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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fifteenth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the joint efforts of the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University and the Southern Japan Seminar. JSR continues to be both an outlet for publications related to Southern Japan Seminar events and a journal that encourages submissions from a wide range of scholars in the field. This issue includes a special topics section showcasing a variety of articles on Japanese women and popular culture, as well as additional articles, essays, and book reviews covering a variety of topics in Japanese studies.

This year's journal features a special section with a brief introductory essay by Jan Bardsley, who has organized a panel for the annual Southern Japan Seminar and edited articles for this issue. Also included are two articles. "Edward Said and the Japanese: British Representations of Japan in the Years before the Sino-Japanese War" by Stephen Smith explores the extent to which the application of Edward Said's notion of Orientalism – which juxtaposes an "irrational Japan" with a "mature, rational" Europe – provides fresh insight into Western writing on Japan in the late nineteenth century. In addition, "The Forgotten Script Reform: Language Policy in Japan's Armed Forces" by Yuki Takatori analyzes the reform in the Japanese written language implemented by the armed forces during Imperial Japan's transformation into a colonial power. Takatori explains why military officers were more enthusiastic supporters of such reforms than the cautious bureaucrats of the Education Ministry.

There is one essay in this issue. Carl M. Johnson's translation of Watsuji Testurō's *Mask and Persona*, reflects on the importance of the face in human existence by explicating three main Japanese terms – *men*, *kao*, and *gammen* – which Watsuji contrasts with the Latin term *persona*. For the convenience of the reader, these are consistently translated throughout as "mask," "face," "visage," and "persona," respectively.

Four book reviews are included. Salvatore Ciriacono reviews *The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization* by Masayuki Tanimoto, and Lucien Ellington reviews Benjamin Duke's book, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872-1890*. Also, Ernesto Fernández reviews *Realizing Genjōkoan: The Key to Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* by Shohaku Okumura, and Katsumi Sohma reviews "From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Who was Responsible?" by the Yomiuri Shimbun.

Steven Heine

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Re: Submissions, Subscriptions, and Comments

Submissions for publication, whether articles, essays, or book reviews, should be made in both hard copy and electronic formats, preferably Word for Windows via email attachment (please inquire about other formats). The editor and members of the editorial board will referee all submissions.

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All comments and feedback on the publications appearing in *Japan Studies Review* are welcome.

Women and Popular Culture

Introduction
***MANGA*, *MAIKO*, *AIDORU*:**
GIRL COOL IN JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE

Jan Bardsley
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

It is a pleasure to introduce this special section of *Japan Studies Review*. The articles by Jan Bardsley, Inger Sigrun Brodey, Kinko Ito, and Yuki Watanabe were originally prepared for the 2009 Southern Japan Seminar (SJS) in Miami hosted by the Institute for Asian Studies, Florida International University. We are grateful to Steven Heine, editor of *Japan Studies Review* and SJS President for inviting us to publish this special section, and appreciative of the several anonymous reviewers who refereed these papers. We also thank Dr. Heine for his inspired choice of discussant for our panel, Laura Miller, the Ei'ichi Shibusawa-Seigo Arai Professor of Japanese Studies and Professor of Anthropology at University of Missouri, St. Louis, and a leader in the emerging field of Girl Studies. We are delighted that Dr. Miller permitted us to publish her commentary, too.

Our exploration of popular cultural views of girls and women in contemporary Japanese culture highlights a range of images of female assertiveness, intentional innocence and sexuality, and imagined identities. Since we examine such mass-mediated phenomena as anime, manga, film, and television programs, our discussion also elucidates the commodification of fantasies of girlhood and the meanings attached to these in contemporary Japan. Articles by Bardsley, Brodey, and Watanabe train attention on diverse representations of girlhood, while Kinko Ito's article on ladies' comics discusses girls grown up and exploring adult sexuality. Miller's essay widens the lens to show how leaders of Japanese government and industry have exploited "girl cool" to promote tourism to Japan and consumption of Japanese popular culture, and introduces issues at the heart of Girl Studies.

The disasters Japan has suffered in spring 2011 make these earlier discussions of popular culture appear to be particularly light-hearted. How will suffering on such a monumental scale affect the narratives of girlhood and womanhood produced in Japan in the next decade and beyond? How will the apparent rise in youth volunteerism and the possibility of jobs related to relief shape this generation of young Japanese? These are questions that we will follow for years to come. We can anticipate that this

newest tragedy will be processed through popular cultural forms, much as have the nuclear devastation and national traumas of the past. It will no doubt be understood as marking a sharp cultural divide in a way that resembles the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. In consequence, this special section stands as one of numerous strands woven into Japanese culture "before 2011."

Below, I briefly introduce the articles in the order that they will appear in this issue. Note that we follow East Asian practice in listing family names first followed by given names. We thank Jennylee Diaz and Maria Sol Echarren of *Japan Studies Review* for their work on this issue.

Inger Sigrun Brodey's article, "*Ema*: The New Face of Jane Austen in Japan," discovers how Jane Austen's famed novel *Emma* (1815) has been re-imagined for contemporary audiences by manga artist Mori Kaoru. Mori's award-winning *manga* series *Ema,* published from 2002 to 2006 in Japan, inspired an *anime* series that aired on Japanese television from 2006 to 2008. Brodey argues that despite differences in the narrative techniques employed by Austen and Mori, abundant connections exist between the two authors. Brodey finds that "Mori borrows plot elements from several Jane Austen novels, as well as visual images from the films of those novels" and her work, too, shows an interest in society, rank, and the concept of the gentleman. This investigation leads Brodey to consider how the Victorian setting of *Ema* may reveal nostalgia for Meiji Japan. She observes that Mori devises characters with the appeal of both traditionalist and feminist overtones by referring to Meiji New Women and *jogakusei* (girl students) as well as contemporary Japanese fascination with the English maid.

Nostalgia for visions of girlhood from bygone days also figures in Jan Bardsley's exploration of contemporary representations of the *maiko* (novice geisha). "Maiko Boom: The Revival of Kyoto's Novice Geisha" describes how maiko blogs, autobiographies, and dance performances, maiko-related goods and services, and even maiko movies and TV drama turned the novice geisha into a site of "good girlhood" around 2008. Bardsley shows how the maiko offers an alternative to depictions of teen characters involved in violent crimes in detective writer Kirino Natsuo's *Real World* (2003) and Akutagawa prize-winning author Kanehara Hitomi's best-selling novel *Snakes and Earrings* (2003). In contrast to the erotic display of contemporary pop singers such as Koda Kumi and the sexually explicit genre of ladies comics, discussed in the articles in this volume by Yuki Watanabe and Kinko Ito, the modest maiko serves to

assuage fears that Japanese girls may have gone wild. As Bardsley also shows, however, associations with the prim and proper have also rendered the maiko figure and Kyoto aesthetics ripe for parody.

In "*Erokakkoii*: Changing Images of Female Idols in Contemporary Japan," Yuki Watanabe investigates how the concept of *erokakkoii* (erotic and cool) came to be embodied by mainstream female singing idols. Tracing the rise of one of Japan's most popular singers, Koda Kumi, who is also known for her risqué costumes, Watanabe examines the social implications of the girl idol phenomenon in terms of increasingly ambiguous gender relationships in contemporary Japan. Watanabe delves into the construction of *erokakkoii* by drawing on some of Koda's song lyrics, music videos, and media coverage, and considers these against the shifting images of mainstream female pop singers in Japan since 1980. She observes that Koda's fans simultaneously appreciate (or at least tolerate) her overt displays of sexuality while also admiring her cool, and discovers that fans of Koda and other female idols consist of a widely heterogeneous mix of both genders.

Ladies' comics, a popular form of manga aimed at adult women, contrast dramatically with the innocence and chastity associated with teenage maiko. As Kinko Ito explains, ladies' comics portray all forms of sexuality, much of it taboo, in graphic form. Her article, "Framing the Sensual: Japanese Sexuality in Ladies' Comics," analyzes examples of the genre to discuss "their individualistic focus on carnal pleasure and the self" and observes how ladies' comics comprise diverse texts that are "visual, informative, and imaginative." Ito argues that dismissing the sexually explicit manga among these as merely "pornography for women" diminishes their potential as erotica that many women readers find pleasurable and empowering. Readers who wish to pursue this topic will want to read Ito's recently-published book on this topic, *A Sociology of Japanese Ladies' Comics: Images of the Life, Loves, and Sexual Fantasies of Adult Japanese Women* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).

Laura Miller's essay, "Taking Girls Seriously in 'Cool Japan' Ideology" offers insightful commentary on this section of *Japan Studies Review*. Examining the Cool Japan campaign developed in 2006 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Miller argues that "girl culture is often missing in enthusiastic celebrations of Japanese popular culture, particularly in formulations that are sponsored or promoted by mainstream and elite institutions." She points out how the campaign through its deployment of such stars as the J-Pop group Puffy (comprised of duo Onuki Ami and

Yoshimura Yumi) or its invention of the three girlish Ambassadors of Cute were carefully calibrated to appeal to a wide audience without threatening to offend. Although such commodified representations do indeed have appeal, as Miller argues, they minimize the range of self-expression produced by girls in contemporary Japan in all kinds of venues. It is the ephemera of girls' shifting interests, fashions, and creative production that most renders their status ambiguous, portents of an indeterminate future, and investigating this is the focus of Girl Studies. Thus, Miller claims that the articles published here "are important because these scholars have immersed themselves in girl culture, unpacking the many different products and media that are appealing to girls and women, paying attention to phenomena that drive a huge part of the Japanese economy but which many critics oddly ignore or negate."

EMA: THE NEW FACE OF JANE AUSTEN IN JAPAN[1]

Inger Sigrun Brodey
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Jane Austen (1775–1817) has had a surprisingly large presence in Japan, for a country girl who never traveled outside of England in her life. Stemming largely from Natsume Sōseki's avowed interest in Austen, other Japanese authors such as Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Nogami Yaeko, and Kanai Mineko, have all paid homage to Austen or developed their own narratives in relation to her work. So, Austen's face (or at least her name) is not new to Japan; however, Austen's most recent tribute has taken on a new and more visual character with Kaoru Mori's award-winning *manga* series *Ema,* published from 2002 to 2006 in Japan, as well as the *anime* series that it inspired, which aired on Japanese television from 2006 to 2008.[2] *Ema*, however, is no ordinary translation or even transposition of Jane Austen's fiction into another time and genre. Mori's connection to Austen is subtler and more difficult to ascertain, leaving many readers on the Internet, for example, struggling to assess whether or not there is any connection at all between Austen's novel about a woman coming of age in an early eighteenth-century English countryside, and Mori's manga about a woman coming of age in urban Victorian London, set some 75 years later.

Kaoru Mori's *Ema* series has experienced wide-spread success among younger generations in Japan, the United States, and parts of Europe. *Ema* won the 2005 Excellence Prize in the Manga Division at the 9th annual Japanese Media Arts Festival. Subsequently, the English translation was listed by *Library Journal* as one of the best graphic novels of 2007.[3] The target audience seems to be girls in their teens: the Young

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[1] Many thanks to the encouragement of Jan Bardsley and to the two anonymous reviewers for very helpful critiques.

[2] When the title (which is pronounced "Ema," rather than "Emma") is written in the Roman alphabet, it is transcribed as "Emma," just like Austen's novel; however, for the sake of clarity when contrasting the two works, I will refer to Austen's work and eponymous heroine as *Emma* (or Emma) and Mori's as *Ema* (or Ema).

[3] See "Manga Named to Librarians' Great Graphic Novels List," Anime News Network, January 16, 2008 (accessed August 8, 2009, http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2008-01-16/manga-named-to-librarians-great-graphic-novels-list).

Adult Library Services Association also named it as among the 10 best graphic novels for teens for 2008. [4] *Ema* was initially serialized in the Japanese *Monthly Comic Beam* magazine from January 2002 until May 2006. It was then rapidly translated and published in Sweden, North America, Spain, Finland, and France between 2006 and 2008, and subsequently inspired the anime series *Eikoku Koi Monogatari Ema* or *Emma: A Victorian Romance*, which was produced by Studio Pierrot, and subtitled in English. While *Ema* was not initially serialized in a *shōjo manga* (teenage girls' manga) magazine, it bears many of the features of the *shōjo* genre, and its age guide also recommends it for teens. There are subplots in the manga series that involve nudity and prostitution, however, and stray from the characteristic *shōjo* content to something more adult in nature. In that regard, the *Ema* manga series could be conceived of as a *shōjo* main plot, with a backdrop of what Fusami Ogi calls "young-lady manga" emphasis on social realism, particularly in its subplots and backstory. [5] This hybrid genre can perhaps appeal to a wider audience and both male and female readership.

The *Ema* series and its heroine have also inspired "*cos-play*" enthusiasms (an abbreviation of costume play, where young adults dress as their favorite anime or manga characters). Although Mori herself has denied such explicit influence, [6] critics continue to credit Mori's manga for inspiring the maid café phenomenon that began to spread in the Akihabara district of Tokyo. Kai-Ming Cha, for example, writes: "The manga series [*Ema*] is said to be responsible for the Japanese maid phenomenon, where women dress up as English maids, complete with elaborate maid uniforms, aprons and bonnets." The official *Ema* maid costume retails for ¥45,000 on the series website, and there is a special "maid café" in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo explicitly dedicated to the heroine Ema and her Victorian world in London, as seen in Figure 1.

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[4] For the full list, see "2008 Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens," American Library Association, January 15, 2008 (accessed August 8, 2009, http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovel sforteens/annotations/08ggnt10.cfm).

[5] Fusami Ogi, "Female subjectivity and Shoujo [girls] Manga [Japanese comics]: Shoujo in ladies' comics and young ladies' comics," *Journal of Popular Culture* 36/4 (2003): 798–803.

[6] Chih-Chieh Chang, "Interview: Kaoru Mori," Anime News Network, September 1, 2006 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.anime newsnetwork.com/feature/2006-09-01/6).

Figure 1. The interior of the *Ema*-themed maid café in Tokyo.

At the maid cafés, young ladies dressed in quaint and often enticing maid costumes give special personalized welcome to their customers, explain the menu on bended knees, and serve food with personalized decorations. These maids use very traditional phrases to emphasize their role as catering to the supposed lord of the manor (*go-shujin-sama*), returning to his estate after a long day's work.[7] And while most customers of maid cafés are male (primarily *otaku*), there are maid cafés that appeal to young women also, and where women form the majority of customers.

As for the connection to Austen, the Internet is full of speculations and denials. Most disclaim any possible connection, but there is a perplexing insistence on *making* connections to Austen, only to *dismiss* them again. Even those who find no connection to Austen feel the need to cite her: Animesuki's article "Torrents for Emma" reviewed the *Ema* anime, for example, explaining curtly that the anime is "based on the manga

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[7] Sakurada Yoko and Torikai Shin-ichi, "Welcome to Fantasyland: Maid Cosplay," *Nipponia* 46 (2008), p. 12.

by the same name by Kaoru Mori. No relation to the novel by Jane Austen."[8] Other reviewers claim a vague romantic connection: "A very fine romance along the lines of the best of Jane Austen"[9] or assume an implicit kinship that would suggest that Austen readers are likely to become Mori readers: *Ema* is "[a] must see for Jane Austen fans and those who love period romances such as *Pride and Prejudice*."[10] At least one review mentions the similarity of Mori's central heroine with Austen's sensible, quieter heroines: "This upstairs-downstairs romance is very restrained, almost to the point of being subdued. Emma is a character firmly in the traditions of Jane Austen's quieter heroines (think Fanny Price and Anne Elliott, not Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse); she says little, keeping her own counsel, but her personality shines through all her interactions."[11]

Others, such as Robin Brenner, note the authors' similar emphasis on social criticism: "The cover certainly does promise pretty maids and, with its creamy tones and textured paper, a whiff of nostalgia for a past we never knew. What you can't tell from the cover is that alongside the lace and tea there is a laser-sharp criticism of society's rules and the overarching

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[8] "Torrents for Emma," AnimeSuki, April 2005 (accessed June 1, 2009, http://www.animesuki.com/series.php/569.html).

[9] Kaoru Mori, "Emma Vol I-V," Bold Blue Adventure, July 20, 2009 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://boldblueadventure.blogspot.com/2009/ 07/emma-vol-i-v.html).

[10] Holly Ellingwood, "Emma: A Victorian Romance – Season 2," Active Anime, April 12, 2009 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.activeanime.com/html/content/view/4828/57/).

[11] Joy Kim, "Mori, Kaoru: Emma, vol. 2," Joy Kim: Manga Reviews-Seinen Manga, February 4, 2008 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://joykim.net/posts/mori-kaoru-emma-vol-2/). See also Karon Flage, "Tart Tastes: Comics for Mom," Sequential Tart, May 1, 2006 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.sequentialtart.com/article.php?id=136): "[*Ema*] is the *Upstairs, Downstairs*-as-written-by-Jane Austen-like story of William, a good-looking but shy young man from a nouveau riche merchant family who falls in love with his retired governess' intelligent, bespectacled maid [Ema]. In contrast to the more usual pattern in English-language romance novels involving cross-class romance, William is attracted to Emma despite – or perhaps because of – the fact that the rather introspective object of his affections is far too sensible and reserved to flirt with gentleman callers or daydream about love interests above her station."

understanding that all the love in the world cannot easily overcome significant gaps in wealth and upbringing…Prepare…for a historical drama inspired by Austen, Wharton, or Eliot, and dive right in."[12] Or finally, there are those who simply muse: "No this is not Jane Austen Manga. But it almost could be!"[13]

Despite the radically different narrative techniques of their respective genres, I will argue that the connections between Austen and Mori are manifold. Mori borrows plot elements from several Jane Austen novels, as well as visual images from the films of those novels. In addition, she shows a similar thematic concern for society and rank, especially debates over the concept of the "gentleman." While the change in setting seems strikingly different, Mori chooses the time that Austen was imported to Japan as her setting for her own transportation of an Austen-related story back to England. In other words, there is actually a link between Mori's Victorian setting and Meiji Japan. In fact, strange as it may seem, the choice of the Victorian setting may well be due to nostalgia for Meiji Japan. It is worth noting that, as different as they are, Meiji Japan and Victorian England actually overlapped by three decades. Finally, in order to contrive her character's own mix of traditionalist and feminist appeal, Mori alludes to several Japanese female prototypes, including such disparate characters as the geisha, the "New Woman," and the *jogakusei* (girl student), in addition to the contemporary appeal of the English maid. Mori's eclectic borrowings and multicultural allusions contribute to her overall ends.

In elucidating some of Mori's allusions and narrative strategies, I hope to suggest some possible future work on what this new face of Austen can tell us about contemporary Japanese girl culture. What we have is at least a very interesting cultural phenomenon. Austen's most socially and financially independent heroine is transported from the countryside of Regency England into poverty and a life of servitude in Victorian London. And of course this temporal fusion is conveyed in the most postmodern of media: the graphic novel and anime film. Meanwhile in contemporary Tokyo, partly due to the popularity of maids in video and computer games, voluntary servitude is replayed in "maid cafés," where customers pay to be

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[12] See "Emma," Graphic Novel Reporter, July 20, 2009 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.graphicnovelreporter.com/content/emma-volumes-1-7-review).

[13] See "Emma by Kaoru Mori," Things Mean A Lot: A Place Where I Talk About Books, July 20, 2009 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.thingsmeanalot.com/2009/03/emma-by-kaoru-mori.html).

waited on by young women dressed as maids, including Ema look-alikes, as discussed above. Adding to this cultural fusion, the maid café itself is an urban, pop-culture transformation of the older Japanese tradition of geisha serving at upper-class tea houses. It seems that Japanese girls and young women resort to the *cos-play* described above to experience nostalgia for older forms of relationship, dress, and expression while also appearing "cute" and attractive according to media-influenced styles.

We will investigate this cross-cultural and multi-media collage to probe further into Mori's implicit statement about women, individualism, and modernity. Building on the similarity one finds between Meiji history and Mori's depiction of Victorian times, I will show that Mori's characteristic fusion of traditionally subservient female roles, set within an atomistic urban setting, allows her heroine to succeed in achieving both love and upward mobility. It may well be that the reason behind this series' popularity among contemporary young Japanese women lies precisely in Ema's bivalent aspirations – the nostalgic longing for traditional forms of femininity along with the desire for freedom and upward mobility – a combination evinced by the heroine herself. *Ema* thus suggests a tacit post-feminism among contemporary Japanese women.

Emma versus Ema

Austen's *Emma*, published in 1815, is often considered her masterpiece of narrative form and free indirect discourse. It treats a heroine who has a privileged but highly faulty perspective on life in her Regency England setting. It might seem odd to compare this classic novel with a contemporary graphic novel set in a different time, place, and involving a different socio-economic class. One must indeed acknowledge that superficial ties between Mori's *Ema* and Austen's *Emma* are hard to perceive. To the initial reader, it might seem as though the title is the *only* possible connection. Be that as it may, Mori, an avowed Anglophile and bibliophile, has explicitly drawn from a large number of eighteenth and nineteenth-century literary and historical sources, such as Brontë, Dickens, Disraeli, Charlotte Smith, and Hannah Maria Jones. It seems unlikely that she was not fully aware of Austen's use of the same title for her strong and attractive central heroine.

Yet what can Austen's most socially and economically independent heroine have in common with an orphaned and destitute young girl who initially views the life of a maid as an almost unreachable social goal? Austen opens *Emma* with the following description of her heroine: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home

and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." In fact, her major challenges, according to Austen's narrator, are "the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments."[14] Emma is the mistress of her father's household, with very little to check her enjoyments or her privileges in a society, where she ranks as "first" in society as well as in the eyes of her doting father and governess.

Ema, on the other hand, is an orphaned child with unknown parents who is abducted as a child and barely escapes being sold to a brothel. She fights for subsistence by selling flowers in a public square, until she is taken in by a former governess named Kelly Stownar. Mrs. Stownar, a widow, takes her in to teach her to be a maid, and is impressed by her abilities. Gradually she learns the tasks of a housemaid and also some unusual accomplishments (such as speaking French) along the way. All is well until Mrs. Stownar dies, forcing Ema to find a new way to support herself. She moves from position to position, struggling to make ends meet, yet she is understatedly upwardly mobile, making a positive impression on her mistresses, who increase in wealth and prominence in the course of the series. She is indeed "first" in the governess' eyes, but in no other's eyes until young William Jones, heir to a large fortune, falls in love with her.

While the similarities are limited, both Emma and Ema are motherless and have loving governess figures who teach them appropriate skills. Their troubles and adventures start at age 20, on the cusp of independence, when these governesses depart – either to marry (in Emma's case) or die (in Ema's). Both motherless young women make new worlds for themselves and eventually grow into the mistresses of great estates. They both stand out among other women for their beauty, elegance, and intelligence. Both women are admired by many men and receive several proposals of marriage; in both cases, they reject dashing rakes and eventually shape their world through choice of a spouse. Unlike most historically set *manga* and *anime* that reach U.S. audiences, Mori's characters have access to no supernatural powers to release them from their limited opportunities. Like Austen, Mori chooses to depict only common occurrences and realistic character traits.

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[14] Jane Austen, *Emma,* ed. R.W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 5. All citations of Austen's *Emma* are from this edition.

It is tempting, when comparing *Ema* and *Emma*, to say that Ema has more in common with some of the minor characters in Austen's novel. Like Harriet Smith, she is the *subject* of matchmaking and romantic speculation, as well as makeovers, all of which are not equally well-intentioned or successful. Like Jane Fairfax, she lives on the cusp of social respectability to the gentry: it is unclear whether she will ultimately be a governess for hire or a landed lady. Austen uses Miss Bates to show what can happen to a woman without means when she does not marry. Yet Mori's distinctions are equally important. While Emma's attempts at a makeover of the orphaned Harriet Smith are disastrous, all the attempts to reform Ema for higher rank and glamour are successful. Whereas Austen shows her heroine Emma falling into the trap of designing a stereotypical romance for Harriet complete with rags-to-riches conventions, Austen ultimately ridicules what Mori embraces. For Mori, the rags-to-riches plot is central and unironized.

In reading Mori's manga series, there are many plot devices and conversations that echo Austen's oeuvre; these similarities seem to increase as the manga series progresses. Just to name a few, an outdoor picnic reveals private disputes and secrets, as does the picnic at Box Hill in *Emma*. A conversation about what constitutes an adequate income parallels the discussion between the sisters in *Sense and Sensibility*. Amateur theatricals are contemplated among the young people, and the hero offers the use of his own house, just as in *Mansfield Park*. The play (in this case *Romeo and Juliet*), is similarly chosen to reveal the private conflicts of the group. When a couple disappears, they are thought to have eloped to Gretna Green, as in *Pride and Prejudice*. And an opera scene is also used to similar effect as in *Persuasion*.[15]

Despite Mori's choice of title, in many ways, *Ema*'s plot actually has most similarities with the better known novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Austen's most beloved novel, and one of the most influential novels written in English. From the opening scenes of *Ema* as well as *Pride and Prejudice*, we see the wealthy hero-to-be embarrassing himself and behaving with an awkwardness that invites censure among onlookers. In *Pride and Prejudice*, it is Darcy's behavior in rudely refusing to dance at the Meryton assembly; in *Ema*, William sheepishly hesitates on the

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[15] Kaoru Mori, *Emma,* trans. Sheldon Drzka (La Jolla, CA: WildStorm Productions, 2006–2008). These scenes appear in volume III.22–45; III.39; III.55; IV.19; IV.29, respectively. All subsequent quotations from Mori's *Ema* are from this edition.

doorstep of his former governess' house and as a result is smashed in the face by a door, gets a red nose, and later suffers questioning about bed-wetting from his former governess.

In a famous scene of *Pride and Prejudice*, several characters compare their opinions about what is required for a woman to be considered "accomplished." While the easy-going Charles Bingley is impressed that so many young ladies "paint tables, cover screens, and net purses," his ambitious sister Caroline takes the opportunity to promote herself with a much longer list: "A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved." Darcy only adds intellectual qualities to Caroline's more theatrical list: "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading." Elizabeth famously responds: "I am no longer surprised at your knowing *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*."[16] Darcy's reflections over the requisite (and nearly unachievable) characteristics of "an accomplished woman" are echoed in Mori's novel. Mr. Jones' remarks on the requisite qualifications of a wife: "a wife must play valuable roles. She must host banquets, balls, tea parties…She must speak on suitable subjects according to occasion. She must be aware of details…acquire a taste for culture…speak King's English. Can a mere maid do all that?"[17] While somewhat more manageable than Darcy's list, the high expectations accorded to rank are nonetheless demonstrated. Despite this social pressure, both heroines dare to reject their prominent and wealthy suitors and forego the practical relief and comfort such marriages could provide, choosing a life of dependency and likely poverty rather than risk injury to their sense of self-respect.

Ultimately, both novels share in the happy ending and romance plot for which Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is most commonly known today. *Pride and Prejudice* provides the inspiration for the archetypal romance plot, where the wealthy aristocratic man falls in love with and eventually overcomes societal obstacles to marry a woman of impoverished means but superior virtue and intelligence. As a result, his estate is enlivened with a democratic fervor, resulting in a happy, heterozeigot

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[16] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice,* ed. R.W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 39.

[17] Mori, *Ema* II, p. 58.

combination of influence and virtue, where individual happiness and societal obligations are balanced with care.

In line with Mori's very eclectic style of historical adaptation, the many plot parallels to Austen's novels could have been partially spurred by the success of the film versions of Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* (directed by Ang Lee) and *Emma* (directed by Douglas McGrath), released in Japan in 1996 and 1997, respectively. While Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was first translated into Japanese in 1926, it achieved widespread notoriety much later through the film adaptations starring Colin Firth (1995) and Matthew McFayden (2005) as Mr. Darcy. In fact, Hans, one of Ema's suitors in the *manga,* also disdains dancing in a Darcyesque manner. When asked if he would like to dance, he replies "I can think of nothing less appealing."[18] His role as rival for Ema's affections is much amplified in the anime series, which was produced after the release of both versions of *Pride and Prejudice* in Japan. The Hans character bears an uncanny resemblance to Matthew McFayden as Darcy as well as to Alan Rickman in *Sense and Sensibility,* whose film preceded the manga (see Figures 2–4).

Figure 2. (Left) Hans from Mori's *Ema* in *Pride and Prejudic*e (2005) (IV.108).
Figure 3. (Right) Matthew McFayden as Darcy.

Figure 4. Alan Rickman as Colonel Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility* (1995).

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[18] Mori, *Ema* III, p. 101.

In short, Mori draws upon both Austen novels as well as the films of Austen novels for some of the visual and thematic content of her *Ema* series.

Austen Before Mori

Mori is undoubtedly aware of Austen's initial reception in Japan, especially the positive attention Austen's novels received from Meiji Japan's premiere English literary scholar, Natsume Sōseki.[19] One chapter of the lengthy *Bungakuron*, or *A Discourse of Literature* contains Sōseki's detailed thoughts on Austen's style, which are now quoted in almost all Japanese works devoted to Austen. The section begins: "Jane Austen is the leading authority in the world of realism. Her ability to score points while putting the most commonplace situations to paper far outstrips that of her male rivals. Take this on my authority. Anyone who is unable to appreciate Austen will be unable to understand the beauty of realism." After this brief introduction to Austen, Sōseki then quotes the entire first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice* in English. Sōseki ends his sixteen-page section on Austen stating that "[Austen's] authority in realism will reign for a hundred generations."[20] By 1907, Natsume Sōseki had become a devoted fan of Jane Austen's work. As interest in Austen and her works grew, translations and

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[19] Yoko McClain, "Sōseki's Views on Women Writers," in Takehisa Iijima and James Vardaman Jr., eds., *The World of Natsume Sōseki* (Tokyo: Kinseido, 1987), p. 95. Sōseki was the first ever to publish on Jane Austen in Japan. His first references to Austen appear in the collected published lectures that would become one of the most influential Japanese works on English literature. Then, in 1909, in his work entitled *Literary Criticism* (*Bungaku Hyōron*), Sōseki again focused on eighteenth-century British literature. Even after he retired from his teaching position at Tokyo Imperial University, Sōseki persistently, almost instinctively, returned to his favorite British authors – particularly Sterne, Swift, and Austen – in his on-going conversations with students about European literature. See also Inger Sigrun Brodey, "Natsume Sōseki and Laurence Sterne: Cross-Cultural Discourse on Literary Linearity," *Comparative Literature* 50/3 (1998): 193–219.

[20] Natsume Sōseki, *Bungakuron* [A Discourse on Literature] and *Natsume Sōseki zenshū* [The Collected Works of Natsume Sōseki] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1965), pp. 365 and 381. I have used a new translation by Joseph A. Murphy from Natsume Sōseki, *Theory of Literature and Other Critical Writings,* eds. Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 107 and 120.

at least one adaptation of her novels began appearing in Japanese in the 1920s and 30s.[21] Oddly enough, due to the timing of this importation, Austen's reception in Japan was mediated by the simultaneous arrival of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century British and European authors, after the long seclusion of the Tokugawa rule. Due to this accidental compression of history, Austen became synchronous with authors like Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855), Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), and George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950).

If one compares Natsume Sōseki's importation and treatment of Austen with the somewhat later but passionate engagement of Yaeko Nogami (1885-1985), one of Japan's most preeminent women authors and important woman's rights proponent, we can see that in both cases, these authors use Austen to help them navigate the transitions associated with rapid modernization of the Meiji period, perhaps without realizing the degree to which Austen's England was also undergoing social transformations. In the hands of Sōseki, Austen serves as a useful example in Japan's political disputes surrounding narration, which were tied to issues of national identity and even national security.[22] At the same time,

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[21] See Eleanor Hogan, "A New Kind of Woman: Marriage and Women as Intertext in the Works of Nogami Yaeko and Jane Austen" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 2001), especially Chapter 3.

[22] Jan Bardsley, *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Woman Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911–1916* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2008), p. 10. Debates over literature in this same Meiji culture were thus thinly veiled discussions of national identity, particularly of Japan's place in relation to its expanding world and the "West." Translating western works of literature and philosophy into Japanese therefore also became, as Jan Bardsley writes, "a matter of national defense as well as of intellectual excitement." According to Etō Jun, "Natsume Sōseki: A Japanese Meiji Intellectual," *The American Scholar* 34 (1965), p. 603: "No matter how radically they differed from one another in their literary or political opinions, Meiji writers shared in the dominant national mission of their time: the creation of a new civilization that would bring together the best features of East and West, while remaining Japanese at its core." See also Eleanor J. Hogan and Inger Sigrun Brodey, "Jane Austen in Japan: 'Good Mother' or 'New Woman,'" *Persuasions On-Line* 28/2 (2008), (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol28no2/brodey-hogan.htm); and Brodey, "Natsume Sōseki and Laurence Sterne," pp. 193–219.

Sōseki's writing and reported comments about Austen suggest that his admiration of her modern narration was counterbalanced – or even potentially based on – very traditional, conflicted views of womanhood and a complete ignorance of Austen's biography. Sōseki assumed, for example, that Austen married, had children, and composed her novels while "cooking potatoes" for her family. [23]

Nogami, like Sōseki, finds Austen useful in her response to the pressure to fuse old and new. Both Sōseki and Nogami found in Austen an author they could use to navigate the seas of change and modernization. Nogami wrote two novels that adapted Austen's work to a contemporary Japanese setting and also translated *Pride and Prejudice*. In 1965, she wrote an introduction to a new edition of *Emma*, called "On First Reading Jane Austen." Speaking of the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*, Nogami wrote: "certainly, this beloved daughter must be the most charming girl in modern English dramas and novels. If Lady Macbeth or Ophelia were brought to life, it would be difficult to imagine the kind of life they would live. However, if Elizabeth were brought to life, it would be easy to picture her stepping lively down the streets of today's London."[24] This is, in a sense, the achievement of Kaoru Mori.

Ranking the Gentlemen

The distinctions of rank and wealth form a major theme in Mori's *Ema*, as in all of Austen's fiction. William's father expresses the distinction in terms borrowed from Benjamin Disraeli: "Great Britain is one...Yet within it are two countries...Marriage between two people from the same *country* is to be desired."[25] This is reminiscent of the tirade in *Pride and Prejudice* by Lady Catherine (Darcy's nearest relative and head of his

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[23] See Hogan and Brodey, "Jane Austen in Japan" for further treatment of this topic. It may be that in order to accept Austen as a female writer of importance, Sōseki needed for her to be a mother; in other words, Austen's ideas and writings were rendered "safe" through his constant references to motherhood.

[24] Yaeko Nogami, "Hajimete Austen o yonda hanashi" [On First Reading Jane Austen], *Nogami Yaeko zenshū* [The Collected Works of Nogami Yaeko] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1982), p. 362.

[25] Mori, *Ema* II, p. 15. Mori herself points out in *The Emma Victorian Gazette* that this is a reference to a novel by Benjamin Disraeli: *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845), referring to "the wealthy and "the poor" (Mori, *Ema* II, p. 88).

extended family), in attempting to prevent Darcy's union with his social inferior Elizabeth: "are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?"[26] In Austen's oeuvre, one can easily detect the broader changes in England's social and economic structure – the shift from an agricultural to a mercantile economy, and the diminishing distinction between the landed gentry and the merchant class, as wealthy tradespeople purchased landed estates, blurring the line between self-made fortunes and inherited fortunes. This theme appears in each of Austen's novels, and becomes increasingly prominent as she writes later in life. These themes are even more apparent in the historical setting that Mori chooses, some 75 years later in metropolitan London. William Jones' family (the Knightley–Darcy equivalent), is very wealthy, but their rank in society is precarious because their fortune was made through trade (and thus have more in common with characters like the Bingleys in *Pride and Prejudice*). This is the source for the pressure William feels to marry well – that is, to marry a woman of title and "good family."[27]

In fact, Volume V opens with a statement that combines events of *Pride and Prejudice* with the sentiments that inform *Persuasion*: "Some upstart in London has bought 200 acres of land!"[28] In both Austen's world and the one that Mori creates, the landed gentry are being displaced and the growing pains are felt on both sides of the social divide. The landed gentry are striving to distinguish themselves from "upstarts" in both cases (also from immigrants, in the case of *Ema*). Yet, in general, both authors favor the upstarts. In *Persuasion*, Austen focuses on the shift of economic and moral authority from the Elliots to the Crofts, as the Crofts rent Kellynch Hall, when Sir Walter no longer can afford to live there. In *Ema*, the only characters who are confident in their social status (particularly the head of the Campbell family) are similarly shown to be growing morally and economically bankrupt.

As a result of this atmosphere of social change, the issue of what constitutes a "gentleman" is under fire in both settings. In particular, the question is whether the qualities that mark one as a gentleman are the result of external circumstance (such as birth or rank) or whether they can be

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[26] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 357.

[27] See Mori, *Ema* I, pp. 136 and 157. Mori's early volumes in the series show initial confusion regarding terminology for rank in Victorian England, calling the same characters all of the following, as though interchangeable: "high born," "upper-class," "royalty," "nobleman," "aristocrats."

[28] Mori, *Ema* V, p. 3.

earned or learned. In Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth asserts her equality with the formidable Lady Catherine de Bourgh by claiming she is a "gentleman's daughter": "In marrying your nephew I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal." Yet, for Lady Catherine, Elizabeth does not fully qualify as a "lady" because her mother's family was in trade. "True. You *are* a gentleman's daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition."[29] Thus, the dispute here is to what extent parentage or marriage can dilute one's membership in the gentleman-class. Earlier, in Chapter 34, Elizabeth's refusal of Darcy's first proposal includes the following censure: "You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner."[30] Elizabeth sees "him start at this," because she has cut him to the quick: the suggestion however, is not that he does not belong to the class of gentleman, but that he is not behaving *like* the gentleman. In other words, within the novel, "gentleman" connotes both position and character/virtue. The one is due to the accident of birth; the latter can be lost or presumably also earned.

Within *Ema*, this debate reappears when William is discussing with his father whether or not he should be allowed to marry a maid. William argues through analogy to the question of the "gentleman": "A long time ago, you told me that one isn't born a gentleman. One becomes one." His father replies with yet another analogy: "Depending on its qualities and training, a horse can become an excellent steed. But a cat can never become a horse. It lacks the necessary prerequisites."[31] In both cases, the terms are undergoing a shift – and both Austen and Mori sympathize with those who define the term more liberally, supporting a hierarchy more based on virtue than heredity.

Trains, Queen Victoria, and Emperor Meiji

Mori is not the first to transpose Austen into Victorian garb, moving her later by more than half a century. When Nogami Yaeko serialized a loose translation of *Pride and Prejudice*, beginning in 1935, it featured the characters in Victorian dress and Victorian coiffures (Figure 5).

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[29] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 356.
[30] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice,* p. 192.
[31] Mori, *Ema* II, p. 59.

Figure 5. The pages of *Niji no hana*, as it was serialized in *Fujin kōron*, beginning in 1935, including portraits of the characters in Victorian garb.

The first English-language film version of *Pride and Prejudice*, made in 1940 by MGM, starring Greer Garson and Lawrence Olivier, also placed the characters in Victorian dress (supposedly because Greer Garson thought she looked better in them). Several of the Internet comments comparing Austen and Mori also reveal contemporary audiences that mistakenly think Austen's novels are set in Victorian times.[32] This is perhaps partly due to

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[32] Holly Ellingwood, "Emma: A Victorian Romance – Season 2," Active Anime, April 12, 2009 (accessed August 10, 2009, http://www.active anime.com/html/content/view/4828/57/). Holly Ellingwood, for example, writes in her review of the second season of *Ema* the anime series: "[*Ema*] is a lovely period account that beautifully captures the essence and era of Victorian romances. It has done so with such artistry and so artfully that I immediate longed to watch Kiera Knightly in *Pride and Prejudice* yet again and delve into my share of Jane Austen books…A must see for Jane Austen fans and those who love period romances such as *Pride and Prejudice*. Although not to be confused with Jane Austen's *Emma*, Kaoru Mori's story is one just as convincingly Victorian in tone and hopeful aspirations for the virtuous at heart."

Queen Victoria's conscious promulgation of rules of etiquette, resulting in the Victorian Period's becoming synonymous with codes of manners in the popular imagination.

In Mori's case, it seems she chooses urban, Victorian London rather than Austen's rural settings to emphasize socio-economic discrepancies and the speed of social change. Mori constantly reminds the reader both verbally and visually of the changing society of *Ema*, as the pages in Figure 6 demonstrate. Mori describes the Industrial Revolution and even details like Watt's invention of the steam engine, providing concrete examples of material culture that influenced the economic structures of the time.[33] As the example of Figure 6 shows, Mori is committed to showing the benefits and losses of these changes, but the emphasis of Mori's narration is squarely on the benefits to the newly upwardly mobile, like Ema and the Jones family, despite the differing social status of these two examples. In short, the Victorian period's rapid developments in industry

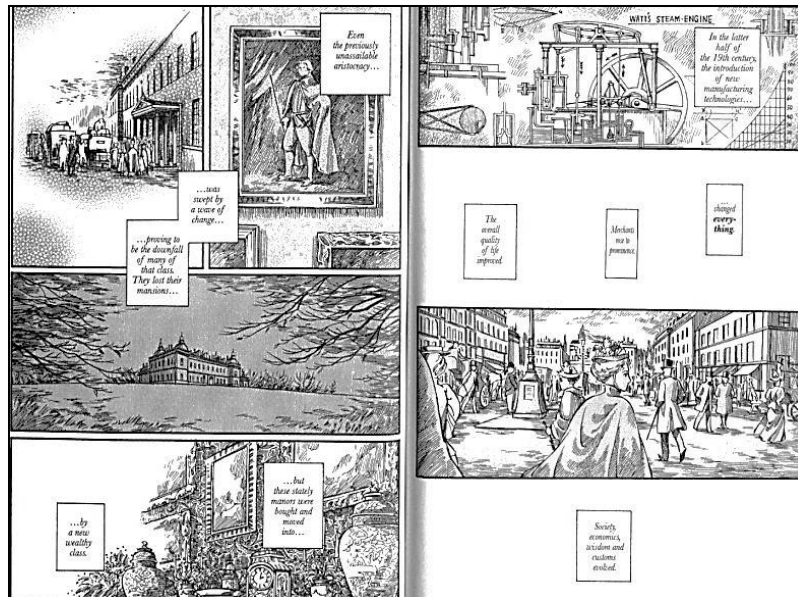**Figure 6. Mori displays the changing society of *Ema*.**

[33] Mori, *Ema* III, pp. 137–138.

and science form a central underlying theme in *Ema*, partly because the emphasis on industrialization and urbanization enables the change in status and the diffusion of rank. Yet permeating the work more subtly is a nostalgia for lost traditions and social forms.
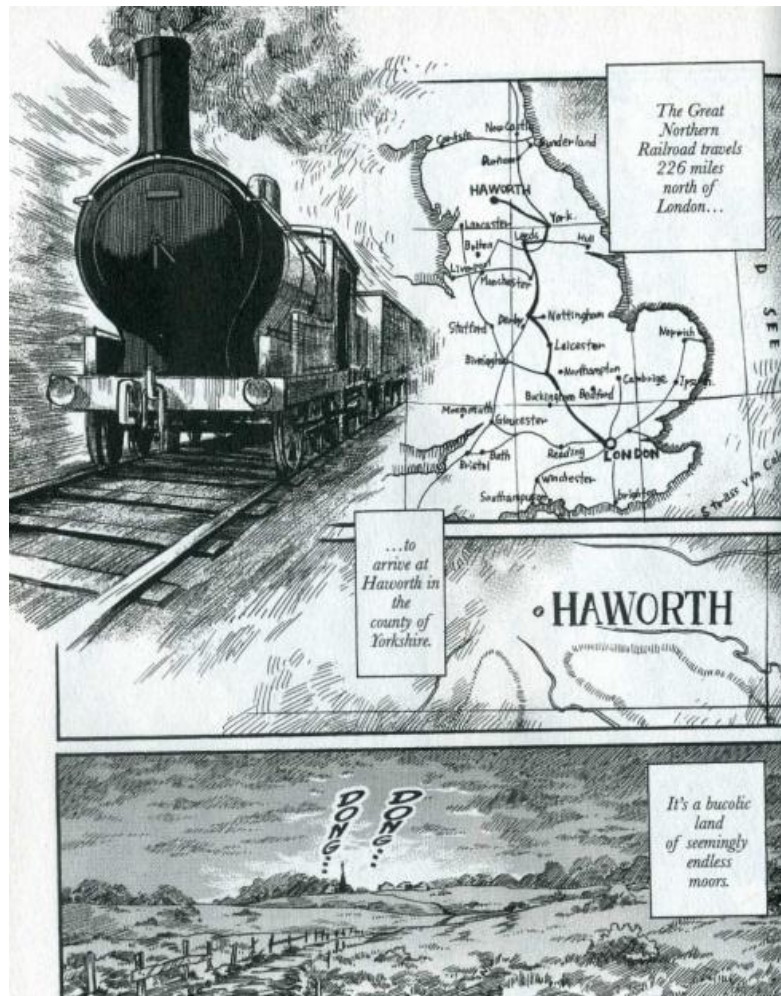

Figure 7. The Steam Locomotive in *Ema*.

The most blatant symbol for this change is the train, or steam locomotive. The train was also considered one of the primary symbols of modernization in Meiji-era Japan, which overlapped roughly three decades with the Victorian Period in England. Thus the *Ema* set in Victorian England is also a reflection of Meiji Japan. To remember the multivalent symbolism associated with the train in Meiji Japan, one need only recall the train imagery in Natsume Sōseki's *Sanshirō*, where the hero discovers a body that has been severed in half by a train. The reactions are divided between the modern scientist, who is intrigued to see the insides of the body, and Sanshirō, who feels all the pain of the probably suicide victim. In Volume III of *Ema*, the train receives a title role (see Figure 7).

The train not only serves as a technological marvel, but as a new social opportunity, dividing individuals from or connecting individuals to their personal pasts with a new fluidity. In addition, as the train slices through the visual landscape, it also replicates the class system in its ticket structure. Ema accidentally purchases a first-class ticket, for example, and while this embarrasses her, it also provides her with new social opportunities and suggests her implicit social mobility and enables her to meet her next employer. And just as this mobility serves Ema for the purposes of escape from the Jones family, it also symbolizes a newly atomized society, where one can more readily achieve anonymity and sever one's ties to the past. Using the train and other industrial inventions, Mori takes themes that are present in Austen as well and makes them more explicit through the direct reference to material culture in the Victorian/Meiji period. In this way, Mori provides an opportunity for her heroine to emerge and defy hierarchies, revealing a natural grace in the midst of the shifting social strata.

Mori's choice of a Victorian setting for her story may stem partly from a nostalgia for an early Meiji world. In fact, the dates of *Ema*'s setting (1895–1896) correspond to a time in Japan when Emperor Meiji had just promulgated the Meiji Constitution, officially eliminating many of the traditional distinctions and privileges of the samurai class and allowing intermarriage between the classes in 1890. Japan had an international debut by exhibiting at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893; the first liner to Europe left Yokohama port in 1896; and the first express train was built between Shinbashi and Kobe in 1896. Mori's London is the London that Natsume Sōseki visited only 6 years later. The England that Mori depicts is the England that the Japanese encountered in early Meiji – an England undergoing similar growth pains as those faced by Japan at least twice in its history – once with the Meiji restoration and once in the

occupation following its defeat in the Pacific War (WWII). Victorian London may, in fact, be more similar to Meiji Japan than first appears. Audiences view Meiji transformations as the definition of extreme and rapid progress at a price, just as Mori capitalizes on these associations in her setting of *Ema*.

Maids, Geisha, and Jogakusei

As much as Mori borrows from Austen and Austen-related sources, the fact remains that Ema is most conspicuously defined by her profession: a maid. There are no maid-heroines in Austen. She also differs from Victorian authors such as Brontë and Dickens, whose working-class heroines are described with greater social realism and much more menial labor and hardship. The contemporary appeal of maids in twenty-first century Japan is more overtly eroticized than the British maid in Victorian literature, more reminiscent of the stereotypical French maid, but also with an intellectual element added. The missing link between this Victorian-maid setting and contemporary taste is the geisha tradition, where beauty and eroticism combines with skill and intelligence. In geisha training, *maiko* were first trained from a young age under one roof and moved to a different house for additional training before qualifying for entrance into and performance at the teahouse. With this long period of disciplined training and seclusion, the geisha tradition emphasized beauty, grace, arts, and intelligence (primarily in the form of conversability).

In some ways, Ema resembles a poised and refined *maiko* or geisha more than she does an English maid. In fact, Ema's training resembles the progression of a *maiko* under Kelly Stownar's roof, to a self-standing geisha, when she is accompanied and trained by the joined forces of the German Mrs. Mölders and the exotic British New Woman Mrs. Trollope. When one considers the professional activities in which Ema is engaged, she is nearly always shown as making and pouring tea, especially while she is in the employ of Mrs. Stownar. Historical geisha, on the other hand, generally served alcohol in their public performances, and the serving of tea, while also done by women, was considered a more domestic activity. Here the activity of tea pouring moves to a liminal position between domestic and public, as Ema is on display pouring tea as a part of her profession. It is, for example, the first thing that Ema does after meeting William. Mori uses tea, which of course is a British as well as a Japanese obsession, to show Ema's changing status as well. At one point, when Ema and Mrs. Mölders are visiting Mrs. Trollope, Ema is suddenly treated as a guest rather than servant: she is *served* tea rather than doing the serving for

others. Mori emphasizes the significance of the occasion with a point-of-view close-up of the tea cup that Ema is served. The tea cup thus suggests her changing position in society, while also pointing to her long-standing position of servitude. Mori thus indirectly uses the geisha tradition to suggest Ema's superior qualities and training, as well as her particular aptitude.

And yet, geisha are also trained in the arts of conversation, and what is particularly striking in *Ema* is the heroine's near silence. Her intelligence is not conveyed through conversation, but rather visually, through references to the geisha tradition and through the complex semiotics of spectacles, to which I return below.

Mori's New Woman: Spectacle(s) of Intelligence
In Japan, the twentieth-century feminist interpretation of Austen (championed by Nogami) was highly influenced by the discourse surrounding the New Woman, or *atarashii onna,* a progressive ideal inspired by Ibsen and Shaw in late Victorian England and imported to Japan during the early twentieth century. New Women, including their *jokagusei* subset, are a Victorian–Meiji phenomenon, at least in origin. Thus, in both Nogami Yaeko's case and in Mori's, we see that the importation and influence of Austen is closely tied to broader concerns – whether cultural, political, or societal. It may seem strange to many Western readers today (who despite recent trends in Austen scholarship may still view Austen as apolitical) that Austen was chosen as a model author to help guide Japan through its modernization and Westernization during the first three decades of the twentieth century. And yet, I would argue that Mori continues in this vein, established by Nogami and continued by other prominent feminist authors such as Kanai Mieko (b. 1947) and Kurahashi Yumiko (1935–2005).[34]

By incorporating New Woman and *jogakusei* iconography into her manga series, Mori emphasizes this early feminist connection, albeit somewhat anachronistically. Through her complex and multicultural semiotics, Mori proposes Ema as a New Woman who is both old and new. Maids of course, like the *jogakusei*, are "easily distinguished by their

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[34] Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley have both written interesting articles about Kurahashi and Kanai's relationship to Jane Austen. Both use direct and indirect references to Austen to create their more contemporary parodies of the romance genre.

unusual clothing choice."[35] But the most explicit example of the liberated, educated woman in the *Ema* series is not the heroine herself, but William Jones' mother, who lives alone and goes by the pseudonym of Mrs. Trollope. She lives apart from her husband and children because the couple could not agree about societal conventions. She sports short hair (to her husband's chagrin when they meet), a Japanese kimono, and radical ideas.[36] She gives away jewelry to a female friend (usually a man's prerogative), and designs her own home as an imitation of the Crystal Palace exhibit. As Rebecca Copeland has indicated, citing outraged Meiji editorials and authors such as Atomi Kakei, short hair was a radical statement among the *jogakusei* of Meiji Japan: "A woman with cropped hair is practically indecent. Although we see such creatures in the cities now, such a practice did not exist of old…In any country, a gentle and temperate lady has long hair which she dresses."[37]

In fact, this new custom of cropping hair so shocked Meiji society, that an 1873 law prohibited women from cutting their hair.[38] Within the world of *Ema,* Mrs. Trollope stands apart for her radical notions. It is, notably, *not* the heroine Ema who has the cropped hair.[39] Mori's Ema remains docile, quietly elegant, and ultra-feminine. And yet, Ema has one characteristic that could also mark her as a *jogakusei*: the conspicuous spectacles or glasses that she is given by Mrs. Stownar (see Figure 8).

They form, in effect, part of the education and pedigree that she receives under Mrs. Stownar's tutelage. Ema combines the glasses and the tacit degree of erudition (her knowledge of French) that mark her as an echo

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[35] Rebecca Copeland, "Fashioning the Feminine: Images of the Modern Girl Student in Meiji Japan," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 30–31 (2006), p. 32.

[36] It is interesting that in this world of reversals that the kimono is used as a symbol of her radical adoption of foreign ideas and cultures, whereas in Japan it is a sign of traditional femininity.

[37] Meiji newspaper article quoted and translated by Liza Dalby, *Kimono: Fashioning Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 75 (cited in Copeland, "Fashioning the Feminine," p. 16).

[38] Copeland, "Fashioning the Feminine," p. 16.

[39] In contrast, the MGM version of *Pride and Prejudice* sets its heroine apart in much the same way as Mori does Mrs. Trollope. Unlike all the other female characters, Elizabeth Bennet's attire is marked by prominent masculine features, such as ties and lapels, connecting her heroic qualities with intelligence and a masculine outspokenness. Thanks to Jade Bettin for this observation.

of the *jogakusei* inhabiting Japan at the same time as her fictional world. In Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo*, for example, the character Osei wears eye glasses "even though they ruin her perfect vision."[40] But whereas some *jogakusei* would wear glasses just for effect, Ema differs in that she needs these glasses to function well in society. Without them, she breaks dishes, stumbles, and cannot recognize people.

Figure 8. Cover of first volume of *Ema* manga in English translation.

Mori suggests the desirability of a hybrid of traditional femininity and companionate marriage alongside social mobility, intelligence, and independence. Ema would seem to be one of the few characters who achieve these characteristics without isolating themselves from society. Yet here we are limited by an interesting narrative choice made by Mori. Mori does not use thought bubbles; the reader is never privy to Ema's private thoughts, except by reading her facial expressions. This is particularly

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[40] Marleigh Grayer Ryan, ed. and trans., *Japan's First Modern Novel: Ukigumo of Futabatei Shimei* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 210. Many thanks to Jan Bardsley for this helpful suggestion.

striking given her nominal heritage from Austen's *Emma*, where the heroine's perspective dominates the entire narrative. Mori's Ema does not share her internal thoughts through words. She remains a silent spectacle, leaving a gap for readers to interpret. In this way, Mori significantly diverges from traditional narrative techniques of the *shōjo manga* genre, where copious use of thought bubbles allows readers to develop intimacy with the youthful heroines. Interestingly, Mori's reader must acquire such intimacy through non-verbal interactions, such as silent frames and body language instead.

In this series, Ema says almost nothing to anyone other than her mistresses; her social interaction is otherwise limited to serving tea, except for her few outings with William Jones. Even there, William does almost all the talking. It seems that Emma's silence contributes to her femininity and grace. The most outspoken female characters are prostitutes, exiled wives, and masculinized cooks. It appears that Ema's intellect or thoughts must be sacrificed in order for the comic resolution to occur. The attractive character of Mrs. Trollope also does not achieve a functional blend of traditional femininity, companionate marriage, and independence: she is still outcast within her own family's society, as the idea of living under a pseudonym suggests. In fact, her pseudonym suggests that short hair and independence are still associated with ill-repute or "indecency" – that the appearance of intelligence must compromise female modesty or virtue.

At an interesting turning point, when Ema is at the peak of her final makeover, resplendent in a gown and jewelry, Ema is forced to remove her glasses. As a result, she does not recognize others in the ballroom, including William Jones. She does not cut her hair, but she must take off her glasses to wear a ball gown. And therefore, symbolically, she must blind herself in order to fit into society. While Mori's literary move to Victorian England in some ways allows for the celebration of a virtuous and talented orphan to rise in status as her virtue deserves, it also expresses a nostalgia for Meiji Japan – or a nostalgia for a world in transition – where possibilities for change existed alongside a very traditional class structure. In other words, it celebrates dependence and nostalgia along with liberation, yet is also reveals a significant cost to her social mobility.

Just as Austen's reputation in the United States is divided among those who look to her for examples of refinement and domestic elegance and those who look to her for rebellious wit and social commentary, if not proto-feminism, so too in Japanese literary and popular culture Austen functions as a symbol of both conservative and progressive elements in society – of tradition as well as liberation. And as Mori innovatively

interprets Austen's complex and multicultural literary inheritance in her *manga* series, she also teases post-feminists into a possible complacency about the implications of Ema's silence and objectification. Meanwhile, Mori's transformation of Ema into silent spectacle opens the door for the heroine's reappropriation and popularization into the world of *cos-play*, maid cafés, and even personal robots.[41]

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[41] Sega Toys has just introduced EMA, a new, "interactive personal robot," which obeys voice commands and even has a "kiss" function, when a face approaches her. This latest "Ema" in Japan has taken servitude and objectification one step further and commodified it. In this case, the name EMA is an acronym for "Eternal Maiden Actualization." Thankfully, Mori's adaptations of Austen are more nuanced.

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MAIKO BOOM:
THE REVIVAL OF KYOTO'S NOVICE GEISHA

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Famous as a symbol of old Kyoto, the apprentice geisha known as *maiko* are enjoying remarkable popularity in Japan in the first decade of the new millennium. One can see this "boom," to use the Japanese term for a spike in public interest, in the proliferation of all kinds of media and products related to maiko. [1] Maiko blogs, autobiographies, and dance performances, maiko-related goods and services, and even maiko movies and television dramas have all been part of the mix. The vogue for maiko has also led to a notable increase in the number of young women who wish to join the profession. By the spring of 2008, Kyoto could boast of being home to one hundred maiko, the most the city had seen since the 1950s. [2] Intriguingly, the attraction of maiko has accompanied a surge of tourism to Kyoto as the site of native tradition, but also comes at a time when girl culture claims much attention in Japan and in Japanese Studies. [3] Novels by award-winning writers and pundits' essays in Japan demonstrate a curiosity

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[1] In this case, however, I am the one calling this proliferation of interest in maiko a "boom."

[2] Shigeyuki Murase, "'Maiko' Fever Strikes Kyoto," *The Asahi Shimbun*, April 18, 2008 (accessed March 23, 2009, http://www.asahi.com/ english/Herald-asahi/TKY200804180064.html). Murase reported that although there had been over one hundred maiko in the ancient capital in 1955, their numbers had decreased in later decades. Seventy-six young women worked as maiko in 1965, but only twenty-eight in 1975, and since 1985, there had generally been between fifty and eighty until the recent increase. According to photographer Aihara Kyoko, there were 164 tea houses in operation in Kyoto's five hanamachi and 198 women actively working as geiko (geisha) and 82 as maiko in 2007. Aihara Kyoko, *Maiko-san no dōgu-chō* [Guide to Maiko Accessories] (Tokyo: Sankaido, 2007), p. 15.

[3] Nishio Kumiko, *Kyōto hanamachi no keieigaku* [Business Administration of Kyoto Geisha Districts] (Tokyo: Toyo keizai, 2007), p. 1. Over 48,000,000 tourists visited Kyoto in 2006.

about what drives girls' self-expression and their enthusiastic consumerism.[4] Fears have emerged, too, over the "moral decay" of girls, inciting criticism of such "bad girl" habits as applying make-up on trains and the phenomenon of *enjo kōsai* (compensated dating). In light of this fascination with girl culture, what vision of girlhood does today's maiko represent? What has piqued such interest in this old-fashioned image of Japanese maidenhood, especially when the free-flying, in-your-face teenage girl has provoked such curiosity?

This article explores these questions by surveying highlights from a range of texts produced in the last few years in Japan, including two by maiko themselves, as well as maiko-related products and services. Although most venerate the maiko, kitschy representations and parody have a role here, too. The cultural texts that comprise the maiko boom and the rising number of maiko put forward a vibrant image of Japanese girlhood that offers feminine pleasures, but one that is held in check by the rigors of tradition and the uniformity of the image itself. The various texts show that much of the maiko's attraction lies in her distance from ordinary life – her freedom from school, the pressures of dating, and the boredom of most jobs. Instead, she has an enviable involvement in parties, sumptuous dress, feminine codes of etiquette, and the arts. In fact, her extraordinary life and costume give the impression of a charming character who has stepped right out of the world of a *shōjo manga* magazine (comic magazines for teenage girls) set in a fairyland of a bygone time.

As a young woman sheltered within a world of classic arts and old customs while being supervised by numerous female mentors, the maiko experiences a significantly extended girlhood. In contrast to the popular image of girls who engage in risky behaviors, do whatever they like, and show little interest in adult responsibility, the maiko is imagined as one who finds freedom and maturity within the constraints of her profession. One cannot ignore, however, the cultural texts' depiction of the maiko's work as including nightly parties with mostly older male clients. This aspect of the maiko life prompts comparison and contrast with teens' engagement in

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[4] For discussion of moral panic over girl behavior past and present in Japan, see Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); and David Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local: Sex, Violence, and Anxiety in Contemporary Japan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

compensated dating. The teen experimenting with *enjo kōsai* is courting danger, but the maiko operates within a safely supervised environment. Following Miriam Silverberg's discussion of the 1920s café girl (*jokyū*) as the poor man's geisha, one can make some connection between the *enjo kōsai* teen and the maiko as figures in the Japanese cultural landscape that provide girlish appeal to older men of different wealth and social circles. Yet, we must also consider the powerful fantasy of an ultra-feminine life that maiko present to girls and women as a key element of the maiko boom.[5]

Celebrations of the maiko as a symbol of Japanese tradition exclude the harsher aspects of her history. Maiko representations in 2009 could not be more different from those popularized in 19th century postcards favored in the West that depicted pretty little girls ensconced in layers of silk, for example, or in the early postwar Japanese media. In the 1950s, just when the maiko population began declining in Kyoto and as the number of young women graduating from high school and going on to college was on the rise, the geisha profession was portrayed as the residue of feudal Japan in a newly democratic era. Mizoguchi Kenji's film *A Geisha* (*Gion Matsuri*, 1953) and Naruse Mikio's *Flowing* (*Nagareru*, 1956), an adaptation of Koda Aya's novel based on her experiences as a maid in a Tokyo *okiya* (geisha house), depict the maiko and geisha as victims of patriarchy and prostitution.[6] Similarly, Masuda Sayo's autobiography, published initially in the magazine *Housewife's Companion* (*Shufu no tomo*) in 1957, describes her life as a hot spring resort geisha as one of long, hard suffering and her days in the okiya as nothing less than child abuse. When she takes up work later in a factory, she finds that others look down on her when they find out about her geisha past.[7] Such representations are closer to the view popularized by Arthur Golden's internationally best-selling novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha* (1997) that is largely set in the 1930s than to the lives of maiko

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[5] Thanks to Laura Miller for this reference. See Miriam Silverberg, "The Café Waitress Sang the Blues," in *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 73–107.

[6] *A Geisha*, dir. Mizoguchi Kenji (1953); and *Flowing* [*Nagareru*], dir. Naruse Mikio (1956).

[7] Masuda Sayo, *Autobiography of a Geisha*, trans. G.G. Rowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

and geisha today.[8] Thus, the contemporary image of the maiko and her actual life and work retain the attraction of traditional costume and arts practice, but not at all the connotation or the fact of a girl trapped in slavery. Maiko in the 21st century choose the profession. Moreover, the emphasis on the maiko's arts training and extraordinary costumes, her position, as one geisha puts it, "as a walking exhibit of Kyoto traditional craft," mute the associations with prostitution in the past and comparisons with *enjo kōsai* today.[9]

Representative of romanticized Japanese past staged in the present, the maiko has become a dreamy figure of escape. She is the idol of costume play (cos-play; *kosupure*) for girls and sentimental TV drama for women of all ages. We can even say that, as she's been transformed from postwar victim to millennial princess, the maiko has become the Good Girl of Japanese Tradition, a maiden apart from the individualistic, hedonistic desires ascribed to contemporary teens. The magic of historical cos-play obscures her role in the service sector and the rigors of the school system she has left. Cos-play also magnifies her nostalgic quality as the quintessential Japanese girl of lost Japan, the time traveler who seems beyond the markers of class, academic degree, and the ordinary life of the 21st century altogether.[10] Of course, this tribute to maidenly virtue, cuteness, and Kyoto tradition – all rolled into one sugary ideal – can be too much for some to take, a factor that turns serious maiko appreciation into the irreverent maiko parody on display in a recent Kyoto manga exhibit and the 2007 slapstick film *Maiko Haaaan!!!* (Miiiss Maiko) discussed below. *Maiko Haaaan!!!* pokes fun at Kyoto mystique and ridicules the exclusivity

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[8] Arthur Golden, *Memoirs of a Geisha* (New York: Knopf, 1997). Western fascination with geisha is a rich topic for discussion. For references to scholarship on this topic, see Jan Bardsley, "Liza Dalby's *Geisha*: The View Twenty-five Years Later," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 31 (2009): 309–323.

[9] Yamaguchi Kimijo, *Suppin geiko: Kyōto Gion no ukkari nikki* [Bare-faced Geisha: A Careless Diary of Kyoto and Gion] (Tokyo: Locus, 2007).

[10] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xv. According to Boym, "...nostalgia...actually is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress."

of the geisha world as well as obsession with the maiko. Read together, all these maiko images raise questions of how girl and nation entwine in these representations, the topic to which we return in the conclusion.

Maiko 101: Training and Traditions

Our discussion best begins with the basic facts about who a maiko is and what she does at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Those aspiring to become maiko today take on a challenging training program that requires learning the arts, business, and etiquette codes of the geisha profession. Unlike in the early postwar when most maiko hailed from Kyoto or were the daughters of geisha, contemporary maiko may come from anywhere in Japan and are likely to apply to an okiya by email. They may have a desire to learn the Japanese arts or are simply entranced with the maiko's life and costume. Prospective maiko do not need to have arts training and preferences for height and weight are not strictly maintained, although those with imperfect eyesight must wear contact lenses, not eyeglasses. [11] Many choose to enter the profession after completing compulsory education, generally at age fifteen, in lieu of going to high school. Young women can become maiko, however, until about age twenty, the official age of adulthood in Japan.[12] Those under twenty need their parent or guardian's permission. Given the old connotations of geisha quarters as red light districts and more importantly, the significance of having academic degrees in Japan, parents may be wary of their daughter's choice to enter an okiya, as the memoirs and NHK-TV program discussed in the next sections illustrate.

As novices, the maiko progress through three stages of apprenticeship: as a *shikomi* (trainee) for several months; as a *minarai* (apprentice) for a party-laden few weeks; and finally, as a *maiko*, a position that may last a few years until a woman either quits or decides to become a geisha. Maiko spend most of their days in arts lessons and their evenings in parties (*ozashiki*) at which, accompanied by geisha, they perform songs and/or dances for clients. They also practice for lavish public dance performances. Training to become a maiko requires commitment to a new lifestyle, a new household and community, and even a new language, a

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[11] Nishio, *Kyōto hanamachi no keieigaku*, pp. 40–41; Liza Dalby, *Geisha* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. xxi–xxii.
[12] Nishio, *Kyōto hanamachi no keieigaku,* p. 92.

lilting Kyoto dialect. Signing on as a shikomi means moving into an okiya in one of the five geisha or flower districts (*hanamachi*) in Kyoto: Gion, Gion-Kobu, Kamishichiken, Miyagawa-chō, or Ponto-chō. The apprentice lives in the okiya until either quitting or achieving the rank of geisha. Becoming a geisha requires taking more control of one's career, living independently and assuming responsibility for one's income and expenses. Kiriki Chizu, a well-known former geisha, laments that many maiko prefer to use their training to obtain positions in posh inns and restaurants or opt for marriage rather than becoming geisha and carrying on the profession.[13]

Strict hierarchy obtains in the hanamachi. Aspiring geisha should spend much time in learning the names of teahouse owners, their clients, okiya mothers, geisha, and other maiko, and building relations with their many arts instructors. Maiko are not the only Japanese, however, who learn their craft in a communal setting. Sumo wrestlers train and live together. Girls in the Takarazuka Music School who train for the Takarazuka Revue also live communally in a strictly hierarchical environment.[14]

Maiko in Their Own Words

Two young members of the *karyūkai* (flower and willow world) have recently published books that give readers an insider's view of their world. Ichimame,[15] a maiko in the Kamishichiken hanamachi, wrote

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[13] Kiriki Chizu, *Aisareru jōzu ni naru Gion-ryū: Onna migaki* [The Gion Style: Polishing Femininity to Be Adept at Being Loved] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007), pp. 38–39.

[14] Leonie R. Stickland, *Gender Gymnastics: Performing and Consuming Japan's Takarazuka Revue* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2008), p. 87. Although Takarazuka Music School long accepted students who had only finished compulsory education, in 1980 the School barred entrants who were not also enrolled in formal high school. Stickland believes that concern for the girls' moral training may have been part of the reason behind the 1980 policy change; "...for girls might lead an 'irregular' life if not attending day-school, learn too much about the adult world, and thus lose the disciplined, sheltered innocence that Takarazuka seems to value in its recruits."

[15] She has taken the name Kamishichiken Ichimame. "Kamishichiken" is her new last name and also the name of her hanamachi. The "Ichi" of her new given name "Ichimame" places her in a long line of geisha extending

Etiquette for a Maiko (*Maiko no osahō*, 2007) and young Miyagawa-chō geisha Komomo collaborated with a photographer in creating the beautiful pictorial book, *A Geisha's Journey: My Life as a Kyoto Apprentice* (2008).[16] Both authors refer deferentially to their seniors in the karyūkai and speak modestly of their own accomplishments, but this unassuming stance does not hide the obvious evidence of their own ambition and initiative. They are hardly naïve girls. Ichimame and Komomo have taken an entrepreneurial approach to their positions in the karyūkai, marketing the maiko at home and abroad. Ichimame has her own line of maiko cosmetics and for some time maintained a blog both in English and Japanese. Her book advertises the Kamishichiken summer beer garden, inviting readers to meet her there. Komomo's book appeared in Japanese and English, and she made trips overseas to promote it.

Figure 1. "Welcome to the Beer Garden." Kamishichiken Ichimame,
***Etiquette for a Maiko* (2007), p. 99. Courtesy of Daiwa shobō.**

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from her elder geisha sisters to a host of Kamishichiken predecessors who also have "Ichi" in their names.

[16] Kamishichiken Ichimame, *Maiko no osahō* [Etiquette for a Maiko] (Tokyo: Daiwa shobō, 2007); and Naoyuki Ogino, *A Geisha's Journey: My Life as a Kyoto Apprentice*, trans. Gearoid Reidy and Philip Price (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2008).

Ichimame and Komomo speak of their lives as dominated by the demands of hanamachi customs, where minute flaws in performance become major cause for concern. They have little time off and no real break from being maiko. Despite this emphasis on discipline, the maiko life that emerges in these books is one of a long, protected girlhood and a form of girlhood, in fact, which extends far beyond that of an ordinary Japanese teen. Both authors portray their maiko training as a gradual coming into adulthood. Moreover, they paint adulthood as a maturity that comes through a mastery of feminine deportment and the geisha's artistic sensibility. It is not associated with sexual experience nor intellectual achievement or social critique. Consequently, it is an exceedingly aestheticized coming of age and one that values becoming adept at managing human relations. While the maiko's mentors on this path to adulthood are stern, they are respected as enforcers of a tough hanamachi love. Their insistence on adherence to custom gives the maiko a sense of being part of stable community, one absolutely convinced of its own worth and assured of its identity. Thus, the maiko reaches adulthood when she fully assimilates to the hanamachi and is able to become one of its gatekeepers.

Ichimame's *Etiquette for a Maiko* is one among several guides to feminine demeanor and beauty authored by geisha. As ethnomusicologist Kelly Foreman has explained, although many in Japan may regard the geisha as less respectable than a wife and mother, she is admired as an expert in Japanese etiquette.[17] Lacing her guide with colorful drawings and photographs and organizing her narrative into short chapters, Kamishichiken Ichimame gives the reader a view of a world where the classic arts mesh with contemporary cuteness. She is a teenager born in Kyoto who fulfilled a secret childhood dream of training to be a maiko after graduating from middle school (the end of compulsory education in Japan). Her friends were surprised, but accepting, and "her parents supported their daughter's choice even though those around them disapproved." As noted above, this disapproval may have had as much to do with Ichimame's decision to quit formal education at such a young age as to enter the somewhat suspect profession of the geisha. Even though she was born in

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[17] Kelly M. Foreman, "The Perfect Woman: Geisha, Etiquette, and the World of Japanese Traditional Arts," in Jan Bardsley and Laura Miller, eds., *Manners and Mischief: Gender and Power in Japanese Conduct Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pp. 67–79.

the city, Ichimame finds speaking in the hanamachi dialect, as required of all Kyoto maiko, to be a chore indeed, and experiences constant correction from those around her.[18] Encountering this dialect in Ichimame's text gives the reader a sense of immediate encounter with the "exotic" world of the geisha community. To a certain extent, like Ichimame, the reader used to standard Japanese must also accommodate herself to the dialect.

What does the reader learn of the maiko's life from Ichimame? Ichimame gives the impression that she tries to be an exceptionally good daughter to her new family, thanking all in Kamishichiken for their kindness and promising to be a responsible representative of their community. Describing the intricacies of her training, Ichimame explains how she needs to learn the ropes "not so much through memorization, but rather through internalization," that is, by repetition of all geisha speech and movement until it becomes natural to her.[19] She devotes much of her guide to the minute details of her cosmetics, the changing and seasonal patterns of her kimono for day and evening, the complexities of dressing as a maiko, and even tells what she carries in her bag. Such descriptions are replete with Japanese words, as if this is not a world for the loanwords from English and French that one finds in most contemporary Japanese publications. Ichimame gives equal attention to her almost daily study of music and dance, detailing each kind of instrument and ballad style that she must learn. She describes very little of the ozashiki except to speak of the kindness of the clients and the helpfulness of the older geisha, and how she observes geisha studying current newspapers, magazines, and anything of interest to a particular client in order to be proficient as conversational partners.[20]

On the lighter side, one chapter describes a typical day off when Ichimame, dressed in jeans and a parka and wearing casual make-up, likes to shop, get coffee at Starbucks, go to the movies, and meet friends – all the while keeping her eye on the clock so she returns home well before her 9:00pm curfew.[21] In fact, she usually gets home by 7:00pm just to make

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[18] Mineko Iwasaki and Randee Brown, *Geisha, A Life* (New York: Washington Square, 2003). Even former geisha Iwasaki Mineko, who grew up in Kyoto, found mastering the hanamachi dialect difficult.

[19] Kamishichiken, *Maiko no osahō*, p. 9.

[20] Kamishichiken, *Maiko no osahō*, p. 68.

[21] Kamishichiken, *Maiko no osahō*, pp. 88–89. The short narrative of Ichimame's dress and activities on her days off includes many loanwords

sure that she is on time. She does not take days off if clients wish to see her, realizing that her true pleasure comes from her life as a maiko. Even with the care she must exercise to make sure her deportment is *maiko rashii* (conforming to the maiko ideal), Ichimame still gets a thrill when tourists to Kyoto greet and photograph her.[22] For her, this ever-present need to stay in character, to be aware that she is the target of attention is a source of pride and concern, as she writes:

> …it is necessary to keep in mind that one is constantly being seen. Forgetting this even for a moment could mean slumping or standing or walking awkwardly.
> Knowing that others are favoring me with their attention has given me the sense of always wanting to act properly. That's the secret to behaving correctly.[23]

In many ways, Ichimame's is a charmed life, more reminiscent of a sheltered *ojōsan* (young lady) than a member of the *mizu shōbai* (water trade), the old Japanese term for the world of entertainment and commodified sexuality. In creating this effect, Ichimame seems to turn class status upside down, yet, viewed against the broad landscape of Japanese culture, it is hard to imagine that many would view the maiko as being in the same rarified strata as the upper-class ojōsan. Nonetheless, Ichimame describes her life with delight. *Etiquette for a Maiko* takes the reader to daily music lessons, interactions in the hanamachi, the nightly preparation for ozashiki, and the occasional trip with a client and other maiko. Other than to describe her own struggles to measure up to the requirements of life in the Kamishichiken, Ichimame makes no complaints. Nevertheless, one can imagine that not all ozashiki clients are scintillating and attending parties as one's occupation as well as the continual need to project charm must be tedious at times. But there is no rule of etiquette for how a maiko may complain, and certainly not in a book designed to welcome Japanese into the world of the karyūkai.

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from English; this contrasts with descriptions of kimono, music, and ozashiki that largely make use solely of words in kanji and the Japanese hiragana syllabary.

[22] Kamishichiken, *Maiko no osahō*, p. 42.

[23] Kamishichiken, *Maiko no osahō*, p. 72.

A Geisha's Journey: My Life as a Kyoto Apprentice emphasizes the hardships of maiko training, even though the author ultimately takes pride in meeting the challenge. *A Geisha's Journey* offers a lively account by fifteen-year-old Komomo ("Little Peach") as she progresses through the stages of her maiko apprenticeship to her debut as a full-fledged geisha. The focus of the book is the photographs. The narrative is printed in a light ink and in type too small to read easily. Komomo's journey from trainee to geisha, which took seven years, was recorded by photographer Ogino Naoyuki, who reportedly had unparalleled access to her life in the Miyagawa-chō hanamachi. The book is introduced by Koito, Komomo's okiya mother (*okaasan*) and the geisha who became famous for using the internet and introducing a blog.

Like Ichimame, Komomo aspired to become a geisha in order to immerse herself in dance. Her years of living abroad in Mexico and China also influenced her decision, making her yearn to experience Japanese culture. Having a strong sense of national identity is important to her. She believes that Japanese teens should be more like the Korean youth that she met in China who knew so much of their country's history and culture. Like Ichimame, Komomo finds the life of the maiko difficult, and seriously considers quitting at one point. She, too, describes how the luxury of the world in which she attends parties, dances, and wears rich robes is disciplined by strict adherence to social hierarchy, speech, etiquette, and a constant awareness that one's comportment is always seen as a reflection on the geisha community. She describes her time as a maiko as just trying to "get through one difficult day after another" as, unfamiliar with the manners of the hanamachi, she made constant mistakes and needed to learn how to treat her superiors correctly. When she takes the exam to pass to the maiko ranks, she realizes that even "perfect dancing wasn't nearly enough to pass. Everything from my manners to my way of walking was under scrutiny."[24] Such scrutiny makes going outside a stressful chore because "sometimes it seemed as if the streets of Miyagawa-cho were peppered with land mines just waiting to explode in my face. It was like being at school twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week."[25] The minutest flaws become cause for concern. For example, Komomo recounts how a handkerchief once fell from her kimono sleeve during a dance. Her mentor was furious

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[24] Ogino, *A Geisha's Journey*, p. 22.
[25] Ogino, *A Geisha's Journey*, p. 32.

and made Komomo apologize to all involved for this breach of etiquette. Adding to this demand for perfection is the stress of a demanding work schedule that keeps her busy with arts lessons all day and into the early hours of the morning at parties. Komomo writes that becoming a maiko "meant losing all the freedoms I'd taken for granted in my old life. I never knew when I could see my family, or even when I'd be allowed a day off."[26]

Komomo's book ends on a positive note. Having become more comfortable with attention and the rituals of the hanamachi as time progressed, she enjoyed her debut as a geisha. She has many regular clients whom she knows well. Komomo especially appreciates those knowledgeable about the music and dance she practices. As an independent business woman now, Komomo has her own apartment and manages her own income and expenses. She says that she cannot imagine trading this life for a more typical job. She feels that her progress from maiko to geisha, or *geiko*, as they are called in Kyoto, mirrors her own maturity:

"Maiko are often just seen as stereotypes; nobody bothers to look beyond the make-up to the real person beneath. A geiko, on the other hand, is seen as an individual with a name and a unique personality…After all my worry about becoming a geiko, I finally felt liberated."[27] Komomo's description of the geisha further defines the maiko as a type. Little is required of the maiko except the projection of naïveté, obedience, and cuteness. In this respect at least, the requirements of the position may be easy for many to fulfill, whether or not they are clever. By the same token, the limits of the maiko persona must be stifling, but not much different from the cheerful disposition required in other service jobs. Once attaining the rank of geisha, the individual is expected to stand out as a personality. Recalling that the new fascination is for maiko, not geisha, however, returns us to the question of why it is the innocent figure and not the more sophisticated, mature one that is attracting attention now. Analysis of a television melodrama that depicts the maiko as a girl-on-the-cusp of possibility living in a world of high romantic drama may help explain this.

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[26] Ogino, *A Geisha's Journey*, p. 19.
[27] Ogino, *A Geisha's Journey*, p. 107.

Maiko Melodrama: The Morning Drama "Dan Dan"

NHK-TV's serialized morning drama (*asadora*) "Dan Dan," which broadcast from September 2008 through April 2009, played cuteness to the hilt, mixing serious maiko appreciation with lightheartedness, and featured the Gion hanamachi in many scenes.[28] The drama and all the surrounding publicity suggest that NHK treats the karyūkai as a Japanese institution that audiences need to understand and appreciate, and assumes that most do not know much about it at all. Thus, the series attempted to educate audiences about the Gion through scenes in the drama and an accompanying website, its yearly public dance, customs, language, and maiko fashion.[29] The upbeat, good girl tone of the drama, its respect for the karyūkai, and its depiction of the strictness of dance training resonate with Ichimame's and Komomo's stories. With the exception of a few scenes of clients laughing and drinking at ozashiki, NHK's geisha world is in many ways a prim one where maiko are largely featured at the okiya or in dance practice and not entertaining. The only character who disapproves of the karyūkai altogether is a rural grandmother who nearly refuses to step into an okiya, yet comes to realize the beauty of the geisha's dance, and more importantly for her, a geisha mother's love for her daughter.

"Dan Dan," which means thank you in the Izumo dialect, revolves around twin sisters Tajima Megumi and Ichijō Nozomi (played by actresses and real twins Mikura Mana and Mikura Kana respectively) who were separated at birth when their parents divorced. The sisters discover each other at eighteen when both happen to visit The Grand Shrine of Izumo, the shrine famous for reuniting people who have some karmic connection. At first the two ignore the possibility that they are twins, but eventually their resemblance pushes them to investigate the circumstances of their birth, which leads to the unraveling of their birth parents' story of love, marriage, and divorce. The sisters realize that their bond as twins overcomes the differences of their background and they become fast friends.

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[28] Moriwaki Kyōko and Aoki Kuniko, *Dan Dan* (Tokyo: Nippon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2008). "Dan Dan" scriptwriter Moriwaki Kyōko has also published a two-volume novelized version of the television drama with NHK.

[29] "Dan Dan," NHK Online (accessed September 6, 2009, http://www3.nhk.or.jp/asadora/cast/cast.html).

The extraordinary divergence in the two girls' lives encourages viewers to contrast contemporary teenage experience with the formalities governing the maiko's life. Although raised in completely different milieu, Megumi and Nozomi have grown up to be honest, spunky girls with a talent for music and a love of performing. The maiko Nozomi, known also by her professional name as Yumehana, functions as the straight-laced girl whose demeanor, hanamachi dialect, and adherence to an old-world environment make her the foil to her twin and the majority of young viewers. Megumi, who has grown up near the seashore in the town of Matsue in Shimane Prefecture, is similarly obedient to her father, a fisherman, but she races about town in casual clothing, hair flying all about, with her good pals, two boys who are partners in her band. The beautiful graphics that begin each episode use the *shamisen* and the guitar to represent the two sisters and the difference in their worlds.

The drama amplifies the constraints on Nozomi's life, describing her as so sheltered in the Hanamura okiya in the Gion that she has never been allowed to wear blue jeans. There is no trace here of Ichimame's day off at Starbucks. But the exaggerated difference between the sisters, however unrealistic, works well to move the drama ahead. Much of the tension in story hinges on Nozomi's awakening to the ordinary teen life led by her sister. Thus, the drama creates Nozomi as the mirror opposite of Ichimame and Komomo who abandoned further schooling to become maiko. This twin longs for the freedom to date boys, to go to the university, and to consider all kinds of career choices rather than following the geisha path that has been ordained for her since birth. Later in the drama, the audience sees that Nozomi's lack of a high school degree puts her at a disadvantage for seeking a job outside the Gion.[30] Megumi feels almost equal pressure to please her parents and joins her sister in the struggle to discover her own life path. Ultimately, the melodrama guides the reader to appreciating the

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[30] The problem of the maiko's lack of formal education comes up again when a young Matsue girl wants to take after Nozomi and become a Hanamura maiko, too. Her parents are initially opposed to the plan because it means giving up high school, and at that point, Nozomi's father reminds everyone of the difficulties Nozomi encountered because of her lack of a high school degree. There is no suggestion in "Dan Dan," however, of changing the system so that maiko could both go to school and pursue this vocation.

Gion while simultaneously feeling affection for the ordinary life. "Dan Dan" concludes by having both girls mature into married women, who, newly pregnant for the first time, are preparing to raise a family while pursuing demanding careers. Nozomi chooses to forego life as a geisha to take her elder's place as the manager of the Hanamura okiya and teahouse. Megumi, who had also trained to be a care provider for the elderly, becomes a nurse, assisting her husband as he assumes his deceased father's place in an island community. Presumably, both young women find their life's meaning in the care of their families and their respective communities.

"Dan Dan" injects humor into the drama with occasional instances of comic incongruity by placing the maiko twin in unexpected situations outside the Gion. The surprise of seeing a costumed maiko outside the environs of the hanamachi points up the maiko's unique role as a kind of living museum. In one scene, Nozomi joins her sister onstage in full maiko garb at a Kyoto live house, a kind of hip music club, for spontaneous and perfectly harmonized singing. In another scene, she causes a commotion in Megumi's college class by showing up with her maiko hairdo and kimono. The most delightful moment of maiko comedy in "Dan Dan," however, takes place when the twins secretly change places *Parent Trap*-style to meet the other parent. The viewer is in on the entire ruse. Nozomi springs the plan on Megumi, giving her twin a speedy maiko makeover, before slipping into her sister's jeans and heading off to Shimane. A geisha who is party to the switch tells Megumi to say as little as possible at the evening's ozashiki. When a client insists that she sing, however, Megumi performs a rollicking pop song. At that moment, her mother, a geisha, appears and instantly knows that this maiko could only be her long-lost daughter Megumi, a realization that leads to much drama as the divorced parents and their families are brought together.

Loyal viewers of "Dan Dan" not only become involved in the family drama and the twins' coming of age, but also experience the vicarious pleasure of visiting rural Matsue and the Gion hanamachi. Encouraging tourism to these locales is part of NHK's mission. A magazine-style guide to the TV series carries advertisements for foods to eat and specific places to visit in Matsue and Kyoto.[31] Linking the maiko to tourism is, of course, nothing new, and if anything, the maiko's celebrity is

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[31] "Dan Dan," *NHK Dorama gaido* [NHK Drama Guide] (Tokyo: Nippon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2008).

training even more attention on Kyoto's hanamachi as the site of this different girlhood. Yet "Dan Dan" spins girlhood in fantastic ways. At one point in the series, the twins become almost overnight pop stars before they follow the path of romantic love and familial responsibility. When Nozomi returns to the Gion after failing to establish a singing career and becomes a geisha, she brings a maturity to her dance performances that she lacked as a maiko. Although the twins' lives go forward with all the speed and surprise of a roller coaster, their world is ultimately a safe one enfolded within melodramatic bonds of sentiment. The program ends when the girls mature into women, and their girlhood, and its fullness of possibility, becomes their past, and their future as mothers, wives, career women, and caregivers blossoms.

Nostalgia Shopping: Maiko-related Goods and Services for Fans

Kyoto's tourist industry has long made use of maiko imagery. One finds maiko on Kyoto tourist maps, posters, and postcards; made into dolls and key chains; and advertising everything from candies to cosmetics. In Kyoto, even Sanrio's Kitty-chan is a maiko. Shops display oil paintings, embroidered panels, photographs, and reproductions of woodblock prints (*ukiyoe*) of maiko. Almost everywhere you look in the tourist areas of Kyoto, you'll find a maiko image of some sort.

Many representations of the maiko one finds in Kyoto focus on her teenage prettiness, characterizing her as a delightful symbol of the old capital. Maiko such as Ichimame lend reality to this image, breathing fresh life into the role in ways that keep it from complete anachronism. When walking in Kyoto on Shijo-dori (literally, 4th street) between the Kamo River and Yasaka Shrine, one often sees maiko in *yukata*, their faces free of cosmetics, going to their lessons during the day and in all their ornate finery and performance make-up at night on their way to ozashiki. It is this captivating glimpse of an extraordinary and highly feminine teenage life steeped in ritual and the arts that has stimulated all kinds of products associated with maiko. Advertising campaigns for local businesses do their best to prompt girls and women to experience hanamachi mystique by buying maiko goods and even by imagining themselves as maiko.

This explains why not all those that one sees strolling down the streets of Kyoto these days in the maiko's distinctive garb are actually maiko. Many may be experiencing a temporary "maiko makeover" (*maiko henshin*) having paid between 8,000 and 10,000 yen (roughly US$80.00–100.00) to one of the local photography studios for costuming,

commemorative photos, and the thrill of going out in public as a maiko. The studios advertise the maiko makeover as a quick way to experience a Japanese past. The studio Aya put it this way:

> What I have been waiting for – one day of unparalleled luxury.
> In a genuine Kyoto *machiya* house, I can become a maiko.
> My first experience of Japanese cosmetics, my skin's silky softness
> As if in a dream, I walk Gion.
> I completely forget the "self" of today.[32]

The studios do not limit this fantasy day to young Japanese women. The Studio Aya site offers its services to non-Japanese and also encourages men and women to be costumed together as "couples of old." Middle-aged women, too, buy these makeover packages, becoming maiko girls for an afternoon. The nostalgic escape into exotic Japaneseness is part of the fun of this makeover. Aimee Major Steinberger's manga sketchbook about her trip to Japan titled *Japan Ai: A Tall Girl's Adventures in Japan* describes how a six-foot tall American girl adored becoming a maiko for a few hours.[33] Kiriki Chizu, who became a maiko in the 1960s, speculates that, had such studios existed in her youth, she may have satisfied her curiosity about the maiko life that way rather than joining the karyūkai.[34]

Figure 2. "Yes, I am this tall." *Japan Ai: A Tall Girl's Adventures in Japan* **(2007). Copyright Aimee Major Steinberger. Courtesy of Go! Comi.**

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[32] "Advertisement for Studio Aya," AYA (accessed June 9, 2008, http://kyoto-maiko.com/).

[33] Aimee Major Steinberger, *Japan Ai: A Tall Girl's Adventures in Japan* (Agoura Hills, CA: Go!Comi, 2007), pp. 39–50.

[34] Kiriki, *Aisareru jōzu ni naru Gion-ryū*, p. 211.

Shopping for maiko-related goods brings the consumer in touch with another ephemeral maiko experience. Although centuries ago, merchant wives would adopt geisha fashion to bring pleasure quarter edginess to their outfits, today's consumers are buying tradition. [35] Promotional signs in stores near the Gion and Ponto-chō encourage adding a dash of classic maiko panache to one's outfit by buying a hair ornament or a bag. Enticing shoppers to get a taste of ancient Japanese "Yamato culture," photographer Aihara Kyoko's 2007 *Notebook on Maiko Accessories* (*Maiko-san no odōgu-chō*) explains where in Kyoto to buy everything from a maiko's *tabi* socks to her fan, umbrella, tea ceremony paper, and her favorite sweets. She provides a map showing the store locations, giving short descriptions of them and their contact information.

Aihara's book offers a visual treat in itself, replete with photos of the varied accoutrements of the maiko's costume and of maiko wearing them. She crafts each short chapter around a single item, drawing the reader's interest in the maiko's world by explaining how the product fits in the maiko's wardrobe, how contemporary women are using it, and often, how the item opens on to a view of maiko lore.

As a long-time documentarian of the karyūkai, Aihara has a store of anecdotes about these products that she has learned from her conversations with older geisha and Kyoto craftspeople. One learns, for instance, about the pillows used to protect the maiko's elaborate hairstyle and how since some point in the 1960s, geisha have been wearing wigs for performances and sleeping more comfortably, and that in the good old days, ozashiki clients, too, wore fresh tabi. Aihara fully admits to a nostalgic attraction to the beauty of the maiko's costumes, finding, for example, that the sight of a maiko in an old-fashioned rain coat and carrying a bright waxed paper parasol, looking for all the world as if she had stepped out of an Edo woodblock print, refreshes those "of us who are so used to Western goods in the 21st century." [36] She finds equally agreeable the sight of foreigners in Kyoto who wear denim while sporting these parasols. Deeply involved and well-versed in the karyūkai, Aihara promotes it to her reader

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[35] Dalby, *Geisha*, p. 74. Dalby cites the 1830s novel *Geisha tora no maki* [Geisha: The Tiger Volume] by Ryūtei Tanehiko, who "mentions that if a geisha were seen wearing a honeycomb-patterned kimono, the wives of townsmen would all rush to copy it."

[36] Aihara, *Maiko-san no dōgu-chō*, p. 40.

as an aesthetic consumer experience. Bringing a taste of the old world into one's life through using a maiko's bag or name card satisfies the demands of fashion and the postmodern aesthetic to innovate through a pastiche of old and new.

Aihara aligns fascination with maiko style to the "Kyoto Boom."[37] The idea of Kyoto shopping tourism, complete with the charm of nostalgia and self-exoticism, recalls Millie R. Creighton's research on Japanese department stores and the ways Japanese goods are displayed and marketed as talismans of native tradition. "As material goods and customs associated with the once-exotic West have become a routine part of life, the customs, goods, and habits believed to symbolize the timeless Japanese past have been embraced as the new exotica."[38] The appeal of maiko accessories may lie in their welcoming connection to this imagined past. They do not represent the stringency of the tea ceremony or the high taste of pottery collecting, but promise a *girl's* connection. In this way, purchasing maiko paraphernalia is similar to the other cute charms, clothing, and make-up strongly identified as the signifiers of girls' culture and off-limits to others.[39]

For a time, those who wanted to dip into maiko culture could try the role of a guest at an ozashiki for a much reduced price could try the Maiko Museum and café in the Gion. An actual ozashiki can cost several hundred dollars, but at the Maiko Museum one could taste elegant dishes as well as watch maiko dance for relatively little money (US$35.00–70.00).[40] After doing so, one was eligible to ask the Maiko Museum for an

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[37] Aihara, *Maiko-san no dōgu-chō*, p. 6.

[38] Mille R. Creighton, "The *Depāto*: Merchandizing the West While Selling Japaneseness," in Joseph J. Tobin, ed., *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 53.

[39] The resistant aspects of girls' culture are discussed in Laura Miller, "Bad Girls: Representations of unsuitable, unfit, and unsatisfactory women in magazines," *U.S.–Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 15 (1998): 31-51; and Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan," in Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, eds., *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995): pp. 220–253.

[40] "Japanese Theme Restaurant in Gion," Maiko Museum & Café (accessed September 9, 2009, http://www.gion-maiko.com/e_toppage/e_top.html).

introduction to a teahouse, thus getting past the "no first timers" rule discussed in the next section. (Unfortunately, this establishment had apparently closed down by the time of my summer visit to Kyoto in 2010, although the website is still active.)

Maiko Parody: Hello Kitty to *Maiko Haaaan!!!*

In 2008, the Kyoto International Manga Museum provided a lighter look at this icon. It invited one hundred manga artists to produce a single drawing each for the exhibit *One Hundred Maiko* (*Hyaku-nin Maiko*). A pop version of age-old celebrations of "100 beauties (*hyaku-nin bijin*)," the exhibit produced a rare diversity of maiko images. [41] Maiko with enormous, shining eyes were drawn by artists of *shōjo manga* (young girl comics). Some cartoonists depicted the maiko as a funny kitten, invoking the long association of geisha with cats.[42] Others erased cuteness from the scene altogether, drawing maiko simply and with comically homely faces. But the stand-out manga played with the idea of blending pop identities, creating "Maiko Jackson." [43] In this comic, manga artist Kojirō fuses popular singing star Michael Jackson with the maiko by having ringlets of the pop star's hair fall down from the maiko hairdo over the face, giving the kimono a bit of stars-and-stripes pattern, and having the star grab his crotch with one hand while holding a fan high above his head with the other. The humor here comes from crossing two icons which at first glance seem to be so different, but this manga also calls to mind Michael Jackson's persona as the boy who never grew up, the child star who longed for his lost childhood, and the man accused of liking boys too much. Here Jackson is mixed with the Japanese girl figure that will always be juvenile, too. Laughing in surprise at Kojirō's "Maiko Jackson" also makes one think twice about the hype that creates the global pop star and the Kyoto maiden.

Maiko parody takes a slapstick turn in the 2007 film *Maiko Haaaan!!!* (*Miiiss Maiko*) directed by Mizuta Nobuo and written by Kudo Kankuro. The farce turns on one man's fixation with maiko, an obsession

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[41] The idea of having one hundred beauties recalls the work of Edo *ukiyo-e* artist Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865) and early 20th century photograph exhibits of geisha. Thanks to Inger Brodey for this allusion.

[42] Dalby, *Geisha*, p. 57.

[43] Kojirō gives "maiko" in characters (*kanji*) and Jackson in *katakana* as *jakuson*, blending the two icons linguistically.

initiated by his first encounter with them on the ubiquitous student fieldtrip to Kyoto.[44] The title's exclamation marks and drawn out "Miiiss" mirror the character's desperate excitement. Maiko bring astonishing color to the film and over-the-top craziness. They are clothed in their most elaborate formal garb, complete with high *okobo* sandals, *kanzashi* ornaments in their hair, and full performance makeup. A band of maiko spontaneously performs show tunes in one scene and, dressed as warriors for a stage performance, storm the Kyoto mayor's office in another. Gone is the subdued elegance described in books by and about geisha, shopping guides, and in "Dan Dan." *Maiko Haaaan!!!* makes fun of every aspect of the hanamachi from snobby teahouse managers to spooky entryway shoe managers to syrupy maiko.

The viewer experiences this strange trip to the hanamachi through the eyes of the lead character, Onizuka Kimihiko (played by Abe Sadao), a nerdy fellow with a schoolboy bowl-haircut and loud plaid suits, who leaves his devoted OL (Office Lady) girlfriend in Tokyo for Kyoto and his dream of playing strip baseball with a maiko. The girlfriend (actress Shibasaki Kou), who exaggerates the OL stereotype by carrying a cell phone weighted with charms, acting cute, and walking pigeon-toed, secretly follows Onizuka to Kyoto, becoming the maiko with whom he finally plays strip baseball (to their mutual disappointment). Frenetically paced from start to finish, *Maiko Haaaan!!!* follows the competition between Onizuka and a man named Naito, a baseball star-turned wrestler-turned actor-turned-star ramen chef, who becomes the mayor of Kyoto. Naito causes a ruckus when he promises to overturn the old-fashioned "no first-timer" rule of the karyūkai that refuses teahouse entry to anyone who shows up without an introduction from a well-known customer. When the maiko rush the mayor's office to protest this initiative, the lead maiko, who is also the favorite of Onizuka, learns that Naito is her father. *Maiko Haaaan!!!* ends

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[44] Fumiteru Nitta, "Shopping for Souvenirs in Hawaii," in Joseph J. Tobin, ed., *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 204–215. *Shūgaku ryōko* (school excursions) take students to places of cultural significance in Japan such as Kamakura, Kyoto, Nara, and Nikko. According to Fumiteru Nitta, most Japanese take three or four such excursions during high school. In affluent times, such trips have extended to foreign locales such as Hawaii.

as Naito drops his fight to change the no-first-timers' rule and both he and Onizuka dress in geisha drag and take to the stage to dance with maiko.

In this fashion, Onizuka's maiko mania turns the film into a broad parody of the customs and stories associated with the karyūkai. Although the film provides gorgeous shots of some of Kyoto's most evocative places such as the wisteria-shaded streams of Ponto-chō, the Toji Pagoda, the Kamo River, and the Hanamikōji street of Gion, it satirizes nostalgic and reverent appreciation of the old capital. Taking a closer look at Onizuka's maiko encounters make this point.

As the film opens, we see Onizuka joining a crowd of frenzied photographers racing around the Gion to photograph a maiko on the day of her debut (*misedashi*). The scene ridicules the crowds who actually do gather to take such pictures. The humor gets more farcical the closer Onizuka comes to meeting maiko. Excited at finally getting to go to a teahouse, Onizuka takes out over 100,000 yen in cash and gets a loan for fancy "brand clothing," which in his case is another outlandish plaid suit. Following the custom of no "first timers" (*ichigen-san*), all the teahouses turn him away. This prompts the dejected Onizuka to break into song on the streets of Gion. Backed up by a band of maiko as showy as any Takarazuka Revue chorus, Onizuka ruminates on being poor "Mr. First Timer." Onizuka gets an excellent chance at entering a teahouse when he accompanies his boss, the president of a cup noodle company and a regular teahouse client. Here, shades of the hit 1986 film *Tampopo*, the film mixes the ordinariness of ramen with the elegance of the teahouse, adding humor and taking karyūkai pretensions down another notch.[45] In a spoof of a legend commonly told in books by geisha, Onizuka is turned away once again, this time by the wise old man who has so long and observantly cared for clients' footwear that he can tell just by looking at Onizuka's shoes that he needs to rush to the hospital, which he does. When Onizuka actually does get into a teahouse with his boss, he panics, realizing that the beginning of the party also ensure its end – a scene that can be read as a send-up of Mishima Yukio's well-known 1956 novel, *The Tale of the Golden Pavilion*, that explores a monk's obsession with the impossible-to-possess beauty of Kyoto's Golden Temple, Kinkakuji.[46]

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[45] *Tampopo* [Dandelion], dir. Itami Jūzō (1986).

[46] Mishima Yukio, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, trans. Ivan Morris (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1959).

For all its satire and over-the-top maiko parody, *Maiko Haaaan!!!* regards the karyūkai as an institution well entrenched in the national project of revering Kyoto as the center of high indigenous culture. Rather than a poignant symbol of a vanishing past, the maiko of *Maiko Haaaan!!!* – like *Maiko Jackson* and Kitty-chan Maiko – becomes the comic symbol of anxious desire to preserve the past in the present, even as the artificiality of this past grows in proportion to the reverence accorded it. Equally, the film satirizes obsession with the girl, and especially the good girl, as the key to this past.

Conclusion: Framing Japan's Good Girl in the 21st Century

The maiko boom, created by a variety of cultural texts and an increase in the actual numbers of maiko, crafts the appealing figure of a Japanese girl leading an extraordinary life, enjoying an extended girlhood, and free from the pressures of 21st century life through her nostalgic performance of the Kyoto maiden. As books by Ichimame and Komomo illustrate, however, the demanding training and communal life of the maiko is not as easy as it looks. Parodies of maiko obsession, especially *Maiko Haaaan!!!*, satirize the reputed exclusivity of teahouse culture, and by extension, the Kyoto mystique itself. In conclusion, we consider how this depiction of Japanese girlhood differs from others and what both say about girl and nation in 21st century Japan.

Contemporary narratives of the maiko and geisha separate them almost entirely from sexuality of any kind, associating them with an imaginary past of refinement. The anachronistic qualities of Ichimame's persona and the fictional maiko of "Dan Dan" come as much from their maidenly aspects as their allegiance to Japanese tradition. But Japan is not the only reference for such nostalgia. The Japanese manga version of Jane Austen's *Emma*, discussed in the article in this volume by Inger Brodey, shows a similar romanticization of the girl in Victorian culture. Women and girls' fondness for these representations recall the reactions of fans of the Takarazuka Theater. Although middle-aged female fans interviewed in the Takarazuka documentary *Dream Girls* confess to sneaking away to the theater to indulge their fantasies and not telling their families about this, the plays that they enjoy are often Cinderella-like fantasies of an ultra-feminine

woman's romance with a Prince Charming.[47] The fans' covert attendance and the fact that all roles are played by women gives the event a subversive quality. It is a resistance simultaneously contained, however, by the conventionality of the narratives on stage. Sharon Kinsella's work on cuties in Japan analyzes a similar mix of resistance and accommodation. [48] Curiosity with the maiko bears evidence of the same fascination with cuteness, romance, and a temporary escape from the push to do well in school and lead a fast-paced life in the contemporary world.

Thus, the maiko offers an alternate vision of girl sexuality in an era when the numbers of young women becoming bar hostesses is on the rise and when world-famous Japanese author Yoshimoto Banana spins stories of girls engaging in casual sex – hetero and bisexual – and even orgies as sport.[49] The maiko is radically different from the teen characters involved in violent crimes in detective writer Kirino Natsuo's *Real World* and Akutagawa prize-winning author Kanehara Hitomi's best-selling novel *Snakes and Earrings* about sadistic sex, tattoos, piercing, and murder, that features a young character who puts on a kimono only for a seedy temporary job. [50] Even conservative romance writer Hayashi Mariko features world-traveling heroines who initiate sexual liaisons with single and married men as they concentrate on achieving the career success that pays for the luxury brands they favor, and like geisha, they travel first

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[47] *Dream Girls*, dirs. Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams (1994). See also Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[48] Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan," in Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, eds., *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), pp. 220–253.

[49] "Women's Work and Japan's Hostess Culture," *New York Times*, August 11, 2009 (accessed September 9, 2009, http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes .com/2009/08/11/womens-work-and-japans-hostess-culture/). See, for example, a collection of short stories by Yoshimoto Banana, *Lizard*, trans. Ann Sheriff (New York: Grove Press, 1995).

[50] Kirino Natsuo, *Real World*, trans. Philip Gabriel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). For a view of girl culture and violence, see Kanehara Hitomi, *Snakes and Earrings*, trans. David James Karashima (New York: Dutton, 2005).

class.[51] The erotic display of contemporary pop singers such as Koda Kumi and the pornographic genre of ladies' comics, discussed in the articles in this volume by Yuki Watanabe and Kinko Ito respectively, further the bad girl image. Concern in Japan over such visible girl rebellion staged in these examples and also in outrageous fashion, self-photographs, and compensated dating might be somewhat assuaged by the new popularity of the modest maiko.[52] She represents a far safer course than the self-destructive characters of popular fiction about girls.

As the symbol of old Kyoto culture, the contemporary maiko brings innocence and accessibility to the aura of native aesthetic traditions. If she stands in some way for nationalism, then it is an idea of nation that is magical and appealing, a soft power girl-world apart from industry and the military. As the colorful figure of numerous cultural texts, she makes Kyoto cute, not imposing. In this way, her image dovetails with Japan's Foreign Ministry's initiative to select three young women as "ambassadors of cute" who will promote travel to Japan. They will encourage the J-cool of manga, youth fashion, and music abroad.[53] Yet, as Laura Miller writes in her remarks on girl images in Japanese culture in this volume, how cool can cool be when devised as government initiative? Don't such programs neutralize even the defiant aspects of cuteness?

Whether or not the maiko boom continues, the appeal of girl culture will surely last for some time in Japan, and with or without government promotion, will continue to captivate fans. The concern for maiko, geisha, and others in the karyūkai, however, is how to maintain this world beyond the ups and downs of trends and the economy, and at a time when few maiko wish to become geisha.

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[51] For example, Hayashi Mariko, *Kosumechikku* [Cosmetics] (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2002). For discussion of Hayashi's *Cosmetics*, see Jan Bardsley and Hiroko Hirakawa, "Branded: Bad Girls Go Shopping," in Miller and Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan*, pp. 110–125.

[52] See Sharon Kinsella, "Black Faces, Witches, and Racism against Girls," pp. 143-158; and Laura Miller, "Bad Girl Photography," in Miller and Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan*. pp. 127–142.

[53] Jun Kamanishikawara, "'Cute ambassadors' roam globe to promote Japan's pop culture," *The Japan Times*, June 17, 2009 (accessed August 15, 2009, http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20090617f1.html).

EROKAKKOII: CHANGING IMAGES OF FEMALE IDOLS IN COMTEMPORARY JAPAN

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As television became the primary medium of mass communication in post-war Japan during the 1950s, singer-idols (*aidoru*) enjoyed increasingly mainstream popularity among Japanese pop music consumers largely because of increasing TV exposure. While there have been many successful male and female singing idols, not surprisingly, most fans of male *aidoru* have been females, as in the case of the vocal groups that belong to *Johnny's Jimusho* (Johnny's Office).[1] In contrast, fans of female idols consist of a more widely heterogeneous mix of both genders. Reflecting substantial postwar changes in the Japanese economy and in Japanese culture, including assumptions about gender and its various constructions in popular culture, this paper will explore the cultural significance of evolving images and receptions of Japan's increasingly popular female *aidoru*. In the process, the paper aims to document processes by which traditional gender roles are simultaneously reinforced and challenged.

This paper looks at how the concept of *erokakkoii* (erotic and cool) came to be embodied by mainstream female singing idols, analyzing the social implications of the phenomenon in terms of increasingly ambiguous gender relationships in contemporary Japan. For example, Koda Kumi, one of today's most popular Japanese female idols, is praised for her singing and dancing as well as her (in)famous erotic moves in skimpy costumes. Interestingly, Koda's fans seem to simultaneously appreciate (or at least tolerate) her overt displays of sexuality while also admiring her cool, i.e. *erokakkoii*. However, before analyzing the concept of *erokakkoii* by drawing on some of Koda's song lyrics, music videos, and media coverage, we begin by looking at how the images of mainstream female pop singers have changed since the 1980s, laying out the background that has led to the

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[1] Johnny's Office (Johnny & Associates) is one of Japan's largest music agents specializing in representing and managing young male idol groups including SMAP, V6, *Arashi*, News, and KAT-TUN.

construction of a popular contemporary icon such as Koda. Finally, the paper explores the implications of gender constructions of pop performers such as Koda against the general backdrop of contemporary Japanese popular culture.

Aidoru is a somewhat tricky term requiring some elaboration. Many say that the notion of *aidoru* started in the 1960s when a French film *Aidoruo sagase (*French title, *Cherchez l'idole*; *Look for an Idol*) became a smash hit in Japan.[2] Whatever its origins, *aidoru* (whether male or female) are famous pop singers who enjoy loyal and substantial followings. Their songs are generally up-tempo love songs, usually written by others, although in some instances *aidoru* write their own lyrics. Those who both write and perform their own songs are called *singaa songu raitaa* (singer-songwriters) and so are distinguished from *aidoru*. Pop stars categorized as *aidoru* are young (in their teens, or at most early twenties), tend to be cute and sexually attractive, and display cheerful personalities. In general, though, they are usually less than excellent singers and/or dancers. The "greatest" singers with genuine talent are expected to be cool enough to bypass obviously teen-targeted pop tunes in favor of either slower, more serious ballads, or more edgy and aggressive rock tunes.

Musical shows featuring *aidoru*, as well as other pop stars such as singer-songwriters and sometimes bands, have been among the most popular forms of prime time television programming since the 1970s. While images of the male *aidoru* have been somewhat static since the 1980s, the number and variety of female *aidoru* representations has increased greatly. During the 1990s, female *aidoru* also branched out into different areas of the entertainment business in Japan. In contrast to the cute young singers of the 1980s, in the 1990s, *baradoru* (variety idols, young female celebs who mainly appeared on talk shows) and *guradoru* (gravure idols, young female models who had posed for magazines) became quite popular. A group of porn stars, *fudoru* (*fuzoku* idols), who worked in the sex industry and became pseudo-celebs due to adult magazine coverage, also enjoyed substantial notoriety. These popular young females added new dimensions to the concept of female *aidoru*, especially the *guradoru* (and even *fudoru*) whose presumably sexier bodies with ample breasts (*kyonyu*) stood in contrast to their predecessors' merely cute and boyishly lean body types. Although noting some of the elements of these alternative *aidoru*, this paper

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[2] *Cherchez l'idole*, dir. Michael Boisrond (1964).

focuses on female singers who populated the pop music hit lists during the 1980s and 1990s.

The most popular *aidoru* of the 1980s included Matsuda Seiko, Kawai Naoko, Koizumi Kyoko, Kikuchi Momoko, Nakayama Miho, and Minamino Yooko.[3] These performers were all in their teens[4] and wore brightly colored dresses with numerous frills and bows, sometimes even including petticoats to emphasize wholesome teen-cuteness. While many were attractive, they were not considered beautiful to the extent of being inaccessible, but rather just cute enough to keep people interested. In fact, it seemed that none of them had model-like figures, but rather "friendly" body types, and even some imperfections (e.g., legs not perfectly straight or perhaps a little mole on the cheek). Their behavior also emphasized cuteness and youth, even to the extent of looking child-like. Most of them sang up-tempo love songs in high-pitched voices, usually while smiling and often casting an upward glance as a child does when pleading for adult attention.

Usually these songs were presented with some dancing, although the moves were simple, requiring little training or practice. Many of their lyrics were about *anata* (a polite second-person pronoun originally meaning "you," but in love songs, usually referring to the male object of the *aidoru*'s affections).[5] Many lyrics went on about how desperately a young woman needed to be loved by *anata*, e.g., "since *anata* was there, I was able to live on."[6] These lyrics seemed to suggest that what women want (and, indeed,

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[3] The names listed were ranked in the top 10 lists of most popular songs by the *orikon* chart cited in Nifty (accessed February 2, 2008, http://homepage1.nifty.com/shislabo/nenkan/nenkan.htm).

[4] Until the early 1980s, child labor regulation prohibited 15 years-and-under performers from appearing on live TV after 9 p.m. Because of this rule, idols of the 1970s tended to be slightly older than those who succeeded them.

[5] *Kimi* is used in male singers' songs to address the women they love. *Kimi* is also a pronoun indicating the second person, "you," traditionally used, interestingly, to address people of lower social status (e.g. bosses to subordinates, teachers to students).

[6] Matsuda Seiko, *Ruriirono chikyuu* [Purple Earth], 1986 (accessed February 15, 2008, http://www.utamap.com). All the song lyrics in this paper were retrieved from free online collections.

need) are men, reinforcing cultural stereotypes of women's dependency on men. Interestingly, as a consequence of being constructed mainly for the Japanese male youth market, the *aidoru*'s persona highlighted cuteness and a muted physical sexuality; in turn, this suppression of overt female sexuality further reinforced the tradition of Japanese society's patriarchal structure.[7] The *aidoru*'s naiveté is perhaps best summarized in their designation as *seijunha*, or pure and innocent youth.[8] The aura of youthful naiveté is further underscored in media interviews with *aidoru,* which seldom reveal or touch on adult subjects. In fact, *aidoru*'s public interviews repeatedly iterate the single phrase "*ganbarimasu*" ("I will do my best"), demonstrating their desire to please their fans.

Images of female idols in the 1980s seemed to go along with the notion of traditional femininity in Japan – women were expected (at least by men) to be subservient or at least non-threatening to men. This traditional cultural construction of femininity manifested itself in many of the *aidoru*'s characteristics described above. According to Murase, *kawaii* (meaning "cute"), the most implicit qualification of *aidoru*, is "a hierarchical adjective" since it is used by older (i.e., superior) people to express affection for younger (i.e., inferior) people.[9] Their youth and cuteness insured that *aidoru* were in no way intending to challenge existing authority in society. Furthermore, they seemed to possess a single-minded eagerness to work hard to please their fans. Their competent yet average and slightly less than perfect performances were calculated to be just that, entertaining in a non-threatening way. Many male viewers appreciated these intentions, joined "fan clubs" of these idols, and loudly cheered them during their performances.

On the other hand, feminist critics regarded this type of female

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[7] There were some *aidoru* with more mature, full-figured bodies with larger than average breasts such as Kawai Naoko who, nonetheless, were also young, cute, and perky rather than overtly sexual.

[8] Female idols categorized as *seijunha* shunned romantic relationships with men in order to maintain their purity and innocence. If they get caught dating a man, the coverage usually criticized the idol for spoiling their *seijunha* image.

[9] Murase Hiromi, *Feminizumu-sabukaruchā: hihyō sengen* [Feminism-Subculture: Declaration of Criticism] (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2000), pp. 216-217.

representation as an example of the objectification of woman. For example, Akita observes, "The obvious trend was that younger women were presented as sexual objects behaving in a cute, infantile, ignorant, and stupid manner."[10] *Aidoru* were, in other words, constructed to be naïve and childlike sex objects, largely unaware of their latent sexual powers and capacities for sexual pleasure, and therefore subject to the control of men. Indeed, it could be said that female *aidoru* in the 1980s were commodities in that they were used by men, whatever their age, to ease men's anxieties in a society where patriarchal authority was increasingly being challenged both at home and in the workplace.[11]

Although many popular 1980s *aidoru* were influential among girls – for instance, they often functioned as role models by setting trends in fashion and hair styles[12] – they were criticized by many women and even men too, for being *burikko*, a term used negatively to describe women who display false innocence.[13] For these critics, the constructed images of the *aidoru* reinforced the negative stereotype of women being docile, innocent and even intellectually inferior to men. Not surprisingly, the un-self-determined image of the *aidoru*, shaped largely to appeal to the demands of the patriarchy, became increasingly problematic for a younger generation of women who gained substantial disposable income and became more powerful consumers during the bubble economy of the 1980s. In fact, in the 1980s, more women attained higher education and landed professional jobs

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[10] Kimiko Akita, "Cuteness: The Sexual Commodification of Women in the Japanese Media," in Theresa Carilli and Jane Campbell, eds., *Women and the Media: Diverse Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), p. 50.

[11] For example, the Equal Opportunity Law, enacted in 1985, stated the goal of achieving equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women in the workplace.

[12] The source for one of the most popular hair styles in the 1980s, the "Seiko-chan" cut, a medium bob with both sides blow-dried to flow toward the back, was Matsuda Seiko.

[13] Laura Miller, "You are Doing Burikko! Censoring/Scrutinizing Artificer of Cute Femininity in Japanese," in Shigeko Okamoto and Janet S. Shibamoto, eds., *Japanese Language, Gender and Ideology: Cultural Models and Real People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 149.

than ever before. [14] Under these circumstances, it seemed that the images of female *aidoru* of the 1980s started to disconnect with the reality of typical Japanese teens and began to migrate to different forms of popular media. For example, we see many of the familiar elements of the *aidoru's* cuteness featured in manga and anime heroines that are designed to nurture the mind of insecure men represented by *otaku*.[15]

The transformation of the image of mainstream female singers that started in the 1980s paved the way for the construction of a new female pop culture figure. These new figures, while carrying over elements of the *aidoru*'s cuteness and naiveté, incorporated more mature female characteristics designed to appeal to Japan's new generation of ever more empowered and self-determined women. For example Nakamori Akina's song about the frustration of being treated as an innocent girl became a smash hit in 1982.[16] Unlike other *aidoru*, Nakamori's popular singing style was more provocative. Significantly, she did not have the customary girlish, ear-to-ear smile as she performed. She also cultivated a bad girl image that could be interpreted as a sign of resistance against the stereotypical attributes of female immaturity, innocence, and submissiveness. Her aggression toward the timid male – who was still supposed to dominate – was widely "read" as an anthem to an emerging female empowerment. Nakamori had a few more hit songs along this line and then began to gravitate to songs focused more on the sadness of love, which led to her transformation from bad girl to mature woman. Her popularity continued throughout the 1980s. This trend was followed by Kudo Shizuka into the late 1980s as well.

The 1990s saw the rise in popularity of so-called "pop queens."

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[14] See the government whitepaper on female employees in Japan, *Joseino Genjoo to Shisaku* (accessed March 3, 2008, http://www8.cao.go.jp/whitepaper/danjyo/woman/06.html).

[15] Hiroyuki Azuma, *Doubutsuka suru posutomodan* (Tokyo: Kodansha Gendaishinsho, 2001). Azuma points out that frills and short skirts with big volume are common elements of cuteness in anime and manga characters that are popular among male fans. These were some of the common features of female idols' costume in the 1980s.

[16] In *Shojo A,* she sang "*jirettai, jirettai, ikutsunimietemo watashi daredemo jirettai jirettai watashiha watashiyo kankeinaiwa*" ("it is irritating. I do not care how old I look or who I am. I am myself").

Among this new breed of singers were Amuro Namie and Hamasaki Ayumi. Both of these performers were young and cute. However, their constructed images also included stronger, more self-assertive performative elements. In Amuro's case, her songs were more edgy, with a Western beat, sometimes even veering toward hip hop, and incorporating English lyrics with sharp dynamic dance moves. Hamasaki, who wrote her own lyrics for the most part, performed with her own band, a clear sign of her artistic dominance over the musical creative process and, consequently, her leadership of her male musician colleagues. Both Amuro and Hamasaki displayed few of the *burikko* traits common among the 1980 *aidoru*, such as high-pitched singing, or displays of overt cuteness or timidity. In all, their performances were quite sophisticated with strong singing and dancing. These pop queens' assertiveness and confidence led many of their fans to admire them as *kakkoii* (cool) rather than *kawaii* (cute). This was a significant shift in the constructed images of *aidoru* since *kawaii*, as stated earlier, signified the dominance of the viewer, while *kakkoii* signified admiration of the viewer.[17]

While the popular media fetishized and commodified female sexuality by associating it closely with the cute young faces and bodies of the mainstream *aidoru* in the 1980s, the pop queen *aidoru* of the 1990s seemed to define their sexuality in somewhat more complex and ambiguous ways. Although they wore tight revealing costumes and had attractive bodies, singers like Amuro and Hamasaki intended their music (lyrics and music) to be at the core of their performances. Unlike the 1980s mainstream *aidoru*, who were "happily exploited by men" by emphasizing their cuteness and youth,[18] Amuro and Hamasaki were principally concerned with presenting themselves as female performers with something to say (rather than as sex objects clearly designed for gratuitous male sexual pleasure). They expressed their femininity in more profound ways compared to the idols of the 1980s who explicitly solicited male protection. The pronouns used in their lyrics provide further evidence of this transition.

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[17] *Kakkoii* is literally translated as "good style" or "good looking." It was originally used to express admiration for heroes in action/adventure genres, sports, and so on. That people started to use *kakkoii* to show admiration for women (not heroes) seems to indicate a blurring of gender expectation in contemporary Japan.

[18] Hiromi, *Feminizumu-sabukaruchā*, p. 218.

In Hamasaki's case, her songs frequently take a male perspective using *boku* (a pronoun used by men) for first person and *kimi* for female second person.[19] This discrepancy between the singer's gender and the song's gender-perspective seems to function to make Hamasaki's gender position more ambiguous for her audiences, thus empowering her as an artist with a voice worthy of consideration in and of itself (regardless of gender). Gender hierarchy in Hamasaki's songs often transgresses *aidoru* conventions. For example, she only occasionally sings *anata* (which reinforces male dominance) to address a second person male, while her frequent use of *kimi* (to address both male and female second persons) implies the first person's dominance over the second person.[20] Amuro's case is somewhat simpler since it is "you" (the English pronoun) that many of her songs use to refer to the man she loves. Since "you" does not have any specific gender hierarchical implications to Japanese ears, it functions as a gender-leveling strategy.

In sum, although they were young and cute, the pop queen *aidoru* of the 1990s seemed to refuse to be "happily exploited" by men. Although still commodified in the male-dominated pop music industry of Japan, their gender position and image construction, as often suggested in their lyrics, seem to be symbolically representative and symptomatic of the rise of female empowerment that was becoming more evident in Japanese society at that time. Nevertheless, their strong gender positions were attenuated by presenting their sexualized bodies as performers with consequently more ambiguous gender coding depending on the subject positions of individual audience members. The traditional cultural belief that only "bad girls" enjoyed their sexuality was still a common assumption,[21] although it was

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[19] For example, in the song "Close to You" (2002), Hamasaki says "*boku wa kimi ni deautame aruite kitandaroo*," ("I guess I have been walking to meet you"). The first person is designated as male, and the second person, female. These lyrics demonstrate an interesting contrast to Matsuda's lyrics quoted earlier, which state that "Since you were around, I was able to live on." In Hamasaki's case, the man finds a woman as one goal of his life, while in Matsuda's case, a woman finds a man as her reason for survival.

[20] *Kimi* can be used by both female and male superiors to address their subordinate.

[21] In Japan it is still commonly assumed that a "decent" woman is not to actively pursue and/or enjoy sex. Although *fudoru* are becoming

starting to be challenged by graphic teen and youth culture as well as the women's movement. It seems as if the name says it all, the "pop queens" were queens who were supposed to behave somewhat "decently" in regard to their sexuality.

Following in the pop queen style of Amuro and Hamasaki, Koda Kumi did not have a very promising start. Although "Take Back," her first U.S. single, reached #18 on *Billboard* magazine's dance chart in November 2000, its Japanese release in December 2000 received little recognition. In 2005, her seventh single, "real Emotion/1000 *no kotoba*" ("Real Emotion/1000 Words") and the theme song from the film "*Kyuutii Hanii*" ("Cutie Honey")[22] became smash hits. Following these successes, Koda released 12 CD singles in 12 consecutive weeks, making her a frequently featured guest of prime time music shows. At the end of 2005, she received the Japan Record Award, which recognized "Butterfly" as best song of the year. Since then, her songs and CD albums have constantly ranked in the top ten.[23]

Koda's musical approach can be summarized as contemporary pop. Employing a variety of styles such as hip hop, R&B, dance tunes and slow ballads, she sings with a supple rhythmic flow delivered in a slightly husky voice. In this sense, her song format and singing style are somewhat similar to those of the 1990s pop queen *aidoru*. But what distinguishes her from her predecessors is her presentation. Most of her costumes are quite tight and very revealing, often featuring a calculated display of undergarments. Her typical costume in the early years consisted of a pair of extremely short shorts revealing every inch of her thighs, and a tight T-shirt

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increasingly popular, women who work in the sex industry tend to be regarded as "second-class" and therefore have difficulty in transitioning to the mainstream to become *aidoru*.

[22] This film was based on the popular comic book heroine, Cutie Honey, created by Nagai Go and Dynamic Production. It was released initially as manga and anime from fall 1973 to spring 1974. The manga version was published in *Shonen Champion* and later reprinted in a two-volume comic book set from Akita Shoten. The live action film featuring Koda's song was directed by Anno Hideaki.

[23] Her first widely acclaimed album, "BEST~first session," ranked sixth in sales in 2005; "BEST~second session" ranked second in 2006, and her following album, "Black Cherry," was second in 2007.

with wide neck designed to show her cleavage. In some performances, her dancing features the same kind of erotic moves typically performed in strip bars. In the "Cutie Honey" theme, the lyrics are "*konogoro hayarino onnanoko, fukufuku boin no onnanoko*" ("Girls that are trendy these days are the ones with soft big boobs"). As she sings these lines, Koda holds up her breasts with her hands to make the point emphatic. At the Japan Record Award ceremony, she wore a gold dress covering barely half of her F-sized breasts,[24] and shook her hips and breasts in a sexually provocative way as she performed her song "Butterfly."[25]

Among her fans and even among general audiences, the common term to describe her is *erokakkoii* (erotic and cool). This term is quite interesting in that it combines two distinctively different concepts. *Ero* in Japanese is not usually used to praise anybody. Rather it is often used in a negative sense. For example, *ero hon* refers to obscene or dirty books which feature excessively pornographic material. One can denounce a lecherous middle-aged man by calling him *ero oyaji* (dirty guy).[26] Yet, in Koda's case, the negative concept is coupled with *kakkoii*, usually a term that expresses admiration for someone considered cool. Therefore, *erokakkoii* is quite a paradoxical term, implying that Koda is both dirty yet cool. *Erokakkoii* also embodies contrasting perspectives – "*ero*" implying the perspective of the male gaze upon the female body as sexual object, with "*kakkoii*" coming from young women admiring her coolness. Koda's constructed image, *erokakkoii*, presents a greatly revised reflection of a new Japanese woman whose empowerment derives in large part from a positive

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[24] "F size" means the difference between the measurement of bust top and under bust is about 22.5 cm (about nine inches), which is the second largest size usually available.

[25] "The record of Koda! 'Cool erotic' vertex," Nikkansports, January 1, 2006 (accessed December 15, 2007, http://www.nikkansports.com/ns/entertainment/p-et-tp0-060101-0006.html).

[26] *Ero* was used in the 1920s and 1930s as part of the set phrase "*ero, guro, nansensu*" (erotic, grotesque, nonsense). The term describes a pre-WWII literary and artistic movement emphasizing eroticism, sexual corruption, and decadence. While the noun *ero* might have artistic implications involving the erotic, *eroi* (ero's adjectival form) tends to have negative nuances signifying "dirty" and indecent. *Ero*, in *ero hon* and *ero oyaji*, is an abbreviation of the adjective form, *eroi*.

affirmation and control of female sexuality consciously deployed as a self-empowering means to achieve equality and even dominance over men and other women. The fact that Koda openly displays her sexuality to attract male (and female) audience members, without becoming too much of a dirty "bad" girl, would appear to be a sign of liberation.

In her interviews, Koda speaks to this, justifying the exposure of her body as a strategy for female empowerment. According to Koda, *erokakkoii* is not just about exposing female skin. She claims that she exposes her body to send a message to women that "if you find a part of your body charming and work hard to improve it, you can change yourself as I have done."[27] One aspect of the "hard work," she publicizes is her special eating scheme known as "Koda-style diet," which requires that she eat nothing after 6:00 p.m. As we can see in this case, she does not hesitate to share her private life as a young woman, which in Japan is not usually communicated so openly to the public, especially to men. Also, on many occasions, she has expressed appreciation for the support of her female fans for the opportunity to be a role model.[28] In one interview, Koda emphasized her gratitude for her female fans supporting her as "*kakkoyokute ecchi*" (cool and dirty), while assuring them that she would continue to "expose her female symbols."[29] According to Koda, it was her female fans' support that enabled her to be so openly "ero" without negative perceptions of being dirty. Quite simply, she has displayed her body in order to demonstrate the results of her hard work (i.e., careful diet and diligent workout) and her pride in herself. She consciously uses her body to attract attention – whether a male gaze objectifying her body or a female gaze admiring her achievement and confidence. In any event, using her body in such a precisely controlled and intentional way is for many, but not all, women a dramatic and effective means of representing one important aspect of contemporary female empowerment.

The construction of Koda's image might also be interpreted as

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[27] Interview posted on Koda Kumi's official website, "Profile," 2006 (accessed December 13, 2007, http://rhythmzone.net/koda/profile/).

[28] For example, see "Koda Kumi," Yahoo Music: Japan, 2007 (http://magazine.music.yahoo.co.jp/pow/20060302_001/interview_001).

[29] Interview about Koda Kumi's new album, "BEST~first things~," Yahoo Music: Japan, September 14, 2005 (accessed December 13, 2007, http://magazine.music.yahoo.co.jp/spt/20050914_001/interview_003).

another significant indicator of the decline of traditional Japanese patriarchal views (i.e., positioning women as refined and submissive and bound by duty to the home), and thus a reflection of more Westernized views of female aspirations as well as commodification. Unlike the *aidoru* of the 1980s, who presented images of female coquettishness preferred by most male viewers, Koda's performances do not emphasize innocence or timidity. Indeed, she pushes the envelope to the extent that her dancing could be considered uncomfortably taboo for many Japanese viewers. At the same time, given the global dimensions of transnational popular culture, many Japanese clearly find Koda's performance style "familiar" in its similarities to the performance styles of pop superstars Madonna and Britney Spears.

Indeed, Koda seems to be transgressing traditional Japanese mainstream cultural practices in a manner comparable to Madonna's transgressions of supposed "mainstream" U.S. and Euro cultural assumptions. In terms of sexual agency, Madonna is regarded by many as a pioneer in taking control over the representation of sexual fantasies including the extreme nudity of works such as *Sex*. Although Koda has not yet published nude photos, she seems to have crossed a new boundary in Japan's ever evolving pop music scene. In fact, Koda herself admits that she is proud that many think that she has "conquered" the sexy singing style in the Japanese pop music scene.[30] However, while Madonna is praised for breaking down boundaries between taboo and non-taboo, the self-commodifying quality way in which she packages her sexuality must be acknowledged and perhaps best understood as a crucial aspect of her performance of female self-empowerment.[31] Likewise, Koda's constructed image can be understood as a self-commodifying as well as self-actualizing of her female body, a position based not on traditional Japanese notions of femininity but on a new norm largely modeled by American pop music megastars.

Koda's song lyrics, however, seem to represent more traditional Japanese ideas of femininity. In writing lyrics for her love songs, Koda's

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[30] "Koda Kumi Interview! 3rd," HMV Online, January 21, 2008 (accessed on February 23, 2008, http://www.hmv.co.jp/news/article/801210157).

[31] Myra MacDonald, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media* (Oxford: A Hodder Arnold Publication, 1995), pp. 115 and 130.

use of second person pronouns for the object of her love (basically a man) is somewhat inconsistent. While she often uses *kimi* (as stated above, a pronoun for the second person implying a slight dominance of the first person), she also uses *anata* (a polite second person pronoun) in some of her songs. Moreover, the content of her songs suggests that a woman's happiness is dependent on her man. For example, in "Butterfly," she writes:

> You are not everything to me
> But if you are not with me,
> Everything about me will go wrong
> That is why I want you to notice
> there is something about me that has changed.[32]

These lyrics imply that the efforts of a woman to improve her appearance are only meaningful if and when she receives the appreciation of a man. As stated above, Koda herself worked hard to become fit, overlapping art with real life. In "Anytime," her newest single, Koda writes about how she cannot stop thinking about *anata*, how she wants *anata* to grant her wishes, and how she awaits a phone call from *anata*, again reinforcing women's dependence on (and appreciation of) men.[33]

These seemingly incongruent aspects of Koda's constructed image might be explained in the context of postmodernism. MacDonald (1995) claims that postmodernism manifests itself when a dislocation between image and identity sets in. According to her, the rigorous workout routines proclaimed in many contemporary women's magazines serve as a route to regain a homology of images and identity that would otherwise be lost. Koda's claim is that her external image is based not merely on a revealing costume or erotic moves but, perhaps more importantly, on the hard work she has put into defining her body. Thus, Koda seems to have successfully merged her private identity with her public image in a feministic way. MacDonald also claims that it is in the postmodern era when style has come to be valued over substance and that since women are presumably more fluent than men in the language of style, they are more likely to benefit from the opportunities offered by postmodernism.[34] Koda's constructed

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[32] Released on June 22, 2005 from Avex Trax. This song won the Japan Record Award in the same year.
[33] Released on January 23, 2008 from Avex Trax.
[34] MacDonald, *Representing Women*, p. 34.

image explicitly signifies the "postmodern" through her "fluency" as a savvy female cultivating a new style of coolness in the Japanese pop scene, achieving remarkable popularity as *erokakkoii*. However, this liberated female sexuality is now coupled with a more recent and seemingly contradictory reinforcement of female dependency on men, as evidenced in her song lyrics, again suggesting the dominance of style over substance in the postmodern period.

In a recent interview,[35] Koda, who recently turned 25, declared she wants to become an elegant lady with good manners. She admitted that elegance must come from the inside and she is therefore going to try to be more knowledgeable and be more conscious of how she behaves.[36] Interestingly, this remark bears resemblance to the notion of an ideal woman in traditional Japan and cuts, significantly, against her breakthrough image featuring revealing costumes and sexy dancing. This seems to suggest that, although she has broken taboos, Koda is now willing to conform to more traditional notions of a woman as she settles into adulthood. Maybe she will drop the "ero" part from erokakkoii and become *erekakkoii* (elegant and cool) some day.

As discussed above, the images of Japanese female idols have undergone significant transformations in recent decades. These transformations reflect the dynamic nature of the *aidoru*'s fandom, the substantive postwar changes in constructions of gender, and the state of the economy that nurtures the popular culture scene of the postmodern era. Although Koda's signature image seems to have transgressed the norms for mainstream performances of female *aidoru* in Japan, thus opening up new possibilities for the artistic expression of the female body in motion, the questions of who defines and controls the discourse regarding female sexuality and gender roles, as MacDonald suggests, still seem to remain largely unanswered.[37]

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[35] "Special Interview," Oricon Style, January 30, 2008 (accessed on February 3, 2008, http://www.oricon.co.jp/music/interview/080130_02. html).

[36] MacDonald, *Representing Women*, p. 164.

[37] Ibid.

FRAMING THE SENSUAL:
JAPANESE SEXUALITY IN LADIES' COMICS

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, Japanese ladies' comics comprise a significant part of the popular culture material enjoyed by women readers. This genre of manga, or comics, for young and mature adult females offers a wide range of categories ranging from romantic fantasy to stories grounded in perverted lust. As popular texts, the comics provide ample opportunity for hermeneutic analysis. The world of ladies' comics supplies provocative images alternative to stereotypical representations of Japanese women as geisha and fantastic girls like Sailor Moon.

Ladies' comics reflect the complexity of readers' lives, experiences, and sexuality. This article will provide a brief overview of this genre, discussing the various categories of ladies' comics as visual, informative, and imaginative texts. The second half will analyze the contents of ladies' comics in terms of the general theoretical tropes of sexuality, modernity, and their individualistic focus on carnal pleasure and the self. This article also takes up the cathartic function of ladies' comics as a vehicle for solitary entertainment and for the sexual expression of women readers. Ladies' comics are a genre that provides a frame through which the sensual desire of one audience of Japanese readers can be freely explored. I argue that rather than interpreting ladies' comics as pornography, we can understand them as erotica that many women find pleasurable and empowering.

What are Japanese ladies' comics?

Rediisu komikku, or *redikomi* for short, are understood as comics for young and adult women. The term adult here does not necessarily connote pornography as in, for example, "adult movies." *Rediisu* can be translated into English literally as "ladies," but does not carry the association of women of high social status or refined femininity. Rather *rediisu* simply denotes adult women.

Japanese ladies' comics emerged in the 1980s as a distinctively different genre of manga from girls' comics or *shōjo manga*. Girls' comics

arose in the 1950s, blossomed in the 1960s and 1970s, and are still very popular in the twenty-first century. When readers of girls' comics became young adults, however, and wanted to keep reading comics that were appropriate for their age and social status, the time was ripe for the development of manga aimed to them. The 1980s was the time when manga in general gained more popularity and legitimacy as entertainment. This occurred at the same time that women were gaining more rights in the workplace. After Japan's Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) was enacted in 1986, the media took interest in what was viewed as women's growing independence. In fact, one can say that issues such as women's social and financial status as well as their sexual behavior became hot topics in the mass media in the late 1980s. Such interests dovetailed with the rise of ladies' comics. In the early years of the genre, ladies' comics were characterized by freedom of sexual expression, and the pictures displayed within their pages were equivalent to an R-rated or X-rated movie in terms of nudity, violence, and sexually explicit scenes.

The readers of ladies' comic magazines are mainly women in their 20s and 30s who are already married or close to getting married, but the readership also includes women as young as fifteen and those in their 40s.[1] Publishers of these comics divide into two main groups and are distinguished by their willingness to print sexually explicit manga. Ladies' comics published by Shueisha, Futabasha, and Kodansha, all major publishers in Tokyo, have few or no sexual scenes. Sexually explicit ladies' comics are published by smaller companies. Both groups of comics, however, are sold in the same bookstores and convenience stores in Japan.

Ladies' comics cover an extraordinary range of themes. They include love, romance, partner selection, female friendships, life-styles, sexless marriage, divorce, adultery, abortion, and dieting. The themes also deal with careers, finances, bosses and male coworkers in the office, independence, and codependence. Social problems such as sexism, domestic violence, injustice, aging and senility appear very often. The stories always entail marriage or family situations and relations that women encounter in their everyday lives. The ladies' comic artists[2] whom I interviewed in Tokyo,

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[1] Erino Miya, *Rediisu komikku no joseigaku* [Gender Studies through Ladies' Comics] (Tokyo: Kosaido shuppan, 1993).

[2] They are Chikae Ide, Midori Kawabata, Hiroko Kazama, Akiko Miyazaki,

Yokohama, and Osaka between 2007 and 2009 told me that they all read newspapers, watch TV, and check the internet in order to get hints for their stories. Simply put, the world of ladies' comics shows us a great deal about what is going on in contemporary Japan in regard to women's lives and issues.

By the end of the 1990s many stories from ladies' comics were made into popular movies and TV series. This is a clear indication that the stories and issues covered in the ladies' comics have legitimacy and a wider appeal not only to their women readers but to a general audience.[3]

The Romantic Category

The ladies' comic stories catering to young adults suggest that a woman's ultimate dream is to find her Prince Charming, marry him, and have an easy, rich life.[4] Most of the stories in this category conclude with a happy ending like the classic Cinderella story. Romance and love are the focus, and sex takes place only as an expression of love. Most protagonists of these comics do find the ultimate Prince Charming and marry, but others look for rewarding relationships outside of marriage. A typical ladies' comic heroine falls in love, encounters some difficult struggles, and sees problems emerge in the relationship with her loved one. In the end, however, the characters develop positive solutions and enjoy happy endings. The stories are constructive because the protagonists always end up with solutions to their problems, and of course, following the narrative of most melodramas, their marriages always have to be hypergamous, which means that they marry men who are higher in socioeconomic status.[5]

This pattern of finding a handsome, high-status man, falling in love, and consummating this love is obviously very familiar to the readers who enjoyed reading girls' comics when they were younger. However, ladies'

Fumie Noguchi, Asako Shiomi, and Masako Watanabe.

[3] Kinko Ito, "The *Manga* Culture in Japan," *Japan Studies Review* 4 (2000): 1−16; and Gretchen Jones, "'Ladies' Comics': Japan's Not-So-Underground Market in Pornography for Women," *U.S.−Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 22 (2002): 3−31.

[4] Erino Miya, *Rediisu komikku no joseigaku*, pp. 40 and 165.

[5] Kinko Ito, "The World of Japanese Ladies' Comics: From Romantic Fantasy to Lustful Perversion," *Journal of Popular Culture* 36/1 (2002): 68−85.

comics are different from girls' comics in that the former is more realistic and pragmatic in depicting the protagonist's situation. For example, details of the female character's family, job, and financial situations in everyday life are portrayed. Girl's comics, on the other hand, emphasize the elements of dreams, fantasies, romances, and adventures.[6]

Relationships can become very complex in ladies' comics. Many heroines may find themselves in a love triangle with their sisters, best friends, and even their mothers. The male love interest could be the boyfriend of the heroine's sister or mother, a situation that makes all those involved uncomfortable, pushing them to agonize for some time. Some young women in ladies' comics find themselves in an affair with a married man, and others have to choose between their love life and their career. The latter plot mimics the real concern many working women have about keeping the balance between work life and love life.

The Lustful Perversion

Pictures of a woman and a man engaging in uninhibited sexual acts are nothing new in Japan. During the Tokugawa Period (1600−1867) *shunga* or "spring drawings" were very popular as were *ukiyo-e*, the pictures of the floating world. *Shunga* are woodblock print pictures that showed uninhibited Japanese sexuality and erotic materials with exaggerated sexual organs. In *shunga* both sexes engage in the mutual pleasure of sexual acts that are similar to those found in *The Kama Sutra* of India. The purpose of *shunga* is to please the audience. The pictures are sexually stimulating and unrestrained, a pure entertainment where sexual acts are the main and only focus. *Shunga* has neither "a religious nor philosophical basis,"[7] and the Japanese do not have a Christian tradition of viewing sex as fundamentally sinful.[8] *Shinto* ("the Way of The Gods"), the indigenous and animistic religion of Japan, includes the cult of the phallus. Physical pleasures and carnal joys are "divine

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[6] Ide Chikae, interview by author, Osaka, Japan (2007).

[7] Glenn Wilson, *The Sensual Touch: A Guide to More Erotic Love Making* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1996), p. 63.

[8] Timothy Perper and Martha Conrog, "Sex, love, and women in Japanese Comics," in Robert T. Francoeur and Raymond Noonan, eds., *The Comprehensive International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* (New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 663−671.

gifts to be enjoyed to the full."[9] Similarly, sexuality depicted in Japanese ladies' comics is not full of guilt, shame, or bad feelings.[10] Japanese literary and art traditions also make frequent reference to the concept of *iro* (literally "color," also "a lover," "a mistress"). *Iro* is generally understood as sensuality with no feeling of guilt toward carnal pleasure.

Interestingly, the lovers depicted in *shunga* are rarely naked. They are often clad in sensuous, loose-fitting kimono. Moreover, it is the expectation that a sensual act will soon take place; this anticipation of the sex act, rather than its depiction, is what evokes sexual attraction and arousal. Although ultimate carnal pleasure and the joy of coitus are the focus of the pictures, they are not depicted as exploitative of the female sex.

Shunga, extremely explicit and sexually stimulating, depicted many kinds of love-making; ménage à trois (threesome sex), voyeurism, auto eroticism, lesbian sex (which was considered a perfectly natural coitus in those days), male homosexuality, and bestiality. Sexual intercourse is to be enjoyed by both partners, and women are often depicted as the subjects of coitus, not the objects. They seek their own carnal pleasure with or without men. Mutually enjoyable sexual intercourse does not entail inequality between the sexes, the subjugation of women or the superiority of men. *Shunga* also served as sex-education manuals for the new bride-to-be.[11]

In contrast to the *shunga*, sexually explicit ladies' comic stories focus specifically on the heroine. It is her sexual experiences that are designed to excite readers. The heroines in ladies' comics often need to overcome obstacles, whether social, psychological, or emotional, before having sexual intercourse. A heroine may have very low self-esteem, suffer from a trauma that took place in her girlhood (e.g., rape, incest, or domestic violence), or feel inadequate as a wife or mother, and this contributes to her inability to accept herself or to deal with her sexual dysfunction. Once the obstacle, whether it is the past traumatic experience, timidity, embarrassment, or inhibition, is removed, or the social taboos are violated, some heroines may become extremely active. Energy and desire are suddenly unleashed. Heroines may even become aggressive and violent toward the objects of their sexual desire. In revenge, some women even hurt and humiliate the men who

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[9] Wilson, *The Sensuous Touch*, p. 68.

[10] Ito, "The World of Japanese Ladies' Comics," p. 77.

[11] Wilson, *The Sensuous Touch*, p. 63.

had originally violated them such as an abusive father or a rapist. Much violence that might be perpetrated by both men and women takes place in some of the ladies' comic stories: clothes get ripped off, women are forced to provide oral sex, they get raped or gang raped, or a huge plastic enema is inserted into the protagonist's anus.

Interestingly, women also seduce men and rape them in certain comic stories. These protagonists are often depicted as intelligent, confident, and cunning. However, it seems that the level of violence is much less than that found in weekly comic magazines for men where hard core violence such as kidnapping, lynching, murder, rape, or gang rape often takes place along with sex.[12]

The themes of sexually explicit ladies' comics tend to revolve around lust and physical pleasure of the ultimate kind. They are not shy about displaying sexuality visually and in frank language. Many four-letter words, very derogatory names and terms for female body parts, and onomatopoeia of the sounds of sexual acts and various bodily liquids appear in these stories, as will be discussed in more detail below. For some examples, one sees beads of sweat running down the face, breasts, bellies, etc., semen being ejaculated, vaginal fluid pouring, and urine and feces released by suppositories. The pictures realistically depict the biological processes of sexual arousal and orgasm as written in a home medical guide. One guide, for instance, explains that sexual "excitement makes breathing quicken, heart rate increase, and blood pressure rise," and notes that "In a female, the labia and clitoris swell, the vagina lengthens and becomes lubricated, and the breasts enlarge."[13] Ladies' comics use this same level of description, and venture into activities that are not allowed such frank discussion in more mainstream publications. All lead to the sexual excitement of the comics' characters. Urination scenes also appear in many S & M themed stories, and they seem to excite some Japanese men who appear in ladies' comics. Female characters are often

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[12] Kinko Ito, "Images of Women in Weekly Male Comic Magazines in Japan," *Journal of Popular Culture* 27/4 (1994): 81−95; and Kinko Ito, "Sexism in Japanese Weekly Comic Magazines for Men," in John A. Lent, ed., *Asian Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), pp. 127−137.

[13] David R. Goldmann and David A. Horowitz, *American College of Physicians Complete Home Medical Guide* (New York: DK Publishing, 2003), p. 762.

forced to perform urination in front of them as well as a form of sex play called "golden shower."

Sexual scenes predominate in the sexually explicit category of ladies' comics, but the genitals are always obscured due to censorship. In erotic Japanese ladies' comics, a blocking technique known as *bokashi* is used to cover from view what obviously must be erect or thrusting penises, swollen vaginas, and the union of genitalia as well as oral and other kinds of sex. *Bokashi* takes the form of a white oval, square, or rectangle space, or the area may appear to be digitally pixelized as in Japanese pornographic movies. Holmberg states that *bokashi* actually "serves to draw attention to… the very thing that it presumes to hide."[14] Ladies' comic artist Asako Shiomi[15] told me in her interview in 2007 that she always draws the details of genitals even though her editor always puts a white rectangle or oval shape over a certain areas in order to comply with the ordinance that prohibits showing of genitals in comics. Hiroki Otsuka, a male Japanese erotic manga artist, said in an interview, "In sex scenes in manga, the editorial staff will draw black lines particularly over sexual organs and their union, just barely obscuring things. *Bokashi* are inserted so that it is *as if* things cannot be seen" (Italics in the original).[16] *Bokashi* obscures and dissimulates the drawn material in order to comply with censorship laws.

S & M Scenes in Ladies' Comics

S & M scenes make use of all kinds of paraphernalia and disguise. Common devices include whips, eye-masks, candles, chains, bondage, suppositories, and enemas. The protagonist may wear sexy underwear and negligee for a feminine look, or don kinky leather straps and boots to create

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[14] Goldmann and Horowitz, *American College of Physicians Complete Home Medical Guide*, p. 206.

[15] Asako Shiomi was born in 1950 in Yokohama and started her manga career while she was an undergraduate student at Chuo University. She drew girls' comics at the beginning of her thirty some year career, but currently she draws only ladies' comics. Her manga is available both in the traditional paper form and on the cell phone and the Internet. She loves depicting touching human stories and sensual adult material.

[16] Ryan Holmberg, "Let We Go: An Interview with Hiroki Otsuka," *International Journal of Comic Art* 10/1 (2008), p. 202.

a dominatrix image. A heroine often goes through a transformation of personality when the props or equipment are introduced by a man who is her master and trainer. Notably, in the world of ladies' comics, she is awakened to and learns the joy of S & M through these experiences, especially when she is being dominated. She gains more power as the sexual adventure progresses and becomes a very active participant, engaging in energetic sex. So enthralling is the experience that the heroine ends up becoming an addicted sex slave.

Readers are encouraged to participate in S & M play as consumers. All of the comic magazines in the pornographic category have, inserted between the comic stories, advertisements for adult toys such as vibrators, dildos, electronic beads for anal sex, clothespins for pinching nipples, massage oils and lotions as well as love potions. The advertisements invite the readers to explore their bodies, find carnal pleasure, and be liberated sexually.[17] Fees from these advertisers support publication of ladies' comics.

Rape Play Fantasy

Many stories in the pornographic category deal with rape as a sexual act that can be satisfactory or pleasurable for women. Actual rape is violence, and of course, must be recognized as a crime that violates basic human rights. However, in certain ladies' comic stories Japanese women, especially those who are sexually neglected by their lovers or husbands, are depicted as having a desire for being raped and enjoy being raped not only by one man but also by a group of men. It is important to distinguish fantasy from reality when discussing readers' engagement in displays of rape. Such involvement does not mean that women enjoy a forced sex act in reality, but love the notion that they – through the fictional heroines – are objects of male desire. In such scenes, the heroine is desired, needed, and wanted by a man or a group of men in an extraordinary, non-everyday situation. Such thoughts may sexually arouse the reader. Of course, the reader is always in control of her reading and is most likely to be contemplating these scenes in an environment which is actually safe. There is no real threat to her and she is free to spin the fantasy from any perspective she likes.

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[17] Ito, "The World of Japanese Comics," pp. 68–85; and Jones, "'Ladies' Comics,'" pp. 3–31.

Instead of labeling the element of rape in these stories "rape fantasy," it may be more appropriate to call it "rape play fantasy" because these fantasies "are designed with particular structures and features."[18] Usually the men who rape the female protagonists are young and very handsome. They are sexually attractive and desirable and they take time in sex. In the pages of ladies' comics, female characters' stimulation increases in proportion to the number of rapists.[19] Thus, the fantasy is about being the object of uncontrollable desire and not the victim of violence.

Kaoru Nanbara's "Shietsu no Yado" (The Inn of the Ultimate Pleasure) that appeared in *Ai no Taiken Special Deluxe* (*Lustful Experiences – Special Deluxe*) in January, 2006, is a very good example of "rape play fantasy."[20] In this story Masami, the female protagonist comes (no pun intended) to find the ultimate kind of carnal pleasure with multiple men at the inn. The action starts when Masami is dumped by her fiancé who left her for another woman. Lonely, sad, angry, and resentful, Masami decides to take a week-long trip to a deserted inn at a ski resort before the ski season. The inn is managed by two brothers, and has a large, open-air bath surrounded by large rocks. She takes a bath and started masturbating. She fondles her nipples and pleasures herself. All of sudden four completely naked, young, handsome men with great bodies appear in front of her. Two of them are the inn keepers. All four of them want to join her and help her to extinguish the fire of her sexual desire. They begin touching her body all over at once. Masami resists their moves at first, but gradually she falls deep into a carnal pleasure that she has never experienced in her normal courtship. The scene is a safe one, however, and told from the view of the pleasures that Masami experiences.

Lesbian Sex

Lesbian sex takes place quite often in erotic ladies' comics. In these

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[18] Setsu Shigematsu, "Dimensions of Desire: Sex, Fantasy, and Fetish in Japanese Comics," in John A. Lent, eds., *Themes and Issues in Asian Cartooning: Cute, Cheap, Mad, and Sexy* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), p. 142.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Kaoru Nanbara, "Shietsu no yado" [The Inn of the Ultimate Pleasure], *Ai no Taiken Special Deluxe* [Lustful Experiences – Special Deluxe] (Tokyo: Take shobō, 2006).

scenes, two women engage in French kissing, oral sex, or sex with dildos and vibrators. The comic book readers may also consist of lesbian women to whom this is more personal. As well, readers self-identified as heterosexual may be curious about displays of lesbian sexuality.

Yuki Lee's comic story "Dankin Gekijo Benigumi" (Women Only Theater Group Beni) appeared in Take Shobō's *Ai no Taiken Special Deluxe* published in January, 2006.[21] The protagonist Naomi, a 22-year old, ex-office worker, who is a single mother, performs as a striptease dancer at a theater that caters to lesbian women only. She is a leader of the theater troupe. Years pass and when her daughter turns 18, she wants to become a dancer like her mother. Naomi trains her and the daughter debuts as a new dancer. In this comic the performers engage in lesbian strip tease acts including S & M. The audiences, who obviously are repeat customers, bring flowers to their favorite dancers, and enjoy friendly relationships. This story depicts women as sexual subjects engaging in acts of sex, and at the same time these women performers are also objectified and treated as commodities by women who are the audience of the lesbian show. Traditionally male-female voyeurism is considered sexually exciting, but this comic story frames the situation as female-female voyeurism. The female audience gazes at and is aroused by female bodies. No matter what the readers' own sexual orientation, they may find viewing female-female acts as arousing as the heterosexual acts described above. Again, in ladies' comics, almost anything goes.

Adultery

Women who commit adultery are common in many ladies' comic stories that depict a protagonist who is a neglected wife or a girlfriend. Like many contemporary societies, Japanese society is very stressful. Division of labor between the sexes still prevails in many arenas. Gender roles are often obvious and rigid. Men usually leave everything domestic to their wives and focus on working at their companies. Women who have jobs are expected to perform the role of a supermom, doing two shifts, one at work and another at home taking care of children and household chores. Even the married heroines in ladies' comics admit that they feel more like a housemaid than an adult woman who can be sexy and sensuous.

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[21] Yuki Lee, "Dankin gekijo benigumi" [Women Only Theater Group Beni], *Ai no Taiken Special Deluxe* (Tokyo: Take shobō, 2006).

There are various reasons for the sexual dissatisfaction of protagonists. Some are in a sexless marriage, their husbands may have mistresses for their sexual outlets, or their husbands are simply too tired from working all the time. Sexual temptations take various forms in ladies' comics but the most common are that women engage in adultery with men they meet at work, salesmen who visit in their homes, or sometimes total strangers whom they meet on the internet or while they are traveling. As in the scenes of rape described above, the heroine, and by extension, her reader, engage in adventurous and anonymous sex within the safe world of comic reading.

Many sex scenes that revolve around adultery include cunnilingus and the stimulation of the clitoris as well as fellatio. Some protagonists delight in the sensation of oral sex performed on them by a lover. The heroines' husbands (and maybe the readers' as well) had stopped providing it long ago. These scenes depict the characters as filled with the joy of being wanted and desired anew. As their most private parts become stimulated, they begin to feel like "a real woman." In this sense, the woman's lover is a technician who brings her to the ultimate climax. As artist Shiomi said, "carnal desire and pleasure must be both ways. A woman should enjoy sex not only as an object of men's pleasure but also as a subject with independent will."[22]

Incest

Incestuous sex also takes place in the pornographic ladies' comics. The most common patterns of incest depicted in ladies' comics of recent years are those between a young aunt and her handsome nephew, who has a great body, and between a step-daughter and a step-father. Other patterns include a widowed stepmother and her stepson, a brother and a sister, a mother and a son, a mother and a daughter, a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter and a grandfather. These stories view incest "as an erotic theme" and "derive erotic value from incest as a form of transgressed taboo."[23]

Incest, in ladies' comics and in reality, is viewed as detrimental to maintenance of the family system. Incest is not openly talked about in

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[22] Kinko Ito, "The Touching and the Sensual in Japanese Ladies' Comics: An Interview with Asako Shiomi," *International Journal of Comic Art* 10/2 (2008): 186–198, especially p.193.

[23] Holmberg, "Let We Go," p. 204.

Japanese social life. In ladies' comic stories incest appears as a variation of sex, but usually it is a forbidden and secretive pleasure that is the focus of the stories.

Sexuality and Modernity

Sociologists have always been interested in modernity and what a modern society entails. Modern society has been characterized by anomie (a social condition where weakened respect for norms prevails), alienation, increased amounts of surveillance by the government, disenchantment, rationalization, and the dislocation and disorientation of self that emerges from social change. Modern society often brings confusion and mental strain.[24] Michel Foucault noted that modern social life is governed by disciplinary power and shows the "characteristic of the prison and the asylum." He also wrote that the discipline that civilization requires "implies control of inner drives, control that to be effective has to be internal."[25] Durkheim noted that obligation and desirability are two characteristics of morality and the sacrifice of individual desires is essential for keeping social and moral order.[26]

Japanese ladies' comics that belong to the sensual category contain aspects of love and romance but they also depict the extreme, extraordinary, or "abnormal" cases of sex such as forbidden or illegal copulation, humiliation, fantasies, degradation, or fetishes. However, it is the aspects of the forbidden that are very important ingredients for the success of ladies' comic stories. In real life most people refrain from actions that are forbidden

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[24] Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*, 2nd ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977); Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study of Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1966); Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, 2nd ed., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and George Ritzer, *Enchanting a Disenchanted World* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1999).

[25] Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 18.

[26] Emile Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1953).

because society exists above and beyond individuals' desires, and a sanction is entailed in the violation of norms.[27] However, conformity to social norms, rules, and laws, means sacrificing certain desires, wants, and needs that humans have naturally. Inappropriate desires must be quenched including one's abhorrent sexual desires. As Richardson observes, "Because the forbidden is supposed to arouse us sexually indeed, that is a good part of why it is forbidden, tabooed encounters are experienced as sexually exciting."[28]

As for the sexual fantasies in the world of pornographic ladies' comics, little social constraints are placed upon women, and they are free to do as they like. There is a complete separation of sex from reproduction, and the protagonists do not need to think about the social or psychological consequences of copulation.

Ladies' comic stories, as we have seen, showcase indeed a great variety of sexual actions and relationships including S & M, adultery, incest, masturbation, and rape. For example, in Yukiko Nishimori's "Nibiiro no Namida" (Tears of Dull Color) that appeared in Bunkasha's *Hontoniatta Shufu no Taiken* in October, 2005, the protagonist Nana is raped by her mother-in-law. Her strange life began when Nana married Masami Ochi, a man with a severe case of Oedipus complex, and moved in with him and his mother.[29] In her odd new family, Nana experiences restraint, control, abuse, despair, and confinement. Even her wedding night is traumatic: the mother-in-law ties Nana's legs and rapes her, turning Nana's new life into a nightmare. Her mother-in-law is obviously a crazy woman and a control freak, who also exploits Nana as a housemaid. As well, her husband starts to abuse Nana, until she finally decides to go to a women's shelter to get away from her toxic husband and in-law. This story is an example of exceptional sexual experience that epitomizes modernity because the variation "is part of a broad-based set of changes integral to the expansion of modernity."[30]

In the world of Japanese ladies' comics women seek out sexual pleasure in many different ways, and in this sense the protagonists are modern

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Laurel Richardson, *The New Other Woman: Contemporary Women in Affairs with Married Men* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), p. 45.

[29] Yukiko Nishimori, "Nibiiro no namida" [Tears of Dull Color], *Hontoniatta Shufu no Taiken* (Tokyo: Bunkasha, 2005).

[30] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 34.

women. For them, the old marriage plots, the traditional division of labor, and rigid gender roles of dominance and submission "are more than old: they are painful, even oppressive."[31] After the passage of the EEOL, for many young women education and career became more important than looking for a husband and settling down. They emerged as a new generation of independent women and they delayed marriage but were sexually active. As in the West, women were no longer "pawns in elaborate property exchanges at marriage, their value no longer depended on their 'purity' in Japan in the 1980s. [32] For many women, there was no more denial of their sex drive.

      Certain hardcore ladies' comic stories definitely show attributes of pornography such as "violence, dominance, and conquest."[33] According to Paul, "In pornography, sexuality frequently accompanies or provokes disgust and hatred – something to be done quickly, and just as quickly disposed of."[34] However, sexually explicit Japanese ladies' comic stories also have definite story lines that follow the heroine's sexual encounters as well as the emotional experiences that result from them. Moreover, the comics' plots always offer some sort of resolution, contentment, or justification about the whole incident at the end. As we have seen, ladies comics' heroines are often frustrated at home due to a sexless marriage, insensitive husbands, or lack of communication and affection. If they work outside the home they are not happy because of toxic bosses, incompetent colleagues, or the lack of excitement and stimulus in everyday work life. Readers of ladies' comics, who may identify with these characters' frustrations, clearly love to escape to the world of fantasy and explore their own sexuality in a safe place where they can indulge themselves for a while without suffering from the consequences such as arrest by the police, social humiliation and stigma, or sexually transmitted diseases.[35]

      The heroines in ladies' comics are often quite ordinary women who

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[31] Richardson, *The New Other Woman,* p. 9.

[32] Helen E. Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992), p. 33.

[33] Pamela Paul, *Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), p. 121.

[34] Paul, *Pornified,* p. 248.

[35] Asako Shiomi, interview by author, Yokohama, Japan, 2007.

become involved in extraordinary activities. They are housewives who have sex with salesmen, delivery men, neighbors' husbands, men whom they met on internet, former classmates, or teachers at cultural centers voluntarily or involuntarily. They are always portrayed to be content after the sexual encounter. Just like the "Cosmo Girl" much celebrated in the United States, the heroine experiences her own sexuality by "having sex with an 'inappropriate' man, by tasting the 'forbidden fruit,'[36] and an illicit and deviant relationship helps "women to overcome their sexual repression."[37]

In a case where the ladies' comic protagonist gets raped, she is a victim of violence, and her perspective of men, trust, and humankind often changes after the incident. Some become vindictive and decide to take revenge. The heroines in pornographic ladies' comics no longer obey the rules of sexuality that are prescribed by society as normal or ideal. They explore their sexuality and new possibilities without much hesitation or inhibition. The body becomes a temple of carnal pleasure. In ladies' comics the female body is no longer an object to be manipulated by the other sex but a subject which has its own wills, preferences, and sense of control. In this sense, sensual Japanese ladies' comics do not belong to pornography but erotica. Erotica is a more flowery, romantic, and mutually pleasurable version of the same sex acts that appear in pornography without objectification or exploitation of female bodies.[38] The female readers can enjoy themselves in the fantasy world that is safe and secret. In this way, they can find the stories empowering.

Carnal Pleasure and Self

Japanese ladies' comics' depiction of sex, whether it is mutually consensual or even in the case of rape or gang rape, often leads to the heroine's obtaining self-awareness. The incident also prompts her acceptance of her true self of which she was not previously aware or which she did not want to accept. The protagonist's narrative of self differs before and after the sexual encounter. Sex has something to do with intimacy that "touches upon prime aspects of self."[39] The heroine becomes more in tune with her true

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[36] Richardson, *The New Other Woman*, p. 45.

[37] Richardson, *The New Other Woman*, p. 43.

[38] Paul*, Pornified*, p. 121.

[39] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 78.

sexuality and desires. Her sexuality becomes "a quality or property of the self."[40]

Asako Shiomi told me in an interview that her manga always have a plot and a story line that involves the intricate web of human emotions and feelings between the male and female protagonists. Shiomi includes in her comics much romance, sensual, sexy, and flowery language as well as sexually explicit expressions that evoke sensuous feelings. Her manga appeal not only to the readers' sexuality but to their emotions as well. She depicts psychological change that has behavioral consequences, namely sex itself. She portrays female carnal pleasure as well as the very moment when the heroine admits or realizes that she is a sexual subject. Sometimes it is a realization that she is a masochist or that she prefers much younger men with sexual prowess. The heroine also wants the man's heart. Shiomi emphasizes the emotional component that is embedded in sexuality, and she believes that sexuality is part of one's sense of self. In her manga, the heroine becomes aware of her sexuality which is almost like an awakening as she acknowledges and accepts what she really is. This awareness might work as catharsis to get rid of one's repression or at least to seek a temporary release from it through fantasy.[41]

Many pornographic ladies' comics still contain elements of romance in terms of unexpected sexual encounters. However, passionate love and lustful experiences in which sexual attachment occur are the main themes. The themes and actions of the copulation scenes are more or less the same from story to story. For example, erect nipples are always drawn as the protagonist gets sexually aroused at the expectation of intercourse that is about to take place or by stimulation by a man or men. Other scenes suggest a stiff clitoris and swollen labia, part of which is meticulously covered with a white rectangular, square, or oval shaped space – the above-mentioned *bokashi* – which actually evokes more imagination. The protagonist may have involuntary, rhythmic, muscular spasms or contractions in the vagina.

Ladies' comic stories also show diversity in the protagonist's orgasmic experience. This mirrors speculation about female orgasm: "women

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[40] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 14.

[41] Ito, "The Touching and the Sensual in Japanese Ladies' Comics"; and Kinko Ito, "New Trends in the Production of Japanese Ladies' Comics: Diversification and Catharsis," *Japan Studies Review* 13 (2009): 111–130.

may exhibit a far wider range of orgasmic experience than men so, in both degree and kind," and even though there has been controversy about this fact, variations in orgasmic experience are more common than previously thought.[42]

Many ladies' comic stories showcase the clitoris as the main source of carnal pleasure. It is often referred to as *mame* (it literally means a pea in Japanese), and the protagonist has it stimulated orally, manually, or by other devices by a man or men. In the case of lesbian sex, cunnilingus is provided by a woman or women. As Nuland suggests "effective and dependable clitorial stimulation must usually be direct, whether manually or by some other stratagem."[43]

Many husbands who appear in pornographic ladies' comics are depicted as lethargic at home whether at night or on weekends. After long hours of work and long distance commutes, they do not seem to have enough energy to please and entertain their wives in bed. In contrast, a protagonist, who is a bored housewife, stays home all day long daydreaming about fabulous sex. She may try to get her husband's attention and affection by changing her hairdo and wearing elaborate make-up and sexy underwear or a negligee. She might light candles and use potpourri to produce a more romantic mood, or cook his favorite dinner. All her husband wants to do when he gets home after drinking with his co-workers, however, is to take a bath, eat dinner, and sleep. He does not even notice any difference in her appearance or the room. If the wife is lucky, her husband may reluctantly agree to intercourse, although without much foreplay. He will finish rather quickly, and fall asleep right away afterwards. The protagonist should be happy now that she had the intercourse that she had craved all day (or all week or for months!) but she feels rejected and worse than before because there is no romantic post sex conversation or caressing. All she hears is the sound of her husband's snoring.

Nuland states "expectations of simultaneous orgasm are in real life more likely to be frustrated than fulfilled," and that many wives in sexless marriages experience disappointment and disillusionment in marriage. [44] In

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[42] Sherwin B. Nuland, *The Wisdom of the Body* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p. 177.

[43] Nuland, *The Wisdom of the Body*, p. 176.

[44] Nuland, *The Wisdom of the Body*, p. 175.

modern society, she argues, women now "expect to receive, as well as provide, sexual pleasure, and many have come to see a rewarding sex life as a key requirement for a satisfactory marriage." [45] The increasing divorce and remarriage rates recently in Japan show that women are not disillusioned by the institution of marriage but by their husbands, and many are willing to remarry in hopes of achieving a more satisfying family life. Many matchmaking agencies, in person or online, now cater to those who were divorced and looking for new partners.

As many of the stories in ladies' comics indicate, one of the causes of marital dissatisfaction is a lack of spousal communication. Japan has a high context culture where communication is not in messages only but in contexts such as facial expression, tone of voice, silence, grunts, gestures, and postures. [46] The samurai tradition makes Japanese men not really good at expressing themselves especially when it comes to private feelings and emotions such as love and romance, and it is often taxing to decipher subtle nonverbal cues. Communication in intimate relationships often requires tuning into what others are saying without words, and the visual texts such as comics are more powerful medium than the texts alone.

Newly-wed husbands may show love by purchasing gifts and flowers, frequent telephone calls and love-making, but once the excitement of the newly-wed days pass, children arrive, and the reality of family responsibilities sets in. After so many years of marriage, the husband may not be as vocal about his love as before. Her love and devotion to the family that they created together are taken for granted. The protagonist is not happy in regard to her romance or sex. She thought she married a prince, but he has turned into a lazy toad as time went by.

A bored and sexually frustrated heroine, whether a housewife or an office worker, finds her everyday life tedious and not fun. Then, all of sudden, she finds herself in a situation where her boss or co-worker makes a sexual advance. As Richardson notes women "by and large, underestimate the impact of their sexuality in their working relationships with men." [47] A housewife may sexually arouse a delivery man or a salesman in her house.

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[45] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 12.

[46] Edward Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977).

[47] Richardson, *The New Other Woman,* p. 26.

What is noteworthy is the tenderness of the stranger who suddenly becomes her lover. The man may shower her with flowery language complimenting her beauty and sexual attraction as he undresses her. Even though she has invited his attention and she now is an object of his desire, she feels a bit shy and even embarrassed. She may be concerned about the age difference, her wrinkles, sagging breasts and underarms, or stretch marks. Instead, she hears, "Madame, you look great! I love your plump beautiful breasts! You must be excited. Look at the love juice pouring from your lovely garden...," he says as he fondles her body in the kitchen or living room of her house, a storage room in an office, outside in the mountains, in a hotel room, or on a Ferris wheel. "I want you right now," he says and kisses her passionately in the mouth. Gradually the heroine succumbs to his advances happily. "Oh, well, if you say so, maybe I am still beautiful and desirable," she says and appreciates the joy that this unexpected sexual encounter brings to her long lost and forgotten carnal sensations. His sweet words become auditory stimulus that excites her even more. Women need "not just to be admired, but told that they are appreciated and valued" and she "sees herself only in the reflection of male desire."[48] The bodily sensation that she is totally desirable and the confidence that a sense of being loved by a man is important for the character's emotional and psychological well-being.

Ladies' comics allow women linguistic freedom, enabling them to feel free about using all kinds of slang to describe the body and sex. Fancy words, four-letter words, and derogatory profanity are often included in ladies' comics, as mentioned above. Once the initial romantic conversation is completed and a sexual act begins, words and sentences are uttered that are completely inappropriate in other normal social situations in life. Female protagonists are often forced by their men to repeat words such as 'pussy' and to say sentences such as "I love your big cock," "My cunt wants you," "Please insert your dick." These are words and phrases most decent and well-mannered Japanese women find rather difficult to utter in their real life. As the protagonist reaches orgasm, she screams with pleasure at the top of her lungs. In a normal Japanese house or apartment where the rooms are small and walls and doors are paper thin, this is not really possible because of the neighbors. In ladies' comics, however, a protagonist can even scream obscenities as she likes. She can let herself go and is able to speak the

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[48] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 128.

forbidden language of illicit sex.

Orgasm is also the climax of many ladies' comic plots. As Giddens comments on sex in modern society that "the high of orgasm is a moment of triumph as well as physical and emotional release; but many sustain a high also in the building up to a sexual encounter, in which they feel peculiarly alert and even euphoric."[49] The ecstatic moment of orgasm that entails physical, psychological, and emotional release is referred to in French as *le petit mort*, or the little death. The releasing experience enables the protagonist to give up self and abandon the self-identity. She becomes one with the man and the universe, and there is no notion of self or ego at this moment. She then triumphs in the glow of euphoria that follows afterwards, an emotional state that the comic celebrates. This experience of reaching an orgasm, especially with a new person, is "set apart from the ordinary, from the mundane characteristics of everyday life,"[50] and thus it is exciting and stimulating. Transcending everyday life experience is a key element for ladies' comic stories. The protagonist may be an ordinary woman such as an office worker or a housewife, but her sexual encounter may be extraordinary, illicit, forbidden, and removed from reality. This in itself may make the readers of pornographic ladies' comics sexually aroused.

In ladies' comic stories men are there to serve women's need to feel sexy and good about themselves. What Giddens observes about romantic novels of today also holds true for Japanese ladies' comics – women seek in fantasy what is denied in the ordinary world, and ladies' comics also help them "come to terms with frustrated self-identity in actual social life" by liberating them from repression and letting them experience excitement and euphoria vicariously. [51] The experience may be "a conquest of mundane prescriptions and compromises." [52] Sexuality "functions as a malleable feature of self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity, and social norms." [53] Those protagonists who suffered from low self-esteem before their ecstatic sexual encounter gain confidence as they prove their sexual prowess and ability to give and receive sexual pleasure. The body that

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[49] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 79.

[50] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 73.

[51] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 44.

[52] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 45.

[53] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, p. 15.

tasted the extraordinary carnal pleasure becomes the domain of sexuality and part of the self conception of the heroine.

Summary

Ladies' comics are relative late-comers to the scene of modern manga. The freedom of sexual expression was one of the major attractions of the comics for adult women. They provide the readers with dreams, romances, and fantasies that cannot be easily materialized in real life and by experiencing them vicariously the reader may be able to get rid of the monotony of everyday life as well as stress in her personal and work situations. The majority of ladies' comic magazines solicit real stories from the readers who want to tell their personal stories whether they are real or fantasy.[54]

Japan indeed is still in many ways a man's paradise where men dominate the society except in the domestic sphere. Women are daughters, wives, and mothers. They are supposed to be soft-hearted and nurturing as well as wise and strong when it comes to the socialization of children. Women who stay home or work at the bottom of the labor market hierarchy do not have much power or status in reality and in ladies' comic stories even though they are the very people who support and contribute greatly to the Japanese family as well as capitalistic system.

In ladies' comic stories, however, women are the heroines who overcome their shyness, inhibitions, and fears. They solve emotional and psychological problems. They enjoy sex as subjects, not as objectified commodities or submissive and subordinate sexual beings. Some of the heroines may be surprised at the sexual encounter and may not appreciate it at first. They might be rather bewildered and passive, but as the sexual act continues they are awakened by the ultimate kind of carnal pleasure which they never had experienced in a normal courtship. The sense of self is transformed into something more positive and enjoyable. In this sense many ladies' comic stories are empowering to women readers at least psychologically. The sensuous, extraordinary, passionate, unforgettable sex with a dream man exists only in the world of ladies' comics, and the readers may also derive much satisfaction from experiencing it vicariously without taking responsibility for the consequence.

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[54] Ito, "New Trends in the Production of Japanese Ladies' Comics," pp. 111–130.

TAKING GIRLS SERIOUSLY IN
"COOL JAPAN" IDEOLOGY

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An event touted as a rare and historic occasion brought the renowned Japanese social critics Azuma Hiroki and Miyadai Shinji to Chicago for a roundtable discussion on the production and consumption of Japanese popular culture, which was held at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting in 2009. The roundtable, funded with the generous support of the Japan Foundation, featured all male speakers discussing theories developed and promoted by men, and focusing on male *otaku* popular culture. There were no girls to be seen in the bodies or ideas of the roundtable. Later, when asked why Japanese feminists or female scholars of popular culture were not part of the event, the American organizer stated that once they "let in women" there would be no end to it: they would then have to include Korean-Japanese, gays, Ainu, everyone! In other words, girls and 'girl culture' are marginal to primary (male) culture. The great contribution of the authors of this collection of essays is that they take the products and interests of girl culture seriously as core and fundamental to our understanding of Japanese popular culture. I will suggest that girl culture is often missing in enthusiastic celebrations of Japanese popular culture, particularly in formulations that are sponsored or promoted by mainstream and elite institutions.

Japanese pundits and bureaucrats are reveling in a perceived tsunami of Japanese cool, pointing to the global spread of *Gundam*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and the Godzilla Roll as examples of influential new forms of cultural diplomacy.[1] Beginning in 2002, with Japan's decline in

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[1] *Gundam* refers to the *Mobile Suit Gundam* (Kidō senshi gandamu) media enterprise. It began as an anime TV series (produced by Sunrise Studios and directed by Tomino Yoshiyuki) that later gave birth to numerous sequels, spin-offs, filmic and other media adaptations. *Ghost in the Shell* (Kōkaku kidōtai, literally Mobile Armored Riot Police) is another massive multimedia enterprise that includes manga, anime, video games, and novels. The first anime version, directed by Oshii Mamoru (1995), was hugely popular with global fans. Ingredients in the Godzilla Roll vary, but often

manufacturing competitiveness, the government began to propose a shift in emphasis to intangible intellectual products and content-based export industries, with a special focus on media such as anime, manga, game software, and cinema. One outcome was a tourism campaign unleashed in 2006 entitled "Yōkoso! Cool Japan: Fusion with Tradition." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributed massive numbers of Cool Japan campaign brochures, posters and videos worldwide. This may have led some people to wonder who decides what constitutes 'coolness' in the Cool Japan campaign, as well as what the basis is for the selection of exportable content. It is abundantly clear, however, that the campaign masks the gendered nature of contemporary cultural industries.

Figure 1. Cool Japan campaign poster featuring the J-Pop group Puffy.

One poster in the campaign featured a campy shot of Onuki Ami and Yoshimura Yumi from the J-Pop group Puffy. The Puffy girls are wearing tacky kimono with black boots and trendy hairstyles. The carefully planned posing combines the "modern" and "traditional." In the background is a woodblock style Mt. Fuji, and Ami and Yumi are holding an eggplant and a hawk. These icons refer to the folk belief that it is highly

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include shrimp tempura, avocado, spicy tuna, wasabi mayo and a drizzle of *kabayaki* sauce.

auspicious for the first dream of a new year (*hatsuyume*) to contain one of these elements.[2] Although for older male sensibilities or foreigners the look may appear daringly irreverent, the pairing of boots with kimono and *hakama* originated in the Meiji era (1868–1912) among elite female students.[3] Now it has re-emerged as a fashion fad for girls' graduation costume.[4] Instead of representing contemporary fusion, the Puffy outfits are forthright and somewhat parodic retro style. Puffy's putative coolness in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs poster is obviously calculated to stimulate but not to offend. These charming celebrities conform to conventional femininity norms and reinforce non-threatening girl sexiness. The images of girls and women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Cool Japan* 2006 promotional video likewise line up with older male expectations of gendered femininity. In it we see sweet deserts, a waitress from a Maid Café, uniformed workers and schoolgirls, and kimono-clad women. The video does not include images of garish, anti-cute *ganguro* blackfacers or working class *yankii* biker chicks.[5]

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[2] The folk saying is *ichi Fuji, ni taka, san nasubi* [first Fuji, then a hawk, then an eggplant]. It dates to the Edo period and there is no consensus on what the meaning is for selection of these items. There are different versions of what the following entries on the list include as well. See Natsui Yoshinori, *Hatsuyume no kamikuzu*; *Edo no warai o yomu* [Reading Edo humor: The detritus of first dreams] (Tokyo: Rekishi shunjū shuppan, 2005).

[3] For more on the often subversive nature of Meiji girl fashion, see Rebecca Copeland, "Fashioning the Feminine: Images of the Modern Girl Student in Meiji Japan," *U.S. Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 30-31 (2006): 13–35.

[4] Girls may rent *hakama* sets that might include kimono, hair accessories and bags. The Kikuzuru company rents them for graduations, and has a special webpage for pairing *hakama* and boots. One *hakama* features a glittery appliquéd skull, a core motif in current girl culture. Hakama Rental, 2005 (accessed June 20, 2008, http://www.hakama-rental.com/tieup/index.html).

[5] For more on *ganguro* blackfacers see Sharon Kinsella, "Blackfaces, Witches, and Racism against Girls," in Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 143–157; and Laura Miller, *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics*

There are other interesting problems associated with the Cool Japan initiative, officially called the Intellectual Property Strategic Program.[6] One issue is government shaping of what is supposed to be free-wheeling creative output through selective promotion or sponsorship. Another is the clear intent of the Japanese government to use these creative products as a form of diplomacy, articulated in the "soft power" concept the bureaucrats appropriated from Joseph Nye.[7] Douglas McGray's influentially snazzy term "Japan's Gross National Cool" no doubt also contributed to their thinking.[8] The hope is that global consumption of Japanese food and popular culture will foster positive attitudes toward the Japanese nation and people. Government strategists hope that the export of Japanese products that encode both the cool and the traditional will eradicate historical difficulties between Japan and foreign nations, and will eventually establish a type of ideological power. Aside from the dubiousness of this assumption – consider, for example, the fact that sales of Mexican food items such as tortilla chips in the U.S. escalated at the same time that Americans asked for fences to keep actual Mexicans out – there is also an unconvincing confidence in official apparatchik involvement in the creation and promotion of coolness.

In 2006, former Foreign Affairs Minister (and recently deposed Prime Minister) Asō Taro urged the Japanese business community to work with diplomats to promote popular culture more assertively, particularly anime, manga, J-Pop and fashion.[9] As part of this initiative, embassies,

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). A female *yankii* biker is represented in the character Shirayuri Ichigo in the movie *Shimotsuma monogatari* [Kamikaze Girls], dir. Nakashima Tetsuya (2006).

[6] Joho Kanri, *Chiteki zaisan suishin keikaku* [Intellectual Property Strategic Program], Kantei, May 27, 2004 (accessed June 28, 2008, http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/titeki2/kettei/040527f.pdf). English translation (accessed June 28, 2008, http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/titeki/kettei/040527_e.html).

[7] Joseph Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy* 80 (1990): 153–171.

[8] Douglas McGray, "Japan's Gross National Cool," *Foreign Policy* 130 (2002): 44–54.

[9] "A New Look at Cultural Diplomacy: A Call to Japan's Cultural Practitioners," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 28, 2006

consulates and JETRO offices outside Japan began to promote soft power in numerous ways through manga contests, Puffy concerts, and anime screenings. In 2009, the Foreign Affairs Ministry appointed three young women to serve as Japan's "Ambassadors of Cute." The three cultural envoys wear trendy fashions, including Lolita-style frilly dresses and bonnets.[10]

The Intellectual Property Strategic Program explains why an older, conservatively-suited businessman affiliated with JETRO discretely approached me a few years ago for advice on the feasibility of setting up a Gothic Lolita shop in Chicago. Eventually the idea materialized in San Francisco in August 2009 with the opening of New People, The Store, a retail and entertainment megaplex where fans may find the latest manga, catch recent anime, and buy Harajuku fashion. The mall, which is the brainchild of Horibuchi Seiji (CEO of VIZ Pictures and Viz Media), houses movie theaters, displays, and shops. A standout among the shops is a branch of Baby, The Stars Shine Bright, famous for its Sweet Lolita ensembles (the shop was also, not surprisingly, showcased in the Viz produced film *Shimotsuma monogatari* mentioned above). For all their enthusiasm to sell cool Japanese cultural products, the Japanese politicians, entrepreneurs and others involved are perhaps not aware that they are violating what news correspondent Douglas Rushkoff calls "the first rule of cool – don't let your marketing show."[11] Once elders and profiteering enterprises get involved in selling youth cultural products, those goods quickly lose their cool status. In the wake of cool's departure, we find only a sanitized version of the real thing, a product obviously crafted by adult strategists.

Still, it is almost endearing to observe the futile effort of unglamorous foreign ministry workers to keep on top of youth culture in order to exploit it for nationalistic and profiteering reasons. The once stigmatized *otaku* (nerd) culture has shifted into prominence as a trumpeted leader in the creative industries, and the violent, pornographic and hyper-cute have taken center stage in Cool Japan ideology. The promotion of

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(accessed June 15, 2007, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech 0604-2.html).

[10] Isabel Reynolds, "Japan picks 'schoolgirl' among cute ambassadors," *Reuters*, March 12, 2009 (accessed August 25, 2009, http://uk.reuters.com/ article/idUKTRE52B4JC20090312).

[11] "The Merchants of Cool," *Frontline*, PBS (February 27, 2001).

cyborg war games, seductive schoolgirls for enriching male erotic fantasies, and anime tentacle rapes as prized elements in creative J-culture is a type of endeavor that Hiroki Azuma disparages as "*otaku* nationalism."[12]

My criticism of Cool Japan is not driven by a sense of priggish nose-thumbing at the vulgarity of capitalism or a contemptuous assessment of low or eroticized tastes (an example of which might be the bizarre bombé breasts found on female figures created by artist Murakami Takashi.) Rather, I question the ability of elders to grasp, let alone package for foreign consumption, various cultural innovations and forms produced by young people. (When they *are* able to do so, those innovations immediately lose their appeal among youth innovators themselves.) As Ito's article on ladies comics in this issue makes clear, women too have their own types of eroticism. In addition to the ladies comics she describes there are also genres such as BL "Boy's love" manga created and consumed by women and girls, yet these too, do not take center stage in Cool Japan ideology.[13] In the case of cultural products created by and for young women and girls, the *otaku* thrust of mainstream sponsorship of Cool Japan is especially off mark. The variation in girl culture images and products explored in this special issue are given very little space in Cool Japan exportation, which is dominated by cultural products endorsed by official bodies.

Even when Japanese girl culture products do successfully get exported, some of their important elements are nevertheless left at home. Parallel to the efforts of the government are the activities of fans and private entrepreneurs to promote global consumption of things Japanese. In girl-oriented media consumed by non-Japanese consumers, key images and details thought to be too imbued with cultural or historical reference are sometimes excised by translators or publishers. (There is actually a job called a "localizer," a person who not only translates Japanese cultural products for release in the U.S., but also examines them for references and content that are thought to be too offensive or overly difficult for the

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[12] Hiroki Azuma, "Superflat Japanese Postmodernity," MOCA Gallery, 2001 (accessed May 2006, http://www.hirokiazuma.com/en/texts/superflat_en1.html).
[13] BL manga, also known as *yaoi*, is discussed by Kazuko Suzuki, "Pornography or Therapy? Japanese Girls Creating the *Yaoi* Phenomenon," in Sherrie Inness, ed., *Millennium Girls: Today's Girls Around the World* (London: Roman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 243–268.

American consumer.) The resulting texts and artifacts lose some of their weight as vehicles for important girl themes and fantasies and become narratives of a different sort. As part of girls' interest in female power and authority, as well as the supernatural and the occult, manga artists often insert symbols related to Himiko (legendary ruler of the third century Yamato polity) or to powerful or revitalized female shamans. In the manga *Cardcaptor Sakura*, for example, the character Kaho Mizuki is a *miko* (shrine attendant) at Tsukimine Jinja, but in the English adaptation this point is not always easy to detect.[14] For instance, when Mizuki is seen posed in the shrine grounds, the English merely refers to it as a "park." Such "localization" robs the character of her association with romantic notions of ancient female power.

Girl Studies

The study of girls (and women who remain girls in their hearts) as a separate research focus, increasingly labeled "Girl Studies," continues to be a contested idea in academe. Supporters claim that Girl Studies is a worthwhile research domain because of past disregard for age within women's studies, and past neglect of gender within youth studies. Naysayers believe that the category and boundaries of what counts as a "girl" are too shifting and divergent across cultures and through time. This ambiguity, however, is what many scholars find so appealing, and why some have tried to come up with a way to capture this. For example, Takahara Eiri proposes the notion of "girl consciousness" to describe a state of mind oriented toward girlhood that may be present regardless of one's age or gender.[15]

Until recently, incipient Girl Studies was dominated by feminist psychology and informed by adolescent development theory. Several new volumes have opened up Girl Studies to a wide community of scholars. Girl Studies as an emergent field of interdisciplinary inquiry focuses on girls' interests, experiences and culture in an era of global transformation.[16]

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[14] Clamp and Carol Fox, *Cardcaptor Sakura* 1 (Los Angeles: TokyoPop, 2004).

[15] Takahara Eiri, "The Consciousness of the Girl," in Rebecca Copeland, ed., *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women's Writing* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), pp. 185-198.

[16] For examples see Anita Harris, *All About the Girl: Culture, Power, and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Sharon R. Mazzarella and Norma

Scholars within Girl Studies are careful to balance interpretations that recognize both agency and oppression by noting what editors of one volume called "the power, agency, and complicity of girls in resisting and negotiating oppression and inequality within the matrices of structural forces that constrain, impose limits on and contribute to [girls'] vulnerabilities."[17] By contributing to this new research area, which continues to be dominated by studies of Euro-American girls and their culture, articles by Bardsley, Brodey, Ito, and Watanabe in this issue are creating a more balanced scholarship.

　　　　Japanese girls, particularly schoolgirls, are the focus of intense interest in Japan. Whole books have been devoted to them, and authors such as Ōtsuka Eiji, Yamane Kazuma, Tochinai Ryō, and Honda Masuko have built careers and reputations on studies of girls.[18] Nakamura Yasuko, the president of Boom Planning, published a compilation of marketing research on high school girls and their latest tastes.[19] Girl culture texts written by young women as guides or critiques of girl lifestyles include those by Ōta Uni, also known by her pen name Unikki, and whimsical books that meld comics, essays and drawings by writers such as Shinsan Nameko.[20]

　　　　We find works that take Japanese girls or girl culture as their subject in English language scholarship as well. Scholars have investigated

Odom Pecora, *Growing Up Girls: Popular Culture and the Construction of Identity* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999); and Sinikka Aapola, Marnina Gonick, and Anita Harris, eds., *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[17] Yasmin Jiwani, Candis Steenbergen, and Claudia Mitchell, eds., *Girlhood: Redefining the Limits* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2006).

[18] Ōtsuka Eiji, *Shōjo minzokugaku* [Native ethnology of shōjo] (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1989); Yamane Kazuma, *Gyaru no kōzō* [The structure of the girl] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993); Honda Masuko, ed., *Shōjoron* [Theorizing shōjo] (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 1988); and Tochinai Ryō, *Joshikōsei bunka no kenkyū* [Research on high school girl culture] (Tokyo: Goma Books, 1993).

[19] Nakamura Yasuko, *Uchira to osoro no sedai: Tokyo joshikōsei no sugao to kōdō* [The Generation of 'Us' and 'Together': The True Face and Behavior of Tokyo High School Girls] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2004).

[20] Ōta Uni, *Girls Be Ambitious* (Tokyo: Gentosha, 2007); and Shinsan Nameko, *Onna no jinsei sugoroku* [The Woman's Game of Life] (Tokyo: Magazine House, 2008).

girl culture resistance, manga, anime, and other realms of cultural production that reflect girls' unique worldviews.[21] Unfortunately, among the new crop of books on Japanese girls are some trade books and popular press articles that come close to being condescending or lacking in empathy.[22] Others dish up a rehash of tired Western journalism that claims to have discovered how "changed" and "evolved" Japanese women have become.[23]

It is wonderful to read the work of the scholars in this issue because they are contributing not only to our understanding of representations of the girl as well as female complicity in and uses of such imaging, as so clearly seen in Watanabe's article, but are also looking at influential forms of culture produced by and for girls and women. The *maiko* moment described by Bardsley spans many domains of activity, from cosmetic shops and photo studios (some of which are female-run or managed businesses). While most critics attribute the rise of the Maid Café boom to *otaku* male fantasy and interests, Brodey in this issue makes a good case for linking this new and highly lucrative business to girl culture inspired *kosupure* enthusiasms that are linked to cultural products emerging from the *Ema* manga.[24] Finally, the articles in this issue are important

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[21] Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley, eds., *Bad Girls of Japan* (Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), Jennifer Prough, "Reading Culture, Engendering Girls: Politics of the Everyday in the Production of Girls' Manga" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2006); Kimberly Gregson, "What if the Lead Character Looks Like Me? Girl Fans of Shoujo Anime and Their Web Sites," in Sharon R. Mazzarella, ed., *Girl Wide Web: Girls, the Internet, and the Negotiation of Identity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 121–140; and Kawasaki Kenko, "Osaki Midori and the Role of the Girl in Shōwa Modernism," *Asian Studies Review* 32/3 (2008): 293–306.

[22] Examples are Patrick Macias and Izumi Evers, *Japanese Schoolgirl Inferno* (Tokyo: Chronicle Books, 2007), and the regular "Japanese Schoolgirl Watch" in *Wired* magazine, see for example Brian Ascraft, "Japanese Schoolgirl Watch: Downloading Sticker Booth Shots Is Now a Snap," *Wired*, May 19, 2008.

[23] Veronica Chambers, *Kickboxing Geishas*: *How Modern Japanese Women Are Changing Their Nation* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

[24] Kaoru Mori, *Emma*, trans. Sheldon Drzka (La Jolla, CA: Wildstorm Productions, 2008).

because these scholars have immersed themselves in girl culture, unpacking the many different products and media that are appealing to girls and women, paying attention to phenomena that drive a huge part of the Japanese economy but which many critics oddly ignore or negate.

Articles

EDWARD SAID AND THE JAPANESE:
BRITISH REPRESENTATIONS OF JAPAN IN THE YEARS
BEFORE THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Stephen Smith
Sheffield Hallam University, UK

> Japan is a great empire with a most ancient and elaborate
> civilization, and offers as much novelty perhaps as an
> excursion to another planet![1]

Emphasizing the novelty of Japan whilst simultaneously praising the country and its people was a recurrent feature in many of the texts written by British travelers to Japan in the years before the Sino-Japanese War. Authors never seemed to tire of providing diverting, and often amusing, examples of the ways in which the two countries differed. In an entry on "Topsy-turvydom" in his miniature encyclopedia of *Things Japanese*, the eminent Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain clearly relished imparting such amusing facts as "[w]hen building a house, the Japanese construct the roof first" and "strangest of all, after a bath the Japanese dry themselves with a damp towel!"[2] For some authors, it was their avowed intention to record for posterity the peculiarities of the country. Barely a week after his arrival in Yokohama, Douglas Sladen felt he should chronicle some more of his impressions "before the strangeness of the country loses its edge."[3]

The forcible juxtaposition of a strange Japan with a familiar West, while at first glance appearing harmless, is redolent of Edward Said's discourse of Orientalism in which a known Europe is contrasted with an unfamiliar Orient.[4] It is the intention of this paper to explore the extent to which the application of Said's notion of Orientalism provides fresh insight into Western writing on Japan in the late nineteenth century. It is simply not

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[1] Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* 1 (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1881), p. 47.

[2] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1891), pp. 427–429.

[3] Douglas Sladen, *The Japs at Home* (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, n.d.), p. 19.

[4] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 43.

possible in the space available here to summarize, and at the same time do justice to, Said's complex work. Nonetheless, I should declare that despite the (often fair) criticism leveled at Said's work, the arguments in this paper assume that his notion of Orientalism remains a useful theoretical framework within which to explore the relationships between East and West.[5] Although Said effectively eliminated Japan from his own analysis, it has been convincingly argued that his notion of Orientalism can be applied to Western writing on Japan.[6] Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that even in the absence of overt Western political domination, Western writing on Japan often resembled closely that of Said's Orientalists.[7] In the writings of Chamberlain and Sladen quoted earlier, Japan, like Said's Orient, appears to have been viewed as a platonic essence to be known and contrasted with Europe. In the same way that Said's Orientalists created the Orient,[8] the intentions of the authors to chronicle the peculiarities of Japan effectively cast the country in the role of unfamiliar "other" and, in a sense, created a strange Japan. In Said's notion of Orientalism, value judgments often accompanied this vision of an unfamiliar Orient and a familiar Europe.[9] The Oriental was "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike;" the European, "rational, virtuous, mature."[10] Ultimately, the essence of Said's Orientalism is the "ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority."[11]

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[5] For criticism of Said, see John MacKenzie, "Edward Said and the Historians," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 18 (1994): 9–25; and Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 159-219.

[6] Said's Orient comprises the "near Orient" including Egypt, Syria and Arabia and the "distant orient" of which Said considers India and Persia the most important. See Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 16–17. For the applicability of Said's notion of Orientalism to the case of Japan, see Richard Minnear, "Orientalism and the Study of Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 39/3 (1980): 507–517; and P. L. Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient: English Representations of Japan, circa 1895–1910," *Japanese Studies* 19/2 (1999): 163–181.

[7] Minnear, "Orientalism and the Study of Japan," p. 515; and Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 180.

[8] Said, *Orientalism,* pp. 34–40.

[9] Minnear, "Orientalism and the Study of Japan," p. 507.

[10] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 40.

[11] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 42.

This paper examines these more value-laden representations of Japan in texts written by British authors who either resided in Japan or traveled to Japan in the years before the Sino-Japanese War. Additionally, this paper explores how Said's notion of Orientalism might help us better understand late nineteenth-century British writing on a country that challenged the foundations of the Western imperialist world view. [12] In the late nineteenth century Japan apparently defied categorization. As Kipling's friend, the professor, proclaimed, "the Jap isn't a native, and he isn't a sahib either."[13] I seek to shed light on British representations of this apparently indefinable country by exploring the three most striking aspects of Orientalist discourse evident in six contemporary British texts. In the first section of the paper, I will consider representations of Japan as childlike and innocent compared to a mature and knowledgeable West. In the second section of the paper, I will examine representations of Japan as feminine in contrast to a masculine West. In the third and final section of the paper, I intend to explore the seemingly contradictory representations of, on the one hand, a stagnant and archaic Japan and on the other hand, a modern and dynamic Japan. Despite the fact that the final three decades of the nineteenth century saw Japan achieve quite staggering progress along Western lines,[14] the British authors, to varying extents, persisted in depicting Japan as part of a stagnant and unchanging Orient. At the same time, however, the very same authors, with some reservations, commended Japan on the progress achieved thus far. In this final section of the paper, I intend to explore these contrasting images of stagnation and progress within the theoretical framework of Said's Orientalism.

The six contemporary texts used in this paper are an assortment of travel memoirs and more serious treatments of Japan. Like P. L. Pham, I have chosen texts in which the authors attempted to present an image of

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[12] For the difficulty contemporary observers had in classifying Japan in this period, see Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power*, *1850–1905* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1978), pp. 20–41; and Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," pp. 163–169.

[13] Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea: Letters of Travel* (New York: Doubleday and MaClure, 1899), p. 309.

[14] See Akira Irie, *Japan and the Wider World: From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Harlow, UK: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), pp. 11–23; and Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers*, *1890–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 1–24.

Japan as a whole.[15] The authors comprise five men and one woman of varying degrees of prominence. Rudyard Kipling traveled through Japan in the period 1889-90 as part of a world tour. Basil Hall Chamberlain arrived in Japan in 1873 on a trip for his health. He settled in Tokyo and became one of the foremost experts on Japanese art and literature, eventually becoming professor of Japanese and philology at Tokyo University. He eventually left Japan in 1911.[16] Sir Edwin Arnold resided in Japan in the late 1880s. He was prominent as an author, a publisher and as editor of the British newspaper, the Daily Telegraph. Isabella Bird traveled extensively throughout her life and often published her travel diaries. She visited Japan in the late 1870s. Douglas Sladen and Henry Baker Tristram both traveled to Japan in the 1890s. Sladen was a prolific author whose work ranged from travel memoirs to anthologies of Australian poetry. Tristram was canon of Durham Cathedral at the time of his visit to Japan. Although his main intention was to visit his daughter who worked as a missionary in Osaka, he found time to travel through much of the country. Having briefly introduced the principal authors used in this paper, I must confess that I subscribe to Pham's theory that the relative prominence of the authors is of little consequence here.[17] The significance of these texts derives from their contribution to the myriad of often conflicting representations of Japan in this period; Japan as childlike, Japan as feminine, Japan as Oriental and stagnant or Western and modern. And it is to childlike representations of Japan to which we turn first.

Childlike Japan: "A Nation at Play"[18]

One of the most prominent and recurring features of the texts

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[15] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," pp. 164–165.

[16] For a short introduction to Chamberlain's life in Japan, see Richard Bowring, "An Amused Guest in All: Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935)," in H. Cortazzi and G. Daniels, eds., *Britain and Japan 1859–1991: Themes and Personalities* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 128–136. For biographical details of Arnold, Bird, Kipling and Tristram, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For biographical details of Sladen, see K. J. Cable, "Sladen, Douglas Brooke Wheelton (1856–1947)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, 2006 (accessed March 28, 2009, http://www.adb. online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A060152b.htm).

[17] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 165.

[18] This quote is a chapter title from Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 290.

under analysis is the sheer number of descriptions of Japanese children. Douglas Sladen claimed that the "streets literally swarm with children" and Edwin Arnold remarked that "[e]verywhere…are visible the delightful Japanese babies."[19] It has been argued that a reified image of Japanese children and babies, to some extent, displaced other depictions of the population and perpetuated the idea of a childlike Japan.[20] The large amount of space devoted to descriptions of children in the texts examined in this paper certainly suggests that this was the case. Nevertheless, the predominance of descriptions of Japanese children was not the only way in which Japan and the Japanese people were cast in a childlike role.

The houses in which the Japanese lived, the meals they ate and the tools they used were frequently described in small, and often childlike, terms. Arnold, for instance, claimed that "all in Japan is *chiisai* [small]" and Sladen described "microscopic farms and tiny village houses."[21] Isabella Bird thought that a "portable restaurant…looked as if it were made by and for dolls."[22] Thirteen years later, Arnold continued the doll analogy by describing his *ryokan* (Japanese hotel) as "like a doll's house."[23] Tristram also referred to his *ryokan* as a "little wooden doll-house."[24] What's more, Japanese meals were similarly ascribed doll-like qualities. The dishes in a *bento* (Japanese luncheon box) purchased by Tristram were, he claimed, "not very much larger than the dolls' feasts to which grandchildren invite me."[25] The idea that Japanese buildings and meals were similar to those of dolls provides an important link between relatively neutral descriptions concerned simply with size and more value-laden representations of the Japanese world as childlike and feminine. The Japanese meals described by Arnold and Tristram were in stark contrast to what a strong, manly Briton would typically consume in a sitting. This is perhaps best illustrated by referring to Arnold's self-prepared breakfast which he claimed was "more substantial than the airy appetites of the Japanese would demand."[26] The

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[19] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 292; and Edwin Arnold, *Seas and Lands* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1894), p. 187.

[20] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 170.

[21] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 168; and Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 25.

[22] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 18.

[23] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 189.

[24] Henry Baker Tristram, *Rambles in Japan* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1895), p. 113.

[25] Henry Baker Tristram, Rambles in Japan, p. 165.

[26] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 192.

insinuation is clear. Women, children, dolls and the Japanese had airy appetites whereas British men required something more substantial.

Physical descriptions of the Japanese population as a whole were often couched in childlike terms. Japanese adult bodies were described in ways that brought to mind the image of a child. Isabella Bird remarked that the Japanese looked young due to a lack of facial hair. She mistakenly believed railroad officials in their twenties and thirties to be only "striplings of 17 or 18."[27] Furthermore the authors frequently commented on the relatively small stature of the Japanese. Bird, for example, remarked on the "diminutive size of the people" and Tristram described the Japanese as "the bright little folk who cover this land."[28] Perhaps crucially, figures of authority were also described in physically diminutive terms. Bird wrote of "minute [custom-house] officials" and Arnold commented on the "little soldiers."[29] Tristram described how his acquisition of a passport allowing him to travel freely in the interior of Japan commanded such respect from the "ubiquitous little policeman [as] to engender a triumphant feeling of superiority over ordinary mortals."[30] It is not absolutely clear who the ordinary mortals to whom Tristram felt superior actually were. In all probability, Tristram was referring to the Japanese policemen but it is conceivable that he was alluding to the unfortunate fellow Western travelers who were not in possession of the aforementioned passport. Even so, descriptions of little policemen and soldiers, minute officials, and the little folk in general are indicative of an Orientalist discourse in which the childlike, subordinate Japanese were contrasted with the mature, dominant British authors.

Ascribing childlike character traits to the Japanese populace as a whole appeared to be almost routine in the writings of this period.[31] Rudyard Kipling agreed with his friend the professor's remark that "the Jap is a child all his life."[32] Perhaps most curiously, and apparently with no trace of irony, Arnold claimed that "the Japanese are fine sleepers."[33] Moreover, Isabella Bird commented on the "childish amusements of [the]

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[27] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 27.

[28] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 79; and Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 36.

[29] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 18; and Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 175-176.

[30] Tristram*, Rambles in Japan*, p. 82.

[31] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 170.

[32] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, p. 309.

[33] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 350.

men and women" and Tristram characterized the Japanese as always amused and easily fetched by a joke.[34] Even in what should have been the serious matter of religion, the authors observed and recorded outwardly childlike behavior in many Japanese adults. Chamberlain remarked that the Japanese "take their religion lightly" and described visitors to the temple at Ikegami as "happy crowds…praying incidentally."[35] Furthermore, the country itself could be depicted as childlike. This characterization of the country as a whole was most pronounced in a chapter entitled "A Nation at Play" in Douglas Sladen's *The Japs at Home*.[36] In only one of countless examples in this chapter, Sladen made the extraordinary claim that "[i]f a village is large enough to hold a shop at all, it will have a toy shop."[37] Towards the end of the chapter, Sladen implored Japan to "[n]ever grow up!" He hoped Japan would never "grow up out of its delightful status of 'a nation at play'."[38] Although the intention, in all likelihood, was to praise Japan, these passages could well be read in Saidian terms as the contrasting of a childlike and innocent Japan with a mature and knowledgeable West.

Interlocking with the depiction of Japan as childlike and innocent was the representation of the entire population as students and the country itself as under the tutelage of the West. Actual Japanese students often came in for a great deal of praise. Chamberlain described Japanese students as "the schoolmaster's delight – quiet, intelligent, deferential, studious almost to excess" and Isabella Bird claimed that "[i]ntellectual ardour, eager receptiveness, admirable behavior, earnest self-control, docility, and an appetite for hard and continuous work, characterize Japanese students."[39] However, in an example of the frequent slippage between descriptions of children and descriptions of the population as a whole, J. Stafford Ransome claimed that "the most marked *trait* in the Japanese character [is] their feverish anxiety to acquire, and wonderful capacity for absorbing knowledge of any sort."[40] This character trait undoubtedly evokes images of youthfulness. Although his intention was to praise the Japanese, Ransome

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[34] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 78; and Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 63.

[35] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 34.

[36] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, pp. 290–300.

[37] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 297.

[38] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 300.

[39] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 128; and Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 2 (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1881), pp. 343–344.

[40] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 170.

effectively reduced the status of the entire population to that of a child.[41] On the surface, this appears to conform to Said's notion of a Western discourse which sought to subordinate a childlike Orient. However, the Japanese were not simply reduced to the status of children; they were cast in the role of willing students. As a result, it could be argued that the entire population was accorded the corresponding dynamic character traits such as intellectual ardor and eager receptiveness. These character traits fundamentally subvert another of Said's key distinctions between the West and the Orient. The depiction of a young, dynamic Japan is simply not consistent with Said's contention that the Orient was represented as stagnant and unchanging.[42] In fact, the portrayal of Japan as young and dynamic calls into question the overall consistency of applying Said's discourse of Orientalism to British representations of Japan.

Japan was represented as childlike through a reified image of its children. The Japanese population as a whole was often described in physically childlike terms and attributed childlike, although generally positive, character traits. Regardless of the positive nature of these representations, Japan was consistently positioned as childlike and subordinate in contrast to a mature and dominant West. However, interconnecting portrayals of Japan as young and dynamic destabilize a different aspect of the application of Said's discourse to writings on Japan. Representations of a youthful, dynamic Japan fundamentally challenge Said's notion of a Western discourse on an unchanging Orient.

Feminine Japan: "Young Miss Japan" and "Mr. John Bull"[43]

In Arnold's *Seas and Lands*, of the 31 full-page illustrations contained within the chapters covering his travels in Japan, women were the principal focus of fourteen. Men were the focus of only three. Moreover, women were the main focus in the vast majority of the part-page illustrations. Often these illustrations exhibited little or no connection to the content of the chapter. In a chapter entitled "Militant Japan," Arnold, or his publisher, saw fit to insert a picture of a Japanese woman dressed in a kimono.[44] It almost appears as if such illustrations were included to remind the reader that, although the written content of the chapter might be

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 96.

[43] Evelyn Adam (1910) quoted in Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," pp. 171-172.

[44] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 367.

inherently masculine, Japan remained in essence a feminine country. The written content of the texts also exhibited a similar tendency towards the prioritization of depictions of Japanese women. Even a cursory glance at the contents page of Douglas Sladen's *The Japs at Home* reveals that two chapters were devoted to descriptions of Japanese women while the only conceivable equivalent chapter pertaining to Japanese men focused specifically on "Japanese Firemen."[45] Moreover, in a chapter concerned with daily life in Japan, Arnold framed his account exclusively through the activities of women. The reader learned about the charming games Japanese women played in the evening, the reader discovered what a Japanese woman wore in bed and the reader was informed as to the first thing a Japanese woman did upon waking.[46] In Arnold's rather one-sided account, daily life in Japan was essentially a feminine life.

In some cases, images of Japanese women could even displace the popular image of Japan as a land rich in history and culture. In one example, Arnold described a young woman who worked at one of the temples in Nikko.

> Her dark eyes, fair, quiet face, and pious gravity were perhaps the best and nicest things we saw in the renowned temple grounds at Nikko.[47]

In Arnold's account of his visit to what Basil Hall Chamberlain and W. B. Mason considered one of the foremost examples of Buddhist temple architecture in all Japan, the description of one women took precedence over all else.[48] The prioritization of descriptions of Japanese women is also evident in the accounts of crowd scenes. In only one example, Sladen described streets filled to overflowing with *musume* (young unmarried women).[49] Like the depictions of children, the portrayals of Japanese women were often so prominent they displaced alternative images of the

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[45] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p .6.

[46] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 351. According to Arnold, the first thing a Japanese lady did upon awakening was smoke a little brass pipe.

[47] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 202–203.

[48] Basil Hall Chamberlain and W. B. Mason, *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan Including the Whole Empire from Yezo to Formosa* (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 11.

[49] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 148.

Japanese populace as a whole.[50]

The authors' descriptions of Japanese towns and buildings also contributed to the feminization of the country. From the deck of his ship, Tristram observed "fairy-like villas" on the side of the hills.[51] Once ashore, Tristram described stepping into a "fairyland…of minute prettinesses [where] even the butchers' shops are decorated with vases and flowers."[52] Images of a feminine Japan persisted in descriptions of the interior of Japanese residences. Arnold believed that "[n]othing is ugly in the very humblest Japanese home." He was charmed by the "numberless little signs of feminine taste and decoration."[53] The images of dolls' houses and dolls' feasts discussed earlier with regard to the representation of a childlike Japan also contributed to the portrayal of a feminine Japan. A pretty, fairylike dolls' world was not simply a childlike world, it was a feminine world too.

Physical descriptions of the Japanese populace as a whole were frequently couched in feminine terms. Arthur Diósy described Japanese men as having "small delicately formed hands with slender, supple fingers" and Arnold remarked that the male *jinrikisha* (rickshaw) drivers had a "tireless quick trot" and "twinkling little legs."[54] Arnold was also struck by the sing-song voices of "all Japanese readers," even the Emperor Meiji.[55] Moreover, distinctly feminine character traits were often ascribed to the Japanese population as a whole.[56] For Arnold, Japan was a "Land of Gentle Manners."[57] He was particularly charmed by "[t]he light perpetual laughter of the Japanese."[58] Indeed, many authors commented on the agreeable nature of the Japanese. Arnold noted a "universal alacrity to please…[and an] almost divine sweetness of disposition which…places Japan in these respects higher than any other nation."[59] In fact, Arnold wondered whether the Japanese could be of the same race as "that which you left quaffing half-

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[50] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 172.

[51] Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 13.

[52] Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 14.

[53] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 292 and 271.

[54] Arthur Diósy, *The New Far East* (London: Cassell, 1898), p. 53; and Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 278.

[55] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 504.

[56] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 172.

[57] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 160.

[58] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 206.

[59] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 242.

and-half and eating rump steaks on the banks of the Thames."[60] Whilst undoubtedly intended as praise, this kind of comparison could also be read in Saidian terms as contrasting a coarse but inherently masculine Britain with a delicate and feminine Japan. This vision of the nature of the relationship between Britain and Japan was most neatly illustrated a few years later by Evelyn Adam who characterized the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as the partnering of "young Miss Japan" and "Mr. John Bull."[61]

The image of a masculine Britain and a feminine Japan was also reflected in the authors' comments on the status of women in Japanese society. This was an emotive subject for many of the authors as evidenced by the harshness of the criticism reserved for Japanese men and the male-oriented Japanese society. The criticism leveled at Japanese men was in stark contrast to the almost unanimous praise heaped upon Japanese women.[62] Basil Hall Chamberlain even jokingly suggested that Japanese women "could not be of the same race as the men."[63] For Chamberlain, the way in which Japanese women were treated by their husbands should cause a "pang to any generous European heart."[64] Both Chamberlain and Sladen remarked that even the greatest lady of the land was essentially her husband's drudge.[65] The authors also commented on the lack of gallantry displayed by Japanese men. Chamberlain explained this deficiency by looking to Japan's feudal past and the ancient custom of filial piety. He argued that first and foremost a samurai's duty was to his lord or father. Hence, a samurai did not perform his valiant deeds for "such fanciful reward as a lady's smile." This fact, Chamberlain surmised, was reflected in contemporary attitudes and behavior towards women.[66] A lack of gallantry was apparently not confined to the samurai class. At the other end of the social spectrum, Tristram observed Japanese peasant women shouldering a considerable amount of manual labor and similarly concluded that the menfolk were short on gallantry.[67] The assessment of Japanese men as lacking a sense of chivalry effectively contributed to the feminization the country. As Japanese men could not fulfill their masculine role as defined

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[60] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 269.
[61] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 172.
[62] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, p. 86.
[63] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 173.
[64] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 451.
[65] Ibid.; and Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 152.
[66] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 452.
[67] Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 191.

by a Western code of chivalrous behavior, the women, who certainly could
fulfill their feminine role, "deserved a better class of man, and who
better…than a sterling Englishman?"[68] The low status of women in
Japanese society allowed the (male) authors to nourish fantasies of Japanese
female subservience.[69] These fantasies of submissive Japanese women are
evident on a macro scale in the portrayal of a subservient, feminine Japan
and a dominant, masculine and chivalrous Britain. The authors examined in
this paper effectively cast Japan and the Japanese in the role of Young Miss
Japan, while at the same time, casting Britain, and more often than not
themselves, in the role of Mr. John Bull.

The authors' views on Japanese women and their position in
society did not simply contribute to the feminization of the country. The
status of women in Japanese society was also considered an important
factor in determining the level of civilization Japan had attained.[70] For
instance, Arnold wrote that the first Parliament of Japan was "sadly
uncivilised" because women were denied the right to attend the opening
ceremony.[71] It is to this representation of Japan as either civilized or
uncivilized, modern or archaic, progressing or stagnant, to which we now
turn.

Stagnant Japan, Progressing Japan

On her approach to Japan, Isabella Bird recorded her first
impressions:

> The air and water were alike motionless, the mist was still and
> pale, grey clouds lay restfully on a bluish sky, the reflections of
> the white sails of the fishing boats scarcely quivered…our noisy,
> throbbing progress, seemed a boisterous intrusion upon sleeping
> Asia.[72]

Other authors made similar observations of a sleeping, stagnant Japan.
Sladen wrote that Japan was "creative of rest, not to say languor" and rather

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[68] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 173.
[69] Ian Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan: Western Images, Western Myths* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1996), p. 114.
[70] See Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, p. 68; and Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, p. 114.
[71] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 502.
[72] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 14.

bizarrely claimed that in Japan, a retired British man of modest means could "end his life in the placid content of a well-looked-after vegetable."[73] For Sladen, Japan was the ideal place for a Western man to come and relax. Arnold seemed to agree. He regarded Japan as place where a man could forget the problems of modern Britain. "Was there really ever an 'Irish question'" he asked. For Arnold, contemporary problems in Britain appeared "vain and tedious" when contrasted with "placid Japanese insouciance!"[74] There is no doubt that Arnold, and perhaps Sladen, preferred the Japanese lifestyle. However, their tributes to life in Japan were inextricably tied to representations of the country as placid, restful and opposed to modernity. Taking matters more seriously, Arnold believed that Japanese civilization grew up in the "placid atmosphere of secluded Asiatic life." This, he continued, was in stark contrast to Britain which grew up "among the clash and turmoil of competing nations." The result for Britain, Arnold claimed, was the evolution of a civilization based on "active science and ceaseless industry."[75] These passages clearly illustrate what Jihang Park describes as the most distinct feature of Said's discourse of Orientalism; the representation of the East as stagnant in contrast to a constantly progressing West.[76]

The placid atmosphere that Arnold took so much pleasure in and his belief that life in Japan was the "softest tonic" for Western life were intimately linked to the idea of Japan as a country of "antique grace."[77] The considerable amount of space the authors devoted to recounting their experiences in Japanese tea houses suitably illustrates this connection.[78] Arnold, for example, described being served by *musume* clad in traditional costume. He also recounted watching mysterious and antiquated song and dance routines.[79] The tea house was a space where images of a placid Japan and images of an archaic Japan intersected, and the result was the representation of Japan as a country of antique grace. Some authors made

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[73] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 316.

[74] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 289–290.

[75] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 253.

[76] Jihang Park, "Land of the Morning Calm, Land of the Rising Sun: The East Asia Travel Writings of Isabella Bird and George Curzon," *Modern Asian Studies* 36/3 (2002), p. 507.

[77] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 286.

[78] See, for example, Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 230–239 and 258–270; and Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 249.

[79] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 239 and 261.

other, more direct, assertions to give the impression that Japan was a country of-the-past. Sladen, for example, remarked that the best way for an Englishman to get an unadulterated impression of Japan would be to study the fifteenth-century paintings at the National Gallery in London. For Sladen, the *jinrikishas* (rickshaws), the bow-and-arrow shops and the suits of armor on sale in the curio shops, gave the visitor the impression of living in medieval times.[80] On the one hand, through the numerous accounts of time spent in tea houses, Japan was portrayed, somewhat favorably, as a country of antique grace. On the other hand, through Sladen's account of street life in Yokohama, the country was portrayed, rather negatively, as backward and mediaeval. Nevertheless, both depictions fixed Japan, in line with Said's discourse of Orientalism, as a country opposed to modernity; as a country of-the-past.

The authors' translations of the Japanese language also contributed to the depiction of an archaic Japan. Edwin Arnold's attempts at translation in *Seas and Lands* provide the best examples. Arnold rather curiously translated the Japanese expression *O yasumi nasai* as "[c]ondescend to take honourable repose."[81] In two further examples he refers, again somewhat oddly, to "honourable old charcoal" and "honourable old hot water."[82] Through these translations, Arnold effectively portrayed the native speakers of this language as extraordinarily polite. As discussed earlier, many contemporary observers praised the gentle manners and antique grace of the Japanese people. However, through the frequent use of such archaic translations, Arnold also represented the Japanese as remote and somewhat ridiculous. Surely no Englishman would say "Condescend to take honourable repose" when retiring for the night. Susan Bassett-McGuire argues that Victorian translators often "felt the need to convey the remoteness of the original in time and place" and that writers in the Victorian period were prone to "archaizing" in their translations.[83] This tendency is certainly evident in Arnold's translations. It should be understood that Arnold made a choice to translate these Japanese words and expressions into such archaic and ridiculous English. Natural and concise translations were readily available in guidebooks such as Basil Hall

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[80] Sladen, *The Japs at Home*, p. 10.
[81] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 191.
[82] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 268 and 330.
[83] Susan Basset-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1980), pp. 68–73.

Chamberlain and W. B. Mason's *A Handbook for Travellers to Japan*.[84] In fact, Chamberlain and Mason accurately translated *O yasumi nasai* as "Goodnight."[85] By choosing to use such archaic English in his translations, Arnold undoubtedly contributed to a Saidian discourse in which Japan, although praised for its antique grace and gentle manners, was positioned as archaic in contrast to a modern West.

The authors often stated that it was their intention to focus on accounts of real Japan. It appears that in many cases real Japan signified old Japan or a Japan that was still recognizably Oriental. Chamberlain declared that his encyclopedia of *Things Japanese* was in essence a book about "old Japan."[86] Real Japan could also signify rural Japan or a Japan which was unaffected by modernization. The authors were often keen to visit and observe first-hand this increasingly elusive real Japan. Tristram, for example, wrote that he had not crossed three oceans to see the "match factories" and "cotton mills" of Osaka.[87] Isabella Bird also longed to "get away into real Japan."[88] Bird's real Japan was the unbeaten tracks of the title of her book in which "the rumble of the wheel of progress is scarcely yet heard."[89] This desire to report on real Japan or old Japan is, of course, understandable. Temples and tea houses must have appeared far more interesting to the contemporary observer than match factories and cotton mills. However, the eagerness of the authors to represent authentic Japan as old, Oriental, rural and unaffected by modernization was unquestionably a significant factor in sustaining the image of Japan as a country of-the-past.

Often the authors seemed to will Japan to remain authentically Oriental. Modernization in the guise of the adoption of Western dress and architectural styles was often perceived as unnatural and regrettable.[90] The authors often reacted negatively to the idea of Japan as a country in development along Western lines, particularly when key components of an authentic Japan such as traditional dress were threatened.[91] It is perhaps Rudyard Kipling who most vividly expressed this feeling of consternation

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[84] Chamberlain and Mason, *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan*, pp. 17–37.

[85] Chamberlain and Mason, *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan*, p. 24.

[86] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 8.

[87] Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, p. 229.

[88] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 21.

[89] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 9

[90] See, for example, Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 217 and 310; and Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, pp. 78, 136, 212 and 275.

[91] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 176.

at the impending loss of authentic Oriental Japan:

> [I]t would pay us to establish an international suzerainty over Japan; to take away any fear of invasion or annexation, and pay the country as much as ever it chose, on condition that it simply sat still and went on making beautiful things while our men learned. It would pay us to put the whole Empire in a glass case and mark it, "Hors Concours" Exhibit A.[92]

At first glance these passages appear to conform to Said's argument that the reverence of the past Orient allows one to disregard the contemporary Orient.[93] However, this application of Said's theory in the case of Japan is problematic. Although the authors clearly revered old Japan, it did not necessarily follow that they disregarded contemporary Japan or could not accept the need for the country to modernize. Chamberlain may have lamented the "substitution of common-place European ways for the glitter, the glamour of picturesque Orientalism," but he also accepted that there was a need for Japan to modernize.[94] Despite acknowledging that *Things Japanese* was quintessentially a book about old Japan, Chamberlain accepted that, as a book, it was an "epitaph" for old Japan. Indeed, contrary to Kipling, Chamberlain declared that "[o]ld Japan is dead, and the only decent thing to do with the corpse is to bury it."[95] Regrettable as it may have seemed, Chamberlain was not alone in accepting the need for Japan to modernize.[96] Having said that, in some cases modernization was portrayed not as something regrettable but rather as a cause for celebration. In fact, positive descriptions of Japan's modern cities and modern institutions abound. And it is to these accounts to which we now turn.

      I would like to return briefly to Isabella Bird's depiction of Japan as part of a sleeping Asia quoted earlier in this paper. Prevalent as the image of an archaic and stagnant Japan might appear, an equally powerful but contradictory depiction of a young and dynamic Japan is also discernable in many of the texts examined here. Bird's metaphor of a sleeping Japan dissolves almost as soon as she steps ashore. She described the port of Yokohama as ebullient and energetic and Tokyo as "a city of business,

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[92] Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, pp. 311–312.
[93] Minnear, "Orientalism and the Study of Japan," p. 507.
[94] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, pp. 5 and 220.
[95] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 8.
[96] See, for example, Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 253.

politics, amusement, bustle, energy and progress."[97] In the late Victorian period, industriousness was often viewed as an important indicator of civilization.[98] And the Japanese certainly appeared industrious to Isabella Bird. What struck Bird most after stepping ashore was the complete lack of "loafers," for everyone she could see had "some affairs of their own to mind."[99] The sleepy, stagnant image of Japan is simply not consistent with Bird's account of bustling new cities and an industrious population.

Many authors devoted a great deal of space to documenting Japan's astonishingly rapid modernization that followed the opening of the country in the middle of the nineteenth century.[100] Chamberlain triumphantly listed many of the key stages in this process, from 1871 ("Posts and telegraphs introduced") to 1890 ("Opening of the first Diet").[101] Furthermore, Arnold described Japan's progress as a period in which

> new and enlightened criminal codes were enacted; the methods of judicial procedure were entirely changed; thoroughly efficient systems of police, of posts, of telegraphs, and of national education were organized; an army and a navy modeled after Western patterns were formed; the finances of the Empire were placed on a sound footing; railways, roads, and harbors were constructed; an efficient mercantile marine sprang into existence; the jail system was radically improved; an existence scheme of local government was put into operation; a competitive civil service was organized; the whole fiscal system was revised.[102]

Clearly Arnold believed that much had been achieved. Yet his use of the passive voice when describing Japan's progress begs the question "by whom?" In answer to that, many of the authors expressed the view that the Japanese were sorely indebted to British and other Western teachers and

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[97] For the description of Yokohama see Park, "The East Asia Travel Writings of Isabella Bird and George Curzon," p. 519. For the description of Tokyo see Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 2, p. 205.

[98] Park, "The Travel Writings of Isabella Bird and George Curzon," p. 521.

[99] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 17.

[100] See, for example, Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 2; pp. 324–345; and Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 375–376.

[101] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, pp. 220–223.

[102] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, pp. 376–377.

technical advisors.[103] Chamberlain went so far as to state that the "foreign *employé* is the creator of New Japan."[104] Many contemporary observers believed that such dependence on foreign expertise implied that Japan's progress was limited or perhaps even doomed to failure.[105] By emphasizing the extent to which Japan remained reliant on Western assistance, the authors continued to portray Japan as junior, subordinate and still under the tutelage of the West. What's more, by implying that the progress achieved was somehow limited, the authors portrayed Japan as a country incapable of fully modernizing; as a country unable to catch up with the West.

Crucially, many of the authors tempered their praise for Japan's progress with passages that reasserted the essentially Oriental nature of the country and its people. Arnold believed that "[u]nder the thickest lacquer of new ways, the antique manners and primitive Asiatic beliefs survive of this curious and delightful people."[106] Some contemporary observers doubted whether Western institutions could ever be transplanted to Japan.[107] Chamberlain, for example, believed that Europeanization could never be completed.[108] Isabella Bird believed that any progress observed should be considered against the fact that the Japanese government was "despotic and idolatrous," the peasantry were "ignorant and enslaved by superstition" and the official class suffered from the "taint which pervades Asiatic officialdom."[109] For Isabella Bird, it was the very Orientalness of the Japanese people that rendered them incapable of successfully assimilating Western ideas. Any evidence of progress always carried with it the suggestion of superficiality. However much the country appeared to be modernizing, in the texts examined here, Japan could not shake the stigma of being Oriental and, as a result, continued to be represented as subordinate to a constantly progressing West.

Conclusion

It is clear that Japan was not caught in the same discourse of

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[103] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 241; and Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 1, p. 40.

[104] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 171.

[105] Park, "The Travel Writings of Isabella Bird and George Curzon," pp. 522–523.

[106] Arnold, *Seas and Lands*, p. 161.

[107] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, p. 37.

[108] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 127.

[109] Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks* 2, p. 323.

Orientalism which captured Said's colonial East.[110] The texts examined here are not examples of a monolithic denigratory discourse. They are suffused with innumerable conflicts and contradictions. Nevertheless, certain striking elements come to the fore. True to Said's notion of Orientalism, the Japanese people and the country as a whole were depicted as childlike, innocent and feminine in contrast to a mature, knowing and masculine West.

On the other hand, through the image of the populace as admirable students and through depictions of modern cities and institutions, the authors represented Japan as young, dynamic and progressing; a representation that subverts Said's notion of a Western discourse on an unchanging Orient. Japan simply did not fit the Saidian stereotypical image of a stagnant Orient, but neither did undeniably rapid modernization along Western lines confer upon Japan anything like equal status with the West. The authors consistently credited Japan's astonishing progress to Western expertise as much as to the Japanese themselves.

Consequently, Japan's modernization was portrayed as limited. Race appeared to be an important factor in explaining this limitation. The progress made by the Japanese would always be tainted by the fact that they were an Asiatic race. Japan might have been "on the edge of the Orient," but, in the texts considered here, it was still very much positioned as part of the Orient.[111] Regardless of the praise for Japan's modern institutions, industrious population, and admirable students, the authors still positioned Japan as a fixed part of the Orient and as subordinate to a dominant West.

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[110] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 179.
[111] Pham, "On the Edge of the Orient," p. 163.

THE FORGOTTEN SCRIPT REFORM:
LANGUAGE POLICY IN JAPAN'S ARMED FORCES

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The Forgotten Script Reform: Language Policy in Japan's Armed Forces

　　　　In 1867, Japan's two and half centuries of seclusion came to an end when the Tokugawa shogunate agreed to return its political power to the emperor. For the new Meiji government, the transformation of Japan from a feudal state into a modernized country was of vital importance in order to squarely meet the threat of the Western imperial powers, who, having made inroads into the Asian continent, had, it was feared, fixed their eyes on Japan as the next target of colonization. Thus, under the slogan of *fukoku kyōhei* (wealthy nation, strong military), it set out to build an army and navy strong enough to confront the danger. In 1869, long before the creation of an elected assembly or basic framework of constitutional law, the handful of powerful bureaucrats who had helped overthrow the Tokugawa regime and put an end to feudalism created the Ministry of War, and four years later, declared universal conscription.[1] The presence of the colonialists in Japan's backyard was not the only menace that warranted expeditious implementation of the conscription law; the need for a standing army to suppress domestic uprisings – of peasants, who had hoped for some benefits from the Restoration but had received none, and of samurai, who had had their privileges stripped away – demanded action be taken. Thus faced with the twin perils of subjugation and insurrection (and compelled to draw mainly on the pool of shopkeepers, craftsmen, laborers and other townsmen until social conditions stabilized), the government acted without delay.[2]

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[1] What distinguished the Japanese military was the law which established its conscription system, promulgated in 1873 (and revised in 1882), predated the establishment of a national assembly or the promulgation of the constitution. See also E. H. Norman, *Soldier and Peasant in Japan: The Origin of Conscription* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), p. 52.

[2] Japan's rush to militarize step toward the military institution cut many corners which would otherwise be the prerequisites for a healthy

Once conscripts were summoned and gathered from every region of the country, differences in language among them immediately became apparent. An Imperial guard, having eavesdropped upon some of their conversations, reported that they sounded like foreigners, or used words that were "vulgar" or had "strange endings." Though infantry regiments consisted for the most part of men from the same regions, there were instances in which under-strength formations had to fill in with drafters from other areas, causing communication problems. In one such instance, when a sergeant from the north tried to issue orders to his men, who were from the west, both the former and the latter, after a series of repetitions and rephrasings, gave up in exhausted frustration.[3] All levels of command quickly realized that the barriers to clear oral communication that were coming to light would hinder the efficient functioning of the Army, perhaps to the point of paralysis.

Of equal or even greater concern to the armed forces was the state of written Japanese, which at the time was nearly indistinguishable from written Chinese due to the influx of Chinese vocabulary and stylistic obscurity. The tumultuous encounter with the West in the mid 19th century made the Japanese painfully aware of the convoluted aspects of their written language, consisting of logographic symbols, or *kanji*, two sets of syllabic characters, or *kana*, and drove many of them to look for ways to make their spelling strictly phonological. Actually, an idea of script reform, though crude and vague, sprang up long before the Meiji era, when Arai Hakuseki, a 17th century politician and linguist, learned of the Western writing system through an encounter with an Italian priest who was under house arrest in Tokyo for having entered the country illegally. There followed a few other users of the Roman alphabet, called *rōmaji* in Japanese, such as Shimazu Nariakira, a

development of a democratic society: i.e., the recognition of the rights of individuals, public education, and the establishment of government by elected representatives. For instance, in many European nations, the granting of voting rights was granted in exchange for acceptance of universal conscription; in others, at least the rationale for obligatory military services was explained to and understood by those to be conscripted. However, Japan's military came into being with no thought given to the laying of a democratic groundwork for it, as a result of the decision made by the despotic power.

[3] Yutaka Yoshida, *Nihon no guntai* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002), pp. 30–31.

daimyō of what is now Kagoshima who taught himself how to read the alphabet and wrote personal letters and diary entries employing it.

These sporadic instances of interests in writing in *rōmaji*, though they remained in the realm of individual practice and hobby, were the forerunners of the full scale writing reform movement launched shortly before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The bureaucrat Maejima Hisoka, for one, proposed an all-*kana* system and a stylistic change; Fukuzawa Yukichi recommended a cap on the number of *kanji*; and Nanbu Yoshikazu submitted a petition in which he urged the use of the Western alphabet as the only way to bring about a revival of the nation's study of its language.[4] In the years since, many attempts have been made to reform the Japanese script.

As Japan itself became a colonial power in East Asia – a result of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 – there arose the renewed necessity to streamline its notoriously complex writing system, so that its new colonial subjects, and the soldiers conscripted from among them, could acquire Japanese with less difficulty than they would otherwise have had. Central tasks in this reform were to (1) eliminate antiquated and rarely used *kanji*, (2) assign one and only one reading to each *kanji*, and (3) match *kana* representation with pronunciation. Though the civilian leadership recognized script reform to be a high priority and an imperative for the nation as a whole, it was the Army that took the lead in improving the written language.

To fully understand the reasons why Japanese orthography came under scrutiny in the late 1800s and early 1900s requires some familiarity with the state of linguistics in the West in that era. By the first decade of the 20th century, the field had benefited from over a hundred years of scientific inquiry, and many important findings had been made that shaped its various branches. Most noteworthy was the progress made in phonetics and phonology, particularly the formation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which first appeared in 1886, and the recognition of the important distinction between phonemes, the fundamental structural sound units of a language, and allophones, the predictable variants of phonemes. The by-product of these accomplishments was the firm establishment,

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[4] Nanette Twine, "Toward Simplicity: Script Reform Movements in the Meiji Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 38/2 (1983): 117–128.

among linguistic researchers, that spoken language has primacy over written language.

Soon, as Japanese scholars began to be influenced by these Western advances in linguistics research, the progress made in the study of speech sounds turned out to be of particular interest to them, stimulating a thorough re-evaluation of *kanji*, and leading to a devaluation of its status to that of an inferior writing system. More than 90% of *kanji* characters are based primarily on phonological principles; nevertheless, they were at that time (and still are) widely perceived as symbols representing meaning, to the exclusion of sound.[5] It was this perception that led to the slighting of *kanji* and to the exalting instead of the native Japanese system of *kana*, which represent syllables, and therefore are indisputably phonological in nature.

One other factor in the increasingly negative perception of *kanji* was the Russo-Japanese War, during which more than a million Japanese soldiers came into direct contact with the illiterate and impoverished Chinese inhabitants of Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. The massive and unprecedented scale of this exposure engendered in many a soldier a sense of contempt and scorn (where before had existed an inculcated respect and admiration) for China and its culture. When they returned to the homeland, disillusioned by their encounter and filled with enhanced esteem for their own society, their greatly diminished regard for the long-time model and mentor spread far beyond their ranks, and into the general population and encouraging some extremists to go so far as to demand the total elimination of *kanji*. It was against this background that orthography reforms were given the impetus within Japan's armed forces.

Such reforms were urgently needed, for the Japanese phonetic-logographic mixed writing system was a construct which the British Japanologist Sir George Sansom (1968) famously derided as "surely without inferiors"[6] Sir Sansom was not alone in his negative evaluation; its complex and outdated condition was both well known and troubling,

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[5] John DeFrancis, *Visible Speech* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), pp. 89–121; and J. Marshall Unger, *Ideogram: Chinese Characters and the Myth of Disembodied Meaning* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), pp. 1–20.

[6] George Sansom, *An Historical Grammar of Japanese* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

markedly so within the Japanese military – first because the number of *kanji* had become too large to memorize without an exceptional effort, and second because the assignment of sounds to *kana* had become so archaic that they no longer reflected pronunciations then current in the language. The average fighting man, having received only an elementary-level education, was not a master of *kanji*, much less a student of historical spelling, and therefore the likelihood that he would misunderstand written instructions, or worse, fail to execute orders, if such were composed in traditional text, was intolerably high.

Yet, the failure to decipher texts and messages from superiors was not the worse problem; that was the inability to read and write the names of weapon parts, a liability which would, more than any other weakness, stall a war machine, especially a modern, mechanized one. When the Imperial Army and Navy were first founded, soldiers and sailors were trained in the use of Western weaponry whose parts were given Japanese names written in *kanji*. As advancing technology resulted in finer and finer divisions of parts, the lexicon inevitably expanded. In an extreme case, one piece of equipment consisted of more than one thousand parts, with each of them assigned a designation intelligible only to the literate few. In order to familiarize enlisted men with these, a significant amount of time had to be spent teaching individual *kanji*. It is not hard to imagine the difficulty of the soldier's task: memorizing the terms was daunting enough; during battle, the job of matching these terms to the items they referred to had to be done rapidly, without mistakes and under great stress. Naturally, the correct identification of the necessary parts, the accurate transmission of that information to the rear, and the error-free transport of the materiel to the frontline became extremely time-consuming, adversely affecting the ability to execute tactics during combat and ultimately threatening to compromise national defense itself. It was a tenacious problem, one that would bedevil commanders in every conflict from the Sino-Japanese War onward. The overriding importance of clear communication, which, on the battlefield, could make the difference between life and death, victory and defeat, pushed the War Ministry into the very vanguard of radical orthographic reform.

The streamlining of spelling rules became yet more pressing after the annexations of Taiwan in 1895 and Korea in 1910; the young men who might be conscripted from among the populations of the new possessions would be even more likely to misread or misunderstand *kanji* (and outdated *kana*) than would their Japanese counterparts, unless guidelines for "easy-

to-learn Japanese" were drawn up and put into effect. Since it would have been highly impractical, if not unworkable, to issue two sets of orders, one for native speakers and the other for non-native speakers, or to command units through translators or language instructors, changes had to be made with a promptness born of urgent necessity.

Though it had to be carried out, it did not promise to be a simple or straightforward undertaking. The *kanji* inventory at the turn of the century was enormous; estimates ranged from 5,000 to 50,000 characters, since no one had bothered to count exactly how many there were. A large proportion of them, perhaps over half (if one accepts to figure of 5,000), were rarely used. To make matters worse, many of these were the very ones used in the spelling of weapon names, leading to numerous cases in which soldiers in the supply chain, naturally confused, sorted parts in the wrong containers or delivered wrong ones. These symbols had to be abolished, then, before weaponry could be properly maintained. Another difficulty involved the phonological opacity of *kana*. For examples, by the early 1900s, the disyllabic sequences /siya/ and /siyu/ had evolved into the monosyllabic /sya/ and /syu/, respectively, but the latter were still represented, in writing, by <siya> and <siyu>.[7] And the syllables /kehu/, /keu/, /kyau/, all formerly distinct from each other, and therefore spelled differently, had been merged into /kyoo/, but the three distinct spellings were left untouched. As a result of these and a number of other mismatches, many Japanese were unable to correctly spell, even in phonographic characters, what they knew how to pronounce. It is illustrative of the problem that, when a rear admiral gave a spelling quiz to the top 42 of 700 new recruits in 1922, instructing them to write the names of 10 battleships in *kana*, to the officer's chagrin, only 49% of their answers were correct.[8]

Naturally, the twin issues of *kanji* overabundance and *kana* inconsistency were also concerns of the Ministry of Education, the government agency formally charged with the task of script reform. Among the members of the Ministry's Ad-hoc Syllabic Character Investigation Committee, formed in 1908, there was general agreement that it would be necessary to reduce the number of characters and to eliminate multiple pronunciations of those that remained. However, when it came to outdated

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[7] Angular brackets are used for spelling and slashes for sounds.

[8] Kawazoe Kaitirō, *Nihon romajishi* (Tokyo: Okamura shoten, 1922), p. 104.

kana spelling, the so-called "historical *kana* usage," the members of the Committee were divided into three camps. The first insisted on the imposition of the traditional *kana*, however outmoded, upon learners in the colonies, and its retention in the homeland. The second proposed abolishing archaic *kana* usage altogether and substituting for it, both in and outside Japan, orthography more faithful to pronunciation. The third, advocating a double-standard of sorts, called for separate language education models for native speakers and for non-native ones that would require the continued use of the historical *kana* in the domestic education sphere, but introduce more phonological spelling elsewhere.

But the military could not afford to dither, for the probability of war with America, Britain and other powers was growing ever stronger. It was convinced that bringing *kana* spelling convention into conformity with pronunciation and culling the *kanji* inventory for the purpose of streamlining it were matters so vital to the expansion and defense of the empire that they had to be dealt with decisively. Thus, in 1940 and 1941, the War Ministry issued a series of directives: No. 1292, *Simplification of the Representation of Weapon Names and Related Terms*; No. 3231, *Standardization of Weaponry Terms*; and No. 1801, *Revised Simplification of the Representation of Weapon Names and Related Terms*.

Specifics of these directives were truly unprecedented. First of all, the War Ministry proposed to cut the number of *kanji* to the 1,235 it reckoned the maximum necessity, and divide them into two classes. Class One, consisting of 959 characters, including all those taught during the first four years of elementary school at that time, plus some easy ones introduced during the final two years. The ministry recommended that names of weapons and weapon parts be written using these characters, so that the average soldier, regardless of his educational background, could handle equipment properly. Class Two, comprising of 276 characters, was made up of the remainder taught in the last two years, as well as some others in general usage. Class Two characters were to be used only in those limited circumstances where Class One characters would not suffice and where the weapons and parts denoted were to be handled mostly by soldiers with a more advanced education. In 1942, the War Ministry contemplated taking the further step of eventually reducing the total number of necessary

kanji to 500 or 600,[9] but never carried the measure out. To make weapon names even more understandable, the Army, which one would expect to have been particularly hostile to all things Anglo-American, did not shrink from using English loan words that had already gained wide currency in usage; e.g. *natto* "nut," *boruto* "bolt," *pisuton* "piston," *supanaa* "spanner," instead of equivalent Sino-Japanese words.[10]

Secondly, the Army took an approach to the mismatches between pronunciations and *kana* that was strictly phonological and synchronic, that is, it was focused on the pronunciations then current, without regard to any that may have existed at earlier stages. Thus, it ordered that all syllables were henceforth to be spelled the way they were pronounced. For instance, the syllable /o/, and the syllables /wo/ (under all circumstances) and /ho/ (only when preceded by a vowel) – all of which were no longer distinguishable from /o/ – were to be uniformly spelled <o>. Another example was the syllable /ha/, which, because it had become /wa/ when occurring after a vowel, was to be spelled <wa>. [To get a sense of these measures, imagine, if you will, a government institution in an English-speaking country formally and officially changing <through> to <thru> or <light> to <lite>.]

Actually, a similar measure to match *kana* representation to pronunciation had already been informally taken as early as the late Meiji period for those drafted into military service. A 1905 handbook published for newly conscripted soldiers, explaining how to write letters to family and friends, departed from the standard orthography and contained a great many examples of spelling pronunciation.[11]

The Army's *kana* directives were influenced by an Education Ministry's proposal written almost two decades earlier, but withdrawn due to opposition not only from literary giants like Mori Ōgai and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, but also from the public, who felt it showed a lack of respect for the nation's literary traditions. Though the Army's measures elicited

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[9] Hoshina Takaichi, *Dai-tōa kyōeiken to kokugo seisaku* (Tokyo: Toseisha, 1942), pp. 63 and 127–131; and Umegaki Minoru, "Sensō to Nihongo," *Nihongo* 2/5 (1942): 127–131.

[10] Of the 75 words that needed revision, 31 were replaced by foreign loan words.

[11] Kageki (reading uncertain) H., *Teikoku gunjin yoo bun* (Osaka: Kashiwabara keibundō, 1905).

praise among some linguists, there was strong resistance especially among officials charged with setting language policy, as they feared that such drastic changes might be seen as tantamount to repudiating the country's past and serve only to weaken the determination to endure the hardships that would make victory attainable. Some of them ascribed the Japanese success in the initial phase of the Pacific War to the mental toughness gained through the rigors of having to learn how to read and write difficult *kanji* and hard-to-decipher *kana*.

The Army's resolve to make written Japanese more user-friendly did achieve some measure of success outside the homeland, notably in the occupied areas of the South Pacific. This was because the War and the Navy Ministries controlled language instruction in the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; though the Ministry of Education had nominal jurisdiction over Japanese education there, the Japanese teachers employed were actually military personnel. What is more, the military oversaw the production of all teaching materials; in Singapore and the Philippines, for instance, textbooks were printed in *kana* spellings conforming to pronunciations. Nevertheless, the citizens of the Japan proper had to wait till the thorough reformation instituted in the post-war era, by, ironically enough, the American military occupation authorities.[12]

Unfortunately, the benefits produced by high levels of proficiency were more than cancelled out by the harsh conditions of colonization, which embittered local populations wherever the Japanese held sway. In the Philippines, soldiers on their way to internment after surrendering witnessed one outcome of Japanese language education in a most unpleasant way: an angry crowd hurled profanities at them in fluent Japanese.[13]

Many outside the military knew of the organization's simplification and clarification of *kanji-kana* mixed writing, but few knew of its equally significant embrace of Romanization. An effort to replace *kanji* and *kana* with the Latin alphabet was one of Japan's many attempts to

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[12] J. Marshall Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform in Occupation Japan: Reading between the Lines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 59–85; and Christopher Seely, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), pp. 142–167.

[13] Tani Yasuyo, *Dai-tōa kyōeiken to nihongo* (Tokyo: Keisō shobo, 2000), pp. 192–193.

revise the method of writing after the installation of the Meiji government. At the turn of the century, there were two competing Romanization schemes. The older one, popularized by an American medical doctor, James Curtis Hepburn, the founder of Meiji Gakuin University, and thus known as the Hepburn System, was created for the convenience of English speakers learning the Japanese language, and therefore relied heavily on English orthography. From the outset, Hepburn has been utilized primarily to show the "outward face" of Japan, that is, as a foreigners' pronunciation guide to place names and personal names. The other system, Nipponsiki, was created by Tanakadate Aikitu. One of the founding figures of Japanese physics, he was opposed to Hepburn's English-centric spelling and was determined to devise orthography rules best suited to represent the Japanese language, a system that would put on an "inward face."[14]

Hepburn naturally had a strong following among Japanese students of the English language, but Nipponsiki found much sympathy among not only Tanakadate's colleagues in physics and chemistry, but European linguists as well. With its orthography seen to be the first practical application of the phonological theory propounded by the Prague Circle of Linguistics, an influential group of phonologists in 1920s and 1930s, the Nipponsiki System had the good fortune of receiving strong endorsements from overseas; prominent linguists, such as Nikolai Trubetzkoy, one of the nucleus members of the Prague Circle, and Otto Jespersen, a founder of the International Phonetic Association, wrote letters in praise of it.

Nipponsiki also drew support from the Imperial Army and Navy. In the Army, the Land Survey Division was an early adopter, switching allegiance from Hepburn to Nipponsiki in September 1917. The Navy, in which close to 200 officers had joined the Nippon Rōmajikai, an organization dedicated to the promotion of Tanakadate's cause, began spelling place names in Nipponsiki in hydrographical maps in 1922, and

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[14] Even though disputes between these two camps were bitter, their differences actually came down to just one question: how to represent coronal consonants? In Japanese, the coronal consonants /t s n/ undergo palatalization before the high front vowel /i/, causing the tongue body to move toward the hard palate during articulation. As a result of this process, these consonants are realized in this environment as [ć ś ñ], respectively. This change is allophonic, that is, the output sounds are considered to be predictable variants of /t s n/.

employed the same system when Japanese became one of the seven official languages of the International Code of Signals in 1927.[15] Since Nipponsiki Romanization was based on the sound system of the Japanese language without reference to that of any other language, one might naturally suspect that there was a nationalistic motive behind its adoption by the Army and the Navy. On the contrary, it was, once again, convenience and practicality that dictated their choice.

In December 1930, the debate between the Hepburn camp and the Nipponsiki camp reached the national level, when the government-formed Ad Hoc Romanization Study Board convened the first of fourteen meetings to decide once and for all on an official Romanization of Japanese. The meetings were attended by bureaucrats of the vice-ministerial level; as for the War Ministry, the impressive array of generals who represented it testified to the seriousness with which it took settlement of the issue.

Generally speaking, when a nation undertakes script reform, the foremost consideration ought to be the benefit to speakers of its language; it would be an inversion of priorities to put the accommodation of non-native speakers before the needs of fellow countrymen. However, some committee members, greatly desirous of catering to "foreigners" (meaning, it seemed, just Englishmen and Americans), argued that Nipponsiki would greatly inconvenience them, and urged that the Romanization of Japanese be in accord with internationally accepted norms. At the outset of the second meeting, one of the members, apparently upset, asked why the War and Navy Ministries had discontinued employing the Hepburn system in their official documents. In response, a representative of the Navy stated that the conversion from *kana* characters to the Roman alphabet was simpler in Nipponsiki, since its spelling was based on Japanese phonology. He also pointed out that it had a superior economy of communication, explaining that, for instance, the number of letters needed to compose a telegram was less with Nipponsiki than with Hepburn. The Meteorological Agency, which had joined the Army and the Navy in adopting Nipponsiki, agreed, adding that Tanakadate's system was easier to teach to someone who did not know English. One can assume that the Army and Navy's espousal of Nipponsiki stemmed from their awareness that needlessly opaque spelling could stymie their personnel's fighting effectiveness. At the conclusion of

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[15] The other six were English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, and Spanish.

the meetings in September 1937, the Japanese government announced that the official Romanization of the Japanese language would henceforth be what it called the *Kunrei* (government instruction) system, which, though formally a compromise between Hepburn and Nipponsiki, was virtually identical to the latter in all crucial notations. It was a clear-cut victory for Tanakadate and his supporters.

Notwithstanding the Allied occupation authority's abrupt replacement of Kunrei/Nipponsiki with Hepburn upon the disbanding of the Imperial Army and Navy in 1945, the former system was (and still is) unquestionably better suited to represent the Japanese language and (it follows) more likely to be comprehended by native speakers. The results of a little known educational experiment conducted during the occupation left no doubt as to its superiority. [16] In this experiment, elementary-school children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were divided into three groups. Each group learned subject matter using textbooks written in one of the three versions of Romanization: Hepburn, Nipponsiki, and Kunrei. Each then took proficiency tests in language and arithmetic in its respective form of Romanization in three separate periods. The results were compared to those obtained in control classes (where students received instruction in the traditional Japanese writing system). Students educated in the Roman alphabet generally did better than those in the control classes, but within the Romanization group, most notably in the third proficiency test, the Nipponsiki classes significantly outperformed the others. The Civil Information and Education Section of the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP), which had come to associate Nipponsiki and Kunrei with ultra-nationalism, killed the results of the experiment with silence, making only perfunctory mention of it, as if an afterthought, at the end of an intra-section memorandum entitled *1948–52 Romaji Experiment Program*, issued on 23 August 1953.

It was quite unfortunate that the Army and the Navy's strong backing of Nipponsiki and Kunrei led to a dismissal of their value. Though the Kunrei system made a comeback of sorts in 1954, when the cabinet validated its 1937 decision, it was little more than a symbolic one, for Romanization in today's Japan, limited mostly to reading aids for foreigners, is predominantly in Hepburn. Nevertheless, not only has the validity and utility of Kunrei continued to be recognized by a number of prominent

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[16] Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform*, pp. 86–118.

linguists in the fields of syntax and morphology, but, in 1989, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) bestowed another seal of approval on the Kunrei system when that body adopted it in ISO 3602: *Documentation – Romanization of Japanese*.

Historically, the Japanese as a whole have shown little interest in devising a system which would make possible effortless and unambiguous reading or quick and simple writing. As a consequence, they have allowed the haphazard addition of *kanji* into their lexicon, with no long-term and persistent attempt at trimming the excess. Even today, when Westerners, stumped by enigmatic place or personal names, complain about the dreadful nature of Japanese writing, it causes the Japanese to feel secret pleasure and pride in its complexity, and a disdain for exclusively phonetic writing. Furthermore, as the "Japanese Miracle" made possible double-digit economic growth, the traditionalists began to gradually embrace the idea that limits on *kanji* would infringe the freedom of expression guaranteed in the constitution. Since then more than a few attempts have been made to reverse earlier language policies.[17] As Hannas observes, the Japanese, like other East Asians, "tolerate the inefficiency of character-based writing until a foreign threat causes them to take stock of their social institutions," and that once the threat is gone, "retrograde practices creep back in."[18] True to this observation, the standard number of *kanji* approved by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, which now oversees Japan's language policies, will be 2,131 in 2010, 15% more than the 1,850 announced in November 1946 in Japan's first post-war script reform, and over four times the 500 proposed by the Army in 1942.[19] The original role of the *kanji* list as the "ceiling," that is, the *maximum* number of *kanji* needed to read and write Japanese, has been reversed to the "floor," that is, the *minimum* necessary number.

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[17] Nanette Gottlieb, "Language and Politics: The Reversal of the Postwar Script Reform Policy in Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53/4 (1994): 1175–1198.

[18] William C. Hannas, *Asia's Orthographic Dilemma* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 46.

[19] On May 13, 2009, it was reported that the agency received request from the general public that 302 more characters be added to the list. Shiraishi Akihiko, ed., "'Hawk,' 'porcelain'...the new kanji," *Asahi shinbun*, May 14, 2009 (accessed May 23, 2009, http://www.asahi.com/showbiz/news_entertainment/TKY200905130306.html).

Those opposed to change feared that "the trend of events might very well have led to the legal acceptance of rōmaji as an alternative script at least – perhaps to more than that. The idea that the government list of *kanji* as a clearly defined goal had to be replaced with the idea that it was only an entrance requirement to Japanese society."[20]

In 1980's, it was widely speculated that, its written language, multilayered and complicated, would force Japan to make enormous technological adjustments to more effectively store, organize, and retrieve information. However, a series of advancements in computer memory volume has virtually eliminated the problem of storing *kanji* and *kana* characters (which are encoded in two bytes instead of the one byte for Roman alphabet). And the introduction of word processing software, which has revolutionalized Japanese typing by producing what is no less than a quantum leap in its ease, has weakened the earlier arguments for script reform.[21]

Recently, traditional Japanese orthography has gradually made inroads into the World Wide Web as well. In November 2007, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the organization responsible for assigning domain names and IP addresses, decided to allow the use of *kanji* in URLs. Such technical progress and such recognition, however, should not divert attention from the inherent impediments to manipulating and mastering Japanese script without undue stress or strain. As for manipulation – the creation of a typed text for instance – despite the advancement of word processing technology Japanese typing is by nature much slower than English touch-typing, since it involves multiple steps: the typist inputs the Roman alphabet that represents the sound of a *kana* syllable; another few key strokes brings up in a look-up dictionary a list of possible (though not necessarily complete) homophonous *kanji* choices; and a final key stroke selects (hopefully) the most suitable candidate. This tedious procedure demands a constant and unbroken attention to the monitor. As for mastery, children and adolescents are still (as in the Meiji era) subjected to a course of study that constrains them to spend an excessive amount of time in the tiresome memorization of a plethora of characters. An even heavier burden is put upon non-native learners of Japanese, who, after their initial infatuation with *kanji*, awaken to the

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[20] Unger, *Literacy and Script Reform*, pp. 121–123.
[21] Gottlieb, "Language and Politics," pp. 1175–1198.

disturbing fact that even knowledge of one thousand characters leaves well short of reading fluency. Left in its current form, written Japanese will continue to perpetuate the myth (accepted as true even by native speakers) that the language is the world's most difficult to learn.[22]

Yet, the Japanese public and the Ministry of Education persist in their unwillingness to break away from the linguistic shackles of the past. How ironical then, that Japan's pre-war and wartime armed forces, quite infamous in the conduct of their profession, were, as far as the efficiency and accuracy of reading and writing was concerned, so remarkably perspicacious and liberal in their thinking. Driven by unavoidable circumstances to devise a user-friendly method of written communication, they were keen and steadfast supporters of spelling reform, and many of the fruits of their suggestions and proposals have found a place in modern Japanese orthography. Echoes of its ideas still resonate, particularly among those scholars who doggedly call for the improvement of Japanese writing.

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[22] Despite the many publications introducing basic Japanese grammar as something that can be learned in five weeks due to the regularity and rule-governed aspects of its morpho-syntax, and despite assurances of those who have learned the language that spoken Japanese is easier than French or German, this collective belief tenaciously keeps regenerating itself.

Featured Essays

Watsuji Tetsurō, *Mask and Persona*

Translated by Carl M. Johnson

Translator's Introduction

Watsuji Tetsurō first published the essay "Mask and Persona" (Men to Perusona 面とペルソナ) in June of 1935 during the prime of his career, before the worst excesses of the war and remorse of the post-war, but well after his turn away from Western "individualism" and embrace of the method of hermeneutic ethical anthropology.[1] In addition to its value in giving us insight into the mature Watsuji's method of philosophical cultural comparison, the influence of "Mask and Persona" can also be seen in its influence on later Japanese works, such as Sakabe Megumi's The Hermeneutics of Masks (Kamen no Kaishakugaku 仮面の解釈学), which explicitly extends the thoughts introduced in "Mask and Persona."

In "Mask and Persona," Watsuji reflects on the importance of the face in human existence by explicating three main Japanese terms – *men* 面, *kao* 顔, and *gammen* 顔面 – which he contrasts with the Latin term persona. For the convenience of the reader, these are consistently translated as "mask," "face," "facial surface," and "persona" respectively.

The character for men, 面, can also be read as *omote* or *tsura* and can be thought of as an outward aspect or "surface," from which it derives the meanings of "face" and "mask." It is used in such kanji compounds as *heimen* 平面 "plane," *hōmen* 方面 "field," *suimen* 水面 "surface of the water," *gamen* 画面 "screen," etc. Its meaning as "face" is reflected by its

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[1] "Men to Perusona" was first published in *Shisō*, p. 157 and pp. 107–112. In December of 1937, Iwanami Shoten published a collection of writings by Watsuji with "Mask and Persona" as the title essay (pp. 1-12). It was reset into the post-war orthography and included in *Watsuji Tetsurō zenshū* [Complete Works of Watsuji Tetsurō], p. 17 and pp. 289–295; and most recently it has been republished in pocket-sized book format as the co-title essay of "Revival of the Idols" and "Mask and Persona" in *Guzō saikō – men to perusona: Watsuji Tetsurō kansōshū* [Collected Impressions of Watsuji Tetsurō]. The latest version was used in the preparation of this translation, but to the translator's knowledge, the only distinction between the different versions is the use of pre- and post-war orthography.

use in writing *omoshiroi* 面白い "interesting," literally "something that brightens the face." It is used in such phrases as *men wo suru* 面をする "to wear a mask," *shikamettsura wo suru* しかめっ面をする "to scowl," *men to mukatte* 面と向かって "face-to-face," and other expressions listed at the end of essay by Watsuji. As in English, the expression "wearing a mask" *men wo kaburu* 面を被る is an idiom for "deceiving others." More abstractly, it is used in *taimen* 体面, *mentsu* 面子, and *memmoku* 面目, which all mean something like "honor," "appearances," or "face" in the sense of "losing face." The term "mask" can be explicitly indicated by *fukumen* 覆面 (a cloth mask) or *kamen* 仮面 (a hard mask), but throughout "Mask and Persona," Watsuji employs the more expansive and ambiguous men, except once when using *kamen* to refer to Greek masks.

Kao 顔 can usually be treated in translation straightforwardly as "face," but this obscures its relation to *gammen* 顔面, which can also be translated as "face," though more literally it is the "facial surface." *Kao* has a slightly broader metaphorical connotation as the countenance of a person, whereas *gammen* typically refers more narrowly to the physical surface of the face. Nevertheless, unlike the somewhat awkward English "facial surface," *gammen* is used in everyday Japanese and is not an especially technical term. Ultimately, it is a loan from Chinese, whereas *kao* is derived from the indigenous Japanese vocabulary. In spite of the broad similarity of the two, the reader should keep in mind that the "facial surface" of *gammen* brings with it a connection to *men* as both "masking surface" and "sur-face."

Turning to the final term, persona, we see that it would not be inappropriate to translate the title of the essay as "Japanese Masks and the Western Persona." However, rather than just chauvinistically champion Japanese terms over their Western counterparts (or vice versa in a bit of cultural self-denigration), Watsuji uses the differences between the terms to better fill out our understanding of the role of the face. As elsewhere, his basic philosophical method is to enhance our understanding of abstract philosophical concepts by contrasting concrete cultural traditions and artifacts as they are located historically and climatically. In the West, the power of the face is demonstrated by the way in which the term persona shifted in usage from mask to the character portrayed by the mask to personhood itself. (The Latin persona is the root of the English "person.") This examination of the term persona was somewhat anticipated by

Boëthius, who connected it to the Greek term prosopon in Contra Eutychen, and Jung, who helped revive the term as a part of his psychology of types, but Watsuji is able to take his examination further by extending it to the East, where the power of the face has been demonstrated by the negative use of the blank Noh mask in portraying an endless variety of expressions.

As is well known, Noh [*nō* 能] is an indigenous Japanese theater form which is performed by a masked actor with a chorus, similar to ancient Greek theater. Noh emerged in the 14th century, and typical plots concern the intersection of the otherworldly with ordinary or historical personages. A skilled actor is able to cause his (traditionally, all Noh actors are male) mask to take on a variety of expressions by changing its angle and thus the shadows on its otherwise emotionally blank face. The five major categories of Noh masks are men, women, the elderly, spirits, and gods/demons, but there are many other subdivisions. The more overtly emotional the mask, the more difficult it is to show a variety of emotions. Thus, often a demon mask may only be employed at the climactic end of a play, whereas the mask of an ordinary woman might be employed throughout. The masks of Noh derive from *Gigaku* 伎楽, an ancient form of masked dance that is now largely extinct. Both were preceded by *Kagura* 神楽, the divine dances of Shinto, the roots of which are recorded even in the earliest Japanese writings. *Kagura* survives in a number of different local forms today and is also used as the name for a style of dance within Noh.

In "Mask and Persona," Watsuji uses all of this background information in order to philosophically explore the importance of the face both for human existence and as a metaphor for human interaction. One unfortunate aspect of the legacy of hermeneutics as the science of translation is that we may sometimes fall into the trap of looking for the "true language" into which our words are translated as thoughts or looking for the "true face" that hides behind the mask of false appearances. We see this, for example, in Jung's positing of an *anima* behind the persona. Watsuji tries to overcome this tendency without thereby falling into the opposite trap of thinking of words or masks as exhausting themselves by their surfaces, as some post-modern thinkers claim. On the one hand, positing a hidden language or a hidden face that is only different insofar as it is hidden merely displaces without solving the problems that led us to posit the existence of a hidden realm in the first place. On the other hand, removing the face from behind the mask removes a part of experience and reality. For Watsuji, there is a fundamental "mysteriousness" which is

neither reducible to a hidden face nor eliminable by Occam's razor. This is the subject [*shutai* 主体] which reveals itself as a personality (*jinkaku* 人格, a translation of the *Kantian Persönlichkeit*, that which makes a person) through its expression [*hyōgen* 表現, German *Darstellung*] in the world. The personality is a hybrid of the transcendental and phenomenal which according to Kyoto School philosophy is possible because of the emptiness of all things. Thus, it is perfectly symbolized by the Noh mask, which though perfectly static and blank freely takes on whatever expression it needs to take on. Through aesthetic experience the personality of the mask itself becomes an object of possible experience. Paradoxically, it is the very inhumanity and immobility of the Noh mask which makes it such an excellent tool of art, because only such a radically decontextualized facial surface is able to lay bare the mechanism of emptiness by which the subject constructs itself in phenomena.

While some might say that is only the "pathetic fallacy" that causes us to project our feelings onto the frozen Noh mask, numerous thinkers in Japanese art and philosophy deny that the personification of things is itself fallacious. For example, Bashō showed no hesitation in projecting his own emotional state onto the fleeting natural world around him in many of his haiku. Similar examples can be found throughout the Japanese arts. Failure to succumb to the pathetic "fallacy" is really a failure to experience the fundamental mysteriousness of the phenomenal world arising from emptiness. Through its own negativity the Noh mask helps demonstrate the negative existence of the human being, which always exists through its expression by signs like the face, yet is never fully captured by them.

Translation of "Mask and Persona"

Innumerable things subsist around us that, when left unquestioned, are thought to be completely understood, but that when we do try to question them turn out not to be understood in reality. The "facial surface" [*gammen* 顔面] is one of them. Though we must expect that among the clear-sighted there is no one who doesn't know what a facial surface is, still there is nothing quite so mysterious as it.

We are able to interact with others without knowing their faces [*kao* 顔]. Linguistic expressions [*hyōgen* 表現] such as letters, messages, etc. mediate for us. However, in those situations, it is merely that we do not know the face of the other; it is not that we think of the other as faceless. In many cases, we come to unconsciously imagine the faces of others from the

attitude expressed by their language or from the look of their handwriting. Though this process is ordinarily rather indistinct, when we actually come into direct contact with such persons, it is powerful enough that we clearly feel whether or not our expectations have been met. This is to say nothing of those cases in which one knows the face of the other – one certainly cannot recall those persons without their faces. If while looking at a picture one happens to think of its artist, what comes to mind in that moment is a face. Also, in the cases where a friend enters one's consciousness, the face of that friend pops up along with the name. Of course, besides faces, one's memory of others is tied to such things as their posture, appearance from behind, gait, and so on. However, even if we could exclude all of those things when recalling a person, still the face alone would be the thing that cannot be taken away. Even when thinking of a person's appearance from behind, it is the face that is facing away.

Busts and portraits are categories that show this straightforwardly. An artist is able to reduce expressing the "person" down to just the "face," yet we will not at all feel as though the limbs and trunk had been broken off or anything like that. Rather, we see there the total body of the person. Yet were a torso with the face cut off presented, we may find it to be a beautiful and natural expression, but certainly we would not see it as expressing "person." Of course, the standpoint of the modern era is for an artist to begin by treating the physical body like such a torso, since it sees nature through the physical and is not primarily aimed at expressing the "person." What about something that once did express the "person" but through damage became a torso? This is clearly because of the breaking off of the head, arms, and legs. That is to say, it became a "fragment." Seen this way, regardless of whether a head separated from its trunk can stand by itself as a expression of "person," a trunk separated from its head changes into a fragment. What is shown here is how central of a position the face holds for the existence of persons [*hito no sonzai* 人の存在].

This point is all the more penetrating with the mask [men 面, also read omote or tsura]. In it, the head and ears are taken away, leaving just a facial surface. Why was such a thing created? To allow specific characters to be expressed on the stage. At first, it was necessary for religious ceremonial pantomime. Following the transformation of these pantomimes into drama as the appearing characters became more complex the masks also became differentiated. Such masks were first perfected artistically by the Greeks. It

was, however, none other than the Japanese who continued the tradition of those masks and caused its excellent development.

Those who saw the *Gigaku* and Noh masks at the Hyōkeikan[2] last autumn (1934) are aware of how many masterpieces of Japanese masks there are. From my own humble viewpoint, it seems that among the wooden masks [*kamen* 仮面] of Greece there are none so excellent. They simply show the "part" of king or queen alone, and do not attempt the thorough typification of a specific look [*hyōjō* 表情] that can be seen in *Gigaku* masks [men 面]. Having said this, neither do they carefully wipe away any positive look like some Noh masks. Such artistic painstakingness is perhaps without comparison among masks. Does this not show that the eye of Japanese sculptors, rather than focusing on physical beauty, focused on the "person" in the physical and thus "the mystery of the facial surface"?

But the true excellence of these masks cannot be understood merely by lining them up on the shelf and looking at them as one would a sculpture. Masks qua masks have been separated from the trunk and especially the head precisely because they are not the sort of things to be treated like sculptures. That is, they are what they are for the sake of a living, moving person who performs a specific gesture while wearing the mask over his face. If this is so then compared to sculptures, which are by essence stationary, the mask is by essence moving. The true manifestation of the excellence of a mask has to be when it is put in a position of motion.

When a person wears a *Gigaku* mask to do a specific performance, it truly comes to expose how sharply the mask typifies a look of joy, anger, etc. and how closely it shapes a specific personality, character type, and so on. At this time we can clearly see that all unnecessary things are stripped away by the facial surface and only what ought to be emphasized survives. And for this reason, this surface actually comes to live many times more powerfully than even the facial surface of a living person. If on the stage a person's face were to be detected in its natural, unchanged state from behind a moving *Gigaku* mask, one would have to feel how poor, shabby, and lacking in vitality the natural face is. The power of art heightens, strengthens, and purifies the facial surface's mystery with a mask.

If *Gigaku* masks aim at positively emphasizing and purifying the "person" in the facial surface, then Noh masks may be said to have

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[2] The Hyōkeikan is a section of the Tokyo National Museum (then called the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum) in Ueno, Tokyo.

negatively stripped it radically. What is revealed in a *Gigaku* mask is always a "person" – however mythological and emptily speculative of a facial surface it may create. For example, even if the mouth had become a beak, we would strongly feel the mask to have a human-like look. However, in the Noh mask of a demon, we find all trace of humanity erased from the facial surface. Though it could also be said to "embody awesomeness," it cannot be said to typify the awesomeness of a person's look. Generally speaking, it is not the face of a type of person. This characteristic of Noh masks is also seen in the ordinary masks that represent men or women. Whether of a man or a woman or even an old person or a young person, in any case, the facial surface of a person is what is shown; however, looks as of joy or anger are not shown there at all. The muscular activity ordinarily seen on the surface of a person's face is here washed away carefully. Thus, the feeling it fleshes out resembles very strongly facial surface of one who died suddenly. The old man mask and old woman mask foreshadow death especially strongly. Surely such masks from which human-like looks have been stripped away as radically as this are found subsisting nowhere but in the world of Noh. The mysterious feeling that one gets from Noh masks is founded on this negativity.

Be that as it may, when a Noh mask appears on the stage and gains a moving body, at that point something surprising occurs. Namely, the Noh mask – from which the look ought to have been stripped away – actually begins to display boundless variety in its looks. When the actor who puts on the mask creates some look through the movements of his hands and feet, what is expressed there has already become the look of the mask. If, for example, his hands move as if to wipe away tears, then the mask has already begun crying. A presentation in the melody of the "chant" [*utai* 謡] is added on top of this, and all of this together becomes the look of the mask. A facial surface that is so able to reveal the nuanced shadows of the heart with such perfect freedom [*jiyū jizai* 自由自在] and subtlety does not subsist in the natural facial surface. And this freedom in its look is founded on the fact that the Noh mask is not statically revealing any human-like look whatsoever. A laughing Gigaku mask is not able to cry. However, a mask of an old man or an old woman showing the aspect of a corpse is able to both laugh and cry.

What especially draws our attention in the activity of these masks is that the mask totally absorbs into its own self the body and gestures of the moving actor who puts it on. Though in actuality it is the actor who puts on

the mask and is moving, speaking in terms of the effect, it is the mask that has acquired a body. If a particular Noh actor when standing on the stage wearing the mask of a woman were not felt to have the appearance of a woman, then there would be nothing of value behind that actor's fame. Indeed, even if the actor were inexperienced or a complete amateur, still we should speak of an actor wearing a woman's mask as having become a woman. So great is the power of the mask. Consequently, we can also say the other way around that the mask is controlled by the body which it acquired. This is because the body has become the body of the mask, all of the movements of the body are comprehended as the movements of the mask, and what is expressed by the body becomes the look of the mask. One example that shows this relationship can be made by studying a comparison of the *Kagura* of the mythological age with Noh. The difference between the gestures made in Noh and those made in *Kagura* by a formally identical mask is glaringly obvious. If what appears to us is the undulation of a soft, womanly body of a kind that cannot be seen in the gestures of Noh, then it utterly becomes something seductive in a way that can never been seen on a Noh stage even if that same mask of a woman were used. This transformation is sufficient in degree to surprise the actual person acting. Yet, on top of this, the same mask if it acquires the body of a dancer during the singing of *nagauta* [長唄] may become another completely different mask.

We can explain the preceding observations as follows: A mask is just the facial surface which remained when the body and head were stripped away from the original physical person, but that mask acquires a body once again. For the expressing of the person, it can be reduced to just a facial surface, but this reduced surface has the power to freely restore itself to a body. Seen this way, the facial surface has a core significance for the existence of a person [*hito no sonzai* 人の存在]. It is not simply one part of the physical body, but it is none other than the seat of the subjective [*shutai-teki naru mono no za* 主体的なるものの座] that subdues the physical body for itself, that is, the seat of personality [*jinkaku* 人格].

What we have thought about so far cannot but naturally remind one of its associations with "persona." This word first meant the mask used in a drama. This meaning shifted, and since it meant the various roles in the drama, it became a word indicating the characters in the drama. This is the "dramatis personae." Yet, this usage is common in life activity in apparent reality apart from drama as well. The various roles in human life activity

are personas. I, you, and he are the first, second, and third personas, and the various positions, statuses, and titles in society are personas. Hence, this usage spread even up to God, so that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are called the three personas of God. However, persons each have their own roles and duties in society. Behaving according to one's own persona is how one gets done what must be done. Therefore, in the case that one acts in another's stead to get what must be done, one has become employed as the persona of the other. This being so, the persona must mean "personality" as the subject of acts and the subject of rights. Thus, "mask" has become "personality."

Now, the most vitally important point about the reason for this turnabout in meaning is that first "mask" had come to mean "role." If masks were only seen as being merely a sculpted facial surface, such a meaning could not have arisen. It was rather because masks held the power to acquire living persons as their own bodies that they were able to be a role or to be a character. Following from this are we able to say about those colleagues who cause us to feel this power vividly that, "Before you employed the mask of a king, but next employ the mask of a queen." If this is so, then we should be able to recognize the previously mentioned mysteriousness of the facial surface acting even in the historical background by which persona acquired the meaning of personality.

The word mask [*men* 面] is different from persona and did not acquire the meanings of personality or legal person. However, this is not to say that it had no inclination to acquire such meanings. If the word "men-men" [面々] is used to mean "people," then the meaning of each person individually is given by "mei-mei" [めいめい] (perhaps a dialectal version of men-men). Along with such usages as "establish one's prestige [*men-moku* 面目]," "shame one's face [*kao o tsubusu* 顔をつぶす]," "show one's face [*kao o dasu* 顔を出す]," and so on, these were budding signs that we use facial surface to mean personality.

Postscript. For more about Noh masks, refer to the collection "Nō Men" [1937] from Nogami Toyoichirō [1883–1950], a recognized authority for understanding and research in the field of Noh masks.[3]

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[3] The translator would like to thank David Ashworth and Shusuke Yagi for their enthusiastic inspiration and instruction.

Book Reviews

The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization. Another Path to Industrialization, **edited by Masayuki Tanimoto, Japanese Studies in Economic and Social History, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 342 pp. ISBN 978-0198292746 (hardcover), $170.00.**

Reviewed by Salvatore Ciriacono

As its subtitle indicates, this collection of essays edited by Masayuki Tanimoto, professor of history at Tokyo University, aims to focus on studies that offer an alternative to the traditional view of 'the industrial revolution.' Concepts such as 'proto industrialisation' and 'flexible production' are used to highlight the role within that process played by small- and medium-sized businesses and by continuing widespread presence of home labour within villages; often a complement to the factory system, these might even at times be a clear-cut alternative to it.

Though they have often stressed the significant variety that emerges from regional case-studies, Western scholars have strangely tended to ignore the experience of Japan, where such regional differences were of essential importance. Tanimoto's work not only draws upon the Western literature on such themes (Mendels, Kriedte-Medick-Schlumbohm, Berg, Hudson, Pfister, Quataert, Piore, Sabel and Zeitlin), but also has the additional merit of bringing together a number of essays that explore the complexities of Japanese manufacturing and industrial production in the years that run from the end of the Edo period to the Meiji restoration (and the transformations it brought with it). The conclusion is that, even more than in other industrialised nations, the move towards modern industry in Japan would seem to have run parallel with a development of small- and medium-sized manufacturing concerns. Furthermore, modernisation here did not entirely break with the traditions of home labour, whose roots can be traced back to the Edo period in particular.

There has already been substantial debate regarding the role of the "Meiji Restoration" in initiating Japan's industrial revolution through a process of westernisation that was subject to political and cultural controls. This debate links up with that regarding the problem of Japan's economic growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth century: most historians of Japan now accept that, contrary to what was once believed, the country was not in this period merely inward-looking and technologically-backward. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that various factors which accompanied the first and second industrial revolution – the use of steam (in the second half

of the nineteenth century) and later the use of electricity; the advent of the railways; the build-up of an arms industry; the development of a national-scale policy on port facilities – had a profound qualitative effect upon the development of manufacturing in the Japanese archipelago. Hence, the very concept of a 'gentle transition' is one that must be evaluated with care.

Together with Tanimoto's insightful introduction, the essays in this volume confirm and underline what historical studies of Japan's 'industrial revolution' have long suggested to be the case: the continuing survival of past social and productive structures within a country that was undoubtedly opening up to such modern phenomenon as large factories, mass concentration of labour and multinationals – to what, in short, is sometimes described as "corporation society."

The fact is that not all the 'early factories' had necessarily to embrace 'up-to-date technology.' In his essay, Johzen Takeuchi draws a clear distinction between various industrial sectors, identifying the factories which could become 'developing industries' (for example, those which produced silk thread and fabrics, cotton cloth, headwear, glass and iron ware, toys, sugar, cement or beer) and the sectors which appear to have been 'stagnating industries' (these latter being primarily linked to agriculture – for example, the production of tea or of objects in woven straw, etc.). Of whatever size, manufactories drew upon a large-sized labour force, which – according to economic theory – should have guaranteed production costs that were lower than those borne by first comers (this offering had relative advantages to late comers). However, Takeuchi argues, in Japan this situation did not result in an industrial system with high concentrations of labour, but rather in a manufacturing system characterised by the presence of small-and medium-sized factories. In effect, as Tanimoto underlines, as late as 1920, statistics (much more reliable than the scant figures we have for the second half of the nineteenth century) depict a situation in which the working-classes were employed primarily in small- and medium-sized manufactories rather than large industrial complexes. For example, 45,806 'factories' employed a total workforce of 4,560,000; but a good 62.6% of these workers were employed by manufacturing concerns that had a workforce of five or less. In France, during the same period, 37% of the workforce was still employed in 'factories' of 1–5 workers, and the figure for the USA was 33%, so perhaps we should reflect some more upon what the advent of the modern factory actually meant in terms of the concentration of workforces (which was clearly rather limited in the early days of industrialization). However, with

specific regard to Japan, the very high percentage suggests that tradition and the links between manufacturing and existing agrarian/social structures played no secondary role in the nation's development. Between the two world wars, employment within Japan developed in two main directions (three, if we take into account the increase in employment in the service industries): on the one hand, traditional small/medium-sized manufacturing concerns continued to hold their own, while large-scale industry slowly absorbed the workforce from the tiny workshops which had gone into progressive decline (Takamori Matsumoto). This trend was particularly clear in the production of silk thread, where the traditional home industry based on the use of hand-operated spinning wheels (the *zaguri* or *tebiki*) would survive in the Suwa region until at least as late as 1870 (Satoshi Matsumura). It was only after this date that spinning machines from Europe were introduced, and subsequently became widespread in the region. Masaki Nakabayashi explains this development on the basis of increasing demand for low- and medium-quality silk from the growing mass market in America (the destination of the silk thread exported from Suwa). The adoption of mechanical spinning machines was due to the fact that the product now had to respond to the standards of uniformity and guaranteed minimum quality expected by such a mass market.

Foreign market demands would also play a fundamental role in the adoption of western technology in the traditional manufactures of porcelain and ceramics. From around 1910, the districts of Nagoya, Seto and Mino began to move away from the artistic perfection of the porcelain created in the Edo period and instead produced everyday objects in ceramic and hard porcelain. Coal-fired kilns were adopted and technical schools set up for the teaching of western know-how, with the result that there was a vast increase in exports (Takehisa Yamada). And even though directed primarily at the home market, the production of spirits (mainly saké), beer and soya foodstuffs was also established on a more industrial basis – even if, as M. Tanimoto points out, in 1896 a good 80% of the 4,500 businesses producing in this sector did not have company capital exceeding 100,000 yen. This observation is particularly important given that, in this period, these industries were the most important outside the strictly agricultural sector; their volume of business far exceeded that of the cotton and silk industries.

Thus, links with local entrepreneurs remained strong: society itself seemed to expect that those economically fortunate enough to have disposable capital should invest in the food/beverage sector, which one might describe as 'socially-embedded.'Ass Jun Sasaki demonstrates clearly

with regard the textile area of Banshū (prefecture of Hyōgo), a rupture with the traditional rural world was avoided – further demonstration of the complexity of the model of Japanese development. In fact, right up to the early decades of the twentieth century, the more complex cotton fabrics (those with horizontal stripes) were produced by home labourers; the factories themselves produced the vertical-striped fabrics, for which machine looms were more suitable. In fact, entrepreneurs would decide which system of manufacture to opt for on the basis of the availability of a female workforce whose time was not taken up by domestic and agricultural labour.

Nevertheless, this system of community manufacture and social capitalism would be put under great strain in various sectors of production – ranging from straw-ware (Kazuhiro Ōmori) to silk (Futoshi Yamauchi). As Isami Matsuzaki concludes, even if such business ventures rested on mutual trust within social networks and on local associations in which management pursued commercial strategies without losing sight of community values, the fragile economic situation which existed between the two world wars meant that their performance was often far from brilliant. And obviously this necessarily stimulated a moved towards high-investment capitalism that eschewed the burden of social considerations.

One last factor that played a decisive role in the establishment of modern factories was the nation's armaments policy, which reflected the national and indeed imperial aims that modern Japan was pursuing during the course of the early twentieth century. As Jun Suzuki points out, traditional crafts were still fundamental here in providing necessary skills (particularly in the area of mechanics). However, one cannot deduce from all this that the role of large-scale industry was simply insignificant. In effect, what one has here is a complex process of industrialisation which cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration both political and cultural factors.

Benjamin Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 163872-1890.* **Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009. 416 pp. ISBN 978-0-8135-4403-8 (hardcover), $65.00.**

Reviewed by Lucien Ellington

Many readers are familiar with the twists and turns in Meiji political and social affairs as Japanese governing elites pieced together a new nation while struggling with foreign and domestic challenges. The creation of a national educational system is a significant part of this story and Benjamin Duke, Professor Emeritus of comparative and international education at the International Christian University in Tokyo, has done a masterful job of telling this story. Professor Duke, who has published several excellent works on Japanese education, including a 1989 edited volume, *Ten Great Educators of Modern Japan: A Japanese Perspective* (University of Tokyo Press), mines Japanese language sources in authoring the most thorough account on this topic to appear thus far in English. Duke also does a superb job of balancing political analysis with numerous biographical vignettes of well-known and obscure Japanese and Westerners who played significant roles in building Japan's educational system.

The Meiji political decision makers who played dominant roles in shaping Japan's schools and universities coalesced into competing factions, each of which were influenced by different Western experiences, individuals, and ideas concerning education. Depending upon what Japanese clique was in power during the twenty-two years when the events occurred – as described in this book – France, the UK, and to a much greater extent, the US and Germany, exerted influence on the design of national plans and educational institutions. This is reflected in the four national school initiatives Meiji governments promulgated and attempted to implement during the period; the short-lived first plan based upon Napoleon Bonaparte's French educational reforms, and an American model that went through two different phases, (1873–1876 and 1877–1879) and then, from the 1880s on, the rejection of many elements of American education and the accession of the influence of German educational ideas.

As they made decisions that hopefully would result in a "modern" educational system that would be an integral factor in Japan becoming a great nation, Meiji decision makers also had to contend with powerful domestic reactions to new institutions and policies they initiated such as

compulsory elementary education (accompanied by heavy local taxes for the new schools), an abandonment of the Confucian moral education of the Tokugawa village schools, and the incorporation of large amounts of English language education, science, and mathematics into the school curricula.

The most vivid and violent reactions to new educational policies occurred during the 1870s and occurred in rural areas where farmers unleashed mass protests against compulsory schooling and the afore-mentioned local tax increases. Forty-six public elementary schools were destroyed in 1873 in Okayama prefecture. In the same year, farmers in Kagawa Prefecture destroyed 48 elementary schools and 20,000 protesters in that prefecture alone resisted the new policies. The army had to break up Kyōto demonstrations and schools were burned in Aichi, Mie, Saitama, and Chiba prefectures.

Political decision makers and bureaucrats engaged in educational reform also encountered other forms of more sophisticated but powerful domestic political opposition. On the left, the *Jiyū Minken Undō* (People's Movement for Freedom) questioned the legitimacy of Meiji government and teachers increasingly supported or joined the movement. The emperor and members of the imperial household, beginning early in the Meiji period, questioned reforms they viewed as an abandonment of Japanese traditional values in schools in favor of excessive Westernization.

Duke begins his book with accounts of young samurai such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, Itō Hirobumi, and Mori Arinori who were in Western countries before the Meiji restoration, and then links their early formative experiences to their later roles in shaping educational events and institutions. Fukuzawa, Itō, and Mori are well known historical figures but the author chronicles the stories of historically obscure decision makers and innovators who had significant influence as well. Colorful and controversial Tanaka Fujimaro, a devotee of American education and American-style decentralization who was the Ministry of Education official most responsible for initiating US-influenced reforms ranging from an inundation of English language texts at all levels to the inclusion in teacher training of the progressive ideas of Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi then popular in "cutting-edge" normal American schools such as the Oswego New York Teacher Training College. Eventually, Tanaka was ousted as powerful forces, including the emperor and most notably his senior advisor and personal tutor on Confucianism, Motoda Nagazane, relentlessly opposed

what they viewed as the denigration of traditional Japanese moral education in the new schools.

Internationalists like Itō Hirobumi and Minister of Education Mori Arinori sided with the Imperial Household in the removal of Tanaka but for different reasons than Motoda; they were intensely attracted to German education. Several early Japanese internationalists, as they assumed political leadership, moved away from earlier youthful flirtations with the notion that education was intended for the individual and toward a position that education should serve primarily state interests.

The transition from an ethos of educational freedom to one of subordination to state interests is a story with some bizarre twists. At one point in the mid-1880s Minister of Education Mori initiated military training for the prestigious Tokyo Higher Teacher Training College and installed Army Major General Yamakawa Hiroshi as president of the institution, but appointed well-known Pestalozzian advocate Tanaka Takemine as head teacher. Eventually, though, more structured German and Hebertian ideas came to dominate the leading teacher education institution in Japan.

Even after the "reverse course" from US to German educational influences, Motoda and the emperor were still most dissatisfied with what they viewed as the lack of attention of internationalists like Itō and Mori to paramount Japanese educational values, defined by Motoda as a combination of Confucianism and elevation of the emperor's moral authority. Eventually and ironically, Inoue Kowashi, head of the central government's Legal Affairs Bureau and part of the pro-German internationalist faction who had earlier opposed Motoda's traditional moral education perspective, compromised. In a series of interchanges with the irrepressible Motoda, Inoue helped draft the critical 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education – which Duke illustrates through documentary comparison – though it was mainly the work of Motoda. In this proclamation that set the course of Japanese education until 1945, Confucian teachings and imperial ideology were assured an equal footing with the study of Western scientific and technical subjects.

Hopefully, this brief review does some justice to a fine work of scholarship that is essential reading for both historians of education and comparative educationists who wish to better understand Japanese schools and universities.

Shohaku Okumura, *Realizing Genjōkōan: The Key to Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō.* **Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2010. 240 pp. ISBN: 978-0861716012 (paperback), $16.95.**

Reviewed by Ernesto Fernández

Shohaku Okumura has produced substantially more than another Zen exegesis with his latest book. His methodical approach to unpacking the Genjōkōan has not betrayed Dōgen's original intention: to prepare the mind, through the clear exposition of vivid metaphors, for a meditative engagement with the Dharma. Because of Dōgen's precise language and quintessentially Zen subtlety, the balance of spiritual and academic insight in Okumura's patient approach to the Genjōkōan is most welcomed, especially after the initial encounter with the text in the book's first pages. My own background rests heavily in the Theravada, a very different Buddhist tradition whose literature can vary widely in terms of methodology, languages and emphasis from that of its Japanese counterparts. Because of this, I offer this review of *Realizing Genjōkōan* as an outsider to Sōtō Zen and, indeed, Zen in general; it is my hope that this will encourage others to approach Dōgen, and Zen, for what may be the first time.

Realizing Genjōkōan spans 12 chapters and 3 appendixes: Chapter 1 establishes the Genjōkōan in the context of Eihei Dōgen's life; Chapter 2 examines possible interpretations of the phrase "genjōkōan"; Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of Okumura's thirteen divisions of the text; Chapters 4–12 exegete the text itself in ten separate sections, as drawn by Okumura; Appendixes 1–3 supplement the exegesis with a translation of Dōgen's commentary on the *Heart Sutra*, a translation of *Shōbōgenzō* Maka Hannya Haramitsu, and an excerpt from the biographical *Eihei Dōgen – Mystical Realist* by Hee-Jin Kim, respectively. These are preceded by a forward from Taigen Dan Leighton, as well as Okumura's own preface, and are concluded with a bibliography, index and endnotes. Okumura's glossary merits an honorable mention for its skillful choice of key terms in Japanese and Sanskrit and its lucid definitions thereof, which I found myself turning to regularly during my reading.

With regard to specific chapters, I provide a brief summary of each. This review focuses on Okumura's style and pedagogical approach to the Genjōkōan, so that the reader may judge for him or herself the merits of *Realizing Genjōkōan*.

Chapter 1, "Dōgen Zenji's Life and the Importance of Genjōkōan," gives a breakdown of Dōgen's pedagogical history, Dharma transmission, family background and personal development. At just over five pages, this short biography seems just right and does not attempt to be comprehensive. Instead, Okumura offers sufficient details on Dōgen's life to make his work of interest to the uninformed reader while contextualizing the Genjōkōan, which is the true focus of the book. For a more thorough account of Dōgen's life, the reader may refer to Appendix 3 (an essay by Hee-Jin Kim).

Chapter 2, "The Meaning of 'Genjōkōan'," examines Dōgen's choice of kanji for the title, those kanji's definitional significance, and their manifold function in "genjōkōan" as a symbol for inter-dependent origination. This careful analysis of "genjōkōan" may prove to be of special interest to students of Japanese language, who may make of it a valuable case study of that language's complexity.

Chapter 3, "Buddhist Teachings from Three Sources: Is, Is Not, Is," will be of particular value to students of Japanese literature as of yet unacquainted with Buddhist philosophy. Okumura extrapolates a satisfactory primer on Mahayana Buddhism from the first three lines of the Genjōkōan, which he identifies as Dōgen's summary of his own understanding of Buddhist teachings. By basing this general lesson in Buddhism on the introductory lines of the Genjōkōan, Okumura remains anchored in the subject matter and therefore never appears off track.

Chapter 4, "Flowers Fall, Weeds Grow," addresses Dōgen's metaphor and exposition on realization and delusion as functions of the unique relationships between *jiko*, the self, and *banpō*, all beings. Rather than taking enlightenment as a cure for delusion or a final state which displaces delusion, enlightenment is understood as the noticing of delusions as what they are: preferences and biases with regard to one's relationships with other beings. Okumura illuminates this metaphor by explaining the special place weeds have traditionally held in the lives of Zen monks. He subsequently deconstructs these delusions by invoking Dōgen's exposition on the classical Buddhist doctrine of "the twelve sense fields" in the Maka Hannya Haramitsu (Appendix 1).

Chapter 5, "Realization Beyond Realization," continues the theme of Chapter 4 by looking more deeply into Dōgen's description of the realization of buddhas. Here Okumura identifies the realization of one's own self-centeredness as Buddha and explains the reasoning behind this at length. Here I must respectfully take a small issue with Okumura's diction:

I found his use of "Buddha" instead of "a Buddha," "buddhahood," or "enlightenment" confusing. Moreover, the definition in the glossary was not helpful in clarifying this, and Dōgen's own definition of "Buddha," which appears in a later chapter (p. 94), seemed incongruent with Okumura's usage.

Chapter 6, "Dropping off the Body and Mind," brings the train of thought begun in Chapter 4 to completion. Here the Genjōkōan arrives at the "Buddha Way" – a process of transcending delusion by realizing it – as a deliberate, proactive deconstruction of the Self. Thus, we see the necessarily engaged and meditative dimensions of Dōgen's unique approach begin to surface. Okumura's commentary appropriately follows this current in the Genjōkōan, emphasizing – through his own use of metaphor and decidedly Zen meditation hall language – the essentiality of self-examination and dharma practice to the Zen experience.

Chapter 7, "When We Seek We Are Far Away," provides the over-stimulated reader with a much needed respite from new information. Here Okumura reviews the previous chapters, concentrating more heavily on the exegesis of Dōgen's Genjōkōan than on adding his own commentary. In order to illuminate the meaning behind Dōgen's writing, Okumura employs a particularly painstaking methodology in this chapter and throughout *Realizing Genjōkōan*. Okumura presents the section, followed by his interpretation, then restates the essential phrase of the section (usually the first line), and finally provides his own explanation of the text:

> (7) "When one first seeks the Dharma, one strays from the boundary of the Dharma. When the Dharma is correctly transmitted to the self, one is immediately an original person. If one riding in a boat watches the coast, one mistakenly perceives the coast as moving. If one watches the boat [in relation…to the water], then one notices that the boat is moving. Similarly, when we perceive body and mind in a confused way and grasp all things with a discriminating mind, we mistakenly think that the self-nature of the mind is permanent. When he intimately practice and return right here, it is clear that all things have [no] fixed self."

Here Dōgen discusses delusion and enlightenment in relation to the search for truth. Okumura then restates the opening line of the passage, but instead of Dōgen's explanation as it appears in the Genjōkōan, he offers his own exegesis: the pursuit of realization initially requires a "hunting mind,"

which believes that liberation exists outside the perceived limits of mind as it is, but it is ironically this delusion itself which at first distances seekers from the Dharma. This "read, explain, reread, interpret" approach facilitates not only a meaningful understanding of the section's central theme but of Dōgen's (often counter-rational) approach to explaining them.

Chapter 8, "Past and Future Are Cut Off," delves deeply into the complexity of Japanese terms and phrases and the difficulty of accurately translating their subtle and complex meanings. Okumura carefully teases out key terms from Dōgen's account of the Self and its construction from the "five aggregates." He gives due consideration to the terms' Japanese and Sanskrit origins in a way which enables his reader to comprehend their historical and linguistic significance and development.

Chapter 9, "The Moon in Water," continues the emphasis on language begun in Chapter 8 but presents a thorough analysis of a single term (translated as "realization") comparable to Okumura's treatment of the name "genjōkōan" in Chapter 2. He makes no secret of the challenges and occasional need to rely on personal judgment in translating Dōgen's writing, allowing the rough edges of his commentary to show. This act of bringing the reader into the interpretive process enriches the reader's experience of Okumura's guided journey through the Genjōkōan.

Chapter 10, "Something Is Still Lacking," deals with Dōgen's emphasis on the attainment of enlightenment in the present moment and an appropriate realization of interdependent origination as a factor of that attainment. As Dōgen's subject matter becomes more nuanced, so Okumura's approach becomes more scholarly. Okumura draws on Dōgen's writings outside of the Genjōkōan, including other chapters of *Shōbōgenzō*, as he begins to slowly ratchet up the intensity of his comparative literary analysis of Dōgen's metaphors in proportion to their importance in the overall text. This, like so much of Okumura's commentary, educates the reader – without the feeling of becoming tangential – and involves the reader in Okumura's interpretive process in a way that enhances the overall experience.

Chapter 11, "A Fish Swims, A Bird Flies," begins to rely even more heavily on Dōgen's works outside of the Genjōkōan. While personal anecdotes from Okumura do appear, Dōgen's writings become the primary focus and interpretive tool. Okumura provides a conservative amount of additional commentary, choosing instead to defer to Dōgen.

Chapter 12, "We Wave a Fan Because Wind Nature is Everywhere," continues the emphasis on Dōgen's literary corpus begun in

the previous chapters. Drawing on a number of kōans and Zen stories from Dōgen's writing, Okumura's commentary here – as in most of *Realizing Genjōkōan* – is made more palatable and easy to read in spite of the depth of the subject matter.

Following Chapter 12, *Realizing Genjōkōan* ends abruptly without any formal conclusion. While the overall quality of the book is outstanding in terms of clarity, readability, and topical consistency (in spite of the great wealth of relevant information relating to the text), it struck me as strange that Okumura – who had committed Chapter 7 to reviewing and consolidating the commentary of the previous chapters – would fail to bring his exegesis together with so much as a brief concluding statement. This would seem particularly necessary considering the great length to which the Genjōkōan had been deconstructed: a commentary-to-text page ratio of just over 39:1.

But Okumura's journey through the Genjōkōan is well executed, with a readily apparent mindfulness of and consideration for the reader. His interpretative process is illuminating with regard to Dōgen, Buddhism, Zen sensibilities, and most of all the Genjōkōan, which so elegantly and understatedly synthesizes the three. The Genjōkōan, which at first appears dauntingly aloof and esoteric, can become accessible and meaningful with Okumura's masterful and encouraging introduction; even to one – such as me – exploring the "boundless skies and oceans" of Dōgen's instruction for the first time.

The Yomiuri Shimbun War Responsibility Reexamination Committee, *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Who was Responsible?* Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006. 410 pp. ISBN 978-4643060126 (hardcover), $40.00.

Reviewed by Katsumi Sohma

This book is the product of a fourteen-month investigation by Japan's largest newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun. The Re-examination Committee consisted of seventeen staff writers and editors of the paper. Its findings were serialized in the newspaper over the period of a year beginning August 2005, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The significance of this work is not necessarily the quantity of new facts it sets forth about Japanese warfare from 1931 to 1945. Instead, it is important in two other ways. First is its source. The Yomiuri is closely aligned with Japan's conservative establishment, and its factual content is widely viewed as reliable and authoritative. Second, this is the first attempt in Japan to thoroughly examine the wars during the early Showa Era, and the findings are presented with exhaustive documentation. To assemble the book the Committee delved extensively into Japanese sources: journals and memoirs of political and military leaders, military documents, foreign ministry archives as well as historical studies.

Throughout the work there is an attempt to illuminate the all-important questions: Why did Japan extend its Manchurian campaign to South China? What was the logic of a war with the United States? Who established the policy? Why the stubborn continuation of the war in the face of certain defeat? What was the legitimacy and utility of the Tokyo Tribunal? To answer these and other questions, the book is divided into three parts.

Part I is an overview of the Showa War. During this period a group of army officers argued that war with both the United States and Russia was inevitable. To prepare for such a conflict would require taking over the natural resources of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. Emboldened by their success in completing this initial step, they quickly expanded the battlefield to South China and beyond. In the meantime political leaders, terrified by a series of coup attempts and assassinations, were unable to bring the army under control. Thus, the war regime was plagued by strategic recklessness and political indecisiveness. The inevitable result was that Japan drifted toward war without a sound strategy. The onrush of events resulted in the fateful Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy (1940) and the invasion of southern Indochina (1941). Caught in an irreversible maelstrom of war, military leaders would insist on fighting to the end, even as Japan lay in ruins. Only the word of the Emperor, in a most unprecedented act of imperial intervention, could end the carnage.

Part II treats in greater detail the underlying influences and key figures that shaped these events. Four topics seem to be of particular importance: the independent military, the Anglo-American strategic position, the person of the Emperor, and the Tokyo Tribunal. It is difficult to imagine an army and navy officer corps empowered to act almost independently of the political government. Yet, the military establishment in the Japanese constitution had a remarkable degree of autonomy. Thus,

the more extreme of its factions were able to go so far as political murder of Chinese and Japanese leaders – with impunity. This lack of civilian restraint led to further and more flagrant exploits.

Another important factor during this period was the importance of Japan as part of the British security system. Japan was expected to police Manchuria, to act as buffer between China and Russia, and to prevent a Communist revolution in China. Thus, initially Britain and the United States more or less acquiesced in Japan's actions in Manchuria. It was only after Japan expanded the war to Shanghai that Britain changed its policy. The reason, according to the authors, was that the bulk of "Britain's investment in China was concentrated" in that city.

The study provides much needed background information on the role of the Emperor as well. Hirohito was "displeased" with the Manchurian Incident (1931) and tried to use his power to halt its expansion. But he was no monarch in the Western sense of the word, and much less was he a dictator. He had no power of command over the military and no voice in the affairs of government. Even after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when military leaders were insisting on an all-out defense of the homeland, it was only in response to an extraordinary plea from the prime minister that Hirohito urged the Japanese to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. Cables were sent accordingly to the Allied Powers on the following morning.

Finally the utility and legitimacy of the Tokyo Tribunal are discussed at length. For example, many officers who were chiefly responsible for the Showa War escaped prosecution due to a lack of evidence and reliable witnesses. Questions are also raised about the assigning of war guilt for crimes against "peace" and "humanity," wherein judgment was based on statutes enacted long after the event. Similarly, the Allied use of firebombs and atomic bombs are examined in the light of international law. To support the Japanese perspective in these matters, arguments by an American attorney and an Indian judge at the Tribunal are discussed.

Part III sums up the findings. This study expands on the responsibility of Tojo Hideki (prime minister, 1941–1944), the central proponent of launching and prolonging the Pacific War. Also examined are the roles of: Ishihara Kanji and Itagaki Seishiro of the Kwantung Army, the principal architects of the Manchurian Incident; Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke and the ambassadors to Germany and Italy for promoting the Tripartite Pact; and mid-career naval officers for advocating the invasion of Indochina. Ultimately, however, it was Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro

(1937–1939, 1940–1941) who approved these strategies. For this reason Konoe emerges as the second most culpable figure in the onset of war.

Once again the value of this book begins in its uniqueness. Remarkably, it is the first such study undertaken in Japan. But for students of history, its importance lies in the voluminous quantity of documentation listed. It would not be an overstatement to say that any further study of the Showa War would be incomplete unless this volume is consulted. However, this book has examined only a limited number of English sources, which include U.S. government documents, memoirs and academic treatises. To have a complete picture of World War II, one would have to review more extensive literature not only in the United States but also in Britain and Germany.

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