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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the twenty-fifth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the Asian Studies Program at Florida International University. JSR remains an outlet for the Southern Japan Seminar and encourages submissions from a wide range of scholars in the field. The 2021 issue features interdisciplinary scholarly works in traditional and contemporary Japanese studies.

This volume contains four articles, starting with a textual and philological analysis by Steven Heine based on his original translations of Zen Buddhist poems written mainly in early medieval Japan in *kanbun* (Sino-Japanese) style. This article is titled, "Selections of Zen Buddhist Poetry in *Kanbun* Reflecting Early Medieval Cross-Cultural and Cross-Sectarian Trends." The following article, "Embodied Survival and Demythologization in Kirino Natsuo's *Tokyo Jima*" by Juliana Buriticá Alzate, examines embodied, gendered experiences relating to survival from a feminist perspective, debunking myths in the novel as it disengages from the essentialized, naturalized, and idealized versions of womanhood. The third article, "Making Movies for the Chinese: Japanese Directors at Manying" by Yuxin Ma, surveys the Manying cinema industry of 1937–1945 from the perspective of Japanese directors producing national policy films for Manchukuo with the competing objective of serving Japanese imperialism and entertaining the local Chinese viewers. The last article, "Ishikawa Tatsuzō and Shimazaki Tōson: Two Writers/Travelers to South America in the Eye of Imperial Discourse" by Matías Chiappe Ippolito, compares divergent viewpoints regarding South America from two twentieth-century Japanese writers' travels to Brazil and Argentina and their respective literary works in light of Japan's emerging imperial discourse.

This issue also has two essays. Kinko Ito and Paul A. Crutcher, in "Swallowtail Butler Café: Cosplay, Otakus, and Cool Japan in Contemporary Japan," provide sociological observations about the popular themed Swallowtail Butler Café in Tokyo through content analysis of online media resources gathered during the Covid-19 pandemic. Daniel Métraux, in "Jack London's Positive Portrayals of the Japanese in His Early Fiction Defy His Reputation as a Racist," offers insight on Jack London's appreciation for Japanese culture with commentary from two of his stories to argue against race hatred attributed to the author at the turn of the twentieth century. There are four book reviews with varying topics. Mari Yoshihara's *Dearest Lenny: Letters from Japan and the Making of the World Maestro* is reviewed by Wayne E. Arnold; Yuki Matsuda's *Poetics of Popular Culture: The Hidden Multimodality* is reviewed by Kinko Ito; Meredith Oda's *The Gateway to the Pacific: Japanese Americans and the Remaking of San Francisco* is reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux; and finally, Melissa Anne-Marie Curley's *Pure Land, Real World: Modern Buddhism, Japanese Leftists, and the Utopian Imagination* and Justin R. Ritzinger's *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism* are reviewed in tandem by Kedao Tong.

Re: Submissions, Subscriptions, and Comments

Submissions for publication, whether articles, essays, translations, or book reviews, should be made in 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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Articles

SELECTIONS OF ZEN BUDDHIST POETRY IN *KANBUN* REFLECTING EARLY MEDIEVAL CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-SECTARIAN TRENDS

Steven Heine
Florida International University

Introduction

This paper provides translations of a couple of dozen Zen Buddhist poems from early medieval Japan, accompanied by an introductory essay providing the background for understanding the significance and religious symbolism of this literature. The selections mainly represent a particular faction of the Sōtō Zen sect, which is generally not recognized for its contributions to Zen poetry yet did play a major role that needs to be explored and explained. Some of the material included here appears in my recent book *Flowers Blooming on a Withered Tree: Giun's Verse Comments on Dōgen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*.¹

In the intellectual history of Japanese Zen, the Rinzai (Ch. Linji) sect is particularly well known for the production of voluminous poetry written in the *kanbun* 漢文 (Sino-Japanese) style consisting usually of four-line, seven-character verse that was typical of the religious elite. Although there are many exceptions to the basic form, the Zen poems do follow various intricate rhetorical rules for rhyming, tonal patterns, thematic progression, symbolic indicators, and more. During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, these poems produced the basis of the great artistic movement known as Five Mountains Literature (*Gozan bungaku*) that dominated, along with Zen painting and other practical arts such as gardening and tea ceremony, the cultural scene in both Kyoto and Kamakura, which was strongly supported by the shogunate seeking to promote continental learning and the exchange of ideas.²

While some eminent Chinese monks relocated to Japan in order to teach Zen poetry, especially Yishan Yining (1247–1317) who arrived in 1299,

¹ Steven Heine, *Flowers Blooming on a Withered Tree: Giun's Verse Comments on Dōgen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

² See David Pollack, *Zen Poems of the Five Mountains* (New York: Crossroad, 1985).

dozens of Japanese pilgrims who traveled to the mainland to learn the method of writing in the authentic Chinese fashion returned to practice their craft while residing at Kyoto temples. Today, several prominent collections of Five Mountains Literature containing multiple volumes with hundreds of examples of verse represent but a small sampling of the full amount of Rinzai Zen poetry composed in early medieval Japan. In addition, the monks also generally wrote traditional Japanese *waka* 和歌 verse with five lines in thirty-one syllables and participated regularly in *waka* competitions known as *uta awase* that were often held at the shogun's elite salons in order to create linked verse (*renga*) in collaboration with their colleagues.

By contrast, the Sōtō (Ch. Caodong) Zen sect that was established by Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) and significantly expanded by the followers of Keizan 瑩山 (1268–1235) a century later in temples located in the northern provincial territory of Hokuriku (covering the mountains of Echizen, currently Fukui prefecture, and the Noto peninsula, currently Ishikawa prefecture), far removed from the capital, was thought to have eschewed literary pursuits. Instead, Sōtō leaders favored a strict adherence to the notion that “just sitting” (*shikan taza*) in meditation was the only true path to enlightenment, whereby writing was seen as a distraction that detracted from realizing one's spiritual goal.

After all, Dōgen is often cited for proclaiming in a sermon included in the *Miscellaneous Talks* (*Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*), “Zen monks these days are fond of literature and seek to write verses or essays, but this is a mistake...Reading poetry is a waste of time and should be completely cast aside.” Adding to the typical view, we find that relatively few Sōtō monks other than Dōgen ventured to China, and those that managed to get involved in the poetry ethos for the most part moved to Kyoto and converted to one of the Rinzai temples.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence showing that Sōtō monks did take part in the composition of *kanbun* poetry and contributed to the overall Zen literary environment cutting across apparent, but often misleading, boundaries of geography and sectarian divisions, especially up to and during the first half of the fourteenth century when various sociohistorical factors caused the trend to subside rather abruptly. First, Dōgen himself composed more than five hundred poems, including about 450 *kanbun* verses that adhere to continental discursive guidelines in addition to 63 *waka* verse. Although only a tiny handful of his *kanbun* poems are included in the major Five Mountains collections, Dōgen's poetry as well as prose writing, which is highly prized for its profound literary qualities by interpreting Chinese

texts in Japanese vernacular syntax, in addition to his calligraphy, is valued for its literary qualities.

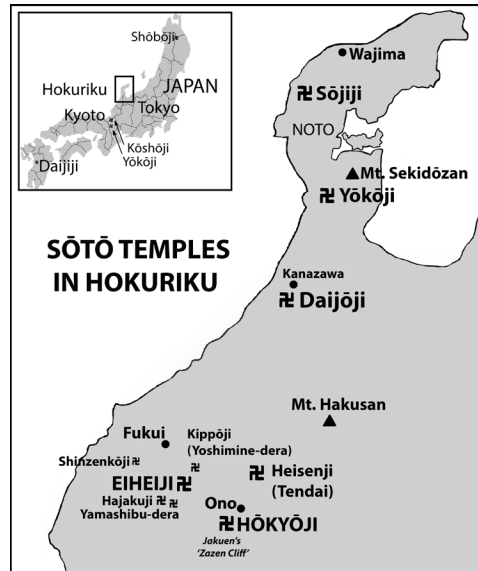


Figure 1. Spread of the Sōtō sect to the far northwestern provinces³

Dōgen's texts, for example, are usually grouped along with the *Tale of Heike* (*Heike monogatari*) and Chōmei's *An Account of My Hut* (*Hōjōki*) as examples of thirteenth-century writing that deeply explore the multiple levels of meaning of impermanence. They have also been inspirational for many important figures in the history of Japanese literature that include: Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), famed *waka* poet who communicated with Dōgen in Kyoto; Yoshida Kenkō (1284–1350), author of *Tsurezuregusa* who appreciated Dōgen's creative discourse; Zeami (1363–1443), the great Noh theater playwright and theorist who integrated the Sōtō founder's philosophy of aesthetics into his thespian approach; *haiku* innovator Bashō (1644–1694), who reported on his visit to the out-of-the-way locale of Dōgen's Eihei-ji temple in *Oku no hosomichi* journeys; and Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), who surprisingly mentioned the impact of Dōgen's *waka* at the very

³ Map designed by María Sol Echarren and Steven Heine.

beginning of his 1968 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself” (“Utsukushii Nihon to Watakushi”). Moreover, Dōgen’s work greatly influenced many of the few famous Sōtō Zen poets, ranging from Daichi Sokei (1290–1366), who spent ten years studying in China and is included in some of the Five Mountains collections, and the brilliantly eccentric hermit Ryōkan Taigu (1758–1831), a great poet who evokes Dōgen’s prosody numerous times.

One of the main examples of Sōtō Zen poetry from the early medieval period, translated in my latest book, is the poetic remarks by monk Giun 義雲 (1253–1333), the fifth abbot of Eihei-ji temple, regarding Dōgen’s masterwork, the *Treasury* (*Shōbōgenzo*). This text titled *Comments on the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (*Shōbōgenzō honmokuju* 正法眼藏品目頌) is an important early commentary on the 60-fascicle edition of the *Treasury* that was composed in 1329 in the specific *kanbun* style known as *juko* 頌古 (Ch. *songgu*) typically used for interpreting *kōan* (Ch. *gongan*) cases that was prevalent in voluminous continental Zen records from the Song dynasty.⁴

Giun’s text also includes cryptic capping-phrase or *jakugo* 着語 (Ch. *zhuoyu*) remarks, which are epigrammatic expressions that accompany each verse, thereby evoking another literary form that was featured in Chinese Zen sources. Consequently, an alternative title that adds the term “*jaku*,” refers to the *Verse Comments with Capping Phrases on the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (*Shōbōgenzō honmokujujaku* 正法眼藏品目頌着). An additional set of capping phrases on the 60-fascicle edition of the *Treasury* was composed in the Edo period by Katsudō Honkō 活動本興 (1710–1773), a disciple of Shigetsu Ein (1689–1764). Honkō’s sayings are part of his own commentary on Giun’s text called *Diamond Reflections on Giun’s Verse*

⁴ The main versions consulted include: a) the edition in volume 82 of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (T82.476a–578a, #2591), the standard modern canon of Buddhist works used in China and Japan that sometimes contains minor misprints; b) a manuscript featuring Japanese grammatical marks (*kundoku*) modifying the original *kanbun* that appears in volume 5 of the *Complete Writings of the Sōtō Sect* (*Sōtōshū zensho*, or SSZ.5.35–40); and c) a partially modernized internet version produced by Eihei-ji temple as a component of a summary of the fifth patriarch’s life and thought.

Comments (*Shōbōgenzō honmokuju kongōjitsuzan* 正法眼藏品目頌金剛莖參), and all those capping phrases are included in my translation.⁵

Giun's religious outlook was most likely influenced by diverse historical and spiritual factors, especially the impact of a small but important Zen movement known as the Wanshi (Ch. Hongzhi)-ha 宏智派 school that was prominent in Japan during the first half of the 1400s based on an emphasis on the writing of *kanbun* poetry to express the Dharma. The Wanshi-ha reflected the profound influence of the writings by Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157, Jp. Wanshi Shōgaku), an essential Chinese Sōtō predecessor of Dōgen whose distinctive approach to poetic composition was also studied by many Rinzai/Linji monks in both China and Japan during this period. Hongzhi is often cited in Dōgen's *Treasury* and in the formal sermons of his *Extensive Record* (*Eihei kōroku*).

A couple of generations after his death, Hongzhi's direct lineage spread to Japan beginning in 1309 with the advent of a follower named Dongming Huiji (1272–1340, Jp. Tōmyō Enichī). There, the Wanshi-ha literary approach greatly impacted both the Sōtō and Rinzai sects for at least half a century. It encompassed various monks who either came from or stayed in China to teach Japanese travelers, especially the renowned poet Gulin Qingmao (1262–1329, Jp. Kurin Seimo), who taught many foreign visitors and sent some of his disciples to the islands.⁶ The school's Japanese members included the eminent Sōtō monk-poets Betsugen Enshi (1294–1364) and Daichi Sokei (1290–1366), both of whom traveled for a long time to China to study under Gulin and also visited Eihei-ji, in addition to Kōhō Kakumyō (1271–1261) and Chūgan Engetsu (1300–1375), who started as followers of

⁵ In *Shōbōgenzō chūkai zensho* 正法眼藏注解全書, 11 vols., ed. Jinbo Nyoten 神保如天 and Andō Bun'eī 安藤文英 (Tokyo: Nihon bussho kankōkai, rpt. 1956–1957), volume 11. Honkō was known for his own poetic approach to interpreting Dōgen's philosophy, as in his remark on the notion of "Dreams" (Yume): "The dream of a person dreaming of a world of dreams that cannot be forgotten— / If someone wakes up from such a dream, then that is the true dream."

⁶ Several of Gulin's disciples accompanied Japanese visitors to the islands in 1326, at least in part to escape the Yuan dynasty leadership that was not sympathetic to Zen Buddhism in China, and they generally lived happily abroad and often stayed there until they died. See Arthur Braverman, trans., *A Quiet Room: The Poetry of Zen Master Jakushitsu* (Boston: Tuttle, 2000).

Dongming and interacted with Giun at Eihei-ji but eventually switched affiliations to the Rinzai sect. This contributed to the misunderstanding that the Wanshi-ha should be seen as a wing of Rinzai rather than connected with Sōtō Zen.

The impact of the Wanshi-ha as a transnational and trans-factional movement is much more significant than has been recognized in recent Western studies of Zen history, and Giun was at the very least an indirect participant. His *Recorded Sayings (Goroku)*⁷ sermons cite Hongzhi more frequently than Dōgen and occasionally suggest the theory of Five Ranks (*goi* 五位) attributed to Caodong school founders Dongshan (807–869) and Caoshan (840–901).⁸ The theory is also associated with numerous later texts, including Hongzhi's poetic writings treating this complex interpretative method in addition to other similar pedagogical devices that were popular in Southern Song-dynasty Zen discourse and transmitted to Japan. According to traditional accounts, Giun enjoyed a reputation for expertise in the subtleties of the Five Ranks (*goi*) that was sought out by adherents of Sōtō and Rinzai Zen, even if his writings offer only a glimpse of this area of specialty. On the other hand, Dōgen's *Treasury* is known for either ignoring or, in a couple of places, refuting the Five Ranks interpretative technique, particularly in the fascicle on "Spring and Autumn" ("Shunjū").

Therefore, Giun's position in Sōtō Zen can well be compared to that of another essential figure from this period, Gasan Jōseki (1275–1366), the major follower of Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325), who was the second most influential Sōtō leader after Dōgen. Gasan's evangelical efforts were, in large part, responsible for the rapid spread of the sect throughout the Japanese

⁷ The standard edition of the *Giun oshō goroku* in vol. 4 of the *Nihon no goroku* series edited by Shinohara Hisao (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), unfortunately, does not contain Giun's *Verse Comments* collection as an appendage to Giun's recorded sayings; neither does another edition edited by Ishii Seijun, *Giun oshō: mukyoku zenji* (Tokyo: Shikisha, 2005). On the other hand, there is a photo-facsimile of an early modern version of the text appears in *Eihei Shōbōgenzō shūsho taisei* 永平正法眼藏菟書大成, 27 vols. (Tokyo: Taishukan shoten, 1974–82), volume 20:3–8.

⁸ See Seong-Uk Kim. "The Zen Theory of Language: Linji Yixuan's Teaching of "Three Statements, Three Mysteries, and Three Essentials" (*sanju sanxuan sanyao* 三句三玄三要)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36/37 (2013/2014), 69–92.

countryside in the fourteenth century and he was also very much involved in disseminating Five Ranks theory through various esoteric writings.⁹ Also, apparently both Giun and Gasan received visits from well-known Rinzai monks on their way to or from visiting the mainland, where they usually studied poetry with Gulin or his associates. These monk-poets, including Chūgan, Betsugen and some others, were eager to learn the details of the Five Ranks method from Giun or Gasan, despite the fact that the Sōtō leaders had not ventured to China and sojourned in areas remote from the major Rinzai centers in Kyoto or Kamakura. However, unlike Gasan, Giun's base of religious authority was limited to Eihei-ji, where many disciples came to read the 60-fascicle edition of the *Treasury*.

Contents

The poems selected for translation below highlight just a few examples of the Wanshi-ha approach, including three sections from Giun's *Verse Comments* plus additional *kanbun* poems composed by Giun and several other prominent monk-poets from both the Sōtō and Rinzai schools in China and Japan. The work of those monks is particularly relevant for providing a context by which to understand the crucial role played by the fifth Eihei-ji abbot in shaping the early medieval history of Zen's approach to studying Dōgen's *Treasury* through appropriating Chinese poetic sources, including interpretations of the doctrine of the Five Ranks, and embracing key elements of the boundary-crossing Wanshi-ha movement's literary standpoint for Zen training.

The first part of the translation section contains verses originally included in Giun's *Recorded Sayings*, either from the section of *Treasury* comments, a dedicated segment of fourteen *kanbun* poems, or other portions of the text.¹⁰ The first three poems, which are accompanied by my comments on the symbolism of the verses and capping phrases by Giun and Honkō, cover the "Genjōkōan," "Makahannya," and "Zazengi" fascicles of Dōgen's *Treasury*. Then, the fourth, fifth, and sixth poems by Giun are in the form of

⁹ See Marta Sanvido, "Multiple Layers of Transmission: Gasan Jōseki and the Goi Doctrine in the Medieval Sōtō school," *Annali di Ca' Foscari: Serie orientale* 53/1 (2017), 337–367.

¹⁰ *Giun*, ed. Shinohara Hisao (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), which includes the *Giun Oshō goroku* 義雲和尚語錄 in two parts: the *Hōkyō Zenji goroku* and the *Eihei Zenji goroku* (this verse is from the former).

“eulogies” (*san* 贊), a typical genre used by nearly all Zen masters, in this case dedicated to the memory of the main patriarchs of Giun’s Sōtō Zen lineage: Dōgen, the founding abbot of Eihei-ji; Ejō, Dōgen’s main disciple and the second abbot; and Jakuen, Dōgen’s primary Chinese disciple who founded Hōkyō-ji temple which Giun joined and then led after the death of Jakuen. These poems evoke the essence of the predecessors’ largesse of character in that their meditative state “resounds with the crack of thunder” or results in “smashing the clouds and splashing the waters.” This small group is followed by two poems expressing “self-praise” (*jisān* 自贊), another poetic category used in Zen records, which emphasize the humility of Giun, who says he simply “eats from and washes his bowl” while yielding to the spiritual power of “spring flowers blooming in the fragrant forest.” The five poems that deal with either praise of others or Giun himself are longer and have variations in the number of characters per line compared to the *jūko* remarks of the *Verse Comments*.

The other poems in this part of the chapter are four-line verses. Two poems written at a mountain retreat near Eihei-ji deal with Giun’s feelings of quietude and solitude while meditating alone amid the beauty of nature. Beginning in the Tang dynasty, it was common practice for Zen abbots to occasionally leave the temple grounds for extended periods in pursuit of spiritual renewal by, in part, composing poetry. Giun records the standpoint of his imperturbable mind that remains undistracted by ordinary thoughts or sensations yet, from an enlightened perspective, compares the breeze and moon to the interaction of guest and host, according to the Five Ranks theory. Both verses feature seven characters per line. The next poem with five characters per line is culled from one of Giun’s Dharma hall sermons on the notion of the one mind influenced by the pantheistic philosophy of the *Huayan Sūtra*, and the last piece with four characters per line represents Giun’s verse on death-anticipation (*yuige* 遺偈), a form of expression that was expected of all Zen masters who could, it is said, know in advance and lyricize about the time of their demise.

The next part of the chapter contains a dozen poems by six Zen monk-poets, who can be considered part of the orbit of figures and ideas that either influenced or were impacted by Giun. The first group includes five poems by Daichi Sokei, an early fourteenth-century Sōtō leader who refined his literary skills while studying in China and returned to establish a temple in his native area of Kyushu, where he received a copy of the *Treasury* and

wrote verse comments on a couple of its fascicles.¹¹ Daichi is unique in being considered one of the great medieval Zen poets during an era when Rinzai monks who were mainly located in Kyoto or Kamakura, clearly dominated the composition of verse.

This group of poems is followed by a selection of three verses written by Betsugen Enshi, another exceptional Sōtō figure linked to the Wanshi-ha school whose work is included in the list of eminent medieval Zen composers of *kanbun* poetry. Beginning in 1320, Bestugen trained for ten years in China, where he received the seal of transmission from the master, Gulin Qingmao, who received dozens of Japanese visitors and sent some of his main Chinese disciples to teach in Japan. Although his mastery of Chinese language and literature was unsurpassed among foreign disciples of Buddhism, Betsugen is mainly known for expressing feelings of homesickness, as in the first two poems in this group. Once he returned to his native land, as conjured in the third poem, he stayed for years in his native Fukui province, where he maintained ties with Eiheijji and resisted the shogunate's efforts to appoint him head of one of the main urban Rinzai temples.

Next is a poem by Gentō Sokuchū, the renowned reformer who published the Main Temple edition of the *Treasury* with 95 fascicles in the early 1800s following years of delay. Gentō's verse features in four lines two of Dōgen's major notions, *genjōkōan* and *datsuraku shinjin* (or *shinjin datsuraku*). Gentō, who was given his name by the emperor and served as the 50th abbot of Eiheiji, is also renowned in Zen lore for having set fire to the large fish-shaped drum (*mokugyo* 木魚) used for chanting because he wanted to purge Pure Land elements from Sōtō practice. An older dharma brother of the famous Sōtō reclusive Edo poet Ryōkan 良寛 (1758–1831), who also sought to restore an appreciation for Dōgen's writings, Gentō's efforts to "purify" Sōtō of syncretistic elements upset Ryōkan so much that he decided to live out his life as a hermit far from the headquarters of the religious institution.

I conclude with a small group of verses by other monks in Giun's orbit, with one poem each by Gulin Qingmao on the topic of sending off a foreign trainee (Ch. *songbieji*, Jp. *sōbetsuge* 送別偈) to return to his teacher in Japan that uses six sets of reduplicatives in lines five and six; Zhongfeng

¹¹ *Daichi: Geju, Jūni hōgo, kana hōgo*, ed. Mizuno Yaoko (Tokyo: Kōdansha, rpt. 1994).

Mingben, another prominent Chinese Rinzaï mentor for Japanese monk-poets in the Wanshi-ha, on the philosophy of undertaking the rigorous everyday chores; and Musō Soseki, a famous Rinzaï abbot, poet, and garden designer in the first half of the fourteenth century who did not travel to China, but uses the term *genjōkōan* prominently that was also favored by Zhongfeng, showing that Dōgen was not alone in highlighting the concept.

Themes

Musō's verse at the end of the translations raises the important question of whether Zen monks who participate in a "special transmission outside the teachings" (*kyōge betsuden* 教外別傳) should be encouraged or even allowed to write verse or must, instead, be instructed to regard literary pursuits as a distraction and thus an activity that detracts from the path of enlightenment. One of the reasons the Sōtō sect was considered aloof from poetry composition is that in the *Miscellaneous Talks* (*Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*) Dōgen says, "Zen monks are fond of literature these days, finding it an aid to writing verses and tracts. This is a mistake...No matter how elegant their prose or how exquisite their poetry might be, they are merely toying with words and cannot gain the truth." Nevertheless, Dōgen wrote over five hundred poems, with nearly ninety percent in the *kanbun* style and the rest as Japanese *waka*. However, aside from the *Verse Comments*, Giun composed only a small fraction of what the founder produced.

The response to the question of the role of literary production indicated by Musō Soseki's poem is characteristically ambiguous in that he recognizes his responsibility to disclose the truth through "word-branches," but wishes that everyone could be able to realize what is already apparent without needing the crutch of words. Dōgen similarly speaks ambivalently about the function of language in relation to expressing enlightenment in the following verse written at an Eihei-ji retreat:

Living in the world for so long without attachments,
 Since giving up using paper and pen.
 I see flowers and hear birds without feeling much,
 While living on the mountain, I am embarrassed by this
 meager effort.

久舍(捨)人間無愛惜
 文章筆硯既拋來

見花聞鳥風情少
乍在山猶愧不才

It is interesting to note that an analysis of the linguistic structure of the poem shows that Dōgen could execute the AABA rhyme scheme and related tonal patterns that were among the rhetorical options required for Chinese poets:

Jiǔ shè rénjiān wú aixī
Wénzhāng biyàn jì pāo lái
Jiàn huā wén niǎo fēnqíng shǎo
Zhà zài shān yóu kuì bù cái

仄仄平平平仄仄
平平仄仄仄平平
仄平中仄平平仄
仄仄平中仄仄平

In addition, Dōgen's verse recalls the sentiments suggested by one of his Song-dynasty Chinese predecessors, Touzi Yiqing 投子義青 (11th c. 投子義青), who lived a couple of generations before Hongzhi. This verse is from Touzi's collection on "self-realization" (*zijue* 自覺):

Though I am in the business of Emptiness,
I cannot avoid being at the mercy of my inclinations.
Although I have long been practicing Zen meditation,
Instead, I remain preoccupied with literary content...

雖然所業空
免被才情役
忝曾學參禪
叨以習文義

The following *waka* syllables shows that Dōgen used this Japanese genre to reveal the complicated aspects of literary pursuits and surmise the way his writing is received by the audience:

Haru kaze ni	Will their gaze fall upon
Waga koto no ha no	The petals of words I utter,
Chirimuru o	Shaken loose and blown free by the spring breeze,

Hana no uta to ya	As if only the notes
Hito no nagamen	Of a flower's song?

This view recalls that of modern American poet Robert W. Service, who in *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone* (1912) wrote, "I have no doubt at all the Devil grins, / As seas of ink I splatter. / Ye gods, forgive my 'literary' sins — / The other kind don't matter."

Another element found in Musō's verse that also appears in a vast majority of Zen literature, including Giun's, involves an admiration for nature and the turning of the seasons as a reflection and standard for cultivating an intellectual comprehension of unity as well as for moral behavior highlighting the equality of all beings. According to Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), the most famous secular poet of the Song dynasty who often practiced meditation and collaborated in his writings with Zen masters, poems are pictures without forms just as paintings are unspoken poems. Many examples of Zen verse were originally composed as inscriptions for paintings so that they feature an ekphrastic or descriptive quality by providing a vivid depiction of a scene or, frequently, a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the "action" of a landscape, the poet offers a verbal representation of a visual image that may amplify and expand its meaning.

In that vein, we can consider the verse by Betsugen showing that nature is the poet's muse: "The courtyard is so lonely in autumn rain / That I open the window and gaze all day at the peak. / From the very beginning my two eyes / Have been fixed to those mile-high pines far away." Also, another Wanshi-ha member, Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300–1375 中巖円月), writes of the natural landscape: "Autumn leaves swirl in the wind, slanting down one by one, / In a single night the mountain cottage is engulfed by them. / Without a thought, this monk-poet sweeps them into a creek: / Not at all like the way he treats falling blossoms in spring." Finally, the tenth volume of the *Extensive Record* includes a poem composed in the village of Fukakusa (literally, "deep grass") around 1230, when Dōgen was back from China but had not yet established his first temple, Kōshōji, that would be built near this location just a few years later:

How pitiful is life and death's ceasing and arising!
 I lose my way yet find my path as if walking in a dream.
 Even though there are still things that are hard to forget,
 The deep grass of Fukakusa settles with the evening rain.

生死可憐休又起
 迷途覺路夢中行
 雖然尚有難忘事
 深草閑居夜雨聲

Here we find from a structural analysis that Dōgen uses an ABAB rhyme scheme:

Shēngsǐ kělián xiū yòu qǐ
 Mítú juélù mèngzhōng xíng
 Suīrán shàng yǒu nánwàng shì
 Shēn cǎo xiánjū yèyǔshēng.

生死可憐休又起
 迷途覺路夢中行
 雖然尚有難忘事
 深草閑居夜雨聲
 平仄仄平平仄仄
 平平仄仄仄中平
 平平中仄平中仄
 中仄平平仄仄平

During this period, Dōgen was staying in a retreat in the area of Fukakusa to the southeast of the capital that was favored by many of the literati as a pristine getaway from the turmoil of court life. Because the name of the town literally means “deep grass,” this term was ripe for being the source of many puns in Japanese waka of the era reflecting on life in the city versus the countryside. The profound sense of vulnerability and instability Dōgen was experiencing is disclosed in a way that makes such attitudes productive for stimulating dedication to the religious quest. Many of the characters in the second line can also bear an explicit Buddhist connotation, including delusion, awakening, transcendence (literally, “within a dream,” and practice, so that the passage could be rendered, “I practice within a transcendental realm while experiencing both delusion and awakening.” This wording does not alter the meaning but highlights that the verse can be read as directly or indirectly evoking the effects of Buddhist discipline.

Selected Translations

FROM GIUN'S *VERSE COMMENTS ON DŌGEN'S TREASURY*

Fascicle 1: Genjōkōan (Realization Here-and-Now 現成公案)

Capping Phrase: What is it? 是什麼

Do not overlook what is right in front of you,
 Endless spring appears with the early plum blossoms.
 By using just a single word you enter the open gate,
 Nine oxen pulling with all their might cannot lead you astray.

面前一著莫蹉過
 空劫春容此早梅
 一字入公門內了
 九牛盡力挽無迴

Title: “Realization Here-and-Now,” based on one of Dōgen’s most famous and frequently used expressions, is the opening section of the 60-fascicle and 75-fascicle editions, although it appears as the third section in the 95-fascicle edition. A letter to a lay disciple from Kyushu, who may have been the boatman Dōgen used for his journeys to and from China in the 1220s, the fascicle is generally considered one of the three sections that best introduce Dōgen’s primary themes, especially the notion that enlightenment is neither a potential from the past nor a goal to be attained in the future, but the realization of the dynamism of authentic reality (*kōan*) manifested here-and-now (*genjō*). The three major fascicles are referred to as Ben-Gen-Butsu (“Bendōwa,” “Genjōkōan,” and “Busshō,” although the first is not part of the 60-fascicle edition). The term *genjōkōan* was used prior to Dōgen, especially in the Chinese *kōan* collection commentary, the *Blue Cliff Record* (Ch. *Biyanlu*, Jp. *Hekiganroku*), and other Japanese Zen masters also used it, including Musō Sōseki, albeit with a different emphasis than found in the *Treasury*.

Capping Phrase: *What is it?* 是什麼. This comment reads in the original *kanbun* grammar as an interrogative, but Giun was well aware that Dōgen often interpreted apparent queries as declarative statements to show the

“what-ness” or quiddity of reality; therefore, this capping phrase could be rendered as, “This is what it is” or “This is it!”

Key Terms:

- *Right in front of you* 面前一著. Truth is readily apparent in all phenomena, but it is all too easily overlooked if you overtly seek or expect that it represents a disconnected realm.

- *Endless spring* 空劫春. Spring is not the abstraction of a date on the calendar somehow separable from seasonal manifestations; rather, it exists in and through concrete particulars whenever spring-like conditions become apparent, such as the flowering of plum blossoms.

- *Open gate* 公門. Creative expressions are strongly encouraged by Dōgen, despite the conventional Zen emphasis on “a special transmission outside the teaching,” so an appropriate saying functions as a turning word that releases obstructions and enables awakening.

- *Nine oxen* 九牛. An ox symbolizes selfish desires and attachments that need to be tamed and controlled lest they discourage even determined practitioners, who must utilize the utmost single-minded concentration accompanied by minute attention to the finest details; however, nine oxen cannot distract a true adept from realizing the immediacy of each and every moment as it occurs.

Honkō's Phrase: 既參本卷

Already engaged in studying the fascicle. A trainee is engrossed with this endlessly ambiguous text because *genjōkōan* represents neither an idea nor a set of images, but the standpoint of ongoing practice regardless of whether one has awareness of the process at any given moment.

Fascicle 2: Makahannya (Great Wisdom 摩訶般若)

Capping Phrase: Every single detail is completely clear. 照了綿密

The lamp of knowledge illumines all the shadowy spaces,
Reaching even those occupying a darkened room.
Who doubts that nothing is hidden in the entire universe?
Such is the joy of the perfection of wisdom.

智燈照徹解陰空
 什麼處人居暗室
 遍界不藏誰敢疑
 摩訶般若波羅蜜

Title: “Great Wisdom,” also known as “The Perfection of Great Wisdom” (“Makahannya haramitsu” 摩訶般若波羅蜜, Skr: *Prajñāpāramitā*), refers to the vast corpus of Sanskrit literature known as the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*, which serves as the basis for the main teachings about the notions of emptiness and compassion that is followed by nearly all schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Attributed to the Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna and translated into 600 volumes of Chinese script by Xuanzang and his assistants, the doctrines expressed in these works are drastically condensed in this short fascicle that was written at a cloister outside Kyoto at the time Dōgen’s first temple, Kōshōji, was being opened. A year later, his scribe and confidante, Ejō, who would eventually edit nearly all the fascicles, joined him. Dōgen mainly comments in the fascicle on passages from the ever-popular *Heart Sūtra* and does not cite the sayings or records of Zen teachers, except for a brief mention of a poem he particularly admired by his mentor Rujing about the sounding of a wind-bell that signifies multiplicity within emptiness.

Capping Phrase: *Every single detail is completely clear* 照了綿密. An alternative, “The finest of details, once concealed, suddenly become clear,” is a lengthy rendering that captures the complex notion that illumination spontaneously brings into focus all aspects of existence as expressions of universality that were covered up by ignorance and attachments.

Key Terms:

- *The lamp of knowledge illumines* 智燈照. The lamp or flame symbolizes the inner wisdom that all beings possess as an innate endowment, according to the Mahāyāna doctrine of universal Buddha-nature and as emphasized by various Zen sayings, especially by the master Yunmen.
- *Shadowy spaces* 暗室. This image suggests that people are typically unconscious of their own capacity to attain insight, so that the light generally appears to be an exterior force emanating from beatific Buddhas, yet it has the capacity to radiate into every possible area of existence.
- *Nothing is hidden in the entire universe* 遍界不藏. A noteworthy phrase included Dōgen’s *Instructions to the Chief Cook (Tenzokyōkun)*, which

indicates that the continuing process of illumination reveals each element of reality without exception manifesting Buddha-nature; according to a saying, “Once your eyes are opened, then everywhere reflects the true teaching.”

- *Joy* 蜜. The final line of the poem simply repeats the longer, seven-character title of the fascicle but the last word, which is used as a Sino-Japanese transliteration of the Sanskrit title, implies the “honey” or sweetness of enlightenment contrasted with the sour bitterness of suffering.

Honkō’s Phrase: 身心脫落

Casting off body-mind. One of Dōgen’s most famous catchphrases uttered at the moment he gained enlightenment in 1225 while practicing zazen.

Fascicle 11: Zazengi (The Principles of Zazen 坐禪儀)

Capping Phrase: Flowers blooming on a withered tree 枯木花開

Flowers blooming on a withered tree 枯木花開
Cattails sitting tall are silently swaying,
Dragons humming as clouds float in the vast darkness.
No longer counting the number of breaths,
Three thousand realms are collected in the sacred sea.

兀兀寥寥倚蒲團
龍吟雲起黑漫漫
箇中消息絕思議
刹海三千祇一般

Title: “The Principles of Zazen” provides instructions on sitting meditation in a way that is similar to two essays by Dōgen, the *Universal Recommendation for Zazen* (*Fukanzazengi*) and *Methods of Practicing the Way* (*Bendōhō*). The fascicle title is derived from a short tract (Ch. *Zuochan yi*) that is included in the 1103 Chinese Zen text on monastic regulations, *Pure Rules for the Zen Garden* (Ch. *Chanyuan qinggui*, Jp. *Zen’en shingi*) by Changlu Zongze. Dōgen borrows heavily from this work in composing his own meditation and other disciplinary guidelines, but he is also critical of Zongze’s understanding of Zen, especially in the fascicle on “The Lancet of Zazen” (“Zazenshin”), which is not included in the 60-fascicle edition. In that

section, Dōgen provides an extensive and innovative discussion of a kōan case that is mentioned briefly in “The Principles of Zazen” and the *Universal Recommendation* about the role of “non-thinking” (*hishiryō*) understood in relation to the possibilities of “thinking” (*shiryō*) and “not thinking” (*fushiryō*); for Dōgen all forms of thought are essentially aspects of non-thinking.

Capping Phrase: *Flowers blooming on a withered tree* 枯木花開. This saying, which was used occasionally in early works of the Chinese Sōtō school but does not appear in the *Treasury*, suggests an integration of two extremes: the quietude and timelessness of the leafless, barren tree and the dynamism of spring blossoms coming into view again signifying spiritual renewal.

Key Terms:

- *Cattails sitting tall* 兀兀寥寥. Cattails are narrow-leafed wetland plants that appear to be upright and tall while silently swaying in the breeze, suggesting basic characteristics of zazen meditation: determination and dedication somewhat softened by flexibility and adaptability.
- *Dragons humming* 龍吟. This phrase, which is the title of Fascicle 51, refers to the legend that a dragon’s ongoing intonation is a sound resembling that of wind blowing through a desolate grove of trees that is only heard by those whose concentration shows a mastery of just sitting.
- *Counting the number of breaths* 箇中消息. This line reinforces passages in which Dōgen maintains that counting breaths, which is crucial to some forms of meditation, can become a distraction that detracts from, rather than enhances, genuine contemplative awareness.
- *Sacred sea* 刹海. This term symbolizes the idea that the highest meditative state involving the full capacity of samādhi is as broad and expansive as the boundless waters of the ocean.

Honkō’s Phrase: 洗足已坐

Sitting still with clean feet. This saying highlights that Dōgen’s approach to meditation combines lofty discussions of non-thinking as key to contemplative awareness with specific instructions for cleaning one’s feet and related preparatory functions, so that bodily purity is conducive and essential to the attainment of an authentic state of realization without obstructions or diversions.

ADDITIONAL GIUN VERSES

Eiheiji Temple Founding Patriarch: Dōgen 永平初祖

He had an extraordinary capacity for receiving transmission,
By learning thoroughly, the original teaching of Huineng and
expressing its inner nature.

Dōgen grabbed Rujing's staff and brought it back to Japan,
With nostrils inhaling the pure air,
And pupils seeing the radiant light.
A five-petal flower blossoms in the warmth of spring,
And lasts until the chilly breeze during the full autumn moon.

捷俊奇相傳大心量
吸盡曹溪源淵而湛性海
奪取太白柱杖而返扶桑
鼻孔端有衝天氣
眼瞳重具射人光
一花五葉春日暖
嶺月洞風秋夜涼

Eiheiji Temple Second Patriarch: Ejō 永平二祖

His resolve is revealed by his eyebrows,
His mind is as expansive as the landscape,
The core teachings of the Sōtō lineage,
Are an eyeball as blue as the sea.
Treading joyfully an auspicious path,
The hair on his head resembles a snowy forest.
When his jewel-like mind encounters myriad phenomena,
It resembles empty space with nothing hanging in midair.
Ejō's teachings illuminate like a flash of lightning,
And his stately seated posture resounds like the crack of
thunder.

肝膽彰眉目
乾坤斂寸心
湛洞水派兮

眼睛如碧海
 繼吉祥踵兮
 頂毛似雪林
 若寶鑑含萬象
 同虛空不掛鍼
 閃電威光舒又卷
 儼居猊座震雷音

Hōkyōji Temple Founding Patriarch: Jakuen 慶寶初祖

His wondrous forms and illuminated self,
 Gaze out from the Peak of Dongshan Mountain,
 And permeate the sacred inner chambers of this monastery.
 Jakuen contemplates calmly each and every object,
 And explains vividly all aspects of momentary existence.
 Picking up the flywhisk, he scares the daylights out of his
 monks.
 And gloats while smashing the clouds and splashing the
 waters.

全相之妙.通身之照
 奪得洞山.頂上眼睛
 透徹吉祥.堂奧心要
 據於塵塵.三昧座床
 暢於刹刹.常說曲調
 拈弄拂柄兮殃及兒孫
 打雲打水兮好一場笑

Self-Praise 自贊: Verse 1

Do not strive to become a sage and do not reject being
 ordinary,
 Just play the melody without trying to put it into words.
 The blind turtle has the capacity to float along on driftwood,
 The wind is felt the same way up high on peaks and down
 low in valleys.
 Every year the snow piles high on the summit,

While the trees withstand it to reveal their crimson color,
Effortlessly yet wondrously maintaining their place.
For three thousand mornings and eight hundred nights,
I eat from and wash my bowl.

聖也不慕凡也不疎
曲泉倚身未涉箇言路
龜毛橫握能質卦爻圖
衣薄洞峯風徹骨
年邁嵩岳雪侵顱
堪攀鐵樹注紅血
倦處天堂受妙娛
朝三千暮八
喫粥了洗鉢盂

Self-Praise 自贊: Verse 2

He who has a deceitful appearance is deceived,
And he who lives humbly in the world is not deceived.
The flywhisk helps to open the eye.
The demon's whisk distracts you from the true path.
On Kichijō Peak [Eiheiji Temple] the moon is shining
bright,
And the spring flowers are blooming in the fragrant forest.

面容醜受彼欺瞞
一世貧無物與人
拂子毫頭眼睛綻
佛魔驗了絕齋隣
吉祥峯月孤輝
薔薇林花累春

Two Poems from a Mountain Retreat 山居二首

Nobody else is here on the peak of Mount Kichijō.
It looks the same even though the seasons are changing.
Sitting upright in solitary meditation can never be disturbed,
In these deep blue mountains with fluffy white clouds
floating by.

吉祥峯頭不人間
莫作四時遷變看
兀坐寥寥無對待
清山深處白雲閑

Quiet and secluded in the unpretentious realm of the forest,
There is no reason to look anywhere other than toward
what is close at hand.
The quiet breeze and clear moon are as related as guest and
host,
Anyone who remains steady and committed will never be
misled.

林下幽閑一世貧
無由向外問疎親
清風白月賓兼主
去就平常不誑人

From a Dharma Hall Sermon 上堂

心心無異心
一心一切法
念念非異念
一念是萬年

Death Verse 遺偈

For eighty-one years,
I have flouted the teachings and reviled Zen.
Now the sky falls, and earth splits open.
Hidden within the flames lies a bountiful spring.

毀教謗禪
八十一年
天崩地裂
沒火裡泉。¹²

¹² Note: On the 22nd day of the 10th month of 1333, Giun presented a poem in anticipation of his death. The whole assembly attended the stūpa ceremony

VERSES BY OTHER ZEN MONK-POETS

Daichi Sokei 大智

“On Receiving a Copy of Dōgen’s *Treasury*”

The enlightened mind expressed in the *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*,
Teaches us the innermost thoughts of past sixty Zen ancestors.
A mystical path stemming from Eiheiiji temple reaches my remote village,
Where I see anew an ethereal mist rising from among remarkable shoots.

賀永平正法眼藏到来
正法眼藏涅槃心
二三四七密單傳
吉峰路入鳳山塢
又見異苗長淡煙

“Insentient Beings Preaching the Dharma” (Mujō Seppō)
(2 poems) 無情說法話二首

Sentient beings can hear insentient beings preaching the Dharma.
A breeze that rustles the leaves in a wintry forest fills our garden.
However, no one beyond the walls is listening
To whispers that spread everywhere amid lanterns and columns.

無情說法有情聽
風攪寒林葉滿庭

at Eiheiiji, and it was given the name Spiritual Plum Stūpa 師.正慶二年癸酉十月十二日辞世の頌に曰く.全身を吉祥山に塔す.號して靈梅と曰ふ(靈梅塔). The death verse of Rujing reads, “For sixty-six years committing terrible sins against heaven, / Now leaping beyond, / While still alive plunging into the yellow springs of netherworld. / O, why did I once think that life and death are not related?” 六十六年罪犯彌天 / 打箇[足+孛]跳 / 活陷黄泉 / 咦從來生死不相干. Dōgen’s verse follows his teacher’s pattern but the italicized phrases indicate the changes he makes, “For *fifty-four* years *following the way of* heaven, / Now leaping beyond *and shattering every barrier*. / O, *from head to toe with no more longings*, / While still alive plunging into the yellow springs of netherworld.” 五十四年照第一天 / 打箇[足+孛]跳 *触破大千* / 咦渾身無覺 / 活陷黄泉.

踏壁無人却有耳
燈鎖國露柱且低聲

Leaning on a handrail gazing at the new moon,
Floating high above the mountains as I fall fast asleep.
In the middle of the night my head falls off the pillow,
Smashing against the floor but staying solid as a brick.

人倚欄 干月在天
月轉山來上床眠
夜深枕子撲落地
無端打破常住塼

“This Very Mind is Buddha” (Sokushin zebutsu)
(2 poems) 即心即仏話二首

Blows received from the master's scolding staff leave their mark,
This mind itself is Buddha is not a matter to be discussed.
A three-foot long hair-splitting sword cuts away all obstacles,
Every evening, celestial light beams down from the Big Dipper.

一棒一痕知痛痒
即心即仏没商量
塵埋三尺吹毛劍
夜夜神光射斗傍

Reality right before us deteriorates if it is weighed and exchanged,
Even in cold bitter times, do not conceal your inner treasure.
Instead, strive to preserve the truth that this mind itself is Buddha,
By releasing the light that emits day and night between the eyebrows.

現成公案沒商量
藥苦冰寒不覆藏
保護即心心即仏
眉間日夜放毫光

Betsugen Enshi 別源円旨 (1294–1364)

“A Clear Barrier” 清關

Green mountains and white clouds are briskly intertwined,
Now is the time for this disciple to return and follow his teacher.
Though difficult to enter into the gate and come back to that strict style,
I no longer wish to remain on the outside looking in.

山青雲白冷相依
是子歸來就父時
寒淡門風難入作
且從門外見容儀

“A Zen Retreat at Taibai Temple” 太白禪居

A wandering monk comes from the east in pursuit of Zen,
These green mountains are like a great emerald blanket spread wide,
At dawn the light from the stars of the Milky Way starts to fade,
So many years have passed since I last welcomed a disciple.

東晉沙門曾此禪
青山都是舊青氈
長庚星沒天河曉
童子不來經幾年

“The Gateway of 10,000 Pines” 萬松關 ¹³

Over a path covered with dark green that lasts for nearly twenty miles,
The billowing of a fresh breeze resounds through the chilly forest.
Its rushing sound brushes by and shakes us while on a leisurely jaunt.
Who can play pipes so fine as the sounds made around this mile-high gate?

廿里蒼髯夾路遙
清風樹々響寒濤

¹³ “10,000 Pines” is the name of a temple, to which Betsugen is returning from a trip and appreciates all the more the way its gate captures the sound of the wind.

等閑掉臂那邊過
誰管門頭千尺高

Gulin Qingmao 古林清茂 (1262–1329)

“On Bidding Farewell to a Japanese Visiting Monk” 送別偈

No shackles on this body so you can come and go as you please,
Half a lifetime spent in journeys to prominent temples.
From one blow to the gut, you learned about pain;
With three answers to the call, you passed through the gate.
The essence of essentials and mystery within mysteries are complete.
Effortlessly at ease, you continually remain carefree.
When you meet your master, do not ask questions!
Gazing at one other with knowing smiles to appreciate mutual understanding.

身世無拘任往還
半生行腳為名山
一拳肋下才知痛
三應聲中已透關
要要玄玄并了了
勞勞役役與閒閒
師資會遇都休問
只合相看展笑顏

Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1262–1323)

“Sweeping the Floor” 掃地

Try sweeping away piles of dirt and trash,
But dust still ends up covering the floor.
Once you stop wasting time and toss away its handle,
Five-petal udambara flowers blossom on the broom.

蕩盡從前垃圾堆
依然滿地是塵埃
等閒和柄都拋卻
五葉曇花帚上開

Musō Sōseki's 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351)

Autumn-colored word-branches dropping many leaves,
 Frosty clouds carrying rain passing this nook in the mountains.
 Everyone is born with the same sort of eyes –
 Why can't we see the kōan case that is right in front of us (*genjōkōan*)?

秋色辭柯落葉多
 寒雲載雨過山阿
 人人自有娘生眼
 爭奈現成公案何

Gentō Sokuchū 玄透即中 (1729–1807)

Huayan Sūtra's, "Triple World is Mind Only" 華嚴經三界唯心

The kōan is displayed (*genjōkōan*) right before your eyes,
 By autumn chrysanthemums, spring orchids, and plum trees blossoming in
 the snow.
 Body-mind cast off (*datsuraku shinjin*) opens the eye that realizes,
 What our ancestors have known well for countless generations.

現成公案呈蹉過
 秋菊春蘭冬雪花
 脫落身心高著眼
 先尼流輩恐滋多

EMBODIED SURVIVAL AND DEMYTHOLOGIZATION IN KIRINO NATSUO'S *TOKYO JIMA*¹

Juliana Burticá Alzate
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Introduction

The “precariat” is a literary motif that appears to be spreading throughout contemporary Japanese literature. Since the collapse of the bubble economy, the 1990s have been referred to as the “lost decade” (*ushinawareta jūnen*), followed by the “decade of the precariat.” These twenty years of economic decline or contraction, from 1990 to 2010, have been termed the “two lost decades” or the “lost score” (*ushinawareta nijūnen*).² Precariat author and activist Amamiya Karin introduced the term, which is a combination of the words “precarious” and “proletariat” into Japanese to redefine precarious workers in terms of class.³ The precariat is a highly heterogeneous group encompassing all kinds of professions and practices, such as *hikikomori*, *freeters*, NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), and general unemployed workers. Their temporary and contingent connections to work (and each other) make their relations precarious, which stands in the way of becoming a long-term, supportive, fixed class group.⁴

The post-bubble, neo-liberalist Japan and its growing socioeconomic inequalities provide the setting in which Kirino Natsuo's *Tokyo jima* (Tokyo Island, 2007–2008) develops. This setting, together with the precariat motif, is also central to other works written by Kirino, such as *Out* (1997), *Grotesque* (2003; trans. 2007), *Real World* (2003; trans. 2008),

¹ Author's Note: I would like to thank Dr. Natsumi Ikoma for her feedback, and Dr. Hitomi Yoshio for her detailed and helpful suggestions.

² Roman Rosenbaum, “Towards an Introduction: Japan's Literature of Precarity,” in Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt and Roman Rosenbaum, eds., *Visions of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 2–3.

³ Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Precarity Discourses in Kirino Natsuo's *Metabola*: The Okinawan Stage, Fractured Selves and the Ambiguity of Contemporary Existence,” *Japan Forum* 24/2 (2012), 143.

⁴ Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Precarity,” 144; Rosenbaum, “Towards,” 2.

and *Metabola* (2007), which has granted her a place within “contemporary proletarian literature” (*gendai puroretaria bungaku*).⁵ Kirino’s *Tokyo jima* received the Tanizaki Jun’ichiro Award in 2008. That same year, Kobayashi Takiji’s (1903-1933) *Kani kōsen* (1929; trans. The cannery boat 1933; The factory ship 1973; The crab cannery ship 2013) was at the top of the best-seller list. Eighty years after its original publication, this classic proletarian novel resonated with contemporary readers – perhaps the same readers of *Tokyo jima*. Amamiya Karin wrote in articles published in national newspapers that Kobayashi’s depiction of the harsh working conditions aboard the cannery ship spoke to those faced by the precariat in contemporary society, which helped consolidate the so-called *Kanikōsen* boom.⁶ Similarly, Kirino’s *Tokyo jima* also speaks to the harsh working conditions and fragile relationships at the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, and class.

However, when discussing precarity in literature, as scholar Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt points out:

[It] makes more sense to speak of precarity as a literary motif, or perhaps a literary mode, rather than a new ‘literature of the precariat.’ What seems important is the construction not of a new class of literature, but of a theoretical framework to discuss representations of cultural and socioeconomic change and its repercussions for individual lives.⁷

To read contemporary literary works within the precariat framework, such as Kirino Natsuo’s *Tokyo jima*, implies an awareness of the impact of precarity

⁵ Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Precarity,” 142; Kathryn Hemmann, “The Precarity of the Housewife in Kirino Natsuo’s ‘Rusted Hearts,’” *Japanese Language and Literature* 52/1 (2018), 205.

⁶ Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Precarity,” 141–142. Also, Kawakami Mieko’s *Chichi to ran* (Breasts and Eggs) received the Akutagawa Prize in 2008, a work that depicts stories of the precariat, and Abe Auestad has emphasized this connection between contemporary readers and literary works in the *Kanikōsen* boom. See Reiko Abe Auestad, “Invoking Affect in Kawakami Mieko’s *Chichi to ran* (Breasts and Eggs, 2008): Higuchi Ichiyō, Playful Words, Ludic Gestures,” *Japan Forum* 28/4 (2016): 530–548.

⁷ Iwata-Weickgenannt, “Precarity,” 144.

on said works and their reception, rather than a fixed definition of a new categorization or genre. Shan Lianyin explains that *Tokyo jima* is an allegory of Japan's sexual politics that makes us rethink contemporary sociocultural and political issues affecting survival concerning the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, race, and class.⁸ In *Tokyo jima*, Kirino problematizes and blurs the boundaries between locals and foreigners while addressing social issues related to outcasts, the underprivileged, and oppressed, as she centers the narrative on precariat characters. Given this social dimension, there is also room for a geopolitical reading that draws an analogy between the Tokyoites and the Hong Kongers, with the actual dynamics between the countries.⁹ But this study is concerned with precarity as a key background and framework useful for exploring representations of embodiment and gender vis-à-vis the question of survival. Hence, this article analyzes embodied, gendered experiences, such as pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering, relating to survival from a feminist perspective and argues that through debunking and reinterpreting myths, Kirino's *Tokyo jima* reimagines the survival of an alternative sexual, maternal, embodied femininity. Namely, it contests hegemonic, ideal, and naturalized views of womanhood and motherhood.

Tokyo jima's setting is a new take on the real-life incident of Anatahan, a Pacific island in the Northern Marianas, where Higa Kazuko was the only woman among thirty-one male World War II soldiers who continued to fight after Japan surrendered.¹⁰ Kirino's novel features a group of people building a community, reconstructing a patriarchal society in conditions close to an ideal "original" state of nature; that is to say, "primitive" and "uncivilized." It is important to clarify that Kirino's treatment of nature is far

⁸ Shan Lianyin, "Rewriting Women's Oppression through Myth and Nature – Kirino Natsuo's *Tokyo Island* and *The Goddess Chronicle*," *Japanese Language and Literature* 52/1 (2018): 179–200.

⁹ Takeshi Suzuki, "Kaiketsu," in *Tokyo jima* (Tokyo: Shinchōsa, 2008), 370.

¹⁰ Mark Schilling, "'Tokyo-jima (Tokyo Island)' Lust, Power, Death and Deception – Welcome to Paradise," *The Japan Times*, August 27, 2010. In this article, Kirino's depiction has been compared to *The Saga of Anatahan* (1953) directed by Josef von Sternberg, which was based on the two memoirs by Maruyama Michirō *Anatahan* (1951), and a later edition in September 1952, *Anatahan no Kokuhaku* (Confession of Anatahan), which included the testimony of another survivor Tanaka Hidechi.

from realistic but rather caricature-like. In other words, Kirino offers comically and sometimes grotesquely exaggerated depictions of nature and events that would otherwise be tragic. Thus, in Kirino's literary world, humor seems to be a key component to survival.

Embodiment and survival are central to this study's characterization of Kirino's depiction in terms of "embodied survival." Iris Marion Young reflects upon gender-specific embodiment as her work aims "to describe embodied being-in-the-world through modalities of sexual and gender difference."¹¹ Thus, embodiment refers to how our sexual and/or gendered body mediates the way we inhabit, interact with, and experience the world. In addition, the term refers to "*being embodied* and *embodying the social*"; hence, it addresses both the individual, personal dimension, and the sociocultural one.¹² In analyzing survival in both literal and figurative ways, as a personal experience and a sociocultural phenomenon, the question of survival is also interlocked with precarity: How do we survive in precarious conditions and under multiple systems of oppression? What kinds of jobs are sustaining one's survival and that of others? This article is primarily concerned with what it takes for women to continue living under patriarchy and how the act of survival can be feminist. More than "living on," Sarah Ahmed thinks about survival in terms of "keeping one's hopes alive; holding on to the projects that are projects insofar as they have yet to be realized" and stresses that "we need each other to survive; we need to be part of each other's survival."¹³ With this in mind, it is assumed that Kirino's *Tokyo jima* articulates a feminist, embodied survival via demythologization.

Kirino has identified that there are arbitrary stories necessary to maintain power and that there are stories needed for humans to live; these stories frequently become myths, which are more important for society as a

¹¹ Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

¹² Deborah L. Tolman et al., "Sexuality and Embodiment," in Deborah L. Tolman and Lisa M. Diamond, eds., *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology: Vol. 1. Person-Based Approaches* (Washington, DC: The American Psychological Association, 2014), 761.

¹³ Sarah Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 235.

whole than for individuals.¹⁴ In a different outlet, in connection to *Joshinki* (*The Goddess Chronicle* 2008; trans. 2013), Kirino says: “I have a rather strong desire to see directly the political intentions which were often concealed in so-called ‘Myths.’”¹⁵ This desire towards unveiling and debunking myths is at the heart of *Tokyo jima*. By revealing that patriarchy is historical and contingent rather than an inevitable natural order, Kirino puts forward a feminist work of demythologization grounded in contemporary Japan’s precarious and gendered reality.

Tokyo jima is thus a fictional demythologization in which Kirino dismantles ideals of femininity and motherhood and reveals the problems that emerge from our current conceptions of gender in relation to community building and patriarchy. It is possible to identify common elements among Kirino’s works. For instance, her novel *Politikon* (2011) also deals with the themes of utopia/dystopia and community building in the absence of love. Moreover, Kirino published *Joshinki* the same year as *Tokyo jima*, and these two demythologizing works seem to be in conversation with one another.¹⁶ Both of them can be read as an example of “feminist revisionist mythmaking,” a term initially proposed by Alicia Ostriker, and often referred to as “myth revision,” which requires the act of looking back at old stories, texts, or myths, then question, alter, and modify them, in order to subvert and/or deconstruct the patriarchal order as well as enable new alternatives.¹⁷

Ostriker has suggested that sometimes this revisionist mythmaking appears as “instructions of survival”¹⁸ and as opposition “to the patriarchal praxis of reifying texts.”¹⁹ Also, Adrienne Rich has linked myth revision to survival: “Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of

¹⁴ Kirino Natsuo, “Ningen ga ikiru tame ni hitsuyō to suru monogatari wo,” *Tokyo jima* kankō kinen intabyū, *Nami*, June 2016, 5.

¹⁵ James Costa, “Interview with Kirino Natsuo,” interview by James Costa, *Three Guys One Book*, August 19, 2013 (accessed May 20, 2021, <http://threeguysonebook.com/interview-with-natsuo-kirino/>).

¹⁶ In both works *Joshinki* and *Tokyo jima* Kirino gives voice and agency to female figures. Refer to Lianyin, “Rewriting,” 179–200.

¹⁷ Susan Sellers, *Myth and Fairy Tale in Contemporary Women’s Fiction* (New York: Palgrave, 1991), 30.

¹⁸ Alicia Ostriker, “The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking,” *Signs* 8/1 (1982), 73.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women more than a chapter in cultural history, it is an act of survival.”²⁰ In *Joshinki*, the old text is the *Kojiki*, whereas in *Tokyo jima* Kirino comes up with a new tale regarding the beginnings of (a) society and, by doing so, dismantles the myth of patriarchy. Not only foundational myths – such as the Izanagi and Izanami myth retold in Kirino’s *Joshinki* – but also folklore and literature often feature a woman who disappears into the underworld; women are locked in the chthonic, destined to the realm of death. Thus, the disappearing or missing woman can be considered a recurring motif representing a Japanese cultural paradigm.²¹ In *Tokyo jima*, through demythologization – an act of imagination and reinterpretation that exposes all the mythical elements and thus is freed from them – Kirino lets Kiyoko live. The woman survives.

Tokyo jima was originally published as a literary periodical or series (*shinchō*). The first short episode, entitled *Tokyo jima*, gave the whole series its name. This first chapter was intended to stand on its own as a short story. The fact that Kirino uses the same title for the whole novel opens the possibility to think of this episode’s end in terms of both chapter and novel, since they both reach a similar powerful conclusion: Kiyoko, our non-conventional heroine, escapes from Tokyo Island and chooses her own survival over anything else.²² Thus, Kiyoko is not a victim but a survivor. The image of Kiyoko as a survivor is performed and embodied, and it is also nuanced as it shifts with the changes in the plot and her subjectivity.

Life on Tokyo Island: Plot and Characters

The novel begins when the lottery to choose Kiyoko’s fourth husband is about to start. The narrative perspective shifts through different characters, but it largely relies on Kiyoko, and the timeline jumps back and forth, so readers are tasked with puzzling out the order of events. Five years

²⁰ Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision,” *College English* 34/1 (1972), 18.

²¹ Hayao Kawai, “The ‘Forbidden Chamber’ Motif in a Japanese Fairy Tale,” in Yoshihiko Ikegami, ed., *The Empire of Signs: Semiotic Essays on Japanese Culture* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991), 176.

²² Only this first chapter has been translated into English by Philip Gabriel and published in 2010 by *Granta*. However, the complete novel is available in French, Italian, Polish and Romanian translations. There is also a film adaptation by director Shinozaki Makoto in 2010.

before this moment, Kiyoko, at the age of forty-one, and her husband Takashi are cast away on a desert island. At first, the island symbolizes hope, salvation, and life, yet it gradually becomes an oppressive place from which she wishes to escape. Kiyoko used to be an ordinary housewife, but once on the island, her survival instinct grows stronger, and she is able to catch snakes and eat all kinds of food, whereas she thinks Takashi is quite useless as he spends his energy in keeping a diary.

A few months later, a group of twenty-three Japanese young men arrives after a storm and shipwreck. They are members of the precariat; they used to be part-time workers for a research project that looked for parasites in the manure of wild horses on Yonaguni Island. Unsatisfied with their job situation, they stole a boat and escaped. Not long after their arrival, Takashi dies mysteriously. Kasukabe – who was having an affair with Kiyoko – may be the one who pushed Takashi off what will be referred to as the *sainara* (*sayonara*, “farewell”) cliff. Then Kiyoko lives with Kasukabe, her second husband, depicted as a strong, possessive, jealous man whom she calls “sex machine.”²³

Two years after the arrival of the Japanese, ten Chinese men who are also members of the precariat come to shore after being forced to disembark from a ship that sailed away, never to return. Japanese and Chinese, later addressed as “Tokyoites” and “Hong Kongers” in the novel, do not live together as one community but are segregated. Yan is the leader of the Hong Kongers, who relate to the natural environment more productively and sustainably than the Tokyoites. Even though the island’s best areas are already in use by the Tokyoites, the Hong Kongers manage to make a sun clock, produce spices, and raise wild pigs. Kasukabe dies mysteriously, and Kiyoko believes that since his corpse was found at a distance from the cliff, several men may have killed him.

The Tokyoites are the ones to name the island “Tokyo Island,” a twofold act: it shows nostalgia for home, as well as a determination to build a new one. Even though the island has nothing in common with the actual city of Tokyo, they use familiar names to divide it: The Imperial Palace, Shinjuku, Shibuya, Odaiba, Tokaimura, Chofu, etc. The Tokyoites seem helpless, bored, and concerned with trivial matters. Initially, Kiyoko – the only woman on the island – is treated like their queen. Watanabe is the only

²³ Kirino Natsuo, *Tokyo jima* (Tokyo: Shinchōsa, 2008), 41. All translations of *Tokyo jima* are mine.

Japanese who does not aim to please her at all costs. He is a *hikikomori*, a misfit, even in *Tokyo jima*'s society. He lives all by himself in Tokaimura, the farthest point of the island. Tokaimura is filled with yellow tanks containing nuclear waste that have been dumped on the beach.²⁴ Watanabe and Kiyoko have an antagonistic relationship but share a strong will to survive and escape throughout the storyline. Among the Tokyoites, we also find Oraga, whom Kiyoko asked to write the story of the island; Manta, who has double personality (he and his dead sister) and who assists the leader of the Tokyoites; Yamada, who soon after Kasukabe's death offers a dead mouse to Kiyoko in exchange for sex; and Inukuchi and Shin, who become a couple in the story.

After Takahashi and Kasukabe die, Kiyoko is perceived as a *femme fatale* or *mashō no onna* in Japanese, who brings death to her men.²⁵ She is not an archetypical *femme fatale* in the sense that she is not stereotypically attractive, yet she possesses the most important characteristic of this trope: men are willing to die and kill for her. Consequently, to restrain her power, a rotational lottery system in which Kiyoko herself is the big prize is implemented to choose her future husbands. Kiyoko refused to have the Hong Kongers take part in the lottery. Kiyoko's third husband is Noboru, and her fourth and final one is GM, who had lost his memory. Kiyoko decides to help him get it back. She and GM form a caring bond, and he becomes Yutaka (a name chosen by Kiyoko).

The lottery system can be read as a parody of the institution of marriage, portraying a sort of "trophy-wife" that does not fit the trophy-wife's profile. Kiyoko is not young and beautiful, and she is marrying men who are younger than her. This system is both allegorical of sexual politics and dystopian, as she loses her freedom. Kiyoko's survival drive is stronger than her "love" for Yutaka, so when she finds out the Hong Kongers have built two boats out of waste cans from Tokaimura, she joins them in their escape attempt. As Kiyoko anticipated, Yan rapes her several times during the two weeks they remain aboard. When they finally reach land, they find themselves back on Tokyo Island. Yet, the island is not the same as the Hong

²⁴ This is a direct reference to the nuclear accidents in Tokaimura in 1999. We may thus read this reference as an expression of concern about humanity's treatment of nature and a warning or commentary against nuclear accidents and nuclear waste management in Japan.

²⁵ Kirino, "Ningen," 3.

Konger's fate, and Kiyoko's social status has drastically changed. She is now considered a traitor, and GM/Yutaka has become Mori Gunshi, the Tokyoites' leader, as indicated by the new last name "*gunshi*" meaning "commander."

Pregnancy renews Kiyoko's status on the island. As it progresses, she decides to leave the Tokyoites once more and looks for the Hong Kongers, hoping, yet again, for a better chance of survival. When she finds them, she is surprised to discover she is no longer the only woman on Tokyo Island. A group of seven Filipina women – precariat singers and entertainers – have arrived after a shipwreck. Their band name is "The Goddess" (which adds to Kirino's mythic parody), and they are waiting for the Hong Kongers to finish fixing their boat. Their presence is of great value to Kiyoko, as it is thanks to their support that she gives birth to twins: a boy, Chita, and a girl, Chiki. As the plot unfolds, tensions intensify between those who want to stay on the island and those who want to flee. In the end, after a deadly confrontation and with the help of Kim, one of the Filipina singers, Kiyoko, and her daughter Chiki manage to escape. Her son, however, remains on the island, snatched away by Mori Gunshi.

Embodied, Gendered Experiences in Context

In order to analyze embodied, gendered experiences such as pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering, and hence relating to survival from a feminist perspective, it is important to put them into context and recognize how Kirino dramatizes reality and exposes gender problematics via humor and satire. A sharp, critical, social commentary underlies her entertaining literary work. Moreover, Kirino's oeuvre may be located within the larger scope of "feminist humor" as it "both elucidates and challenges women's subordination and oppression."²⁶ Humor is thus a strategy to expose and challenge the status quo and conventional ideas.

Kirino Natsuo's *Tokyo jima* can be read as a response to real-life discourses on the following issues: maternal mortality, abortion, rape, pregnancy as alienation, and the imperative of motherly love. This analysis aims to identify how Kirino comments on and offers new alternatives to such issues. For instance, in *Tokyo jima*, Kiyoko is afraid of dying during childbirth. The fear of dying not only contests the motif of the disappearing woman but it may be read as a response grounded on the actual number of

²⁶ Nancy A. Walker, *A Very Serious Thing: Women's Humor and American Culture* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 152.

women who die during pregnancy or while giving birth, especially in precarious conditions, as maternal mortality continues to be a critical challenge to health systems around the globe.²⁷ Moreover, “about 295,000 women died during and following pregnancy and childbirth in 2017. The vast majority of these deaths (94%) occurred in low-resource settings, and most could have been prevented.”²⁸ These numbers cannot be understood without considering the intersection of gender and precarity. Japan, however, is a successful example of maternal mortality reduction. In 1950, Japan had a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of around 180 deaths for every 100,000 live births, and already by 2004–2005, the MMR dropped to 6 deaths (per 100,000 live births).²⁹ Japan’s health system excels in ensuring the safety of mothers throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. Hence, Kiyoko’s fear of dying can be interpreted as commentary on a global concern. It is not only related to her age, but also to being in a precarious situation outside of Japan. In other words, she is not in a place where she can have the adequate support and conditions to give birth. But there is an ironic twist, given that Kiyoko’s pregnancy and delivery succeed on the island and not in the city.

Momentarily, Kiyoko considers putting an end to her pregnancy. Abortion is understood as a voluntary termination of one’s pregnancy, or in other words, as an act of agency that requires one’s autonomy and ability to choose. Kirino problematizes agency throughout the novel. In fact, through a reference to Kiyoko’s cousin’s miscarriage, Kirino moves away from idealizing, essentializing, and naturalizing the experiences of pregnancy and childbirth. Instead, she echoes the realities of those who suffer hemorrhages during miscarriages, abortions, and/or births. Therefore, by following Kiyoko’s train of thought, it is possible to recognize such experiences as interrelated, as social and public health matters, instead of isolated individual situations.

The portrayal of pregnancy and the actual birth is quite peculiar and detailed for a literary text. Of course, female characters have babies in

²⁷ Margaret C. Hogan et al., “Maternal Mortality for 181 Countries, 1980–2008: A Systematic Analysis of Progress Towards Millennium Development Goal 5,” *The Lancet* 375/9726 (2010): 1609–1623.

²⁸ “Maternal Mortality,” *World Health Organization*, September 19, 2019 (accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>).

²⁹ Ibid.

literature, but pregnancy and childbirth have, more often than not, been reduced to an ellipsis. Writing in 1978, Poston points out that birth is rarely described in literature, “because female experiences, from menstruation to menopause, have been consistently slighted in our literature, childbirth is a virtually unexplored literary topic.”³⁰ The uses of birth imagery and birth as a metaphor are prolific, yet depictions of the actual physical birth are limited. Almost twenty years later, this omission persists in Saitō Minako’s treatment of “pregnancy literature” (*ninshin shōsetsu*): instead of looking at the role or representations of pregnancy in literary works, she uses the term to “denote a sub-genre of works...in which an older man falls in love with a younger woman, has an affair with her, and gets her pregnant.”³¹ Instead of being narrated from a male perspective, as Saitō’s characterization of “pregnancy literature” indicates, Kirino’s novel, written fourteen years later, can be counted amongst the few works that represent actual childbirth – albeit its comic tones – from the woman’s point of view. It is important to emphasize when these studies and books were written and published because they illustrate the shifts and constant redefinition of both hegemonic and alternative representations of motherhood.³²

Kirino also addresses experiences of alienation, which is a recurring concept to understand pregnant embodiment. Pregnancy splits or doubles our subjectivity in multiple ways: “[The pregnant subject] experiences her body as herself and not herself. Its inner movements belong to another being, yet they are not other, because her body boundaries shift and because her bodily self-location is focused on the trunk in addition to her head.”³³ The question of bodily boundaries emerges in the story when different people ask Kiyoko if the baby is moving. As Young explains, it is the movements of the fetus that cause the sense of the splitting subject: “the fetus’s movements are wholly mine, completely within me, conditioning my experience and space.

³⁰ Carol H. Poston, “Childbirth in Literature,” *Feminist Studies* 4/2 (1978), 20.

³¹ Amanda Seaman, “Two for One: Pregnancy and Identity in Hasegawa Junko’s ‘The Unfertilized Egg,’” *Japanese Language and Literature* 44/1 (2010), 1. See also, Saitō Minako, *Ninshin shōsetsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1994).

³² See Amanda Seaman, *Writing Pregnancy in Low-Fertility Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016).

³³ Young, *On Female*, 46.

Only I have access to these movements from their origin, as it were. For months only I can witness this life within me, and it is only under my direction of where to put their hands that others can feel these movements.”³⁴ Pregnancy and childbirth are thus embodied experiences that shake fixed ideas of subjectivity and agency.

On a related note, Kirino writes in *Tokyo jima* that motherly love is part of civilization, but it is somewhat removed from the story because the setting is outside of civilization. Kirino thus joins the historical and ongoing debate amongst Japanese feminists between being pro-*boseiai*, which finds motherhood empowering, and being anti-*boseiai*, which considers it a source of oppression.³⁵ This tension, however, is not exclusive to Japanese feminism. Nakano Glenn points to the conflict between feminists who regard maternally derived gender differences as oppressive against those who reclaim motherhood as a source of power and status:

We are reluctant to give up the idea that motherhood is special. Pregnancy, birth, and breast-feeding are such powerful bodily experiences, and the emotional attachment to the infant so intense, that it is difficult for women who have gone through these experiences and emotions to think that they do not constitute unique female experiences that create an unbridgeable gap between men and women.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., 49.

³⁵ Michiko Niikuni Wilson, *Gender is Fair Fame: (Re)thinking the (Fe)Male in the Works of Ōba Minako* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 104; Ōhinata, Masami, *Boseiai shinwa no wana* (Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha, 2000); Sandra Buckley, *Voices of Japanese Feminism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³⁶ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview,” in Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey, eds., *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 22–23.

In Japan, the idealization of motherly love is intimately related to the legacy of the so-called “good wife, wise mother” ideology.³⁷ This ideology can be traced back to the Meiji period when the state’s ideal image of the modern Japanese woman was a cis-gendered, heterosexual, married woman who aspired to become a mother. Education was gendered and focused on preparing girls for their roles as wives and mothers in connection to patriotism.

Nakamura provides the background for the notion of motherly love in Japan by looking at how the birth control and eugenics movements defined what was required of the modern mother.³⁸ Besides possessing musical, literary, and cultural talents, “they had to emanate *bosei* (“motherhood,” derived from the Swedish word *moderskap*) and *bosei ai* (motherly love) – words that did not exist in Japan until the beginning of the Taishō era.”³⁹ Textbooks from this period depicted “*bosei* and *bosei ai* as natural sentiments that all women possessed, claiming that motherhood was a physical and psychological attribute inherent in all women.”⁴⁰ This process exemplifies how socio-culturally constructed notions are reified and naturalized into biological, essential traits of human nature, which in turn become individual and sociocultural pressures and expectations. Kirino sees through this naturalization process, and her depiction of Kiyoko is a direct challenge to the naturalization of maternal love.

Kiyoko’s Sexuality

Kiyoko’s body and her sexuality are articulated in the novel through a symbolic analogy between her and the island. The parallel is quite explicit: “Kiyoko and Tokyo Island were certainly similar. Isolated and enclosed by the impetuous ocean, the island is as severe as Kiyoko. Like the belly button of the ocean, the island is flat, and its shape is as commonplace as Kiyoko.”⁴¹ Kiyoko is thus seen as an ordinary woman who is all alone in an adverse scenario. The correlation between Kiyoko and the island is recurrent and

³⁷ Shizuko Koyama, *Ryōsai Kenbo: The Educational Ideal of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ in Modern Japan* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 52–54.

³⁸ Mari Nakamura, *Monstrous Bodies: The Rise of the Uncanny in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 115.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 161–162.

presupposes the common association between “women” and “nature” that sustains the myth of patriarchy. Also, men on the island take advantage of nature’s resources as well as of Kiyoko’s sexuality. Both Kiyoko and the island are required to satisfy men’s needs.

Yet Kiyoko is far from being a passive character: she faces dangers, lies, resorts to violence, and uses her sexual power to her advantage. She is aware of her special status as the only woman on the island, treated as an endangered species. Even when she transitions from being treasured to a less interesting sexual commodity and then to a traitor, the feeling of being the “only one” stays with her until the very end.⁴²

The Hong Kongers refer to the island as “the egg,” a name that emphasizes its natural qualities as it welcomes everyone regardless of their background and provides them with the chance of survival.⁴³ Kiyoko agrees on it being a more suitable name than “Tokyo,” as she says: “Certainly, the deserted island is also an egg. An organism covered by a shell.”⁴⁴ Given that “eggs” are often representative of female reproduction, this naming process adds to the symbolic overlap between the island and Kiyoko, since this metaphor is also applicable to Kiyoko herself as a pregnant woman. Here, the overlap is rather straightforward. Soon after she realizes she is pregnant, she says: “Tokyo itself is an egg. I mean it was one egg. On a desert island, which is only an egg, live more eggs. How absurd.”⁴⁵ Hence, “eggs” are a powerful metaphor for both the island and Kiyoko in terms of being life enablers, but they are also a gendered depiction that creates a new maternal femininity.

Kiyoko’s correlation to the island is also seen in how her body adapts to life there after putting on weight. For example: “Not even she understands why she is getting fat living in this poverty. It was like her plump body with plenty of fat was a proof that the island’s lifestyle fitted her, and she didn’t like that. ‘Seems you got fat sucking men’s energy’ – bad-mouthed Watanabe.”⁴⁶ Here, Kirino uses the word *seiki* 精気 (“vigor,” “energy”). Its closeness to the word *seiki* 精液 (“sperm”) cannot be overlooked. The pun alludes to Kiyoko’s sexual relations with the men on the island, but it also foreshadows Kiyoko’s pregnancy. Kiyoko’s sexuality oscillates between

⁴² Kirino, “Ningen,” 3–4.

⁴³ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 50.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 13–14.

being an empowering act and being policed by patriarchal power. Kiyoko embraces her sexual desire, which can be read “as an assertion of the life-force of women; of that creative energy empowered.”⁴⁷ Kirino connects the desire to live with survival. When comparing *Tokyo jima* to proletarian literature and characterizing this genre as being sensual, Kirino stresses that “you only have your body. Bodies are reflections of the class system, but this loses its meaning because the body is so desperately bare. Desire is only focused on survival, and this is, in fact, erotic.”⁴⁸ This explains why we find a variety of depictions of sexual desire and sexuality in a tale about survival, such as Kirino’s *Tokyo jima*.

Kiyoko’s Pregnancy

Kiyoko’s bodily transformation epitomizes her affiliation with the island, which reaches a peak when she becomes pregnant and safely gives birth to twins. As the Hong Kongers and Kiyoko are escaping from the island, they look at it from a distance and notice that its shape can be compared with an “older woman’s breasts: flat and floppy.”⁴⁹ Kirino continues to juxtapose Kiyoko’s body and the island, and in turn, portrays the island as a mother too. Descriptions of Yan raping Kiyoko on the boat stand in sharp contrast to previous displays of eroticism. During her twenty years of married life in Tokyo, Kiyoko did not bear any children; in fact, she had experienced several miscarriages. The island somehow makes her body more fertile. The next passage describes Kiyoko’s realization that she is pregnant:

Suddenly I felt sick. I vomited. I thought I was overly hungry but just looking at a fruit makes me feel sick. My belly is bloated, and it hurts. Kiyoko rubbed her belly. This is strange. I have already experienced this sense of

⁴⁷ Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” in Karen E. Lovaas and Mercilee M. Jenkins, eds., *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life: A Reader* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 89.

⁴⁸ Natsuo Kirino and Masaro Satō, “‘Tokubetsu taidan,’ Satō Masaro vs Kirino Natsuo: *Tokyo jima* no riaru na kannō to konton,” *Shūkan Shinchō*, June 5, 2008 (accessed May 27, 2021, <https://www.shinchosha.co.jp/wadainohon/466702/>).

⁴⁹ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 42.

discomfort. These are early pregnancy symptoms. From her late twenties until her early thirties, Kiyoko has had three miscarriages. That is why she clearly remembers how morning sickness feels. She had been told by a doctor that it's not easy for her body to become pregnant, and that it is not so likely that she'll be blessed with children, so she had already given up, and had decided to live with Takashi, just the two of them. After coming to this desert island, I had been way too loose, and it can't be that now I'm pregnant, is it even possible? I'll be forty-six by the time I give birth. Also, is this Yutaka's or Yan's baby? I don't know. And she tried to remember when was the last time that her period came.⁵⁰

There is a connection between Kiyoko and her body: the latter speaks, and she decodes its signals. This passage also contrasts Kiyoko in the past and present, in the city and on the island. In the city, the doctors somehow decided on her body's fertility; now the island does. Her pregnancies did not thrive in the city, while on the island, the opposite is true. The attempt to remember her last period is a usual reduction of menstruation to indicate whether one is pregnant or not. There is also the question of paternity. Is the father her last husband Yutaka/Mori Gunshi? Or is the pregnancy a result of Yan's rape? Kiyoko will exploit this question and try to manipulate both to increase the likelihood of survival.

The task of writing the myth of the island is a crucial element to make sense of the castaways' new reality, and Kiyoko's pregnancy is a key component of such a task. The chapters "Record of the Island Mother" and "Hormone Princess" embody two different attitudes towards Kiyoko's pregnancy: from joy to worry, respectively. Soon after finding out she is pregnant, Kiyoko is filled with joy at her fertility's recovery. Her pregnancy is a "miracle":

I wanted to be worshiped as the only one who achieved this wonderful job of giving birth. For that, it needs to be reinforced through a myth or something, Kiyoko thought suddenly. We must record and pass on the story of a

⁵⁰ Ibid., 83–84.

woman, who copulated with the island, gave birth to the child of the island, and transformed herself into the island. 'A mother is all that is needed.'⁵¹

Here, Kiyoko conceives of maternity as divinity and as a pillar of the island's future. Therefore, she asks Oraga – the most studious member – to write the story of the Mother. However, Mori Gunshi has already asked him to write the story of the island, of the Father. In both requests, there is a tension between whose point of view will prevail in telling the story of the origin of Tokyo Island's society: Kiyoko's transient dream of a matriarchal society versus the actual patriarchal society that is being reconstructed on the island. Kirino thus poses larger questions about the myth-telling tradition and the role of writing and stories in reproducing myths as cultural artifacts. Here, Watanabe's eventual theft of Takashi's diary is worth mentioning, which he reads on his own and cherishes as it serves different purposes: from entertainment to erotica, to mysticism. More importantly, the journal still has blank pages in which Watanabe tries to put down his own thoughts and imaginings.

"Hormone Princess" is a title that already symbolizes a pregnant woman. The term "princess" is quite ironic here because Kiyoko is far from being the female monarch of the island, even when she claims – as a survival strategy – that her baby is Mori Gunshi's, the current leader of the Tokyoites. The title rather signals to the negative connotations of the word "princess" as an arrogant or spoilt woman. In addition, the mention of hormones in it and throughout the chapter exposes the physiological dimension of pregnancy. The material dimension is always embedded with sociocultural meanings, particularly gender meanings. In Fausto-Sterling's words, "chemicals infuse the body, from head to toe, with gender meanings."⁵² The so-called "sex hormones" have been categorized into a dubious dichotomy: "female" (estrogen and progesterone) and "male" (androgens, such as testosterone). This, in turn, feeds into the misconception that women are controlled by hormones and that the "female-hormone-impelled behavior is crazy; therefore, the normal female is 'naturally diseased' – or at least irrational."⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid., 171.

⁵² Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 147.

⁵³ Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women*

In Kiyoko's case, despite emphasizing the physical changes and the impact of the hormones, she is never depicted as irrational nor ill.

Kiyoko's belly has come out, and her lower abdomen feels hard. Early on, she notices the cravings for sugar, cold drinks, frozen tangerine, vanilla ice cream, cold cucumber, among others. In addition to such physical changes, Kiyoko experiences emotional ones. For example, she thinks: "I wonder where my excitement went. I felt so much happiness at that time, but was it the hormones' fault? This strong desire to drink something cold and sweet, also the hormones' fault? I'd better hate the hormones. No, I'd better hate this deserted island."⁵⁴ Through the recurring question – "is it the hormones' fault?" – Kirino makes a satirical comment on the negative mythology of pregnancy hormones that depicts pregnant women as "hormonal hurricanes" or "hormonal and emotional basket cases."⁵⁵

In addition, pregnant embodiment also exposes the vexed question of agency. Her reactions to the pregnancy combined with it likely being a result of Yan's rape make clear that it is an unwanted pregnancy that escapes her will, or perhaps that her will in this matter is irrelevant. Kiyoko often mentions that the decision of becoming or remaining pregnant seems to fall into the island's will. Kiyoko then locates her pregnancy at two levels, the micro and the macro: at her bodily level, affected by the hormones and as a personal, singular experience, and at the social level, as an experience of the island. It is within these levels that more tensions between biology/nature (the hormones, the psychological/physiological experiences), culture/society (the island, social reality or circumstances), and her agency (her will, dreams, actions) develop:

What makes me angriest is that it is myself that got pregnant. It was really stupid of me to feel all excited about proving my *raison d'être* as a pregnant woman... Giving birth on this desert island is just an act of madness. I

and Men (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 99.

⁵⁴ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 210–211.

⁵⁵ For more on the discourses of hormones surrounding pregnancy, see: Fausto-Sterling, *Myths*, 90; and Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Biology of Fatherhood," *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*, June 3, 2014 (accessed May 30, 2021, <http://bostonreview.net/world-us/anne-fausto-sterling-biology-fatherhood>).

thought it's still safer to abort, and I tried to hit this belly that is sticking out with rocks, but I remembered when a cousin had a miscarriage and she lost so much blood, she almost died. That was awful, so I put away the rocks. Until recently, my pregnancy was the island's will. Until recently, I was so happy telling everyone on the island that, but now, I have this dark feeling inside, like I'm the person who'll die first. Is it the hormones' fault? No, it isn't. I'm just following the normal logic.⁵⁶

In this powerful passage, Kirino tackles the theme of agency by addressing issues surrounding miscarriages, abortions, and unwanted pregnancies. This fragment also shows both sides of Kiyoko's character. On the one hand, Kiyoko is extremely calculating and uses her logic and reason to gain power on the island and secure her survival. On the other hand, Kiyoko's story resonates with a larger picture of women's history, as it reflects Adrienne Rich's words: "most women in history have become mothers without choice, and an even greater number have lost their lives bringing life into the world."⁵⁷ When Kiyoko repeatedly says that her pregnancy is the island's will, she is also saying that it is against her own will, or that whether she wants it or not, she will still be pregnant. In this excerpt, she considers, momentarily, ending her pregnancy, yet her survival drive persists.

Kiyoko is aware of the possible consequences of a "high-risk" pregnancy. She bluntly says: "*The next person to die is me, no doubt about it*, Kiyoko thought. *As the only woman on this island, I will lose my life while giving birth. That will also become a myth*, she thought for an instant, but immediately, she sputtered: 'This isn't a joke. Kiyoko (death by hemorrhage)' – She cried out loud."⁵⁸ Initially, Kiyoko linked her ability to create life with pride and divine power and wished to be mythologized as the mother of the island. Now, she connects giving birth with her own mortality, echoing origin myths such as that of Izanami, and rejects being mythologized as a victim. In this passage, Kirino uses and goes beyond satire to address the fragile and

⁵⁶ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 211.

⁵⁷ Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Norton, 1976), 13. Reprint in 1995.

⁵⁸ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 212.

blurred boundary between life and death and allows us to peep into Kiyoko's fear of dying and dreams of survival.

Kiyoko is also scared of giving birth in the place that both Manta and Mori Gunshi have chosen, a small, enclosed cave. She also fears that if the child is a girl, they will both be killed or that she will be confined her entire life to such a cave. This fear also seems to echo the Izanami myth, as the goddess is sealed forever in the Yomi after dying from giving birth to the fire god. Thus, I read Kiyoko's fear of death and confinement to the dark cave as an extension of the cultural paradigm of the disappearing woman. Kiyoko escapes that fate and finds a new place to give birth with the Hong Kongers' help.

When Kiyoko meets Maria, The Goddess's leader, for the first time, the latter immediately asks: "Are you okay? You have a baby inside your belly, right? I speak Japanese. I used to perform in Utsunomiya, that's why".⁵⁹ Here, Maria clarifies that they are also members of the precariat but offers friendly words and sympathy for her pregnancy. As Kiyoko watches in confusion, it is explained that "the younger women offered their sympathy to the older woman who had gone through a lot of trouble."⁶⁰ The radical contrast between the treatment she receives from men and from women gives Kiyoko a new hope for survival based on female solidarity. Thus, she tries hard to gain their trust and sympathy. For Kiyoko, their boat supplies a real possibility of escape, and the presence of women is a chance to give birth safely. The spots in the boat are limited, however, and so her worries continue.

Calculating as always, just like she was with the Tokyoites when she claimed Mori Gushi was the father, Kiyoko now points to Yan and lets everyone know the child is his. Then, she "faces Yan and pointing to her protruding belly, she shows him. Your baby has grown this much. That's why I came here risking my life, I thought you could help me give birth."⁶¹ Asking for his help does not absolve him of his crime, as being close to Yan revives her trauma:

Maria waved at Yan, Yan smiled back at her, something he hadn't done for Kiyoko, not even once. Kiyoko looked down in discomfort. She remembered all the times Yan

⁵⁹ Ibid., 291.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 293.

raped her inside the small boat that was almost sinking like the tanuki's clay boat. When she thinks that the baby that resulted from that time is now hurting her, she gets an urge to hit him.⁶²

Clearly, Kiyoko is not only a victim but also an example of sheer resilience on a greater scale – a survivor. The “tanuki's clay boat” (*tanuki no dorobune*) is an allusion to a gruesome Japanese folktale known as “Kachi-kachi yama” (The Crackling Mountain). Here, the *tanuki* (raccoon-shaped, cunning creature) is evil, and its crimes are left unavenged until it is left to sink on a small clay boat.⁶³ This tale also features a disappearing woman: an innocent wife killed by the same *tanuki* she saves. Therefore, in the quoted passage, there is an underlying reference to Yan's impunity and Kiyoko's yearning for justice. Similarly, in both the folktale and Kirino's treatment of Kiyoko's rape, there is a link between physical and symbolic violence, cynicism, and humor.

Despite how painful being close to Yan is for Kiyoko, the presence of the other women has a positive impact on her life. Her whole situation has changed now that she has other women to lean on: “I think it's best to give birth before leaving the island. There are plenty of women here that can help me. I'm also scared to give birth on board on the seas. Kiyoko felt relieved in tears and Maria held her shoulder.”⁶⁴ Kiyoko's pregnancy brings women together and evokes sympathy and solidarity. Now the other women and the Hong Kongers do the daily chores for her. Now she is being helped, as opposed to being looked down on by the Tokyoites. Kiyoko certainly uses her power to “bear and nourish human life” to get recognition and appreciation from others around her.⁶⁵ Kiyoko's desire to survive is always on her mind, thus when Maria asks her if the baby is moving:

Kiyoko decided to wear a pitiful face and hold her stomach as if in pain. She'd better use her pregnancy as a “weapon.” If she were not pregnant, she would be just the same

⁶² Ibid., 302.

⁶³ See Hatsue Nakawaki, *Chaachan no mukashi banashi* (Tokyo: Fukuinkan shoten, 2016).

⁶⁴ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 296.

⁶⁵ Rich, *Of Woman*, 13.

middle-aged woman who had been living on this desert island for a long time. And if this were the case, there is no doubt that Maria would never take her with them in their boat.⁶⁶

This is an example of Kiyoko's performance as she deliberately exaggerates and plays on her pregnancy to survive; just as she did with her sexuality, now she uses her pregnant status to her advantage. Maria replies this when Kiyoko asks who is going on board with them:

"What are you saying? I'm thinking of choosing from the weakest on. Aren't you pregnant? You are the weakest." *I made it*, Kiyoko thought. However, as soon as she gives birth, she loses the 'pregnant license.' Kiyoko had been thinking all along to give birth early and safely, yet at the calculation of having more chances of being taken on board if she is still pregnant, Kiyoko felt as if her heart was being torn apart.⁶⁷

In this excerpt, a pregnant woman is more worthy of survival than a mother. The former is perceived as vulnerable and weak, but also precious. Kirino dramatizes pregnancy as a license that is easily revoked, with her heroine stuck in the following paradox: Kiyoko could die from giving birth on the boat, but it is only because she is pregnant that she would be allowed aboard. In this way, pregnancy is interweaved with the possibility of both dying and surviving.

Kiyoko's Lack of Motherly Love

Kirino's depiction does not idealize motherly love. Childbirth is not presented as that moment when baby and mother meet or when sex is assigned, but rather it is written as a matter of survival. Kiyoko dreams that she has already given birth: "I don't care much about the face and sex of the baby, I'm just relieved because I finished without having a painful memory, and with my life intact."⁶⁸ It is clear that above anything else, Kiyoko wants

⁶⁶ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 299.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 304.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 276.

to survive the birth. To do so, Kiyoko performs the role of the vulnerable pregnant woman and widow and pretends to conform to the general expectations of soon-to-be mothers. For instance, Maria says: "The baby will come out soon. Isn't it exciting?"⁶⁹ And Kiyoko replies: "Yes, I'm looking forward to it."⁷⁰ The reader knows that her answers are premeditated and that she is not eager to meet her baby but to survive.

One of the strongest characteristics of the depiction of Kiyoko's pregnancy is that she does not feel any love for the baby inside her, which displays the mentality of a rape victim and articulates a particular mother-child relationship:

One afternoon, Kiyoko was walking around the beach while holding her big belly. Lately, the baby inside her belly had been moving so actively that if she doesn't exercise, the baby won't be quiet. Kiyoko touched her now hard lower belly with her hand. When she felt something like the baby's arm pressing from the inside through her skin, she shivered. This baby I have inside me is Yan's – that man with the yellow canine teeth – just the thought makes her cold. Kiyoko doesn't feel any love for the baby in her belly, to the point of wanting to push the baby away to someone from GODDESS right after having given birth.⁷¹

This personal confession frankly describes one possibility of what having a baby inside one's belly might feel like. We can elicit a sense of alienation between mother and baby as she feels her baby's eerie movements. The excerpt also addresses the issue of unwanted pregnancies, especially as a result of rape. The way she refers to Yan – with disgust – and her clarity about feeling no love for her baby is a depiction that moves away from the essential, ideal, natural mother, but probably is closer to experiences of maternal regret. Also, the passage shows a side of Kiyoko that wants to give the baby away to any of the other Filipina women on the island, perhaps feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility or hoping somebody else would

⁶⁹ Ibid., 301.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 300.

be willing to care for the newborn. There is more textual evidence of Kiyoko's feelings about the fetus:

“Oh, I’m hungry,” Kiyoko said while holding her belly. The fetus moved, as in agreement. She trembled at her own thought of giving birth to a bold brat like in her dream. Kiyoko didn’t have any feelings of love towards the baby inside her belly, and this surprised her. Perhaps it’s because motherly love belongs to civilization.⁷²

This is a powerful quote in which the very notion of motherly love is questioned and relativized as a social construct. *Tokyo jima* constantly probes the limits between nature and culture and questions our assumptions regarding essential or naturalized aspects of “human nature.” In this case, Kirino denaturalizes motherly love as an innate quality of all mothers. Kiyoko’s surprise at not loving the baby in her belly shows the existence of a certain social expectation regarding motherly love. The element of surprise only comes as a response to doing or feeling something unexpected – in this case, not feeling affection towards one’s baby. Kirino further points out how this love is part of civilization, making a clear case for it being socio-culturally constructed rather than naturally embedded. This point is reinforced through parody during childbirth, as all the other women sing Aretha Franklin’s classic “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman.”

Throughout her pregnancy, Kiyoko experiences dissatisfaction, anxiety, and fear. She does not love her baby and has imagined herself hurting it. Hence, Kirino sees through the naturalization process of motherly love, and her depiction of Kiyoko is a direct challenge. In terms of myth, maternal love is used to define and justify women’s role in society. As Ōhinata exposes, “the trap of the myth of maternal love” is a fabrication that relies on the idealization of the mother-child bond. Specifically, it relies on the expectations of self-sacrifice and unconditional affection, where there is no room for ambivalence or contradiction.⁷³ Within the framework of the “wise mother,” the ideal mother also seems to be at odds with the notion of choosing between being mothers and being strong independent subjects, as this is already symptomatic of women’s oppression in society. Kirino’s

⁷² Ibid., 281–282.

⁷³ Ōhinata, *Boseiai*, 2.

heroine Kiyoko not only belongs to a different time. Since she finds herself on a deserted island, she can also move away from ideals of motherhood and experience it in a tragicomic way. The setting away from civilization allows Kirino to criticize these fixed roles and social norms and ideals. Even when Kirino reconstructs an oppressive and exclusive patriarchal setting, Kiyoko never gives up on a strong, independent subjectivity that acknowledges her own contradictions.

Kiyoko's Childbirth

Kiyoko's childbirth scene is key to portray her as a "natural woman" without so-called natural instincts. The ironic comedy of the scene is attached to the unrealistic quality of the scenario. Again it is the setting of the deserted island that allows Kirino to dramatize childbirth. It is in the mode of parody that Kirino unravels the "natural woman" and "motherly love" myths, pointing to their artificiality by exposing their fictionality. She ultimately leaves the reader with an image of a natural woman that seems possible only in fiction.

The birth begins with Kiyoko's waters breaking. Kirino then describes the reactions of Ruth, Maria, Kim, and the other women. Kiyoko feels (mentally) unprepared, yet her body (re)acts. There is a strong physiological, biological, and material dimension to childbirth: "Giving birth on the beach, it is just like sea turtles, isn't it? Without being psychologically prepared, she panicked at the sudden experience of birth that came at last."⁷⁴ In comparing this experience to that of sea turtles, Kiyoko recognizes the animality of birthing. Childbirth is generally perceived as an experience that belongs to the natural world. This experience does not completely overshadow Kiyoko's rationality and interest in survival, however. Indeed, "Even with the pain of the contractions, Kiyoko is looking at Maria's face, having uninvited thoughts."⁷⁵ Her mind is occupied with speculations concerning the escape from the island. Thus, her survival drive never abandons her, not even during birth.

Kim also joins the scene. She is an experienced mother and guides Kiyoko through the breathing exercises: "Every time Kiyoko exhaled, she'd involuntarily pushed; she couldn't stop pushing down. The birth could start at any moment. Even if Kiyoko was consumed with worry, she also wanted

⁷⁴ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 308.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 307.

to free herself from her heavy belly by “expelling” the baby as fast as possible.”⁷⁶ The word *haishutsu* translates as “expel.” It is often used to refer to a discharge of fluids or the process of excreting “waste matter.” Therefore, it is possible to interpret that, from Kiyoko’s point of view, the baby is just like any other bodily fluid that needs to be “eliminated” or “released.” The emphasis on bodily fluids is significant in moving away from an ideal depiction of childbirth to an embodied one.

At this point, Kiyoko gets support from all the other women. One of them says: “I saw the head, come on, you can do it!”⁷⁷ The description builds upon the naturalness of the body and the birth: “Now Kiyoko’s arms are being supported by the seven women, and she’s about to give birth in a semi-crouching position. Kiyoko is simply giving birth like sea turtles do over the sand. They say sea turtles shed tears, but in my case only sweat drops are flowing.”⁷⁸ Once more, the allusion to sea turtles illustrates the physiology of birth and how maternal bodies are perfectly designed for the act. But there is also humor implicit in being physically sustained by seven women during birth. In this scene, humor serves as a subversive strategy that alters standard images of childbirth.

The final part of the birth’s description increases the parody-like elements as Kiyoko ends up bringing twins into the world while everyone around her sings Aretha Franklin’s “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman.” The role of this song is significant to the scene because it both entertains and adds layers of meaning regarding gender discourses. Judith Butler claims that this song suggests “that some natural potential of her biological sex is actualized by her participation in the cultural position of “women” as object of heterosexual recognition.”⁷⁹ In Butler’s consideration, the emphasis is on how the sociocultural dynamics of heterosexuality and the recognition of “woman” as object of heterosexual desire cause the effect of naturalness. Even if the song sounds like a confirmation of natural gender, in actuality, it suggests its performativity. In Butler’s words: “After all, Aretha sings, you make me feel *like* a natural woman, suggesting that this is a kind

⁷⁶ Ibid., 309.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin, eds., *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 317.

of metaphorical substitution, an act of imposture, a kind of sublime and momentary participation in an ontological illusion produced by the mundane operation of heterosexual drag.”⁸⁰ In Kirino’s scene, it is childbirth (rather than heterosexual recognition) that creates the illusion of naturalness. Kiyoko is also performing the natural woman in labor. She even says that at that moment, this song is like her life’s soundtrack, and it gives her the extra energy she needs to finish giving birth:

This song energized Kiyoko, and she finally succeeded in giving birth. Before the baby got all covered in sand, Kim picked up the baby. After a little while the baby gave her first cry. “Yes!” – All the other women gave a shout of joy. “It’s a girl, it’s a girl” – shouted Kim. You could see tears in Kim’s eyes. Some were crying in each other’s arms... Another piece of flesh covered in blood slid down in between her legs. Another one. This time it was a boy. Believe it or not, Kiyoko became a mother of twins. Contrary to her dreams, the actual babies that she gave birth to didn’t have either cuteness or cleverness, they were as ugly as baby monkeys, they were just a weak existence. And there were two of them. Kiyoko didn’t even have energy to hold them. She was simply dumbfounded. For her, they weren’t remotely cute.⁸¹

This passage exposes an idealized version of giving birth to twins as it also shows an act of sisterhood and a successful childbirth in precarious conditions. There is a divergence among the other women’s reactions, especially Kim’s and Kiyoko’s. The scene still conveys the strength and tiredness of the birthing woman, as well as the fragility of the newborn life. Kiyoko feels safe and relieved thanks to the help and support she receives from the other women. Kirino’s depiction of childbirth is closer to “a social event” rather than “solitary childbirth.”⁸² Poston explains the difference between the individual and social dimensions of childbirth: Birth is “an act of essential solitude...no one else can give birth for us when labor is upon us.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 310.

⁸² Poston, “Childbirth,” 28.

However, this essential solitude need not be loneliness. It is a question rather of whether those people who surround the woman at the moment of birth are part of the community, understanding and articulating the profundity of her feelings, or whether they are merely an audience.”⁸³ At the moment of birth, the Filipina women are supportive, yet there seems to be a wall between Kiyoko and the others since they do not have access to the depths of her feelings. Hence, in the scene, they function as community members and audience simultaneously.

Kirino places childbirth outside of technology, capitalism, and even patriarchy. In a study about “natural mothering” – that is, mothers who practice “attachment parenting” and “simple living” – Chris Bobel concludes that this movement resists capitalism and technology, but “its discourses of choice and control, deeply paradoxical at their core, fail to resist the third institution: patriarchy. The mothers’ surrender of agency to so-called instinct and a romanticized view of nature reifies an essentialist construction of womanhood.”⁸⁴ In this way, “natural mothering” accommodates patriarchy, compromising its potential for social change.

Furthermore, Kirino’s depiction of Kiyoko as a caricatured “natural mother” in *Tokyo jima* manages to undermine the three aforementioned institutions: capitalism, technology, and patriarchy. Kirino does not offer a romanticized, utopian view of nature, but rather a dystopian caricature of it and of patriarchal community.⁸⁵ Kirino is also aware of the tensions and paradoxes surrounding agency, and Kiyoko’s subjectivity suffers drastic changes throughout the novel, putting forward a more nuanced and embodied model of identity.

Despite being surrounded by other women, Kiyoko behaves differently: she is not crying tears of joy. Her inner state contrasts with the ambiance. Kiyoko is exhausted, while everyone else on the island bursts with happiness, competing to hold the two babies. Especially on a desert island where survival is always at stake, a birth is a tangible manifestation of flourishing life. Despite her lack of motherly love, Kiyoko behaves as the

⁸³ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁴ Chris Bobel, “Resisting but Not Too Much: Interrogating the Paradox of Natural Mothering,” in Andrea O’Reilly, ed., in *Maternal Theory: Essential Readings* (Toronto: Demeter Press, 2007), 782–791.

⁸⁵ Kirino Natsuo, *Hakkaten: Kirino Natsuo taironshū* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2012), 230.

children's primary caregiver once they are born. Naming babies is a ritual that symbolizes belonging to a community, yet for Kiyoko, it is part of her survival strategy: "Maria came holding both babies, one in each arm, and showed them to Kiyoko. With the lack of love for the babies she gave birth to, and to flatter Maria, Kiyoko said to her: 'What about Chiki and Chita? The girl would be Chiki, and the boy Chita. So you can be the singing godmother.'"⁸⁶ This causes great laughter among the women, who then join in and sing "Chiquitita." Afterward, "Kiyoko felt relieved and closed her eyes. Now that she's the godmother, Maria wouldn't possibly abandon us, mother and child. Even so, how would I feed the twins?"⁸⁷ Kiyoko continues to be calculating with an eye towards survival. Even after giving birth to the babies, maternal love is not natural to Kiyoko. However, she is still part of the mother-child dyad and takes the responsibility of feeding them.

The remaining Hong Kongers go close to Odaiba (the island's harbor), risking their lives to bring fruits and potatoes for Kiyoko. Thanks to this, her breastmilk is abundant. Kiyoko breastfeeds her babies: "Chita is crying, Kiyoko opens her eyes, without really wanting to. She wanted to sleep some more, but there's nothing to do, she lets her son suck her shriveled breast."⁸⁸ Kiyoko does not reflect on the act of breastfeeding. It is not depicted as a pleasurable experience or as a way to strengthen the bond between mother and child. In the novel, breastfeeding is an intrinsic part of the new mother's role, who seems to be going through the motions in a mechanical way. Suddenly, Kim comes and interrupts her. She says that the chance to get on the boat is now or never, anticipating the novel's dénouement. Still holding and breastfeeding her son, Kiyoko goes with her.

All this time, Kiyoko expected Maria to decide who gets on the boat, but surprisingly, Mun (one of the Hong Kongers) and Kim decide to go ahead and escape behind Maria's back. Mun does not want Kiyoko aboard with them, but Kim cannot bear the thought of leaving the children behind: "Kim pointed to the babies and desperately protested."⁸⁹ So it is Kim's love and care for the children that prevents her from going alone. Kim cannot abandon them, and thus, Kirino depicts a strong bond between children and a non-biological mother figure. This is also significant with regards to Kirino's

⁸⁶ Kirino, *Tokyo*, 311.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 316.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 317.

denaturalization of motherhood. In the end, however, the Tokyoites, who want to prevent everyone from escaping the island, stop the would-be fugitives in a deadly confrontation. Mun dies, but Kim, Kiyoko, and her newborn daughter Chiki manage to escape. Chita is snatched away by Mori Gunshi, and this is how Kiyoko is forever separated from him.

The birth of twins is noteworthy as it serves to disturb clear boundaries. In the epilogue, the twins share their stories, and the reader is left with two parallel worlds: Chita in Tokyo Island and Chiki in the city of Tokyo. Chita is reared as Tokyo Island's Prince by Mori Gunshi and Maria, while Kiyoko and Kim raise Chiki. On the one hand, in Tokyo Island, Kiyoko is the disappearing mother featured in the myth sustaining the island's patriarchal society. Through storytelling, Maria reenacts their birth scene, singing "You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman" and "Chiquitita," and explains that a mother would never abandon her son – an essentializing view of the ideal mother – so they conclude that Kiyoko and the others must have died while escaping. On the other hand, Kiyoko tells Chiki that Chita died soon after she gave birth to him. It seems that, in order to grant Kiyoko an independent survival, it is first necessary to cut the bond with the masculine power of the island, and thus she is forced to leave her son behind. It was not a choice, since he was snatched away, yet she did choose to live on and keep the hope for the future alive. Through this demythologizing narrative, Kirino lets Kiyoko survive and embody an alternative sexual and maternal femininity.

Conclusion

Tokyo jima's setting is fantastic and imaginary, yet its narrative deals with very real themes. This analysis has shown that there is critical social commentary and dramatization of gender issues underneath humorous and entertaining scenes. Indeed, Kirino's allegorical fiction makes us think about sociocultural and political issues in contemporary Japan in connection to the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, race, and class. This reading focused on representations of embodied experiences (such as pregnancy, childbirth, and mothering), taking into consideration the precariat framework and feminist conceptions of survival. As a result, this study revealed how *Tokyo jima* offers a demythologization of the patriarchal maternal myth through striking depictions of sexuality, pregnancy, lack of motherly love, and childbirth. In so doing, Kirino articulates a feminist, embodied survival via Kiyoko as she moves away from essentialized, naturalized, and idealized versions of femininity.

The novel does depict – as secondary yet important characters – homosexual couples, experiences of same-sex desire, as well as characters that seem to be gender-nonconforming and moments of gender-bending. The particular setting of a desert island with a group of men surrounding one woman makes it possible to grasp the pervasiveness of normative heterosexuality, while some characters challenge norms prescribed by the “heterosexual matrix.”⁹⁰ The focus on Kiyoko’s gendered subjectivity and her embodied experiences related to parenting serves to reveal attributes of “women” – as a sociocultural construct – instead of making universal, homogenous, essentialist, and naturalizing claims about womanhood. Kiyoko challenges any ideal or archetype. She is different from what is usual or expected from a woman, and her manipulative, selfish qualities make it hard for both characters in the novel and readers to like her and connect with her.

There is no doubt that Kiyoko’s wish to survive drives the plot of the story. *Tokyo jima* is a parody of a castaway tale. Nature in the desert island is depicted as a tamed caricature, and thus, the novel’s take on survival is more figurative than literal.⁹¹ In effect, Kirino states that she “wanted to ask how do we continue to live without getting crushed in today’s society.”⁹² A question that more than ten years after *Tokyo jima*’s publication remains relevant and timely. Both the literary work and this academic study are concerned with how to continue living under patriarchal systems of oppression and exclusion, what are our hopes for the future, and how can the act of survival be feminist. For these questions, *Tokyo jima* presents embodied survival and demythologization as possible answers.

⁹⁰ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 24.

⁹¹ Kirino, *Hakkaten*, 230.

⁹² Ibid.

MAKING MOVIES FOR THE CHINESE: JAPANESE DIRECTORS AT MANYING¹

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The most important task is to cultivate the national consciousness among Chinese people in Manchukuo...They want to be entertained through watching movies rather than being imposed with national concepts. When they find Manying movies interesting and enjoy watching them, they would follow national policy.”

—Muto Fumio, Head of Information Office
of Manchukuo State Council²

“Manying cinema has made a major mistake due to the non-action of Japanese film makers who never truly explored what kind of movies that Manchurians liked...Now Manying must make films that the Manchurians enjoy. There is absolutely no need to make films that exoticize Manchukuo for Japan.”

—Amakasu Masahiko,
Managing Director of Manying³

Overview

In August 1937, Japanese authorities in Manchukuo established the Manchurian Film Association to serve Japan’s propaganda needs during its full invasion of China. Manying cinema – most of which resulted from co-production between Japanese filmmakers and their Chinese disciples –

¹ Note: Some material from this article is drawn from Yuxin Ma, “Collaborating with Japanese in Making Entertainment Movies for Chinese Viewers: Chinese Filmmakers at Manchurian Film Association,” *The Chinese Historical Review* 27/2 (2020): 119–145.

² Muto Fumio, “Manchuria Becomes One of the Film Countries in the World” [Manchu ha sekai ichi no eigakoku ni naru], *Eiga junpo*, August 1, 1942.

³ Amakasu Masahiko, “Making Film for Manchurian People” [Manjin no tameini eiga wo tsukuru], *Eiga junpo*, August 1, 1942.

served the dual goals of promoting Manchukuo national policy and competing with Shanghai movies for the Chinese film market. Manying Japanese directors failed to reach either goal in 1938–1939 due to their misunderstanding of Manchukuo national policy and their ignorance of Chinese culture, local customs, and Chinese movie aesthetics and tastes. As Manying focused more on making Chinese entertainment in 1940–1943, Japanese directors localized their movies' content and forms by working with Chinese scriptwriters and imitating popular Shanghai movie genres. Such efforts improved their movies' reception in the context of Japanese control of film in occupied China.

Introduction

There were two models of film industry around the world in the early twentieth century. One was the commercial business model, represented by Hollywood studios, which controlled film production, delivery, and exhibition as a vertical integration for maximum profits.⁴ The other was the European model of using film for cultural projects. In France, the Lumière brothers made films to record people's lives. In Germany after World War I, the state set up a German film industry to propagandize its national policies.⁵ Imperial Japan was skillful in deploying film to control its image throughout its territory. Manchukuo (1932–1945), as the final stage of Japanese imperialism, was a system of foreign political occupation which combined Japanese rule with the use of force to control the multi-ethnic peoples in Northeast China. When Japan invaded China in July 1937, Japanese authorities in Manchukuo established the Manchurian Film Association (滿洲映畫協會 *Manshū eiga kyōkai*, Jp: *Man'ei*; *Manzhou yinghua xiehui*, Ch: *Manying*, August 1937–August 1945) to promote film production efficiency and serve Japan's propaganda needs during its full invasion of the country. On October 7, 1937, Manchukuo Film Law (映畫法) made the state directly manage, inspect, and promote films produced by Manying. Like the Nazi-controlled UFA (Universum Film-Aktien Gesellschaft), Manying was expected to make *kokusaku*, “national policy” films, for Manchukuo. Peter High, who studied Japanese national policy films from the 1932–1945 period, defined *kokusaku* in three ways: (1) “exalt the spirit of the nation,” (2)

⁴ Douglas Gomery, *Movie History: A Survey* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company Press, 1991), 7.

⁵ Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (Eaglewood, NJ: Englewood Cliffs Press, 1985), 15.

“stimulate national industry and research,” and (3) “provide wholesome public entertainment.”⁶ By 1939, the entire Japanese film industry was reorganized according to national policy principles, and all Japanese film workers joined the Japan Film Personnel Association.⁷

Although Manchukuo national policy films served Japan’s wartime needs, Manchukuo’s national policy was not identical to Japan’s. These Manchukuo films were supposed to promote state construction, ethnic harmony, and the special relationship between Manchukuo and Japan. Nominally as an independent state, Manchukuo struggled to mold a nation out of its multi-ethnic peoples. However, Japanese occupiers retained full sovereignty and extended their control beyond the military and economic dimensions into the cultural sphere. As a result, the art and literature portrayed nuanced differences as Japanese policy in Manchukuo changed in the following timeline: (1) promoting the Confucian kingly way and ethnic harmony to counter Chinese republicanism and nationalism in 1932–1937; (2) advocating national construction and Manchukuo’s special friendship with Japan under the “same virtue, same mind” in 1937–1939; (3) bringing Manchukuo under the protection of Amaterasu and Japan in 1939–1941; and (4) mobilizing Manchukuo to support Japan’s “Holy War” during 1941–1945.

Film rationalization in Manchukuo, through Manying, took place earlier than in Japan. The special issue of *Manchuria* in July 1939 stated that Manying would “carry on enterprises’ relating to the production of educational, cultural and entertainment films, with a view to contributing to the exaltation of the national spirit and to the promotion of national education.”⁸ Beyond such nationalistic claims, the business practices of Manying resembled Hollywood: monopolized profits from producing, delivering, and exhibiting films through vertical integration of the distribution and exhibition networks and by sending mobile projection teams to remote places.⁹

⁶ Peter B High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years’ War, 1931–1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 61, 293.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “The Manchuria Motion Pictures Corporation: Its Structure and Work,” *Manchuria* 4/15 (1939), 5–7.

⁹ Michael Baskett, *Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 32; Sookyeong Hong, “Between Ideology

Anika Culver found that arts and literature in Manchukuo were mobilized to create a unique space for cooperation among ethnicities.¹⁰ In her recent co-edited volume, she argued that Manchukuo, as a cultural and linguistic borderland, witnessed a transnational literary production in a colonial contact zone. The outcome was affected by censorship, Japanese propaganda, and the market.¹¹ Manying film production was another site of cultural cooperation between Japanese and Chinese in Manchukuo – most Japanese film specialists were recruited from major studios in Japan, and they trained Chinese into actors, directors, and cinema technicians and supervised them during production.¹²

Manying made three types of films: entertainment films (*gomin eiga*), enlightenment films (*keimin eiga*), and newsreels (*jiji eiga*). During its eight years of existence, it produced one hundred and seventeen feature movies (including unfinished ones), both for entertainment and to promote national policy, as well as more than two hundred educational and documentary

and Spectatorship: The ‘Ethnic Harmony’ of the Manchuria Motion Picture Corporation, 1937–45,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 2/1 (2013): 116–138.

¹⁰ Annika A. Culver, “The Legitimization of a Multi-ethnic Literary Culture in Manchukuo,” in *Glorify the Empire: Japanese Avant-Garde Propaganda in Manchukuo* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 168–92.

¹¹ Anika Culver, “Introduction: ‘Manchukuo Perspectives,’ or ‘Collaboration’ as a Transcendence of Literary, National, and Chronological Boundaries” in Anika Culver and Norman Smith, eds., *Manchukuo Perspectives: Transnational Approach to Literary Production* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2019), 2–4.

¹² Wang Yanhua, “Manying yu dongbei lunxianshiqi de Riben zhiminhua dianying yanjiu – yi daoyan he zuopin wei zhongxin” [A Study of Manying and Japanese Colonial Films in Occupied Manchukuo: Film Directors and Their Works] (Ph. D diss., Northeast Normal University, 2009); Wang Hong, “Shijie de yingxiang – ‘Manying’ lunkao” [Disloyal Images – A Study of Manying] (Ph. D diss., Northeast Normal University, 2009); Yuxin Ma, “Public Performance and Private Choices: Manying Actresses as New Women,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 26/1 (2019): 15–42; Yuxin Ma, “Chinese Cinema Technicians at Manying: Professionalism Triumphed Ideologies,” *Virginia Review of Asian Studies* 22 (2020): 115–136.

films.¹³ Only Japanese directors were allowed to make enlightenment movies and documentaries, and they also monopolized the production of early Manying feature movies. Chinese directors did not appear until early 1940. Even then, they could only make entertainment movies.

Scholars in China and Japan paid close attention to the function of propaganda in Manying movies, while those in the English-speaking world focused on Manying movies' commercial success, artistic details, ideological ambiguity, and the incompatibility of their cinematic narrative and language.¹⁴ Michael Baskett studied the transnational film culture in imperial Japan and found that it gained reciprocal participation because it circulated an "attractive" and "modernist" vision of the Japanese empire and rendered Japan's culture and ideology appealing.¹⁵ Manying film production also served Japanese imperialist interests by circulating a modernist image of Manchukuo and a bright view of the Chinese living in co-prosperity, ethnic harmony, and material abundance. But what made Manying movies special was that they were primarily in Chinese and for a Chinese target audience in Manchukuo, not a Japanese one.

This article studies Japanese directors at Manying who were tasked with producing national policy films for Manchukuo and entertaining Chinese movie viewers. The primary sources are from Manchukuo's print media, such as *Shengjing Times* (*Shengjing shibao*), *Great Unity Herald* (*Datong bao*), *Binjiang Daily* (*Binjiang ribao*), and leading bilingual film magazine *Manzhou yinghua* (renamed *Dianying huabao* in June 1941).¹⁶

¹³ Furuichi Masako, "*Manying*" *dianying yanjiu* [A Study of 'Manying' Cinema] (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2010), 1.

¹⁴ E. Mei, "Commerce and Culture: The Manchukuo Film Industry from 1937–45" (MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2009); Ying Guo, "'Making Dreams with the Enemy' Chinese Collaborationist Filmmakers in Manchukuo, 1937–45" (MA thesis, The University of British Columbia, 2018); Yue Chen, "Between Sovereignty and Coloniality – Manchukuo Literature and Film" (Ph. D diss., University of Oregon, 2018); and Hong, "Between Ideology and Spectatorship," 116–138.

¹⁵ Michael Baskett, *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 5, 8.

¹⁶ *Manzhou yinghua* was Manying's institutional magazine for advertising and popularizing its production. It began in December 1937 with two versions with different content: the Chinese version was *Manzhou yinghua*

Since most Japanese directors hesitated to write about their Manying past in postwar years, and Japanese authorities largely destroyed archives of Manchukuo after Japan's defeat, Manchukuo print media still preserves the vestiges of Manying's film production and cultural activities.

This article addresses questions such as: Who were those Japanese directors, and what brought them to Manying? How did they produce movies with the competing purposes of serving Japanese imperialism and entertaining the Chinese? Did their professional experiences in Japan help their film directing at Manying, and how did they work with Chinese filmmakers? How did they negotiate the cultural and aesthetic differences between Japanese and Chinese cinema and meet the Manying and the Chinese film market demands? And how did the Chinese film world respond to Japanese directors' movies over time? The study sheds light on how colonial cultural producers negotiated between the colonialist culture and the culture of the colonized in finding appropriate artistic forms to convey the fixed ideology of the colonialist state while being accepted by the colonized, and how they entertained the colonized without contradicting the culture of the colonialist state.

Japanese Filmmakers at Manying

After Japan invaded North China on July 7, 1937, Japanese authorities immediately sent cinematographers to the Film Institute of the Southern Manchuria Railway Company to travel with the Japanese Kwantung Army to North China and make warfront "documentaries."¹⁷ As a

edited by Jiang Feng, proclaiming to construct a distinct Manchukuo film culture; the Japanese version *Manshū eiga* was edited by Iida Hideshi 飯田秀世, and was more like a colonial magazine introducing metropolitan Japanese film culture to Japanese in Manchukuo. The two versions merged into a bilingual version with most content in Chinese in September 1939 under the editorship of a Manying Chinese employee Wang Ze. In November 1940, Manying turned the magazine to a commercially successful publisher Manzhou zazhisshe. In June 1941, the magazine assumed a more authentic Chinese title *Dianying huabao*.

¹⁷ Hu Chang and Gu Quan, *Manying: guoce dianying mianmian guan* [Aspects of National Policy Films at Manying] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 62; Sato Tadao, *Paosheng zhongde dianying* [Cinema and the Rubble of Gunfire], trans. Yue Yuankun (Guangzhou: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 2016), 81.

result, the Manchukuo government and Southern Manchuria Railway rushed to found Manying in August 1937. They gathered some Japanese cultural workers in Manchukuo from the Information Office of the State Council, the *Manshū shinbun* (Manchurian News) agency, the Concordia Society, and the Department of Culture and Education, and brought others from Japanese film companies. In addition, a few former Purokino (Proletarian Film league) filmmakers in Japan who coerced *tenko* joined the Manying documentary division.¹⁸ By September 10, 1937, Manying had one hundred employees. Some were professional film workers, while others merely showed an interest in cinema.¹⁹

From 1938 to 1939, Japanese screenwriters, directors, and film technicians dominated Manying's feature movie production. The urgent need to produce national policy films made Manying use amateur Japanese filmmakers in Manchukuo to direct its earliest feature movies, probably inspired by the success of Atugawa Kozo at Mantetsu Film Institute. The Department of Security commissioned Manying to produce a movie to promote conscription at Manchukuo in December 1937. State Council Japanese writer Naka Yoshinori 仲禮賢 wrote the draft, while Tsuboi Atae 坪井與, a journalist at *Manshū shinbun*, revised it into the script *The Ambition* (*Zhuangzhi zhutian*), which he also directed into Manying's first national policy movie.²⁰ Tsuboi Atae had no filming experience and let cinematographer Ōmori Ihachi 大森伊八 take control of the camera. They relied on two assistants – Wang Wentao 王文濤, who graduated from Meiji University, and Yahara Reizaburō 矢原禮三郎, who knew Shanghai cinema well – to communicate with Chinese actors who received training at the Manying Actor Training Center.²¹ The war with China and the Japanese control of film in Manchukuo had sharply reduced the supply of Shanghai movies there in the second half of 1937. Chinese moviegoers in Manchukuo had high expectations for Manying movies²² yet were greatly disappointed

¹⁸ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 124–125.

¹⁹ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 31.

²⁰ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 84.

²¹ *Shengjing shibao* [Shengjing Times], December 19, 1937; Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 44.

²² “Manzhoukuo zhi dianying-xu” [Cinema in Manchukuo-Continuation], “Yinghai yushen” [The Screen], *Shengjing shibao*, December 5, 1937. After September 18, 1931, Shanghai films with “anti-Japanese, anti-Manchukuo

by *The Ambition* because of its propaganda of the “paradise of kingly way,” “harmony of five ethnicities,” and “friendship between Japan and Manchukuo.”²³ Inspired by two famous comedians in Shanghai cinema (the overweight Yin Xiuqin and skinny Han Langen), Matsumoto Mitsutsune 松本光庸 made the first Manying entertainment movie, *The Birth of A Star* (*Mingxing de dansheng*), based on the studio’s first recruitment of student actors, with Yin Baoyuan 尹寶元 as his assistant. The movie’s selling point was lead actor He Qiren, who weighed three hundred and sixty pounds. Thirty-four additional actors and actresses displayed their talents on screen.²⁴ Due to promotion in print media, Chinese movie fans in Manchukuo swarmed into theaters to watch the movie.²⁵ For more than two weeks, *Shangjing shibao* carried readers’ critiques of the movie’s plain plot, insufficient cinematic techniques, violations of local customs, and actors’ and actresses’ performance.²⁶

Japanese film critic Yahara Reizaburō also directed a romance movie, *The Jigsaw Puzzle* (七巧圖 *Qiqiaotu*), scripted by former Manchu royal Yu Zhenmin 裕振民 and with Yu Mengfang 於夢堃 as the assistant.²⁷ Yu graduated from Beijing Railway University and was a former lecturer at a Japanese girls’ high school.²⁸ Yahara came to China as a child and studied Russian literature for three years. He had been impressed by the progressive ideas and positive social impact of Cai Chusheng’s *Song of the Fishermen* (*Yuguangqu*, 1932) and described the excitement of Chinese audiences

content were prohibited by Kwantung army in Manchukuo. By December 1937, 30% of the movies shown in Manchukuo were from Japan, 30% from the United States, 25% from China, and 15% were from other nations.

²³ Zhang Yi, *Manying shimo* [The Beginning and the End of Manying] (Changchun: Changchunshi Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 2006), 18.

²⁴ “Xinpian kaipai zaji” [On the New Movies in Production], “Yinghai yushen,” *Shengjing shibao*, December 5, 1937.

²⁵ Zhang Yi, *Manying shimo*, 19.

²⁶ “Guangyu Mingxing zhi dansheng de piping” [A Critique on *The Birth of a Star*], *Shengjing shibao*, May 4–16, 1938.

²⁷ *Shengjing shibao*, May 15, 1938 and May 25, 1938; “Manying xinpian *Qiqiaotu* kaipai ji’ nian sheying” [A Picture Taken Upon the Beginning of the Shooting of Manying New Film *The Jigsaw Puzzle*], *Shengjing shibao*, March 8, 1938.

²⁸ *Shengjing shibao*, December 12, 1937.

watching anti-Japanese films in his article “The Spirit of Chinese Cinema.”²⁹ Yahara had attributed the essence of Chinese cinema to rising Chinese nationalism, the humorous representation of loneliness, and mellow lyricism.³⁰ In *Manshū eiga*, he criticized Japanese movies for failing to effectuate positive social changes and Japanese actors for being hedonistic.³¹ When he was invited to work for Manying in late 1937, Yahara was uninterested in making national policy films, so he directed Chinese love story *The Jigsaw Puzzle* instead. The movie was not well received,³² but it was shown in North China through Manying’s exchange network with Xinmin Film Association in Beiping.³³ At Manying, Yahara wrote articles in *Manshū eiga* introducing Shanghai cinema.³⁴ Also at Manying, Tsuboi Atae directed *Looking for Mother* (*Wanli xunmu*), with Wang Wentao as his assistant, in May 1938. It tells the story of a child sold by his evil uncle to a woodcutter family in Northern Manchuria and tries to find his biological mother.³⁵

Chinese audiences were disturbed by the Japanese bias, poor film techniques, and violations of Chinese culture and customs of early Manying feature films. For example, in those movies, the simple Japanese phrase “Gomen nasai” was rigidly translated into “*duibuqi*” in Chinese, which made Chinese viewers mock Manying movies as “*duibuqi*” films.³⁶ Manying’s dire need for professional directors led it to recruit from studios in Japan such as Shōchiku, Nikkatsu, and Shinkō. When Negishi Kan’ichi 根岸寛 – the father of Nikkatsu Tamagawa studio, known for his many humanist war movies –

²⁹ Yahara Reizaburō, “Shina no eiga no seishin” [The Spirit of Chinese Cinema], *Eiga hyoron* (September 1937).

³⁰ Zhang Quan, “Rijuqu dongfang zhimin zhuyi dianyingzhan de huan mie-yi Manzhouguo lisan dianying ren wei zhongxin” (November 12, 2015), 5 (accessed May 10, 2021, <http://twcinema.tnus.edu.tw/en>).

³¹ “Cong Zhongguo dianying tandao Riben dianying,” *Manshū eiga* 2/1 (January 1938), 16–17.

³² Xinxian, “Ping Manying xinpian *Qiqiaotu*” [On Manying’s New Film *The Jigsaw Puzzle*], *Great Unity Herald*, June 12, 1938.

³³ *Shengjing shibao*, May 15 and May 25, 1938.

³⁴ “Zhi’na yinghua jie jinkuang,” *Manshū eiga* 3/7 (July 1939), 53.

³⁵ *Manzhou yinghua* 2/2 (February 1938) and 2/5 (May 1938); “Wanli xunmu benshi” [Story of Wangli Xunmu], *Shengjing shibao*, May, 8, 1938.

³⁶ *Shengjing shibao*, July 24, 1938 and September 4, 1938.

joined Manying as production chief on June 20, 1938, Makino Mitsuo 牧野満男 followed him as vice production chief.³⁷ Some professional filmmakers, cinematographers, and art designers also followed him to Manying.³⁸ Tsuboi Atae remembered that most Japanese filmmakers were either colleagues of Negishi and Makino at Nikkatsu studios or their acquaintances in the Japanese film world. Among directors, these included Mizugae Ryūichi 水ヶ江龍一 from Shōchiku, Ueno Shinji 上野真嗣 from Shinkō, and Yamauchi Eizō 山内英三 from Nikkatsu. Among major scriptwriters, there was Araki Yoshirō (荒木芳郎) from Nikkatsu, Nakamura Noriyuki 中村能行 from Shōchiku, and Takayanagi Haruo 高柳春雄 from Shinkō.³⁹ Meanwhile, at the Manying cultural film division, Takahara Fujirō transferred to produce feature movies.

With the arrival of professional filmmakers from Japan, Makino Mitsuo told Manchukuo press in August 1938 that Manying would make more entertainment movies for Chinese viewers, hoping to rescue its reputation.⁴⁰ Since the Japanese film industry was still thriving in June 1938, joining Manying for Japanese filmmakers was more like seeking refuge rather than opportunities.⁴¹ Most Japanese directors who joined were not first class. An exception was Suzuki Shigeyoshi 鈴木重吉 (1900–1976), who had directed the influential silent film *What Made Her Do It* (1930). Makino told Chinese theater managers that they could make a profit from the movies Manying made. He informed them that Manying was making *Melody of Intimacy* (*Zhixinqu*), *Honeymoon Express* (*Miyue kuaiche*), and *Garden of Maidens* (*Chunü de huayuan*).⁴²

Japanese directors from major studios in Japan lacked the linguistic skill and the knowledge of Chinese culture to produce movies for Chinese.⁴³ Instead, they communicated with the actors through their Chinese assistants, who were fluent in Japanese, and relied on their filming experiences in Japan to make national policy films for Manchukuo and entertainment movies for

³⁷ Manying's early production chief Toshiya Kumiya joined North China Film founded by Yu Zhenmin. Sato, *Paosheng zhong*, 85.

³⁸ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 39–40.

³⁹ *Shengjing shibao*, October 16, 1938.

⁴⁰ *Shengjing shibao*, August 28, 1938.

⁴¹ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 85; High, *The Imperial Screen*, 273.

⁴² “Quannei shangxia zuotanhui” [Roundtable Within the Movie Circle], *Shengjing shibao*, September 18, 1938.

⁴³ Wang Yanhua, “Manying yu dongbei,” 35–78.

the Chinese. As a result, some struggled with Manchukuo national policy and often misinterpreted China, while others remade popular Nikkatsu B-movies with Chinese dialogue due to a lack of Chinese scripts. Still, others imitated Shanghai or Hollywood movies.⁴⁴ For instance, Manying's *National Law Was Selfless* was a remake of Nikkatsu's *The Prosecutor and His Sister* (1937) and *Tears of a Loving Mother* based on *Three Mothers* (1930).⁴⁵

The second wave of professional Japanese filmmakers came at the end of 1939 when Manying completed its new structures and became the state-of-the-art film company in Asia with the most advanced technology and facilities. According to issue number 64 of *Man'ei News*, Manying had 690 employees by December 1, 1939, including 142 actors.⁴⁶ On March 6 that year, Japan issued the Film Law, which listed many "musts" for Japanese filmmakers. Article 9 introduced pre-production censorship by installing script-censors for the "protection of film producers," while Article 5 demanded that directors, actors, and cameramen be tested for aptitude and registered with the legally designated agency of their profession. Those tests probed the political thinking of the applicants, as well as their citizenship and cinematic knowledge. The Greater Japan Film Association administered the certification. The law spelled out strict regulations for theater owners to no movie screening for more than three hours. Articles 12 and 16 restricted the distribution and exhibition of foreign films and made it impossible for American movies to be aired in Japan, while the Currency Exchange Law made it harder to buy films.⁴⁷ Four film companies' news sections merged into Nihon News Film Company (*Nichiei*) in April 1940.⁴⁸ Discouraged by the state's film industry regulation, some Japanese filmmakers were attracted to Manying, which promised better income, greater artistic freedom, and advanced technology. Director Ōya Tashio from Toho, some scriptwriters, and many film technicians flocked to Manying in 1939.⁴⁹

The third wave of Japanese experts came in 1942, when the ongoing Pacific War exhausted Japanese resources at home and the shortage of film stock led to a sharp decline in film production and the unemployment of

⁴⁴ Baskett, *The Attractive Empire*, 83.

⁴⁵ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 70.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 96.

⁴⁹ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 89.

many professional filmmakers. Yet Manying had entered its most productive years and even established a film academy. Amakasu, the new managing director of Manying, hired some top Japanese scriptwriters. These included Yagi Hotairō 八木保太郎, known for his humanist and artistic scripts. Yagi replaced Makino as the director of entertainment movies in June 1942. Tsuboi Atae remembered Yagi as a hardworking person who arrived early to take care of everything in his department. Consequently, all employees in the production department became more disciplined, ambitious, and hardworking.⁵⁰ Manying Film Academy attracted the famous director Kimura Sotoji 木村莊十二 to be its full-time professor since his dream of establishing a film academy in Japan could not be realized during wartime.⁵¹ Tazuko Sakane 坂根田鶴子, a female student of Kenji Mizoguchi 溝口健二 and the first female director in Japan, joined Manying's enlightenment movie department.⁵²

The last group of Japanese filmmakers arrived at Manying in May 1945 to avoid air raids in Tokyo. Famous cinematographer Sugiyama Kōhei 杉山公平 trained Chinese assistants, including Li Guanghui.⁵³ Famous director Uchida Tomu 内田吐夢 and animator Mochinanga Tadahito 持永只仁 also went to Manying.⁵⁴ Most of them joined other Japanese who traveled with the Northeast Film Company to Northern Manchuria before the Chinese civil war. Mochinanga took apart and reassembled special cameras for making cartoons and produced a short political satire of Chiang Kai-shek called *Wengzhong zuobie* (*Catch the Turtle in a Jar*, 1948) trained the first generation of animators for the new China.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 39.

⁵¹ Kimura Sotoji was a director of leftwing tendency drams in 1930 and led a strike against Shino Kinema in 1931 and departed with 30 members. Later, he moved to the right and was an active participant in Japan Film Association. He made war documentary for Toho, such as *Yangtse River Fleet* (Yasuko Kantai, 1938) *Naval Bomber Squadron* (Kaigun Bakugekitai).

⁵² Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 39.

⁵³ Lu Ren, "Zhuming sheyingshi jian daoyan Li Guanghui" [Famous Cinematographer and Firector Li Guanghui], *Changchun wenshi ziliao* 2 (1986): 73–139.

⁵⁴ Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 39–43.

⁵⁵ Nan Longrui, "Tadahito Mochinanga and Chinese Animation," *Contemporary Cinema*, 56–60.

Lost Directing Manying Movies: Japanese Directors in 1938-1939

Japanese directors at Manying were influenced by the film language of their colleagues in Japan, Japanese ideology and censorship in Manchukuo, and the company's production policy. Starting in the mid-1930s, some directors in Japan switched from military films to national policy films with Japanese civilians as the central figures, emphasizing emigration to Manchuria as Japan's solution to the agrarian crisis. Films with the happy endings of Japanese emigration to Manchuria included Ozu's *Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Clan*, Shimazu's *A Brother and his Younger Sister*, and Franck and Itami's *The New Earth*. Unfortunately, those movies misleadingly represented Manchuria as vast stretches of fertile land where tractors were used for farming to encourage Japanese settlement.⁵⁶ Similar films were continually made in Japan during Manying's existence, including Toyoda's *Ohinata Mura* (Toho 1940) and Kurata's *A Vast and Fertile Land* (Yokudo Manri, Nikkatsu, 1940). Both suggested that the wildland in Manchuria could be tamed for wet rice cultivation.⁵⁷

Japanese directors at Manying contributed to a discourse that portrayed the Japanese as an integral part of Manchuria and brought modernity when native Chinese governments seemed incapable of doing so.⁵⁸ From 1937 to 1939, Manying focused heavily on producing cultural films and documentaries since its Chinese actors were still under training, professional directors were lacking, and the company had only one temporary studio with poor facilities. Overall, Manying produced a total of sixty cultural films and only 17 feature movies.⁵⁹ Those cultural films and documentaries were mostly in Japanese and Chinese, with the Japanese ones aimed at attracting Japanese at home to Manchukuo with depictions of abundant resources, rich cultures and interesting customs, and rapid modern development. Cultural films and documentaries in Chinese had the goal of educating Chinese about Manchukuo, promoting conscription, and introducing modern Japan. Some bilingual enlightenment films preached the

⁵⁶ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 268.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 268–270.

⁵⁸ Rana Mitter, "Evil Empire?: Competing Construction of Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria, 1928–1937," in Li Narangoa and Robert Cribb, eds., *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895–1945* (London: Routledge, 2003), 146–147.

⁵⁹ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 58–61.

unity of Japan and Manchukuo, the harmony of five ethnic groups (*gozoku kyowa*), and the spirit of national construction.

By making feature movies at Manying, some Japanese directors committed to constructing New Asia and building Sino-Japanese fraternity, while others tried to entertain Chinese audiences without conflicting with Manying's mission. Most of the early Manying national policy films were commissioned by the Manchukuo government to praise its army, police, and judiciary. Such films aligned with Manchukuo official discourse, highlighting the country's modern construction, good social order, improved lives, and ethnic harmony. Most early national policy films are no longer extant, but film literature preserves their plots, promotional campaigns, and feedback. Amateur director Tsuboi Atae's *The Ambition* (1938) was about a Chinese rural youth whose life was disturbed by local bandits; he joined the Manchukuo army to round up outlaws and defend local order to unite with his fiancé.⁶⁰ State Council and Security officials attended its premiere, and *Shengjing shibao* carried the recommendation letter from the Minister of Security, who praised the movie for "lifting the national spirit and popularizing military knowledge."⁶¹ Professional director Uesuna Taikura's 上砂泰藏 *Rainbow over Continent* was a joint production of Manying and its branch company Xinmin Film Association in Beiping, founded in February 1938. The story was about an honest Manchukuo policeman whose many good deeds contrasted with those of the corrupt police of the old days before the founding of Manchukuo. *Shengjing shibao* advertised the movie for "promoting proper behaviors" and "entertaining people with a pure love story."⁶²

Mizugae Ryūichi was from Shōchiku studio, known for its American-style family dramas and *shoshimin-geki* movies on the lives of salarymen. When he arrived at Manying in October 1938, he struggled to direct national policy films. His first movie, *National Law Was Selfless* (*Guofa wusi*), was commissioned by the Supreme Court of Xinjing. Mizugae borrowed the story of the Nikkatsu B-movie *The Prosecutor and His Sister* (1937) to praise the integrity of a Manchukuo prosecutor.⁶³ *Shengjing shibao*

⁶⁰ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 44.

⁶¹ "'Zhuangzhi zhutian' tuijian shu" [Recommendation for *The Ambition*], *Shengjing shibao*, April 10, 1938.

⁶² Wang Hong, "Shijie de yingxiang," 43; Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 46.

⁶³ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 85

promoted the movie by carrying the Chinese lyrics of its theme song.⁶⁴ His next movie, *The Flower at the National Border* (*Guojing zhihua*), was a national defense movie which distorted the Nomonhan Incident (Kwantung army's invasion of Soviet-controlled Outer Mongolia) of summer 1939 into a foreign invasion and praised Mongolian youth in the Manchukuo army who risked their lives defending the border. Mizugae also directed *The Opium Addict* (*Yan gui*), a story about a Manchukuo policeman who unknowingly kills his father, an opium-smuggler, while suppressing the opium trade.⁶⁵ Besides making national policy films, Mizugae also remade Nikkatsu B-movie *Three Mothers* (1930) into *Tears of a Loving Mother* (*Cimulei*), an ode to maternal love.⁶⁶ That movie was better received than his national policy films and helped Mizugae see that overt propaganda did not work.

One national policy film that received much attention and investment from Manying was *Dawn's Light* (*Liming shuguang*) of 1940, dedicated to Kwantung soldiers and Manchukuo policemen who sacrificed their lives rounding up bandits in Andong. In the spirit of Article Seven of the Film Law, Manchukuo Prime Minister Zhang Jinghui commissioned this movie from Manying to commemorate the fallen Japanese soldiers who founded Manchukuo.⁶⁷ Also, the Kwantung Army, the National Security Department, and the Concordia Society assisted with the film, and famous scriptwriter Aramaki Yoshio revised the scenes five times. Manying not only deployed its best actors but also invited leading performers from Datong Revue in Xinjing and brought Japanese ones from Shōchiku Ofuna studio. Director Yamauchi Eizō spent six months filming the movie, paying great attention to aesthetic details. The film began with a dedication "to honor those heroes who sacrificed their lives to found and defend Manchukuo." Japanese authorities in Manchukuo were pleased and called the production a real national policy movie with an exciting story. Japanese film critic Tatsumi Ryuji 辰巳龍吉 commented that it "overcame the lack of entertainment in other

⁶⁴ Wang Hong, "Shijie de yingxiang," 43.

⁶⁵ "Dianying jianshangze, dianying shangren, dianying zhizuoze: Sanwei yiti kentanhu" [A Triune Roundtable Among Film Critics, Film Businessmen, And Film Producers], *Manzhou yinghua* 3/8 (August 1939).

⁶⁶ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 85.

⁶⁷ Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 47.

national policy movies, and captured audience's interest."⁶⁸ The movie was made at a time when the domestic situation in Japan was chaotic, and the Japanese Prime Minister hoped to use it to unite all Japanese to carry out the divine mission of the Japanese emperor. But when Shōchiku company showed the movie in Japan, it was criticized harshly.⁶⁹

The only extant national policy film that Manying co-produced with Toho is *Journey to the East* (*Azumaasobi ki; Dongyouji* 1939), directed by Ōya Toshio 大谷俊夫. Ōya had the most impressive credentials among Japanese directors at Manying: he had studied under famous directors Naruse Mikio and Yamamoto Kajiro pursued a fifteen-year career in Japan, and directed eleven movies at Nikkatsu, PCL, and Toho before he joined Manying.⁷⁰ He stayed with Manying from 1939 until Japan's defeat and directed eleven feature movies and some cultural films. Ōya was from Toho studio, known for producing Japanese national policy films. He first experimented with ghost movie *The Wronged Soul Avenged* (*Yuanhun Fuchou*), which Manying criticized for its disagreement with national policy.⁷¹ Then, Ōya led two national policy movies through joint production with Toho: *Journey to the East* (*Dongyouji* 1939) and *Contemporary Japan* (*Xiandai riben* 1940), introducing modern Japan to the Chinese. *Dongyongji* had included two famous Japanese actresses, Takamine Hideko and Hara Setsuko. Yet, it portrayed Chinese people as backward and morally flawed. The two peasants played by Manying comedians Zhang Shuda and Liu Enjia, lacking knowledge and experience with modern urban life, became rural bumpkins in Tokyo.⁷² Such visual representation angered Chinese movie viewers, who criticized Ōya for his clownish worldview and dehumanizing real people.⁷³ In *Modern Japan*, two Chinese students finish their college education in Japan and travel as lovers around the country, appreciate the beauty of Kobe, Osaka, Nara, and Kyoto and attend the celebration of the

⁶⁸ *Manzhou yinghua* 4/3 (March 1940); Wang Hong, "Shijie de yingxiang," 44; Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 47–48.

⁶⁹ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 203.

⁷⁰ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 124.

⁷¹ "Manying zhipian buhe guocen yinqi gefang tonglie paiji" [Manying Movies Were Bombarded for Their Disagreement with National Policy], *Shengjing shibao*, May 12, 1939, 2.

⁷² Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 61.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

2600th anniversary of the Japanese nation. Despite their admiration for modern Japan, they decide to return home to construct Manchukuo.

Some Japanese directors remade Nikkatsu B-movies in Chinese dialogue to entertain the Chinese viewers yet were frustrated that their Japanese filming experience was inadmissible in Manchukuo.⁷⁴ Ueno Shinji 上野真嗣 from Shinkō studio expressed his excitement and frustration in *Manshū eiga* in June 1939. He genuinely hoped to reach out to Chinese people by learning the language and making good films that would out “decadent Japanese and Shanghai movies.”⁷⁵ However, even after living in Manchuria for a year, he still could not speak basic Chinese. Impressed by the romantic Manchurian landscape and rustic Chinese village life, he struggled to reveal human emotions with camerawork against the seemingly changeless landscape. His first movie *Honeymoon Express* (*Miyue kuaiche*), from 1938, was a remake of popular Nikkatsu comedy *The Bride Who Has Been Peeked At* (1936), directed by Ōya Toshio. Ueno’s hot temper and lack of respect for actors created much tension in the filming process. He kept hurling insults at performers. But the leading actress Ro Koran/Li Xianglan was Japanese, and actor Du Hanxing had studied at Waseda University, so both understood Japanese.⁷⁶ Li Xianglan could not bear Ueno’s insulting remarks and returned to the hotel to cry her heart out.⁷⁷ Plus, this movie represented Chinese characters as flawed: a married Chinese man had an affair, and his unreasonable wife, who followed him around. To Ueno’s discouragement, Chinese moviegoers did not find the movie funny due to cultural differences between Japan and Manchuria.

Ueno suffered from one setback after another. He and Shōchiku filmmaker Yoichi Saiki 岡齋與一 started making a movie called *Garden of Maidens* in early 1939, but it shortly got canceled.⁷⁸ While making *Smiling*

⁷⁴ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 273.

⁷⁵ Ueno Shinji, “The Garden of Manchurian Cinema,” *Manshū eiga* 3/6 (June 1939), 40–41.

⁷⁶ *Shengjing shibao*, July 24, 1938, 4.

⁷⁷ Yamaguchi Yoshiko, *Wo de qianbensheng – Li Xianglan zhuan* [The Early Half of My Life – Biography of Li Xianglan], (Beijing: Shijie zhushi chubanshe, 1988), 67–70.

⁷⁸ “The Production of *The Paradise of Virgins* was Delayed,” *Manshū eiga* 3/1 (January 1939), 70–71. *Manchurian Cinema* carried a shooting scene

Earth (1938), commissioned by the Ministry of Industry to improve the countryside and enlighten peasants, a frustrated Ueno resorted to violence against Chinese actors.⁷⁹ He and his Chinese assistant Jin Ying took a film crew of thirty people to shoot outdoor scenes in Baichengzi during hot summer days.⁸⁰ Peng Bo, a journalist at *Shengjing shibao*, wrote about what he saw on the filming site.⁸¹ A new actress, Jiang Xiuwen, drew water from a well and was criticized for her inappropriate expression, but she did not know how to make it right. Ueno rushed towards her and knocked her on the chest, making her fall unconscious to the ground a few steps away. Others quickly rushed the actress to the hospital.⁸² Leading actor Guo Shaoyi could not bear Ueno and returned to Manying in tears, quitting his role in the movie.

Another journalist sympathized with both the performers and Ueno: the Japanese director did not know that student actors were paid very little for their jobs, nor did he understand Chinese customs. Here the journalist still questioned whether a modern film company should adopt the uncivilized practice of beating actors as opera revues did in the past.⁸³ The journalist wondered whether Japanese directors were qualified to direct movies on Chinese lives and exposed the harsh treatment of Chinese actors at Manying. *Smiling Earth* changed its leading actor yet was canceled “for weather reason.”⁸⁴ Ueno also contributed four episodes to *Fugui chunmeng*, directed by Suzuki Shigeyoshi, a movie with five episodes on different people’s attitude towards money. In early 1939, Ueno finished the national policy movie *Xingmeng biaoqi*, but it was banned from exhibition due to “its disagreement with national policy, its inappropriateness in dealing with

with Yao Lu, Xia Peijie, Ji Yanfen, Hou Feiyan, and Lu Xuan as students in uniform, Li Ming as their teacher, and Yu Yi as their dormitory supervisor.

⁷⁹ *Shengjing shibao*, September 4, 1938.

⁸⁰ *Shengjing shibao*, June 13, July 10, 17, and 24, 1938.

⁸¹ Peng Bo, “Guanguang Manying: Sanhecun waijingdui” [Visiting Manying: On Outdoor Shooting Team at Sanhe village], *Shengjing shibao*, July 17, 1938.

⁸² “Yanyuannan, Daoyan yinan” [Both Director and Actors Had Their Hardship], *Shengjing shibao*, July 24, 1937.

⁸³ “Erci Guanguang Manying Sanhecun waijingdui de jishu” [A Report on My Second Visit of Man’ei Scenery-Shooting Team at Sanhecun], *Shengjing shibao*, July 24, 1938.

⁸⁴ “Yinghai yushen,” *Shengjing shibao*, July 24, 1938 and September 4, 1938.

Mongol issue, and its wrong understanding of Manchukuo army.”⁸⁵ Despite his ambition and effort, Ueno was not accepted at Manying.

Takahara Fujirō 高原富士郎 was transferred from the division of cultural films to produce entertainment movies from 1938 through 1941. He directed six movies.⁸⁶ His first movie, *Melody of Intimacy* (*Zhixinqu*), focused on urban lives and praised the triumph of justice over evil by weaving together a story with all the selling points of a Hollywood commercial movie – a dancing girl, a ruffian, a rich girl, a robber, and a policeman. His next movie, *Spring in the Countryside* (*Tianyuan chunguang*), was a national policy film praising the rural development in Manchukuo through a love story. His *Sisters* (*Zhenjia zimei*) adopted the literary archetype of two sisters, criticizing the elder one for her vanity and praising the younger one for her purity. After 1940, Takahara began adopting scripts by Chinese writers: *New Life* (*Xinsheng Life*), by Jiang Xueqian and Zhou Lantian, comedy *Safe and Sound* (*Renma pingan*), co-authored by Nakamura Noriyuki and Zhou Lantian, and another comedy, *Every Dog Has His Day* (*Shilai Yunzhuan*), by prolific playwright Zhang Woquan. Takahara pioneered the comedy genre in Manying cinema, although his comic film language was immature. Zhang Yi remembered Takahara as an eccentric artist who lived in his own world yet was friendly to Chinese actors and actresses. Takahara influenced Chinese director Zhu Wenshun, who had been his assistant.

Other Japanese directors at Manying did not produce many movies. Uesuna Taikura 上砂泰藏, from Shinkō studio, was the first professional Japanese director at Manying. He graduated from Doshisha University in Kyoto and only directed one national policy movie, *Rainbow over the Continent* (*Dalu changhong*), which praised Manchukuo policemen. Suzuki Shigeyoshi, from Shōchiku studio, was invited by Kagakita Nagamasa (川多喜长政) to direct propaganda movie *The Way to Oriental Peace* in December 1937 for the East Harmony Film Company in Beiping.⁸⁷ He then joined

⁸⁵ “Yinghai yushen,” *Shengjing shibao*, February 26, 1939 and May 12, 1939, 2.

⁸⁶ *Shengjing shibao*, July 17, 1938; Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 114.

⁸⁷ *Shengjing shibao*, April 24 and May 29, 1938, 6. They recruited amateur actors Zhang Jizu (a cross-talker), Xu Cong, Bai Guang, Li Yufei, Li Ming, and Zhong Qiufang in December 1937 to make the movie, and brought those actors to Japan to meet the Japanese audience for its premiere. Li Yufei was

Manying as a production manager in 1938. Suzuki only directed one feature film, *Dreams for Wealth* (*Fugui chunmeng*, 1939), and other cultural ones.⁸⁸ Famous Shōchiku scriptwriter Aramaki Yoshio directed his own script, *A Beautiful Spouse* (*Ruhua meijuan*), at Manying in 1940, while Shimada Taichi 島田太一 directed *The Autumn* (*Dadi qiuguang*) in the same year. In Manying's later years, actor-turned-director Kazuo Hirose 廣瀬数夫 directed a few action movies. Kasai Huiji 笠井輝二 directed *The Beauty with a Mole* (*Heizhi Meiren*) and supervised Chinese director Liu Guoquan.

Japanese directors were expected to produce national policy films for Manchukuo without clearly understanding the differences between national policy in Japan and Manchukuo. They often imposed Japanese imperial ideology in Manying cinema to the distaste of Chinese,⁸⁹ which made leading Chinese writer Wang Qiuying refuse to take Manying cinema as art.⁹⁰ Additionally, these directors' Japanese film language and aesthetics estranged Chinese moviegoers who had developed their tastes watching Shanghai commercial movies on romance, family, and social issues; they disliked the Japanese flavor, propaganda, and unnatural stories and dialogues of Manying movies.⁹¹ Even *Manzhou yinghua*, edited by Manying, criticized early Manying movies for entertaining audiences by showing off actors' skills rather than satisfying spiritual needs and catering to low taste by showing actresses' legs and physique.⁹² Still, the magazine credited Japanese directors for their hard work and sympathized with their dilemma and distress: "Japanese directors who came afar did not understand Manchurian environment, Chinese people and their material lives. But they worked hard

from a banner household and was used to being attended by servants. He lived constantly under the fear of being scolded by Suzuki while making the movie. When the crew was in Japan, they worked till two or three o'clock in the morning.

⁸⁸ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 61, 232.

⁸⁹ Laohan, "Ribei yinghua manxi dianyingyuan peiji shangying zhi jiantao" [A Reflection on the Distribution and Exhibition of Japanese Movies in Chinese Theaters], *Manzhou yinghua* 2/10 (October 1938).

⁹⁰ Qiuying, "Suiyu chao" [Random Talk], *Manzhou yinghua* 3/8 (August 1939).

⁹¹ Zhang Yi, "Wo suozhidao de Manying," *Changchun wenshi ziliao* 1 (1986): 1–43.

⁹² Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 45.

to establish Manchukuo cinema by studying Chinese customs and human relationships and tried their best to accommodate the Chinese audience. Their hard work did not achieve satisfactory results due to their movies' overt Japanese flavor and their effort to cater to the low taste, alienating the audience. It is not hard to understand the frustration of Japanese directors."⁹³

Early Manying national policy movies depicted Manchukuo and Chinese people according to Manchukuo official discourse in Japanese film.⁹⁴ As a Chinese theater manager noticed, those entertainment movies were either unpopular remakes of Japanese movies or immature Hollywood and Shanghai movies imitations.⁹⁵ Since the political and cultural identities of Manchukuo print media were often separated,⁹⁶ Chinese film critics frankly expressed their disappointments with Manying movies therein. Japanese-edited *Shengjing shibao* ran the weekly cinema column "Yinghai yushen" (The Screen) from February 20, 1933 to April 28, 1940. With Manying's establishment, the column introduced Manying movies, personnel, filming activities, and news to entertain cinema fans. Manying's monthly magazine *Manzhou yinghua* (*Manchurian Cinema*), aimed at film education and entertainment, often carried Chinese criticism of Manying movies. Chinese critics seldom criticized the political message of said films, yet they lashed out at their boring stories, unnatural dialogues, Japanese music, the juxtaposition of Japanese and Chinese elements, violation of Chinese culture and custom, actors' poor performances, and lackluster film technique.⁹⁷ By restricting their criticism to cultural and artistic aspects, Chinese critics questioned the authenticity of Manying cinema and the legitimacy of Japanese producing movies for Chinese.

⁹³ Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 64.

⁹⁴ Baskett, *The Attractive Empire*, 83.

⁹⁵ "Harbin: Dianyinyuan guanxizhe zuotanhui" [A Roundtable Among Film Theater Owners in Harbin], *Manzhou yinghua* 2/11.

⁹⁶ Chen Yan, "Wu Si mailuo xide 'manzhouguo xushi'" [The Narrative of Manchukuo Along the May Fourth Lineage], in Liu Xiaoli, ed., *Chuangshang: Dongya zhimin zhiyi yu wenxue* (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 2017), 275–276.

⁹⁷ Zhang Yi, "Wo suozhidao," 2, 9–10.

Entertaining Chinese: Japanese Directors in the Period of 1940–1943

The failure to transplant Japanese filming experiences forced Japanese authorities to reform Manying to produce better entertainment movies. In November 1939, Kwantung army appointed Amakasu Masahiko 甘粕 正彦 as the new managing director of Manying upon completion of its new offices and studios. Amakasu had been imprisoned for his extrajudicial execution of anarchists after the Great Kantō earthquake.⁹⁸ He participated in planning for Manchukuo,⁹⁹ helped establish the civilian police force in Xinjing,¹⁰⁰ and was notorious for his brutality.¹⁰¹ He declared that “Manying must make films that the Manchurians/Chinese enjoy”¹⁰² and switched the film production’s focus from enlightenment to entertainment.¹⁰³ Amakasu instituted many reforms to improve Manying management and productivity. He traveled to Germany to purchase the most advanced video cameras, invited Japanese movie stars, directors, and scriptwriters to participate in Manying film production, and built cinematic networks with the film industries of Japan, Germany, Italy, and occupied China. He established the Manying Film Academy (*Manying Yangchengsuo*) to train all film majors,¹⁰⁴ founded the Manchurian Film Society to control Manying’s film distribution and local cinemas, turning Manying magazine *Manzhou yinghua* into the Manchurian Magazine Society for commercial publication.¹⁰⁵ Amakasu led the film company into its most productive and profitable years.

During 1939–1942, the propaganda policy in Japan shifted to “thriving Asia (Koa)” or “Construction of Greater East Asia.” Japanese documentaries advocated Sino-Japanese “amicability and cooperation,” despite the anti-Japanese sentiment of the Chinese populace.¹⁰⁶ Various

⁹⁸ Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2000), 573.

⁹⁹ Edward Behr, *The Last Emperor* (Toronto: Futura, 1987), 193.

¹⁰⁰ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 87–88.

¹⁰¹ Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 16.

¹⁰² Amakasu Masahiko, “Manjin no tameini eiga wo tsukuru” [Making Film for Manchurian People], *Eiga junpo*, August 1, 1942.

¹⁰³ Zhang Jin, “Li Min fangtan lu,” *Changchun Yingshi: Dongbei juan* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2011), 90.

¹⁰⁴ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 90.

¹⁰⁵ Furuichi, “*Manying*” *dianying*, 53, 59.

¹⁰⁶ High, *The Imperial Screen*, 265.

Japanese directors depicted China/Manchuria as a land with a long history, rich cultures, and impressive achievements. In Toho studio's movie *Vow in the Desert*, directed by Watanabe Kunio, a Japanese character marvels atop the Great Wall: "This is the foremost testimony to the greatness of the human will." Then he pointed to Beijing and announced that the military highway being constructed by Japanese engineers would be a second Great Wall of China.¹⁰⁷ Manying Japanese directors of the same period had to adjust their direction to produce popular entertainment movies for the Chinese market. Some adopted film scripts by Chinese writers or experimented with popular Chinese movie genres – historical costume, martial art, detective, and comedy. Others imitated Shanghai movies, which made their directing lack distinctive features that became rather "ambiguous."¹⁰⁸ Chinese writer An Xi pointed out that Manying entertainment movies could not absorb elements of the Japanese and Shanghai cinemas for their own use, but simply included both, which caused the criticism that "Manying cinema was the combination of Japanese cinema and Shanghai cinema."¹⁰⁹

Manying movies during 1940–1943 reflected the change in Japanese imperialist ideology by representing Manchukuo and China in a better light. Female Chinese characters in Manying cinema were mostly positive with traditional feminine virtues, and Chinese children were good and innocent.¹¹⁰ Due to the reduced supply of Shanghai movies caused by film control in Manchukuo, Manying entertainment movies of this period were better received by Chinese audiences. Film critic Airen praised a Manying children's movie, titled *The Smile of Love* (*Ai de weixiao*) and directed by Yamauchi Eizō, as "animated with innocent and lively air" and was "better than Shanghai movie with similar content."¹¹¹ Most Japanese

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 271.

¹⁰⁸ "Manzhou qida daoyan zong pian" [A General Criticism of Seven Directors in Manchuria-on Mizugae Ryūichi], *Dianying huabao* 7/3 (March 1943).

¹⁰⁹ An Xi, "Miaoyuan de xiwang" [A Distant Hope], *Dianying huabao* 7/1 (January 1941).

¹¹⁰ Liu Wenhua, "Manying dianyingzhong de Zhongguo xingxiang lun" [On the Image of China in Manying Movies] (MA thesis, Changchun University of Science and Technology, 2016).

¹¹¹ Refer to Yamauchi Eizō's *Aide Weixiao*, Mizugae's *Cimulei*, Ikeda's *Haohaizi*, and *Huayu chunfeng*. Airen, "Qunian Manying de chenggongzuo"

directors produced better-received entertainment movies through trial and error, and some movies were even exhibited in occupied Shanghai and Beiping through Manying's exchange networks.¹¹²

Manying let Chinese and Japanese scriptwriters co-author scripts. The most productive team was that of Chinese writer Zhang Woquan and Japanese scriptwriters Yagi Hiroshi 八木寛, who was fluent in Chinese, and Nagatsuku Hiroshi 長佃博司. They assumed the collective pen name "Xiye 熙野" and got some of their scripts screened.¹¹³ Nakamura Noriyuki worked with Chinese writer Zhou Lantian, fluent in Japanese, and wrote comedy script *Safe and Sound*. Yamauchi Eizō's script for Japanese martial art film *The Thief Wearing a Black Mask* (*Heilianzei*) was rewritten into Chinese by Wang Du, who added many details and rearranged the plot.¹¹⁴ Mizugae's 1940 romance movie *Voyage in Love* (*Qinghai hangcheng*) used Aramaki Yoshio's script adapted from *Konjiki Yasha* by Meiji novelist Ozaki Koyo.¹¹⁵

However, Chinese scriptwriters Yang Ye, Zhou Lantian, and Zhang Yinghua localized the story in a Chinese setting before it was filmed. Manying often sent Chinese and Japanese writers to travel together to gather sources for writing. Liang Shanding and Yagi Hiroshi went to Rehe to visit ancient historical relics,¹¹⁶ while Wang Du and Yagi Hiroshi went to Northern Manchuria to experience life.¹¹⁷ The mechanism of co-authoring film scripts suggested that even during wartime, writers from two East Asian cultures could still find common ground and reach an agreement in their writing.

[A Successful Movie Manying Made Last Year], *Dianying huabao* 7/1 (January 1943).

¹¹² Liu Xiaochen, "Ri wei baokan yanjiu jiqi Manying xuanchuan" [Japanese-Ran Periodicals and Their Reports on Manying] (MA thesis, China Film Art Research Center, 2014).

¹¹³ Those six scripts were *Qinghai hangcheng*, *Shui zhidao tadexin*, *Yuanlin chunse*, *Lipan huaxiang*, *Xinhunji*, and *Baozitou Lin Chong*. Nagatsuku also wrote his own scripts: *Huaping tanan* (under penname Lu Ping), *Yinying lineage*, and *Su Xiaomei*; Yagi wrote *Jieda huanxi*, *Baima Jianke*, and *Yan Qing yu Li Shishi*.

¹¹⁴ Zhang Jin, "Li Min fangtan lu," 87.

¹¹⁵ Wang Yanhua, "Manying yu dongbei," 54.

¹¹⁶ *Shengjing shibao*, July 27, 1941.

¹¹⁷ Li Yu, "Li Min Fangtanlu," 100.

Japanese directors made genuine efforts to learn Chinese history and culture while producing popular Chinese movies. Ōya Tashio, known for his early national policy films, directed the well-received historical costume drama *Rogue (Yanzhi)* in 1942, which received positive feedback. *Rogue* was based on Japanese sinologist Shibata Tenma's translation of a short story by Qing novelist Pu Songling. When Ōya Toshio directed the movie, he consulted Chinese lyricist and artist Yu Yuanshou in Jilin city many times to verify the story's historical background, characters' costumes, and hairstyles with his Chinese colleagues Sen Yan and Wang Xinzhai. While filming the movie, Ōya faithfully followed the original story's twisted plots and chain of wrongs by varying the lighting in different scenes and employing different camerawork to convey themes of love, sex, crime, detection, justice, and happiness. He confessed that his goal was to make the piece precise, artful, detail-oriented, and holistic rather than to pursue the pompous air of Shanghai flicks. He praised actress Zheng Xiaojun, whose performance made the heroine intelligent, elegant, and delicate.¹¹⁸ Chinese audiences liked the movie better for this new style and scene arrangements. It was even received quite well in Shanghai.¹¹⁹

More Japanese directors adopted scripts by Chinese writers, making their movies more reflective of Chinese people's lives and culture. The most productive Japanese director, Mizugae Ryūichi, led twelve movies during his five years at Manying, between 1938 and 1942. Following Amakasu's call to produce Chinese entertainment movies, Mizugae began adopting scripts by Chinese and experimenting with popular Chinese movie genres. He first directed two movies on married life – *A Friend from Faraway (Youpeng zi yuanyang lai)*, 1940), written by Zhang Woquan, and *Tears of Two Girls (Shaungshu lei)*, 1941) with An Longqi. He later directed a detective movie, *Vases and Detectives (Huaping tan'an)*, scripted by Japanese writer Nagatsuku Hiroshi.¹²⁰ Finally, Mizugae made a few historical costume dramas with Chinese scriptwriters and established his fame in his last two years at Manying. The scripts for his martial art movie *Heroes (Longzheng hudou)*, 1941) and the fairy tale *Temple of Goddesses (Niangniangmiao)*, 1942)

¹¹⁸ Otani Tashio, "Zatan Yanzhi" [Random Talk on Beauty], *Dianyinghuabao* 6/7 (July 1942).

¹¹⁹ Liu Xiaochen, "Ri wei baokan yanjiu jiqi Manying xuanchuan" (MA thesis, China Film Art Research Center, 2014).

¹²⁰ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 117.

were both by Wang Du, who wrote the film under the penname Jiang Yan. *Heroes*, which adapted Tang legend *Shigongan*, gained box office success in Manchukuo and was later shown in Shanghai. *Temple of Goddesses*, on the other hand, was based on Manchu folklore on three fairies who descended from heaven to right wrongs. Mizugae also directed *Unruly Monk Lu Zhishen* (*Huaheshang Lu Zhishen*, 1942) scripted by Zhang Woquan and He Qun and based on a story from the Chinese classic *Heroes of the Water Margin*. Mizugae's last movie *Spring Wind and Wild Grass* (*Chunfeng yecao*, 1942), adapted the script of Chinese writer and director Yang Ye.

Mizugae had a pleasant personality and enjoyed a good working relationship with Chinese actors and actresses. He praised child actress Yang Manli for her natural performance in *Cimulei*,¹²¹ mentored Chinese actress Ji Yanfen on how to reveal her character's emotions,¹²² and wrote an article praising several Manying actresses.¹²³ Actor Zhang Yi remembered Mizugae as a "*laohaoren* (a good man)" who greeted others with a smile and addressed actors politely as "*xx-san*." Mizugae not only shared his opinion on how to create characters but also listened to actors' and actresses' ideas.¹²⁴ As head of the Acting Personnel Office (*yanji ke*), Mizugae led Chinese actors with wisdom. For example, when the film *Safe and Sound* had difficulty assigning unpopular roles, he asked cadre actors what to do and got them to volunteer. He later decided to return to Japan in late 1942.¹²⁵

Zhang Yi praised Mizugae's directing as "subtle and detail-oriented," influencing leading Chinese director Zhou Xiaobo. But Chinese film critics criticized Mizugae for his ambiguity in *Dianying huabao*:

Manchurian cinema has an ambiguous character which can be seen in the ambiguous directing style of its directors... Take Mizugae Ryuichi for example... To win the audience, he explored different genres to see which one the movie

¹²¹ "The Screen," *Shengjing shibao*, March 26, 1939; and *Binjiang Ribao*, March 21, 1939.

¹²² "Dianyingcun fangwenji," *Manzhou yinghua*, June 1940, 56–58. It carried a picture of Mizugae and Ji Yanfen.

¹²³ "Kantoku no tasimeru Man'ei no sita" [Actresses Who Were Praised by Director], *Manzhou yinghua* 4/5 (May 1940), 86.

¹²⁴ Zhang Yi, "Wo suozhidao," 36–37.

¹²⁵ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 121.

audience liked better, just like a physician who gave a patient several different medicines to see which one worked. Directors had their struggles with the radical shift in film production direction. But this is not a good phenomenon. For an ambitious director, that is a tragedy. The tragedy of Mizugae Ryūichi is the tragedy of other directors as well.¹²⁶

Besides criticizing Mizugae for lacking a distinctive personality and directing style, the critic also found flaws with his film technique: his pacing was uneven, and his camerawork lacked variety, which made viewers feel that his film language was plain and straightforward.¹²⁷ Yamauchi Eizō also achieved success during his later years at Manying by making popular entertainment movies. When he arrived at the company in June 1939, Yamauchi wrote for *Manshū eiga* while directing his first national policy film, *Blood and Wisdom* (*Tiexue Huixin*), which was about police suppression of opium in Manchukuo. His decision to join Manying made his mother in Kyoto worry about his safety in “bandit-filled Manchuria” and brought tears to his wife. So he went to Manying to create national policy films and thus avoid conflicts with colleagues. In addition, he was bothered that Manchukuo Chinese enjoyed watching Shanghai movies (which were much worse than Japanese ones) and resolved to produce better Manying movies to “oust Shanghai movies in the movie war.”¹²⁸ Despite Yamauchi’s efforts to give a politically correct backstory for his presence in Manchukuo, he followed Negishi to Manying, likely due to personnel issues at Japanese studios.

Known for directing ten feature movies at Manying, Yamauchi had two advantages over other Japanese directors: he spoke Chinese and could write scripts. His script for *The Thief Wearing a Black Mask* was revised by Jiang Yan and screened by Mizugae, while another script, *Blood and Shadow* (*Bixue yanying*) was filmed by Chinese director Liu Guoquan.¹²⁹ Yamaguchi was a perfectionist who shot movies slowly yet artistically. Most Manying

¹²⁶ “On Seven Manying Directors: Mizugar Ryuichi,” *Dianying huabao* 7/3 (March 1943).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *Manshū eiga* 3/6 (June 1939), 88–89.

¹²⁹ Guo Yanping and Liu Shenwu, *Zhang Jing yu Guo Fenyang* (Changchun: Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 2007), 8.

movies were completed in twenty days, shooting forty or fifty scenes per day.¹³⁰ He only shot two or three scenes a day and spent half a year in each of his early national policy films. Wang Du praised Yamauchi's films for their artistic value and thought his movies were even better than Ōya's. Some of Yamauchi's movies reflected Chinese life at the bottom of Manchukuo society, while others were historical costume dramas adapted from classical Chinese literature.¹³¹ He produced family melodramas, including *The Flame of Love* (*Ai'yan*) and *Wandering Songstresses* (*Liulang genü*), scripted by Yang Ye; *Ironman* (*Tiehan*), scripted by Shang Yuandu; *Storm Destroyed Flower* (*Yubao huacan*), by Liu Guoquan; and *Princess* (*Yingluo gongzhu*), by Jiang Yan. His Chinese proficiency enabled Yamauchi to scout talented actress Zhang Jing for Manying from a Fengtian stage.¹³² Yamauchi invited leading Chinese actors and actresses to a feast at Yamato Hotel to celebrate the premiere of his *Yubao huacan*.¹³³ He wrote an article praising Chinese actresses he worked with: Zhao Aiping, who skillfully played the suffering wife of an opium addict, Yao Lu, who performed as a lovely maiden in her first filming experience; and Zheng Xiaojun, who looked more like a Japanese beauty though her expression was a little rigid.¹³⁴

Yamauchi also wrote scripts under the pen name Ding Ming. He was the scenarist-director for three movies: *Modern Men* (*Xiandai naner*, 1940), *Mr. Liu Changed* (*Liu Xiansheng Huitou*, 1940), and *The Diary of a Star* (*Mingxing Riji*, 1941). He adapted Liang Shanding's novel *The Sorrow of a Songstress* (*Genüihen*) into a script that Zhu Wenshun directed in 1942. His script, *Blood and Shadow Bixue yanying* (1943), was directed by Liu Guoquan and praised by audiences in Beiping.¹³⁵

The movie that best represents the radical change of Japanese directors' depictions of Manchuria and Chinese during 1940–1943 is *Yingchunhua* (*Winter Jasmine*), directed by Sasaki Kang in 1942 and a co-production between Manying and Shōchiku studio. Like most Japanese imperial cinema, which presented an attractive and modernist vision of

¹³⁰ "Sanwei yiti kentanhui," *Manzhou yinghua* 3/8, 42–44.

¹³¹ Li Yu, "Li Ming Fangtanlu," 87; Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 126.

¹³² Guo Yanping and Liu Shenwu, *Zhang Jing*, 8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³⁴ Yamauchi, "Director Praised Manying Actresses," *Manzhou yinghua* 4 (1940), 82.

¹³⁵ Liu Xiaochen, "Ri wei baokan yanjiu jiqi Manying xuanchuan," 38.

empire where indigenous people lived in co-prosperity, ethnic harmony, and material abundance, *Winter Jasmine* showed Manchukuo markets of 1942 full of meat, fish, and staple foods despite the harsh reality of food rationing, inflation, and the black market.¹³⁶ It also highlighted Xinjing's impressive modern buildings, factories, urban planning, and landscape and presented Japan and Manchukuo as nations with similar cultures that shared a common origin. Although the movie suggested that Chinese lacked good hygiene – a Chinese clerk says that he seldom takes a bath and Chinese people spit in public – it characterized Chinese employees at a Japanese company as capable, diligent, and frugal. Chinese in the movie live content, love exercise, and are friendly to Japanese. They teach Japanese hero Murakawa to speak Chinese and influence him with their virtues of frugality and moderation.

Moreover, *Winter Jasmine* reversed the power relations between colonizer and colonized. Instead of depicting the Japanese as superior modernizers, *Winter Jasmine* represented Chinese heroine Bai Li as an ideal modern career woman who is more virtuous and competent than Japanese hero Murakawa and Japanese woman Ya'e. Bai Li is bilingual and moves easily between Chinese and Japanese, family and profession, and associates with men freely at work, sports, and business trips, without the struggle of Japanese career women.¹³⁷ Her sufficiently modern lifestyle is balanced with preserving the traditional feminine virtues of frugality, moderation, and self-control. The movie promoted ethnic harmony in Manchukuo by showing that the Japanese and Chinese mutually appreciated each other's culture. Also, Bai Li's family home is decorated with Chinese and Japanese artifacts, and her father discusses art and plays *go* with his Japanese friend. Japanese live among Chinese and converse with them in hybrid *xieheyu*.¹³⁸

Unlike most Manying movies, *Winter Jasmine* was shown in Japan because it was a joint production between Manying and Shōchiku. But Japanese film critics were unimpressed with its ideological message and

¹³⁶ Michael Basket, *The Attractive Empire*, 8.

¹³⁷ Chen, "Between Sovereignty and Coloniality," 116–138.

¹³⁸ *Xieheyu* was invented by Japanese writers and cultural workers in Manchukuo. They picked easy words in Chinese and arranged them in Japanese grammatical order or render Chinese names or terms in Japanese fashion. Since it can be easily understood, Chinese people also used *Xieheyu* to communicate in Japanese. In addition, *Xieheyu* was commonly used in Manchukuo literature and print media.

criticized it sharply. Murakami Tadahisa 村上忠久 wrote in *Eiga junpo* (*Film Ten Day Reports*) on April 21, 1942, “The movie is empty and boring and offers little entertainment to please the audience. The story is not bad, but its film language and techniques are poor. The only positive thing about the movie is that actress Ri Koran/Li Xianglan has contributed to a good box-office sale. The structure of the movie follows the routine of Ofuna movies which makes two women symbolize Japan and Manchukuo, respectively. However, the movie fails to portray two women’s psychological world clearly.”¹³⁹ Murakami thought it was inappropriate to attribute its artistic achievement to Manying since Shōchiku filmmakers mainly produced it.

Both Mizugae and Yamauchi left Manying in late 1942, but Ōya stayed until Japan’s defeat. In the final years of 1944–1945, many Japanese and Chinese filmmakers left Manying due to Japan’s adversities in the war and intensified police surveillance in Manchukuo.¹⁴⁰ To correct Manying’s severe personnel shortage and boost Japan’s martial spirit, Amakasu revived national policy films. Ōya directed three more national policy movies in 1943–1945: *Romance of the Airplane* (*Yin’yi lian’ge*), *Driving Out the Invaders* (*Miaosao langyan*), and *The Fight Between the Tiger and the Wolf* (*Hulang douyan*). Those three movies avoided overt propaganda by telling love stories with twisted plots that praised Manchukuo airplane pilots and army officers.¹⁴¹ He also directed the unfinished *The Illusion to be a Star* (*Mingxing huanxiangqu*) in 1945. Ōya relied more on scripts by Japanese. Although his two comedies adapted scripts by Chinese writers Wang Du and An Xian,¹⁴² Wang could not remember writing *Jinghua shuiyue*, which was clearly not his best. Ōya was domineering and discomfited by newly-promoted Chinese director Wang Du when they shot outdoor scenes together in June 1943. Manying assigned Ōya to mentor Wang, yet he constantly gave orders.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Murakami Tadahisa 村上忠久, *Eiga junpo* (*Film Ten Day Reports*), April 21, 1942; Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 203–205.

¹⁴⁰ Furuichi, “Manying” *dianying*, 105.

¹⁴¹ Hu and Gu, *Manying*, 85.

¹⁴² *Huangjin meng* (1941) was about a Chinese miner who dreamed of making a fortune from stocks, and *Jinghua shuiyue* (1941) was about the dream of a poor Chinese labor who could conceal himself to punish those who bullied him.

¹⁴³ Zhang Jin, “Li Min fangtan lu,” 97, 102.

Although Ōya was mostly known as the director of five national policy movies at Manying, he also directed six entertainment movies, including two comedies, a ghost movie, historical costume drama *Rogue (Yanzhi)*, and two-family melodramas. Ōya belonged to the circle of Japanese film artists around Negishi and disliked the militaristic Amakasu. But he had to follow Amakasu's orders even if he later cursed him in private.¹⁴⁴ His Manying directing career corresponded with the changes in Manying's production policy: from the overt national policy films of 1938–1939 to the entertainment movies of 1940–1943, then back to covert national policy films in 1944–1945. Ōya's two comedies influenced the film language of his Chinese assistant, Wang Xinzhai, who specialized in directing comedies in Manying's later years. Amakasu had criticized Japanese filmmakers in 1942 for their early mistake of never researching what Chinese people truly liked.¹⁴⁵ Ōya did not know what movies the Chinese enjoyed until the end of Manying and simply followed the lead of Amakasu, whom he resented.

Manying movies depicted Chinese and China/Manchuria more positively during 1940–1943 due to the change in Japanese imperialist ideology. To reconcile the differences between the Japanese colonialist vision of Manchukuo and the everyday reality of Chinese people, Japanese directors localized their entertainment movies by turning to Chinese culture and history, adopting Chinese scripts, and focusing on the lives of ordinary Chinese people. To negotiate the contrast between Japanese and Chinese film aesthetics, some Japanese directors consciously imitated Shanghai movies. Because of Manchukuo's film control, Chinese movie viewers could only watch Manying entertainment movies. In these circumstances, some Japanese-directed movies achieved commercial success. A comparison of Manying entertainment movies directed by Japanese with those helmed by Chinese in 1940–1945 suggests major differences in their views on Manchukuo and Chinese, which is beyond the scope of this article.

Conclusion

Manying, as a film company of national concern, was fundamentally more interested in indoctrination that advanced the national policy of Manchukuo for Japanese imperialist interests than in letting filmmakers practice their favored artistic forms to please Chinese movie

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁵ Sato, *Paosheng zhongde*, 88.

viewers. This priority set restrictions on the artistic creativity of both Japanese and Chinese filmmakers. They did not have the freedom to experiment with movies as a possible artistic expression of their social values but had to explore how to convey fixed ideology to reach Manying's political and commercial goals with artistic forms that Chinese audiences could accept.

Japanese directors were handicapped by their unfamiliarity with Chinese culture and local customs, their misunderstanding of Manchukuo national policy, the shortage of "proper" Chinese scripts, and the incompatibility of their Japanese film language with popular Chinese aesthetics. Japanese directors' early movies alienated Chinese movie viewers due to their propaganda and disagreeable film aesthetics despite their strenuous efforts. By making adjustments to rely on scripts that reflected ordinary people's lives or Chinese culture and history, imitating popular genres of Shanghai movies, Japanese directors made their work more acceptable to the Chinese since the latter was limited under Manchukuo's film control. Their collective experiences suggest the irreconcilable tension between the official colonial culture and the culture of the colonized.

ISHIKAWA TATSUZŌ AND SHIMAZAKI TŌSON: TWO WRITERS/TRAVELERS TO SOUTH AMERICA IN THE EYE OF IMPERIAL DISCOURSE¹

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyze and compare the works of Ishikawa Tatsuzō and Shimazaki Tōson about South America. Both Japanese writers visited the region during the Empire of Japan's expansion throughout Asia and Central and South America via migration and settlers' projects. Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985) traveled to Brazil as a correspondent in 1930, a journey that would result in his celebrated novel *Sōbō* (1935). The book criticized the ill-treatment that Japanese migrant delegations to Brazil suffered during the previous decades. As for Shimazaki Tōson, he traveled to Argentina with the Japanese government's sponsorship in 1936 to participate in the International PEN Club Congress, an official voyage that sought to develop deeper ties with South American countries and mitigate the militarist image that Japan had developed in the previous years. The product of the trip was Shimazaki's travel account, *Junrei (Pilgrimage)*, 1936). In essence, the works of these two writers are inseparable in terms of colonial discourse as they both envisaged in South America a standpoint from where to write about colonialism and modernization.

Migration to Latin America in Japanese Literature

Migration became a topic of late-Meiji and Taishō literature at the hand of government-aligned expansionist journals that integrated travel and utopian literary works from abroad and blended them with domestic genres. The latter included travel accounts, *jitsuwa* (true-life stories), *kaigai/imin shōsetsu* (overseas/immigrant novels), *shokumin shōsetsu* (colonizer's novels), and *risshi shōsetsu* (novels of success). Periodicals such as *Seikō* (Success, 1902–1915), *Tanken sekai* (Exploration World, 1906), and

¹ Author's Note: The present article is an extension of a homonymous conference paper given at the 69th Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs (MCAA) for the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University on October 17, 2020.

Shokumin sekai (*Colonizer's World*, 1908–1933) started depicting not only the migrants' journey overseas but also the economic prosperity that those ventures could bring for them. It should be noted that the first Japanese literary publications concerning migration shared their printing space with publicity coming from private migration companies and propaganda from government enterprises; this promoted an official ideology not only through content but also (and sometimes even more explicitly) through their paratexts and non-textual spaces.

Regarding Latin America specifically, the Japanese reading public first learned of the region through travel books published by businessmen and researchers with funding from government-sponsored migration companies. Among such books, two of the most renowned were Shiraishi Motojirō's *Nanbei jijō* (*Affairs of South America*, 1905) and Matsuo Saburō's *Nabei kōkai nikki* (*Diary to an Overseas Trip to South America*, 1906). Nevertheless, it was Horiuchi Shinsen's (1873–n.d.) short story “Nanbei yuki” (“Bound to South America,” May 1908) that first fictionalized a voyage to the region and presented it as a setting in popular literature. The narration tells the life of Nisaburō, a poor Japanese farmer rejected for military service and bullied for his enfeebled physique, who ends up traveling to South America to work the land and eventually becomes a rich entrepreneur capable of sending money back to his family. According to Seth Jacobowitz's reading of this story, the figure of the young Japanese individual looking to somehow fulfill a patriotic duty coincides with the typical reader that Shinsen's fiction had described in *Seikō* and other journals, with a growing audience between the 1920s and 1940s.² This fact shows that literature worked parallel to official expansionist discourse since the early days of the Empire. For Latin America, it demonstrates how the earliest depictions of the region in Japanese literature were determined by imperial discourse, but more so by an imaginary economic realization that could not be obtained locally.

The image of Latin America as a region that could secure access to land and economic prosperity for young sojourners implied, however, a counter-image as a place where a settler could harvest their most ambitious utopias. Unlike the picture that the Japanese had of Canada and the US, countries associated with cosmopolitanism to where most migrants traveled

² Seth Jacobowitz, “‘Struggling Upward: Worldly Success and the Japanese Novel’ by Timothy Van Compernelle,” a review in *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 46/2 (2020), 522.

until the end of the nineteenth century, Latin America began to be seen as a bountiful natural region that needed to be capitalized and exploited. This image was distant from an Arcadia or Eden and closer to that of a primitive and backward wilderness lacking what the Empire of Japan could bestow: culture. Even the paratexts of “Nanbei yuki” evidence such a depiction of South America as a primitive territory, showing an aboriginal figure and wild animals (Figure 1). This primeval conception of South America would endure throughout the next decades until at least the postwar years, when travelers with purposes other than migration and settlement would start seeing the region within the paradigm of internationalization that the Allied Forces introduced in Japan during their occupation from 1945 to 1952.

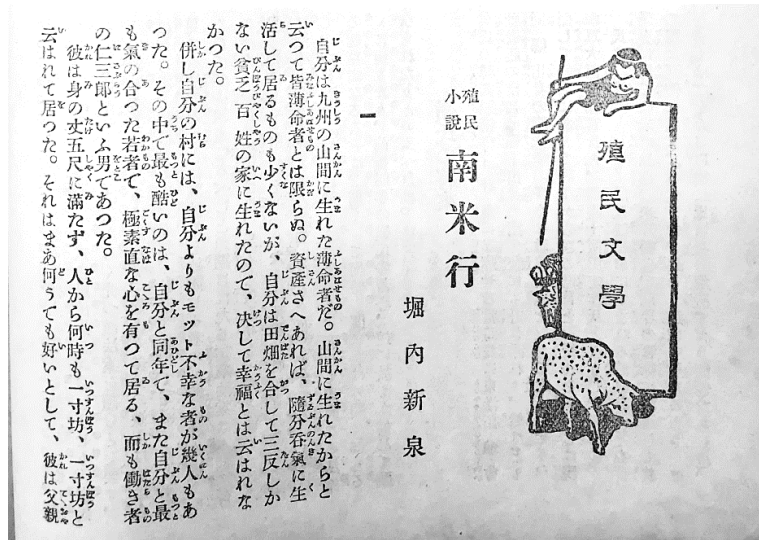


Figure 1. Initial fragment of “Nanbei yuki” in *Shokumin sekai* (May 1908)³

From this early twentieth-century literary context, two Japanese writers emerged to serve as contrasting examples of the pervasiveness of imperial discourse in Japanese literature and the resulting perception of Latin

³ This image was taken by the author from Waseda University’s Library collection and with permission from the institution.

America among Japan's reading public. The first of these is Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985), who traveled to Brazil in 1930 and became a fierce critic of the Empire's migration policies. The second one is Shimazaki Tōson (1872–1943), who visited Argentina in 1936 with the double mission of promoting Japanese culture and being an imperial emissary able to transform the international image of the Empire. These two writers took advantage of the primitive image of Latin America for their own needs: the former to condemn the Empire and question the idealized discourse that invited the Japanese to migrate to the region, and the latter to legitimize the Empire's need to civilize Latin Americans and the Japanese already settled there.

This study begins by analyzing how these two divergent positions on Latin America serve as instruments capable of both criticizing and justifying imperial discourses. Although these two writers wrote extensively about their travels to South America, the current study will focus on Ishikawa's novel *Sōbō* (*The People*, 1935) and Shimazaki's travel account *Junrei* (*Pilgrimage*, 1936), as they condense most of the ideas these authors developed about Japanese imperial policy and overseas migrant settlement.

Ishikawa Tatsuzō in Primitive Brazil

The novel *Sōbō* (1935) turned journalist and author Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905–1985) into a national celebrity. The realist saga was the first to win the Akutawaga Prize, after which it sparked a storm of controversy concerning official expansionist policies. The Empire of Japan had recently invaded Manchuria in 1931 and broken off relations with the League of Nations in 1933 amid growing nationalist and militarist sentiments in all spheres of society. Ishikawa, who had traveled to Brazil in 1930 while being editor of *Shokumin* (*Colonies*), an expansionist journal of the government-controlled company *Kaigai kōgyō*, had harshly criticized the Empire in the travel book *Saikin nanbei ōraiki* (1931), which he published upon returning from his trip. It was his cruder depiction of the Japanese migrants in *Sōbō*, however, that has placed his work in the context of imperial discourse.

The novel starts at a Migration Center in the port of Kobe, where groups of migrants take physical examinations and language classes to depart for Brazil in a few days. Among them are the protagonists, Magoichi and Onatsu, two poor and orphan siblings from Akita Prefecture. They are accompanied by Katsuji (with whom Onatsu agreed to contract a marriage of convenience to become eligible for the state's family subsidy to travel to Brazil) and his younger brother and mother. Readers rapidly learn about their pasts. On the one hand, Magoichi was the one who planned his sister's

marriage and the trip to Brazil to avoid going through military conscription. On the other hand, Onatsu wanted to run away from their hometown after a sexual assault by her factory manager (unluckily, she ends up being molested by the supervisor of the Migration Center). Magoichi and Onatsu are victims of the gender and social expectations of Taishō Japan: becoming a soldier and breadwinner in the former's case and maintaining an obedient and submissive role as a woman in the latter's case. Therefore, within such a narrative structure, migration does not fulfill the characters' social duties but is instead their only possible escape; not a utopia full of possibilities, but their only way out of the motherland's dystopian conditions. As such, the novel does not portray a story of success, but rather one of misfortune, particularly that of the many "people" (in Japanese, *sōbo*) who had to comply with the social dictates of Japanese overseas expansionism.

Ishikawa's preferred narrative strategy to introduce readers to commentaries on migration is the recurrent debate he puts his characters through. While most migrants-to-be are enthusiastic and hopeful about the trip, some are doubtful and pessimistic. One of the latter says the following:

There is not a single immigrant who knows what the real Brazil is like. It's a fantasy. A fantasy in which the good things someone heard about Brazil are put together with the good things of Japan. But the *real* Brazil is a harsh place. Its remote villages are like other worlds detached from this. The next village is ten miles away if close, thirty if far. Regardless, the radio and the newspapers there are all bad. There is not even a postal service. The farmers live by making their own bed on the dirty floor. It is a place where there is nothing but working and eating and sleeping.⁴

⁴ 移民達は誰一人本当のブラジルを知ってはいない。空想だ。話に聞いたブラジルの良い所に日本の良い所だけを付け加えての空想だ。事実のブラジルは大変なところだ。僻遠の農村はこの世から隔離された別世界だ。隣の部落迄は近くて三里遠ければ十里、そこにはラジオは愚か新聞雑誌は愚か、郵便の配達さえもない。百姓達は土間に自分で寝台を作って住む。働くと食うと寝るより他にやる事もない所だ。Ishikawa Tatsuzō, *Sōbo (sanbusaku)* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1939), 27–28. See Matías Chiappe Ippolito, "Primitive, Primeval, and Peripheral. Images of Latin America in Japanese Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Waseda University, 2021).

This fragment is hardly an isolated example in *Sōbo*. While in the Migration Center, the characters discuss and complain about Brazil's salaries, education system, health conditions, and the lack of infrastructure, among other things.⁵ Ishikawa introduces those kinds of statements through the voice of his characters to criticize official discourse on migration and show that the place where the government was sending migrants was worse than their living conditions in Japan. Hence, his novel served as a counter-discourse to the Empire of Japan's expansionist propaganda by portraying "the people" as victims represented in the austere circumstances of his characters and described South America to Japanese readers as a backward and primitive space. Indeed, literary critic Moriya Takahashi has claimed that the author's depiction of Brazil and Japan's countryside (*inaka*) as non-civilized spaces also sought to criticize city and cosmopolitan life as representative of the Empire of Japan's application of the modernization and Westernization processes incorporated after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which led to the twentieth-century's escalating militarism.⁶

Alternatively, statements like the one quoted earlier must be highlighted as one of the many opinions and debates that *Sōbō*'s migrant characters share while waiting for their departure. Regardless, those experiences and sentiments cannot be taken as the general message of the novel. Literary critics Wu Fei Shan and Tachibana Reiko have pointed out that Ishikawa's anti-official discourse is only superficial, limiting himself to contrasting the opinions and voices of different migrant groups rather than making a strong argument.⁷ Be it a critique of imperial discourse or a display of plurality, however, the point of view toward Brazil remains unchanged. In consonance with naturalist and proletarian writers of his time, Ishikawa fell prey to the victimization of his characters as a method of exalting and reaffirming his figure as a socially engaged intellectual. In this process, the primitive image of Latin America, created by the presence of imperial

⁵ Ishikawa, *Sōbo*, 9, 28.

⁶ Moriya Takashi, "Burajiru nikkeiimin shōsetsuron," *Ibunka* 12 (2011): 133–156.

⁷ Fei Shan Wu, *Ishikawa Tatsuzō no bungaku. Senzen kara sengo he, 'shakai-ha sakka' no kiseki* (Tokyo: Arts & Craft, 2019); Tachibana Reiko, "Loss and Renewal in Three Narratives of the Nikkei Brazilian Diaspora. Ishikawa Tatsuzō's *Sōbō* and its Sequels," *Japan Review* 29 (2016), 145–169.

discourse in popular literature in the previous decades, was not only maintained in *Sōbo* but also spread out within *junbungaku* or high literature.

The success of *Sōbo* led Ishikawa to write two sequels: “Nankai kōro” (Sea Route through the Southern Seas) and “Koenaki tami” (Citizens Without a Voice), both published in *Chūō kōron* in 1939. The first sequel describes the sea voyage of the migrants from the original novel, while the second one depicts their living conditions in the Brazilian coffee plantation once they arrive. In both, Ishikawa toned down Brazil’s backward and primitive image to convey a more nationalistic and patriotic sentiment. Similarly, the characters start feeling less fearful about the living conditions in South America and becoming more interested in them. Fei Shan, Tachibana, and even Moriya⁸ agree that Ishikawa’s attitude change toward official migration policy was a product of his gradual conversion to imperial ideology, but these critics also highlight the pressures of censorship and self-censorship during the Pacific War that he endured for this change to take place. In fact, Ishikawa was imprisoned for three months in 1938, one year before the publication of *Sōbo*’s sequels, for criticizing the actions of the Japanese army in China in his novel *Ikitenuru heitai* (Living Soldiers).

One example of Ishikawa’s about-face in “Nankai kōro,” the first of *Sōbo*’s sequels, comes up at the end of the novel. The migrants finally arrive at the port of Rio de Janeiro after the narration built up to that moment for dozens of pages. The occasion is described as follows:

April 29. The loyal Japanese subjects would not forget that day at the port of Rio [...]. The migrants, lined up along the ship, shouted three hurrahs together with the captain’s voice and accompanied by other high-rank officials. Then, looking back on the long, very long sea voyage they had endured until today, they gave a salute and a bow towards the north-east sky and sang the national anthem twice. “We have finally reached the end of the world,” they thought keenly while doing this. Pulsing with singing voices full of tears, the Kimigayo anthem turned into a chorus of mixed voices of all ages and started shedding a beautiful rhythm all over the waves and shores of Brazil. As the Rising Sun flag in the main mast made them wonder if the grace of the

⁸ Moriya, “Burajiru nikkeiimin shōsetsuron,” 133–156.

Emperor would reach these remote lands and protect their future, tears poured down from their eyes.⁹

Sōbo's first sequel, "Nankai kōro," leaves its readers with some final thoughts: a nationalistic invocation, something nowhere present in the trilogy's original installment. Throughout the entire narration, the land retains the primitiveness that had characterized Latin America in Meiji and Taishō books. What changes is not the land itself, but rather the migrant views about it. When accompanied by the Empire of Japan's most cherished symbols (the anthem, the flag, the Emperor), they feel safe in Brazil as if they were in their homeland. In the passage, these symbols of Japan literally shroud the landscape just as the Empire's military had been using in its political affairs in the 1930s. Culture, then, is presented as an instrument to expand the nation's limits and protect overseas settlers.

Something similar occurs in "Koenaki tami," *Sōbo*'s second sequel, in which the migrants have already settled in a Brazilian coffee plantation. In this case, the land is described as a utopian place, a *locus amoenus* close to the Arcadia or Eden that the original installment so eagerly tried to tear apart. In it, there are green pastures, birds singing, and the constant flow of a crystalline river, all covered by "a huge setting sun burning in the Western hills."¹⁰ Ironically, the phrase used to describe such a bucolic landscape resembles the one used to criticize it in the first installment: "[Magoichi] had blurted out things about Brazil even while sleepwalking, but now that he had arrived, he felt puzzled that the things he had heard in Japan about the country were totally different from reality."¹¹ The Brazil that Ishikawa portrayed in 1939, a year when the Empire of Japan was going full-speed with expansionism, was quite different from what the author had described in 1935

⁹ 四月二十九日・忠良なる日本の巨民はリオの港にあってもこの日を忘れはしなかった。【略】移民たちはデッキにならんで、高級船員と共に、船長の發聲で萬歳を三唱した。それから長い長い今日までの航路を逆に辿って、東北の空に向かって最敬禮をし、國歌を二回合唱した。すると、たうとう世界の果てまで来てしまった自分たちがしみじみと考へられた。涙ぐんだ歌聲にうちしめった君ヶ代は、老若男女、さまざまの聲のまじったコーラスとなって、ブラジルの岸邊、打ち寄せる磯波のうへに美しい韻律を流した。仰ぎ見るメン・マストの日章旗は、はるかなるこの土地にまでも皇國の餘榮が及び、彼等の將來を見守ってぬてくれるかと思はれて、涙が流れた。Ishikawa, *Sōbo*, 256.

¹⁰ 西の丘に大きな入陽が燃えながら降って行った。Ibid., 289.

¹¹ Ibid.

— a time of political dissidence and controversy. The difference between these two visions of Brazil shows, then, not only the omnipresence of imperial discourse in representations of Latin America using a primitive image but also the capacity of such discourse to transform according to the political needs of each context.

Shimazaki Tōson in Primitive Argentina

A year after Ishikawa's novel *Sōbō* won the Akutagawa Prize, national literary celebrity Shimazaki Tōson (1872–1943) was dispatched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the 14th International PEN Club Congress, held in Buenos Aires between the 5th and 15th of September 1936. The trip was settled after the institution opened its branch in Japan, with the famous *homme de lettres* as its first president. According to official arrangements, Shimazaki was to promote Japanese literature and bring news of Japanese migrant communities living abroad, not only in South America but also in the many stops that he would make (Singapore, Colombo, Cape Town, Brazil, the United States, and Europe). There was also a third and hidden governmental objective: to publicize a positive picture of the Empire of Japan in the international arena, which could mitigate the damage caused by recent actions such as the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and dropping out of the League of Nations in 1933.

There were personal incentives as well. First, Shimazaki was involved in a scandal in the 1920s, after the publication of his autobiographical novel *Shinsei* (*New Life*, 1918–1919). In this novel, he describes an affair he had with his niece with her father's consent. Most importantly, as a representative of national literature, this trip signified an opportunity for him to cleanse his public image. A second incentive was the profits that the trip would bring him. In contrast to Ishikawa, who traveled to Brazil in 1930 with the help of a 200-yen subsidy that he acquired from his journalistic connections, Shimazaki did so with the benefit of a 50-thousand-yen compensation for bringing news about Japanese migrant communities, aside from incalculable gains in the form of publicity and media exposure. Third and finally, the genuine excitement about being considered one of the first Japanese writers to travel to Argentina surely motivated him too, both for personal enjoyment and as a milestone in the history of Japanese literature.

Junrei (*Pilgrimage*, 1936), the travel account that Shimazaki published upon returning to Japan, juxtaposes the official mandate and objectives on the one hand and, on the other, the apparent personal experiences and incentives. The book is not only a collection of vignettes

about the writer's exploits but also a sketch of South America and the migrants living in the region for the Japanese public. In its introduction, Shimazaki says of his motives for traveling abroad:

I wanted to make a getaway to the sea, as a cloud invited by a faraway wind, and to be bathed by the sunlight there and to be blown by the lake breeze there. Yes, I had received requests from many sectors for this trip to South America, so I also had to fulfill my mission and bring about a report upon returning safely to Japan. But I did not hold any particular responsibility. From the very beginning, I only felt satisfaction for the things that would be touching my eyes. I left my country with many expectations floating lightly before me, just like many other travelers had done before.¹²

By presenting himself as part of the landscape and describing his movement as that of a cloud following only the “satisfaction for the things that would be touching his eyes,” Shimazaki is detaching himself from any political mandate and asserts his voyage stems merely from a desire to acquire new experiences. In the same breath, by using a phrase expunged of contextual specificities such as “requests from many sectors,” he is watering down the Empire's role in his dispatchment and turning the opportunity into an excuse for an adventure he links to previous Japanese travelers. Such aestheticization of the real motives of the trip is constant throughout *Junrei* and allows Shimazaki to maintain an undefined perspective toward governmental patronage.

¹² 風に誘はるゝ雲のように廣々とした海の方へ出て行って、そこにある日光を浴び、そこにある湖風に吹かれたいと願った。もとよりこの南米旅にはいろいろな方面からの依頼を受け、その使命をも果たさねばならず、無事歸國の上はそれらの報告をも齎さねばならなかったが、それとてわたしは強ひてするやうな意識を待たずに、おのづから眼に觸るゝものがあるだけに満足して、多くの旅人と同じように、成るべく浅く浮びあがることを楽しみに國を離れたものである。 Shimazaki Tōsōn, *Junrei* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1936), 3–4. For further analysis, see Chiappe Ippolito, “Primitive, Primeval, and Peripheral” (Ph.D. diss., Waseda University, 2021).

Still, it would not be entirely accurate to interpret Shimazaki's travel account as a masquerade for an imperial enterprise. Literary critics like Inaga Shigemi, Oka Erina, and Sakai Kazuomi have pointed out that the writer and traveler deliberately assumed an ambivalent stance in order to relate his role as a public servant to his personal enjoyment.¹³ Moreover, there are historical particularities that explain Shimazaki's ambiguity. The first of these is the tightening censorship of the Empire of Japan, which made it difficult for writers to show explicit dissent with the government. The second one is the rise of colonial tourism, which emerged in Japan in the 1920s and boomed in the 1930s. As Shimazu Naoko explained regarding travelers that occupied Taiwan, this practice was an instance of ambiguity and indecision toward the dichotomy of Self-and-Other and the experience of alternative forms of modernity.¹⁴

In contrast, taking an ambivalent stance allowed Shimazaki to introduce different perspectives toward South America without opposing imperial discourse. After arriving in Buenos Aires, he presents the region as a place where he feels welcomed and at home and where even the flowers remind him of those in Japan:

The South is cold, and the North is warm. In the exact opposite spot to where our home country is in the Northern hemisphere and the sun glows, there is a typical South American old-style, yet solid mansion built initially to be the residence of some German. The stone sculptures placed

¹³ Inaga Shigemi, "Sesshū em Buenos Aires, Bashō en São Paulo. A participação de Shimazaki Tōson no PEN Clube Internationale e a conferência sobre o mais típico do Japão," *Estudos Japoneses* 28 (2008), 149–168; Oka Erina, "The Politics of Junrei no Tabi: Shimazaki Toson and the Formation of a Zone of Political Contact in South America" [in Japanese], *Border Crossings, The Journal of Japanese-Language Literature Studies* 3 (2016), 35–50; Sakai Kazuomi, "Shimazaki Tōson no nanbei yuki. 'Kokumin gaikō' no shiten kara." *Kyoto Tachibana University Research Bulletin* 45 (2018), 17–29.

¹⁴ Shimazu Naoko, "Colonial Encounters: Japanese Travel Writing on Colonial Taiwan," in Yuko Kikuchi, ed., *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 21–38.

in the front garden are a lively group of pupils not up with the times, but the blooming flowers, much like Japanese plums, indicate the coming of the hasty spring to Buenos Aires, something unbelievable in early September. After a long 50-day trip of thinking of the moment in which I would be finally arriving at my wife's company, so tired of the trip herself, what was also waiting for me here was this unexpected place and this unexpected, yet pleasant season.¹⁵

South America is no longer a harsh place but a welcoming one. Still characterized predominantly by its natural features, the image of the region that Shimazaki conveys is quite different from the “primitive” one given by previous publications, including those of the anti-imperialist and paladin of the voiceless, Ishikawa. Here the continent is a place that invites the writer into a familiar environment and that nostalgically takes him back in time. In this sense, the writer of *Junrei* compares his walks through the region, particularly those along the Río de la Plata, with Matsuo Bashō's pilgrimage in premodern Japan.¹⁶ This does not mean that Shimazaki does not depict certain areas of Argentina and South America as savage and backward (for instance, when describing the Amazon rainforest). However, those attributes are a reminiscence, looking back in time and assimilating the region into an already-lost Japan.

Concurrently, Shimazaki presents the city of Buenos Aires and, specifically, everything concerning the migrant community there as a space of civilization and progress. In fact, he seems to draw two Argentinas: the first is the South American one, unsophisticated yet evocative of a premodern Japan; the second version of Argentina is the Japanese settlers' one, developed, trendy, and prosperous. Notably, he is very eulogistic of the

¹⁵ 南は寒く、北は暖かい。この南米らしい、北半球にある自分達の國のとは正反対な日あたりのところに、元は獨逸人の住宅として建てられたといふ古風でがっしりした屋敷がある。庭前に置く石の彫刻物も時代離れのした瞳子の群像ではあるが、それだけまた落ちつきもあって、前栽のところに咲く梅に似た花のほころびは九月初めの陽気とも思はれないほど、ブエノス・アイレスへ来る春の早さを語ってぬる。五十日の長い航海の後、旅に疲れた家内を相手に漸く辿り着いた思ひのするその自分を待つてぬて呉れたのも、こんな思ひがけない場所と、思ひがけない好い季節の頃とであった。 Shimazaki, *Junrei*, 99.

¹⁶ Ibid., 119.

community's economy and work capacity, which he attributes to the local richness and Japanese customs combined. In this way, Shimazaki transforms the "primitive image" of South America yet again by presenting the region as a diamond-in-the-rough with economic potential that can be utilized in the Empire's favor. Furthermore, such a description allows him to detach the migrants from the notion of *kimin* (abandoned people),¹⁷ a common 1930s critique of the Empire from opposition writers such as Ishikawa, and to turn the community into a carrier of Japanese modernization, mirroring the imperial discourse used in expansionist campaigns throughout the Pacific during those years.

Finally, it must be noted that Shimazaki describes the migrant community in Buenos Aires as a patriotic group devoted to the Emperor. The most explicit instance of this is when Shimazaki visits the Japanese migrant high school for the first time (not named in the travelogue, though it was known to be Buenos Aires' Nichia Gakuin). Surprised by the level of Japanese and manners of the teachers and students, the writer is moved to tears by a migrant girl who, upon meeting the envoys coming from Japan, recites the Japanese national anthem.¹⁸ When seeing this and other actions of the Japanese settlers, Shimazaki confirms that they are loyal nationals, just as any Japanese living in the archipelago, who can worship the Emperor from afar (*yōhai*)¹⁹ and work in favor of the Empire.

In analyzing the interactions between the Empire of Japan and the Japanese community in Argentina, Facundo Garasino concentrated on the case of Shinya Toshio (1884–1954), a pioneer migrant to the South American country later turned leader of the community and imperialistic proponent during the 1930s and 1940s. According to Garasino, the case of Shinya

¹⁷ For an analysis on the notion of *kimin*, see Endō Toake, *Nanbei kimin seisaku no jitsuzō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shōten), 2016.

¹⁸ In the end, one girl was chosen. She stood up from among the crowd and started singing the national anthem of Japan especially for us. This was a second-generation girl singing with words of a nation she had never seen with her own eyes. Never throughout the journey had I been so much in tears as at that time. やがて一人の選ばれた少女が聴衆の中から立って、特にわたしたちのために日本の唱歌を歌った。見知らぬ故國の言葉もめづらしげに歌ひ出づるその少女こそ、第二世そのものであった。旅に来て、わたしもその時ほど涙の追ったこともない。 Shimazaki, *Junrei*, 104.

¹⁹ Ibid., 109.

proves that the Japanese government was using and counting on the local elite to promote its expansionist propaganda and transmit a positive image of the Empire through its settler communities abroad.²⁰ Shimazaki's description of the migrants in Argentina in *Junrei* opened the door for them to work for the Empire in a similar fashion. As representatives of Buenos Aires' modernization imbued with patriotic sentiment despite the distance, Shimazaki portrayed them as potential helping hands of the Empire and called for the latter to support them.

Primitive South America as an Instrument in a Political Struggle

The image of South America that these two writers constructed in the first half of the twentieth century resulted from the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Empire. It must be reiterated that Ishikawa and Shimazaki were both writing at a time when imperial discourse was inescapable, especially for the latter since he was financed by the government. In that regard, South America was depicted in their oeuvres with the background of previous propagandistic periodicals and literary genres such as *kaigai shōsetsu* or *imin shōsetsu* that conveyed a backward, underdeveloped, and primitive image of the region meant to promote the government's expansionism. The continent was an Other to the Empire.

The "primitive image" also presented the connection between Japan and South America as a result of Meiji migration policies. Unlike some works of this period (but more so those of the postwar era), it did not portray a history of travels initiated since the so-called Christian century of Japan, when Mexico (or New Spain) played the role of a stopping point for the ships traveling from the Pacific to Europe. The reason for portraying the links between South America and Japan only through the Meiji lens was to build upon a power structure that could legitimize the imperial advance: on one side was the supposedly underdeveloped South America, and on the other, the supposedly already-modernized Japan. Such a depiction posited the Empire as an emissary of culture with policies that permeated local communities.

Despite having opposite ideological positions on official policy, Ishikawa's and Shimazaki's analyses referenced depictions of South America

²⁰ Facundo Garasino, "Ratenamerika kara teikoku wo senden suru: hitori no aruzenchin nihon imin ga kataru seiyō – oriento – shinsekai," *Nihon gakuho* 35 (2016), 129–152.

that ultimately merged on similar patterns. The “primitive image” of the region that they used served these two writers to either (1) highlight the harsh living conditions of migrants and thereby criticize the government (in the case of Ishikawa) or (2) praise the modernization that the migrants had carried overseas to legitimize the Empire’s advance (in the case of Shimazaki). For both writers, the Japanese settlers in South America fulfilled an instrumental role: they were victims that could display the Empire’s failures or flag-bearers and vessels of the official policy employed to justify imperial expansion. In either case, South America and its Japanese communities were conceived as tools in a political struggle.

As a final note, the current study has provided evidence that Ishikawa and Shimazaki incorporated alterations to the original “primitive image” of South America that emerged in Japan during the early twentieth century. Whether in confronting the hegemonic discourse on migration or relaying a new perspective on it, both authors complexified the issue of Otherness and its representation. By depicting South America in a crude and provocative way, Ishikawa expunged all idealization from the “primitive image” of the region, at least for the first installment of the *Sōbō* trilogy. Meanwhile, Shimazaki transformed this same “primitive image” by presenting South America as a place where Japanese migrants had been welcomed and able to develop fully in social and economic terms. In this way, he imbued the settlers with a deeper understanding than that of being considered either *kimin* (abandoned people) or successful travelers. These aesthetic changes opened the door for new representations of South America and envisaged in the region a standpoint from where to write on colonialism and modernization.

Essays

**SWALLOWTAIL BUTLER CAFÉ:
COOL JAPAN, COSPLAY, OTAKUS, AND INTERACTION
RITUALS IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN**

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Introduction

This study is a sociological analysis of the Swallowtail Butler Café (“Swallowtail”), a popular themed café in Tokyo favored among Japanese and foreign visitors. Special attention is paid to cosplay (costume role-playing) and interactive rituals that appeal to the fantasies of the customers, especially those female *otakus* who are avid fans of manga (Japanese comics), anime (animation), food, and handsome men.¹

During the Covid-19 outbreak, the Japanese government restricted travel to and from Japan, and the Metropolitan Tokyo Government mandated certain measures to protect citizens from the virus in 2020 and 2021. Swallowtail, like many other restaurants and bars, must strictly follow the national and local ordinances. The unprecedented pandemic affected social life in many ways, and research is no exception. The authors were forced to be creative and use less conventional, alternative ways to gather data. Content analysis is one of the qualitative methods of sociology that provides the researchers with a way to understand human behavior by analyzing recorded communication. We watched more than 70 YouTube videos, analyzed their contents, and reviewed various web pages about the themed cafés such as maid and butler cafés. An ethnomethodological conversational analysis was also conducted as part of this research project.

Cool Japan

It has been more than 76 years since Japan lost World War II and the Allied Forces occupied the nation for the first time in its long history. As Japan rose from the ashes, an unprecedentedly rapid economic development

¹ The word *otaku* is generally used for enthusiastic fans of Japanese popular culture such as anime, manga, video games, etc. In contemporary Japan, it is also used for any fandom. For example, there are otakus who are really interested in trains, cameras, castles, foods, books, music, science fiction, or history. We use the term *otaku* to focus on its various subcultural aspects in this study.

occurred in the 1960s. The “Income Doubling Plan” of Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda, for example, was accomplished within seven years, and Japanese GNP grew at an average of 10 percent per year in real terms. The Japanese economy became the third largest in the world.² The government encouraged exports of several material products through tax deductions. After 1965, it also promoted mergers of large corporations to become more competitive internationally. The term *Japan Inc.* refers to the intimate and cozy relationship between the Japanese government and corporations.³

Exports are still significant in the twenty-first century. Some of the most important exports contributing to the Japanese economy nowadays are products of popular culture, which are marketed with great success globally and in Japan for inbound tourists. The term *Cool Japan* (which sounds narcissistic and outdated to some) refers to the branding and tourism of Japanese pop culture. According to the Cabinet Office of the Japanese government, *Cool Japan* includes manga, anime, video games, broadcasting, cosplay, J-Pop, and diverse industries such as food (i.e., sushi, ramen noodles, cafés, and restaurants), tourism, manufacturing, and merchandising. The formal *Cool Japan* platform was established by the government and the private sector. Vigorous promotion of the concept, owing to its role as the nation’s soft power in international relations and diplomacy and as a source of national income, began in the 2010s.⁴

So-called “concept cafés” are a good part of *Cool Japan*. Many are found in modern Tokyo and other metropolitan cities, including cafés where the customers can enjoy spending time with cats, dogs, hedgehogs, owls, and other animals as they eat and drink.⁵ In a maid café, the staff members and

² Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan: The Story of a Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1990), 244–245.

³ Johannes Hirschmeier and Yui Tsunehiko, *The Development of Japanese Business 1600–1973* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁴ Ito Kinko and Paul A. Crutcher, “Popular Mass Entertainment in Japan: Manga, Pachinko, and Cosplay,” *Society* 55/1 (2013), 44–48, “Cool Japan Strategy Public-Private Collaboration Initiative Summary,” Cabinet Office, (accessed April 30, 2021, https://cao.go.jp/cool_japan/english/pdf/published-document1.pdf).

⁵ Laura Reid, “Top Craziest Themed Cafes in Tokyo 2019 (Monster, Hedgehog, Owls),” March 8, 2019 (accessed April 18, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/5CcDniFNNF0>).

clients enjoy cosplay, games, food, and drinks together. Other themes include *kawaii* (cute), vampires, robots, ninjas, and monsters that cater to the fantasies of children and adults alike. In maid cafés, the young and pretty waitresses dressed in French maid uniforms (a dress with frills, a petticoat, a pinafore, hair accessories, and stockings) welcome men by greeting them, “Welcome home, Master” with a smile. This service gives the male customer, young or old, a valuable sense of pure joy and fulfillment. There are also cross-dressing maid cafés where all the wait staff members are young men dressed in women’s outfits and hairstyles.⁶ Gender seems to be more fluid in these types of cafés.

Swallowtail Butler Café (“Swallowtail”)

Swallowtail Butler Café is categorized as a “concept restaurant” or a “theme restaurant” where both the wait staff members and their customers enjoy cosplay and role-playing. There are themed restaurants in the United States, such as Hollywood Café, Rainforest Café, and Hard Rock Café, but they do not entail cosplay elements or role-playing.⁷ Swallowtail is nationally and internationally renowned in certain circles. It is located on *Otome Dōri* (a street the locals call “Maiden Road”) in Ikebukuro, one of the downtown centers of Tokyo. Maiden Road has many shops and cafés that cater to female otakus, especially those who love anime. In addition, they sell cheap household goods, cosmetics, and fashionable styles of clothing.⁸

Since opening in March 2005, Swallowtail has welcomed customers from multiple age groups ranging from 20 to 50 years old,⁹ yet 80% of those who patronize the café are women in their 20s and 30s.¹⁰ The prices for the food, service, and overall experience with the handsome, clean-cut, and professional butlers are quite reasonable. For example, the afternoon tea set

⁶ ZeSSIV, “The Cutest She-Men in Japan. We Sneaked into a Dragged-Up Café in Akihabara,” February 6, 2013 (accessed April 18, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/rGfFv1GwOCc>).

⁷ An exception might be the Medieval Castle Café in Texas.

⁸ Yumiko Sugiura, *A Study of Otaku Girls: Survey of Yaoi Ideology* (Tokyo: Hara shobo, 2006).

⁹ The Uwaga Pies, “I Paid a Japanese Man to Serve Me,” June 14, 2018 (accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/WFHqzIII3Rg>).

¹⁰ Akemi Nakamura, “Turning the Tables on ‘Maid Cafés: For Female ‘Otaku,’ a Coffee House All Their Own,” *The Japan Times*, April 24, 2006.

is 3,300 yen (about US \$32). Course menu dinners, which change every month, are around US \$60. Thus, the café is within the means of ordinary college students and young working women, not to mention rich bar hostesses and middle-aged women.

Over the years, Swallowtail has evolved into a multi-business enterprise that includes the following:

(1) The Butlers' Café offers various kinds of tea (British tea, herb tea, flavored tea, iced tea, etc.), exquisite desserts, an afternoon tea set, and dinners. The afternoon tea sets change from season to season and have three tiers of plates with sandwiches, scones of butter/jam, and cakes. According to Iori, a second steward, it "is a tea salon for all the busy ladies to spend some relaxing moments," and "At dinner time, course menus are served."¹¹

(2) The Gift Shop, located across the café, sells 40 kinds of baked goods for teatime and loose-leaf tea in cans and refill bags. These tea infusions are blended by the butlers, certified or licensed as tea instructors, coordinators, masters, sommeliers, and advisors by specific organizations such as the Japan Tea Association, the Japan Ability Development Promotion Association, and the Japan Safe Food Cooking Association.¹²

(3) BAR BLUE MOON is located near the café, and it caters to more mature adult women who would like to drink alcohol after dinner.¹³

(4) Butler Café Opera Troupe has musicians, singers, and dancers who also serve in the café as butlers. The group has numerous YouTube videos of mixed content: original music videos, operettas, concerts, promotional videos, and even instructional videos on how to make delicious tea drinks and special meals offered at the café. In all these videos, the audience is addressed as *ojōsama* (My Lady).¹⁴

¹¹ Play Tokyo, "Swallowtail-Butler's Café," July 10, 2019 (accessed November 5, 2020, <https://www.youtube.be/I9eKUTybId8s>).

¹² Swallowtail 執事喫茶, "Oyashikinosusume gifutoshoppuhen #1," March 6, 2018 (accessed May 4, 2021, [//www.youtube.be/WxjrKrqmQ6o](https://www.youtube.be/WxjrKrqmQ6o)); and Swallowtail 執事喫茶, "Oyashikinosusume gifutoshoppuhen #7," February 6, 2019 (accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/Ip6CuR1TKWA>).

¹³ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, "Shitsujiga ookurisuru Bar Blue Moon," September 20, 2018 (accessed May 5, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/7PvKMqF8hOg>).

¹⁴ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, "2020.11.26 Butlers Opera Troupe, 10th Anniversary Concert" J-LOD Live, December 24, 2020 (accessed April 31, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/gkaxc8nD22Y>).

(5) Several staff members have regularly been making public appearances as butlers at conventions such as Houston's Anime Matsuri (festival) since 2017.¹⁵ They also attended the Anaheim Convention Center for Japan Park Los Angeles on November 10th and 11th, 2018.¹⁶

(6) There is a very popular anime and manga titled *Kuroshitsuji* (Black Butler) by Yana Toboso, serialized since 2006 in *Monthly G Fantasy*, a manga magazine for boys published by the company Square Enix in Tokyo. The protagonist is a demon disguised as a marvelous butler who works for an aristocratic family in Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. The comic has been adapted to animation, theater, live-action films, and even video games.¹⁷ Many *Kuroshitsuji* fans dream of being served by the butlers who dress like the anime's protagonist, Sebastian.

(7) As for tourism, the café offers its fans trips to various places. On March 2nd, 2019, for example, 98 women and 19 butlers took a special train called *Nagomi* from Ueno Station in Tokyo to Nikko, one of the most attractive sightseeing spots in Japan. A luncheon was provided at a famous hotel, and the fans' favorite butlers served them drinks and meals, played games, and talked with them. They also stopped at a strawberry farm and picked fruits together.¹⁸

Swallowtail Butler Café is in the basement of a commercial building in Tokyo. The environment and ambiance of the café are to remind the

¹⁵ Anime Matsuri, "Swallowtail Café Experience at Anime Matsuri 2017," November 30, 2016 (accessed April 28, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNQOHc-xjFE>); Anime Matsuri, "Experience Swallowtail Butler Café at Anime Matsuri 2018," October 30, 2017 (accessed April 28, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7k1v8vnAyg>); and Anime Matsuri, "Swallowtail Butler Café at Anime Matsuri 2019," December 27, 2018 (accessed April 28, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0etByleh9k>).

¹⁶ "Welcome to the Swallowtail Butler Café, a Popular Butler Café Based in Ikebukuro, Tokyo," Japan Park Los Angeles, Facebook, September 26, 2018 (accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/japanparkLA/posts/welcome-to-the-wallowtail-butler-café-based-in-ikebukuro-1952477301439632/>).

¹⁷ Sawamura Shuji, *Nihon Manga Zenshi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha shinsho, 2020), 335–336.

¹⁸ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, "Butlers Tour 2019," March 2, 2019 (accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vanJIzQS3V8>).

customers of a British mansion, considering that domestic service as an occupation is said to have reached its height in Victorian England. The furniture and decoration in the café are also quite elegant – tables, chairs, cushions, cupboards, curtains, mirrors, clocks, candleholders, paintings, portraits, and roses – as all these items appear in the popular manga and anime series *Black Butler*. Upon entering the tearoom, a first-time customer from abroad said, “Oh, my goodness. This is like...something like an architectural digest... something like a movie set.”¹⁹

On the ceiling of the café are gorgeous and glitzy chandeliers of various sizes made of Swarovski crystals. A woman from Las Vegas was impressed with the décor and lost track of time because she was “too busy enjoying the atmosphere.”²⁰ Similarly, Pamela Drobig, a German translator who lives in Tokyo, wrote, “I couldn’t help but feel both mesmerized and overwhelmed.”²¹

Shiina,²² a senior butler, explains that the “Mansion” where the café is located is in a large compound with several buildings, gardens (including a rose garden), a dormitory for footmen, a gym, a horse stable, a riding platform, and a field for growing vegetables and herbs. These settings exist in an imaginary realm since the café itself, as mentioned previously, is in the basement of a building in Ikebukuro. The “main building” of the “Mansion” is the residence of the Master and his family, and Swallowtail is a salon located in one of the annexed buildings and used by the ladies as a place to have a wonderful time with delicious tea and sweets. The elegant and

¹⁹ OtakuVerseZero, “Otaku-Verse Zero S2 Ep02,” April 16, 2011 (accessed April 27, 2021, https://www.youtube.be/Otld_NAotNU).

²⁰ Miranda L., “Swallowtail,” Yelp, July 14, 2018 (accessed April 26, 2021, <http://www.yelp.com/biz/swallowtail-豊島区>).

²¹ “Like Maid Cafés, for Ladies: Dining at Tokyo's Swallowtail Butler Café!” Live Japan Perfect Guide, July 20, 2020 (accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www.livejapan.com/en/in-tokyo/in-pref-tokyo/in-ikebukuro/article-a0000531>).

²² Just like in Victorian England, all butlers in the café are addressed by their last names only. Interestingly, at a hostess bar, the hostesses are addressed by their first names, which are usually pseudonyms.

romantic atmosphere of the café offers a spacious and relaxing place for women to escape from everyday reality.²³

Japan is 1/25th the size of the United States, but it is not the smallest country in the world. However, the European Union (EU) ridiculed the island nation in its internal 1979 report on economic strategies against Japan, which said that people there live in “rabbit hutches,” using a derogatory phrase to refer to the size of Japanese housing.²⁴ Like many societies, Japanese people enjoy entertaining guests at home if they have a spacious house but prefer going to cafés and restaurants if their home is small or not presentable. Japanese apartments and houses constructed in recent years seem to be growing larger, but the Japanese still dream of having bigger homes and gardens.

Swallowtail’s “huge compound with several buildings” is part of the world of make-belief, so customers need to be familiar with this concept to carry an appropriate conversation with the butlers, who are fully in character. Customers walk downstairs to the café from the outside entrance at street-level access. Once at the basement, a footman waits for customers to arrive and opens the door for them while a senior butler politely greets each person. As an example of a presentational ritual, the butler then “makes specific attestations to recipients concerning how he regards them and how he will treat them in the on-coming interaction.”²⁵

Here is when the cosplay begins between the butlers and their customers. The former are servants, and the latter are family members of the mansion. A senior butler dressed in a traditional cutaway coat²⁶ greets the female guest saying, “*Okaerinasai Ojōsama* (Welcome home, My Lady),” or as “My Princess.” Then, behind him the second steward in his tailcoat will

²³ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, “Shitsujikissa Swallowtail Goannai & Shitsujikagekidan,” November 9, 2011 (accessed May 8, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/32vPj23X09A>).

²⁴ “兎小屋 (usagigoya),” Goo 辞書 Dictionary (accessed April 30, 2021, <https://www.dictionary.goo.ne.jp/word/兎小屋>).

²⁵ Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), 71.

²⁶ In Japan cutaway coats are called *mōningu* (morning coat), and they are worn by men for formal ceremonies and occasions. The fathers of the bride and bridegroom, the bridegroom, and the male *nakōdo* (go-between) usually wear the coat at Japanese weddings.

warmly say, “Welcome back.” Finally, he escorts her to her table in the salon, where she gets seated.²⁷ When the customer is male, he is addressed as “*Botchan* (Young Lord)” or “*Dannasama* (Master).”²⁸

Understanding Cosplay

At Swallowtail, the butlers’ uniform consists of a white shirt, a black cutaway coat or tailcoat, a bow tie or long and narrow “necktie,” black pants, and black leather shoes. Although the café mainly caters to women, men are also regular customers who enjoy the atmosphere, great tea and food, and royal hospitality.²⁹

Kosupure (cosplay) is a Japanese portmanteau combining the English terms costume and play. Broadly understood to have originated as an amalgam of American role-playing and masquerade and Japanese anime and manga fandoms, the contemporary term and practice are often attributed to Takahashi Nobuyuki. Takahashi and several authors, creators, and fans have participated in cosplay cultures, many of which flourish online and at the San Diego Comic-Con, anime conventions, and similar events. Comic-Con began in 1970 and has become the largest and most prolific comic convention in the United States, attracting tens of thousands of manga, anime, and cosplay fans today.³⁰

The origins of cosplay are contentious. Some scholars and experts trace contemporary cosplay through a lineage of theatric and imaginative performance in human history, including masquerades, costume balls, and the Japanese *Noh* and *kabuki* theaters. For example, the “Gothic Lolita” girls in 2020 Harajuku, Tokyo, are continuing traditions from an 1820 street masquerade in Venice, Italy. Others locate cosplay’s inception in late twentieth-century fandoms, such as people going to the theater in proxy dresses (as a character) to see *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Star Wars*, or

²⁷ ZeSSIV, “The Quality of Butlers’ Café’s Royalty Service is Just Impressing,” May 15, 2013 (accessed April 30, 2021, <https://youtu.be/b8YNguVmKi0>).

²⁸ All the YouTube videos show female customers only, and the authors do not know what kind of men frequent the café. Any customer can enjoy interacting with the witty, elegant, and gentlemanly butlers.

²⁹ “Like Maid Cafés, for Ladies,” Live Japan Perfect Guide, July 20, 2020.

³⁰ Sawamura, *Nihon Manga Zenshi*, 351.

Frozen, or in groups donning handmade costumes to represent their favorite characters in popular manga or anime such as Sailor Moon or Naruto.

Cosplay involves the creative tasks of costume design and other artistry, performance, group engagement, and source content knowledge. The 501st Legion, for instance, is an international cosplay community focusing on *Star Wars* and includes a wide range of dedicated fans. As a fan, you are embraced with world-specific features; for example, rather than colloquial and general terms for membership in a social group, you are instructed to understand your “local Garrison” or “Outpost” and to contact your “Detachment.” Live Action Role Playing (LARP) offers its fans deep psychological and social association with their preferred animated characters, like those fans we see in cosplay performances at Swallowtail or in troop formations at a pop culture convention such as the legendary 501st Garrison. Cosplay is thus a shared, embodied activity that promotes community.³¹

The word cosplay is also used for any type of costume play, such as occupational and situational uniforms or the butlers’ attire at Swallowtail. The female otakus who frequent the café also dress up in their kimonos, like a traditional *miko* (shrine maiden), or in dresses with themes such as *rorikon*³² (girls’ clothes for adult women) and *kawaii* (cute).³³ Hence, the term cosplay covers not only the cosplay of manga and anime characters but also various other themes in contemporary Japan.

Role-Playing, Role-Taking, and Role-Making in a Hierarchical Society

At Swallowtail Butler Café, both the customers and the handsome butlers enjoy interacting with one another. A customer may go to the café solo or with a few friends as the salon offers seating options for single customers or small groups.

The customers need to be familiar with the “stage” or setting where they engage in role-playing and its ambiance. The elegant environment with fancy furniture, curtains, cutlery, and chandeliers is quite different from everyday Japanese homes and offices. Pamela Drobig wrote, “I was a bit nervous before my visit, not knowing what exactly to expect...The relaxed,

³¹ S. J. Napier, “The World of Anime Fandom in America” in F. Lunning, ed, *Mechademia* 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 47–63.

³² The term is an abbreviation of the so-called “Lolita Complex” in Japanese, but it usually means an attraction to underage girls.

³³ The Uwaga Pies, “I Paid a Japanese Man,” June 14, 2018.

confident professionalism (of her butlers)...immediately brushed aside any sort of tension that I might have brought into the café.”³⁴ Shiina advises, “We remind the ladies visiting the salon for the first time that this is their home and tell them to relax. We are servants after all, and we want them to enjoy their teatime.”³⁵ The customers usually start to feel more comfortable with the setting and the role they are supposed to play within a short time as they immerse in this unique experience. Drobig writes that the butlers “strive to make everyone feel welcome, valued, and yes, royal.”³⁶ With more comfort comes a transformation of one’s concept of self.

George H. Mead (1863–1931) was a US philosopher and founding father of a sociological paradigm called symbolic interactionism. He states that our initial selfhood process entails the acquisition of language, which enables us to engage in role-taking and role-making. Children develop their self, a conception one has of oneself, as they go through several stages: the play stage, the game stage, and the generalized other stage. An example of the play stage is children playing house, where each child takes the role of their “significant other,” such as a parent. They understand the world from the perspective of their significant other, who influences the child’s self-evaluation and acceptance of norms to a substantial degree.³⁷

Mead used the example of a baseball game to explain the game stage, where the child assumes numerous roles at a time to acquire “the generalized other,” the attitude of the group, community, and society. Society is internalized in one’s self by adopting the generalized other, and humans eventually reach the stage where they have self-control.³⁸ For instance, TV dramas and movies about Victorian aristocracy might help people learn proper manners regarding interactions with the butlers.

³⁴ “Like Maid Cafés, for Ladies,” Live Japan Perfect Guide, July 20, 2020.

³⁵ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, “Swallowtail Butler Café,” May 2, 2015 (accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/8DFOuyGwOUU>).

³⁶ “Like Maid Cafés, for Ladies,” Live Japan Perfect Guide, July 20, 2020.

³⁷ George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), reprinted in Craig Calhoun et al., eds., *Classical Sociological Theory* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons, 2012).

³⁸ Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical Social Context* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 337.

In this realm, the novice butlers must learn their roles from others, especially from senior butlers who act as their “significant other,” teaching them the correct etiquette, proper manners, and language. In several YouTube videos, the butlers serve customers and carry witty conversations with ease and professionalism. Yet, when it comes to new butlers, they must first go through a rigorous two-month training.³⁹ Professional trainers of hotel and restaurant staff members teach them lessons on how to stand, wait, bow, walk, bring food, serve tea, and talk. They also teach customs and manners, responsibilities, and professionalism.⁴⁰ Butlers must master the art of tea making and learn the names of different teas, flavors, and teacups. Iori, the tea manager, understands that “tea is made with various considerations – the lady’s mood, weather, season, etc.”⁴¹

A rookie butler needs to take the role of “the generalized other” to fit in the community where he now belongs. He needs to learn the way of Swallowtail by character training and socialization. The generalized other of the café “consists of the commonly shared and presumably deeply felt expectations, sentiments, values, and ideas of which members of the social unit are aware and in relation to which they judge themselves and one another.”⁴²

First-time customers to Swallowtail need to pay attention to the role they are playing to behave properly. The new and adventurous experience with handsome and proper butlers may make some customers uncomfortable at first. However, once seated at a table, the butler becomes their significant other. He is an agent of socialization who reveals information about the “Mansion,” explains the process to make tea and the various foods served, and occasionally gives instructions on how to be a proper “lady.” For example, when she wants more tea, she should use the bell to call his attention, and her butler comes to her table and pours the beverage. When she wants to

³⁹ “Like Maid Cafés, for Ladies,” Live Japan Perfect Guide, July 20, 2020.

⁴⁰ Suzuneiro すずねちゃんねる, “Shitsujikissade hataraitara omoiohoka taihendadda hanashi 1 kenshūhen,” April 28, 2020 (accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/xVqEpu2OEYY>); CDawgVa, “I Joined Japan’s #1 Butler Café,” August 3, 2020, (accessed October 25, 2020, https://www.youtube.be/qqVHHTQco_A).

⁴¹ Swallowtail 執事喫茶, “Swallowtail Butler Café,” May 2, 2015.

⁴² John P. Hewitt, *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1988), 130.

use the restroom, she rings the bell, and he will escort her there. Veteran butlers with more life experience give suggestions and life advice to younger customers as needed. They also “discipline” them by saying, “Our Master told us not to spoil you!”⁴³ When customers ask a private question about the butlers’ age, marital status, or where they live, they gracefully dismiss these details to let them ponder and leave it to their imagination. Often, customers enjoy playing the role of a “spoiled” rich woman who can command the well-mannered butlers.⁴⁴ The roles give both employees and customers an organizing framework that they “can use to make a performance that will meet the needs of a particular situation,” and as for their role-making, they are self-consciously and “creatively engaged in making an appropriate role performance.”⁴⁵

A butler and his “lady” are mutually oriented toward each other. Their co-presence entails verbal and non-verbal cues such as silence, glances, postures, gestures, use of space, body movement, and other contextual understandings. US anthropologist Edward Hall observed that Japan has a high-context culture, where this context “determines everything about the nature of communication and is the foundation on which all subsequent behavior rests.”⁴⁶ Thus, Japanese people need to know the explicit messages and the hidden dimensions within contextual meanings to interact appropriately. This ability is required to *kūkiwo yomu* (to “read” the air/atmosphere/situation and to read between the lines) in Japanese.

Erving Goffman, a Canadian-born sociologist, known for his dramaturgical analysis, states that an individual needs to rely on others “to complete the picture of him of which he himself is allowed to paint only certain parts. Each individual is responsible for the demeanor image of himself and the deference image of others.”⁴⁷ The individual self is the product of a joint interaction ceremony, and it applies to all the cosplayers at

⁴³ Emirin Channeru, “Arasājoshiga ohimesamani narikitte shitsujikissani ittara jikkanikaetta kimochininatta,” October 16, 2019 (accessed April 17, 2021, <http://www.youtu.be/ER4BTEb2eck>).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Hewitt, *Self and Society*, 83.

⁴⁶ Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1977), 92.

⁴⁷ Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), 84.

Swallowtail: the butlers and the customers. Each individual needs to interpret how others handle themselves and observe their demeanor and deference during their social interactions in the salon. Goffman summarizes that “the self is in part a ceremonial thing, a sacred object which must be treated with proper ritual care and in turn must be presented in a proper light to others.”⁴⁸ The butlers’ royal treatment of their customers makes them feel special, noble, and important. This is especially meaningful for contemporary Japanese women’s psyche. Japanese women are expected to be polite and attentive to their men, be it their boss, father, husband, or son, and they are generally asked to serve others’ needs more often than men. Many women (whether Japanese or not) willingly do these things because they want to do so. The desirability of service to others still symbolizes an ideal womanhood and motherhood.

Nevertheless, women tend to suffer from overwork in their careers and at home, especially those who need to take care of the very young, sick, disabled, or elderly without much help from other family members. The Japanese word *karōshi* (death from overwork) appeared in the 1980s, and more than 10,000 “workaholics” die annually in recent years. More Japanese women employees die from overwork and suicide attributed to work-related fatigue. It can happen to housewives, too.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, women who have advanced in their careers face a tremendous amount of stress at work as their responsibilities and accountabilities increase. Appropriateness in speech and behavior is very important in Japanese corporations, yet sexual and moral harassment by men abound, and they usually can get away with it. It is tough to be a woman in Japan. Many desire to be respected and pampered at least once in a while. No wonder they become repeating customers at the Swallowtail café!

Traditionally, Japanese society is considered a hierarchical one where rank and order are indispensable for proper interaction rituals.⁵⁰ Japanese people are never equal to one another, and respect is shown in many ways, such as language (e.g., greetings, titles, forms of address, and verb stems), bowing, the space one occupies, and seating arrangements. Ruth

⁴⁸ Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 91.

⁴⁹ Tara John, “Japan’s Deadly Culture of Overwork.” *Time*, October 23, 2017.

⁵⁰ Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1947); Nakane Chie, *Japanese Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972).

Benedict remarked that the notion of hierarchy is as natural as breathing to the Japanese. One must know one's proper station in society and behave accordingly.⁵¹

In role-play, one can enjoy more freedom by escaping from everyday reality and routines. It is fun and liberating, and it offers psychological satisfaction to deep-seated longings or certain fetishes. It also makes our unrealistic hopes and extravagant dreams "come true" at the café, if only for a short time. At Swallowtail, the butlers are always pleasant and deferential. They use polite and respectful language to elevate the status of their customers or humble language to bring themselves down to do the same. They also use different degrees of bowing to show respect and sincerity. Their "ladies" speak as they like and can indulge themselves in the passive affection of the butler and embrace complete relaxation while being accommodated in this kind of interaction. It relieves the stress of many young women working in corporations where it is typical for their male bosses and colleagues to force them into submissive and demure behavior, demanding they make errands or even tea or coffee in the office.⁵² At the café, the housewives can temporarily forget about their household chores and daily routines to serve their family members. They can genuinely enjoy a quiet teatime with handsome butlers who pamper their self-esteem. There is much psychological satisfaction in this type of social interaction, so it is understandable how often women seek it, given how rarely it occurs in everyday reality.

The butlers are always required to be professional. They have information and general knowledge, and they pay attention to events and trends in the world to talk with their "ladies." The conversations at the café also entail make-believe stories about their life situations, and the butlers and stewards try to answer any questions from their customers. For example, a young Chinese woman asked Iori, the second steward, "What is my schedule today?" He immediately takes out the planner from his suit pocket and says, "After the meal, at 10 o'clock, you are supposed to do a painting outside while the weather is good." He then mentions a dance party that she will attend later that day.⁵³ Mizusawa, one of the youngest and novice butlers, receives a request from his "lady" to cut down a tree in the garden. He says,

⁵¹ Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 47–49.

⁵² Channeru, "Arasajoshiga," October 16, 2019.

⁵³ ZeSSIV, "The Quality of Butlers' Café's Royalty Service," May 15, 2013.

“I was asked (to do the job), but I was worried about the squirrels who live there (in the tree).” Furuya, another butler also in charge of BAR BLUE MOON, was asked about his recent activities. He says, “I went to see cherry blossoms. I thought about the transient nature of our lives when the blossoms were falling down from the tree.” He continues, “I just don’t understand this feeling about missing you...I have never experienced it before,” while his “lady” customer assures him that this feeling is love. In this conversation, Furuya talks about the Japanese notion of *wabi sabi*, the transient nature of life itself, which can also be observed in Lady Murasaki’s *The Tale of Genji* or Matsuo Bashō’s famous haikus. When he describes his feelings for his “lady,” Furuya’s words remind one of speech bubbles from typical Japanese girls’ comics from the Showa Era.⁵⁴ The conversations in the café are based on role-playing, blending fiction, and each butler’s personal experiences. Emirin, a thirty-something Japanese YouTube personality, remarks: “I love the café so much because I can talk about any topic (with the butlers).”⁵⁵

Cosplay and Otaku

The cosplay and otaku phenomena overlap and interact in notable ways. At the most fundamental, cosplayers are likely to be otaku themselves and are patronized by otaku, as seen in the case of Swallowtail. Given that the term and the identity otaku are colloquially applied to avid fans of Japanese popular culture, one might argue that the economic interests of *Cool Japan* are rooted in promoting an affirmative otaku perspective. Thus, the otaku as a consumer supports the Japanese popular culture industry, while the social otaku contributes to an increased fandom.

In this respect, native Japanese otaku or foreign otaku receive a mostly positive reception within Japanese culture. The term has been used for several decades since 1970s Japan to reflect this reality, both as a proud “nerd” label and as a social moniker to identify membership to a subculture like in the magazine *Otaku USA*.

⁵⁴ Emirin Channeru, “Shitsujikissatoiunanojikkani kiseishitara shiawaseni michiafureteita,” April 11, 2020 (accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/w5xZj-8i5So>); Channeru, “Arasājoshiga,” October 16, 2019.

⁵⁵ Emirin Channeru, “Hisashiburino shitsujikissade daijikenga okotte-shimatta,” August 31, 2020 (accessed April 2, 2021, <https://www.youtube.be/wANzZ1OO81A>).

Like cosplay, the otaku term is not always positive. In Japan and the United States, the word has often been used pejoratively and associated with social stigmas. For example, the 1989 case of Tsutomu Miyazaki led to the smearing of anime otakus. Miyazaki kidnapped, raped, and killed four small girls aged four to seven in Tokyo and Saitama. He also engaged in cannibalism, vampirism, and sending the deceased girls' body parts to their families with postcards using a woman's pseudonym. When the police investigated his house, many pornographic videotapes were found. The Japanese mass media reported that they were anime-related, and Miyazaki came to be dubbed "an otaku murderer." As a result, the mass media and the Japanese political parties tried to ban manga and anime.⁵⁶

For instance, Saturday Night Live's 37th season (2011–2012) featured the recurring skit "J-Pop America Fun Time Now." The skit satirized the foremost stigmas about non-Japanese otaku – naïveté, social ineptitude, Japanese cultural ignorance, cultural insensitivity, and obsession. Two university students hosted the show, presenting a poor approximation of Japanese variety TV while being chided by their embarrassed Japanese Studies professor. Also, the 2000s import of anime to Cartoon Network, Funimation, and other cable and distribution networks in the US (which produced the current cohort of university student and 20-something otaku), in addition to the release of heralded classics like Otomo's *Akira*, was preceded by the now-iconic "Comic Book Guy" on the long-running show *The Simpsons*, a blunt caricature of the stigmas associated (particularly with adult) pop culture fandom. Similarly, before that demographic cohort was reading *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Dragonball Z*, and other Japanese manga that were then newly available in bookstores and libraries, the comics industry in the US witnessed a boom in the early 80s, including the dark turn (i.e., *Watchmen* and *Dark Knight Returns*) and parody in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (and Moore's denial of the serious value of *Watchmen*) towards the mid-80s, along with the broad social critique of the adult comics reader or fan.

Undeniably, cosplay and the otaku are non-normative, subculture practices and identities. Cosplay itself contributes to broader otaku stigmas, as neither most Japanese nor most Americans find avid fandom and proxy costuming and acting normal. Contentiousness reveals how much the otaku

⁵⁶ Sharon Kinsella, "Amateur Manga Subculture and the Otaku Panic," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24/2 (1998), 308–309.

investment in pop culture and associated technologies are socially vacuous, to what degree conventional popularity abhors otakuness (and all “nerdiness”), and how this creates a collection of subcultures to both actively shun and allow freedom to flourish. As noted above, research shows how the cosplayer, the otaku, can find a range of prosocial benefits.

Conclusion

Swallowtail is a themed restaurant where both the butlers and their “ladies” enjoy cosplay role-playing. About a dozen butlers are the opera troupe members who engage in various kinds of performances in music videos and concerts and make public appearances at anime conventions. They also often take group trips with their fans. The café is a perfect example of a multi-faceted entertainment industry based on otaku fandom, café, music videos, and tourism in twenty-first-century Japan. Many YouTubers are currently uploading videos that feature their extraordinary experiences with the butlers.

Cosplay entails demeanors with appropriate clothing, posture, gesture, and language. There is also an interaction ceremony where the players present their proper self-images temporarily in the eyes of others. At the end of the customer’s visit, a butler announces something like, “My Lady, it is time for your horse-riding lesson. There is a horse waiting for you outside.” He escorts her to the door and sends her off with a deep bow saying, “Farewell, My Lady. Please have a lovely day!”⁵⁷ Cosplay at Swallowtail Butler Café ends when the door is closed by the butlers and the customers leave the building. The experience, just like in any other concept café, is characterized by an entertaining and interactive setting with delicious food and tea. In a sense, it is like visiting an amusement park. However, in this case, customers can experience a fantasy world where women’s status is elevated; for an hour or so, they are pampered and cared for by handsome butlers that make them feel special, relaxed, and free to forget about reality outside the salon. Role-playing that includes both role-taking and role-making contributes to one’s status, fun, and good mood, as well as the reduction of everyday life stress in a hierarchical Japanese society.

After exiting the café, the lady customer returns to reality and to a society where she is still expected to cater to men’s needs by playing the role of an ideal woman who speaks politely, helps without complaining, and acts

⁵⁷ ZeSSIV, “The Quality of Butlers’ Café’s Royalty Service,” May 15, 2013.

just like a traditional *yamato nadeshiko* (an ideal Japanese woman who is beautiful, pure, demure, elegant, gentle, and humble). Overall, the café provides otaku and non-otaku customers with delightful and positive social experiences that contribute to their well-being and happiness.

JACK LONDON'S POSITIVE PORTRAYALS OF THE JAPANESE IN HIS EARLY FICTION DEFY HIS REPUTATION AS A RACIST

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Jack London (1876–1916), at his peak in the early years of the twentieth century, became one of the most popular and highest-paid writers in the United States. Several of his stories, such as *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, and *The Sea Wolf*, remain as popular today as they were a century ago. However, it is rather ironic that he remains one of the most misunderstood writers of his era despite his enduring fame. Some scholars have accused London of being a racist who fed the flame of the “Yellow Peril.” The truth is that London was a true internationalist who admired Japanese and other Asians and who correctly predicted the rise of Asia in the twentieth century. He retained these pro-Asian feelings throughout his long career as a writer. Indeed, one of London’s last essays, published shortly before his death in 1916, urged the creation of a Pan-Pacific Club in Hawaii where white Americans and Easterners could meet in a large building to get to know each other on an individual basis.

One can trace London’s sympathetic view of Asians to the very start of his career when, on a brief visit to Japan in 1893 as a teenager, he acquired enough inspiration and material to compose two colorful tragedies, “Sakaicho, Hon Asi and Hakadaki” and “O Haru.”¹ These stories are important because they show tendencies in many of his later short stories – his deep sympathy and concern for “down and out” people, respect for women and Asians, and the use of a surprise ending as a key literary device.

London is far better known for his work as a journalist and photographer in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria during the opening months of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, but it was his initial stay in Japan a decade earlier that provided his first encounter with a foreign land and inspired these two stories. In early 1893, London had joined the crew of a vessel, the *Sophie Southerland*, for its voyage from San Francisco to the cold waters of the

¹ These stories are available online (accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.prosperosisle.org/spip.php?article229#stories>) and in Daniel Métraux, ed., *The Asian Writings of Jack London: Essays, Letters, Newspaper Dispatches and Short Fiction by Jack London* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 104–108 (Sakaicho) and 114–124 (O Haru).

Bering Sea north of Japan and near the Siberian coast in search of seal skins. The ship made a brief stop in the Japanese-administered Bonin Islands on its outward journey and stopped in Yokohama for several weeks on its return to sell the seal skins to the Japanese market and collect provisions for the long trip back to California.²

In his 1913 book, *John Barleycorn*, London described this time in Japan as an autobiographical indictment of his excesses in drinking. He wrote about all the time he spent working on the ship and getting intoxicated at the port's many drinking establishments,³ but this is improbable, however. London's stories inspired by those experiences reveal his understanding of the local scenery. He had somehow toured parts of Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kamakura, where he spied the *Daibutsu*, a large outdoor statue of the Buddha.⁴

London published "Sakaicho, Hona Asi and Hakadaki" in 1895 while a student at Oakland High School in the institution's literary magazine, *The High School Aegis*, and "O Haru" in another publication in 1897. These two stories are an early indication of London's lifelong curiosity about ethnic and racial others. They are also notable for his admiration of Japanese culture. Through these stories, one can perceive the image of Japan that London portrayed to his reading public and the phenomenal potential for writing that he was already exhibiting as a teenager. These two stories relate to how London befriended a rickshaw driver and attended the dance of a beautiful geisha. These are not the tales of a drunken teenager who passed out every night in a Yokohama bar, but rather of a young man with an utter fascination for a new country which he was only briefly visiting on this occasion. Indeed, London could not have written such penetrating stories without close

² Earle Labor, *Jack London: An American Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 42–49.

³ London wrote: "We lay in Yokohama harbour...and all we saw of Japan was its drinking places where sailors congregated. Occasionally, some one of us varied the monotony with a more exciting drunk. In such fashion I managed a great exploit by swimming off to the schooner one dark midnight and going soundly to sleep while the water police searched the harbour for my body and brought my clothes out for identification." Quoted in Sachiko Nakada, *Jack London and the Japanese: An Interplay between the West and the East* (Tokyo: The Central Institute, 1986), 5.

⁴ Labor, *Jack London: An American Life*, 42–45.

observations of the area. It is also evident that he learned about the traditions and culture of Japan after reading books by writer and ethnologist Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904).⁵

A Realistic Portrait of a Yokohama Jinrikisha Man

“Sakaicho” is the short, ultimately tragic, and haunting story of a jinrikisha man who spends a week taking the narrator on a tour of local sites around the Tokyo and Yokohama regions. The life of a jinrikisha man was tough – it involved running long distances, up and down hilly streets and thoroughfares, transporting one or more individuals for a small amount of money. Because of intense competition from other jinrikisha men, the prices they charged were low, and the profits minimal at best. There were an estimated 40,000 or more rickshaws in operation in the Tokyo-Yokohama region at the turn of the last century. Because of their hard and stressful lives, many men like Sakaicho were dead before the age of forty.⁶

The story begins with Sakaicho and the narrator becoming good friends after a week of touring together.⁷ They visit temples, gardens, and other historic sites in the Yokohama and Kamakura regions. “All morning I had wandered from tea-house to temple, through bazaar and curio-shop.”⁸ Eventually, before the narrator is due to leave Japan with his ship, Sakaicho accords him with the great honor of inviting him to his house for an authentic Japanese meal and a chance to meet his wife Hona Asi and their son Hakadaki. The narrator accepts with gusto. Sakaicho and his hungry American guest traverse a poor section of Yokohama until they finally reach a small and dilapidated hut where they encounter Hona Asi, Sakaicho’s wife.

⁵ Lafcadio Hearn was a writer and journalist who in 1890 at age 40 settled permanently in Japan, married a Japanese woman, and raised a family with her. He wrote extensively on Japanese folklore and culture.

⁶ Bonny Tan, “Rickshaw,” Singapore Infopedia, January 25, 2005 (accessed June 24, 2021 https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_947_2005-01-25.html).

⁷ Sachiko Nakada writes: “Sakaicho is one of the rickshaw men waiting at the wharf for foreign sailors to take them to the city of Yokohama.” His name in the story seems to have been derived from the name of a block area near the wharf, “Sakaichō.” He spoke to London in “Yokohama English,” “Jock, you like come see my house? – not far – you come see my wife – come ‘chopee–chopee’” See Sachiko Nakada, *Jack London and the Japanese*, 5.

⁸ Quoted in Metraux, *The Asian Writings of Jack London*, 104.

Concerning the economic status of Sakaicho's family, London writes that his host owned his little house, really a humble shack, along with two jinrikishas, one of which he rented out at fifteen cents a day. His wife worked industriously at home, hemstitching silk handkerchiefs, sometimes making as much as eighteen cents a day. Hona Asi said she was only twenty-seven, but her face was so haggard that she looked at least forty. Toil and worry had marred her naturally pretty face and left it wrinkled and sallow.

The party smoke together briefly and then sip weak green tea, served by Hona Asi. Afterward, Sakaicho and the narrator sit back for a true Japanese feast. In accordance with Japanese custom, Hona Asi does not eat with the men. Instead, she waits on them with great attentiveness, removing the top of a round wooden box to ladle out two bowls of steaming, sweet-smelling rice and serving many intricate Japanese delicacies. The "savory odors" arising from the dishes whet the narrator's appetite, and he jumps into the meal. They share miso soup, boiled fish, stewed leeks, pickles and soy, sushi, *kurage* (a form of jellyfish), and endless cups of tea: "The soup we drank like water, the rice we shoveled into our mouths like coals into a Newcastle collier, and the other dishes we helped ourselves with the chopsticks by which time I could use quite dexterously."⁹ They also merrily sip sake from tiny, lacquered cups.

The narrator, noting that he normally found the Japanese to be a shrewd people with a keen interest in making money, is surprised with the hospitality of Sakaicho and a bit floored when the latter adamantly refuses the guest's generous offer of payment for the meal. He is overwhelmed by the kindness of his hosts and comments on the inherent goodness of the Japanese people.

After the meal, Sakaicho relates his struggles to his guest. Here we see for one of the first times London's sympathy for the hardships of the working classes who had to labor against harsh odds merely to survive. London was only nineteen when he wrote this story, but the descriptions of Sakaicho's abode and difficulties parallel those of characters found years later in *People of the Abyss* (1903) and other stories by him. One can clearly see the leanings that would make London an active socialist only a few years later.

With a melancholy tone, London describes Sakaicho's hard life in Yokohama. In his broken English, the Japanese man reminisces about his

⁹ Ibid., 106.

youth, his struggles to survive, and even his ambitions. He once worked as a peasant in fields below Mount Fuji, but when he grew into adulthood, he found jobs working as a porter and as a driver of jinrikishas in Tokyo. Sakaicho managed to save enough money to eventually buy his house and two jinrikishas. His wife works hard at home, hemstitching silk handkerchiefs to supplement the family's income. All this was for their son, who goes to school so that he might have a chance to escape his parents' endless cycle of poverty. Sakaicho dreams of someday sending his son to America to further his education. Later that afternoon, the narrator meets the son, Hakadaki, "a sturdy rollicking little chap of ten." The narrator, genuinely enjoying the encounter, slips a Mexican dollar coin into "his sweaty little paw" before leaving.¹⁰

A week later, after returning to Tokyo from a busy time of sightseeing in Kyoto and around Mt. Fuji, the narrator searches in vain for Sakaicho all over Yokohama. He finally gives up and hires another rickshaw to do some last-minute sightseeing and shopping. He is cruising through the countryside near Yokohama when he encounters a funeral cortege with two small coffins: "A solitary mourner followed, and in the slender form and bowed head I recognized Sakaicho. But O! How changed! Aroused by my coming he slowly raised his listless head, and, with dull apathetic glance, returned my greeting."¹¹ The narrator later learns that Sakaicho's wife and boy had perished in a major fire that swept through their neighborhood.

After the Buddhist funeral, the saddened narrator returns to his ship. The joy and excitement surrounding the visit to Japan are gone, for he shares his friend's grief, the hardworking and kindhearted Sakaicho. "And, though five thousand miles of heaving ocean now separate us, never will I forget Sakaicho nor Hona Asi, nor the love they bore their son Hakadaki."¹² The fire had destroyed Sakaicho's family and effectively stifled his dreams.

This tale is a tragic but surprisingly unsentimental reflection on London's first visit to Japan. London presents detailed information about

¹⁰ Ibid., 106–107.

¹¹ Ibid., 107.

¹² Ibid., 108. The story of the fire is based on a true incident in Yokohama. On June 17, 1893, two weeks before London's arrival, a raging fire had destroyed more than 1600 homes in Yokohama. The fire started in Motomachi, not far from the wharf. London certainly saw the ruins of the great fire. See Nakada, *Jack London and the Japanese*, 6.

Japanese cuisine as well as a fairly accurate portrait of a small Japanese dwelling and the lives of Japanese working people of the period. Clearly, he has conversed with ordinary people in Japan, visited their homes, and empathized with their struggle to survive. One may find similar depictions in Hearn's works, even if Hearn had not yet published much of his enduring work when London first visited Japan. We also see the gestation of yet another feature of London's short stories – the sad or unhappy ending with an unexpected twist.

This tale about Sakaicho and his family reflects the theme of many of London's later stories and essays. London grew up in an impoverished family and had to work as a laborer in a canning factory as a young boy. His stories and books like *People of the Abyss* (1903) reflect his ideology and activity as an avowed socialist. London writes poignant stories about workers and poverty-stricken families who were victims of exploitation by wealthy and greedy capitalists. "Sakaicho, Hon Asi and Hakadaki" represents the beginning of London's repertoire of socialist literature.

The Sad Tale of "O Haru"

Jack London's "O Haru" is the sad and haunting tale of a beautiful geisha. It is not clear where he got the material or the idea for this story, but it is one of his best early pieces. The start is slow and unfocused, and the identity of the narrator is unclear. However, as the action picks up, we get more into the story, which ends with a dramatic crash. Like Sakaicho's tale, "O Haru" ends with a tragic and unexpected twist. The parallel themes of racial and gender oppression come together when O Haru's husband spurns her for a Caucasian girl.

The story begins with an exemplary description of the role and art of the geisha in Japanese society. Geisha, London notes, are the brightest and most accomplished of Japanese women. Chosen primarily for their beauty, they are educated from childhood in all the seductive graces of dance and forms of speech that make them appear both witty and alluring. The goal of their long training is to make them artistically fascinating. They lead active lives when they emerge as young women, but many suffer from poverty and neglect when they grow old.¹³

London here presents the reader with one of the finest concise descriptions of the geisha tradition in Japan. The fact that it was written over a century ago by a writer barely out of his teens is by itself remarkable. It is

¹³ Metraux, *The Asian Writings of Jack London*, 115.

one of the earliest indications that London would become a superb ethnologist and journalist as well as a novelist and short-story writer. This story provides the Western reader at the turn of the last century with a highly accurate view of the life of the Japanese geisha.

London next introduces the most accomplished and beautiful geisha of all, the fictional O Haru. A samurai's daughter, she had achieved great fame and fortune as an exquisite dancer. She was desired by some of the wealthiest men in the land, who would have surrendered much of their fortunes to have her for even one night, but she staked her love and future on a proud but impoverished samurai's son named Toyotomi. To her great regret, her beloved had gone to America a decade earlier, promising to enrich himself there before returning to Japan to marry her. In the following passage, London gives considerable attention to O Haru's beauty:

To the Occidental she could not appeal, while to the Japanese she was the ideal of beauty. Her figure, slender, long-waisted and narrow-hipped, was a marvel of willowy grace, rendered the more bewitching by the ease and charm of her carriage. Her bust was that of a maid's – no suggestion of luscious charms beneath the soft fold of her kimono – rather, the chaste slimness of virginity. Long, slender, beautifully curved, the neck was but a fitting pedestal for the shapely head, poised so delicately upon it. Her hair, long, straight and glossy black was combed back from the clear, high forehead – a wondrous dome to the exquisite oval of the face.

Her exquisite dancing, her moves and gestures, only added to her luster. The expression, never the same, the shifting mirror of every mood, of every thought, now responsive to vivacious, light-hearted gayety; now reflecting the deeper, sterner emotions; now portraying all the true womanly depths of her nature. Truly was she "O Haru, the dream of the lotus, the equal of Fugi [Fuji] and the glory of man!"¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid., 116.

O Haru appears on stage clad in the armor of a Tokugawa-era samurai. She dances the role of Oishi Kuranosuke, one of the heroic ronin of the samurai epic *Chushingura*. Oishi's lord had been disgraced by a minister of the shogun and forced to commit *seppuku* because he raised his sword in anger at the minister. Oishi is one of the lord's forty-seven samurai who, a year later, assassinated the minister and then committed *seppuku* themselves. O Haru performs the whole story with poise and vigor. She reflects Oishi's passion as she enacts his tragic suicide at the end of the dance.

Despite her samurai heritage, O Haru was a destitute orphan who had sold herself to the master of a geisha house. She had learned all the dances and graces of a geisha and brought wealth to her master through public performances that wealthy men had paid dearly to admire. Toyotomi desired her as well and had spent everything he had to purchase her from the geisha house. She had agreed to marry her new master, but he told her to wait, that he wanted to go to the land of "the "white barbarians," promising to come back, rich and powerful, and marry her."¹⁵

Toyotomi, however, stays away for over a decade. She remains faithful to him despite marriage proposals from many affluent and prestigious men. Her lover finally returns from the land of the "barbarians" and, in fact, marries her, but to her horror, she soon realizes that he is a vastly changed man. She gives him her fortune, but he continually ignores her and spends his time carousing in tea houses and chasing after women of ill repute. He becomes a habitual drunk, an abuser obsessed with Western women with none of the beauty and charm of Japanese women. O Haru thinks these women repulsive, with their ugly, strangely shaped bodies and large faces disgustingly "mouthing themselves and their men."¹⁶

O Haru, profoundly depressed, visits a temple – perhaps the great Kamakura Daibutsu that London visited after his ship docked at Yokohama. A young priest blesses her and tells her the story of the Buddha and his discovery of the great truth: "Self, the mere clinging to life, was the evil; self was the illusion, whereby the soul endured the pain of countless incarnations; self was to be annihilated, and when destroyed, the soul passed to Nirvana. Nirvana, the highest attainable sphere, where peace and rest and bliss unuttered soothed the soul, weary from many migrations."¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., 118.

¹⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁷ Ibid., 122.

O Haru returns home, pulls out her father's samurai sword, and prepares for her evening dance. She arrives to find the pavilion packed with people who wish to watch her performance, set to end with her favorite piece, the "Loyal Ronin." She dances with more intensity than ever before, especially when the "low crescendo" of the finale commences. She takes out her father's blade and vigorously kisses it. The audience shudders expectantly: "She is to follow her lord into the nether world, into the silent Nirvana. Her body sways in rhythmical undulations: her face is aglow with heavenly rapture: she poises for the blow. Now – the music rolls and crashes – swift, that deft, upward thrust – swift the mighty gush of blood... The sweet silence of the lotus-time night is rent with the sobbing agony of many voices: 'Woe! Woe! Woe! O Haru, the divine O Haru is no more!'"¹⁸

London wrote this story four years after his return from Japan and soon after his journey to the Yukon. He turned to writing full time and sold a number of his stories to some noteworthy journals and magazines. Possibly, through his reading of popular books and articles composed by Hearn, London had gained a sympathetic appreciation for aspects of Japanese culture. He admires and respects his heroine O Haru, allowing her to maintain her honor and self-worth through her ritual suicide.

London's understanding of Japanese culture is also impressive. The concept of regaining one's honor, which Toyotomi strips from O Haru when he betrays her love for him, is central to Japanese thought. London also values geisha as gifted artists, but even more remarkable is his grasp of the key tenets of Buddhism – the idea that one can reduce or eliminate suffering by letting go – in this case, the annihilation of the self. O Haru is in a unique position to regain her honor and punish her deceiving husband; she must eliminate herself by letting go of her life.

Another theme found in much of London's literature is his portrayal of men's mistreatment and exploitation of women. London's fictional women are strong, virtuous people who refuse to accept their reduced status and who fight back to regain their honor. O Haru frees herself from her abusive husband. London's later stories with Asian themes have similar women who can rise above their secondary positions in society. In this sense, London was a very modern writer whose stories and essays are as relevant today as they were just over a century ago. He was also one of the first Western writers to incorporate positive Asian themes into his works.

¹⁸ Ibid., 124.

London's Positive Portrayal of Asia and Asians

While lacking some of the incredible mastery of London's later stories like "To Build a Fire," these two stories show his innate talent as a young writer at the start of his career. He shows his sympathy for those less privileged and hits us with unexpected endings. London also effectively develops the personalities of his main characters while deftly bringing the reader into the story. The frequent twists that end his stories – the forlorn face of the grief-stricken Sakaicho and the image of O Haru plunging a sword into her abdomen while she dances before a large cheering crowd – add to the power of London's narrative.

London's stories are a refreshing break from the intense anti-Asian racist dogma found in contemporary Western literature. Some modern writers mistakenly portray London as anti-Asian. John R. Eperjesi, a London scholar, writes that "More than any other writer, London fixed the idea of a yellow peril in the minds of the turn-of-the-century Americans."¹⁹ Many biographers quote London, just after his return from covering the first months of the Russo-Japanese War for the Hearst newspapers in 1904, as telling a coterie of fellow socialists of his profound dislike for the "yellow man." Biographer Richard O'Connor quotes Robert Dunn, a fellow journalist with London during the Russo-Japanese War, saying that London's dislike of the Japanese "outdid mine. Though a professed socialist, he believed in the Kaiser's 'yellow peril.'"²⁰

If these charges are correct, they can cast London as a bigot and alarmist. However, a close examination of London's fictional and essay writing shows the opposite: he was ahead of his time intellectually and morally even as a teenager writing about people like Sakaicho and O Haru. His Russo-Japanese War dispatches from Korea and Manchuria around 1904–1905 are balanced and objective reporting, evincing concern and respect for the welfare of the average Japanese and Russian soldier, the Korean peasant, and the ordinary Chinese people he met. As perhaps the most widely read of the journalists covering that war, London emerges as one of

¹⁹ John R. Eperjesi, *The Imperialist Imaginary: Visions of Asia and the Pacific in American Culture* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 2005), 108.

²⁰ Richard O'Connor, *Jack London: A Biography* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), 214.

the era's writers who sensed that the tide of white "superiority" and Western expansionism and imperialism was receding.

London knew that Japan's strength at the turn of the twentieth century lay in its ability to use Western technology and its national unity. Including London and some other contemporary writers, many politically attuned Asians recognized that Japan's defeat of Russia was a turning point in a history of Asian subjugation to white imperial powers. As no previous event, Japan's victory had called into question the innate superiority of the white race.⁵ And yet, London believed that there were severe limits on Japan's ability to become a leading world power. However impressive its initial gains, Tokyo would falter from lack of "staying power." One reason was that Japan was too small. Although it had humbled Russian forces, London believed that its might was insufficient to create a massive Asian empire, still less to threaten the West militarily or economically. Seizing "poor, empty Korea for a breeding colony and Manchuria for a granary" would substantially enhance Japan's population and strength – but that was not enough to challenge the great powers. London's view of Asians and the Pacific's other nonwhite people evolved in the last seven years of his life, during and after his 1907–1909 trip to the South Pacific aboard his decrepit schooner, the *Snark*. London's increasingly pan-national worldview led to his 1915 recommendation of a "Pan-Pacific Club" where Easterners and Westerners could meet congenially in a "forum" to exchange views and share ideas as equals. Far from being the thoughts of a racist, this is the vision of an internationalist.

It becomes apparent that London wanted Americans and Japanese to associate and foster mutual respect. In addition, as an analyst, London's understanding of how the industrial, politico-strategic, and social worlds were transforming surpassed that of his peers. His fiction and essays explore the emergence of new industrial powers in the East, as well as Western countermoves and inter-Asian tensions. London shrewdly predicted the coming age of revolution, total war, genocide, and even terrorism. As Jonah Raskin observed, "In a short, volatile life of four decades, Jack London (1876–1916) explored and mapped the territory of war and revolution in fiction and non-fiction alike. More accurately than any other writer of his day, he also predicted the shape of political power – from dictatorship to

terrorism – that would emerge in the twentieth century, and his work is as timely today as when it was first written.”²¹

Jack London traveled extensively in his short but active life. He encountered diverse cultures that he tried to understand. He empathized with the downtrodden in the United States, Hawaii, Europe, East Asia, and the South Pacific. His “Pan-Pacific Club” essay is his final appeal for the West to overcome its stereotypical view of Asians as inferior peoples who needed Western domination for their betterment. As London scholar Jean Campbell Reesman points out, “London’s story is a strident warning against race hatred and its paranoia, and an alarm sounded against an international policy that would permit and encourage germ warfare. It is also an indictment of imperialist governments per se.”²² Although London died in 1916, the words of this realistic and humane writer still speak to us.

²¹ Jonah Raskin, *The Radical Jack London: Writing on War and Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 1.

²² Jean Campbell Reesman et al., *Jack London: Photographer* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 65.

Book Reviews

Mari Yoshihara, *Dearest Lenny: Letters from Japan and the Making of the World Maestro*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 280 pp. ISBN: 978-0190465780, £19.99.

Reviewed by Wayne E. Arnold

Leonard Bernstein needs no introduction. As one of the foremost orchestra conductors of the twentieth century, his worldwide reputation is indisputable. In North America and throughout Europe, the draw of Bernstein's persona made him a household name. Now, according to Mari Yoshihara's groundbreaking work, we learn that Bernstein's popularity was just as strong in Japan as *Dearest Lenny* reveals comprehensive particulars concerning Bernstein's fondness for the country. Part of the press attention surrounding this publication has focused on the surprise revelation of Bernstein's previously unknown ten-year affair with a young Japanese man, Kunihiko Hashimoto, beginning in 1979. In addition to the Hashimoto correspondence, a woman named Kazuko Ueno sent her first piece of fan mail to the maestro on August 25, 1947; until his death on October 14, 1990, Bernstein's life was enriched by these two dear friends in Japan. While the correspondence between these three people is certainly a driving factor of the narrative, there is also a wealth of information about the business side of Bernstein's life. The Leonard Bernstein Collection in the Music Division of the Library of Congress is immense, as Bernstein apparently saved everything; when Yoshihara explored folders relating to two unidentified Japanese, she uncovered a hitherto unknown side of Bernstein's connection with Japan. A fascinating element of Yoshihara's book is that a large portion rests purely on archive research, meaning that much of the included material has been relatively untapped by previous Bernstein biographers.

As the subtitle makes clear, the text focuses on letters *from* Japan. After reading, an obvious omission stands out: where are Bernstein's replies? Very seldom does Yoshihara include replies from the maestro; presumably, this absence rests in the likelihood that his messages were short and sporadic. In my research on Henry Miller and Japan, I have noticed a similar trend in the steadfastness of Japanese correspondents. It might be a cultural tendency for westerners to expect a letter-for-letter exchange; not so, it seems, for the Japanese, who in some sense write expecting almost no answer, but who are overwhelmed with joy when a reply appears. The hundreds of letters from Ueno and Hashimoto suggest that their correspondence was mostly one-sided. Bernstein's hectic orchestra schedule and an inundating global

correspondence often kept him from fully reciprocating the attention received. Lacking Bernstein's responses, Yoshihara essentially reverse engineers the correspondence to provide context while simultaneously utilizing the archival materials to delineate the timeline of the maestro's hectic travel schedule. In doing so, Yoshihara demonstrates the depth with which she has delved into the Bernstein archives. While Bernstein's relationship with Ueno never transitioned over to his professional dealings, Hashimoto became an intricate part of his business engagements with Japan. In this element, the archival material again is crucial in outlining how Bernstein and his corporation benefited from personal interaction with Japanese individuals. As an academic text, the primary aspect that stands out in Yoshihara's work is witnessing a researcher in action. The extensive archival work on Bernstein provides fresh insights into the conductor's private life. Certain chapters outline the trajectories of Bernstein's business corporation, highlighting how various contracts influenced his musical presence in Japan.

Yoshihara's Japanese heritage aids in drawing inferences from the correspondence, especially the letters of Kazuko Ueno. The cultural implications of what is said and left unsaid between Ueno and Bernstein might easily be overlooked, but Yoshihara takes specific care in explaining the nuances hidden within the messages. These "cultural lessons" deepen the friendship between Ueno and Bernstein, allowing Yoshihara to elucidate the intimacy written into the letters. Likewise, with Hashimoto's letters, we witness a deep bond forming between the young man and Bernstein. Extensive portions of Hashimoto's messages are reprinted, which reveal how over the ten years, he transformed himself from a Japanese salary worker into an artistic individual, motivated by Bernstein but talented and driven by his own passions. Yoshihara also adds opinions while reimagining situations and events mentioned in the letters, allowing her authorial presence to comment on the highs and lows of the three lives. I describe these forays into Bernstein's intimate relationships to demonstrate how Yoshihara deftly interweaves the narratives of two distinct individuals, both holding deep emotional connections with their beloved maestro. Certain missives have specifically been selected from a much more extensive collection to keep the story moving. At times, Yoshihara includes entire letters; at other points, only important snippets are needed. This finesse in choosing what to share with the reader, including the enlightening input, is the most vital point of Yoshihara's narrative.

I have thus far focused on the personal facet between Bernstein, Ueno, and Hashimoto; however, while the text is driven by their letters,

Yoshihara's more expansive addition to Bernstein studies relates to the details regarding the maestro's business and performance activities. Since Ueno's first letter arrived in 1947, Yoshihara begins with this year and follows the important historical events of Bernstein's life, emphasizing his interest and performances in Japan. As he aged, his attraction to Japan grew, in part because of his work for nuclear disarmament. Passionate about using music to help promote peace, Bernstein was involved in the 1985 ceremonies at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. His humanitarian work against nuclear weapons is the foremost political issue in *Dearest Lenny*, and the significance of Bernstein's role in promoting a nuclear-free world is an important subtext in Yoshihara's work. Said significance is succinctly noted when Yoshihara writes: "as an American Jew delivering a message of peace and disarmament in the midst of the Cold War, Bernstein understood the moral and political complexities of the position from which he spoke" (151). From his first visit to Japan in 1961, until the last one in 1990 (his seventh), Bernstein advocated positive action to prevent repeating the devastation from the bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another subtext, not surprisingly, is the music. Yoshihara's background as an amateur classical pianist facilitates an intimate comprehension of Bernstein's performances. Instead of simply writing "Bernstein conducted a concert," Yoshihara enlivens our understanding concerning the performance's consequences – artistically and sometimes politically. This connectivity with Bernstein's music is doubly rewarding when Yoshihara adds descriptions found in letters from Ueno and Hashimoto, who sat through many of the concerts in Japan. Bernstein's last visit to Japan came shortly after the political turmoil in 1989 at Tiananmen Square. The original plan was to do a China-Japan tour, but the disturbing events and subsequent slaughter in China nixed all joint venture possibilities. In turn, the idea for the Pacific Music Festival (PMF) evolved, eventually held in the northern Japanese city of Sapporo. Yoshihara dedicates the last chapters of her book to describe the events surrounding this groundbreaking collaboration between the east and the west. The festival was to highlight aspiring musicians from around the world, who trained for two weeks under the tutelage of Bernstein and other world-class conductors. Again, Yoshihara's firsthand experience is important: during the 2010s, she taught summer courses in Sapporo throughout the PMF sessions, thereby incorporating field research, as the opportunity allowed her to interview some of the founding members.

One question that persisted throughout reading *Dearest Lenny* was, “what about Ueno and Hashimoto?” Were they alive, and what type of input could they provide on events that were uncertain for Yoshihara? It is not until the postscript that Yoshihara, having travelled to Australia and Japan to meet both people, reveals that Ueno and Hashimoto were alive and provided feedback on the manuscript. Knowing this fact, the narrative seems a little perplexing since Yoshihara makes no direct reference to having input from Ueno or Hashimoto until the ending. Nevertheless, this temporary omission is an authorial decision that allows Yoshihara to remain in control of her text; yet, it seems this information could have been more forthcoming in the preface. Even so, *Dearest Lenny* is an absorbing journey through two previously unknown – yet meaningful – friendships in the life of Leonard Bernstein. Yoshihara aptly engages the reader by presenting an intimate as well as a public image of the world-renowned maestro and his various relationships with Japan. The depth and breadth of the research is praiseworthy, as nearly the entire text has been constructed from the material within the Leonard Bernstein archives.

Yuki Matsuda 松田結貴, *Popyurā karuchā no shigaku: Nihongo no mojini himerareta maruchimodaritei* ポピュラーカルチャーの詩学：日本語の文字に秘められたマルチモダリティ [Poetics of Popular Culture: The Hidden Multimodality]. Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 2019. 208 pp. ISBN:978-4759922851, ¥ 2,500.

Reviewed by Kinko Ito

Popyurā karuchā no shigaku: Nihongo no mojini himerareta maruchimodaritei is a book about the social semiotics of the Japanese language. It also covers the study of letters and scripts, discourse analysis, popular culture, and pedagogy. This book focuses on the usage of unique semiotic resources for communication in Japanese, which has multimodal expressions. Matsuda pays special attention to specific social and cultural practices in addition to certain linguistic situations related to the Japanese writing system. She introduces theoretical and pragmatic aspects of studying the literary forms and discourse in examining Japanese literature and linguistics. Included in her book are various linguistic, sociolinguistic, and communication theories by Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Gunther Kress, I. K. Maynard, Shinji Konno, Yasuhiko Tohsaku, Satoshi Kinsui, and other

Western and Japanese scholars. This book has a prologue, seven chapters, and an epilogue that focus on the visual expressions of Japanese letters, the history of Japanese language, literature from ancient to contemporary times, Japanese scripts within the framework of multimodality theories, and the functions of *ruby* scripts known as *furigana* and the words in *kanji*. Matsuda also presents the correlation between the lyrics of popular music and the adaptation of multimodality to provide pedagogical tools for teachers of Japanese. In her epilogue, she asks the question, “What are Japanese letters?” She discusses the hybrid and visual nature of the Japanese writing system that enables functional multimodal communication, presents one’s identity, and produces diverse voices as well as poetic, artistic, and creative expressions that appeal to people’s emotions.

One can master spoken Japanese with relative ease. However, its writing system, which uses four kinds of letters or scripts, is one of the most complicated and challenging to learn among modern languages. Originally, as the Japanese did not have their own letters, they borrowed *kanji* (Chinese characters) to write books and record public documents more than 1300 years ago, with the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihon Shoki* (The Chronicles of Japan) published in 712 and 720.

Hiragana and *katakana* were developed by simplifying or abbreviating Chinese characters during the Heian Period (794–1185) when the borrowing from China lessened, and the unique aspects of Japanese culture started to blossom. Individual *kanji* are often pronounced in multiple ways, and many have several forms and diverse meanings. It takes a child several years to master about two thousand essential Chinese characters for everyday usage, and the Japanese need to keep learning more *kanji* throughout adulthood. Small-sized letters called *ruby* scripts are often placed on top of the full-sized character when written horizontally or next to the full-sized script when written vertically. The *ruby* letters are known as *furigana*, and they help those who do not know how to read or pronounce the Chinese characters.

Contemporary Japanese language includes *romaji* (romanization of Japanese words), *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. This variety and hybrid nature of the Japanese scripts makes reading and writing Japanese difficult. No wonder Francisco Xavier, a Jesuit missionary to Japan in the sixteenth century, is said to have called Japanese “the Devil’s language.” However, Matsuda contends that this unique writing system enables those in the Japanese linguistic community to enjoy creative multimodal expressions that

are visual, artistic, and entertaining, but this is not possible in other languages that use only one type of script.

The newly created *hiragana* provided the court ladies of the Heian Period with freedom and ample opportunities to express themselves in poems, literature, and travel diaries. Thus, *hiragana* was considered “women’s writing.” The ladies were also encouraged to practice calligraphy, with *hiragana* calligraphy enjoyed and appreciated as artwork. Writing poems was an indispensable skill for both male and female aristocrats in business, social interactions, relationships, and matchmaking. Matsuda points out that the Japanese used different types of paper with a wide range of designs or fragrances that matched the content of the message. Sometimes in-season flowers were sent alongside the poem. The scripts, papers, and flowers thus became as important as the poem’s message. Poems played an important linguistic function as a means of communication, and the selection of other items added more detailed and delicate meanings. Matsuda calls this social and linguistic practice “pragmatism of multimodal communication.”

It was customary for male aristocrats to use *kanji* and *katakana* for official business, such as recording public and historical documents and engaging in scholastic writing. Men needed to read and understand politics, Buddhist scriptures, military laws, and famous Chinese poems, which gave them more social power. A distinction emerged between the gendered scripts: *hiragana* was considered feminine, artistic, and aesthetic, while *katakana* and *kanji* were masculine and used for business and scholarship. Each script created a different impression, mood, or flavor due to its visual artistic element. As a sociologist, I found these gendered aspects of Japanese language fascinating.

Matsuda uses rich materials found in contemporary popular culture for her excellent multimodal content analysis of semiotics. These materials include manga (Japanese comics), newspaper articles, poems, literature, video games, J-Pop song lyrics, and advertisements (photos, posters, videos, and TV commercials). Chapter Six, for example, discusses popular song lyrics from modern and contemporary Japan. Matsuda focuses on how the sociocultural background of the songs and their kinds of scripts and visual images contribute to the mood and construction of meaning. She uses examples of popular Japanese artists’ so-called graduation songs such as “Sangatsu Kokonoka (March 9th),” “YELL,” “Tabidachi no Hini (On the Day of Departure),” and “Michi (Roads).” She argues that these song lyrics tell stories and are visual texts, like novels. The lyrics have many seasonal words related to spring because graduation takes place in March in Japan.

They also have many letters that often appear in literature, with Japanese words written in *kanji* or *romaji*.

We live in what Marshall McLuhan once called “the Global Village,” caused by modern advances in technology and communications, including the internet, SNS, and YouTube. Many people now share information, news (real and fake), commentaries, and ideologies instantly wherever they are. Matsuda uses numerous examples from contemporary texts found in the new media mentioned above. She believes that students can learn Japanese through manga and their various adaptations such as animation, TV drama, film, or “light novels.” Even though the contents are the same, different media construct and present different meanings that affect interpretations and understanding the versatility of media poses a learning experience for students.

Recently, Japanese popular culture has gained unprecedented worldwide popularity and acceptance owing to its translation to many languages. Its popularity has prompted many fans to learn Japanese and enjoy the contents in the original language. Plenty of scholars have also started to research visual culture in areas such as cultural theory, sociology, and art theory. However, Matsuda claims that few studies have been conducted regarding the interrelationship between visual cultural studies and semiotic analysis of the Japanese language, especially its notation of scripts and their roles in constructing meaning.

Matsuda has been teaching Japanese language and linguistics in the United States for a few decades, and her specialty includes the pedagogy of Japanese. She suggests a new teaching pedagogy, particularly its writing system in the tech-savvy twenty-first century. With multimodal communication resources, Matsuda advocates for classroom instruction in the sociocultural aspects of the writing system, standard pedagogy, and the inclusion of the expressive needs of the students. The examples and methods that Matsuda employs can be adopted by not only Japanese learners but also scholars, teachers, and professors who are interested in linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, music, art, marketing, history, and sociology.

Most of all, Matsuda’s book conveys a feeling of enthusiasm for Japanese linguistics and the associated writing system she describes. Her fascination with said system’s social semiotics is evident throughout the pages. She effortlessly presents complex semiotic materials and multimodal resources from Japanese popular culture, offering many interesting examples. This book inspires readers to learn more about the embedded social semiotics hidden in Japanese entertainment.

Meredith Oda, *The Gateway to the Pacific: Japanese Americans and the Remaking of San Francisco*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019. 304 pp. ISBN: 978-0226592749, \$35.00.

Reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux

During the years of the Gold Rush, San Francisco quickly became the leading international port that greeted hundreds of thousands of Chinese and other Asians from across the Pacific. Although most of these immigrants flocked to gold mining areas and railway construction, many decided to make San Francisco their home. Chinese immigrants largely settled in the city's Chinatown while smaller numbers of Japanese, who belatedly began to arrive in the mid-1880s, congregated in a section known as the Western Addition in a neighborhood called *Nihonmachi* (Japanese Town). With a growing Asian population at the start of the twentieth century, San Francisco became America's key link to the Pacific world and a center for anti-Asian movements and sentiments.

The Japanese transformed the Western Addition into a thriving district of shops, businesses, and residents in the early decades of the twentieth century. However, Japanese and Japanese Americans' forced internment in early 1942 left a vacuum that encouraged a significant influx of African Americans, Filipinos, and other ethnic groups into the area. After the war ended in 1945, a smaller number of Japanese Americans made a successful return to the Western Addition, where they once again opened up a thriving commercial area.

By the end of World War II, Los Angeles had surpassed San Francisco as a key center for trade, finance, and manufacturing in the Pacific region. Several San Francisco politicians, civic heads, and Japanese American community leaders frequently met in the years after the war to discuss plans to make their city once again a "hub for transpacific travel, investment and ideas" and a virtual "Gateway to the Pacific" (108). The partner in this ambitious enterprise was to be Japan, and the United States had just fought a vicious war against them. However, the advent of the Cold War and the American-led occupation, together with the victory of the Chinese Communist Party on the mainland, forced American leaders to help rebuild Japan's economy and work with the Japanese as close allies.

Meredith Oda, Associate Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Reno, has written a rich and detailed analysis of San Francisco's close business, financial, and cultural ties with Japan. Her recent book, *The*

Gateway to the Pacific: Japanese Americans and the Remaking of San Francisco, recounts how the city embraced Japan as a partner in its efforts to enhance its economic and cultural wellbeing in the decades after World War II. The linkages with Japan were a multi-channeled process that involved many civic and business leaders in both countries and the contributions of Japanese Americans, who often acted as go-betweens between major figures in San Francisco and Japan. The process began early in the 1950s when San Francisco business and political authorities initiated a sister-city relation with Osaka, Japan's trading and manufacturing center. The development and construction of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center in 1968 has played a vital role in attracting Japanese capital and investment and promoting Japanese culture in the city. These and other measures allowed San Francisco to become a thriving cosmopolitan hub with its courtship of economic ties with Japan and other parties in Asia, not to mention its favorable location as a critical port for Asian trade.

San Francisco's shrewd affiliation with Osaka resulted in numerous trade missions from both countries and enhanced commerce and investment as Japan's economy commenced its spectacular postwar growth. This association "proved a useful instrument to challenge popular views of Japan and rebalance a local incarnation of the US-Japanese relationship. From intimate private introductions to largescale public events, many of the early San Francisco events highlighted Japan as an equal, ready for and capable of partnership" (72). The relationship allowed both nations to regard each other as partners and allies rather than adversaries. Oda describes at great length how the city's connections with Japan began with the early exchanges and hard work of business and civic leaders.

The most conspicuous example of San Francisco's drive to become a cosmopolitan center and key link to the Pacific world is the Japan Cultural and Trade Center built in the city's recently redeveloped Japanese enclave in the Western Addition. The original idea for the structure and its location came from local Japanese American businessmen working together with city redevelopment authorities, but their resources and vision were limited. Civic leaders on both sides of the Pacific determined that "transpacific trade and cooperation with Japan" would build the center (134). These civic leaders included Japanese architects and executives from the Bank of Tokyo and Japan Air Lines working together with famous Hawaiian land developer Masayuki Tokioka. Today the center remains a significant financial and cultural locale for the city's relations with Japan.

San Francisco's collaboration with Japan involved many Japanese Americans as middlemen. This link created considerable interest in Japan among Americans, and some Japanese Americans found work as clerks in businesses dealing with Japan, particularly in Japanese restaurants, and as flight attendants for airlines involved in transpacific communication. The spillover effect of the benefits provided by this relationship is enormous.

Professor Oda has written a thorough and analytic study of San Francisco's efforts with Japan to become the "Gateway to the Pacific." Oda's meticulously researched book illustrates the complexity of the efforts to enhance this relationship. She does an excellent job showing how Japanese Americans have played a major role in bringing the two nations together in this close symbiotic tie. Oda has written what is bound to be a pioneering study of US-Japanese relations in the postwar era.

Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, *Pure Land, Real World: Modern Buddhism, Japanese Leftists, and the Utopian Imagination*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. 256 pp. ISBN: 978-0824857752, \$65.00.

Justin R. Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. 334 pp. ISBN: 978-0190491161, \$74.00.

Reviewed by Kedao Tong

In both East and West, pre-modern and modern times, utopia has been a powerful symbol in religious and non-religious contexts and continues to fuel the human imagination in unanticipated ways. The two books reviewed here approach the transformative images and uses of the Buddhist visions of utopia – or Pure Land, the most common Buddhist equivalent to it – in an era of unprecedented inter-cultural communication and social-political changes in the history of modern China and Japan. Thus, the two studies not only overlap in the main subject of Buddhist utopia and in the timeframe but also share thematic and methodological concerns despite a different focus in the geographical area.

Nevertheless, Curley and Ritzinger pursue different paths to illustrate the significance of the Buddhist utopia in modern Japan and China. While Curley organizes her study around three non-Buddhist figures – Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946), Miki Kiyoshi (1897–1945), and Ienaga

Saburō (1913–2002), Ritzinger’s work primarily focuses on the Chinese monk Taixu (1890–1947), the person behind the reinvention of the Maitreya cult in China. On the one hand, these two works form a fascinating contrast, exploring the same subject from emic and etic perspectives, respectively. On the other hand, the two studies complement each other, showing the multiple lives that such a popular Buddhist concept could take.

The main body of *Pure Land, Real World* consists of five chapters, which can be divided into two parts. In the first two chapters (Part 1), from Genshin, Hōnen, Shinran, to the Nishi Honganji Abbot Kōnyo and Kiyozawa Manshi, Curley gives a critical history of key figures and their take on the notion of the Pure Land from medieval to early Meiji Japan. One of her central arguments is that the common understanding of the Pure Land as “strictly transcendent” and other-worldly is an anachronistic modern creation, often misleadingly mapped onto medieval times (46). One implication of this misunderstanding is the confusion about what is “traditional” and “modern.” For instance, in Chapter 2, Curley suggests that certain views of the Pure Land in the thought of Kōnyo and Kiyozawa Manshi that we often think to be modern are indeed not so modern but have their roots in the writings of Shinran, as is often the case. Later, I will show how this observation bears a striking resemblance to Ritzinger’s comment on the debt that Taixu owes to the Buddhist and Confucian traditions in his reinvention of the Maitreya cult.

In Part 2 (Chapters 3–5), based on a careful reading of primary sources, Curley examines views of the Pure Land from the perspective of three leftist thinkers (Kawakami, an economist; Miki, a philosopher; and Ienaga, a historian). Her approach is that of “the history of thought” in the Foucauldian sense, as explained in the introduction. Her meticulous analysis demonstrates that each of the three thinkers employs and envisions Pure Land imagery in ways that reflect and are shaped, if not dictated, by their individual intellectual pursuits and personal experiences. Laid out in Chapter 1, one guiding analytic framework that cuts across these three chapters is the “Two Truths” debate concerning the relationship between “the imperial law” and “the Buddhist law” (32). Curley devotes a section towards the end of each chapter to discuss, through the lens of the “Two Truths” debate, these scholars’ varied responses to the relationship between Buddhism, the nation-state, and modernity. Her emphasis is on why they found Pure Land imagery intellectually appealing. While it is by no means an easy task to evaluate the meanings of the Pure Land to such prolific writers as Kawakami, Miki, and Ienaga and the author has already given a solid introduction of the main Buddhist doctrines covered in the book, readers not specializing in modern

Japanese political and intellectual history might appreciate some more background in these two topics to better understand, for example, the reception of Marxism in Japan and where these three thinkers fit in the intellectual landscape of their day.

Modernity and church-state relations also figure prominently in *Anarchy in the Pure Land*. Focusing on the early life of Taixu and situating his career in the turbulent final years of the Qing dynasty and the early Republican era, Ritzinger presents a nuanced picture of Taixu as an anarchist reformer and founder of the Maitreya School, calling attention to the significance of the cult of Maitreya in Taixu's career. He argues that the young Taixu's involvement in radical and socialist movements exerted a long-lasting impact on him, an aspect of his life that has hitherto eluded most scholarly attention (106), partially because of the limited accessibility of primary materials for scholars. However, this is also due to the predominance of what Ritzinger describes as the "push models of modernity," depicting religion as ever passively responding to a Western modernist paradigm (5–7).

The main body of the work is divided into three parts, each consisting of two chapters. A helpful feature of the book's organization is that each introductory chapter offers historical context for Parts 1 and 2. In contrast, the second chapter is more analytical, featuring an elaborate treatment of arguments put forward in the first chapter. In Part 1, titled "Taixu's Buddhist Radicalism," Ritzinger outlines Taixu's activities in the 1910s, arguing that during this period, Taixu projected three different approaches to realize Datong or Grand Unity, his vision of a Buddhist revolutionary utopia: economic-materialist, sociocultural, and existential-metaphysical. As Ritzinger demonstrates, Taixu's changing understanding of the anarchist utopia is rooted in ancient Confucian classics, the Buddhist tradition itself, and contemporary political activists' reinterpretation of the utopia. Similarly, in Curley's account, Kawakami, Miki, and Ienaga establish Shinran as the anchor in formulating their theories and constantly invoke him as a regrettably distant symbolic figure of the "authentic" or "pure" form of Pure Land practices.

However, one area that distinguishes Taixu's attitude toward the legacy of the pre-modern tradition, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, is his emphasis on the continuity between past and present views of utopia. Part 2, "The Cult of Maitreya," demonstrates how Taixu drew inspiration from the Yogācāra School of Xuanzang (602–664) and Kuiji (632–682), as Ritzinger traces the development of the Maitreya School from 1924 to circa 1937

through a contextualized reading of Taixu's "Three Essentials" (*Cizong sanyao* 慈宗三要), that is: the "Chapter on Knowing Reality" in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Yoga Bodhisattva Prātimokṣa*, and the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of Maitreya Bodhisattva's Ascent to Tuṣita Heaven* (173). Throughout, Ritzinger demonstrates the continuing influence of radicalism and revolutionary activities on Taixu and how he attempted to integrate the moral frameworks of "revolutionary utopianism" and Buddhism. Ritzinger's account challenges the misleading but prevailing characterization of Taixu's theology as entirely demythologized, secularized, and thus, socially engaged – and devoid of idolatry and superstition (5).

Part 3, "Worlds Closing and Opening," explains the decline of the newly-founded Maitreya School from the late 1930s onwards (Chapter 5) and its resurgence in recent times along with contending popular groups interested in Maitreya (Chapter 6). In Chapter 5, Ritzinger also devotes a section to the comparison between Taixu and his disciple Yinshun (1906–2005) regarding their Maitreyan thought and interpretations of Pure Land. Overall, the author has presented a thorough overview of Taixu's vision of the Buddhist utopia. Still, readers may find it helpful to know more about Taixu's Maitreyan theology in comparison to his contemporaries, whose own views of the Pure Land and responses to Taixu's evolving "revolutionary utopia" might shed light on the development of the Maitreya School.

Well-researched, methodologically illuminating, and neatly structured, both *Pure Land, Real World* and *Anarchy in the Pure Land* offer fresh insights into Buddhist modernizing movements led by members within and outside the monastic community in modern East Asia. They have shown the tremendous vitality and flexibility of the Pure Land – the Western Paradise of Amida, the Inner Court of Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven, the Pure Land on earth – as reformist and revolutionary thinkers in China and Japan vigorously sought to reinterpret it while referencing new intellectual currents available to them, particularly anarchism, socialism, and modern science. Nonetheless, their visions of the Pure Land vary greatly in terms of the ontological status of the Pure Land (transcendent, provisionally existing, or even non-existent), its location (this-worldly or other-worldly), and its timing (for Taixu, the foreseeable, though deferred, future; imminent because of being private, for Kawakami). In addition, even though the relationship between state and religion is debatable, it can be said that all these figures agree that Buddhism has something essential to contribute to the state and its people, either as a complementary or a critical other.

In sum, both *Pure Land, Real World* and *Anarchy in the Pure Land*

are invaluable contributions to not only the study of Pure Land movements but also the burgeoning field of modern East Asian Buddhism in a globalized context. Above all, they pave the ground for future research on the multifaceted interaction between Chinese and Japanese religion in modern times beyond sectarian studies' limits. Recently, there has been an increasing number of works on this subject, notably *Leaving for the Rising Sun: Chinese Zen Master Yinyuan and the Authenticity Crisis in Early Modern East Asia* (Oxford, 2016). Within the scope of the works considered here, the extent to which Japanese Buddhism might have influenced Taixu and his contemporaries, which was mentioned in passing here and there (e.g., the possible influence of Matsumoto Bunzaburou's *On Maitreya Pure Land*, 112), and the persistent influence of Confucian ethics in the rhetoric of modern Japanese Buddhist discourses on the Pure Land suggest the rich potential of such cross-cultural comparative study.

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