers around Kyoto and the Kii Peninsula. Carter closely analyzes not only who wrote what about the mountain and when, but also where they were writing from: Shugendō's Mt. Hiko, Tendai Buddhist Mt. Hiei, or Togakushi itself. The result is a vivid history of the development of religious ideas and institutions at Togakushi from the thirteenth to nineteenth century, one contextualized by broader political, economic, and intellectual trends which Carter uses to provide insight into the religious history of Japan as a whole.

Most fundamentally, Carter argues that Shugendō did not spread to Togakushi—or, likely, to many mountains outside of the Kii Peninsula—until the sixteenth century.

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1 Castiglioni, Rambelli and Roth 2020.

Carter therefore tells the history of Shugendō at Togakushi in three parts: Togakushi before Shugendō, the transmission of Shugendō to Togakushi, and the promotion and fate of Shugendō after its arrival at the mountain.

In the first part of the book, Carter convincingly shows that, while Togakushi shared in the broader Buddhist ideas and practices of medieval Japan, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that the mountain complex had its own, self-conscious Shugendō tradition. Carter offers an insightful political, economic, and intellectual interpretation of the early origin stories of Togakushi. References to dragons, *oni*, and ascetics in these narratives, he argues, tell us more about struggles to claim authority over the mountain, its income, and its institutions than about practices on the mountain itself. The thirteenth-century *engi* thus shows a successful strategy by Tendai priests at Mt. Hiei to “affix stories of dragons and great serpents onto new landscapes” (p. 35), a dual strategy to disseminate Tendai logic and practice in the area while legitimizing Mt. Hiei’s claim to the income of surrounding estates. Two centuries later, amid the instability of the mid-fifteenth century, a practitioner at Togakushi wrote a new origin story to claim authority for the local administrative lineage. In Carter’s hands, the narrative details of these texts provide exciting insights. Carter reminds scholars to pay attention to the names (or namelessness) of ascetic protagonists; borrowings from other texts (including, here, possibly the earliest evidence of knowledge of the Korean *Samguk yusa* in Japan); and references (or lack thereof) to Shugendō-specific clothing, ritual implements, ranks, and the like. Carter ultimately concludes that from the thirteenth to sixteenth century a “Buddhist asceticism” existed at Tokugashi, but Shugendō had yet to arrive.

In the second part of the book, Carter highlights the importance of Akyūbō Sokuden (fl. 1509–1558), an ascetic at the Tendai-affiliated Shugendō center of Mt. Hiko in Kyushu. In the early sixteenth century, Akyūbō compiled earlier notes handed down within Mt. Hiko’s esoteric tradition into texts that codified self-consciously Shugendō attire, rituals, and narratives. Most importantly, Carter explains, Akyūbō framed these writings in “translocal” terms—tying these practices, and En no Gyōja, the founding ascetic with whom they were traditionally associated, not to any specific mountain but to a vague “this peak.” When Akyūbō then visited and left copies of his texts at Togakushi and other mountain sites, this vagueness allowed for the easy local adoption of his specifically Shugendō rituals, narratives, lineages, and more.

The last part of the book upends the conclusions of earlier scholarship, which viewed Tokugawa-era Shugendō at Togakushi as a constrained, weakened reflection of an earlier golden age of Shugendō on the mountain. Instead, Carter emphasizes that Shugendō had only recently arrived at the beginning of the Tokugawa era. Togakushi’s Shugendō therefore developed under the Tokugawa head-branch system, as Tendai clergy and *yamabushi* in the mountain’s subtemples worked with the centrally-appointed chief administrator to attract worshippers, and their wealth, to the mountain.

In Carter’s analysis, two remarkable developments occurred in the early eighteenth century. First, in 1701, the chief administrator of the time opened two peaks of Togakushi to laymen, who would be allowed to visit under the leadership of Togakushi’s *yamabushi*. But, Carter notes, it was almost immediately after that, in 1705, that the first stele was apparently erected at Togakushi announcing a boundary beyond which women could not proceed (*nyonin kekkai*). Carter proposes that the two events were connected, and

furthermore suggests that the opening of sacred mountains to laymen generally coincided with the enforcement of *nyonin kekkai*, not just at Togakushi but at other mountains around Japan. At Togakushi in particular, Carter shows that the chief administrator apparently did not consult with local villagers before opening the sacred peaks to unsanctified laymen; enforcement of *nyonin kekkai* may have been part of a strategy to appease local concerns and protests that resulted.

Two decades later, in 1727, a new chief administrator, the elite and well-connected Jōin (1682–1739), worked to raise the profile of Shugendō at Togakushi, inventing both new rituals and a legendary past for what he envisioned as a distinct Togakushi lineage of Shugendō, associated with the Celestial Masters lineage of Daoism. Jōin, too, failed to collaborate effectively. Clerics on Mt. Togakushi complained to the head temple Kan'eiji; after an investigation, Jōin was found guilty of heresy and exiled in 1739. Shugendō references at Togakushi became sporadic after that point.

*A Path into the Mountains* offers a vivid, accessible, and rewarding reading experience. The language is clear and straightforward, the chapters short, and the arguments clear. Even as Carter offers a new narrative for Shugendō at Togakushi—a story of medieval Buddhist asceticism, the sixteenth-century transmission of Shugendō from the Kii Peninsula, and continuing innovation in the Tokugawa era—he explains, with a light and personal touch, the critical reasoning that makes his groundbreaking analysis possible. The result is an outstanding monograph, rewarding for scholars, but also accessible to students or educated readers with an interest in Shugendō or the history of Japanese religion as a whole.

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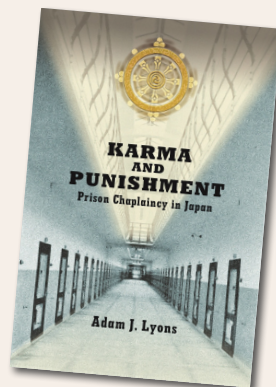
Andrea Castiglioni, Fabio Rambelli, and Carina Roth, eds. *Defining Shugendō: Critical Studies on Japanese Mountain Religion*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Karma and Punishment: Prison Chaplaincy in Japan*

By Adam J. Lyons

Harvard University Press, 2021  
400 pages.



Reviewed by Andrew TODD\*

This is an intriguing book that casts light not only on the hidden world of chaplaincy in Japanese prisons, but also on the history of the interaction of religion and the Japanese state over some one hundred and fifty years. The book is the product of extensive research and draws on a wide range of sources including historic texts, photographs, and artifacts, as well as interviews with those involved in contemporary Japanese prison chaplaincy.

At the heart of the history presented is the development of a model of chaplaincy based on doctrinal admonition of prisoners for their correction. Even today, “the formal goals of doctrinal admonition remain tethered to the state’s purposes of correctional rehabilitation and promoting inmate docility” (p. 262). This model has its roots in Japanese Buddhist understandings of the complementarity of the rule of the sovereign/state and dharma, with religion being seen as both a private matter and a contribution to the public good. In the case of prison chaplaincy, “Teaching the dharma can promote a change of heart and encourage people to be good citizens” (p. 10).

The book traces the development of this model and the particular contribution of Shin Buddhist groups and clerics. Chapter 1 notes the contribution of temple-state relations in Tokugawa Japan to the maintenance of social order as the root of the Buddhist response to the later Meiji government’s choice of Shinto over Buddhism. Lyons argues in chapter 2 that the approaches developed by Shin Buddhist clerics to converting Christians, in the period before and after the Meiji restoration of 1868, demonstrated the utility of Buddhism for the state, and also provided the prototype for prison chaplaincy in the Meiji period. The term for such admonition, *kyōkai*, became, in due course, the name for prison chaplaincy. The practice was consolidated in the period of the “Great Promulgation Campaign” in the early 1870s, as Shin Buddhists sought to join the campaign to offer the Japanese people a “great way,” as national instructors alongside Shintoists. The basis for the Buddhist approach was the ideal of the law of the state being in harmony with the dharma, and the dharma therefore offering a contribution to social order.

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Coincidentally, the development by the Meiji government from 1872 of a modern carceral system (drawing on Western models) provided a particular opportunity to transfer doctrinal admonition into the context of the proliferating prisons. Rather than adopting foreign Christian models of religious correction in prison, Shin Buddhist clerics offered and developed a Buddhist model of doctrinal admonition, underpinned by the understanding of harmony between the two laws mentioned above, to serve the correctional purposes of the state. Whereas the Great Promulgation came to an end, the role of prison chaplain, *kyōkaishi*, was recognized in prison regulations in 1881 and has persisted to the present; by the turn of the twentieth century this was a Shin Buddhist monopoly.

Later chapters trace that subsequent history in fascinating detail, including the development of its underpinning philosophy, practices, artifacts, and buildings, and the use of doctrinal admonition to bring about not only religious, but also political conversions. Further, consideration is given to the political negotiation of the chaplaincy role and the effect of carrying out this work on the chaplains themselves. The history narrated includes the diversification of the prison chaplaincy post-1945, with other religious groups included. This was accompanied by changing practices, including attention to the rights of prisoners and more individual models of care. Yet the model of doctrinal admonition, although itself diversified, has persisted to form the core of Japanese prison chaplaincy.

The book makes a robust and coherent argument, therefore, that Japanese prison chaplaincy offers a particular and persistent example of “statist” religion, in which the chaplain’s role is “to harmonize the private realm of values, aspirations and the conscience with the priorities of the public authorities” (p. 271).

What is less thoroughly discussed is the comparison with prison chaplaincy in Europe and North America. Lyons assumes an all-pervasive “spiritual care” model, directed only at the individual needs of the prisoner and which has its roots in “the pastoral practices of parish priests in European societies” (p. 267). While there are elements of spiritual care in Western prison chaplaincy, a significant root for European and North American practice is the role of the chaplain in the “separate system” of incarceration developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by reformers such as John Howard. This role was to bring prisoners to repentance through regular preaching to them as part of the state’s correctional regime. This was realized in chapel design and has marked similarities with doctrinal admonition in Japan. And in a number of European settings this form of correctional chaplaincy was dominated by a particular religious tradition, such as Anglicanism, Catholicism, or Lutheranism.

In Europe at least, elements of nineteenth-century chaplaincy practice persist, alongside new ways in which chaplains in prisons contribute to the state’s aim of, for example, “reducing re-offending behavior.” As an example, in England and Wales chaplaincy contributes to the reform or rehabilitation of prisoners in a range of ways: through the weekly hour of religious education to which each prisoner is entitled (in addition to their entitlement to an hour of worship/prayer/meditation); through the statutory chaplaincy duty of contributing to the induction of all prisoners on arrival at the prison; through contributing to the development of and participation in restorative justice programs; through contributing to the prevention and reversal of “radicalization” (an example of where religion may be seen as part of the problem *but also* the solution). Further, chaplains are civil servants, employed by the Prison Service. Even in contributing to fulfilling the human rights of prisoners (a common theme

across Europe as well as in Japan) chaplains may also be contributing to state priorities—enabling the prison to fulfil its public duty to promote equality and thereby maintain good order in the prison.

It may indeed be the case that persistence of statist religion in the work of contemporary Japanese prison chaplains is particularly marked. But there is also sufficient persistence of earlier, as well as the development of new, statist models of chaplaincy in Europe to warrant a fuller comparison and dialogue with Japanese chaplaincy, and room for further exploration regarding the extent to which such models have contributed to the continuing public profile and role of religion.

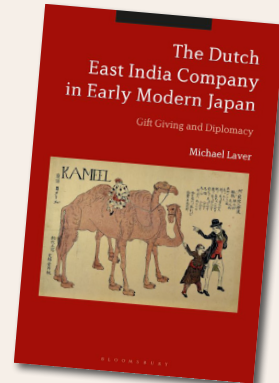
## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan: Gift Giving and Diplomacy*

By Michael Laver

Bloomsbury Academic, 2020  
171 pages.

Reviewed by Birgit TREMML-WERNER\*



The last decade has witnessed a surge of studies tracing gift-giving practices in the early modern world from a global perspective.<sup>1</sup> Michael Laver adds to this list with a monograph-length study focusing on the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in seventeenth-century Japan. Laver, Professor of History at Rochester Institute of Technology and an expert on Tokugawa Japan's foreign trade and relations, explores how VOC merchants went to great lengths to provide exotic gifts to the shogunate and various other Japanese officials. Much like Laver's previous monograph on the Sakoku Edicts, the book is directed at an audience of nonspecialists with little knowledge of Japanese history.<sup>2</sup> As such, it offers its readers a mix of easily digestible generalizations—at times over-simplifications, for instance, the description of the Sinocentric tribute system (p. 24)—and enlightening details in a snappy one hundred and twenty pages of text. Engaging storytelling based on a close reading of archival material is indeed the book's greatest achievement.

In the introduction, Laver outlines the historical context for the Dutch presence in Tokugawa Japan, highlighting the VOC servants' annual court journey to Edo and emphasizing the role of gifts in this context. Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual framework for early modern gift-giving as a social and economic lubricant, linking the anthropological concept of reciprocity to the diplomatic context of East Asia history, and the nature of what Laver deems the ironic Dutch privilege of "being imprisoned on Deshima" (p. 33).

What follows are four thematic chapters surveying the VOC's gift-giving activities. Chapter 2 on (exotic) animals includes colorful episodes in the delivery of megafauna such as camels and horses, a discussion of the most varied types of gifts, foreign birds from hawks to parrots, and examples of animal products such as tusks and horns. The following chapter on arts and crafts elaborates on the delivery of painstakingly procured Persian carpets, maps, and Dutch paintings before, in the section on candelabra as gifts, the author

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1 See in particular Tremml-Werner, Hellman, and van Meersbergen 2020; Biedermann, Riello and Gerritsen 2017; Melo 2013; Windler 2000.

2 Laver 2011.



somewhat unexpectedly embarks on a longish discussion of two incidents (those associated with Nuyts and Inaba) that challenged the fortunes of the Dutch in Japan.

The chapter on scientific paraphernalia discusses Dutch efforts to acquire state-of-the-art telescopes for their Japanese superiors and the complex issue of importing foreign books to Japan, which reflects the VOC's transformation from merchants to bearers of information. The last category of gift-giving activities deals with food, drink, and VOC obligations to entertain Japanese officials on Deshima. Here, illustrated sources are persuasively linked to studies about the social value of strangers "eating a meal together" (p. 100), highlighting the ubiquity of gift-giving for all sorts of social relations. The book ends with an epilogue comparing seventeenth-century Dutch gift-giving to Commodore Perry's expeditions of 1853–1854. Laver argues that Perry's careful study of and ability to replicate Dutch practices played an essential role in opening trade relations for the U.S. in Japan. Based on his study of the records of the Department of State, he postulates that the future of U.S.-Japanese relations depended on ten Merino sheep (p. 117). Regardless of whether one finds the comparison of seventeenth- and nineteenth-century examples of gifts in foreign relations enlightening or random, it does raise questions about the author's agenda.

Overall, the book demonstrates that gifts were a symbol of Dutch submission to Tokugawa authority and a necessity for the VOC to continue to trade with Japan. Yet, Laver's main argument that the severely controlled VOC presence in Japan served the Tokugawa regime to legitimate domestic rule largely synthesizes previous English-language scholarship by Adam Clulow, Martha Chaiklin, and Timon Screech. In contrast to these authors, Laver neglects the Japanese side of things, both the historical and the contemporary scholarly one. Despite his express interest in foreign relations involving Tokugawa Japan, he seems surprisingly disinterested in what happened in Japan. While concerned with the reasons and logic that guided Dutch actions in Japan, he does not apply a similar lens to Japanese perspectives. Therefore, despite the book's subtitle, we learn little about the actual dynamics of Japanese-Dutch diplomacy. Equally disappointing is his lamentable failure to include Japanese scholarship. To give but one example: in the section in which he paraphrases the scholarship on the VOC as bearers of global knowledge to the shogun, he ignores Matsukata Fuyuko's influential study of *fūsetsu gaki*, annual reports about events outside Japan, which were precious gifts indeed.<sup>3</sup> Another missed opportunity is the absence of visual images of the lavish seventeenth-century gifts described. Their inclusion, or at least some more information about what subsequently became of them, would have significantly increased the appeal of the volume.

To conclude, the undeniable strength of the book lies in the insights gleaned from a close reading of the Dutch archival records. Even here, Laver's constant use of the first-person plural is notable, as it implies the readers' familiarity with Dutch primary source records. These have been available online since June 2020, but it is doubtful that connoisseurs of seventeenth-century accounts of the Dutch factory in Japan (Nederlandse Factorij in Japan, abbreviated as NFJ) will read this book from cover to cover.<sup>4</sup>

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3 Matsukata 2010.

4 See the records at <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.21>.

Undergraduates, on the other hand, may value its concise introduction to early modern merchant practices in East Asia.

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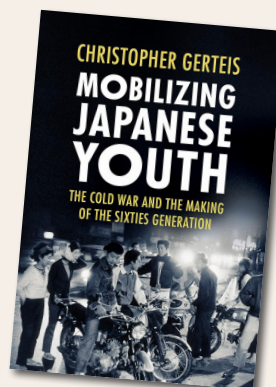
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Mobilizing Japanese Youth: The Cold War and the Making of the Sixties Generation*

By Christopher Gerteis

Cornell University Press, 2021  
192 pages.

Reviewed by Ran ZWIGENBERG\*



*Mobilizing Japanese Youth* examines how figures and movements on both the left and the right tried to mobilize and “shape the political consciousness” (p. 1) of the generation that came of age in the 1960s. The focus is on “non-state institutions,” labor and the new left on the progressive side and, on the right, “cold war warriors” like Sasakawa Ryōichi and Kodama Yoshio (pp. 2, 100). All these actors were as much a part of the Japanese domestic scene as they were part of the bigger global struggle and the “transnational flow of ideas” of the 1960s (p. 2). Building on the work of Oguma Eiji, Chelsea Schieder, and Setsu Shigematsu, Gerteis examines how ideas of class and gender operated within the “generational consciousness” of the sixties, and shaped generational conflict with older figures who sought to mobilize the rebellious youth.<sup>1</sup> The book details the failure of either political extreme to inspire this new generation, and as such explains the dominance in Japan of the “moderate” political center, as the sixties generation rejected the ideas of those seeking to mobilize them.<sup>2</sup>

The first part of the book examines the left’s efforts. Chapter 1 makes a convincing case for a disconnect between labor leaders and younger workers, and examines the way wage hierarchies and outdated ideas of gender and class hindered any successful mobilization of the youth by the labor movement. Chapter 2 focuses on the Japanese Red Army (JRA) and the way the group’s “titillating and terrifying” (p. 76) political violence was packaged and presented by the JRA and their collaborators in the arts. Gerteis argues that Shigenobu Fusako’s appeals were framed mostly through a gendered lens, the major reason for their ultimate failure, and critiques the framing of Shigenobu and other women as “sexualized vehicles for revolution” (p. 66). Gerteis sees the JRA as a manifestation of a transnational movement that, within the particular matrix of class and gender present in Japan, ended in failure.

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1 Oguma 2009; Schieder 2021; Shigematsu 2012.

2 I thank Nathan Hopson for this insight.

The latter part of the book focuses on the right. In between, chapter 3 presents a survey by the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) on social mores and values. The surveys “indicate the rise of a cynical generation” and show increasingly conservative tendencies among the sixties generation. There are multiple problems with this chapter. The survey data starts in 1973, while the rest of the book covers events in the decade prior to the start of the survey; the language and methodology of the chapter are completely out of sync with the rest of the book, discussing, for instance, “multiple linear regression analysis of the aggregate survey data” (p. 82). Furthermore, the chapter seemingly highlights a lack of generational identity as “the NHK data point to significant differences in political attitude that . . . correlate more strongly with gender and class than with age” (p. 99). One wonders if there is in fact a coherent “sixties generation” to examine in the first place.

Gerteis does a much better job in the chapters on the far right, however, which are excellent surveys of a topic, postwar right-wing activism, little covered in English. The main actors are Kodama Yoshio and Sasakawa Ryōichi, both of whom reemerged after the war as leaders of the far right, seeking to save Japan’s youth from communism and armed with extensive connections to U.S. intelligence, the Yakuza, and the ruling LDP (p. 100). Both wanted to achieve a “revival of prewar values through purity of youth” (p. 103). Yet they gained little traction with right-wing students, unhappy with their pro-American tendencies, with the *bōsōzoku* (bike gangs), or with other groups. Sasakawa was more successful in getting his message to the wider public through his media and philanthropy campaigns, funded through his motorboat gambling empire. To do so, however, he had to water down his prewar nationalistic message and focus instead on promoting repackaged traditional norms and morality.

The basic thrust of Gerteis’ argument is convincing and the evidence he brings for it is mostly persuasive. Generational conflict is an excellent way to frame the clash of ideas that happened in the 1960s. It brings into focus the conflict between the various actors, and how the image and message of younger figures like Shigenobu Fusako were shaped by the goals and values of older actors. It is ultimately a study in the failure to mobilize Japan’s youth rather than of mobilization by non-state actors, which did not take place on a large scale after ANPO.

The book largely makes for an enjoyable and entertaining read and raises a number of interesting questions and insights. Yet, it is ultimately only partially successful. Gerteis throws his net wide, looking at pink films, song lyrics, labor posters, advertisements, public surveys, and a number of other sources, but, apart from the labor posters, he does not really engage with these materials in depth, and relies excessively on secondary sources (much of it, admittedly, excellent, like the work of Nathaniel Smith in English and Till Knaudt in German).<sup>3</sup> A great deal of the book deals with various groups on the margins—bike gangs, revolutionaries, and musicians—but it is unclear how these constitute the sixties generation as a whole. The argument would have benefited from being more tightly focused through Gerteis’s excellent gender and class analysis, and venturing less into bike gangs, music, anime, postwar fascism, and other marginalia. Nevertheless, Gerteis is a gifted writer and narrator, and the argument regarding gender norms and their centrality is key, meaning that this book will be immensely useful for those of us who teach and study the era.

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3 Smith 2011; Knaudt 2016.

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## *Japan Review* Style Guide

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\* The information that follows is drawn directly from the *Japan Review* Style Guide (<https://nichibun.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/7005>). Authors should consult the Style Guide before submitting their manuscripts.

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