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Special Feature: “Korean Wave”
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CONTENTS

Editor’s Note .......................................................................................................... v
Welcome from the SEC/AAS President ............................................................ vii
Instructions for Authors ...................................................................................... viii
The Volume at a Glance ....................................................................................... xii
Contributors .......................................................................................................... xviii

INVITED ESSAY

My Tenure as Annals Editor, 1984–1988
HAL W. FRENCH .............................................................................................. 1

ARTICLES

Special Feature: “Korean Wave”

Introduction: Conceptualizing the Korean Wave
MARK RAVINA .................................................................................................. 3

Japanese Surfing the Korean Wave:
Drama Tourism, Nationalism, and Gender via Ethnic Eroticisms
MILLIE CREIGHTON .......................................................................................... 10

Image Is Everything:
Re-imaging Traditional Music in the Era of the Korean Wave
HILARY V. FINCHUM-SUNG ............................................................................. 39

No “Korean Wave” Here:
Western Classical Music and the Changing Value System in South Korea
OKON HWANG .................................................................................................. 56

Transnational Korea:
A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States
EUN-YOUNG JUNG ............................................................................................ 69
Finds, Encounters & Relations in Asia

"You Are the Clever One":
A Semantic Contest in a Transient Host/Tourist Community in Nepal
STEVEN FOLMAR ................................................................. 81

Tudi Gong in Taiwan
CHRISTOPHER A. HALL ...................................................... 97

Philologist of an Abandoned Classic:
Coterie Reading, Comic Commentary, and the Topos of the
Found Manuscript in Ueda Akinari’s Kuse Monogatari
DYLAN McGEE ................................................................. 113

Extramarital Relationships, Masculinity, and Gender Relations in Vietnam
NGUYEN KHANH LINH & JACK DASH HARRIS ......................... 127

Visions of Empire, East & West

Victim of Colonialism or Model of Colonial Rule?
Changing Japanese Perceptions of Egypt, ca. 1860–1930
RICHARD BRADSHAW & IBRAHIM NDZESOP ........................... 143

Runner-up:
Japan in the German Mass Media during the 1936 Olympic Games
RICKY W. LAW ................................................................. 164

Engineering the Empire of Images:
Constructing Railways in Asia before the Great War
NATALIA STAROSTINA ...................................................... 181

INTERVIEW

Interview with Sichan Siv
QUAN MANH HA .............................................................. 207

SCHOLARLY NOTES

Using World History to Teach about Premodern Japan
THOMAS W. BARKER .......................................................... 219

Science Innovation during the Cultural Revolution:
Notes from the Peking Review
DARRYL E. BROCK ............................................................ 226
East Asia in Survey Courses:
Assessment and Comparative Digital Resources
LUCIEN ELLINGTON & MERWIN MCCOY ................................................................. 233

Gandhi’s Grandchildren: The Legacy Continued
HAL W. FRENCH .................................................................................................. 242

The Southern Dynasties (420–589) Buddhist Caves at Qixiashan, China
WEI LIN ............................................................................................................. 254

Japanese Simplification of Chinese Characters in Perspective
XUEXIN LIU ........................................................................................................ 262

Hosting the World: Perception Management and the Beijing Olympics
JIM LORD ............................................................................................................... 272

The Nagayama Criteria for Assessing the Death Penalty in Japan:
Reflections of a Case Suspect
DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX ......................................................................................... 282

Yin-Yang in Snow Country
MASAKI MORI .................................................................................................... 290

Democratic Paradox: What Has Gone Wrong in Thailand?
CHUNJUAN NANCY WEI ..................................................................................... 296

Bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Gar Alperovitz and His Critics
KAZUO YAGAMI .................................................................................................. 301

RETROSPETITIVE REVIEW ESSAY

Liza Dalby’s Geisha: The View Twenty-five Years Later
JAN BARDSLEY .................................................................................................... 309

BOOK REVIEWS

Asia: Comparative & Transnational

Gupta, ed., Going to School in South Asia

Postiglione & Tan, eds., Going to School in East Asia
STEVEN E. GUMP ............................................................................................... 325

China

Chen, ed., Fu Baoshi quanji [The complete works of Fu Baoshi]
DAVID A. ROSS ................................................................................................. 331
Littlejohn, Daoism: An Introduction
JIM DEITRICK ........................................................................................................ 335

Japan

Corson, The Zen of Fish: The Story of Sushi, from Samurai to Supermarket
Issenberg, The Sushi Economy: Globalization and the Making of a Modern Delicacy
SCOTT W. NAGEL ..................................................................................................... 337

Samuels, Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia
DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX .......................................................................................... 343

South Asia

Metcalf, Husain Ahmad Madani: The Jihad for Islam and India’s Freedom
M. RAISUR RAHMAN ............................................................................................ 346

Pinto, Where There Is No Midwife: Birth and Loss in Rural India
RACHEL NEWCOMB ........................................................................................... 349

Southeast Asia

Van Esterik, Food Culture in Southeast Asia
STEVEN E. GUMP ................................................................................................ 351

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 48TH ANNUAL MEETING

Program of the 48TH Annual Meeting ................................................................. 355

Minutes of the 48TH Annual Business Meeting ............................................... 364

SEC/AAS Executive Committee, 2009–2010 ...................................................... 368
You have before you the largest volume of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies (SERAS) produced to date (over 167,000 words), demonstrating the impressive depth and range of work carried out by members of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). This volume includes contributions by a record thirty-four Asianists (pp. xviii–xxiv)—twenty-five of whom are publishing in the SERAS for the first time. Another first is that this volume includes a special themed feature: a collection of four articles on the “Korean Wave,” made possible through generous support by the Academy of Korean Studies (see Mark Ravina’s introduction to the section on pp. 3–9 for details). The remaining seven articles and eleven scholarly notes address East, South, and Southeast Asia from the perspectives of anthropology, art history, comparative literature, education, history, linguistics, political science, religion, and sociology. The articles are organized thematically into three transdisciplinary sections:

Special Feature: “Korean Wave”
Finds, Encounters & Relations in Asia
Visions of Empire, East & West

You are invited to read within and across these sections, pulling from the material various content, perspectives, and approaches that will inform and expand your disciplinary and geographical understandings of Asia. Pay attention, also, to the reviews of nine recently published monographs and edited volumes—plus a biography—addressing aspects of Asian art history, cultural studies, economics, education, philosophy, political science, religion, and sociology. As with earlier volumes of the SERAS, which have served to record the history of the SEC/AAS and its activities, this one also includes the program of the annual meeting and minutes of the annual business meeting held during the year of publication—in this case, the 48th Annual Meeting hosted by Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in January 2009.

More firsts for this volume include an interview and a retrospective review essay. The invited essay that opens the volume continues the series of reflective essays by former editors of this journal, begun in Volume 30.

Editing the SERAS is far from a solo operation. As with Volumes 29 and 30, I appreciate the advice and counsel of Daniel A. Métraux; and Ronnie Littlejohn once again brought together an excellent, diverse collection of scholarly notes and book reviews. David Jones should have been listed as
a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for both Volumes 29 and 30; I apologize for the unintentional omission. He and other members of the Editorial Advisory Board, listed on the inside front cover, provided useful, detailed comments to authors. In addition, sixteen special reviewers assisted me over the past year: Raja Adal (Harvard University), Cemil Aydin (George Mason University), Cheryl Crowley (Emory University), David Del Testa (Bucknell University), Paul Droubie (Manhattan College), Erik Esselstrom (University of Vermont), David Hardiman (University of Warwick), Thomas Havens (Northeastern University), Wan-Li Ho (Emory University), Li-ling Hsiao (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Robert Lee (University of Western Sydney), Michael Rich (Georgetown College), Sven Saaler (Sophia University), Ajay Skaria (University of Minnesota), Allison Truitt (Tulane University), and Susan Walcott (University of North Carolina at Greensboro). I thank all of these specialists for their involvement, attention, and interest in the SERAS.

I encourage you to consult the Instructions for Authors (pp. viii–xi) and to consider submitting your own articles, scholarly notes, and book reviews for the next volume. Moreover, I invite you to propose additional genres and types of scholarship for inclusion in future SERAS volumes; do not feel restricted by the categories described in the Instructions for Authors. The SERAS is your journal, after all: A goal is to be as reflective as possible of your work and interests. As well, the journal remains committed to offering a balanced look at Asia, providing both historical and contemporary pieces that address the different regions of Asia from a variety of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.

This volume is my third and last as editor. I first became involved with the SEC/AAS in 2004, soon after making an academic transition from Asian studies to education, and I joined the SERAS editorial team in 2006. In addition to affording me the privilege of experiencing the inner workings of the scholarly publishing realm, editing the SERAS has allowed me to keep a foot in an academic world about which I remain passionate. I have enjoyed meeting so many Asianists from across the Southeast United States (and beyond); and I have appreciated learning about your academic interests and pursuits, as presented at the SEC/AAS annual meetings and as chronicled in the SERAS. The eighth SERAS editor will be appointed by members of the SEC/AAS Executive Committee in January 2010 and announced at the 49th Annual Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. The SERAS Web site will be updated in January with new editorial contact information. In 2010, feel free to contact either me or the new editor (with whom I will put you in touch). I am quite relieved that Ronnie Littlejohn has agreed to remain, for at least one additional year, as associate editor for scholarly notes and book reviews. His experience and assistance will certainly be a boon for the new editor.

As always, enjoy reading—and learning from—this volume. I welcome your thoughts and comments about past SERAS volumes—and your suggestions and ideas for future volumes. You can reach me at sgump@illinois.edu.
It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the thirty-first volume of the *Southwest Review of Asian Studies*. As a former editor (2004–6) and frequent contributor since joining the SEC/AAS in 1983, I have witnessed the steady progress of this publication from an in-house work featuring a few papers and abstracts from the previous meeting to a full-scale, noteworthy scholarly journal with high-quality articles by both seasoned veterans and younger scholars. We are proud of the fact that the SEC/AAS is the only regional chapter of the Association for Asian Studies to produce such a professional journal that rivals any other Asian studies publication in terms of quality.

My three-year term as *SERAS* editor was notable for several changes: an on-line version, book reviews, scholarly notes, and acceptance of articles not necessarily resulting from papers presented at the previous conference. In other words, we were moving the *SERAS* away from its “in-house” status to that of a professional publication with national aspirations; but there was plenty of room for improvement. What we really needed was a highly talented editor to transform this aspiring journal into a highly professional scholarly work. Luckily I befriended Steven Gump when he submitted a classy article for publication. I soon recognized his great editorial talents and invited him to assist me in editing my final volume. Because of his enormous contributions to the 2006 issue, SEC/AAS colleagues commended me on “the best *SERAS* issue to date.” I smiled, knowing that Steve deserved this praise, and promptly nominated him as my successor.

Steve has gathered an Editorial Advisory Board that has helped the *SERAS* grow year by year, but the lion’s share of praise must go to Steve himself. He is an incredibly talented editor and scholar who has devoted hundreds of hours every year to producing what is now a truly first-class publication. The entire SEC/AAS Executive Committee expresses its deep appreciation for the wonderful work that Steve has done for us.

I also thank Emory University and Mark Ravina for hosting a marvelous conference in January 2009; I look forward to the day that we can reconvene there. The January 2010 conference will be held at the University of Louisville under the inspired leadership of Shiping Hua, Director of Louisville’s Center for Asian Democracy. Our theme of the “Democratization of Asia” should inspire some fascinating papers—and another excellent volume of the *SERAS*. 
Instructions for Authors

About the Journal

The *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* (SERAS, formerly called the *Annals of the Southeast Conference, Association for Asian Studies*) is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal published annually since 1979 by the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). We welcome submissions of articles, scholarly notes, book reviews, and other forms of scholarship that relate to the regions of Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, or Southeast Asia from perspectives within such diverse fields as anthropology, art history, cinema studies, cultural studies, economics, education, ethnomusicology, gender studies, history, language and linguistics, literature, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and sociology. All authors should take care to address the interests of our broad, multidisciplinary readership by raising larger questions that reach beyond individual research specialties.

As the publication of a regional conference, the SERAS is designed to promote and support research on Asia by authors with affiliations within our region: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Submissions from authors outside this area are also welcome, but potential contributors should become members of the SEC/AAS and are encouraged to present their research at an SEC/AAS annual meeting. (Membership and conference information are available at the SEC/AAS Web site, http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/.) The SERAS is listed as a member journal by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (http://www.celj.org).

Contributors may draft their submissions as articles or as briefer scholarly notes. Also, we welcome reviews of recent (published within the last two years) scholarly monographs, edited volumes, works of literature, or other works that address issues pertaining to Asia. English-language reviews of non-English-language works are especially welcome, as are reviews of works written, edited, or translated by members of the SEC/AAS. Please let us know if you have recently published a relevant work; we would be happy to find a qualified reviewer for you. Alternative forms of scholarship will certainly be considered; please consult with the editor to discuss your ideas.

Submission deadlines are March 1 for articles and June 1 for scholarly notes and book reviews. Please consult and follow the specific preparation and submission guidelines (below, and also accessible from the main SERAS Web page, http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/seras.html).
**General Manuscript Preparation**

Prepare manuscripts in 12-point type with 1-inch margins, double spacing throughout (including notes and references). If possible, format your manuscripts for letter-size (8½ × 11–inch) paper. Please adhere to the word limits indicated for each type of submission. Include notes in the word count, but exclude the abstract, references, tables, and figure captions (if applicable).

With the exception of book reviews, provide your manuscript with a short, descriptive, and—ideally—interest-piquing title. Include descriptive headings and subheadings to help readers follow the organization of the piece. (The headings “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” although “descriptive,” are not particularly helpful. Please use headings reflective of the actual content, not the rhetorical structure, of your presentation.)

Notes should be as few as possible and should appear at the end of the text. Use parenthetical in-text citation and author–date formatting for references, as per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 620–24. If you are preparing a piece better suited to an alternative method of citation, please consult with the editor (sgump@illinois.edu) prior to submission. A full list of works cited within the manuscript (headed “References”) should follow the text. Asian-language references should include Romanized names and translations of titles; see examples in this volume for models. Ensure that this list is complete and includes only items cited within the manuscript itself.

On the title page of your manuscript submission, please include the word count of your submission as well as your name, affiliation, e-mail address, and complete mailing address. This page will be removed before sending the document (electronically) for double-blind reviewing.

Except for names or terms already well known in English, please use the following Romanizations: Hanyu Pinyin (Chinese); Hepburn (Japanese); Revised (Korean—new for Volume 32 and beyond). Note also that Asian scripts are supported by the SERAS. For purposes of education and information, please include them in your texts, especially following names and transliterated terms, phrases, or expressions.

These general manuscript guidelines, plus the following specific guidelines for each submission type, are also accessible from the main SERAS Web page, http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/seras.html.

**Specific Guidelines for Articles**

In addition to following the general manuscript guidelines, preface your article submission (word count range of 5,000–7,500 words) with a 100–150-word abstract, a concise summary that conveys the central focus of the piece. If your piece is substantially shorter than 5,000 words, consider submitting
it as a scholarly note. If your piece is longer than 7,500 words, either consider a different venue or shorten it before submitting it to the SERAS. The submission deadline for articles is March 1.

Direct all article-related inquiries to the editor (sgump@illinois.edu).

Specific Guidelines for Scholarly Notes

Pieces in this section generally present brief introductions to Asia-related topics or issues but may also provide Asia-related commentaries, editorials, or descriptions of research-in-progress; the tone may be either academic or reflective (or both). Submissions should be fewer than 3,000 words, and shorter submissions are most welcome. The deadline for scholarly notes is June 1.

Please follow the general manuscript guidelines, and direct all specific inquiries to the associate editor (ronnie.littlejohn@belmont.edu).

Specific Guidelines for Book Reviews

The SERAS accepts reviews of books published within the past two years. (Reviews submitted by June 1, 2010, for example, should be of books published no earlier than 2008.) Reviews of single works should be approximately 1,000–1,500 words (though shorter reviews are accepted); thematic essay reviews of multiple, complementary works should be no longer than 3,000 words. Preface all reviews with full citations, including numbers of pages, for the book (or books) under review. Examples for a monograph and an edited volume are below.


Internal citations to the work (or works) being reviewed should be made parenthetically, providing only the page number (in the case of a monograph or work of literature) or the author and page number (in the case of an edited volume). All direct quotations from the text or texts reviewed should be followed by citations. The submission deadline for book reviews is June 1; and the general manuscript guidelines also apply to these submissions, with the exception that any external citations should be made in notes. (Reference lists do not accompany book reviews or review essays.)

Additional book review suggestions and guidelines are available at the main SERAS page, http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/seras.html.
Submission Process & Expectations

Submit manuscripts electronically to the relevant editor as Microsoft Word attachments by the appropriate deadline:

**Articles (March 1):** Steven E. Gump, sgump@illinois.edu

**Book reviews & scholarly notes (June 1):** Ronnie Littlejohn, ronnie.littlejohn@belmont.edu

Tables, figures, and images, all of which must include titles or captions, should *not* be embedded in the manuscript file but rather should be sent as separate attachments, each on its own page. Only low-resolution images should be sent with manuscript submissions; high-resolution versions will be requested after acceptance.

Contributors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce any materials, including photographs and illustrations, for which they do not hold copyright and for ensuring that the appropriate acknowledgments are included in the manuscript.

If electronic submission is not possible, please contact the appropriate editor for further instructions.

Submissions will be acknowledged by e-mail within one week of receipt, with article decisions normally sent by the first week of May and book review and scholarly notes decisions normally sent by the second week of July. Authors of article submissions will receive written feedback from reviewers along with the decision letter. Authors of accepted article manuscripts will have approximately two months to revise their manuscripts according to comments from the reviewers and editor. In late summer, final versions of accepted articles will be edited for accuracy and style; page proofs will be sent (electronically) to authors for review prior to publication. The SERAS is printed in late autumn, and copies are mailed to contributors before the end of the year. The journal is distributed to attendees of the SEC/AAS annual meeting the following January.

Authors whose manuscripts are accepted for publication will be expected to submit a brief (50–75-word) biographical statement for the “Contributors” section. Examples of past bionotes can be found in previous SERAS issues or are available, upon request, from the editor.

Manuscripts submitted to the SERAS should not have been published elsewhere and should not be under review for publication elsewhere. Articles in the SERAS represent neither the views of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies nor those of members of the SERAS editorial board. The editor is responsible for the final selection of content and reserves the right to reject any material deemed inappropriate for publication. Responsibility for opinions expressed and the accuracy of facts published in articles, reviews, and scholarly notes rests solely with the individual authors.
The Volume at a Glance

Invited Essay

My Tenure as Annals Editor, 1984–1988

HAL W. FRENCH, University of South Carolina

In this invited essay, Hal French reflects on his 1984–88 editorship of the Annals, the journal that today is the Southeast Review of Asian Studies.

Articles

Introduction: Conceptualizing the Korean Wave

MARK RAVINA, Emory University

This essay introduces the “Korean Wave” special feature of this volume of the SERAS.

Japanese Surfing the Korean Wave:
Drama Tourism, Nationalism, and Gender via Ethnic Eroticisms

MILLIE CREIGHTON, University of British Columbia

The Korean Wave, brought on by the popularity of serialized Korean drama Winter Sonata, flooded Japan from 2004 on. At the popular level, it initiated a generally positive shift in attitudes toward Korea, Koreans, and resident Koreans in Japan. Commercially, it spawned consumer trends and fads that focused on middle-aged women. This article contextualizes the Korean Wave, offers a synopsis of Winter Sonata, and considers ways that popular culture has the power to influence people and their attitudes toward other groups. For example, female fans of the drama’s lead male challenged long-established hierarchies that positioned Japanese above Koreans and older men above younger men. Ultimately, this piece argues that the Korean Wave created a venue in Japan for dialogue on new possibilities for gender relations, new constructions of self-identities, and new pathways for interacting with other nations of Asia.

Image Is Everything:
Re-imaging Traditional Music in the Era of the Korean Wave

HILARY V. FINCHUM-SUNG, Seoul National University

In contemporary South Korea, much attention has been focused on developing strategies for Korea’s global integration. The recent hallyu 한류 (Korean Wave) phenomenon attests to the sheer potential of using performing arts as a cultural emissary for the promotion of Korean culture abroad. Within this context, individuals priming Korean music for global acceptance have been molding the image and sound into something potentially more accessible and, thus, marketable, to both local and global audiences. This article examines the influence of the Korean Wave on the development and promotion of Korean music. Based on firsthand observations through field research from summer 2008 to spring 2009, this piece explores three sites of performance—the stage, brochures, and Web sites—on which the image of Korean music is being reconstructed for widespread consumption. Developments draw on the romantic imagery and storylines of hallyu dramas, using intangible forms of Korea’s heritage as raw source materials.
No “Korean Wave” Here:
Western Classical Music and the Changing Value System in South Korea
OKON HWANG, Eastern Connecticut State University
Because of the Korean Wave, Korean popular musicians have gained a powerful presence in South Korea, while classical musicians have become increasingly marginalized. This change is surprising because a considerable amount of educational capital has been invested in the systematic grooming of classical musicians—and popular musicians have historically been treated with disrespect and even contempt. The impact of the Korean Wave and the shifting social status of musicians indicate that a fundamental change may be taking place in the South Korean value system. Based on personal experiences of musicians and the history of the presence of Western classical music in Korea, this article demonstrates that this change of attitude toward musicians’ social status may metaphorically serve as a wedge driven into a crack created by the shift of the old and new cultural and social tectonic plates of South Korea.

Transnational Korea:
A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States
EUN-YOUNG JUNG, University of California, San Diego
In the international spread of popular culture from Korea since the late 1990s, known popularly as the “Korean Wave,” television dramas have won the hearts of fans and paved the way for rising interest in Korean popular music throughout Pacific Asia and in Asian communities around the world. Indeed, Korean popular music has been spreading rapidly; but, as argued in this article, the reasons have relatively little to do with aesthetic and cultural values that could be identified as typically Korean. After providing a theoretical framework for understanding transnational flows and hybridity, this piece looks specifically at the Korean television drama Winter Sonata and the music, public personas, and career trajectories of BoA and Rain (비Rain), ultimately questioning the cultural validity of the concept of the Korean Wave.

“You Are the Clever One”:
A Semantic Contest in a Transient Host/Tourist Community in Nepal
STEVEN FOLMAR, Wake Forest University
By developing a conceptual model of social discourse, based in part on a rites-of-passage model of tourism, this article illustrates how tourists and hosts employ different assumptions of social interaction to pursue competing goals in touristic encounters. An ethnographic example—the author and a young souvenir peddler in Kathmandu, Nepal, haggling over an inexpensive necklace—demonstrates the nature of some tourist/host social encounters. The participants in this example attempt to “one-up” each other socially, engaging in a linguistic contest over who is “clever” as they vie for social status in the fleeting community they establish with each other.

Tudi Gong in Taiwan
CHRISTOPHER A. HALL, Union Institute & University
Studies of Tudi Gong 土地公 in English are relatively rare. This article reports the history, faces, roles, and duties of Tudi Gong, one of the lowest-ranked gods of the traditional Taiwanese pantheon, whose name can be translated as “Earth Lord.” Tudi Gong is the most ubiquitous and one of the most commonly worshipped gods in Taiwan; he is the approachable genius loci with access to the higher gods. This article brings together various perspectives on Tudi Gong from previous studies of Chinese or Taiwanese religion. To these portrayals it adds notes from the author’s observations of worshippers and informal interviews at temples, homes, and other places around Taiwan in 2008.
Philologist of an Abandoned Classic:
Coterie Reading, Comic Commentary, and the
Topos of the Found Manuscript in Ueda Akinari’s Kuse Monogatari

DYLAN MCGEE, State University of New York at New Paltz

Ueda Akinari’s 上田秋成 (1734–1809) Kuse monogatari くせものがたり (Tales of compulsion, 1791) is a compelling case study for considering how alternative modes of literary production arose in resistance to hegemonies of print in early modern Japan. Conceived as a parody of the Heian-period (795–1185) classic Ise monogatari 伊勢物語 (Tales of Ise, ca. 1100), Kuse monogatari was circulated in manuscript form among a close coterie of Akinari’s literary acquaintances, with the intent of engaging these readers in the collaborative project of revising the main text and adding marginal commentary. The result was a collaboratively revised and annotated redaction of Akinari’s original drafts, carried out through epistolary exchanges between author and reader. In this article, I propose that this mode of textual production enhanced the parodic premise of Kuse monogatari and made it a site for satirizing current philological scholarship on Ise monogatari.

Extramarital Relationships, Masculinity, and Gender Relations in Vietnam

NGUYEN KHANH LINH, Syracuse University
JACK DASH HARRIS, Hobart & William Smith Colleges

In most of their forms, extramarital activities by Vietnamese men are not perceived as infidelity or adultery. Extramarital relationships often facilitate male bonding and are important signifiers of Vietnamese masculinity and male privilege. However, Vietnamese men face significant role strain as their wives become better educated, more independent, and contribute greater amounts to the family income. This article, based on both primary and secondary data—including 220 survey interviews conducted by Nguyen and three assistants in all three regions of Vietnam in 2006 and 22 in-depth follow-up interviews in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Vinh Long by Harris in 2007—presents a typology of extramarital relationships in Vietnam and considers their development and further evolution vis-à-vis issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.

Victim of Colonialism or Model of Colonial Rule?
Changing Japanese Perceptions of Egypt, ca. 1860–1930

RICHARD BRADSHAW, Centre College
IBRAHIM NDZESOP, University of Paris (Panthéon-Sorbonne)

The Japanese displayed an extraordinary interest in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but their perception of Egypt changed radically during that period. From the 1860s to the 1890s, many Japanese thought Egypt’s situation was similar to Japan’s. When Egypt’s growing debt led to increasing intervention by European powers, Japanese officials regarded Egypt’s eventual loss of sovereignty as a cautionary tale and minimized Japan’s dependence on European loans. But after Japan’s 1895 victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese officials used European colonial administration as a model and justification for their own colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan. When Japan’s alliance with Britain destabilized after World War I, the Japanese contrasted their enlightened colonial policies with those of Britain, with Egypt then perceived as an example of British misrule. The ways Japan viewed Egypt between the 1860s and 1930s were strongly influenced by Japan’s changing relationship with Britain and its evolving status in the world community.
Runner-up: Japan in the German Mass Media during the 1936 Olympic Games

RICKY W. LAW, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Japan and Germany both saw an opportunity in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games to use the publicity to promote their image in the world. In particular, the host country’s mass media generated a wealth of materials, ranging from radio broadcasts to newspaper articles, cigarette-card photographs, and film footage. This study makes use of these primary sources to analyze their portrayals of Japan during the Games, revealing an overall image plagued by stereotypes and misconceptions. Japan, whose successes often came across as surprises, also appeared as a sort of lesser runner-up best suited for aping Germany. Given that the Olympics occurred only three months before the Anti-Comintern Pact of November 25, 1936, these unflattering depictions of Japan in the German mass media indicate that German-Japanese rapprochement resulted from a radical shift from previous cultural and social attitudes.

Engineering the Empire of Images: Constructing Railways in Asia before the Great War

NATALIA STAROSTINA, Young Harris College

This article addresses how the construction of railways in Indochina and the Chinese province of Yunnan shaped representations of the French “civilizing mission” prior to 1914. In the early 1900s, Paul Doumer (1857–1932), as governor-general of Indochina, initiated a large program of railway construction in Indochina and Yunnan. There, French engineers created technological marvels such as the pont Doumer (Doumer Bridge), the pont sur Albalétriers (Crossbow Bridge), and the pont en dentelle (Steel Lace Viaduct). Railway construction demanded millions of francs; and over twelve thousand workers died while building the Yunnan railway. The French were ultimately able to use this railway line only until 1940—for fewer than thirty years. Nevertheless, images of railway masterpieces created illusions of French imperial presence in southern China. Such images also suggested that the French had a profound impact on modernizing Indochina and Yunnan, a perception that was far from the truth.

Interview

Interview with Sichan Siv

QUAN MANH HA, Texas Tech University

This piece presents a transcription of a March 12, 2009, interview with Sichan Siv, the 28th U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Economic & Social Council, by SEC/AAS member Quan Manh Ha, during the 2009 Vietnam Center Conference on “Cambodia, Laos, Thailand & the Vietnam War,” held at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

Scholarly Notes

Using World History to Teach about Premodern Japan

THOMAS W. BARKER, University of Kansas

In this scholarly note, Thomas Barker provides five examples from premodern Japanese history that can be used in secondary or undergraduate world history classrooms. These examples could enable cross-cultural and cross-period comparisons, helping students to better understand how societies have changed, developed, and transformed over time.
Science Innovation during the Cultural Revolution: Notes from the Peking Review

Darryl E. Brock, Fordham University

In this scholarly note, Darryl Brock utilizes numerous articles from the Peking Review to argue that scientific and technical innovation among the “mass line” existed at surprising levels during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

East Asia in Survey Courses: Assessment and Comparative Digital Resources

Lucien Ellington & Merwin McCoy, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

This scholarly note discusses online and other resources particularly suitable for world history and geography courses and includes a draft of a diagnostic assessment tool that is intended for university and high school–level survey courses. The material herein should also be applicable to other survey courses in the humanities and social sciences.

Gandhi’s Grandchildren: The Legacy Continued

Hal W. French, University of South Carolina

In this scholarly note, Hal French explores the lives and legacies of several of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi’s (1868–1948) grandchildren and great-grandchildren, placing special emphasis on Ramchandra Gandhi (1937–2007) and his 1992 novel, Sita’s Kitchen.

The Southern Dynasties (420–589) Buddhist Caves at Qixiashan, China

Wei Lin, Transylvania University

Here Wei Lin introduces the late fifth to sixth century Buddhist rock-cut cave temple complex of Qixiashan, a collection of about 250 caves and niches housing some 350 Buddhist carvings, near Nanjing in China’s Jiangsu province.

Japanese Simplification of Chinese Characters in Perspective

Xuexin Liu, Spelman College

In this scholarly note, Xuexin Liu explains simplification as a Japanese linguistic strategy, focusing on motivations for simplifying certain Chinese characters borrowed into Japanese and the resultant orthographic effects on Japanese kanji.

Hosting the World: Perception Management and the Beijing Olympics

Jim Lord, Bob Jones University

In this scholarly note, Jim Lord uses news reports and personal research to offer a general overview of political developments prior to and during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, focusing on the Chinese Communist Party’s attempts at perception management.

The Nagayama Criteria for Assessing the Death Penalty in Japan: Reflections of a Case Suspect

Daniel A. Métraux, Mary Baldwin College

Here Daniel Métraux recounts his involvement in the sensational 1969 case of serial killer Nagayama Norio 永山則夫 (1949–97) in Japan and details the resultant “Nagayama criteria,” used by Japanese judges to determine if a case warrants the death penalty.

Yin-Yang in Snow Country

Masaki Mori, University of Georgia

In this scholarly note, Masaki Mori shows how yin-yang is a latent structural basis of Kawabata Yasunari’s 川端康成 (1899–1972) Yukiguni 雪国 (Snow Country), published between 1935 and 1947, thereby ascertaining the novelist’s Asian affiliation in a broad sense.
Democratic Paradox: What Has Gone Wrong in Thailand?

CHUNJUAN NANCY WEI, University of Bridgeport

In this scholarly note, Chunjuan Nancy Wei describes the recent political turmoil in Thailand and suggests an alternative approach that would permit democracy to bring stability to this Southeast Asian constitutional monarchy.

Bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Gar Alperovitz and His Critics

KAZUO YAGAMI, Savannah State University

Here Kazuo Yagami, supporting and expanding upon Gar Alperovitz’s interpretation in *Atomic Diplomacy* (1965), examines the various arguments regarding the U.S. decision to use the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki toward the end of World War II.

Retrospective Review Essay

Liza Dalby’s *Geisha*: The View Twenty-five Years Later

JAN BARDСLEY, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In this retrospective review essay, Jan Bardsley considers the role of Liza Dalby’s *Geisha* (first published by the University of California Press in 1983) in both past and recent academic discourse, offering a description of how she uses the text in undergraduate classes to raise issues of identity, representation, gender, and race.
Contributors

Jan Bardsley (bardsley@email.unc.edu), associate professor of Japanese humanities and chair of the Department of Asian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is author of *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Women Essays and Fiction from Seito, 1911–1916* (Michigan, 2007) and co-editor (with Laura Miller) of *Bad Girls of Japan* (Palgrave, 2005). She teaches courses on Japanese literature, theater, and women’s studies, including “Geisha in History, Fiction & Fantasy.”

Thomas W. Barker (twbarker@ku.edu), Ph.D. student in curriculum and instruction at the University of Kansas, focuses on secondary social studies education—specifically on how to train teachers to teach world history and to incorporate East Asia. After completing an M.A. in history, his undergraduate indoctrination in world history and concern for teacher training in East Asian studies got the best of him, and he switched to education from his previous focus on premodern Japanese history.

Richard A. Bradshaw (rick.bradshaw@centre.edu) is associate professor of history and international relations at Centre College (Danville, Kentucky). Reared in Japan, he served with the Peace Corps in Africa, attended graduate school at Ohio University, and was awarded two Fulbright scholarships to study Japanese-African relations in Japan and to teach diplomats at the International Relations Institute in Cameroon (where he met co-author Ibrahim Ndzesop). He recently completed *History of the Central African Republic* (Greenwood, 2009).

Darryl W. Brock (dbrock1@fordham.edu), Ph.D. student in history at Fordham University, is interested in the international dimensions of the history of science. His dissertation interest on Latin American influence on Darwinian evolution emerged from his research on China’s reception to Darwinism, in turn catalyzing his investigation of science and technology during the Cultural Revolution. An associate editor for *Southern Historian*, his earlier work led to a major contribution to *Cubans in the Confederacy* (McFarland, 2002).

Millie Creighton (milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca), associate professor of anthropology at the University of British Columbia, serves on the executive boards of both the Centre for Japanese Research and the Centre for Korean Research. She is a former officer of the Society for East Asian Anthropology,
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Steven Folmar (folmarsj@wfu.edu), assistant professor of anthropology at Wake Forest University, has conducted research in Nepal since 1979. Recently he has focused on two intersecting topics: tourism and the marginalized status of Dalits (formerly called “untouchables”), looking into issues of identity and nationalism and the Dalits’ role in tourism. He combines his academic interest with a commitment to aiding in the development of the Dalit community, according to their goals, methods, and standards.

Hal W. French (frenchh@sc.edu), Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at the University of South Carolina, has served as president of the SEC/AAS (1990–91), editor of the Annals (1984–88), and local arrangements chair for three annual SEC/AAS meetings at Hilton Head (1993, 1995, and 2008). Although primarily a South Asianist, his most recent book, Zen and the Art of Anything (Praxis International, 2009), was recently issued in a third edition.
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Christopher A. Hall (christopher.hall@email.myunion.edu) is a master’s student in history and culture concentrating in Taiwan studies at Union Institute & University. His interests in Taiwan focus on religion and identity; and his master’s thesis will draw upon the time he spent at seminary by comparing Tudi Gong with a locality god introduced in the Jacob Cycle in the Book of Genesis. His article on Tudi Gong presented here won the 2009 SEC/AAS Graduate Paper Prize.

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Okon Hwang (hwango@easternct.edu), D.M.A. in piano performance and Ph.D. in ethnomusicology, is professor of music at Eastern Connecticut State University. She has researched various aspects of Korean popular music and the intersection between Western art music and Korean cultural identity. Her recent book, Western Art Music in South Korea: Everyday Experience and Cultural Critique (VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009), discusses the influence of Western art music on contemporary history, music, culture, and identity in South Korea.

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**Ricky W. Law** (rl@email.unc.edu) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His interest in German-Japanese relations stemmed from his time studying at the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen (where he chanced upon the cigarette-card albums mentioned in his article) and working as an English teacher in Hokkaido. Currently he is conducting research for his dissertation project in Tokyo as a Japan Foundation doctoral fellow.

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My Tenure as *Annals* Editor, 1984–1988

**Hal W. French**

*University of South Carolina*

In this invited essay, Hal French reflects on his 1984–88 editorship of the *Annals*, the journal that today is the *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*.

**Continuing an Established Tradition**

“We stand on the shoulders of giants.” It’s a much easier task to continue a role that has been well inaugurated than to initiate one, because precedents have been established in policies and styles. This was certainly the case when I became editor of the *Annals* of the Southeast Conference, Association for Asian Studies, following Howard Federspiel. Under Howard’s guidance through the first five volumes (1978–83), the *Annals* had already proved its worth to our membership; there was solid support for its continuance in terms of submissions and a willingness on the part of key people to see it continue to move forward.

Some of those key people on the editorial board during the 1984–88 period included Molly Frost (George Washington University), Daniel Métraux (Mary Baldwin College), and John Seabury Thomson (Central Intelligence Agency). In 1985, Ken Berger (Duke University) was brought on board to serve as occasional papers editor and archivist; and Avinash Maheswary (also at Duke) became circulation manager. Editorial meetings with the folks at Duke and at the homes of Molly and John in the Washington, DC, area were both useful and delightful. To these names could, of course, be added a host of colleagues who served as presenters, discussants, and reviewers for papers given at the Southeast Conference meetings in Atlanta (1984), Durham (1985), Raleigh (1986), Chattanooga (1987), and Charlotte (1988).

**Creating Additional Records & Resources**

In addition to volumes VI–X of the *Annals*, four occasional papers were published during this period. Two of these were important bibliographical works edited by Ken Berger (*Asian Resources in the Southeastern United States:*)
Archival and Manuscript Resources on China and Japan in North Carolina and a companion volume on East Asia in Georgia). Two important historical documents were also produced in 1987 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Southeast Conference. Ken Berger edited *Asian Studies in the Southeast: A Twenty-five Year Retrospect*, with articles by Robert Crane, Burton Beers, Howard Federspiel, Edward Jones, and Frank Shulman, plus a piece by Ken describing the history and content of our archives. Then Howard served us again by compiling and editing *A Guide to the Programs of the Southeast Conference, Association for Asian Studies, for the Years 1962–86*. Perhaps, as we near the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference in 2011, members will want to review these important documents and consider the creation of similar ones to bring these historic records up to date.

This editorial statement, which appeared in the 1986 *Annals*, could serve as a summation of the role of the *Annals*:

We are Asianists. Editorial policy, reflecting that, is to select the best papers, while attempting a balance between representative disciplines and geographic regions. Readers of this and other volumes of *Annals* should find ample opportunity in these pages to enrich their general understanding of the range of Asian studies.

### Appreciating Support & Opportunities to Serve

Finally, a word should be added about the necessity of institutional support in undertaking a role such as editor of this journal. Support was consistently solid for me from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of South Carolina. I am grateful, also, to my home institution for recognizing the editing of the *Annals* as scholarly work. In addition, I profoundly appreciate that the Conference requested and felt that I might, with some degree of competence, fulfill not only the editorial role but also subsequent roles as president and local arrangements chair on three occasions at Hilton Head (1993, 1995, and 1998). Serving in each of these capacities has been a high and rare privilege.
Introduction:
Conceptualizing the Korean Wave

MARK RAVINA
Emory University

This essay introduces the “Korean Wave” special feature of this volume of the SERAS.

About This Special Issue

This special issue of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies grew out of a panel at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference of Asian Studies, held in Atlanta in January 2009 (see the conference program on p. 356). That panel, “The Korean Wave: Hallyu in Transnational Perspective” and this special issue were generously supported by a grant from the Academy of Korean Studies, part of the Strategic Initiative for Korean Studies promoting research on “The Korean Wave (Hallyu) and Korean Studies Abroad.” The Korean Wave itself is a relatively new phenomenon, but research on the subject has grown rapidly and has reached a high level of sophistication. Our purpose in Atlanta, therefore, was not only to build on previous research but also to suggest new directions for the study of the Korean Wave and how such research should connect to Korean Studies, East Asian Studies, and cultural studies in general.

What Is the Korean Wave?

In the narrowest sense, the “Korean Wave” (hallyu 한류 in Korean) refers to a surge in the international visibility of Korean culture, beginning in East Asia in the 1990s and continuing more recently in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe. The wave consists principally of two forms of media, television serials and pop music (K-pop), although Korean feature films and other musical forms are also part of the phenomenon.

Because the Korean Wave involves the export of Korean culture, it is inherently both a national phenomenon and a transnational phenomenon.
The emergence of a distinctly Korean popular entertainment idiom—and the impact of that idiom on other Korean cultural practices—are issues best understood in a Korean national context. But the “success” of the Korean Wave is a transnational issue: The salient questions are why and how Korean pop culture was received so enthusiastically abroad. These two questions, while distinct, are not unrelated: When promoters or government officials measure the success of the Korean Wave by overseas sales, they are making foreign consumers the arbiters of cultural value. This projection has the ironic impact of making Korean culture successful to the degree that it is enjoyed by non-Koreans. Indeed the term “Korean Wave” (hanliu 韩流) itself was coined by Chinese journalists to describe the wave of Korean pop that struck China in the 1990s.

The Korean Wave also lies at the intersection of several different fields of inquiry. Because it involves pop culture, the Korean Wave has been studied most extensively in the field of cultural studies (Chua and Iwabuchi 2008; Howard 2006). But the Korean Wave is also a marketing and business phenomenon, involving concerted efforts by promoters, publicists, and corporate agents to sell Korean culture as a commodity (Cho and Kang 2005; Han and Lee 2008; Kim and others 2008; Lee, Scott, and Kim 2008). This process, in turn, has a distinctly political dimension. The Korean government has promoted the Korean Wave as an export industry, with efforts that range from celebrating Korean pop stars in tourism materials to the direct support of Korean media companies. Thus K-pop stars figure prominently on the Chinese and Japanese versions of the Korean Tourism Organization Web site, and government promotions specifically highlight K-pop celebrities (Yu-Shan Lin and Hwang 2008). At the same time, the Korean government has offered subsidies for “cultural industries” (Chua and Iwabuchi 2008, 28), and industry representatives have called for low-interest loans in order to support the continued success of hallyu (Kang 2009).

The Korean Wave as National Phenomenon

The four papers on our panel that have been revised for inclusion in this volume dealt with both the national and transnational aspects of the Korean Wave. Okon Hwang and Hillary Finchum-Sung were concerned primarily with the domestic aspects of the Korean Wave. Eun-Young Jung and Millie Creighton, by contrast, dealt with how K-pop was received abroad and how existing cultural conditions and practices shaped that reception.

Okon Hwang’s essay, “No ‘Korean Wave’ Here: Western Classical Music and the Changing Value System in South Korea” (56–68) is striking because it shows how the Korean Wave affects Korean culture more broadly. Hwang contrasts the Korean Wave with the fate of (Western) classical music in contemporary Korea. Classical music has historically been enor-
mously popular in Korea as a measure of cultural attainment, and thus, although sales of classical music recordings by Korean performers are dismal, families have poured considerable resources into classical music training for their children. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, training in classical music consumes economic capital but builds “cultural capital.” The Korean Wave, however, problematizes this “high culture” versus “low culture” distinction, since it gives official support to a redefinition of pop culture as legitimate and authentically Korean. The Korean Wave thus appears as a threat to the status of classical music in contemporary Korea.

In “Image Is Everything: Re-imaging Traditional Music in the Era of the Korean Wave” (39–55), Hilary Finchum-Sung treats the parallel case of traditional Korean music, or kugak, understood broadly as musical forms developed during the Choson dynasty (1392–1910). Since the 1960s, kugak has enjoyed government support from the Bureau of Cultural Properties to “preserve cultural forms that were disappearing from popular use” (42), and traditional musical forms were linked to a “search for unique cultural expression” distinct from “Western” music and art (43). “Traditional” Korean culture was contrasted, in broad terms, with “Western” individuality and materialism.

The success of the Korean Wave, however, undermined this concept of Korean culture. Demand for K-pop turned pop culture from a problem to an export, and the Korean government changed its conceptual framework accordingly. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism now promotes kugak performances in non-traditional venues and its advertising campaigns connect, rather than contrast, kugak and Korean hip hop. The Korean Wave has thus generated new categories of cultural production, and Finchum-Sung carefully explores the dynamics of these new forms.

The Korean Wave as Transnational Phenomenon

Eun-Young Jung’s essay, “Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States” (69–80), focuses, by contrast, on the cross-cultural face of the Korean Wave. “The Korean Wave,” she writes, “may not be as ‘Korean’ or as ‘authentically Korean’ as people might imagine” (78). Korean culture is popular overseas, she argues, partly because is it “transnational and hybrid” and “involve[s] combinations of local and foreign elements at multiple levels” (78). The Korean Wave was successful first in China and Japan because of a broad range of shared cultural tropes. Here Jung echoes a point made elsewhere, that the Korean Wave was successful in part because “Korean TV producers have not just imitated but also creatively appropriated and transformed Japanese TV dramas, so much so that Korean youth drama has now become popular throughout East Asian markets, including Japan” (Iwabuchi 2008, 153). In
the absence of such common cultural references, however, “riding” the Korean Wave is more difficult. Jung explores the difficulties of marketing the hip-hop performer Rain in the United States, where he was dismissed as “a copycat of Justin Timberlake” (77). But such adaptations, she suggests, may be precisely what is necessary to sell the Korean Wave in the United States: The singer BoA produced a special version of her video “Eat You Up,” featuring more overtly sexual imagery than the domestic version. Nonetheless, despite BoA’s success in Japan and Taiwan, she has yet to cross-over in the United States.

In the lead article, “Japanese Surfing the Korean Wave: Drama Tourism, Nationalism, and Gender via Ethnic Eroticisms” (10–38), Millie Creighton examines the Korean Wave from the standpoint of Korean-Japanese relations, with a particular focus on gender relations. The romantic appeal of Korean pop and drama stars such as Winter Sonata star Pae Yong-chun, she observes, threatened a legacy of transnational gender relations from the colonial era. Instead of a colonial regime, in which Korea, the colonized, is female, Pae (better known in Japan as “Yon-sama”) positioned Korea as male, and his throngs of Japanese female fans indirectly spawned an angry subgenre of Japanese pop culture: the “I hate Kanryū [Korean Wave]” movement. These anti-Korean books and comics (manga 漫画) were written predominantly by middle-aged and older men, precisely the demographic whose wives were the most avid Yon-sama fans. Creighton concludes that for “established males to whom the older, officially espoused definitions of Japanese culture granted more power and control” the Korean Wave was not merely a pop-culture phenomenon but a challenge to patterns of “career, family, and gender constructions” (34).

At the same time, Creighton notes how the Korean Wave has created possibilities for Japan and Korea to move beyond colonial and postwar relations. The Korean Wave, for example, has prompted a broader reevaluation of Korean culture, changing Korean cuisine, for example, from a strange ethnic food into a dining experience for special occasions. While many political legacies of the colonial era remain unresolved, Creighton suggests that this new appreciation of Korean culture has genuine potential and that Pae Yong-chun has “likely done more to contribute to positive relations between Japan and Korea than most of Japan’s political leaders” (16).

Future Research on the Korean Wave

Where might research go from here? Clearly a central question is “What is Korean about the Korean Wave?” Or, rephrased, “Are there features common to the Korean Wave across different cultures and markets, or is the appeal of the Korean Wave specific to local norms?” At Emory University, as part of our Korean Wave research project, we are examining the Korean
Wave in lesser-known markets, such as the Americas and the Middle East. Our preliminary conclusions suggest that we can indeed find transnational constants in the appeal of K-pop, although these constants do not obviate the importance of local culture.

One striking constant in the appeal of the Korean Wave is its achievement of intense romantic passion without overt sexuality. This quality was described by a fan from Hong Kong quoted by Jung (72):

Those Korean dramas I watched . . . [are] very different from Japanese dramas; Japanese dramas always have sexual scenes! And then you discover, there has been no such restrained love [in TV dramas] for a long time, and [you finally] find it in Korean dramas! That is, just a kind of eye contact, just a little touch, [one] still gets very excited. (quoted in Angel Lin and Tong 2008, 103)

This absence of explicit sex has helped the Korean Wave in the Middle East, where displays of physical sexuality can draw censorship, protests, and lawsuits (Emam 2008; Ying 2008). And the gentler, romantic ethos of the Korean Wave may also lie at the heart of its appeal in Latin America. In response to the general question “Why do you think Korean pop culture is popular in Latin America?” two Peruvian K-pop bloggers independently offered two strikingly similar responses. Respondent A reported that “I believe that dramas are so well liked because of the emotion that Koreans express through their actions, and the delicate way of representing love and other emotions” (translated from Spanish). Respondent B observed (in English) that “their plots are totally different from what we are used to. . . . their stories are sweeter, romantic in a beautiful way, funny, the plot grips you. . . . the actors seem to be different (sweets [sic], caring and handsome) and the Korean culture in general . . . is different (and better in some ways) from our own culture and we like that.” Despite the formidable cultural differences between Hong Kong and Peru, the non-physical sexuality of the Korean Wave seems to have common appeal.

What of the United States? As Jung observes, promoters have tried to “sex-up” Korean performers for the U.S. market but have had only mixed results. Further, this approach would seem to run against the broader appeal of the Korean Wave. Intriguingly, the latest attempt to promote K-pop in the United States draws on its desexualized romanticism. In summer 2009, the Korean band Wonder Girls began touring the United States as an opening act for the Jonas Brothers, a group known for its own American brand of chaste sexuality. The brothers sing about romantic passion (“If it’s you and me forever, if it’s you and me right now”) but have declared that they are all virgins and will remain so until marriage. The band deploys a series of devices to desexualize their romantic appeal. For example, the band members wear “purity rings” which symbolize their intention to remain sexually chaste (Wyatt 2008). At their August 22, 2009, concert in Atlanta,
the logic of this cross-cultural continuity was readily apparent. The show opened with Honor Society, an earnest, clean-scrubbed boy band recently signed to the Jonas Brothers’ own record label. The Wonder Girls then performed their single “Nobody But You” before yielding the stage to American Idol–winner Jordin Sparks, who led to the main act. The Wonder Girls, styled as a preteen-friendly version of the Supremes, fit seamlessly into this lineup. Their song of monogamous but non-sexual devotion fit perfectly between similarly themed songs by the two boy bands. Indeed, the entire evening was a reminder that Disney has long profited from an American tradition of earnest, fun-loving, non-coital sexual sexuality that began with Annette Funicello, the original Mickey Mouse Club sex kitten. The Wonder Girls with the Jonas Brothers thus highlights and foregrounds how the Korean Wave can be understood as a single cultural phenomenon: a celebration of chaste sex appeal.

At the same time, however, there are profound differences in the impact of the Korean Wave in different markets. Selling Wonder Girls songs to U.S. preteens raises a radically different set of political concerns than those prompted by Pae Yong-chun’s appeal to adult Japanese women. Indeed, the response to the Korean Wave in the United States reflects local anxieties about race: On U.S. pop-culture blogs, the comments on K-pop focus largely on questions of racial authenticity. At the Perez Hilton celebrity gossip site, a recent exchange on the performer SeungRi was representative: “HMMMM, IT’S ALWAYS FUNNY TO ME WHEN I HEAR LIGHT SKIN PEOPLE TALK HMMMM GHETTO! FO SHO!” prompting the response, “LOL according to the racist people on this blog site, Seungri can’t do hip hop, dance, sing or rap because he’s asia [sic] and he’s not ‘dark-skinned’ or white?????” (“Watch & Listen” 2009). Notably, these exchanges say little about Korea, instead reflecting historically constructed U.S. racial categories, especially the question of whether East Asians are “white” or “colored.” Indeed, these categories reduce the hybridity of the Korean Wave to another attempt by “whites” to appropriate “black” culture. This is a striking to contrast to the Japanese response to K-pop. While Yon-sama’s appeal to middle-aged Japanese women expectedly encountered the legacy of Japanese colonialism, K-pop rappers in the United States have unwittingly bumped into U.S. racial discourse, including the legacy of the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Gentlemen’s Agreement, and the Civil Rights Movement. All this must be difficult to navigate or understand for promoters based in Seoul, and in this way the Korean Wave, for all its global reach, is ultimately shaped by local practices and local concerns.

Note

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References


Japanese Surfing the Korean Wave: Drama Tourism, Nationalism, and Gender via Ethnic Eroticisms

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The Korean Wave, brought on by the popularity of serialized Korean drama Winter Sonata, flooded Japan from 2004 on. At the popular level, it initiated a generally positive shift in attitudes toward Korea, Koreans, and resident Koreans in Japan. Commercially, it spawned consumer trends and fads that focused on middle-aged women. This article contextualizes the Korean Wave, offers a synopsis of Winter Sonata, and considers ways that popular culture has the power to influence people and their attitudes toward other groups. For example, female fans of the drama’s lead male challenged long-established hierarchies that positioned Japanese above Koreans and older men above younger men. Ultimately, this piece argues that the Korean Wave created a venue in Japan for dialogue on new possibilities for gender relations, new constructions of self-identities, and new pathways for interacting with other nations of Asia.

Preface: A Joke, an Identity Statement, or a Prophecy?

In 1984, as a student studying and traveling in Japan and South Korea some twenty years before the Korean Wave floods Japan, I engage with a group of young Korean men in the port city of Pusan, South Korea, who tell me a joke that suggests to me their attempts to establish their own nationally defined masculine identities vis-à-vis their other two major East Asian counterparts, Japan and China. At this time, South Korea is not yet considered economically on a par with Japan. Smaller in size and population, it is neither accorded the same international awareness nor attention in terms of its heritage offerings to the world as China. Knowing I am a student of anthropology and Asian studies, they ask me—jokingly—if it is possible to differentiate among Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans by looking at them. I know not to answer this question. They continue to prompt me, repeatedly urging me to answer. I do not wish to engage in anything that might be construed as an ethnic joke; furthermore, I have a nagging suspicion that any answer I give could be considered “wrong” and potentially
offensive. They prompt me further. “Okay,” one says, “you see three East Asian men walking down the street together, a Chinese, a Japanese, and a Korean: Can you tell them apart?” I persist in refraining from any sort of answer until, finally, these young Korean men answer for me. “Of course you can tell them apart. The one who looks intelligent—he’s the Chinese. The one who looks rich—he’s the Japanese. And the one who looks sexy—he’s the Korean.”

Contextualizing the “Korean Wave”

Manifestations of Shifting Japanese Attitudes toward Koreans

In May 2009, while on a brief research and lecture visit to Japan, I seek out places to eat dinner near my hotel and notice that, along with the other offerings for typical everyday-style meals, local restaurants serving Korean dishes (perhaps operated either by Koreans or members of Japan’s resident Korean minority) now seem common just about everywhere in Tokyo. Such restaurants are sought out by Japanese as well as Koreans, along with the sushi spots, noodle shops, and tonkatsu豚カツ(pork cutlet) eateries, long a part of the common urban dining scene in Tokyo. Later, while in Kyoto, I stay with an acquaintance and spot a large, fancy-looking Korean restaurant meant for those “special occasions” when people dine out in groups with friends or colleagues. Nearby, designed to be aesthetically pleasing to modern Japanese tastes, is a new, large, and stylish Korean “super”（スーパー）—an expanded supermarket and merchandise store more like a mini-department store than a supermarket. This is the first time I have encountered such a swank Korean “super”: and this is not even in an area inhabited by a high concentration of resident Koreans. Both the Korean restaurant and the Korean “super” are prominently viewable from the main highway. They seem directed as much or more toward mainstream Japanese than toward Japan’s resident Koreans.

As someone with a long-term involvement in Japan, these sightings were noteworthy to me. The situation was dramatically different twenty to twenty-five years earlier, when I lived in Tokyo as a student. It reaffirmed my belief that the “Korea Boom,” rocking Japan since 2004, has had a major impact on shifting mainstream Japanese attitudes toward Korea, Koreans, things conceptualized as Korean, and even resident Koreans（在日韓国人）of Japan. Resident Koreans have been the largest minority group living in Japan. In most cases, their ancestors came—or were brought—to Japan during Japan’s colonial period (1910–45), when Korea had been annexed by Japan and was treated as part of Japan, with Koreans as nominal Japanese citizens. The 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty following World War II reversed this nationality label; after 1952, they no longer held Japanese citizenship, even if born in Japan (see Iwabuchi 2008, 251–
Thus, resident Koreans, despite their legal definition as “foreigners,” for the most part are actually people whose families have lived in Japan for generations, who were born and raised in Japan, speak Japanese as their first language, and comprise part of Japanese society.

While living in Japan between 2004 and 2005, at the height of Japan’s “Korea Boom,” I had become aware of potentially changing attitudes among average Japanese toward Korea. The year 2005 also marked the fortieth anniversary of the 1965 normalization of relations between Japan and South Korea. Thus 2005 was designated by the two countries to be a mutually recognized “Friendship Year” (called “Japan-Korea Friendship Year” in Japan and “Korea-Japan Friendship Year” in South Korea). Since Japan had not been seen as projecting a particularly friendly interest toward South Korea prior to this popular-culture wave of fascination with Korea, it is important to attempt to understand how a schmaltzy serialized soap-operatic popular-culture drama contributed to shifting Japanese perceptions of Korea.

**Sparking the Flames of Japan’s “Korea Boom”**

The spark that fanned the fiery passion for things Korean in Japan was a Korean-produced television drama, *Winter Love Song*—or, as known in Japan, *Winter Sonata* (*Fuyu no Sonata* 冬のソナタ). Serialized into twenty-hour-long episodes (sometimes televised in twenty-four segments to accommodate advertising and other breaks), this emotional, romantic, sometimes silly, and often soap-operatic mini-drama brought the Korean Wave, or *hanryū* 韓流 as it is called in Japanese (*hallyu* 한류 in Korean), to Japan—and the wave soon flooded the nation. Several of the main characters of the drama became major stars in Japan, prominently featured in Japanese magazines, on entertainment offerings and consumer products, and in advertisements. In particular, the main male star of the drama, Pae Yong-chun (Bae Yong-jun) 배용준 (b. 1972), rose to the peak of stellar status in Japan, and his image soon became—and remains—ubiquitous. Although his surname is Pae, the Japanese refer to him as “Yon-sama” ヨン様 (his given name, transcribed phonetically, with the honorific suffix *sama*).

*Winter Sonata* was not only embraced by an endearing Japanese populace (and re-televised repeatedly in Japan); it also sparked other Korean take-off dramas, magazines, and media products. As the anniversary of the normalization of Japan-Korea relations approached, the Korean Wave phenomenon in Japan was positioned as something more than just a popular-culture fad: it was more than K-pop music, more than K-idols, more than K-drama. It was promoted as involving K-friends. For example, one of the many new magazines featuring Korean actors and entertainers that began to be produced in Japanese and circulated throughout Japan (often with every monthly issue containing a DVD of a new Korean drama) as part of the Korean Wave is called *K-Friends: Korea Entertainment Magazine*. Pae
Yong-chun and other cast members of *Winter Sonata* are frequently featured in the magazine, along with other Korean stars, particularly young males.

**The Context of Japan-Korea “Friendship”**

*Winter Sonata* was first televised in Japan in 2003; due to audience enthusiasm, it was repeatedly re-televised in 2004. Although other East Asian countries had been influenced by the Korean Wave prior to the *Winter Sonata* phenomenon—Chinese journalists apparently used the term *hanliu* 韩流 as early as 2001 (Lee Keehyeung 2008, 176)—*Winter Sonata* brought the Korean Wave to Japan. Once Japanese embraced the Korean Wave around 2004 (Mōri 2008, 128), they became emphatic about it. Japan’s *Winter Sonata*–induced Korea Boom created a rage for all things Korean in Japan throughout 2004. By the year’s end, Japan was the biggest importer of Korean films and dramas, accounting for nearly 70 percent of all Korean film exports (Shim 2008, 21).

Ultimately, the *Winter Sonata* drama became a pivotally featured aspect of plans for 2005 as Japan-Korea “Friendship Year.” The Korean Wave also sparked a Korean language–learning craze among Japanese. In February 2005, as part of the Friendship Year activities, the South Korean Embassy in Tokyo hosted a Korean language competition advertised, in English, as honoring “the anniversary of one-year” of Japanese-Korean friendship. (The intention, I suppose, was to commemorate the year-long celebration of friendship between Japan and Korea; but, for many people, the other wording—suggesting Japan and Korea had been friends for only one year, since infatuation with *Winter Sonata* began in 2004—made more sense.) Contestants were Japanese who were studying the Korean language, competing to see who could best mimic the actors of *Winter Sonata* through their renderings of lines from various scenes.

Another plan for Friendship Year involved the mutual issuing—in Japan and South Korea—of a new commemorative stamp featuring Pae Yong-chun’s image. This plan was highly debated in South Korea, where officials preferred more classical or official images on their postage stamps, not those considered pandering to pop-culture tastes. For Japan, it would be the first time a Korean was featured prominently on a stamp. Prior to the Korean Wave, Japan would have been unlikely to consider honoring a Korean on a Japanese stamp, given how Korea has historically been hierarchically positioned below Japan. Although the mutual release of the stamp was planned, I never heard of the Japanese version of the Yon-sama stamp being released in Japan. It is possible, then, that the plan was abandoned when tensions between Japan and Korea took their toll on the espoused Friendship Year, resulting in the cancellation of many of the year’s planned activities.

At the popular level, South Korea became a major tourist destination for Japanese, who had not previously shown such intense interest in visit-
ing the country. Propelled by the passionate popularity of *Winter Sonata*, nearly 36 percent more Japanese traveled to South Korea in 2004 than in 2003 (Hirata 2008, 143). Fans of the drama sought out locations appearing in it that were once little known to Japanese, such as Ch’unch’ŏn, Nami Island, and the Yongpyong Ski Resort area. *Winter Sonata* tours were begun and orchestrated by Korean tour companies. Although these could be joined by anyone, it was clear that many were targeted at Japanese. Such tours were often offered in either Japanese or English (and occasionally in Chinese), and signs or banners at the sites were typically written in Japanese and English. In the case of a banner put up by the city of Ch’unch’ŏn to welcome tourists to this *Winter Sonata* site location, the Japanese writing appeared on top and in much bigger lettering than the English underneath it (fig. 1). Since English is now being used as the common international language in Korea, the prominence of the Japanese language in this case shows the high impact of Japanese *Winter Sonata* drama tourism on South Korea.

My interest in *Winter Sonata* arose because the trends I was witnessing in Japan in 2004 and 2005 were contradictory to many of my earlier experiences of Japanese attitudes toward Korea and resident Koreans in Japan. Previously, little emphasis had been placed on Japanese-Korean “friendship.” Korea had not been a particularly popular tourist destination for Japanese in the period prior to the Korean Wave, and most Japanese seemed to have little or no desire to go there except if compelled to for work purposes. Historically, the first Japanese package tour to Korea was initiated in

![FIGURE 1](image-url)
1906. Although Japan officially annexed Korea as a colony in 1910, it had already gained control of it by 1906; hence, this tour was saturated with the suggestion of Japan as hierarchically positioned above Korea and Koreans (Ariyama 2001; Hirata 2008). Japanese tours were also led to Korea during the 1910–45 occupation. According to Moon (2009), although the tourist destinations sought out by the Japanese in the colonial period centered on major cities, postcards sent home emphasized “images of pre-modern exoticism” (151). Such representations circulating within Japan and among Japanese thus helped establish a view of Korea as “something to be conquered, enlightened, modernized” (151).

In the years and decades preceding the Korean Wave’s impact within Japan, Japanese tourists favored Western destinations such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and European countries. The main possible exception was “sex tourism” to Korea for Japanese men; but, given its unsavory associations, such tourism tended not to be openly acknowledged. Conversely, many South Koreans held enough resentment toward Japan for its colonial annexation of Korea in 1910, colonial intrusions into it and the rest of Asia in the 1930s and 1940s, and treatment of Korea and Koreans (despite their nominal Japanese citizenship) during the war years that Japan was not positioned as a country Koreans particularly wanted to visit as tourists—nor was there an easy eagerness toward having Japanese tourists in Korea.

The trend of large numbers of Japanese suddenly engaged in Korean language study was one of the most dramatic shifts for me. In 1985, when Japan was riding high on its own economic affluence, I enrolled in a free Korean language class given at a Tokyo ward office. Despite being offered for free, there were plenty of unoccupied seats, and the class had almost been cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. Two other women, whom I later learned were sisters (despite their different Japanese surnames), were also in the class. They were the children of a Korean father (from Korea) and a Japanese mother, and they were trying to “pass” as Japanese and not reveal their true identity. The older sister used her Japanese husband’s surname, and the younger sister used her Japanese mother’s surname. Their fear of having their half-Korean identity discovered was so great that they did not let people know they were sisters and, although they wanted to study Korean, had hesitated about taking the class for fear people would suspect they were Koreans (see Creighton 2007).

The beginning of a shift from extreme tension between Korea and Japan to one of potential “friendly” engagement in each other’s culture seems to have emanated more from popular, consumer, entertainment, and recreational culture (with tourism included as an aspect of these) than from political interactions or planned policy programs. The shift in Japanese-Korean interactions at the level of average members of the populace desir-
ing to engage in mutual exploration of each other’s culture emerged with youth traveling between the neighboring Asian countries in the 1990s. The 2002 World Cup Soccer series, co-hosted by Japan and Korea, helped create further impetus to better the relations between the two countries. Then, with the popularity of Winter Sonata, the Korean Wave flooded Japan in full force in 2004, pumping the popularity of Korea and Koreanness to new heights in Japan.

Projecting the year 2005 as a parade of events marking Japanese-Korean “friendship” suggests that relations between the two countries had not long been conceived as particularly “friendly.” As it turned out, the Korean language competition hosted by the Korean Embassy in February was one of the last big events of the so-called Friendship Year; friendship between the two countries at the political level was apparently too tenuous to make it through an entire year. Most other events had to be cancelled when political tensions—such as those over the contested ownership of Takeshima (Tokto) Island and then–Prime Minister Koizumi’s decision to visit Yasukuni Shrine—rose. Given the persisting negative feelings between the two countries due to the tensions of history—and the fact that national-level, officially orchestrated attempts at recognizing “friendship” failed severely—it is noteworthy that popular culture has been more consistent in allowing mutual engagement and the potential for better relations among the populations at the level of common individuals. As such, it is perhaps valid to state that Pae Yong-chun (Yon-sama) has likely done more to contribute to positive relations between Japan and Korea than most of Japan’s political leaders. His popularity has also contributed dramatically to the economy of South Korea. Yon-sama and other Korean stars of the Korean Wave have done for South Korea what the Beatles did for England in the 1960s, in terms of sparking vast international interest in—and economic contributions to—the home country.

The following section presents a synopsis of Winter Sonata, necessary in order to explore more fully the impact and continuing significance of the Korean Wave in Japan—as well as the raging popularity of Winter Sonata’s main star, Pae Yong-chun. Then, I discuss how the drama addressed issues of identity that permeate not only Korea but also other East Asian countries. I ultimately consider how Winter Sonata and the Korean Wave, more generally, are used inside Japan as a context for expressing the emotionally volatile contemporary debates surrounding Japanese family and gender roles. My analysis suggests that Winter Sonata, clearly understood by Japanese as a Korean-made production, is being used within Japan by Japanese women for their own purposes to express their discontent and to contest hierarchies of power, nationality, race, ethnicity, and gender. In contrast, an “anti–Korean Wave” movement is reflecting a desire to re-inscribe these hierarchical definitions and forms of control within Japanese society.
A Synopsis of the Serialized Drama *Winter Sonata*

Serialized into twenty to twenty-four episodes, *Winter Sonata* was envisioned and produced as a television mini-series. It is a prolonged soap opera–style drama in which the action and plot evolve around a group of characters who have known each other—as either both friends and rivals or as family members and co-workers—over the course of many years. At the beginning of the series, a male high school youth, Kang Joon Sang (played by Pae Yong-chun), who is being raised by a single mother with a prominent international career as a pianist, moves into the small town of Ch’unch’o˘n (in northeastern South Korea). All students must belong to a club at the high school he enters, so he joins the radio club. The rest of the drama follows the lives of those in the radio club and their families at this time and over the course of more than a decade.

Soon after Joon Sang joins the club, a bittersweet romance begins with the main female character in the drama, Yujin. A pertinent and persisting “love triangle” is added by the endearing devotion of Sang Hyuk, another male member of the radio club, for Yujin. Despite being newer to the scene than Sang Hyuk, it is Joon Sang’s romance with Yujin that begins to blossom, albeit often awkwardly. The drama highlights this emergence of youthful love as a representation of “first love.”

After many awkward moments and missed opportunities, Joon Sang and Yujin are to acknowledge their love on New Year’s Eve—in what is hopefully to result in a romantic interlude between the two—on the main shopping street of Ch’unch’o˘n. Amid the modern, consumer-oriented (Westernized) seasonal decorations, Yujin waits at the appointed meeting spot, but Joon Sang never shows up. She finally leaves, disappointed and annoyed at having been “stood up.” Unlike the television-viewing audience, she does not know that on his way to meet her, Joon Sang was in a major car accident. The next day, she arrives at school to encounter classmates weeping over the news of his death. As the friends understood it, Joon Sang’s mother took his body away after the crash but did not hold a funeral for him in Ch’unch’o˘n. Thus, the friends organize their own ceremony to memorialize his life and death and to say goodbye to him.

The drama then makes a sudden leap in time and place. Ten years later, the remaining friends are all young professionals and employees working and living in the mega-city of Seoul. The other young man from the high school radio club, Sang Hyuk—still devoted to and steadfastly in love with Yujin after ten years—has become a radio broadcaster in Seoul along with another male member of the high school club. One of the female members of the high school group, Chelin (the sometimes “friend,” sometimes catty rival, of Yujin), has become a clothing designer with her own boutique. Yujin is now an architect; and another of the men from the club has become a
veterinarian. Another woman from the club has never quite found her career calling, but she will eventually marry the veterinarian and find a purpose in life through raising a family.

Chelin returns from a fashion-related business trip to Paris with a new boyfriend, Lee Min Hyeung, whom she met there. Min Hyeung bears a shocking resemblance to Kang Joon Sang, the dead youth of their high school days. After he is introduced to the group, all the others are clearly aware of his resemblance each time they interact with him. Min Hyeung turns out to be the director of the ski area–construction project at Yongpyong Ski Resort—a project with which Yujin’s architecture firm is also involved.

Of course, what the main character of the drama does not yet know—but the audience suspects—is that Min Hyeung is indeed the same person as the youth from the Ch’unch’ŏn high school who supposedly died ten years previously. The plot flows into a series of multiple-triangled love affairs (Min Hyeung and Chelin versus Min Hyeung and Yujin; Yujin and Sang Hyuk versus Yujin and Min Hyeung; and even Yujin and Min Hyeung versus Yujin and memories of his former incarnation, Joon Sang). Glimpses into the similar love triangles of their parents’ generation are also revealed. The main male character eventually comes to realize he is not who he thought he was and is no longer sure what his identity is. He did not die in the car crash but, instead, suffered memory loss. His mother and a psychologist decided that, rather than “recover” his memory, they would “replace” it with what they believed to be better memories of a better past (for example growing up in a more typical nuclear family with a father). During treatment after the accident, without Joon Sang realizing it, they provided him with his new identity—that of Min Hyeung—based on a new history of his past and “new memories.”

As the suspense over whether he is the same youth from the past or someone who just resembles him begins to be solved, other questions emerge. A new issue is the realization that his absent father must have been one of the two close friends of his mother during their youth, namely either Yujin’s or Sang Hyuk’s father. (This plotline involves the daring suggestion that sex does occur in dating relationships in Korea—and did in past generations as well.) If Min Hyeung’s father was also Yujin’s own father, this problematizes their would-be relationship, while, if he and Sang Hyuk share a father, Sang Hyuk’s extended family life is problematized.

Throughout these potential revelations, Yujin seems to suffer from extreme angst. First, she is wrapped up in ten years of lingering grief over the death of her first love. Then she feels guilty about falling in love with someone else—even though it is actually not someone else—and tries to understand whether this action represents disloyalty to her first love. Even when she realizes the two men are the same person, she wonders whether she
should feel guilty toward her “first love” (or the first version of him) by falling in love with her “second love” (or the second version of the same person). Throughout, Sang Hyuk remains steadfastly loyal in his love for Yujin, despite the fact that he was unable to get her to commit to marrying him throughout their ten-year relationship.

Some have suggested that plot cannot develop in Korean drama without a car crash. With the many twists and turns of this serialized drama, Winter Sonata requires not just one but two car crashes. Just as Sang Hyuk relinquishes his decade-long quest for Yujin’s hand in marriage and offers her up to Min Hyeung, the main male character is involved in yet another major car accident (this time as Min Hyeung rather than as Joon Sang), requiring his removal from the scene again, this time for further medical treatment in New York City. Yujin must decide whether to go to New York to be with him, stay in Seoul to marry Sang Hyuk, or—a newly emerging possibility—go to Paris to pursue her own architecture studies. After vacillating at length between which man she should allow to have her, Yujin suddenly decides to pursue her own career in France instead. Eventually, at the close of the series, fate brings the “two” main characters together again at last—but not without yet another dramatic and emotional twist.

Asian Identity Conflicts & the Staging of Popular Culture

**Staging a Receptive Drama**

Many analysts of the impact of this drama have written off the above plot as “hokey” and little more than a means of enabling the presentation of the continuing romantic twists endured by the main characters. However, I suggest there are elements of the plotline and the “staging” of the drama that, resonating with audiences not only in Korea but elsewhere in East Asia, were part of its immense attraction. Two elements of the staging of this drama will be considered here: the characters in the drama and the symbolism of the places featured.

Winter Sonata’s Social Repertoire of Characters

Barnouw and Kirkland (1992) contend that popular culture provides audiences with a “social repertoire of characters, relationships and outcomes that is used in the ongoing attempt to make sense of the world” (52). This argument may work for domestic popular culture; but did the Korean-produced Winter Sonata have such an attraction for Japanese audiences? I would say that it did—and that this was part of its major appeal. Trends suggesting an affinity among various segments of Asian audiences had already occurred with Japanese serialized dramas. Discussing the earlier transnational consumption of Japanese television dramas elsewhere in Asia, Iwabuchi (2004a) writes that their reach is “significant in terms of the in-
tense sympathy many young East/Southeast Asians have come to feel toward the characters in Japanese dramas, and the way they have learned to cope with the meanings of their own modern experiences through the urban lives depicted in Japanese TV dramas” (2). Dong-Hoo Lee (2004) holds that this effect has now also been shown to occur for Korean television dramas going to other parts of Asia, including Japan. He writes: “Local audiences make sense of them according to their personal context and their social, cultural, and economic milieus” (253). Importantly, the South Korean government effectively did not allow Japanese popular culture into South Korea between 1978 and 1999 (Morris 2005, 12) due to fear that Japanese popular culture, such as films and dramas, would take over the Korean scene. Ironically, then, Korea’s opening up to mutual popular-culture exchange actually facilitated the incredible reverse popularity of Korean popular drama in Japan.

Lee (2004) suggests that Japanese audiences can “read” such later-made Korean serialized dramas because they involve a genre they have already learned how to experience. He notes that Japanese drama techniques were influenced by American productions, and Korean dramas were influenced by Japanese productions. This similarity of genre allowed for the easy acceptance and applicability of meaning of Korean television dramas to Japanese audiences. Serialized Japanese television drama hits in the 1990s were classified as “trendy dramas” (as exemplified by Tokyo Love Story 東京ラブストーリー of 1991) in contrast to older, so-called traditional dramas. Winter Sonata combined attributes of both styles, thus vastly increasing its appeal to members of multiple age groups in Japan.

A noted difference between Korean dramas, including Winter Sonata, and Japanese trendy dramas (such as Tokyo Love Story) is that only the Korean dramas depict extended family relationships. For this reason, Korean dramas have often found more resonance among audiences in places like Taiwan and Hong Kong, where viewers find this aspect more attuned to their own lives, given the context of extended-family relationships and the expectation that these be respected and maintained. The inclusion of plots involving other generations and age groups of family members also helped encourage the popularity of Korean dramas among middle-aged and older Japanese.

Much interest has revolved around why middle-aged Japanese women have been enthralled with the drama and infatuated with its young male star. Middle-aged Japanese women may fantasize about their love for Yonsama and imagine themselves in the role of Yujin. They can also relate to scenes in which Yujin acts appropriately submissive to Sang Hyuk’s mother, who, given their decade-long dating relationships, fills the symbolic role of mother-in-law to Yujin. Given the conflicts between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in Asia, including in Japan, the older generation of Japa-
nese women can take pleasure in Yujin’s continued submissiveness to the older woman, even after the older woman slaps her. After being slapped, Yujin is the one who tells Sang Hyuk they need to go back and apologize to his mother about the disagreement. Young women both in Japan and Korea told me they did not think such a situation was likely to happen anymore—that a woman symbolically in the daughter-in-law role would no longer so easily submit to such mistreatment from an older female symbolically in the mother-in-law role and would thus no longer be likely to suggest apologizing after being mistreated. However, such scenes showing this traditional expectation of submissiveness of the younger woman in the symbolic daughter-in-law position may find favor among Japanese women with adult offspring.

Metaphors & Meanings of Place

In addition to the cast of characters and the themes that are orchestrated around them, I suggest the drama appealed to Japanese audiences because of the staging of place, most pertinently as reflected in the two primary settings of the drama. Japan in the last twenty years of the twentieth century was a society desiring convenient and chic urban lifestyles while simultaneously suffering a sense of loss. It was wrapped in nostalgia for the warm, embracing, collectivist lifestyles believed to have been part of the past, before modernity brought increasing urbanization, internationalization, and post-industrialization (Befu 1983; Creighton 1997, 1998; Ivy 1995; Iwabuchi 2004b; Kelly 1986; Robertson 1988, 1998). Seoul, the later residential location of the drama’s group of friends, offers the cosmopolitan urban life that was the goal of modernity for many Japanese. Highly internationalized Seoul suggests the affluent, modern, and sophisticated lifestyle that has been (and continues to be) sought out by Japanese. The drama also offers Japanese viewers the smaller town of Ch’unch’ön, home to the drama’s characters in their high school days and, for many of them, a place they return to occasionally to visit family who still live there. The imaging of the characters’ past lives in small-town Ch’unch’ön mirrors Japanese desire for the projected memory of Japanese life in previous times focused on nostalgically remembered or imagined past rural village and small-town communities. Seoul represents the elegant and chic city life that modern Japanese desire, while Ch’unch’ön offers the contrasting but also desired aspects of embedded community, the “good life,” and wholesome human relationships (Creighton 1998, 127–31).

Although located in Korea, Ch’unch’ön becomes an emblematic projection of the Japanese concept of furusato ふるさと. Literally, furusato means “old birth place” and has the meaning of “home-village community” or “hometown community.” The idea of furusato is strongly associated with childhood and youth. It embraces the idea of place in relationship to where one’s childhood and youthful memories are most strongly bonded. It
conjures up a sense of community in which one feels at home, feels a sense of belonging, feels a sense of shared engagement and union with others.

*Winter Sonata* was in accord with a more generalized modern Asian identity conflict felt in Japan that involved a desire to merge the traditional with the modern, a sense of being Asian with a sense of being Western, while living highly Westernized lifestyles. It was embraced by Japanese audiences in part because it catered to the desire to have it both ways by offering the retention of traditional values along with everything modernity has to offer, providing the continuation of small-town community life and values seen to be at the heart of collectivist Asian identity as espoused since the past, and developing the individualistic orientation associated with the West as represented in the personal friendships and romances of the drama’s characters who are living independent lives in a major cosmopolitan city. The cast of characters helps facilitate this dual-identity quest through the youthful friends and lovers able to pursue their independence and individualism through trendy careers and highly Westernized lifestyles in the mega-city of Seoul (along with occasional trips to desirably imaged Western cosmopolitan centers such as Paris and New York City), while their youthful experiences and continuing presence of the parental generation in the smaller town of Ch’unch’ŏn retains the suggestion of identity as embedded in larger groups of on-going interactive family, community, and support networks. The symbolism and positioning of place facilitates this quest by contrasting the small-town community (imbued with the values of Asian interconnected human relationships) with Seoul (demonstrating the sophisticated cosmopolitan intersection of Asian modernity with the West).

**Serializing Contemporary Consumer Culture**

*Modern Consumer Lifestyles*

As a contemporary serialized drama and element of modern popular culture, *Winter Sonata* catered to modern orientations of consumer culture in Japan. Several of my Japanese informants indicated that the prevalence of scenes of modern consumer culture in *Winter Sonata* was actually one of the biggest reasons their previously negative understanding of Korea shifted. Prior to the Korean Wave, many Japanese had thought of Korea as a less developed country than Japan, lacking in the modern lifestyles of urban Japanese. The scenes of fancy big-city department stores, restaurants, hotels, and the featured Yongpyong Ski Resort in *Winter Sonata* allowed them to see Seoul as equally modern as Tokyo—and to see South Korea as equally modern as Japan. Korean entrepreneurs, both large and small, recognized the possibilities of creating and capitalizing on consumer trends from the drama.
Although *Winter Sonata* added parents and other extended relationships to the storyline, in other ways it followed patterns of Japanese idol dramas of the 1990s that depicted modern consumer lifestyles. According to Iwabuchi, these Japanese “trendy dramas” typically depicted “youths’ love affairs, friendships, and working life in urban settings” (2004a, 9). He continues: “The eye-catching features of [Japanese] trendy dramas were their depictions of stylish urban lifestyles and trendy nightspots abundant with extravagant designer clothes and accessories, sets with chic interior designs, and the latest pop music, all of which clearly reflected then prevailing highly materialistic consumerism of Japanese young people” (9). Similar elements are also imaged in Korean dramas. In *Winter Sonata*, these are apparent in the trendy night spots in Seoul where the characters go for dinners or drinks; the boutique run by Chelin along with the designer, party, and evening clothes it features; the restaurants with chic interiors; the sophisticated, large-scale department stores; and Min Hyeung’s swanky Seoul apartment décor. The drama thus depicts the stylish consumer lifestyles of well-off Seoul urbanites as described and discussed by Nelson (2000).

**Intangible Consumer Trends: New Lifestyle Choices**

Underlying Japanese television dramas were attempts to establish consumer trends. *Winter Sonata* also imaged the ideal of a middle-class consumer lifestyle, prompting consumer trends. In some cases these were planned, while in other cases the drama sparked forays of consumerism occasionally prompted by small-scale entrepreneurs.

Intentionally sparked consumer trends of the drama often involved the imaging of new, modern, updated consumer lifestyles. Rather than emphasizing materialism in terms of consumer acquisitions, the drama emphasized a “soft menu” of consumption involving experiences, feelings, and interactive intimacy. This emphasis, one not on material items to consume but on new lifestyle choices, indicated that South Korea—like Japan—had reached a level where people’s material needs were largely already met, allowing them to pursue experiences and services instead, and that many Koreans had entered the realm of global-consumption tastes of the middle to upper-middle classes internationally. Like Japan, Korea was shown as having entered the consumer age of *mono igai no mono* 物以外の物, or “things other than things” (Creighton 1992, 1994). This phrase emerged among retailers and advertisers in Japan to emphasize that, since basic material needs were largely satiated, modern consumerism instead emphasized offering people leisure, recreation, experiences, services, and other non-material aspects of life. Such an emphasis in the drama is shown in the scenes of fancy restaurants and nightlife in Seoul, the planning of a gala wedding for Yujin and Sang Hyuk (even though it never occurs), and the music and en-
tertainment projected by the commercial radio broadcasts with which several of the characters are involved.

The most emphatic presentation of the new experiential global middle-class consumer orientation hinges around the ski resort that is pivotal to the later part of the drama. For several of these segments, the action takes place at Yongpyong Ski Resort, South Korea’s new ski area and year-round leisure and recreational resort center. Again reiterating South Korea’s advance into global consumer arenas, the Yongpyong Ski Resort was one of the three semi-finalists for hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games (along with Salzburg and Vancouver), even though, unlike Austria and Canada, South Korea has not had a long strong history of skiing as part of its culture, and most Koreans probably would not have even considered skiing a few decades earlier. The scenes of the ski resort suggest that skiing has now become a leisure pursuit for middle-class Koreans, as it had earlier for Japanese, and that South Korea has thus joined into this aspect of global taste patterns of consumption.

The Yongpyong Ski Resort has also become a trendy dating location, in an age when the dating scene has become an important route to mate selection. This development echoes Kendall’s (1996) work on weddings in Korea, showing how the new consumerism in dating spots enters into contemporary marriage negotiations (including those for arranged marriages), dating expectations, and marital transitions. When I visited the Yongpyong Ski Resort, large numbers of Korean children and teenage youth were engaged in ski lessons on the slopes, thus acquiring global leisure lifestyle skills of members of the middle to upper classes. Yongpyong also has an on-site child-care center to allow couples with young children to continue skiing rather than giving up this pastime when children arrive. Thus, *Winter Sonata* provides new models of individualism, dating, marriage, and family relations, made possible through consumer offerings.

*Tangible Consumer Trends: Scarves, Socks & Other Trinkets*

Other examples of consumer trends prompted by the drama involve less monetary expense than skiing or skiing lessons. Although some fans will spend significant amounts of money on high-ticket items, recognizing profits through fan consumption is often done through the sale of less expensive items to larger numbers of people. Scarves and socks provide two pertinent examples of less expensive consumer products geared at *Winter Sonata* fans.

Scarves are featured throughout many episodes of the serialized drama. Their placement and affordable nature resulted in their becoming the material object prominently suggested in many consumer campaigns. Scarves worn in the drama symbolize concepts of “warm-heartedness,” “goodness,” and even “sex appeal,” depending on the type of scarf, how it is worn, and,
of course, who is wearing it. Even in the romantic interactions, the scarves shown are not the silk "apricot" scarves that Carly Simon sings about in a supposed reference to her ex-lover, Mick Jagger. Instead, they are cozy, homey, wholesome scarves—and there are lots of them. Scarves are worn when the characters are high school students in Ch'unch'ŏn, and scarves are worn by their parents. Scarves are worn throughout the winter to go with different winter ensembles. Scarves are naturally worn in the scenes featuring the ski resort, which several of the young professionals are involved in building. Scarves are worn inside the trendy nightspots and posh restaurants of Seoul (although presumably such places would now be heated). The main male character, in his second incarnation as resort designer Lee Min Hyeung, ties scarves on Yujin, the female lead, showing that he is not only sexy looking but also a sensitive, warm, and caring individual, after all. Scarves are tied in a manner it would take a scarf expert to tie. Scarves are worn well into the approaching spring—by characters ironically commenting on how warm it has become.

The use of such scarves even in the projection of "sexy" involves a suggestion that sexy can stem from being "sincere" and "sweet"—and also that "sexy" can suggest "hominess" and the lack of artificiality. In one scene, Yujin is contemplating what to wear for her big date with Min Hyeung. No, she is not trying on low-cut evening dresses: she is trying on different woolen scarves. This episode leads to one of the drama's most heart-warming scenes involving other family members, as Yujin asks her kid sister for advice regarding which scarf is best. The child exits and, upon returning, offers to lend her older sister her most prized possession for the big date: a pair of pink bunny-shaped earmuffs that would be sure to make an impression on her date.

Scarves in the same materials and patterns as those shown in the drama were marketed as consumer items in large-scale department stores, boutiques, airports, and malls within Korea (often directed at Japanese tourists) and by stores highlighting the Korean Wave within Japan. However, they were also peddled in imaginative ways by small Korean vendors. At drama sites that attract tourists—particularly Japanese fans, local entrepreneurs sold scarves that looked like the scarves seen in the particular scene of the drama filmed at that location. Recognizing the Japanese emphasis on katachi, or the precise and proper form and way of doing something, vendors posted an image of the character in the drama wearing a similar scarf at that location along with a template of visual instructions on how to tie the scarf so that it would come out the same way. If one purchased the scarf, one got the instruction template with it for free. Although tourists could potentially decide to buy a scarf like it somewhere else, even back in Japan, the need for the template of how to tie it the right way secured the deal in many cases, as many scarves were worn in extremely complicated ways, too difficult to be exactly replicated without the step-by-step visual instructions.
Yon-sama socks appeared as another example of an inexpensive consumer item directed at mass sales, again often by small entrepreneurs and street vendors in Korea. Piles of socks with Pae Yong-chun’s image on them were sold at traditional Korean markets, such as the Namdaemum, Tongdaemun, and Moran markets, and in street-sale areas such as those in the Insadong and It’aewon districts of Seoul. That these were directed at Japanese consumers visiting Korea is clear by the rendition of “Yon-sama” written on the side of the socks in the Japanese katakana and hiragana scripts. Some of the socks also had “Yon-sama” (the Japanese designation for the star) written in English. Japanese have long had a fondness for purchasing consumer goods with the once-“foreign” feel of English script on them; it remains popular among Japanese to have items with English writing on them (Stanlaw 2004). I discovered that female Japanese tourists seemed to prefer the exotic feel that the English alphabet still brings; they bought the socks with “Yon-sama” written in English rather than those rendered in either Japanese script.

At stands surrounding the drama sites in South Korea, vendors with carts or tables sold numerous small consumer items like photo covers and key chains, which were geared to fit the Japanese travel custom of buying lots of omiyage (souvenirs suggestive of specific places visited) to bring back home as inexpensive gifts for people in on-going, interconnected relationships. Other items sold were more personal favorites for Japanese women on such tours to Korea, such as pillows with large images of Yon-sama’s face on them (so they really could, in a sense, take him to bed with them), T-shirts with Yon-sama images on them, or playing cards with fifty-three different views of Yon-sama (one each for the fifty-two suit cards, plus the image on the joker cards), often in either sweet and sensitive—or sexy bare-chested—poses. Such items, geared for sale to Japanese tourists, were particularly prevalent around the Ch’unch’ón house used as the high school home of Kang Joon Sang and his pianist mother in the drama. The city of Ch’unch’an rented the house during 2004 to use for tourism, largely because of the recognition of massively increased Japanese tourism to the Ch’unch’ón area prompted by the popularity of the Winter Sonata. The city allowed visiting tourists to go through the house for free during 2004, and over 100,000 Japanese tourists took advantage of the offer.

The idioms of a high-level modern consumer culture, and how these were marketed for Japanese fans of Winter Sonata, reveal both the developed level of consumer orientation within Japan and the savvy of even small-scale Korean vendors in marketing to a particular Japanese cultural niche. Many Japanese who had formerly looked down on Korea experienced a pronounced shift in perception brought about through the consumer-oriented scenes of the drama, because they could now identify, in contrast to their previous conceptions, Seoul and South Korea as having a consumer
culture as highly developed, sophisticated, and modern as Japan. The projection of global consumer tastes and involvements in the drama also suggests a desire to prompt more South Koreans into such engagements and show South Korea’s entry into an international, cosmopolitan middle-to-upper-middle-class network marked by shared tastes, activities, entertainment, and leisure knowledge. Many of the consumer offerings available at the touristic sites of the Winter Sonata drama, although located in South Korea, were often clearly directed specifically at Japanese tourists. This focus shows that Koreans were well aware of the popularity of the drama among Japanese fans—and of the potentially shifting attitudes toward Korea because of it. Even small-scale Korean vendors utilized knowledge of Japanese customs and culture to enhance sales through use of Japanese scripts on souvenir goods, by offering items popular among the Japanese tourists, by satisfying Japanese desires for the kara or precise form of doing things, and by offering items that fit expectations of Japanese gift-giving in relation to Japanese culture and travel obligations.

Japanese Gender Debates & Ethnic Eroticisms

Yon-sama’s Reception in Japan

A large amount of media attention in Japan has been directed at the overwhelming popularity of the Winter Sonata drama series among middle-aged Japanese women and their romantic infatuation with its young male star, Pae Yong-chun, fondly known as Yon-sama. The women I met as fans in Japan and those on drama tours in Korea had largely become such intense fans because of their devotion to Yon-sama. I once asked a stocky Osaka housewife I met in South Korea on a Winter Sonata drama tour why Japanese women such as herself came on such tours. Her emphatic response, typical of that of other Japanese women engaged in drama tourism to South Korea, was, “Yon-sama! That’s the only reason!” Others eagerly took photographs of themselves next to life-size cardboard replicas of Pae Yong-chun, positioned for such purposes at drama sites and within Korea’s main international airport at Inch’on. At a drama site location in Ch’unch’on, outside the shop run by Yujin’s mother in the drama and thus the female lead character’s home, was a life-size cardboard replica of both the main male and female characters huddled together, wearing their winter coats, and, of course, scarves. Fitting a pattern to which Japanese tourists are accustomed, the face of the female character is cut out of the cardboard so that visitors may insert their own face for a grand photo opportunity of intimacy with Yon-sama. This is the case, even though the location represents the female character’s home in the drama! I suggested to the Korean tour guide, somewhat teasingly, that there should be another similar set of such cardboard replicas, only this time with Yon-sama’s face removed—so
that men could insert their faces to mimic being with the female lead. She turned to me and patiently yet somewhat patronizingly rebuffed the suggestion of actually removing Pae Yong-chun’s face from the cardboard cut-outs, stating, “There is no need.”

The media obsession with the issue of “middle-aged” Japanese women in love with Yon-sama exploded on April 3, 2004, after an estimated five thousand female fans rushed Tokyo’s Narita International Airport to greet him. The press described the fans as predominately “middle-aged” women, likely a visual assessment of the crowd rather than a formal tallying of ages. By way of comparison, Mōri (2008, 130) notes that just five hundred fans came to the airport to meet soccer player David Beckham, also considered immensely popular in Japan.

Even popular-culture history repeats itself. Pae Yong-chun made another visit to Japan in November 2007 to promote the opening of a photo exhibit of himself, featured at the Mori Tower complex in the posh Roppongi Hills district of Tokyo. The star had been engaged in months of work at body building, and the exhibit was a first-time showing in Japan of his new bare torso, complete with “six-pack” abs and a more muscular chest. Thousands of Japanese female fans again flocked the airport the day of his arrival. Later, the hordes of Japanese female fans pressed against his hotel, trying to get a view of the star, climbing on each other in the process. This melee resulted in several injuries, and many of the women had to be taken to the hospital—a fact widely reported in the Japanese press. Yon-sama himself was interviewed by the Japanese press and was asked what he thought about it all. True to his already prevalent Mr.-Sweet-and-Sensitive image among his female Japanese fans, he simply answered that he hoped the women were all right and that none of them had been badly hurt.

The infatuation of Japanese women with the young male Korean star of the drama, and subsequently with other young male Korean stars, was what seemed to be the biggest shock to Japan as a nation. In particular, it was the idea of “middle-aged” Japanese women in love with a younger, Korean male that grabbed the greatest amount of press and other media attention.

The Concept of “Middle-Aged” Japanese Women

Before analyzing the phenomenon further, I must problematize the concept of “middle-aged women” as used in Japan. In the North American context, we may think of women around 50 years old as “middle-aged.” The conceptualization is not the same in Japan. Living in Japan when I turned 30 years old, I was surprised to receive a large package from my local Tokyo ward office—a package that presumably all Japanese women registered and living in that ward received upon turning 30. Wrapped around an inner package was a paper Japanese belt (obi 帯) upon which was written, in beautiful calligraphy: Chu¯nen na onna ni natta kara 中年な女になったから
(because you have now become a middle-aged woman). Packaged within were several health and medical pamphlets, in Japanese, intended for women turning 30. Thus, for Japanese women, the age of 30 at least used to correspond to the beginning of what was considered the middle-age years. What is most noteworthy about the fandom of Japanese “middle-aged” women—here perhaps best understood as Japanese women in their 30s, 40s, and 50s, and possibly on into their 60s—for Winter Sonata, Yon-sama, and other young Korean male stars, was the degree of their involvement. Some of this was attributed to the intensity with which Japanese tend to adopt hobbies or other such pursuits. Several Koreans—who themselves liked the drama—indicated they believed that Koreans tended not to get “so crazy” about something, turning it into a big fad; they mentioned the Japanese concept of otaku おたく, fans who become totally and overwhelmingly involved in the objects of their fandom. While otaku tendencies might account for part of the devotion of Japanese women to the drama and its star, a review of some of the statements and urban legends growing up around the drama in Japan suggests that their fandom was being used to explore and espouse irritations with gender roles constraining them as women within Japan. Additionally, their espoused love for a Korean man came precisely at a time when many Japanese men were feeling adrift. The long-term recessive economy in Japan, along with increasing awareness of women’s desires for more independent gender roles, often left men feeling less secure, bringing their previous gender identity as income earner and hierarchical family head into question.

**Stories of Female Fans & the Plight of the Japanese Male**

The following are two such stories of Japanese female infatuation with Yon-sama, portrayed against the plight of the contemporary Japanese male, that attracted attention of Japanese press and television talk shows. They were typical of the kind of stories that became widely commented upon and debated. Whether they represent actual incidents or are part of an emergent urban myth, the importance of such stories is shown in the attention given to them and the debates about gender and family that they sparked. Such stories typically involve the heart-breaking portrayal of a hard-working Japanese man who returns home from another day at work. Rather than being greeted by his wife (who once would have been ready with a well-prepared meal and hot bath), he instead enters his urban apartment to find the walls covered with Yon-sama posters, his own children wearing Yon-sama T-shirts, and an absent “Mama”—who has gone to her Yon-sama fan-club meeting.

Another such story goes like this: A father takes his 10-year-old son with him to do some weekend grocery shopping at a produce shop near his residence. (Already there is the suggestion of gender incongruity from so-
called traditional expectations in that the father is venturing into “women’s work” by both caring for his child and carrying out a task related to maintaining the household.) As the father is purchasing groceries from a female clerk at the store, his young son gets excited because he has seen a poster at the back of the store and recognizes the familiar face. It is, of course, a poster of Yon-sama. Seeing his excitement, the clerk asks the boy if he knows who it is. The boy responds, “Mochiron, are wa mama no ichiban suki na hito”: “Of course, that’s Mama’s favorite person.” The clerk, aware of the boy’s father, and now embarrassed for having asked the question, tries to rectify the situation. She says to the boy: “That’s not quite correct, is it? Your papa is your mama’s favorite person.” The boy knows what he knows. He does not pick up the clerk’s hints about his father’s feelings and instead responds to her declaratively, again pointing to the poster of Yon-sama: “Iie, are wa mama no ichiban suki na hito.” “No, that’s Mama’s favorite person!”

Such stories, empathizing with the supposed feelings of Japanese men at being less fondly loved by their women than Yon-sama and other young male Korean stars, reflect a concern for Japanese men faced with the loss of self-esteem in a prolonged recessive economy in which their job security and work advancement, long a strong basis of male identity in Japan, are in doubt. With the decline of both salaryman culture and the assurances of permanent employment, many men are struggling. Such men had previously been led to believe they were on the upper track work-wise; and they also likely once believed that Japan was hierarchically above South Korea. Now they find themselves questioning their career trajectories and facing wives, lovers, or girlfriends who are seemingly suggesting that Korean men (formerly seen as inferior) are better lovers, mates, or partners than Japanese men. Suggestions of Korean males as positioned above Japanese males clearly conflict with earlier concepts of Japanese national identity and patriarchal forms of nationalism.

What underlies the infatuation of Japanese women, in their 30s and older, with Yon-sama? Is it really his handsome face, elegant voice, and those exhibit-featured pecs? In part, Japanese women are utilizing their espoused infatuation with Yon-sama and other young Korean males, dangling these suggestions of ethnic eroticisms, to make statements about gender roles, relationships, and their own frustrations with marriage or dating involvements in the Japanese context. Repeatedly, while such Korean stars are embraced as handsome or “sexy,” it is qualities of gentleness and sensitivity that are championed as at the heart of the attraction. Thus, through their glaring devotion to Korean males, Japanese women are suggesting they feel certain desired characteristics are lacking from the Japanese men in their lives. Even before his new, more muscular body went on display, Yon-sama’s charismatic embodiment of sweetness and sensitivity is what Japanese women most cherished. Some people even suggested Yon-sama
had feminine or androgynous characteristics. This notion is consistent with Japanese gender-identity expectations that position sensitivity and sweet-ness as “feminine” qualities.

_Beyond Takarazuka_

Japanese women’s devoted love for Yon-sama parallels Japanese women’s fandom of Takarazuka, the all-female theater where women specialize in either male or female parts, as presented in the documentary _Dream Girls_ (Longinotto and Williams 1994). Heterosexual Japanese women could become intense fans of the male-part players of the Takarazuka Review—even though they understand that, in real life, these parts are played by women (in a reverse parallel to the onnagata 女形 of Kabuki theater, where men play the roles of both women and men). Fantasy love of the male characters in the Takarazuka Review allowed many Japanese women to dream about being in a relationship with stronger romantic aspects than what they experienced with their husbands, a fantasy in which a male was nice to them, treating them sensitively as someone who was special. Both cases—the love of heterosexual Japanese female fans for the male figures (played by women) in the Takarazuka Review and the flocking of heterosexual Japanese women after Yon-sama and other Korean male stars—involves Japanese women dealing with a frustration over what they desire but lack in their personal relationships.

The Takarazuka Review provided a way for some women to deal with their frustrations silently, through the offsetting pleasures of a fantasy romance. For heterosexual women, since it was but fantasy, it did not matter that the actors playing the male parts were women. However, in the recent wave of romanticization over Yon-sama and other Korean male stars, heterosexual Japanese women are not just finding a fantasy to help them suffer through their discontent. They are instead utilizing their espoused infatuation with these young Korean stars to make statements to their husbands and to Japanese society about their discontent. Collecting Yon-sama memorabilia or dressing their children in Yon-sama T-shirts often involves an attempt to get the men in their lives to notice their discontent and their desires for more sensitive and more equal marital or love relationships. As a form of consumer engagement, Japanese women’s intense and often very publically espoused love for Yon-sama complies with Felski’s (1995) suggestion that women’s involvement in the culture of consumerism “disrupts the sanctity of the private sphere, encouraging women to indulge in their own desires in defiance of their husbands and of traditional forms of moral and religious authority” (74).

Japanese society takes stronger notice of the Korean Wave and Japanese women’s current enthrallment with Korean men precisely because something is different—and more threatening—in this wave of fandom than for
heterosexual Japanese women “in love” with the male characters of the Takarazuka Review. Whereas the love of Japanese heterosexual women for the male characters of the Takarazuka Review must eternally remain a fantasy, Japanese women’s love of Korean men can move into the realm of reality. They might not have a chance to become involved with Yon-sama or the other Korean stars, but they can get involved with other Korean men. The Korean Wave has brought the projection of Korean men as gentle, sweet, sensitive, and nice to women; thus they are potentially desirable mates. In the marriage market, newly emerging companies in Japan are offering matchmaking services for Japanese women and Korean men. (Reports indicate that not all such arrangements have resulted in happy couplings for Japanese women, as they come to the realization that not all Korean men are necessarily as sweet and sensitive as the imagined Yon-sama.) Equally threatening to Japanese men and society—though less likely even to be voiced—is the possibility that Japanese women will engage in extramarital affairs with Korean men.

The recent projection of Korean men as gentle, sensitive, and nice to women, hence desirable mates, stands in sharp contrast to the former ethnic erotic hierarchy as described by Kelsky (1999, 2001) and echoed by Bailey (2006), in which white Western males were seen as nice to women and hence sought after as romantic or marriage partners by Japanese women. Part of this change clearly reflects the intersections of erotic attractions with economic status. Once, white males symbolized not only niceness to women but also wealth. In part, the ability of Korean men to move into such a category of desirability has resulted from Japanese women now seeing South Korea as among the wealthier and more economically advanced nations. However, further reasons exist why Japanese women’s espoused love of Korean males, resulting from the Korean Wave, has made waves within Japanese society.

In openly parading an espoused erotic interest in Korean male stars, Japanese women are voicing, for the benefit of men’s ears, their desires for more gentle, sensitive interactions and treatment from men. I suggest they are also inverting long-held ethnic and age-based hierarchies underlying Japanese society in order to also challenge a classically prevailing Japanese gender hierarchy. Until recently, Japanese men saw their positioning as above Korean men. Older men have been positioned above younger men in Japanese versions of patriarchy, and men are positioned above women. In intentionally and overtly projecting a preferred erotic interest in young Korean males, Japanese women are, at least in the romantic and consumer arenas, positioning young Korean men above Japanese men and above older men. Since the romantic-erotic economy suggests a mirroring of other aspects of social status, Japanese women are projecting a challenge to previous ethnic and age-based hierarchies that positioned Japanese males over Ko-
orean males and older men over younger men. As shown in table 1, inverting these two hierarchies suggests the possibility of inverting the third hierarchy that places men over women.

In an essay written for the Japan Times, Jean-Pierre Lehmann (2002), a Swiss economist, characterized Japan as a society run by old men, for the benefit of old men. The Korean Wave as a fandom fad among Japanese women involves more than girlish projections of fantasized love with young male Korean stars. It also involves a critique by Japanese women of Japanese gender roles, constraints, and hierarchical positionings and suggests the potential to challenge the foundations of ethnic, age, and gender power rendered by senior males.

The Anti–Korean Wave Movement

The threat to persisting power hierarchies within Japan was countered by backlash against the Korean Wave in the form of a predominantly Japanese male–prompted, anti–Korean Wave “wave.” Referred to as the “I Hate Hanryü” counter-boom, or the ken-hanryü 嫌韓流 (against the Korean Wave) movement, Japan’s anti–Korean Wave movement resulted in a series of popular books on the topic that decry the Korea Boom and point out the ills to Japanese society of Korean popular culture and Japanese women’s infatuation with Korean stars. Most of the books and newspaper articles proclaiming concerns about (and possible horrendous consequences of) the Korea Boom to Japanese society that I encountered were written by men, generally themselves at least “middle-age” or older. Rather than the Korean Wave being a threat to Japanese society generally, the agitation with which the ken-hanryü movement was waged suggests that it was a threat to an element of established males to whom the older, officially espoused definitions of Japanese culture granted more power and control. In turn, these men

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<th>Inversions created by Japanese women’s Korean Wave attractions</th>
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TABLE 1  Selected Hierarchies in Japan
find their views challenged by emerging (and already previously existing but now more frequently voiced) ideas of Japanese culture involving more flexible possibilities of career, family, and gender constructions—and pathways to other forms of interaction with other Asian groups.

**Korean Wave: The Rippling Effects on Japanese Society**

The Korean Wave, brought on the tide of the popularity of *Winter Sonata*, flooded Japan from 2004 on. Although the wave may have crested, it continues to reverberate throughout Japanese society. At the popular level, it has brought about a shift in attitudes, generally in a positive direction, toward Korea and Koreans. More Japanese are traveling to South Korea, are interested in Korean customs and culture, and are even studying the Korean language. Korean-made dramas, *Winter Sonata* in particular, led to new Japanese perceptions of South Korea as a fully developed, modern nation, with cosmopolitan urban centers. At the same time, the drama presented Koreans as maintaining warm-hearted human relationships in long-term support networks, something valued in Japan as well as in other areas of East Asia.

The Korean Wave also helped shift Japanese attitudes toward resident Koreans in Japan. Whereas, once, restaurants and shops run by resident Koreans were directed at and frequented by other resident Koreans, there has been a growing tendency for these to be directed at and sought out by mainstream Japanese as well. The more positive estimation of Korea has led to a more positive estimation of resident Koreans, and sometimes a more open acceptance of their presence in Japan. Although generally a positive trend, one drawback, as discussed by Iwabuchi (2008), is that some Japanese now equate South Koreans (people residing outside Japan in another country) with Japan's resident Koreans (people who reside within Japan and have been a part of Japanese society for generations). Overriding Japanese projections of nationalism and national identity based on a rubric of homogeneity remain strong, and the collapsing of Koreans and resident Koreans can be shaped into a persisting sense of Japanese identity based on the myth of Japan as a homogeneous country.

As manifested in Japan, the Korean Wave reveals the prominence of consumer culture in both Japan and Korea. As entertainment, dramas like *Winter Sonata* and other aspects of the Korean Wave (like K-pop music) are elements of consumer culture. Tourism, including the drama tourism discussed here, is also included under the rubric of consumer culture. *Winter Sonata* and other Korean dramas and films helped raise perceptions of South Korea by showing it as a place that has entered into global consumer tastes. It also spawned consumer trends and fads.
Greatest attention within Japan has been directed at so-called middle-age women’s infatuation with *Winter Sonata*, along with their unabashedly proclaimed love for Yon-sama and other young Korean male stars. Their consumerist involvement with the Korean Wave marks an important moment in Japanese society. For perhaps the first time, the spotlight was on middle-aged women as a consumer group, providing these women with a highly visible social stage upon which to perform their emphatic fan role, while society took note. Middle-aged women were thus able to utilize their espoused love of Yon-sama and other young Korean males to voice their frustrations and discontent over their own roles and relationships within Japanese society. Their love of young Korean males challenged long-established official hierarchies in Japan that positioned Japanese above Koreans and older men above younger men. By extension, Japan’s gender hierarchy of men above women was also indirectly challenged (table 1).

Such challenges reveal that Japanese do not fall into a monolithic category but that, as elsewhere, various groups attempt to (re)negotiate social realities at different times. Although Japanese fans of *Winter Sonata* and Yon-sama were often scoffed at and made to appear silly, such treatment in itself can represent attempts to offset the threat their fan involvement represented to some who wished to retain other (older) definitions of Japanese society and identity. The anti–Korean Wave backlash movement in Japan suggested that, for some Japanese, the infatuation of “our” women with foreign, and especially Korean, males was a threat to former constructs of nationalism that ascribed a lower place to both Koreans and women.

As exhibited through consumerism in Japan, the Korean Wave created a venue for presentations of and dialogue on new possibilities of gender relations, new constructions of self-identities, and possibly new formulations of nationalism and new pathways for interacting with other nations of Asia. Rather than belittling the importance of consumer or popular culture, the Korean Wave shows that popular culture can have the power to influence people and their attitudes toward other groups. It can create a momentum for positive social change—or at least the first steps in a positive direction—sometimes in more effective ways than legal, political, or governmentally designated attempts to do so. In considering the widespread effects of the Korean Wave in Japan and in other parts of Asia, as inter-Asian relations and identities are being reconfigured, I think back on that conversation with a group of young men in Pusan twenty years before the Korean Wave hit Japan. In searching for a way to positively define Korean masculine identity and, in a sense, their own form of nationalism, they did not refer to South Korea’s mandatory expectation of male military involvement (as something creating tough men); they did not refer to South Korea’s then-growing economic status (as something resulting from hard-working men devoting themselves to corporations); they did not refer to Korea’s ancient
learning or classical contributions to humanity (often depicted as resulting from men’s scholarly endeavors). Instead, they espoused a sense of positive masculine identity and source of nationalistic pride through their assertion that Korean men are “sexy.” Some twenty years later, throngs of women in Japan, and elsewhere in Asia, would chant and act out their agreement, as Korean popular culture that enveloped the rest of Asia through the Korean Wave helped raise the status of South Korea to a higher, more visible, and more pivotal presence in Asia and the world.

Notes

1 Japanese citizenship is granted on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, meaning descent through a biological relative, rather than through the principle of *jus soli*, meaning through birth on the soil or through place of birth.

2 All names are given a polite ending in Japan, most commonly *san* さん (Mr./Ms.) attached to a surname. The more polite, elegant, and elite designation of *sama* is occasionally used, especially for very famous or high-ranking individuals. When attached to a given name, *sama* can suggest the individual is so well known or high ranking that the surname is unnecessary; it also carries a heart-warming suggestion of intimacy. Koizumi Jun’ichirō 小泉純一郎, Japan’s prime minister during the onset of the Korean Wave, jokingly expressed envy over not being referred to as “Jun-sama.” Koizumi’s joke suggests a realization that he himself was neither held in as highly adored status by the Japanese public nor perhaps loved in the same way by the hordes of Japanese women who became committed “Yon-sama” fans.

3 The 1990s saw the rise of *esute* エステ (aesthetic, from French *esthétique*) tourism for young Japanese women; but such tourism was overwhelming focused on beauty: cosmetic and (beautifying) health treatments. “Shopping tourism” to Seoul also existed in the 1990s (particularly among Japanese women); and this phenomenon also sky-rocketed after the Korean Wave. See Creighton (2006), Hirata (2005, 2008), and Moon (2009) for discussions of the hierarchical positioning of Japan vis-à-vis Korea and of sexual forays for Japanese males into Korea.

4 Yasukuni Shrine, where the souls of Japan’s war dead (including several individuals marked by the postwar Tokyo Tribunal as war criminals) are enshrined, has strong associations with Japanese militarism prior to and during World War II—and with its imperialistic incursions into other areas of Asia. Thus both Korea and China have strongly objected to the Yasukuni Shrine visits of Japan’s prime ministers. Koreans have also protested over Japan’s enshrining of Koreans who died while serving in Japan’s military. Although claiming his visits were “personal,” Koizumi went clad in *hakama* 袴, a style of Japanese clothing projecting a strong statement of Japanese national identity and hence associated with nationalism, and signed the guest book as Prime Minister.

5 Names of actors and of the characters they portray sometimes appear in different Romanizations. The two identities played by Pae Yong-chun in *Winter Sonata* are Romanized in this article as Kang Joon Sang (for the high school youth) and Lee Min Hyeung (for the older professional). Following Korean custom in which the surname is placed first, *Kang* and *Lee* are the surnames, while *Joon Sang* and *Min Hyeung* are the given names the characters are called by their acquaintances in the drama.

6 As a drama series, *Winter Sonata* has been very popular among “middle-aged” women in Japan; but it has also been popular to varying degrees among younger women
and among men of various age groups. Men I spoke with in both Japan and Korea—often after some hesitation—acknowledged that they liked the drama, too. The hesitation could have been because they understood it as something women were supposed to like, and therefore their enjoyment of it might call their masculinity into question. For these men, the admission almost seemed to be one of repressed romanticism, suggesting something about the context of gender expectations and identity in Japan. Under projected gender expectations, men are shown as having sexual interests, while romantic or sentimental feelings are often denied them or at least are not to be openly or publically expressed. In contrast, women are portrayed as having romantic and sentimental feelings but are often expected to deny sexual feelings. So, for many of the men I queried, acknowledging they liked the drama was seen as a “confession.” The romantic theme and emphasis on emerging “first love” also struck an emotional chord with some men. One Korean man told me he liked the drama because he also had a “first love.” In his case, in order to impress his “first love,” he had even taken her to Ch’unch’on, because it was considered to have good scenery.

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Image Is Everything: Re-imaging Traditional Music in the Era of the Korean Wave

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Seoul National University

In contemporary South Korea, much attention has been focused on developing strategies for Korea’s global integration. The recent hallyu 한류 (Korean Wave) phenomenon attests to the sheer potential of using performing arts as a cultural emissary for the promotion of Korean culture abroad. Within this context, individuals priming Korean music for global acceptance have been molding the image and sound into something potentially more accessible and, thus, marketable, to both local and global audiences. This article examines the influence of the Korean Wave on the development and promotion of Korean music. Based on firsthand observations through field research from summer 2008 to spring 2009, this piece explores three sites of performance—the stage, brochures, and Web sites—on which the image of Korean music is being reconstructed for widespread consumption. Developments draw on the romantic imagery and storylines of hallyu dramas, using intangible forms of Korea’s heritage as raw source materials.

Setting the Stage

We live in a world in which the visual image often trumps musical and verbal communication. In many instances, the visual actually helps to shape both how we perceive ourselves and what we wish to communicate to the outside world. For example, in his documentary about wedding photography in South Korea, visual anthropologist Kijun Lee (2002) explores a cultural phenomenon in which ordinary couples are transformed into movie stars. Engaged couples are at the center of a fantasy, constructed through visual imagery, that depicts an idyllic relationship. Through soundtracks and soft lighting, videos offer a sexy and appealing view of the soon-to-be married couple. Photographers make use of locations such as Lotte World and the Kyŏngbokkung Palace in Seoul as romantic backdrops, and they further boost the romantic factor by painting over the background: adding rippling waves to water, peacocks, and fruit hanging from trees in the background. With directives such as, “Look happy,” and, “Kiss her a little more passionately,” the couple is transformed into stars of a personalized drama. In much the same way, contemporary performance of traditional music in
South Korea is currently being transformed as a romantic fantasy, packaged for consumption and gladly consumed by those hungry for the exotic.

The Korean Wave, or *hallyu* 한류 phenomenon offers the perfect opportunity through which the interconnectedness of aural and visual aspects of contemporary music-making in South Korea can be explored. *Hallyu* refers to the dominance of Korean popular culture in Asian cultural markets—as well as its sudden popularity in places such as Africa, Central Asia, and Europe—since the beginning of the twenty-first century. *Hallyu*, a term allegedly coined in 1999 by Beijing journalists expressing bewilderment at the sudden influx and popularity of Korean popular culture, has been credited with lifting South Korea into global consciousness. The sheer success of *hallyu* has meant a greater awareness of Korean culture abroad, which, of course, has also meant an expansion of Korea’s cultural-export market. As Millie Creighton (2009) points out in the case of Japan–South Korean relations, *hallyu* has spurred debates regarding the role of popular culture in strengthening diplomatic ties and repairing relationships damaged by occupations and territorial disputes. This article explores the impact of *hallyu* on music creation and promotion in South Korea.

The popularity of Korean television dramas and the proven success of popular-music artists and B-boys (devotees of hip-hop culture) have encouraged the emergence of campaigns aimed at paving the way for the acceptance and success of traditional Korean music among the general population, both domestically and abroad. I believe that, beyond stage design and costumes, *hallyu* imagery plays an extremely important role in the development of contemporary traditional music in South Korea. My aim in this article is to demonstrate how *hallyu* imagery is currently driving the ways by which traditional Korean music is designed, produced, and presented to contemporary audiences.

**Context: Music & Visual Studies**

An examination of imagery first needs to acknowledge visual studies. The study of visuality has combined psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and political dimensions of seeing in the quest to interpret those things that we see in our daily life. The perimeters of the study of visual culture remain a mystery. Akin to cultural studies, and branching off from historical art studies, the study of visual culture encompasses all that we see around us (Elkins 2003). According to the description of a recent art exhibit in Seoul, visual culture includes “everything you see in your day-to-day life. . . . [These] constantly change . . . [and] can emerge, disappear, or be replaced with something else” (Korea Design Foundation 2008).

Within the academic field of cultural studies, the focus has been on the relationship between “high” and “low” art, something that James Elkins, in
his visual-studies reader, has identified as the concern in visual studies (2003, 45). Contrary to the historical focus of art history on “high” art, visual studies take us to a new realm by offering a study of the “cultural industry,” an industry in which once-clear lines dividing “high” and “low” art are blurred. Theodor Adorno famously criticized this cultural industry and argued for the merits of high art, defending the need for the separate and unequal status of the two (1938). According to Adorno, lessening high art to the level of low (or popular) art would dirty it and imbue it in it an impurity that could not be undone. For Marx (1992), analysis of visual culture is useful because it can reveal the “false consciousness” implanted in a marketing practice, for example, that makes it appear natural. Hence, marketable—and fetishized—objects are not natural, pure expressions. For both Marx and Adorno, the need fulfilled by mass-produced art and mass consumption is not the need for aesthetic fulfillment; it is rather capitalistic greed driven by the desire for standard consumer goods. The “culture industry,” that is, creates need and desire through manipulation rather than through the actual value or worth of an item. Therefore, the message communicated here is that the popular—the focus of visual studies—is embedded in fraudulence. Hence, the study of such ordinariness, in some academic circles, remains embedded in controversy and insecurities.

To take on a study of imagery in music performance unearths many of these insecurities, not the least of which is the question of whether it is a worthy area of study. There are very few precedents for ethnomusicological works that deal with the relationship of the visual to music performance. Of those, works in sociology, music education, and psychology examine the relationship between the visual and the aural—for example, in the symbiotic relationship between music and color known as synesthesia (Baron-Cohen and others 1996; Sloboda 1985; van Campen and Froger 2003). Ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam famously tackles synesthesia in his classic work The Anthropology of Music (1964). His theory on the embeddedness of aesthetics in symbolic structures led to his questioning of a “pure” synesthesia, devoid of dependence on cultural assumptions (101). Other ethnomusicological works that concern the visual take a decidedly historical approach, using visual sources as clues that help musicologists piece together performance as it was practiced historically. Similar to the approaches taken in articles found in the International Journal for Music Iconography, these ethnomusicological works use images from tombs, cave paintings, vases, and other artifacts to piece together musical life historically and its relevance to present-day musical culture. Bonnie Wade (1998), for example, examines music performance as depicted in Mughal paintings. Through her examination of paintings, she asserts that music was both an aural and visual assertion of the monarch’s power. In the study of Korean music, as well, scholars have made use of visual representations of performances to
draw conclusions about musical life in Korea. This imagery has been most important in the study of folk music, for which a written record prior to the eighteenth century is virtually nonexistent (Provine 1983, 1985, 1988; Song Bang-Song 1980, 1991, 1997; Song Hye-jin 2000). Although visual imagery offers an important record from which the value of music to society can be inferred, I assert that popular culture in contemporary Korea is actually helping to shape the development of traditional music performance. Before so concluding, I must first explain and contextualize traditional music in contemporary South Korea.

Defining the Subject: Traditional Korean Music

Defining traditional music itself is a methodological concert: what *exactly* is it? First and foremost, the meta-genre of traditional music, or *kugak* 국악, can be defined as a category of music incorporating multiple court and folk genres. The genres within the *kugak* category include instrumental ensemble and solo genres (such as banquet music and *sanjo* 산조), vocal performance (such as *p’ansori* 판소리 and *sijo* 시조), and ceremonial music (such as Confucian shrine music and *sinawi* 시나위). Many of those who study Korean music employ the general term *kugak* when referring to music that developed primarily during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), and most distinguish “traditional music” from “new compositions.”

When the South Korean government established the Bureau of Cultural Properties (*Munhwajae kwalliguk* 문화재관리국) in 1962 to preserve cultural forms that were disappearing from popular use, the designation of certain cultural forms as *tangible* or *intangible cultural properties*—or of an individual as a *human cultural treasure*—increased the visibility of older forms of cultural creation by encouraging cultural education. At the same time, ideas regarding “proper” or “authentic” Korean musical structures and aesthetics were cemented, and alterations were discouraged within genres or in musical pieces designated as cultural properties. In such a manner, the foundation of official cultural heritage was formed. A limiting construction of *kugak*, stemming primarily from modern systems for preservation, has helped shape expectations regarding the appropriate genres for “authentic” presentations as well as a general sense of proper form.

The traditional, thus authentic, performance of music relies very heavily on the preconceived notions outlined above. Just as in the realm of traditional Korean painting in the mid-twentieth century, traditional Korean music has come to symbolize “a self-identity [that] was problematized by” Korea’s relationship with foreign former occupiers (Chun 1996, 185). Quite frequently, an attempt at resolving this problematic relationship has emerged through creating “binary oppositions about western value and that of the East, at the level of representation” (Chun 1996, 185). In both tradi-
tional Korean music and painting, the “West” has emerged as synonymous with the unnatural and egocentric, and Korea is viewed as evoking the spirit of nature and harmonious relationships. The result is a self-orientalizing discourse, exaggerating Koreanness in the search for unique cultural expression. These developments have set the tone for discourse regarding traditional Korean music and the transformation of this music by concurrently categorically identifying “official” performance styles and essentializing a Korean sound. Consequently, the need both to preserve cultural heritage and to define a cultural self in relationship to the rest of the world has meant a constant refining of South Korea’s musical identity, often verified through recognition via official channels (e.g., government institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, which provides much of the funding for cultural programs).

The Image-ing of Heritage: Performance & the Refining of a Korean Identity

Yen: July 14, 2008

On a hot, humid July evening, people crowded into Sangmyŏng Art Hall in Seoul’s trendy Daehangno neighborhood. Inside the theater, black walls and a darkened stage were barely discernable thanks to the glow of black lights illuminating audience members, dressed predominantly in loose white tops and dresses. Smoke billowing from an off-stage smoke machine briefly preceded the heavy beat of electronic music controlled by a Mac-wielding deejay. As the beat progressed, shadows crossed the stage while the performers, young women dressed in black and white shoulder-baring tops and sneakers, took their places, instruments at hand. With a flash of bright white lights, the women were fully revealed and the music—kayagŭm 가야금 and kŏmun’go 거문고 (bowed and plucked zithers), haegŭm 해금 (fiddle), taegŭm 대금 (bamboo flute), p’iri 피리 and t’aep’yŏngso 테평소 (two types of oboe), changgŏ 장고 (hourglass-shaped drum), keyboard, percussion, electronic media—filled the theater in full force. The first piece, “Tribute to Seoul,” introduced the audience to the theme of the concert: a rumination on contemporary Korean urban life. The familiar whine of the haegŭm, the p’iri’s piercing tones, and the rhythmic pull of changdan 장단 (percussive rhythmic cycles) were juxtaposed with hip-hop and house rhythms as a veejay—a video jockey—projected an assortment of animated images and texts onto a large screen behind the performers. The words and images directly referenced Pak T’ae-wŏn’s (1909–86) 1934 novel Sosŏlga kubossi-ŭi iril 소설가 구보씨의 일일 (A day in the life of the artist Kubo), which was written at a time when modernity and the survival of traditional values were at the forefront of Korean literary and political thought. Expressed in the first person through an animated character of Gubo, the words reflected
on his life, expressing a perceived tedium of daily life in the city and the hopelessness of existence. Sung lyrics inverted this hopelessness by imbuing optimism and hopefulness into the performance context. Words, music, and sound effects worked in tandem to convey the intensity of contemporary life flavored with the nostalgia intrinsic to the South Korean urban existence. Through the multiple, overlapping media, the performance by the group Yen 엔® created a performance space in which both modern vitality and the comfort of heritage were within reach. The evening’s performance, complete with its clapping, shouting, and dancing crowd, felt more like a party in a dance hall than a Korean music recital at a university art venue.

Yen’s performance presents a fitting metaphor for the state of contemporary Korean music. First, it immediately presents to the spectator the question of whether this spectacle can be called “Korean music.” Second, Yen’s performance style exemplifies current trends in performances labeled as chółmin 철민 (young) kugak. Within the performance context itself, the potential incongruity of Korean heritage and modern lifestyles was implied. The performers required the audience—a mixture of young children and parents, kugak enthusiasts, students, music lovers—to participate in this reconstitution of “Korean music” as a fluid category. Yen refers to its brand of performance as “kinetic kugak,” implying an ever-moving and changing definition of Korean music; the subtext is that, as contemporary society begets a rapidly changing daily experience, music should not be approached as a static cultural property. The sexy, youthful performers combine their expertise in traditional performance with electronically produced sounds and dance rhythms, and the image presented to audiences is of a cool, confident, Korean youth culture. First and foremost, with Yen, the imagery assaults the audience, symbolically expressing that “this is contemporary performing arts”—with the implication, “this is Korean heritage.” Ironically, Yen’s performance, emphasizing the fluidity of tradition while questioning old assumptions, offers a timely reflection of South Korea’s new brand of official culture.

Five years ago, the images offered forth by Yen and similar groups would have been outside the realm of official culture. Although drawing on traditional forms, they would not have been considered true reflections of Korean musical heritage. Official culture, on the other hand, took into consideration genres officially recognized as intangible properties by the South Korean government. Researchers with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism’s Traditional Music Division who are charged with organizing public performances must stay within the boundaries of the genres officially labeled by the term “cultural property.” The primary audiences and contexts for unofficial and official heritage have been, in the past, distinct. Audiences exposed to work by performance groups like Yen or other neo-traditional chółmin kugak groups have been, for the most part, domestic au-
diences with a connection to traditional music culture. It is within this culture that the need for revisions of traditional forms was most urgently expressed, and experimental performances such as that of Yen exemplify the types of performances lumped together under the label ch’angjak 창작, or created, kugak (Finchum-Sung 2008). The primary venues tended to be small performance halls and Web sites. The main audiences for official heritage (in the case of music, that which is labeled “traditional music”) tend to be foreigners or schoolchildren. The primary performance venues for official heritage include the stages at cultural heritage sites (such as Changdökkung Palace in Seoul) and Web sites. The majority of the latter are sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. The focus of the performance practice of unofficial heritage is inward (aimed at musical development), while that of official heritage is outward (aimed at cultural promotion). Both forms of heritage are connected, due to the fact that their existence is reinforced through promotion and rhetoric describing their worth. For more experimental forms of music, concert programs and Web sites provide information on the importance of such activities. For the officially recognized forms of performance, concert programs, Web sites, and promotional campaigns reinforce the definition of Korean tradition and the place of music within it.

Cashing in on Heritage

The question of heritage stands at the forefront of discussions regarding contemporary Korean music in South Korea. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1998) defined “heritage” as an opportunity to explore internationalization or globalization of a cultural form without questioning its authenticity. It is a heritage that is “not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse in the past” (150). Considering the current reconstruction of heritage in the present, this definition is most suiting. As in the “storehouse of treasures” into which composers dipped in Margaret Dilling’s (2007) recounting of music created for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, “officially” recognized cultural forms have become source materials on which contemporary, “dynamic” performances are built (303). Official heritage and unofficial heritage (experiments that safely ease in and out of the perimeters of traditional performance), as Adorno (1938) feared, have bonded in this new movement toward global promotion. In a sense, it has all become “official heritage.”

I focus here on those performances of “intangible cultural properties” currently featured in public venues meant to promote Korean culture. For this reason, South Korea’s tourist industry and the construction of Korea’s international image remain central to this focus. The international stage, in this instance, maintains strong connections with a domestic evaluation of the value of Korean culture and the display of contributions of Korean cul-
ture to the global community. In this sense, it becomes a medium through which traditional performance genres are refashioned for international audiences (Iyer 2001). While the official heritage promoted by the government draws on musical genres recognized as intangible properties, the new image of Korean heritage promoted internationally requires a reconstitution of “official heritage” that incorporates elements of Korean culture—many of which are Korean products identified as Korean merely due to their origins in a Korean context or with a Korean artist—that have a proven track record abroad. The building of a national image has taken the forefront of the commodification of traditional music, and, as a result, theatrical effects, popular trends, and audience expectations play active roles in the cultural production of traditional music on the global stage. Present-day expressions of Korean identity are conscientiously applied to performances in the making of an image labeled and objectified as “Korean” (Appadurai 1996).

Tourism has become an important venue through which culture is produced because it has become an increasingly important part of the South Korean economy. A century of societal shifts, from agrarian to industrial society, and recent developments in inter-cultural contact reveal a society for which culture has become one of South Korea’s biggest exports and carries much potential for boosting economic and political growth. Since 1988, tourism has consistently contributed 4 percent of South Korea’s GDP. Between 2001 and 2002, the government increased its assistance to the tourism industry by 942 percent (an increase of about US$160 million) (OECD 2002). Government assistance and programs such as the Tourism Promotion Act attest to the significance of tourism to the South Korean economy. With an increased focus on tourism as a way to bolster Korea’s international status, tangible and intangible cultural products have become actively enlisted in the refashioning of a Korean identity that can be marketable worldwide. The heavy influence of tourism, with the hope of bolstering both international standing and domestic pride, plays a direct role in cultural reinvention. In Indonesia, for example, traditional performing arts and music have played a significant role in tourism—and vice versa. There, tourism has been “one of the means by which a world audience has been able to access, admittedly in a ‘diluted’ form, the performing arts of Indonesia and thus become aware of their significance” (Iyer 2001, 1). It seems suitable, as well, that Koreans should employ traditional performing arts in the fashioning of an international image.

As in the case of Indonesia, many performances for the sake of tourism are “diluted” to such an extent that scholars have pondered the depth of such “airport art” (Howard 1989). One of the frustrations encountered in many traditional music concerts designed for tourist consumption can be found in the explanation of the program, or lack thereof. As Chan Park (2001, 131) and Roald Maliangkay (2008, 56) rightly point out, many per-
formances begin with a mention of the performing art as a cultural asset; yet simply stating that something is significant means very little to an audience unfamiliar with the historical context or meaning behind the performance. The audience is treated to a visually stunning yet vacant performance: vacant because the audience has little to go on in terms of content and, thus, engagement with the performance. In efforts to remedy this situation, organizers of performances and government agencies seek, through various measures, to strengthen appreciation for traditional performing arts. Their approach includes redefining “traditional” and showcasing performing arts that are “transmuted, refashioned, or invented to serve present cultural and political agendas” (Hackforth-Jones and Roberts 2005, 5). It is through an engagement with Korea’s past and with other cultures that a new sense of self-identification is emerging. The popular media has become increasingly responsible for directing this engagement, and, as I outline below, a combination of mastered imported culture and export trends are directing contemporary performances of traditional music.

The Korean Wave & Traditional Korean Music: The Hallyu Effect

The hallyu phenomenon ignited throughout Asia a flurry of interest in Korean culture. Sparked by interest in the beautiful people and romantic storylines of such popular dramas as Winter Sonata and Jewel in the Palace, the soundtracks to these dramas and the artists producing songs on these soundtracks soon attracted a huge following in places like Taiwan and mainland China (Sung 2006). Tourists soon flooded Korea to see the locations where many of these popular dramas were filmed and to snatch up memorabilia sold in tourist shops at these locations (Creighton 2009). The fascination with the idyllic locations and dramas in which, most always, the protagonist succeeds while love and good old-fashioned Korean values save the day, has inspired interest in traditional Korean arts. This interest is something that has not been overlooked by organizers of traditional music performances and government agencies who have latched onto the romantic imagery and idyllic love stories to create an attractive, romantic Korea, using traditional music and hybrid forms as the national soundtrack (Tuohy 2001). The result has been a refashioning of the very definition of traditional Korean music.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism has taken the proverbial bull by the horns with its new promotion campaign, “Han Style,” which focuses on six major aspects of Korean traditional culture: han’gul 한글 (Korean alphabet), hansik 한식 (Cold Food Festival in April), hanbok 한복 (traditional Korean dress), hanok 한옥 (traditional Korean houses), hanji 한지 (traditional Korean paper), and han’guk ümak 한국음악 (traditional Korean music). The momentum from hallyu has, for the moment, made traditional
Korean culture more appealing than at other times in recent memory, and the Han Style initiative aggressively underscores this appeal. The stated overall goal of the plan is to increase the “Korean Premium” internationally (HanStyle 2007). On the Web site dedicated exclusively to Han Style, the goals related to Korean music include creating a national brand of performance and building star artists who promote traditional Korean music abroad (including fusion art and t’ae kwŏndo 태권도 teams and B-boys). The plan includes, as well, designs to develop cultural events aimed at introducing Korean culture to foreigners, restoring “original Korean music,” and supporting related activities (HanStyle 2007). Currently, researchers with the traditional performing arts unit of the Art Division of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism are developing strategies aimed at increasing interest in traditional music.

The recent revisions in defining and promoting traditional music are part of something I term the “hallyu effect.” The hallyu effect is that in which the trends based on the aesthetic sensibilities and romantic notions of popular media, such as drama, precede refashioning of traditions and directly stimulate the ways by which these performing arts are produced in the present. One of the most telling examples of these new developments is an advertisement, produced by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, aimed at both attracting tourists and inducing nationalist pride among domestics. The ad begins with a scene showing snow falling softly through trees; the scene is reminiscent of one of the most popular scenes of Winter Sonata that shows a grove of trees on a snowy day. The scene fades into another showing a misty river through which a man wearing traditional Korean garb (hanbok) and sporting a topknot is rowing a boat. The soundtrack features the sound of a kayagu˘m (twelve-string zither), its strings plucking softly the tune of a sanjo 산조 (improvisatory folk piece). As the music speeds up, the sounds of percussion ensembles greet the ears, and the viewer sees scenes such as a woman standing on a swing (in a hanbok) and swinging back and forth in front of tall buildings—and an old man with a long white beard in traditional garb playing with his cell phone on the subway. The distinct sound of a human beatbox introduces hip-hop rhythms that are juxtaposed atop the kayagu˘m and percussion as the viewer is shown scenes of B-boys, club-goers, and soccer fans in rapid succession. The advertisement’s images draw on popular imagery associated with the Korean dramas that sparked the Korean Wave while juxtaposing disparate musical forms into a soundtrack identified as “Korean.” The hallyu effect relies heavily on both imagery and hybrid musical forms to construct a new tradition, at once self-exoticizing and global.

Media images with proven success in the global market now dominate the promotion of Korean culture. In Ray Chow’s (1995) critique of Benedict Anderson’s idea of print capitalism symbolizing a symbolic national unity,
he emphasizes the overarching effects of the onslaught of media images. Visuality, in this sense, is at the center of emergent nationalism and, thus, at the center of commodification of a national image. The choices regarding the images and genres in the process of commodification may be provoked by the “gaze” of the tourist, heavily influenced by the hallyu effect which, in turn, influences the decisions regarding which elements might be of greater interest to international audiences. Yet, contrary to a Foucauldian perspective on the gaze (1995), the power regarding the dominance of some images or genres over others still rests in the hands of those creating the forms for consumption. On the Web site of the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), communication guidelines regarding discussion of Korea’s visual identity—“Korea, Sparkling!”—include the use of images and other promotional materials. For example, the “communications guidelines” on the Web site suggest “what kind of tone must be adopted in writing an article related to Korea’s tourism brand, how to use the KTO’s tourism brand identity and other organizations’ identity at the same time, how to select and use photos, how to produce promotional materials, what kind of concept must be used in setting up a promotional booth and how to make promotional videos” (Korea Tourism Organization 2009). The visuality of “performing Korean identity” appears to connect to very specific ideas about a proper Korean image.

The Hallyu Effect on the Stage

The hallyu effect has found a place in the ways by which programs at popular tourist venues are developed. For example, at Seoul’s Chongdong Theater, a venue at which cultural programs of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism take form, a recent “Korean Traditional Stage” performance titled MISO 美笑 featured a variety of genres from different social contexts in what Maliangkay (2008) refers to as a “hotchpotch,” a medley of performances strung together. Because it attempts to connect multiple genres and performance styles with, interestingly, a love story, MISO stands out among the variety shows. The love story, progressing from a fleeting encounter to the physical and spiritual union of the lovers, creates a tenuous connection, stringing the different scenes and reconstructions of musical form into a single performance.

The performance is divided into subsections made distinct through themes, musical ensemble combinations, and choreography. “Purity and Tremor” opens the performance, with a congregation of four percussionists, called a samul nori 사물놀이, taking center stage. At the front of both stage right and stage left, an instrumental ensemble consisting of kŏmun’go, kayaŏgŭm, ajaeng 아쟁 (zither), haegŭm, taegŭm, p’iri, and tanso 단소 (bamboo flute) perform music based on the p’ungnyu 풍류 (secular chamber mu-
sic) repertoire. The physical design includes carefully choreographed lighting, beautifully painted backdrops, and colorful hanbok. The samul nori performers initially dominate the segment, but with the crescendo of the ensemble and added harmonies and interplay with the percussion foursome, the piece climaxes and presents the audience with a rather spectacular instrumental opening to the performance. With the integration of elements such as harmony and the joining of ensembles not typically combined (and from very different contextual histories), the performance echoes the definition of tradition firmly stated, in English, on the brochure: “Traditional art is not a definite form that has been descended from the past, but it incorporates everything we sense and feel.” The statement, as well, serves as a disclaimer for the vague descriptions (e.g., “Korean classical orchestral music and traditional percussion quartet” or “Exorcism Dance”) used to explain the musical ensembles on stage during each section of the performance. Although the performance is aimed at foreigners who, most likely, know very little about the instruments, musical structure, historical forms, and contexts of the music, beyond the brief ensemble titles or genre indicators, not much else is given. Other sections of the performance include “Feeling of Love,” “Curiosity,” “A New Beginning,” “Lovers,” “Joy and Delight,” and “Blessed by Everyone.”

In MISO, the sparse descriptions of dance and musical genres are often filtered through the love story—complete with essentialization of femininity and a link to the deep suffering, or han, often characterized as an innate Korean emotion—that dominate the performance (Willoughby 2000). As the folk, court, Buddhist, and shamanic musical genres intermingle on stage, a screen to the side of the stage displays text (in Korean, English, Japanese, and Chinese) that explains how the musical performances develop the love story. For example, the text accompanying “Curiosity” is as follows:

The woman suffers from her feeling of love that comes and goes against her will. Finally, she decided to open her heart, but she’s still not familiar with her own feeling toward the man. Her mixed emotion is expressed in Gayageum [kayagüm] chorus. Gayageum chorus refers to a type of play that the singer plays Gayageum themselves while singing a phrase of Pansori [p’ansori] or folk song.

With the focus on the love story and the supposed expression of the story through kayagüm pyôngch’ang 가야금병창 (kayagüm self-accompanied songs), the explanation of the on-stage action focuses on reinforcing an aura of romance. The music plays a decidedly secondary role.

After watching the performance on July 16, 2008, I had the opportunity to discuss the performance with the artistic director. A bit perplexed by the love story, the mixture of performance genres, and the distinct lack of content, I asked him about his decision to use a love story to link the perform-
ances. The most difficult aspect of presenting these performances, he asserted, rested in the fact that non-Korean audiences had trouble understanding the action on stage during a typical performance. He believe that the placement of the love story within the variety show would help engage foreign audiences and help them understand the performances a little better. When I pressed and asked if he really believed the love story helped people understand the music more deeply, he responded by saying that the emphasis was not on teaching people about traditional Korean music but on entertaining them. The artistic director developed the storyline in order both to imbue some continuity into the performance (to provide the illusion that the performance was not simply a montage of genres) and to make the performance more interesting for the audience. While acknowledging the fact that the storyline did not necessarily facilitate actual comprehension of the genres, he contended that the storyline made the audience feel as if they had understood the action on stage—echoing the language on the brochure that asserted the simple format and story existed so the “audience can easily understand and enjoy the traditional art which is often considered difficult.” Interestingly, members of the traditional performing arts unit of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism were present in the audience that evening. The focus of the ministry representatives was to discern whether audience members were entertained and thus, perhaps, further intrigued by the “traditional” Korean performance.

The choices made by the ministry representatives regarding the MISO performance reflect assumptions that are made about the transferable nature of traditional Korean performing arts. Placed in a context in which foreign audiences are the primary consumer, it seems, such performances lose their historical significance and, therefore, take on a new, global significance exemplified through imagery popularized by the dramas and music videos of the Korean Wave. Additionally, the assumption is that domestic Korean audiences understand the cultural significance of the musical genres when, in reality, most Koreans have very little understanding of traditional Korean music. The imagery promoted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism—self-orientalizing and essentializing as it is—has become internalized and absorbed into the very rhetoric defining traditional music. In 2003, five years before my summer trip to Seoul, the ways people described and defined traditional music were remarkably different. At that time, people drew a sharp line between “traditional” and “contemporary” music. Yet, as exemplified in the definition printed on the program for MISO, tradition has become a more fluid category, part of the present as much as the past. In my discussions of traditional music with music scholars and performers in Korea in 2008, this new perception of tradition had come to permeate both their own ideas of and contributions to traditional music.
The Shifting Definition of “Tradition” in Korean Music

In South Korea today, we are witnessing a transformation in the ways by which traditional and contemporary performing arts are defined. In the process, the very meaning of “Korean” music has come to incorporate elements of contemporary lifestyles that, until recently, had no place within Korean society. Collaborations between B-boys and zither ensembles both pull B-boy culture into the overarching scheme of “Korea” while also making a new place, and function, for music once considered to be static. To make room for these changes, the very definition of tradition has changed.

New definitions of tradition may reflect changing cultural attitudes regarding tradition, yet performing on the global stage heavily emphasizes image-making that draws on officially recognized representations of tangible and intangible Korean culture. Despite the fluid definitions of tradition and the juxtapositioning of music of diverse genres and origins, the genres that dominate the performances, such as those by Yen and MISO, are still the same genres that the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism promotes in similar performances throughout Seoul; its use of popular themes from p’ansori, samul nori, and sinawi is standard. The aspect that makes MISO stand out is the brash application of a standard dramatic storyline from popular Korean dramas onto the performance. And MISO, like other contemporary forms of music promoted by the ministry, draws heavily on the youthful energy embodied by hallyu. The result is smoke-and-mirrors conundrum, one for which the effect is potentially damaging to the way that traditional music will be developed and performed in the future. Once-disparate forms of new traditional music and conservative genres are sharing a space in the youth-driven market. With the education and reintegration of the music, it is hoped Koreans will internalize the music of their heritage as a mode of cultural production relevant to and shifting with cultural transformations. When the focus turns outward, as in the image-making function of music performance within the tourist industry, the aim of the performance shifts to highlighting the physical and emotional manifestations of Korean identity that have proven to be popular and appealing across cultural borders for both domestic and international audiences.

Organizers of cultural programs and events package the forms that they anticipate might be more appealing to international audiences; yet the question remains as to whether the packaged commodity has much to do with most Koreans’ sense of cultural or national identity. In Nelson Graburn’s (2001) discussion of heritage in the U.S.S.R., for example, the physical and much-lauded symbols of culture (peasant costumes, dances, architecture) “were never as valued as the inner, spiritual (ethnic and national) heritage . . . which was inside the person, could not be taken away, and was worth fighting for” (80). Therefore, one could argue that, while tangible
and intangible cultural objects are endorsed by the government and promoted in visual imagery as official representations of Korean values and aesthetics, the invisible values such as \( \text{jông 정} \) (human connection) that exist are more significant than commodified symbols. These invisible symbols could be characterized as something internalized and “worth fighting for,” while the popularized image of “tradition” becomes the empty commodity Adorno (1938) feared.

In a Marxian phantasmagoric twist, the images and fantasies of traditional Korean culture, constructed with the help of popular trends and touristic expectations, become fetish objects valued for their exchange value. The categorizations are based on the classifications designed by the Korean government, yet the images build on what has proven marketable. As witnessed in the performance of MISO, theatrical and extra-musical elements remain at the forefront of the performance to ensure an entertaining experience for the audience. The principal purpose of the performance, therefore, is to excite, not to educate. While “hotchpotch” performances that collapse genre boundaries and make little effort to educate audiences on the meanings behind traditional music may frustrate some, the remanufacturing of images for profit by the tourist industry could be interpreted as projected culture rather than internalized culture. In other words, these types of performances may say more about the tourists or non-specialists themselves, or at least about assumptions regarding their tastes, than about Korean cultural heritage and identity.

Notes

1Adorno’s discussions of high and low art are not limited to the visual. His writings on music also reveal his critical approach to popular works versus their classical cousins.

2Contemporary manifestations of traditional Korean music have been known by many labels, some clearly distinguishable, some not. The terms \( \text{sin kugak 신국악} \) (new national music), \( \text{ch’angjak kugak 창작국악} \) (created national music), and \( \text{hyŏndaeg kugak 현대국악} \) (modern national music) are used when referring to music primarily employing traditional Korean instruments and musical idioms in a “revision” of the tradition. The appropriation of these particular terms appears to depend on the preference of the user and not on clearly distinguishable sonic factors. Yet, in conversations with musicians and composers, some have noted distinctions between the application of the term and sound of the music.

3The cultural properties system has been widely criticized as a system through which the “museumification” of Korean culture takes place. Some scholars have determined that the system changed the structure of music performance and education pedagogy. Instead of the student learning a foundation and embellishing the tradition with his or her own style (a sign of good musicianship), the student became an apprentice who studied a master’s style and then replicated the master’s style as part of the master’s legacy. Other identified problems include favoritism (certain artists singled out over others not according to their skills but to personal connections) and censorship, such as
with the subjective singling out of certain characteristics of an art form and discarding of others (Howard 1989; Maliangkay 2004; Yang 1994).

3 The full name of the group is Kinetic Gugak [Kugak] Group “Yen,” with “Yen” standing for ye-in 예인 (artist). Thus, the group is literally named “artists on the move.”

4 In my research on ch’angjak (created) kugak, many composers and musicians I interviewed detailed extra-musical, abstract concepts as essential to an authentic Korean music. Intangible cultural concepts such as jong (interpersonal connection) and han (deep sorrow or grief) were consistently included in discussions of “real” Korean music aesthetics.

References


No “Korean Wave” Here: Western Classical Music and the Changing Value System in South Korea

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Because of the Korean Wave, Korean popular musicians have gained a powerful presence in South Korea, while classical musicians have become increasingly marginalized. This change is surprising because a considerable amount of educational capital has been invested in the systematic grooming of classical musicians—and popular musicians have historically been treated with disrespect and even contempt. The impact of the Korean Wave and the shifting social status of musicians indicate that a fundamental change may be taking place in the South Korean value system. Based on personal experiences of musicians and the history of the presence of Western classical music in Korea, this article demonstrates that this change of attitude toward musicians’ social status may metaphorically serve as a wedge driven into a crack created by the shift of the old and new cultural and social tectonic plates of South Korea.

Changing Social Status of Musicians

The Korean Wave refers to the surge in popularity of South Korean popular culture around the world since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Because of the Korean Wave, the status of Korean popular musicians has been elevated significantly, while classical musicians have become increasingly marginalized. This article examines the impact of the Korean Wave and the shifting social status of musicians in South Korea.

Musical activities in South Korea can be roughly divided into three overlapping spheres: classical music in the Western tradition that deals with the performance of works composed primarily by Western composers (e.g., Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Schoenberg); domestically produced popular music that is represented by various genres (e.g., ppongtchak 봄짝, palladu 발라드, sinminyo 신민요); and traditional Korean music.¹ The major forces of the Korean Wave came from popular cultural fronts, most notably television dramas, movies, and popular music. But when it comes to increasing awareness and popularity of non-popular musical spheres, the Korean Wave was
not so successful. Indeed, the contrast between the popularity of music produced by Korean “popular” musicians and that by “classical” musicians—often referred to as “art” musicians—both inside and outside Korea is quite striking. This disparity is even more startling when placed in the perspective of the different treatments these two groups of musicians have garnered in the past.

When I was doing fieldwork on Korean popular music in the early and mid-1990s, the term “Korean Wave” did not yet exist; it was coined later by Beijing journalists (Faoila 2006). The major focus of my inquiry at the time was a Korean popular-music genre called t’onggit’a 통기타, which swept the nation in the 1970s and early 1980s. I was able to arrange interviews with many famous t’onggit’a singers and even once waited with Song Ch’ang-sik 송창식 (b. 1947) in the green room at a music hall while he was preparing for an appearance in a nationally broadcast concert. The name of this concert was Yöllin ümakhoe 열린음악회 (Open concert). It was “open” because it featured musicians from all three spheres, quite a departure from previous practice. One of the most memorable statements Song Ch’ang-sik made to me that day was that, in the past, hardly any venue had existed that featured both classical musicians and popular musicians on the same stage. Even if they happened to have appeared at a same venue (still an extremely rare occasion), classical musicians had typically shunned popular musicians and not even acknowledged their presence. But, Song Ch’ang-sik stated, now such musicians were not only sharing the same stage but also exchanging pleasantries.

If one is familiar with Korean popular culture of the 1970s, Song Ch’ang-sik needs no introduction, because, as one of the biggest stars of the South Korean pop scene in the 1970s and early 1980s, he was—and still is—a household name in South Korea. But, despite his fame and celebrity, he was still considered a cultural lowborn because of his affiliation with the popular music industry. In fact, another famous pop singer of the time, Cho Yong-nam 조영남, acknowledged in his memoir (1993) that, while he officially belonged to the high-class (고급) world as a classical voice student at Seoul National University, he actually “bummed around” (해갈대고 다니다) in the low-class (저급) world of popular music (75). He explained that his decision to appear on a television program as a popular musician was one of the toughest decisions he had to make in his entire life—because it could have led to his expulsion from university (154).² When I interviewed Song Ch’ang-sik in 1992, he was compelled to point out to me that he felt the status of Korean popular music and its practitioners had significantly improved in recent years.

As Bob Dylan once sang, “The times they are a-changin’”; this sentiment is certainly true in South Korea, where the losers from the past are now the winners. These days, the power of popular entertainers is evident
in not only the Korean cultural sphere but also the social, economic, and political spheres. If Korean pop musicians were already grateful for the courteous treatment they received from classical musicians in the mid-1990s, now the table has completely been turned: It is not just classical musicians but Korean politicians, capitalists, and just about everybody else in Korea who would be grateful for a nod of acknowledgment from the very powerful popular entertainers.

While Korean popular musicians are now enjoying an unprecedented level of recognition and limelight due to the Korean Wave, and although the spill-over effect of the Korean Wave has even attracted non-Koreans to take notice of Korean food and the Korean language, classical musicians in Korea have not been able to ride the wave at all. If one considers the fact that quite a significant amount of educational capital has been invested—and a massive educational infrastructure has been constructed—to train and groom classical musicians systematically, while popular musicians have historically been treated with disrespect and, sometimes, contempt, this change of fortune seems quite perplexing. After all, classical music, not Korean popular music, had been regarded as the culturally superior and therefore desirable form of cultural pursuit since its formal introduction to the country in the nineteenth century.

A Brief History of Classical Music in Korea

According to commonly accepted accounts, Western music was first introduced to Korea in 1885. In that year, two of the most influential Protestant missionaries, Horace G. Underwood (1859–1916) and Henry G. Appenzeller (1858–1902), arrived at Jemulpo Harbor. In 1886, they established Kyŏngsin 경신 School and Paechae 배재 School, respectively, where Western hymns were taught. Soon, the Northern Presbyterian Church, the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, the Southern Presbyterian Mission, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission, the Southern Methodist Episcopal Mission, and the Salvation Army all established schools in various parts of the country. These schools—about 40 were established by various churches between 1885 and 1909, with 759 schools established by 1919—became the bedrock of modern Korean education as well as the breeding and nurturing ground for classical music in Korea (Choi 1997, 4, 74–103; Yi Yu-sŏn 1985, 21–28).

Although activities of other musical spheres, such as that of traditional Korean music or popular music, were not regarded as desirable cultural pursuits for reasons that I will not delve into in this article, classical music was regarded as desirable because it became associated with cultural sophistication and prestige due to its Western origin and its affiliation with formal educational institutions from the beginning of its presence in Korea.
The first school exclusively for Western music opened its doors in 1945 as Kyŏngsŏng Music School (경성음악전문학교); this school became the College of Music within Seoul National University a year later. Since then, the number of higher-educational institutions that house schools of music or music departments has continued to rise. In 1975, 33 universities and colleges had music schools (Yi Yu-sŏn 1985, 289–94). By 1993, 70 colleges and universities produced approximately 4,000 graduates in classical music. By the end of the twentieth century, more than 90 four-year universities and colleges offered degree programs in classical music performance in South Korea (Kim, Kwŏn, and Yi 1993, 221).

Recognizing the connection between classical music and a potential for achieving a higher social status, Koreans started sending their children to music lessons in droves, and music training is now a ubiquitous part of the present-day South Korean cultural landscape. Private music academies are fixtures in every neighborhood in South Korea, and, according to Pak ŭn-cha, the number of licensed and unlicensed private piano academies reached about 100,000 by the middle of the 1980s (1993, 8). Until fairly recently, the music curricula for K–12 students were based on classical music, and almost all first- and second-grade students take some sort of lessons on a Western musical instrument in order to boost their school grades.

This emphasis on classical music education for young children has had a profound impact on the proliferation of music schools in higher education. Each year, thousands of music majors from colleges and universities graduate in South Korea. Statistics supplied by the Titimdol Publishing Company indicate that 25,000 students applied to four-year institutions of higher education to study music in 1997 (Titimdol 1997). Yang Chi-yŏng (1998, 37) stated that, as of 1997, 93.1 percent of full-time music professorships at universities and colleges were occupied by musicians specializing in classical music, compared to a meager 6.9 percent in traditional Korean music. Not surprisingly, in the same year, 90.2 percent of the incoming students at universities and colleges were admitted to study classical music, but only 9.8 percent were admitted for traditional music, and no significant number in popular music.

Many South Korean students aspire to continue their training in classical music at foreign institutions. Korean nationals are heavily represented at many prestigious music conservatories in the United States and Europe. Via phone, I was told by the staff of the Manhattan School of Music that, as of 1998, 20 percent of the students in the college division of the school were Korean. Yi Sŏng-man (1999, 140) stated that two-fifths of the preparatory division and one out of every six students at the undergraduate and graduate schools of the Juilliard School of Music were Korean.

Koreans' zeal to study classical music has had an impact on the integrity of music professionals outside Korea. Music critic Yi Nam-chun (1993)
claimed that Koreans had “corrupted” some faculty members of foreign institutions. To get on the “good side” of teachers, South Korean students and parents “spoiled” their teachers by paying enormous amounts of money for lesson fees at the drop of a hat, “bribing” them with costly presents, or treating them as if these teachers were members of royal families during their visits to South Korea. Although Confucianism indeed taught Koreans to be respectful of their teachers, it is beyond one’s obligation to pay the entire expense of a teacher’s stay in Korea or to recruit students to take expensive lessons during a teacher’s visit to Korea. But some parents have happily done so to curry favor for the sake of their children.

Also according to Yi Nam-chun (1993), many so-called international competitions sprung up in Italy like mushrooms after a rainfall primarily for Korean and Japanese contestants, because Koreans and Japanese were known to value musicians with prizes from competitions with the word “international” in their name. Yu Yun-jong at the Dong-a Daily News (Tong-a Ilbo) reported in 1999 that one voice competition in Italy decided to reject all Korean and Japanese contestants based on evidence that singers from these two countries had won a series of competitions and then returned to their home countries to charge extraordinarily inflated lesson fees with their newly acquired credentials—but without furthering their performance careers to fulfill the purpose of these competitions.

What these sad sagas indicate is that Koreans are willing to expend an enormous amount of money on classical music education and training. But such high enthusiasm has produced tangible results. It is now a routine to see Koreans winning international music competitions, and some of them—Kyunghwa Chung (violinist, b. 1945), Young-uck Kim (violinist, b. 1947), Myung-hun Chung (pianist and conductor, b. 1953), Sumi Jo (opera singer, b. 1962), and Han-na Chang (cellist, b. 1982), to name a few—have become international stars.

In fact, classical music has become integrated into the lives of Koreans to such an extent that in the everyday Korean language, ᵁ막 음악 (music) is equated to classical music. For example, if Korean children learn to play piano or violin, it is colloquially called learning ᵁ막, and lessons take place at “music academies” (⁶막⁹⁴ 학원). But if they are learning to play Korean traditional instruments, such as the kayaküm 가야금 (zither) or tanso 단소 (bamboo flute), they are said to be studying traditional Korean music, ᴺが増え국악, at traditional Korean music academies, ᴵが増え학원. And as for Korean popular music, Koreans use genre specifications (e.g., rock, rap) to identify them, reserving the term ᵁ막 exclusively for the domain of (Western) classical music.
Superficial Integration of Classical Music in Korea

Despite the massive investment and significant social prestige, in comparison to Korean popular music, classical music is integrated into the everyday lives of Koreans in a remarkably superficial manner. A closer examination reveals that there is almost no true listening audience for classical music in South Korea who would pay to go to musical events for pure listening pleasure and artistic experience. Most recitals given by domestic classical musicians are occasions for performers to spend, not earn, money, in hopes that their recital endeavors eventually lead to fulltime positions at educational institutions. Indeed, classical musicians cannot make livings as performers in South Korea unless they rely on their salaries from positions at various educational institutions. And, as the supply-and-demand rule dictates, the competition to secure the limited number of fulltime positions at South Korean universities is brutally fierce.

If performers cannot make adequate money by giving performances, can they bring in extra income through the sale of compact discs? Unfortunately, CD sales of domestic classical musicians are almost nonexistent in South Korea. Unless one goes to a music superstore in a metropolis, finding a sizable collection of classic music CDs in South Korea is a tough task. Even if a CD store displays an extensive collection of classical music, those CDs would almost entirely be by famous international stars, not by domestic musicians. During a recent trip to Korea, I learned that one of the most respected pianists in South Korea had recently produced a CD. I visited several well-stocked CD stores in Seoul in an effort to purchase the CD. But no store was carrying it. In the end, I had to contact the performer to get a copy, and he lamented the dismal market condition for domestic performers. In fact, production of a CD in Korea is a sure way for a musician to spend, not earn, more money. According to one store owner, such CDs are “more for one’s vanity and ego.” Although musical venues featuring international stars do draw huge crowds, it remains questionable if they constitute a serious listening audience. It almost seems that Koreans go to these concerts featuring international mega-stars in an effort to demonstrate their cultural sophistication to others as well as to themselves.

If classical music exists as an aesthetic pursuit and pleasure that people truly enjoy, they would actually pay to go to recitals and buy CDs by domestic performers and composers, which is the case for products created and offered by Korean popular musicians. But in South Korea, the primary purpose of classical music seems to be not as an art form but as the social and cultural trappings and rituals that comes with that art form. Therefore, no independent performers, not even the first-rate ones, can make livings based on performance alone within South Korea, and classical musicians’ careers must primarily be linked to educational institutions.
Status as a Value: An Effect of Confucianism

Although evidence suggests that classical music does not seem to have been thoroughly internalized in South Korea, it nevertheless has been considered culturally superior to popular music, and that was why I believe a concerted effort has been made to embrace classical music since its introduction to the country. Indeed, I believe the fundamental structural force that assured the widespread acceptance of classical music in South Korea—and simultaneously marginalized the position of Korean popular music in the cultural topography of the past—was the Confucian ideology that shaped traditional Korea.

Confucianism was introduced to Korea some two thousand years ago: Chinese commanders who dominated the northern part of Korea during the first three centuries C.E. are thought to have introduced a rudimentary knowledge of Confucian tenets. In 372, a Confucian academy was established during the Koguryŏ 高句麗 dynasty (37 B.C.E.–668 C.E.), and Confucianism was further disseminated into the southern half of the peninsula with the rise of the Paekche 百濟 (18 B.C.E.–660 C.E.) and Silla 新羅 (57 B.C.E.–935 C.E.) dynasties. In 682, a Confucian academy was built in Kyŏngju, the capital of Silla, and an imitation of the Tang 唐 China (618–907) examination system was instituted in 788 during the Unified Silla period (668–935), with the Confucian classics as its core (Deuchler 1992, 14). The Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty (1392–1910) adopted Confucianism as the national ideology on which to build an ideal nation, and it subsequently became the ruling governing principle for every aspect of Korean life for several centuries (Deuchler 1992, 24–27).

The intellectual, aristocratic, academic, and governing ideology of the ruling class of the Chosŏn dynasty was Neo-Confucianism, and the “influence of Confucianism on Korea’s traditional culture was, needless to say, both profound and pervasive” (Kihl 1994, 730). Indeed, the impact of Confucianism still reverberates to this day. For example, Seoul has the most imposing Confucian shrine outside China where one of the major genres of Korean traditional music—Confucian ritual music—is performed during Confucian ceremonies. The study of Confucianism is still a vibrant academic pursuit, and one of the missions of Sŏnggyun’gwan University in Seoul (established in 1398) is the preservation and promotion of Confucianism. Out of three paper notes in South Korea, two of them—1,000 won and 500 won—feature Korean Confucian scholars, Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501–70) and Yi I 李珥 (1536–84), respectively. The permeation of Confucianism in Korea does not end at a symbolic level. The Confucian ethical and behavioral code profoundly affects every aspect of Koreans’ lives, and some consider Korea as the country most steeped in Confucianism.
Traditional Korean society was divided into three strata: an aristocracy (yangban 兩班); commoners (yangin 良人 or sangmin 常民); and lowborn (ch‘onmin 賤民), such as slaves, butchers, leather workers, entertainers (including most professional folk musicians), and shamans. In 958, Emperor Kwangjong 光宗 (r. 949–75) of the Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (918–1392) introduced the civil-service examination system of China in order to break the power of the original elite, and this system became the main vehicle to recruit officials for governmental positions (Deuchler 1992, 32). The term yangban—referring to two orders (pan 班) of civil (munban 文班) and military (muban 武班) officials—was introduced to Korea during the formative period of the Koryŏ dynasty (Deuchler 1992, 32). Only members of the hereditary elite were allowed to participate, and passing such a competitive examination that led to a governmental job—the ultimate goal for Korean elite—meant added prestige and status. Through this examination system, the Koryŏ government gradually became organized into a rigidly hierarchical bureaucracy consisting of civil and military officials: the yangban.

Some scholars argue that social strata in traditional Korean society were never delineated legally, and there was no sure guide to determine who was eligible to be counted among the elite (Deuchler 1992, 12). Nevertheless, traditional Korean society, which recognized the yangban as an elite stratum, resembles a caste system more closely than a class system, because its membership was more or less fixed or impermeable, members were strongly endogamous, and their legitimate offspring automatically became yangban.5

When Western music was introduced to Korea, the country was experiencing turbulent political, economical, and social changes. A series of calamities—the decline of the Chosŏn dynasty; the Japanese occupation (1910–45); division of the country (1945–present); and, worst of all, the Korean War (1950–53)—led to the disintegration of both the dynastic system and the strict social stratification of the past by the middle of the twentieth century. With this disintegration, Korean society was propelled from a closed caste system to a new society based on a fluid class formation. This transition proved a great opportunity for those who wanted upward mobility. Some were said to invent new identities by fabricating genealogical records or by changing their family names. Unlike the old days, when education was only for the privileged few, modernization made education widely available throughout the country. The Korean economy began to prosper, and people could afford more leisurely lifestyles, which led to the formation of the middle class. But who belonged to this middle class? How is the middle class defined?

Denise Lett (1998) and Nancy Abelmann (1997a, 1997b) affirm that defining the South Korean “middle class” is, indeed, a slippery slope, because the demarcation lines in a class society are much murkier than those in a caste system. In this hazy and fluid area, opportunities abound for those
who seek upward mobility. One way of doing so is through what Lett terms the “pursuit of status.” To be specific, members of the middle class in modern South Korea seek the status of the yangban of former days. Lett argues that Korean society after the middle of the Chosŏn period became essentially dichotomized between the yangban and the lower classes, comprised by commoners and lowborn (16). Although the yangban made up no more than 10 percent of the total population at first (Deuchler 1992, 12), they were the center of leadership and power during the Chosŏn dynasty, and their worldview became the standard mode of operation of the society as a whole (Eckert and others 1990, 135).

Identifying a thread that connects the yangban stratum of traditional Korean society to the middle class (chungsan'ŭng 중산층) in contemporary South Korea, Lett states that:

The key to understanding South Korea’s contemporary middle class and its development is the underlying drive Koreans have to attain status and prestige. In the closing years of the Chosŏn dynasty Hulbert noted “a passionate desire” among the Korean people “to ascend a step on the social ladder,” as they tried in every way to insinuate themselves into good society. . . . I found that characteristic to be as operative as in the past. Moreover, this desire to acquire status, coupled with new opportunities to do so, has been a driving force behind the development of South Korea’s human resources in general, of its new middle class in particular, and ultimately of South Korea itself. . . . The dreams themselves are continually evolving as the middle class itself evolves. Ways of asserting status may change. But status consciousness, the cultural need for status inherited from the yangban tradition . . . remains the underlying principle behind the drive for status and the development of South Korea’s urban middle class. (1998, 41).6

Deuschler (1992, 13) identified the following five criteria as essential for yangban status in Chosŏn society: a clear line of descent, “distinguished” (meaning with a scholarly reputation) ancestors, a clear geographical area within which such status was recognized, close marriage ties with other reputable lineages, and a special way of life.7 Among them, the first four are based on elements that are beyond one’s control and thus cannot be created or fabricated. However, the fifth criterion, a “special way of life,” is more easily accessible, if one has the economic means to afford it. No longer classified as a member of a certain unchangeable stratum, Koreans have been able, in their newly industrialized and urbanized country, to seek higher status, and they have done so by imitating the trappings of the upper social stratum from the past. For example, pianos (even if never played) and complete sets of encyclopedias (even if never read) began appearing as status markers in living rooms in South Korea.

According to Lett (1998), members Korea’s contemporary urban middle class display the characteristics of an upper rather than a middle class because of their desire to seek a status equivalent to that of yangban in the
former days. Suenari Michio describes the term “yangbanization” as “a process by which the members of a kinship group of lower rank raise their social ranking by making meticulous efforts to conform to the behavior model of the upper* yangban*” (1994, 577–78). Lett, too, argues that the growth of South Korea’s middle class can be characterized as the yangbanization of Korean society in the modern context. And when status is not inherited, one way to achieve it is through acquiring elements considered to be characteristic of those with such status.

As mentioned above, classical music was always part of the formal curriculum at Westernized schools in Korea. As in the West, where the learning of classical music by serious musicians has primarily taken place in institutional settings (from the Romantic era on, at least), Koreans created a similar milieu for music training. Long before traditional music was recognized as a valuable subject of academic pursuit, classical music had already been embraced by prestigious institutions of higher learning. A degree program in music education was launched at the college division of Ewha School as early as 1910 (Min 1997). Seoul National University—regarded by most as the nation’s most prestigious educational institution in almost all fields—opened its doors to classical musicians in 1945 (but not to practitioners of traditional Korean music until the end of the 1950s). Since associations with educational institutions were considered status markers, the connection between educational settings and classical music from the beginning of its existence in Korea provided another marker of status, adding another reason for the successful dissemination of classical music in Korea. Thus this connection can be summarized in the following manner: First, a shift took place in Korean society from a rigid caste system based on heredity to a more fluid class system based on individual achievements. Second, the opportunity created by the shift allowed people to raise their social status (through a process known as yangbanization). Third, Koreans used classical music as a status marker in the yangbanization process.

Besides the association with education as a status marker, another fundamental factor that secured the perception of classical music as a status marker was its origin. As Korea finally succumbed to the military power of the West in the nineteenth century, people started to regard the dominant West as a positive and constructive force for the future. This mindset—which can be summed up as “anything old and ours is bad, and anything new and Western is good”—was also seen in other countries. Since classical music was considered a marker of the elite class in its originating countries (i.e., France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain), it was a perfect means to raise one’s status in Korea as well. After all, it not only came from the West but also came from the* upper crust* of the West. When this aspect was combined with Koreans’ zeal to be yangbanized, classical music exerted a powerful attraction (Hwang 2009, 150).
The Korean Wave & the Changing Value System in South Korea

Although Denise Lett identified Koreans’ pursuit of status as the fundamental force that shaped modern South Korean society, the era when status was perceived as the ultimate goal in society may seem to be over, especially in light of what is happening with the Korean Wave. In the olden days, individuals who pursued academic knowledge but had no ambitions to be wealthy—exemplified by the sŏnbi 선비 (yangban scholars)—were regarded as role models due to their status in society based on Confucian ideology. But the Korean Wave emphasizes the chasm between the popularity of Korean popular music and the inability of classical musicians in South Korea to penetrate Korean cultural behaviors as a truly meaningful art form even more so. Furthermore, the inability of classical musicians in South Korea to ride the Korean Wave may indicate a changing value system in contemporary South Korean society.

Although one can argue over the contribution of the Korean Wave on artistic fronts and its impact on Korean culture overall, I believe the most immediate and visible contribution of the Korean Wave is its ability to generate enormous financial gains for various partakers, including South Korea as a country. And the attraction to materialism as the ultimate goal of individuals has been palpable. According to a 2008 poll conducted by children’s magazine Koraega Kūraesso 고래가 그랬어 (That is what the whale said), Korean elementary schoolchildren consider doctors, lawyers, entertainers, and sportsmen as the most desirable occupational choices because of their earning capability (Kang 2008). This inclination marks a drastic departure from even a couple of decades ago, when being elected president of the country was the most common dream among children (Ilyo 2004).

I must admit, though, that the grip of Confucian ideology has not completely disappeared. It is visible in the sudden mushrooming, within the last few years, of schools offering degree programs in popular music in South Korea. My rough count yielded 58 schools to date (July 2009), and this figure demonstrates that Koreans still have an urge to learn within formalized educational settings, even in the case of popular music.

But all the machinery and hullabaloo that support and surround the Korean Wave and the countless young people who worship Korean Wave stars as their ultimate role models—stars such as Pae Yong-chun, Rain, Yi Young Ae and Boa, whose names are known around the world—testify that Korean society may be experiencing a shift of tectonic plates. As evinced by classical musicians’ inability to ride the wave both inside and outside Korea, Koreans may no longer be governed by Confucian ideology that regards status as the ultimate goal of a pursuit in life. Instead, they may finally and thoroughly be engulfed by the capitalism and materialism of the postmodern era. In that sense, the Korean Wave may metaphorically serve as a
wedge driven into the crack created by the shift of the old and the new cultural and social tectonic plates of South Korea.

Notes

1 In this article, “classical” music refers to Western classical music.
2 As a piano major at Seoul National University at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, I was keenly aware of the prejudices against popular music. For example, piano students were strongly discouraged from engaging in music-making that was considered “unsavory,” such as accepting gigs as lounge pianists.
3 The 759 schools established by 1919 were classified by Yi Yu-sŏn (1985, 21–28) as follows (with Korean terms and numbers in parentheses): regular schools (보통학교, 601), high regular schools (고등보통학교, 45), bible schools (성경학교, 40), special schools (전문학교, 40), and other (기타학교, 33).
4 New Encyclopædia Britannica, s.v. “Confucianism.”
5 A yangban male might have many concubines from lesser strata, but his main wife would be of yangban lineage. Concubines’ offspring were unable to take the examination for government positions.
6 The internal citation is to Hulbert (1969, 38).
7 Suenari Michio’s (1994, 588) list for the qualifications of yangban status is identical to Deuchler’s, except for the second item, which Suenari replaces with “to receive guests politely.”
8 The study of popular music is called silyong ūmakhak 실용음악학 (study of practical—or utility—music).

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Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States

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In the international spread of popular culture from Korea since the late 1990s, known popularly as the “Korean Wave,” television dramas have won the hearts of fans and paved the way for rising interest in Korean popular music throughout Pacific Asia and in Asian communities around the world. Indeed, Korean popular music has been spreading rapidly; but, as argued in this article, the reasons have relatively little to do with aesthetic and cultural values that could be identified as typically Korean. After providing a theoretical framework for understanding transnational flows and hybridity, this piece looks specifically at the Korean television drama Winter Sonata and the music, public personas, and career trajectories of BoA and Rain (비 [비]), ultimately questioning the cultural validity of the concept of the Korean Wave.

The Korean Wave: Transnational Flows & Hybridity

Regarding the international spread of Korean popular culture over the last ten years, known popularly as the “Korean Wave” (hallyu [판류 in Korean), TV dramas have dominated both popular and scholarly discourse, which view Asian “family-friendly” values as the main reason for the success of the shows. As many Korean TV dramas have won the hearts of fans in China, Taiwan, Japan, Southeast Asia, and overseas Asian communities worldwide, prominent cultural scholars like Koichi Iwabuchi and Chua Beng Huat began to analyze the penetration of Korean TV dramas into Asian markets and defined the process as newly “emerging intra-Asian popular cultural flows under globalizing forces” (Iwabuchi 2002, 16). At the same time, Korean popular music has also been spreading rapidly, on a scale scarcely imaginable only a decade ago. However, the reasons behind this new craze have very little to do with traditional Asian family values or uniquely Korean musical elements; instead, interest in Korean popular music seems to be due to its increasingly transnational and hybrid aspects. Today, the issues of transnational cultural flows and cultural mixture (that is, hybridity) are important discourse elements practically everywhere, actively discussed and debated in almost every country around the globe.
The term *transnational*, coined by writer Randolph Bourne (1886–1918) in his 1916 article “Trans-National America,” has been favored by scholars like Arjun Appadurai (1996); Linda Basch, Nina Schiller, and Cristina Blanc (1994); Ulrich Beck (2000); Ulf Hannerz (1996); Iwabuchi (2002); Michael Smith (2001); and Wolfgang Welsch (1999) over such generic or overused terms as *international* or *global*. Basch, Schiller, and Blanc define transnationalism as

the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call those processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. . . . An essential element . . . is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants’ [sic] sustain in both home and host societies. (1994, 7, emphasis added)

This definition indicates that the concept of *transnational* refers to multiple connections and interactions linking communities across the borders of nation-states.

Iwabuchi also emphasizes the mobility of the term as he argues that

*transnational* has a merit over *international* in that actors are not confined to the nation-state or to nationally institutionalized organizations; they may range from individuals to various (non)profitable, transnationally connected organizations and groups, and the conception of culture implied is not limited to a “national” framework. As Hannerz (1996, 6) argues, the term *transnational* is “more humble, and often a more adequate label for phenomena which can be of quite variable scale and distribution” than the term *global*, which sounds too all-inclusive and decontextualized. (2002, 16–17, original emphases)

Consequently, transnational cultural flows concede a “more locally contextualized manner to the interconnections and asymmetries that are promoted by the multi-directional flow” and successfully discount nationally separated boundaries both from above and below (Iwabuchi 2002, 17). This point is particularly important when we look at the ways in which expressions of Korean pop culture—TV dramas in particular—have been unevenly disseminated and differently received by diverse Asian and overseas Asian communities over the last ten years. Contemporary Korean pop culture is built on such unavoidable transnational flows, as its multi-layered and multi-directional mobility has been creating various socio-cultural contacts taking place across, beyond, and outside national and institutional boundaries.¹

With regard to hybridity, cultural scholar Marwan M. Kraidy defines the term as “the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities . . . which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries” (2005, 5). In his landmark study *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi K. Bhabha stresses the in-betweenness of national and
cultural identity by arguing that all cultural systems and statements are constructed in what he calls the “Third Space,” which enables other positions to emerge. Bhabha explains that “it is in this space that we will find those words with which we can speak of Ourselves and Others. And by exploring this hybridity, this ‘Third Space,’ we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves” (1995, 209). Bhabha also describes this space as a “stairwell”:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (1994, 5)

In other words, embracing the hybrid nature of cultures encourages us to move away from the problematic qualities of essentialism and exclusionism inherent in notions of cultural “purity” and “authenticity.” Stuart Hall suggests, in fact, that

we cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about “one experience, one identity,” without acknowledging its other side—the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, [a culture's] “uniqueness.” Cultural identity, in this . . . sense, is a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being.” It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture and power. (1990, 225)

As Hall sees it, “modern nations are all cultural hybrids” (1996, 617). In the field of music, Martin Stokes argues that “purity of musical expression is not possible . . . [because] the building blocks of every mixed style are themselves hybrids” (2004, 60). Consequently, contemporary transnational popular music certainly carries this ubiquitous hybridity. But while all music is in some sense “hybrid,” I think we can also use the term more narrowly to refer to mixture that is intentional and perceptible. In the following sections, I examine the transnational and hybrid aspects of the Korean Wave as it has been flowing in multi-layered directions and constantly re-packaged for different consumers in different regional communities, particularly Asian and Asian American communities around the world.
The Korean Wave: Television Dramas

Cultural Proximity & Family Values

What, then, do Asians and Asian Americans (and other Americans who have been exposed to Korean pop culture) find so attractive about the Korean Wave? Many fans of Korean TV dramas talk about the physical attractiveness of the Korean actors and actresses and their modern and glamorous fashion, make-up, and hairstyles. They also point to the lavish productions, including their skillful editing, beautiful cinematography, good acting, captivating storylines, and accessibility. Thanks to recent IT and digital-media developments, versions of these dramas are available for little or no cost with various subtitle options, including English, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Turkish, Spanish, and several Chinese dialects.

Before the Korean Wave, Japanese pop culture, including TV dramas, had been popular in some parts of Asia. Scholars in the field of Japanese popular culture studies—Hirochi Aoyagi (2000), Timothy Craig (2000), Iwabuchi (2002), and Saya Shiraishi (2000)—have pointed that the popularity of Japanese pop culture in Asia was largely driven by the perception of “cultural proximity,” as Japan and other Asian societies share certain cultural values; and, indeed, Asian viewers often referred to this cultural affinity as a reason for their enthusiasm for Japanese TV dramas. However, undying anti-Japanese sentiment due to the colonial experience among the former Japanese colonies and the overtly sexual and violent content of some dramas have created a simultaneous degree of resistance (and, occasionally, official banning). Thus, when Korean TV dramas—which provide a similar cultural proximity but without the colonial legacy and without the offensive content—were introduced to Asian viewers in the late 1990s, the flow was smoother than for their Japanese counterparts. Jin Yaxi, a 25-year-old graduate student at Beijing University, said in 2006: “We like American culture, but we can’t accept it directly. And there is no obstacle to our accepting South Korean culture, unlike Japanese culture. Because of the history between China and Japan, if a young person here likes Japanese culture, the parents will get very angry” (quoted in Onishi 2006). Emma in Hong Kong wrote:

Those Korean dramas I watched . . . [are] very different from Japanese dramas; Japanese dramas always have sexual scenes! And then you discover, there has been no such restrained love [in TV dramas] for a long time, and [you finally] find it in Korean dramas! That is, just a kind of eye contact, just a little touch, [one] still gets very excited. . . . [I’m] so surprised to find an ethnic group [that is, Koreans] who possesses such qualities! (quoted in Lin and Tong 2008, 103)

Since the late 1990s, when the first commercial television station (SBS, Seoul Broadcasting System) began broadcasting both cable and regional television stations, Korean television broadcasters have faced intense com-
petition for audience attention. Among the various kinds of programs, TV dramas have always been very popular. In any given week, Korea’s three main stations air more than thirty TV dramas, and the stations and news media closely monitor popularity ratings. These competitive circumstances have resulted in high-quality productions of TV dramas and have attracted attention of neighbor countries, China in particular.

In 1997, China’s national station (CCTV, China Central Television) aired the Korean TV drama *What on Earth Is Love?* (also known as *What Is Love All About?*), which became a huge hit and was re-broadcast by several other Chinese networks (Shim 2008, 25; Yu 2005, 52). This 55-episode-long comic family drama takes a Confucian approach to the issues of patriarchy and cultural clashes by reflecting conflicts between older and younger generations. The emphasis on “family values” had immediate resonance with Chinese audiences (Han 2007, 154–56). Surprised by the fast-growing fandom for Korean popular culture, Chinese popular media began to use the term *hanliu* (Korean Wave). Soon, numerous Korean TV dramas were enjoying popularity throughout China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan—and among overseas Asian communities worldwide, including in the United States.

The major Asian and Asian American communities in California, New York, Chicago, and the Washington, DC, areas also became important disseminators of Korean pop culture. In May 2004, a *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist noted that the Korean Wave was not yet a “wave” in the United States, but its ripples had reached these shores: “U.S. audiences for Korean television drama are small, but vocal and devoted. Stations in Chicago, Philadelphia, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Seattle, Washington and New York offer several shows daily. These cities have sizable Korean-American populations, but Korean-Americans are not the sole audience” (D’Alessio 2004). The vice president of WOCH-TV in Chicago, Kwang Dong Jo, explained:

We knew that most viewers of the dramas were first-generation Korean-Americans, but we worried about the second generation, who were losing the language. . . . We started subtitling to reach those younger people, and we asked viewers for feedback to see if they liked the subtitles. . . . We got nearly 500 e-mails from English-speaking Americans. . . . We never expected non-Koreans to write, and it was a shock to us. I know these dramas are becoming popular even in Latin America—but in the U.S.? We are still surprised. (quoted in D’Alessio 2004)

**Winter Sonata & the Yon-sama Syndrome**

The Korean drama *Winter Sonata* (겨울연가 *Kyōul yōn’ga*, literally “Winter song”) has become emblematic of the Korean Wave. Though Korean dramas had begun to make a strong impact in much of Asia as early as the late 1990s, it was not until the tear-jerker *Winter Sonata* (冬のソナタ *Fuyu no sonata* in Japanese) that the Korean Wave hit the shores of Japan. With
its twenty hour-long episodes broadcast—in full—four times between 2003 and 2004 by NHK, Japan’s national public broadcasting company, this drama was nothing short of a sensation for Japanese audiences. In fact, it received a spectacular 20.6 percent program rating (Ham and Hŏ 2005, 13). *Winter Sonata* is about four young, attractive people’s love and career struggles and family tensions.² Besides the good acting and well-written episodes, Korea’s picturesque countryside and luxurious cosmopolitan city-life shown in the drama wowed Japanese fans.

Given the colonial history between Japan and Korea and some lingering postcolonial conflicts, their national images of each other have been antagonistic: Korea is often seen by Japan as poor and backward, and Japan is seen by Korea as barbarous and greedy. Japanese fans, who are predominantly middle-age women, very often were brought up with prejudice toward Korea and acknowledge that they were very surprised by the beauty of the nation and the people of Korea. One Japanese female fan said, “I am embarrassed to say this, but I didn’t really know about Korea. I just had a bad image of Korea because of their dangerous political situations. But when I was watching the drama, I was really shocked to learn that Koreans are very handsome and beautiful, and the places in the drama looked nice too” (“Fuyu no Sonata” 2004). This kind of Japanese attitude of racial superiority toward Korea is not unusual; it is, in fact, well known by Koreans. Thus, when the main actor in *Winter Sonata*, Pae Yong-chun (Bae Yong-jun) 배용준 (b. 1972), became a superstar in Japan, it surprised not only Japanese but Koreans as well.

This actor, nicknamed “Yon-sama” ヨン様 (Honorable Yon) in Japan, gave rise to the so-called Yon-sama syndrome, the huge fandom culture built around his persona. Numerous commercial items related to *Winter Sonata* and Yon-sama’s character have been produced in Japan, and Gosireh, Yon-sama’s upscale Korean restaurant that opened in 2006 in Tokyo, has been very popular among middle-aged Japanese women. Even after five years, Yon-sama syndrome is still present in Japan, and the drama has been repackaged over and over, including a musical version and an upcoming animated version. All of these developments were unimaginable a decade ago.

The latest piece of the Yon-sama syndrome I have encountered came not from Japan but from Los Angeles. In a February 2009 *Los Angeles Times* article, Teresa Watanabe reported on the tensions that grew in Little Tokyo Towers five years ago when Koreans started moving into the predominately Japanese senior housing facility. Complaints from the Japanese residents soon reached the ears of Hongsun Kim and others at the Los Angeles Service Center. Watanabe (2009) described the response as follows: The social service center
sponsored a series of four films, two Japanese and two Korean, to share cultures and bring residents together. The idea was sparked when social workers visited a Japanese resident who often complained about Koreans—only to see a poster of Korean drama star Bae Yong Jun [Yon-sama] in her apartment. The venture was considered a success, drawing 80 seniors who wrote in surveys afterward that the films opened their eyes to new aspects of each other’s cultures.

Since then, residents started a “Good Neighbors” group to help smooth over conflicts and have begun various cultural events together, including karaoke nights, basic language study, and joint participation in traditional holiday events. Last summer, they put together a “harmony concert,” featuring traditional Japanese and Korean dance and music; an Asian American jazz group; and three emcees speaking Japanese, Korean, and English. This concert “drew a full house of more than 150 people, half Korean and half Japanese. And more importantly, the complaints about each other have markedly dropped” (Watanabe 2009). This sharing-of-cultures solution might seem too rosy. Only time will tell whether ongoing political tensions between Koreans and Japanese—such as the territorial dispute over tiny Takeshima (Tokto) Island in the Sea of Japan (East Sea)—permit similar “harmony concerts” to occur in the future.

But the evidence is clear that because Korean TV dramas touch the right chord of Asian sentiments, such as family values and respect for elders, they were welcomed by many Asian viewers who share similar cultural values. But how can one explain the expansion in popularity of Korean TV dramas to America, Europe, and Africa? Besides the good-looking actors and lavish production, new cultural products and new patterns of consumption seem to be playing an important role as well. Popular cultural products and cultural consumption in the twenty-first century have become increasingly transnational and hybrid, as national, cultural, and ethnic boundaries around the globe become less clearly defined. Also, consumers of popular cultural—members of the so-called digital generation—are familiar with transnational and hybrid cultural products through the digital world. One fan in Los Angeles claims in the “About Me” posting to her Web log:

My fascination with all things Korean basically started when I watched [the movie] My Sassy Girl and it made me cry, which no movie had done for a number of years. Then I moved on to other Korean movies, KBBQ [Korean barbecue] and other Korean dishes, decided to pick up the alphabet [hangul], and am now addicted to kdramas [Korean TV dramas]. . . . I’m not Korean, but I try not to let that stop me. (“I Love Koreatown” 2009)

Fans of Korean TV dramas in different regional communities have flowed with the Korean Wave for various reasons and in different ways. While some consumers simply enjoy watching the “family-friendly” stories as viewers, some consumers (Yon-sama fans in particular) became active fans, adding another dimension to the hybrid aspects of the Korean Wave.
Also, fans in Asian communities in the United States have clearly indicated the unpredictable transnational aspects of such cultural flows.

The Korean Wave: Popular Music

Hybridization of Sound
In the early 1990s, under the more liberalized cultural policy and booming economy of South Korea’s recently empowered civilian government, the Korean pop-music industry was booming, and Korean pop music continued to incorporate diverse stylistic input from abroad. With the arrival of American hip-hop culture and rap music, which was first adopted by the young-boy band Seo Taiji and Boys, Korean pop music became youth oriented. A number of teenage boy and girl bands targeting audiences in their teens and early 20s have dominated the Korean pop-music world ever since, and boys bands such as H.O.T. (which stands for “High Five Of Teenagers”) became popular outside Korea in the late 1990s, at the start of the Korean Wave (Howard 2006). BoA and Rain have been the two most outstanding Korean Wave pop stars since the early 2000s.

BoA
In early 2001, Korea’s S.M. Entertainment company was promoting a teenage-girl singer named BoA, whose launch in Korea had been mediocre, but who, they thought, might be successful in Japan. Thanks to formal collaborative agreements with some of the most powerful Japanese media companies (such as AVEX Group), BoA ultimately became one of the most successful pop stars in Japan (“Cool Korea” 2004). Often celebrated as the Korean Wave pop star, BoA’s successful music career in Japan has little relation to her “Koreanness.” She learned to sing in Japanese, to speak it fluently for public appearances, and to present herself publicly as a Japanese pop star. This process of repackaging and de-Koreanizing (or Japanizing) was the key to her success in Japan and became the rule for becoming successful in Japan. Furthermore, BoA’s dance moves and fashion styles were often taken from American pop stars like Britney Spears; and most of her song titles, and some of her lyrics, are in English. In BoA’s case, the language, musical styles, dance movements, and visual images packaged for her presentation are not Korean but either Japanese or American. BoA is thus an embodiment of the crossover, transnational, and hybrid aspects of twenty-first-century popular cultural production and consumption (see Jung 2009).

After succeeding in Japan and in Asia as a contemporary pop star, and after intensive training in English, BoA made her American debut in October 2008. Her debut was a huge entertainment-news item in both Korea and Japan. For her debut song, “Eat You Up,” two versions of the music video
were produced, one by a Korean producer, the other by an American ("Poa Miguk" 2008). In the Korean version, BoA wears a casual jacket and baggy pants and dances on the street with a group of young American boys. In the American version, BoA wears a sexy leather dress, red lipstick, and high-heels and performs suggestive scenes with an American man. Many of her devoted Asian fans criticized the American version for not representing her correctly, saying the overtly Americanized “sexy” images are not suitable for her petite Asian body and girly persona. As of July 2009, it is still too early to judge whether BoA will be successful in the American pop music market. Indeed, it might be difficult for her to satisfy American fans, whose tastes have been shaped by the overtly sexy Beyoncé, J-Lo, Jessica Simpson, and Britney Spears—and whose images of Asian female sexuality have been shaped by stereotypical media representations.

Rain (Bi)

Twenty-seven-year-old male singer, dancer, model, and actor Rain (Bi 비 in Korean) debuted in 2002 in Korea as a singer and began to star in TV dramas. Among them, the 2004 hit TV drama P’ul Hausu 풀하우스 (Full house), in which he played a famous actor who fell in love with an ordinary woman, became one of the most successful Korean TV dramas across Asia and beyond (Russell 2008). Although his stage performances are filled with sexy dance movements that showcase his well-built body, his character in P’ul Hausu featured a little boy–like smile, cute and cheerful attitude, sensitive emotion, and warm heart. Rain has a rather typical “Asian” face with slender eyes. He confessed that he felt his face was not so handsome and had been an obstacle during his earlier career. He was even told to have plastic surgery to make his eyes bigger (Discovery Channel 2009). As traditional Korean values have rapidly become replaced by Western values, which are seen as more in step with the globalized “modern world,” Western qualities of physical beauty and body type have also become ideal physical features in the Korean imagination, a predilection for hybrid physical appearances, visually projecting the hybrid sounds of the music. In fact, many Korean women and some men undergo plastic surgery to lift their eyelids, raise their noses, plump out their lips, lower their cheekbones, enlarge their breasts, and the like. Plastic surgery is not helpful when it comes to changing one’s height, especially the length of one’s legs. To that effect, many Koreans try alternative medicine or specially designed exercise regimens; or they simply wear high heels or shoes with high insoles. To his good fortune, Rain stands about 6 feet tall and has what in current parlance would be called six-pack abs.

Despite some harsh criticism on his U.S. debut in 2006—for example, he was frequently referred to as a copycat of Justin Timberlake (Sontag 2006)—Rain’s popularity in the United States has been growing (Russell
2008). For his female fans worldwide, Rain offers a kind of “perfect” fantasy guy who is the best of all worlds: simultaneously Asian but modern and Western but not too foreign. In other words, the well-packaged hybridity of his physical and musical presentation is what is effective. Although his music career in the United States has not been as magnificent as his career in Asia, his acting career in America has taken a significant step. He played a supporting role in *Speed Racer*, released in May 2008, and has won the leading role in the martial-arts movie *Ninja Assassin* (scheduled to be released in November 2009). But here, Rain’s roles in both movies are not as a Korean, but as a Japanese! Such is the transnational and hybrid nature of contemporary global popular culture that underlies the Korean Wave.

**Riding the Korean Wave into the Future**

What is the Korean Wave, really? The Korean Wave may not be as “Korean” or as “authentically Korean” as people might imagine. As discussed in this article, most of its characteristics are transnational and hybrid; and these characteristics involve combinations of local and foreign elements at multiple levels. The Korean Wave does not have a uniform style or a fixed directional flow; it is not simply a phenomenon that originates from Korea and spreads to the world. It is multi-layered and multi-directional. Thanks to digital technological developments and daily exposure to global phenomena, consumers of twenty-first-century pop culture are ready to digest, simultaneously, a wide array of cultural content and material.

Some say the Korean Wave is over, and others say there never was a Korean Wave, as the exports of Korean TV dramas and the popularity of some Korean pop music stars have decreased among those who were previously the most enthusiastic supporters. Still, the Korean Wave has been in the spotlight of global pop culture for the past ten years, and it helped reveal new forms and patterns of cultural production and consumption. However complicated the Korean Wave is to unravel, the transnational flows of hybrid, yet Korean-made, popular culture in the global world of the twenty-first century are only likely to intensify in the future. We should therefore not be surprised to find additional complications and shifts in the Korean Wave that has swept across Asia and the rest of the world.

**Notes**

1 In this piece, I am not using the term *transnational* in opposition to the term *global*; rather, I prefer the term *transnational* because of its multi-mobility. Distinguishing between “truly” global and “purely” transnational is not only difficult but also not helpful, as Kennedy and Roudometof (2002) argue.

2 See Millie Creighton’s (2009) piece in this volume of the *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* for a synopsis.
No relation to either the ITV (UK) sitcom of the same name that ran from 1985 to 1986 or the ABC (US) sitcom of 1987–95.

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“You Are the Clever One”:
A Semantic Contest in a Transient Host/Tourist Community in Nepal

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By developing a conceptual model of social discourse, based in part on a rites-of-passage model of tourism, this article illustrates how tourists and hosts employ different assumptions of social interaction to pursue competing goals in touristic encounters. An ethnographic example—the author and a young souvenir peddler in Kathmandu, Nepal, haggling over an inexpensive necklace—demonstrates the nature of some tourist/host social encounters. The participants in this example attempt to “one-up” each other socially, engaging in a linguistic contest over who is “clever” as they vie for social status in the fleeting community they establish with each other.

Interrogating Initial Touristic Encounters

This article addresses an aspect of tourism that has thus far failed to catch the attention of academic research: the initial interpersonal exchanges between hosts and guests, many of which are viewed by tourists as intrusive, hostile, and threatening—and by hosts as demeaning yet necessary. The encounter embodies a paradox often recognized as the tourist bubble, that place to which tourists retreat in order not to experience too closely the foreign culture which they seek. Although ignored by social scientists, such interactions are fodder for many tourists’ oral travelogues and structure the hassles-of-travel portion of their narratives. Tourists’ reactions can often be interpreted by the locals as rude and antisocial. By examining the nature of these exchanges, we can achieve a subtler understanding of critical moments in the tourist experience and in numerous human interactions: What happens when strangers meet? The following analysis addresses a small portion of that social terrain—in the context of Nepal, a country that relies heavily on tourism, economically and socially—and in encounters that are viewed as desirable by one party and undesirable by the other.
Some Hassles of Touring

Tribhuvan International Airport is the last sanctuary for tourists arriving by air to Nepal. Anticipating the exotic, they are soon to be confronted by the more unseemly side of the experience and will fine tune their “tourist’s gaze” (Urry 2002) to what makes Nepal exotic yet threatening, enticing but dangerous. Visitors navigate immigration and customs in the relative familiarity of the supermodern space, unmarked as a specific cultural place (Auge 1995), as yet unaware of the intensity and persistence by which locals will greet them—in ways that challenge, frustrate, exhaust, and threaten them. These encounters frustrate first-time and well-seasoned travelers alike. Judging by their comments, there is little doubt that tourists abhor many of the overtures of street beggars, drug-pushers, street musicians, shop owners, shoe-shiners, stall-vendors, tailors, monks selling trinkets, and a dizzying array of others whose roles are less identifiable. This order of travel commences when the tourist emerges from the airport, leaving its protection to be inevitably and immediately assailed by a cacophony of strangers tussling to carry bags; rent a room; drive to a hotel; book a tour; simply beg money; or sell them gems, clothes, incense, or the services of a young girl.

Thus launched into the dangerous, unfamiliar world of the host, from that moment onward the tourist enters into and exits from innumerable brief social interactions. Hotel and restaurant employees cater to their demands. Shop owners solicit their business. Tour guides lead them to and explain high points of the country. Bus and taxi drivers usher them to choice locations. Beggars and street hawkers vie for attention, each trying to squeeze from tourists a little more than they want to give. Like what occurs in similar situations across the globe, visitors to Nepal appear to be oblivious to the ritual connection of entering into the fleeting community that hosts attempt to construct hastily for them. Many, if not most, hosts fail to establish even tenuous bonds of solidarity necessary to benefit them from the tourists’ visits. What sets some of these people or interactions apart from others? Who is able to establish the successful social interaction that results in transient communities in which limited-purpose exchanges take place? And, how?

These are open questions that remain so because, to date, cultural approaches to tourism have focused on either the tourist or (rarely) the host and not on their interactions or what those interactions mean. Ritual theories, discussed below, pertain only to the tourist; similar theories of host behavior in Nepal await explication. This article attempts to address social behavior of two parties propelled by disparate motives and operating in contrasting social frames of reference: the tourist and the host. Tourist behavior can, to an extent, be usefully described as a rite of passage; but the
host’s behavior is framed around a more mundane set of greeting and parting rituals. This article identifies gaps in understanding caused by focusing too narrowly on a rite-of-passage model to describe tourist–host interaction and suggests modifications to the existing model to address those gaps. The importance of reframing how we see such social behavior is rarely considered in academic circles; but, by so doing, we will better comprehend the increasingly prevalent social dynamic between tourists and hosts.

The scale of the mixing of peoples and their different cultural traditions instigated by international tourism is boggling. Briefly, a fact sheet on international tourism issued by the World Tourism Organization (2009) reports that there were 924 million international tourist arrivals in 2008, up 2 percent from 2007. International tourism accounted for US$865 billion in monetary transfers in 2007, making it among the largest of economic forces on the planet. Nepal is a favorite destination for a tiny fraction of international tourists. The Ministry of Tourism (Government of Nepal 2009) reports that 526,705 international tourists visited Nepal in 2007, continuing a decades-long trend of significant growth during times of relative political stability. According to Raj (2009), international tourism accounts for 3.5 percent of Nepal’s GDP. Consequent to the force of this process, many hopes are pinned to international tourism, including its potential to spread democracy across the globe (Goldstone 2001); to propel development efforts in Nepal (Sharma 2000); and to provide income and social connections for individuals in the city of Patan, Nepal.

International tourists are a heterogeneous group, including those who travel to Nepal. Tourism comes in a variety of forms, related to the reasons a tourist travels: adventure, educational, heritage, cultural, ecological, health, and other such forms of tourism are recognized by academics and development planners. Tourists seek and experience variation in levels of luxury and involvement with hosts. Tourists are often motivated by multiple pursuits; and any one tourist can seek and enjoy different levels of luxury and involvement with hosts in one tour, or even in one day. Hosts are equally diverse and have many motivations for seeking out or avoiding tourists. Some want to sell things or services; others want experience, knowledge, and association with outsiders. At least a few want to educate tourists about their country and enjoy the pride they feel in its rich history and culture. Still others attempt to create personal relationships. Like the tourist, the host can exhibit a variety of reasons for interacting with tourists and may choose, at times, to be intensely social or, at others, distant.

This article addresses social situations common to a rather broad range of tourist–host pairings. Because the terms “tourist” and “host” refer to an expansive range of social roles, I specifically focus on the international tourist and the host who solicits the tourist openly. Their interaction is quite common in Kathmandu and elsewhere in Nepal and throughout South
Asia, perhaps more common than in the West. The main example used in this article took place in Patan, once one of the three main kingdoms of Kathmandu Valley. Administratively, it remains a city distinct from the capital, Kathmandu, with its own local and district governments that comprise a continuous metropolitan area. Patan is renowned for its architecture, arts, crafts, ritual observances, and the culture of its indigenous inhabitants. In Patan, tourists and hosts intermingle in a dense touristic environment, one where they expect to encounter each other frequently and, over time, develop strategies to manage such interactions to their own benefit. In this highly touristic context, hosts and visitors encounter one another in transitory moments, most of which result in nothing of note. Sometimes, however, these moments last just long enough to establish what I term transient community: the hosts and visitors pursue limited goals—sometimes compatibly, other times testily—only to part again, forever. In this article I delineate further the transient community of tourism and present a theoretical framework with which to understand it.

Tourists’ Rites of Passage

Scholars of tourism research in anthropology are familiar with the paucity of unifying theories of touring. A notable exception is a fruitful line of thought that stems from Victor Turner’s (1967, 1969) classic three-stage model of ritual, borrowed from Arnold van Gennep (1960), which outlines how rites of passage potentiate particularly strong social bonds of communitas among initiates. The by-now familiar ritual stages in rites of passage are the rite of separation, the rite of transition, and the rite of incorporation. Traversing these three stages, groups of initiates seek a new social status and establish communitas with one another in the anti-structural period of psychological-social liminality, occurring in the transitional phase of the rite. Turner’s analysis follows van Gennep’s observation that this structure is universal to rites of passage. For Turner, this structure includes pilgrimage (Turner and Turner 1978), which follows a rite of passage in most regards but departs from it by the geographic dislocation of the pilgrims, which is usually temporary, but sometimes of indefinite duration. As simplified by Bowie (2000), this process is played out in a particular community–pilgrim context; that is, the pilgrim undergoes a rite of transition in reference to the community in which she lives. How a pilgrimage is to be understood in reference to the dynamic between the pilgrim and the community she visits is not a part of this analysis.

Nelson Graburn (1977, 1983, 2004) adapts this model formally to fit the circumstances of tourism. By focusing solely on the process that the tourist undergoes in leaving and returning to his home community, Graburn’s analysis resides squarely in the intellectual tradition launched by Turner. A
key difference between Graburn's analysis and the one I undertake in this article is that Graburn's analysis, by focusing on the tourist-qua-initiate's relationship to the community from which she traveled, ignores the relationship the tourist has with the community she visits. Thus, the tour is conceived of as the middle, transitional phase for Graburn, the phase during which the tourist achieves an anti-structural, liminal status with reference to the community wherein she lives and interacts daily. She shares this liminality with other tourists who, like her, are also out of contact with their home communities. She thus forms bonds with fellow tourists who are undergoing a shared process with her, a process that often occurs within a "bubble" (Cohen 1977) that tourists create in an attempt to keep at a distance what they ostensibly seek to experience firsthand. The bubble's comfort, I suggest, is increased by associating with like folk, other tourists, and by insulating oneself physically and emotionally from the "foreign" host (an oxymoron with which the tourist is comfortable).

Continuing in this intellectual tradition, Jafar Jafari (1987) elaborates the details of Graburn's more general scheme. The segment Graburn identifies as "sacred"—i.e., the tour itself, including the transitions between home and host community—deserves special attention by Jafari. The tour itself is a three-stage ritual process of orientation, animation, and validation. The sojourn is described as a singular experience: in the orientation phase, "the tourist settles in touristic sanctuaries . . . takes care of essentials and is oriented to the surroundings" (Jafari 154). He then enters, in the animation phase, the touristic culture, which "begins to define and redefine roles, rules, notions, motions, forms, forces, expectations, processes; and the notion of animation . . . captures this lubricant or illusive state of flotation, detachment, disengagement, or disconnectedness—transcending ordinary bounds, away from it all" (153). Finally the tourist moves through the valediction phase, when "the curtain comes down, indicating the end of the performance" (154).

The second stage, in which the tourist defines and redefines roles, is my point of departure; but I expand on Jafari's exclusive focus on the tourist and his changes in status. Jafari ignores both the community from which the tourist travels (as do I) and, of particular relevance to this article, the community he visits. My contention is that we can better appreciate the transformative potential of tourism by considering both the tourist and the host in the context of their temporary communion. In the process of going abroad, the tourist vacillates between his own, familiar community and that of a foreign and strange "other's" community. Much more aware of the communal aspects of the former, he thinks of it in the comforting and familiar image of home. Little aware that his destination also carries with it the potential for creating some kind of community, however temporary, with the host, he struggles even to imagine what "it" (the destination, the
people, how to interact with them) will be like before actually encountering it.

**Enter the Host & the Ritual Contest**

For the host, the process is not parallel. Tourists are intruders, welcomed by some locals and resented by others, who are probably in the minority. The host, in contrast to the visitor, operates in familiar surroundings, is armed with knowledge of the tourist (what he is like, how to approach him), and has strategies designed to engage him so that several social, including economic, exchanges might occur. There is little expectation that tourists will be absorbed into the host’s community, but the tourist represents opportunities. Selling souvenirs, practicing English, or talking about the tourist’s country all require establishing a social bond. The trajectories of the tourist and host are on a collision course with contradictory goals. At the same time that the tourist seeks shelter from strange surroundings in the comfort of the bubble, the host operates on home turf and strives to draw the tourist from his bubble for a purpose that is sometimes utilitarian—to pursue a living—and other times social. The tourist’s movements in and out of his home community are marked with separation and reentry rituals that, small or large, are important, familiar rituals of welcome. Thus they mark clearly for him, using symbols and rites he understands, and recognize his desired status as a world traveler. His experience with host communities is quite different and alienating. Into various host communities, he enters and exits only once; and he is greeted with rituals that at first are so foreign he fails even to recognize them as such. In Nepal, I have observed countless examples of tourists keeping their distance from hosts, staring ahead, ignoring greetings, curtly ordering a host to move aside. I have also recorded instances of hosts’ comments that such behavior by tourists is rude and unfriendly. Tourists rather infrequently invite hosts in, as exemplified to me in Nepal in 2005, when a young man told me, “You are not like other tourists. They don’t talk to us.”

The tourist’s motives are juxtaposed with the contrary purposes of the host, whose interests are concentrated to a degree in material profit. Shielded by the lack of any social bond, the host is given to tactics that are initially exploitative as he asks outlandish starting prices. If the tourist is unresponsive or rude, the host quickly retreats from this attempt at what Marshall Sahlins (1972) termed “negative reciprocity.” The host then attempts to strengthen the social dimension of the interchange and offers more reasonable, yet still inflated, prices. If these are rejected, the host is ready to enter a prolonged economic negotiation, tied to social probes intended to form bonds that might make the tourist feel obligated to barter with the host. The tourist often has no interest in radically unbalanced exchanges and is
unclear of the values of the objects and rules for barter involved. In Jafari’s words, the tourist is absorbed in the inversion of his normal status to that of “king for a day,” in a place where, for example, his buying power far exceeds that of his everyday life and of the hosts he visits. He cares little for the norms he left behind or, according to Jafari, the ones he now encounters. In certain types of tourism in Nepal (Folmar 2004, 2008), tourists who ostensibly seek to immerse themselves in the culture of other peoples are so timid that they, “go cocooned in safe, packaged environments which generally insulate them from the very thing they wish to encounter” (Goldstone 2001, 1–2), a phenomenon also known as the “environmental bubble” (Cohen 1977). It is in the host’s best interests to defy the tourist’s insularity and to become noteworthy for a short time. In order to accomplish this effect, the host engages the anti-structural tourist in a contest to create a momentary structure, which he does by attempting to reverse the ritual polarity of the tourist’s efforts to avoid social interaction.

Likely to lump all Westerners into the category of “tourist,” hosts seldom make fine distinctions among then (Hepburn 2002). But tourists offer certain things, in terms of material and cultural exchange, ranging from money to the chance to make a connection with a Westerner, whose “modern” lifestyle can be desirable in its own right and is linked to other positive associations with the modern, such as the chance to represent oneself as a “developed” (bikashi) person because of associating with Westerners. In conversations that I have had with hosts, there is a strong tendency to speak positively about tourists. Nepalese express concern that tourists have good experiences while they are in Nepal. They attempt to cast Nepal in a good light and, when possible, to protect tourists from unpleasant experiences. For the host, the tourist represents much that is positive; hosts characterize their own behavior in the light of enhancing potential relationships and tapping potential resources.

**Rituals of Greeting & Recognition**

The process of greeting and recognition begins with engagement at a time the tourist intends to disengage. A greeting, elaborate or simple, everywhere signals the ritualized recognition of an existing (or creation of a new) social relationship. As Raymond Firth (1972) illuminated three decades ago, greetings and partings are ritualized behaviors that mark and measure the social worth of individuals who employ and recognize them as such. The challenge of a host—for example, the street hawker or the beggar—is to utilize the most efficient, intriguing, or recognizable greeting possible on the tourist stranger who is ignorant of local etiquette. When strangers, especially those on the wrong side of a cultural chasm, stumble upon a foreign social behavior—one that contains an element of uncertainty—feelings
of risk and danger permeate the situation. In Firth’s (1972, 31) words, “confrontation without communication is threatening, and even the most casual greeting gesture tends to remove an element of uncertainty to the encounter.” That, of course, works only if the greeting is recognized as such. If it falls outside the tourist’s experience, a greeting may also set off internal alarms. Even when recognized as such, a salutation may portend of something that is less ominous than bodily threat yet is still undesirable. According to Esther Goody (1972), all greeting behavior is tainted with the brush of begging. In that it “contains an element of deference which is status enhancing, ‘greeting’ becomes a mode of entering upon or manipulating a relationship in order to achieve a specific result” (40). The result the host seeks is often an exchange of material goods superimposed over the establishment of a quick and easy social order. But to limit the host’s interests to material transactions misses much of what goes on in tourism in Nepal and probably in other third-world cultures as well.

Community & Social Bonds

To illustrate what does go on between hosts and tourists in Nepal, it is useful to examine briefly the notion of community and how it relates both to ritual processes and to how community is imagined differently by hosts and tourists. The ensuing discussion employs the notion of the geographic community, that is, the one to which people relate on a face-to-face basis, in which people have a range of relationships from “stranger” (a person with whom there is no social interaction) to “fast friends” and “intimate family” (to whom a person relates daily, cooperatively, and on multiple levels). The degree of familiarity relates to the depth of emotional connection. For Durkheim (1915), solidarity is the functional bond between people in a community, while for Turner (1969), communitas is a bond that is deeper still, arising during ritual processes that somehow threaten the people undergoing them. These social bonds are felt at different depths because they refer people to different groups: solidarity with the community at large, and communitas with fellow initiates who constitute a part of that community. Initiates bond deeply as they help one another survive a ritual’s trials and achieve the new status they seek. Theoretically, if tourism is a rite of passage, fellow tourists could develop communitas with one another, deriving it from their shared experience. They would then return to their former, more inclusive communities of associates, friends, and family with their rite-of-passage experience affecting solidarity with those members only minimally. These processes and the bonds that arise within them are distinct from the social dynamic of interest here, i.e., the attempt by the host to establish a connection with a stranger, to convert someone outside her community into someone who is passingly familiar for a brief interlude. This attempt
operates near the extreme where the term community may not be suitable and may better be characterized by a more sterile term like dyadic relationship. If solidarity later ensues, that is because the social process lengthens and deepens beyond the initial reason for it.

This consideration, though secondary, is a potential outcome of creating this initial bond. At least in Nepal, there are numerous intrinsic motives to establish social relationships per se. The Nepalese often seek, at least nominally, something ongoing in social relationships, such as correspondence by mail or e-mail, or the promise of a future visit by one party to the other's home. In their vernacular, Nepalis want to establish maya, a sense of social connectedness, desired in its own right and discussed quite well by Sarah Lamb (2000) for West Bengal. So, as the tourist traverses the touristy streets of Thamel, Patan, and other places, he is assailed by frequent attempts at greeting. "Hello, sir, come and have a look!" A gentle clawing at his garments accompanies the respectful "Sir": an open hand and a pitiful look. A young boy inquires as to a tourist's home country and, once learned, responds with, "Oh, USA! The capital is Washington, DC. I know the capitals of all the states [or all the countries of the world]. Just ask me."† A young man holding a baby asks the tourist if he can spare money to buy milk for this child. A teenage girl dangles a trinket in front of the tourist's face and quotes one price, then another. Any sign of recognition—a "yes," a "no, thank you," or eye contact—is enough to embolden the host to continue.

As I discovered in Sirubari, a hill village in central Nepal that is famous for its cultural tourism (Folmar 2008), the pursuit of tourism as a development strategy can be as much about filling social needs as it is about filling economic needs. Tourism organizers declared, without my prompting, that their tourism program was merely a "side business" and that they desired tourists because they liked to have them around. This desire was heightened by the dearth of children in the village, which had resulted from out-migration by many of the "younger generation," along with their wives and children.

At first, the tourist, no matter how motivated to engage the host, nonetheless initially seeks more social distance than does the host. The desire to keep her social distance invites the tourist to employ rituals that fend off greetings, with the intent to negate the host's social desirability. The host's attempts to validate the social status of the tourist can either be accepted by the latter or turned on its head by her. Employing a strategy of taking no notice or of rejecting a greeting, the tourist seeks to transform a ritual of recognition into a ritual of "marginality," a term I have borrowed from Carlos Velez-Ibanez (1983) to describe the ritual denial of the greeting, which is used to alienate and mark the greeter as having lesser status. This, too, is part of the interchange between tourist and host, employed by the tourist.
when she ignores the approach of the host, refuses to make eye contact, pretends that she does not hear the solicitation by the host, or retorts in frustration and anger that she does not want to be bothered. It should also be recognized that hosts often pursue only enough interaction to satisfy themselves. In certain instances, when the tourist seeks social contact beyond the host’s comfort zone, hosts also invoke social-distancing mechanisms. Attempting to maintain a bubble of their own after creating the social bond that benefits them, host families in Ghale Gaun, a village that offers a cultural tourism program (based on that of Sirubari) with relatively intense tourist–host contact, employ tactics of alienation: a subtle turn of the back, a gentle but clear end to a conversation to keep tourists from community spaces where they are not welcome. Gurungs and other Nepalis, like the Sherpas described by James Fisher (2004), “have a public, onstage side that they want the rest of the world to see, and a private, backstage side that is more unadornedly true to themselves” (373–74) that they do not care to put on display. The salient variable here is the timing of when hosts and guests attempt to close the door to further social interaction: It is decidedly more common for the tourist to deflect the host’s advances in the initial stages of a tour.

“You Are the Clever One”

This, then, is the dynamic stage which sets the boundaries for contests between tourists and hosts over whether they will establish a hasty and impermanent social structure between them. The development of relatively strong bonds advantages the host and fosters her goals, while keeping sociability weak favors the tourist. I illustrate this process with the following example, taken from field notes in 2003 when I, occupying the social and conceptual space of a tourist (albeit not the most usual one) was encountered by a charming and persistent young girl, Sita, who wanted to sell me a trinket.

Walking into Patan that day, I was midway along the body of our group, which was strung out over a few dozen yards. A young girl in a shining azure sulwar kamij [tunic and loose pants] and black scarf came up to me and tried first to sell me a small perfume container and then alternated that with other proffers of a hodgepodge of little necklaces, which were designed with black sun-and-moon or mandala [geometric representation of the cosmos] motifs set into white backgrounds. Why she singled me out I do not know, but she stuck to me like glue, persisting in her offers—“OK, ten dollars; OK, two for ten dollars”—shifting rapidly among various combinations of trinkets and prices. I held steadfast, telling her in a variety of ways that I did not want it or them, depending on whether I was rejecting the sale of single or multiple trinkets. . . . “I already have that one”; “No, I don’t want to buy today.”
When we approached Maha Buddha, the Temple of 10,000 Buddhas, she said, “OK, I will wait for you,” as I went through the entrance. Apparently we stayed inside the temple compound too long for her taste, so she and her several companion hawkers came in to wait, but while inside the Temple compound made no move to solicit me. I purchased a brass Buddha for my son from one of the saujis [shopkeepers] inside, spending all the rupees in the front pocket of my walking shorts.

Immediately upon exiting the Maha Buddha square, she was back at it, with renewed gusto. Maybe she was more energized because she knew I had made a purchase. Whatever the case was, she and I then took up a lively sparring match, she trying to maneuver me into a sale, me deflecting each thrust.

“Young friend,” indicating with her head a student behind me, “bought one, so why don’t you buy?” she insisted.

“He didn’t buy one,” I countered.

“Yes, he did,” she persisted. “Why don’t you buy? Only 500 rupees for this one,” she offered and, when I declined, revised the price downward, “OK, two for 500.”

“But I have no money,” I said. “I spent it all on the statue I bought at Maha Buddha.”

She hesitated when I pulled my pocket inside out as proof, then challenged me with, “Oh, you are clever.”

I smiled, “No, I am not; I have no money.”

“Then give me your watch! If you will give me your watch, then you can take it.” She dangled the perfume container from her slender fingers.

Trying to turn the tables on her, I intoned, “I think you are the one that is clever.”

“No,” she denied, “you are the clever one. I am not clever. If I was clever, I would have a house.”

At some point she returned to the fact that Jeff, the student, had bought a trinket, a transaction I eventually had to recognize, as she got him to admit to it. I retorted, “He is not clever; he is stupid,” loud enough for Jeff to hear so that he knew I was joshing him.

She countered (this was the second time she used this ploy) that my brother, who was along for the trip and now ahead of us, was clever and had bought something. She then said that the tourists with him were clever. I objected, using Nepali for the first time: “Uniharu tourist justai chha. Uniharulai dheri bujdainan. Maile bujchu.” [They are just like tourists. They don’t understand very much. I do understand.]

To this she responded, “Tapailai kati pani bujdainal!” [You don’t understand a thing!] I laughed.

She revisited other ploys she had already tested: “I have been working for one hour, just you buy this one. First-time sale. I have no business today. It is good for me, good for you.” I confided to her that I believed she had worked very hard for this sale. I had been unable to dissuade her by deflecting her tactics. When she suggested that my brother lend me 100 rupees, he tried to slip it unseen into my palm, but she noticed the attempt and confronted me on it. She also did not let it pass when I revealed that I did have 20 rupees in my shirt pocket. “You said you have no money, but this is money.” I tried to insinuate I would come back another time; she claimed she would be unavailable on each occasion I might return. Sita won me over with her sheer determina-
tion to make the sale. Plus, I wanted there to be closure to this fortuitous episode.

Finally, I paid her with money borrowed from my brother; she gave me the little necklace and quit trying to make further sales. She seemed suddenly shy. I got her name and gave her mine, and I found out that she was fifteen and studying in the sixth class. I told her that when I came back next year I wanted to know that she was in seventh class, and when I came in ten years, I wanted her to invite me for dinner at her house. She assented with a light nod and a hint of a smile. I got on the bus and we parted ways.

Semantic Contest & Transient Community

Now several years removed from this event, I can compare it to other entries and exits I have made into the field and to yet others, in far greater number, that I have witnessed tourists make. Tourists, their motives, and the situations they confront represent an impressive variety of social forms, yet many of the encounters they have with hosts have structural similarities that bear comparison to my encounter with Sita. The events I have described above illustrate a general process of hurried community-building spurred on by two parties having quite opposite motives to do so. Since in this case one party actively seeks to avoid establishing community, the orientation process is drawn out, ignoring, as Jafari suggests, the rules of politeness governing greetings back home and pointedly not learning new ones in an attempt to keep the bubble intact.

If the host is successful in engaging the tourist, though, verbal probing turns into sparring when the host’s ends are threatened (for example, failing to make a sale). In this example, she engages me, the tourist (anthropologists do not occupy privileged status of non-tourist in this setting), for as long as she can, first by introducing herself abruptly, but without creating an identity I can relate to—apparently not even seeking to become a dim object in the tourist’s future memory but merely attempting to sell a souvenir. But this is either a ruse on her part or misrecognition on the tourist’s. Having been rebuked more often than not, she is armed with linguistic tools that the tourist lacks, to sustain the interaction, by entering a verbal dual, including the semantic contest over which one of us is “clever.”

The choice of cleverness is advantageous. It is ambiguous, carrying both positive and negative connotations and, as such, can be easily manipulated to sustain the duel. In research that reveals the alienating and contested nature of tourism in Nepal, Arjun Guneratne (2001) comments that Tharus tend to see Brahmans as “clever.” They are “capable people . . . able to get ahead in the modern economy by virtue of their natural qualities of hard work, thrift, cunning, and unscrupulousness” (532), with all these shades of meaning available to Sita and me during our contest over who was clever.

The value of cleverness shifts from positive to negative and back in order to sustain the impermanent and rudimentary social structure long
enough to achieve her goal. She deftly prolonged this verbal sparring match in a manner that retained its inherently anti-structural properties, not allowing either of us to land on socially superior ground. Who is “one up” in terms of social advantage? Being clever in this instance appears to help to sort that out; but because it is neither straightforward nor a matter of simple inversion, it remains ambiguous and impermanent. When I am the clever one, it is a subtle accusation partially disguised as a compliment—but so thinly disguised that it places me as the moral inferior to this girl over whom I would normally, in Nepalese society, be her superior because of age, gender, and nationality. My social advantage would be recognized by Firth (1972)—and especially by Goody (1972)—along yet another dimension: The young hawker “begs” me into the social exchange by approaching me, thus placing her at a social disadvantage, which she needs to confuse. As I feel my superior status threatened, I attempt to use cleverness to my advantage. I ultimately reveal my facility in Nepali and suggest that I also have the advantage of understanding over my companions, who, because they lack this skill, are susceptible to her advances. I assert my cleverness and attempt to shift it from an immoral attribute to something more positive. But she will have none of that. She quickly reverses my self-perceived advantage into a disadvantage: “You don’t understand a thing” (i.e., I am not clever).

The strategy is meant to engage me on several levels. It is not to her benefit to admit to my superiority in this situation, otherwise my internalized sense of being (“king for a day”) would enable me to ignore my own and local conventions and allow me to dismiss her. She apparently senses this potential and shifts the ground so that I am not sure whether clever is a social liability or asset. The point is that she is able to engage me, challenging the integrity of the environmental bubble I hope will allow me to experience vicariously the culture I don’t want to contact too closely. She forces my hand, willing me into her cultural space where she has an advantage. Once she achieves her goal, she disappears quickly into her own bubble, into the dangerous (to me, the tourist) but familiar (to her, the host) background the tourist is all too willing to keep at a less-threatening distance.

Rethinking Tourism: Multiple Levels of Ritual

Rites of transition are about the individuals undergoing them and the communities to which the individuals belong—as well as their interrelationship; but this aspect of such rites has gone under-investigated for too long a time. Except for the development of communitas, the interaction between initiates and their communities has been taken for granted. Tourism for the tourist has been likened to a rite of passage in the same way that pilgrimage has for the pilgrim, or even immigration for the immigrant; and its ritual aspects
have focused on the tourist/initiate to the exclusion of the communities through which he moves. Inasmuch as tourists are hailed as a major force behind spreading democracy across the globe (Goldstone 2001), and fueling development efforts in countries like Nepal (Sharma 2000), it is necessary to explicate the social/ritual interactions between host community and tourist, since the latter have the ominous potential to impact the very social fiber of the former via these innumerable attempts to negotiate transient community.

The phenomenon of tourism involves several layers of ritual, all operating simultaneously. According to Dean MacCannell (2004): “Taken together, tourist attractions, and the behavior surrounding them are . . . one of the most complex and orderly of the several universal codes that constitute modern society” (62); or, in other words, the culture of tourism comprises one of modernity’s ritual complexes. Graburn (1977, 1983, 2004) and Jafari (1987) outline how, when treating the tourist in isolation, the tour is a rite of passage for the tourist in reference to his home community. Undergoing this rite, the tourist creates a kind of community with other tourists during Jafari’s “animation stage” of the tour, when he detaches himself from the rule structures of his own society. But, unfamiliar with the rules of the host community, he creates an “environmental bubble” from which he indulges in the host’s foreign culture through a protective screen that insulates him from risk and discomfort. He attempts to keep the skin of this bubble intact by avoiding advances from hosts, employing practices he hopes that hosts will construe as rites of alienation. Because the host’s goals contradict those of the tourist, the host assails the tourist with greetings that are intended to equalize social status and create recognition of a temporary social bond between them, which, if achieved, gives the host a chance to make a sale or to establish a deeper social connection with the tourist. The encounter, while appearing to be impromptu and without structure, in reality follows relatively well-defined, implicit rules in which tourist and host vie over whether to establish or avoid creating a temporary social bond. Close examination of one of these processes therefore reveals the contested nature of tourism and demonstrates the ritual nature of the verbal tactics that are employed by both parties to achieve their respective ends.

Note

†Sichan Siv, in his interview with Quan Manh Ha in this volume of the *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, mentions how children at Angkor Wat in Cambodia similarly know much about the United States—including the state capitals (see p. 215).

References


Tudi Gong in Taiwan

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Studies of Tudi Gong 土地公 in English are relatively rare. This article reports the history, faces, roles, and duties of Tudi Gong, one of the lowest-ranked gods of the traditional Taiwanese pantheon, whose name can be translated as “Earth Lord.” Tudi Gong is the most ubiquitous and one of the most commonly worshipped gods in Taiwan; he is the approachable genius loci with access to the higher gods. This article brings together various perspectives on Tudi Gong from previous studies of Chinese or Taiwanese religion. To these portrayals it adds notes from the author’s observations of worshippers and informal interviews at temples, homes, and other places around Taiwan in 2008.

Situating the Ubiquity of Tudi Gong in Taiwan

In Taiwan, religion is everywhere: in the home, on the street corner, in the temple, on the sidewalk in front of stores. Religion is thus an integral part of life in Taiwan. The structure of the old Chinese imperial bureaucracy is reflected in the hierarchy of some of the gods in the spirit world; this reflection is one manifestation of what is commonly known as the “imperial metaphor” (Feuchtwang 2001, vii). Tudi Gong 土地公, the “Earth Lord” or “Locality God,” is one such god (fig. 1). Tudi Gong is an appointed position represented by a different individual from place to place and time to time (Wolf 1974, 133). His position reflects that of an alderman in a city precinct, except that the one who is the local Tudi Gong is no longer among the living. Moreover, the spirit who becomes the god is a person who, in life, was a good person. Occupying the lowest position in the celestial hierarchy, Tudi Gong plays various benevolent roles and is very close, very accessible, and very important to the Taiwanese people. He typically answers to Cheng Huang 城隍, the “City God” (Dell’Orto 2002, 6). Cheng Huang, like Tudi Gong, is a position or office that is filled by a succession of different individuals over time.

Who do the Taiwanese say Tudi Gong is? Do the Taiwanese understand the imperial metaphor? Given the notion that Tudi Gong is an appointed position, do the Taiwanese know the answer to the question, Who is the Tudi Gong of this place? In summer 2008 I went to Taiwan seeking answers to these and other questions. Ultimately, I found that the Taiwanese
do know who Tudi Gong is, both in their practice and in terms of the imperial metaphor. They understand that in nearly all localities, sometimes several within a single city block—in markets, stores, temples, fields, even cemeteries—a historical person, usually a hero, is deified and holds the position in the spirit world as the local embodiment or manifestation of the god Tudi Gong.

The History of Tudi Gong

As important as Tudi Gong is to the people, many of the Taiwanese I questioned do not know who their particular Tudi Gong is, nor do they know the origin of the cult. Scholars have found that the cult of Tudi Gong evolved and merged with older, pre-imperial cults of the gods of she 社 (earth) and chi 稷 (grain). Beginning in the period of the Eastern (Later) Han 漢 dynasty (25–220 C.E.), the Tudi cult soon took on the form that it has today, with Tudi Gong serving as “the patron of the local community” (Yang 1967, 97). Tudi Gong came into all neighborhoods because of his community representation—indeed, Yang suggests that community integration is facilitated by the practice of religion—but Tudi Gong originated in the agricul-
tural tradition. The most important cults of this type were those associated with the elements of nature. During the Zhou 周 dynasty (1045–256 B.C.E.), the gods of earth and grain were prominently worshipped in the she–chi cults. Before the dynastic period, which began with the Qin 秦 dynasty (221–206 B.C.E.), the legal and social system in China was feudalistic. According to Yang, she–chi represented the “theistic symbol of the feudal state” (97), while the t’u ti 土地 became understood as the patron of the local community. In some cases, t’u ti replaced the she and chi gods; in other cases, t’u ti was worshipped alongside she and chi. By the beginning of the Common Era, the she–chi and t’u ti cults had begun to merge.

When the feudal system made way for the imperial system, the she–chi lost its importance. Economically, though, earth and grain were still very important. According to Yang (1967, 97), “elimination of feudal states after the Chou [Zhou] period removed the political significance of the she chi cult, but its affinity to earth and grain retained its economic significance for the peasantry and transformed it from a political to a community cult, endowing it with a new function identical with that of the t’u ti, namely symbolizing the collective existence of the local territorial community based on agriculture.” The amalgamation of t’u ti with she–chi was thus complete. Communities and neighborhoods both rural and urban initially revered both cults for their communal importance. Many people came to think of Tudi Gong as representing all of these gods (Yang, 97). Accordingly, some of Tudi Gong’s duties were inherited by way of the merging of the she–chi and t’u ti cults. Today, his agrarian origins maintain their importance: Tudi Gong shrines and temples are quite visible and ubiquitous throughout the Taiwanese countryside. But the addition of the duty of community protector to duties of the rural Lord of the Earth and gods of earth and grain is today more important for people in cities across Taiwan. One of Dell’Orto’s informants confirms yet expands the guardian simile, describing the “local policeman” function of Tudi Gong: “You should not offend local policemen, otherwise they will give you trouble if you are engaged in business” (2002, 196). Such an analogy is common: Tudi Gong is a sort of policeman in his duties. Fittingly for the analogy, one sees police stations in every ward, just as one sees Tudi Gong shrines and temples in every ward.

**Tudi Gong in Taiwan**

*Shrines, Temples & Names*

In Taiwan, separating the religions is sometimes more difficult than not. Religion there is so syncretistic that origins of deities, practices, and myths are sometimes difficult—if not impossible—to untangle and trace. Statistics provided by the Government Information Office of the Republic of China (Taiwan) show that the two institutionalized religions to which
most people say they belong are Buddhism and Daoism. But the lines that separate one religion from another are often blurred. Although defining Buddhism against other religions in Taiwan is generally not too difficult, Daoism presents another matter altogether. People often lump gods of popular or traditional beliefs that are not part of the Daoist pantheon into the catch-all Daoist category. When asked to which religion a specific deity belongs, Taiwanese who do not know the answer will often say with conviction that the god must be a Daoist god. In Taiwan, indeed, some of the same gods can be found in both Buddhist and Daoist temples. Both Buddhism and Daoism have, as part of their official pantheons, gods who have been adopted from non-affiliated traditional cults and popular religion (Government Information Office 2008).

According to the Government Information Office (2008), Tudi Gong is “a single deity in essence” who “nevertheless has myriad spirit avatars whose mission is to look after local tracts of land and the people on them.” Tudi Gong is so popular that he may be the most commonly worshipped deity in Taiwan. Such a statement is particularly remarkable, given the fact that the Taiwanese worship many gods. Each god has certain responsibilities or powers, with Tudi Gong perhaps having more responsibilities than most. Essentially, Tudi Gong protects the people of his locality. Because he is in every locality, he protects individuals in different ways and against different threats.

Tudi Gong in the Home

Most of the inhabitants of Taiwan trace their ancestry to China. Their ancestors came from China to Taiwan either during the mid-seventeenth century or in the late 1940s, bringing with them their religions and their gods. Those who worked the earth worshipped Tudi Gong. But, as he is the “patron of the local community” (Yang 1967, 97), his purview spread to every tract of land, including villages and city neighborhoods, commercial buildings, residential buildings—all manner of buildings that might sit on the land. In Taiwan he is known as an “old friend” (lao pengyou 老朋友) (Dell’Orto 2002, 5), and many people have statues or images of Tudi Gong in their homes.

Many homes in Taiwan have a family altar that frequently includes Tudi Gong (Government Information Office 2008). A typical organization of family altars is as follows: The left side of the altar is for ancestors and includes the ancestral tablets. The right side is for the gods. On the wall behind the right side of the altar is a wall hanging that depicts various gods (Jordan 1972, 94n). Reflecting his position in the spiritual hierarchy, Tudi Gong usually occupies the lowest portion of the decoration.

In addition to protecting the living in the home, Tudi Gong is asked to be a go between “with the ‘celestial court’” after a loved one dies (Dell’Orto
2002, 150). In this capacity he is sometimes called Fu Shen 福神, god of happiness and good fortune. As a representative on the family altar, Tudi Gong protects the place and the people of the place, and he communicates between the living and the gods of the spirit world.

**Tudi Gong in the Fields**

Tudi Gong shrines can also be found on the perimeters of agricultural fields throughout Taiwan. From these posts, Tudi Gong is expected to watch over the land and ensure a bountiful crop. The “old man” of Tudi Gong “wants to be where he can look out on the growing field” (Dell’Orto 2002, 192). Farmers will consult with Tudi Gong for the right time to plant and harvest their crops. Tudi Gong is praised for the harvest (Feuchtwang 2001). He can also be found near agricultural water sources such as streams and rivers. He is there, according to Dell’Orto, so that he can protect the farmers’ wealth from flowing down the river. Interestingly, although the cult of Tudi Gong began—and continues to hold import—in agricultural society, in Taiwan Tudi Gong has also evolved to preside over safe and bountiful industry and commerce (Dell’Orto 2002, 149).

**Tudi Gong in Shops & Factories**

Shrines to Tudi Gong can be found in many retail establishments, markets, and restaurants throughout Taiwan. These displays may be small shelves in back corners of small, one-room shops; or they may be larger shrines in alcoves. Merchants also burn spirit money in front of their stores, usually on the sidewalk or at the curb of the street. (Also called joss paper, spirit money—jinzhī 金紙 in Chinese—is paper that represents money that gods can use to pay for things in the spirit world.) The merchants entreat their Tudi Gong to provide and build wealth, to make their business, restaurant, or shop a prosperous one. Often this aspect of Tudi Gong is referred to as Cai Shen 財神, “god of wealth” or “spirit of commerce” (Dell’Orto 2002, 149). Indeed, everyone needs the protection of Tudi Gong, but some places are more dangerous than others. Workers need to be protected from accidents on the job. So, Tudi Gong fills this role in mines and factories. These places have their Tudi Gong shrines, too.

**Tudi Gong in the Outdoors**

Often on a path up a mountain, near a lake, or just on the side of the road, Tudi Gong is enshrined and watching over the land, passersby, and the people who live and work nearby. Sometimes one may see images of Tudi Gong in a taxi or private vehicle. Tudi Gong is asked to protect the driver and his passengers from accidents. The same idea is prevalent with travelers. Because Tudi Gong protects travelers, his images can often be seen near bus or train stations (Dell’Orto 2002).
**Tudi Gong in Temples**

Although most Tudi Gong images are found on home altars and in smaller shrines, numerous Tudi Gong temples can be found across Taiwan. As a testament to the syncretic nature of Taiwanese religion, temples built for other gods also have special places for Tudi Gong. The Daoist Bao’an Temple 保安宮 in Taipei, for example, is dedicated to the god Bao Sheng Da Di 保生大帝. Tudi Gong is there. The Longshan 龍山 Temple in Taipei is dedicated to Guanyin 觀音, the Buddhist bodhisattva of mercy. A Tudi Gong statue is also there. On Danan Road in Taipei’s Shilin district is a temple dedicated to the goddess Mazu 媽祖. Tudi Gong is there. In Tainan in the temple of the City God, Cheng Huang, Tudi Gong is there. In nearly every temple I visited in Taiwan, Tudi Gong was also to be found.

In these temples, Tudi Gong’s role is again that of guardian and protector. He keeps the temple and its grounds—as well as the surrounding community—safe. Moreover, Tudi Gong often leads the birthday processions for other gods’ birthdays (Dell’Orto 2002). Frequently in these other temples, Tudi Gong is known by the name Fu De Zheng Shen 福德正神, “Meritorious Upright God” (Feuchtwang 2001, 40).

**Tudi Gong at the Gravesite**

Finally, Tudi Gong can be found in cemeteries and gravesites, where he is often known as Houtu 后土. His job is to protect the dead as well as the place of burial. If someone has died a horrible death, that person’s ghost may hang around the area where the death occurred. Worse, the ghost might molest the living. Naturally, it is up to Tudi Gong to “police the ghosts” (Wolf 1974, 134).

**Tudi Gong’s Duties**

**Protecting the People**

Tudi Gong has many responsibilities both to the people over whom he watches as well as to the spirit to whom he must answer, Cheng Huang. Cheng Huang is obliged to protect the citizens of his city from evil (Government Information Office 2008). Tudi Gong’s area of concern is much smaller than that of Cheng Huang. Tudi Gong has two main responsibilities: policing the ghosts and watching over the people (Wolf 1974). Tudi Gong is charged by his superior to watch over the people and report on the goings-on in his jurisdiction. He must report deaths, births, marriages, illnesses, and the like. In this way he can be seen as a protector. He can send no news or good news of the person or family up the celestial ladder, or he can send bad news. Sometimes people feel that Tudi Gong’s reports may be negative. They believe that they can influence Tudi Gong’s reports, if not by their actions, by money or goods. Sometimes a bribe is used to convince
Tudi Gong to report positively (or not at all): “You have to give the god something so that he won’t say things about your family and cause you a lot of trouble” (Wolf, 134).

In order for Tudi Gong to be able to make his account, the people should report to him. Very often they do. They tell him of births, illnesses, deaths, infertility, and marriages. Before they move, they tell Tudi Gong where to find them (Wolf 1974). When they get to their new abode, they tell the local Tudi Gong that they are now in his community. If the residents do not report to Tudi Gong, he may resort to spying on them. He must make his report to the gods, so he must have information to report. He has to see that his parishioners “behave themselves with religious and social propriety” (Yang 1967, 28). Tudi Gong also protects people and their property from fire, flood, famine, and drought. Often these types of disaster and disease are believed to be brought on by those whom Tudi Gong is responsible for keeping in check: ghosts.

Managing the Spirits

Taiwanese religion has two main types of spirit: shen 神 (god) and gui 鬼 (ghost) (Smith 1983). Shen are the yang 阳 spirits of popular religion, the gods. Gui are the yin 阴 spirits, ghosts or demons. In addition to gods and ghosts, a third class of spirits in Taiwan are ancestors (Wolf 1974). Although ancestors and gods are respected, ghosts can cause trouble, so they are feared. Ghosts are bullies and troublemakers.

Ghosts are the souls of dead people. These souls are cared for by living relatives. If a ghost is well cared for, then the ghost is content and does not molest the living. However, if a ghost is not satiated or well kept, it will have to prey on the living (Wolf 1974). Those ghosts who left no descendants have no one to care for them. Others are neglected because they have been forgotten. No sacrifices are offered to them. “Some are angry because they are hungry and homeless, and some are hungry and homeless because they are angry” (Wolf, 170). The strongest ghosts are loners. They roam about, preying on their victims. But “the weaker of these unhappy beings gather outside temples to beg for a living like the derelicts of this world” (170).

The fear of ghosts drives Taiwanese to appease the ghosts. First, the name “ghost” is not used; rather, they are called “the good brothers.” If they were to be called “ghosts,” that would anger them (Wolf 1974, 170–71), and one does not anger a bully. Ghosts are propitiated in many ways. Often spirit money is burned for them. Food or merchandise is provided. Sometimes incense is burned. But, this sort of appeasement is always done outside, never inside the home or a temple or a building. If it were to be done inside, such an action would invite the ghost into the home, which is the last place one would want a ghost to be.
Ghosts are considered to be tied to particular places. They are “creatures of the soil, spiritual residues of the most material part of man” (Wolf 1974, 134). The cosmology of popular tradition sees a constant struggle between yin and yang (Smith 1983). Because ghosts are spirits and are of the earth, they are classified as yin (Wolf). Tudi Gong and other gods are considered yang; they are the balance to the yin gui. Tudi Gong is sometimes known as “the king of gui, the locality’s official” (Feuchtwang 2001, 100). As the intermediary between the living and the spirits, Tudi Gong is in a unique position to regulate and temper the activities of ghosts who prey on humans. In fact, the connection between ghosts and the god suggests that the act of propitiating the ghosts is an act of worship of Tudi Gong. Some Taiwanese say that offerings to ghosts always include offerings to Tudi Gong (Wolf).

Modes of Tudi Gong Worship

How one worships in Taiwan depends upon what or whom one is worshipping. Offerings are common and can take the form of spirit money, incense, food, flowers, and even merchandise. Several types of spirit money are burned in honor of the gods or to propitiate ghosts (Feuchtwang 2001). When spirit money is burned for Tudi Gong, some Taiwanese burn three different types: One is for Tudi Gong, and the other two are for him to use to elicit assistance from other deities (Dell’Orto 2002).

The ritual of burning incense is also used to honor the gods or placate demonic ghosts. Incense is central to worship in Taiwan, both in terms of location within the home or temple and also in terms of the ritual of worship itself: “Its burners mark the central points of households and the temple of that territory. Incense-burner, incense sticks and incense ash are peculiar to the address of ghosts, gods, ancestors and demons” (Feuchtwang 2001, 25). Two times a month—the first and fifteenth for most but the second and sixteenth for merchants—incense is burned for Tudi Gong. Gods are honored with an odd number of incense sticks. Usually one or three sticks of incense are held with both hands straight up out in front of the body as the worshipper bows several times in front of a statue or image of Tudi Gong. If there is an incense burner near Tudi Gong, the sticks are sometimes stuck straight up into it to continue to burn for him.

Observation shows that many worshippers, when they enter any temple, first stop at the Tudi Gong shrine. This phenomenon is common even in temples where Tudi Gong is not the primary god of the temple, such as at Longshan and Bao’an temples in Taipei. At both temples, a Tudi Gong shrine is located along the back wall, yet he is the first god to whom many Taiwanese speak when worshipping at either temple. I asked a worshipper why this is so. The response: “They stop to report to him, ‘I’m here.’”
In addition to burning spirit money and incense, offerings of food and merchandise are also made (fig. 2). The meal in the Taiwanese home is for intimate friends and family (Wolf 1974). But deceased ancestors are also in need of sustenance, so meal offerings are common on the anniversary of ancestors’ deaths. These cooked meals are complete: they include rice and utensils. But when food offerings are made to the gods, they are seen as gifts. In contrast with food offerings made to deceased ancestors, food offerings made to gods such as Tudi Gong are not complete meals; they do not include rice or utensils. Occasionally the contents of these offerings are shared with the community. Dell’Orto (2002, 149) relates these words of Mr. Lin, head of Yongxing village: “With my family I would often go to the local Tudi Gong temple. During special celebrations, each one of us would give two oranges to Tudi Gong and take one which other villagers had already presented to the spirit. We would, then, take it home and eat Tudi Gong luck.” Dell’Orto described such exchanges as signifying a “strengthening of relationships among local inhabitants” (149).

**Tudi Gong’s Birthday: Honoring the God**

The largest communal celebrations are those of the main god of the community or local temple—who, depending on the community, may or may not be Tudi Gong. According to Dell’Orto (2002), three Tudi Gong birthday celebrations are held throughout the year. The first birthday, near the beginning of the year, is on the second day of the second lunar month. The second celebration, just beyond the middle of the year, is on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, during the Mid-Autumn Festival. And the third celebration is an end-of-year celebration that falls on the sixteenth day of...
the twelfth lunar month. In this way, the worship of Tudi Gong defines the annual cycle.

A birthday celebration for Tudi Gong typically includes a sort of exchange. People from one Tudi Gong district often travel to another Tudi Gong district in another city or village (Dell’Orto 2002). The Tudi Gong temples arrange for many activities during the month of the birthday. These activities can include film showings, theater performances, lectures, taking home of statues, and traditional operas. In fact, operas are such a large part of traditional Tudi Gong birthday celebrations that the cost of hiring an opera troupe on Tudi Gong’s birthday can easily be twice the normal rate (Sangren 1987). C. K. Yang (1967, 16) relates how important the birthday celebration of Tudi Gong is to the parishioners as follows:

In the village of Nanching [China], the villagers in the summer of 1949 unstintingly spent the equivalent of about $500 in United States currency for the temple festival celebrating the birthday of the earth god [Tudi Gong], the community patron deity, while they failed to raise a similar amount for an irrigation reservoir for the village, or to raise one-third of that sum for a literacy class for underprivileged children. No “unreligious” people long under the ordeal of economic hardship would allocate such a heavy financial support for a religious occasion at the sacrifice of an irrigation or an educational project.

These birthday practices are very important. They are to honor the god, but they are also “to let Tudi Gong enjoy it” (Dell’Orto 2002, 211).

Defining the Tudi Gong Community

An activity endorsed and supported by Tudi Gong temples on his birthday is the taking home of statues. Tudi Gong statues from the temple are taken home by parishioners and kept for a year. The statue is returned on the same day the following year along with an offering for the Tudi Gong opera (Dell’Orto 2002). This idea of community is celebrated in the annual cycle as well as in the sharing of offerings described above concerning oranges, money, and “Tudi Gong luck” (149). Tudi Gong has a “contractual” or “mutually beneficial” relationship with the people of the community (2): “Mass worship of these gods in crisis or at festivals during normal times served as rallying occasions to heighten the community consciousness of the local population” (Yang 1967, 12).

The community itself is defined by ritual. One of the reasons that there are so many Tudi Gongs in Taiwan is because Tudi Gong’s power, his jurisdiction, is very limited. Because a single city god can cover an entire city, only one city god (and city-god temple) is needed for most cities. But Tudi Gong’s jurisdiction is generally more limited. Theoretically, where one Tudi Gong’s reach ends, another Tudi Gong’s power typically begins. Overlap, of course, occurs: Wolf (1974) observed that occasionally one Tudi
Gong will have representatives in other places. As a rule, though, Tudi Gong’s power extends only as far as the reaches of his neighborhood. It is this neighborhood that in the past was defined by ritual. The Tudi Gong neighborhood was defined by means of a circulating plaque, a piece of wood about twenty inches long and eight inches wide, inscribed on one side with the name of the god and on the other with the name of the community. This token of the god’s authority was passed from family to family, day by day, moving through the community along an irregular but exhaustive route. The family holding the plaque on any given day was responsible for making an offering of incense, fruit, and tea at the T’u Ti Kung [Tudi Gong] temple. This it did in the morning after receiving the plaque and again in the evening before passing it on to a neighbor. In this way every family participated in honoring the local T’u Ti Kung and in so doing identified itself as part of the community. (Wolf, 135)

The daily parishioner worship and the process of circulating the plaque support the “conditional relationship” (Wolf, 135) between the god and his people. The god serves all the people grouped together in one location. He does not serve only members of a specific family or even of a specific race; rather, he serves all who live within the boundaries of a particular physical location.

Because Tudi Gong protects the people and the land, the establishment of the neighborhood Tudi Gong shrine or temple was normally the first thing the residents did when a new neighborhood or village was established. Until the land has a supernatural master and communal sacrifices can be made, it is not considered to be “part of the domain of heaven” (Sangren 1987, 102). Such a state is dangerous, because “being outside the domain of celestial hierarchy, foreigners and aborigines, like the unordered masses of ghosts in hell, are termed kuei [gui]” (102). Therefore, until Tudi Gong is present and protecting the people, there is constant concern for the community. It is this communal spirit that is fostered and perpetuated by the worship of Tudi Gong; and it is in the community that the cult originated.

The Many Faces of Tudi Gong in Shrines & Temples

Tudi Gong shrines can range from small, informal stone boxes standing alone in fields or near sidewalks, to stalls in temples dedicated to other gods, to grand temples specifically for Tudi Gong on the scale of those for more powerful gods. Typically the most humble shrine contains a picture, calligraphy of Tudi Gong’s name, or a small stone statuette and an incense pot. Near a gravesite the shrine may be as simple as a stone with the characters for Houtu carved into it. But often the Houtu stone is more elaborate: intricately carved, perhaps, with paint and other pigments applied. Tudi Gong statues can be made of plaster, stone, concrete, marble, wood, plastic—vir-
tually any material. They may range from statuettes of a few centimeters in height to huge statues standing several meters tall.

A common feature of shrines is a table in front of the Tudi Gong altar; this table often holds an incense pot or flowers or other offerings (fig. 2). Occasionally one finds a red vinyl or leather kneeling pad near the table and the Tudi Gong statue. I also often noticed a carving or statue of a tiger near Tudi Gong. This tiger appeared in many places and many guises: in some temples or shrines, it was etched into the wall near Tudi Gong; in other places, it was carved into the lower front panel of the offering table. Some people left offerings of uncooked food for the tiger. According to Dell’Orto (2002), this tiger is Tudi Gong’s representative. Tudi Gong himself can also be portrayed riding a tiger, demonstrating that Tudi Gong has power over evil.

Tudi Gong statues can take many forms. Tudi Gong’s likeness often represents his community and his particular job there. For example, a respondent told me that, in a farming community, one might see a thin, white-bearded Tudi Gong, while, in a business district, one may see a fat, happy Tudi Gong. Painted Tudi Gong statues can have faces of white, black, brown, red, peach, or yellow (fig. 3). If the specific god is not labeled, it can be difficult to know which god is Tudi Gong, because his look can vary so much. When faced with a pantheon of deities at particular temples, I sometimes had to ask attendants or other visitors for clarification.

**FIGURE 3** Statues of Tudi Gong, the Earth Lord, appear in different colors and with different sartorial array. Tudi Gong can be white, black, brown, red, peach, or yellow. This black Tudi Gong is on Cijin Island in the southern Taiwanese city of Kaohsiung. Although black is often a color used to indicate illegal activities in Taiwan, here it may simply indicate the heat of the locale. Photographed by the author in June 2008.
The color of the face can be different even within the same temple. At a Tudi Gong temple I visited at the intersection of Gan Zhou Street with Gui Sui Street in the Datong district of Taipei, I found at least eight Tudi Gong statues: three had red faces, two had black faces, another two had essentially white faces, and one had a brown face.

Tudi Gong is usually cloaked in a robe. The color of the robe can vary from blue or purple to red, but gold seems to be the most common. He occasionally wears a sash over his shoulders. His hat takes different forms, as well; and I heard of speculation that different styles and shapes of hats have different symbolic meanings.

Occasionally Tudi Gong sits serenely with his hands on his knees. But, more often, he has something in his hands. In his right hand he often holds the ruyi 如意, a kind of short staff, which represents good luck (Dell’Orto 2002, ii). Other times—especially if the statue is standing—Tudi Gong holds a walking stick in his right hand (fig. 4). In his left, however, whether sitting or standing, he is constantly in possession of yuanbao 元寶 (money).

**FIGURE 4** Tudi Gong 土地公, the Earth Lord, with a zhang 斋 (walking stick) in his right hand and the yuanbao 元寶 (sycee, an ingot of precious metal) in his left. Photographed by the author in June 2008 at Tian Fu Gong 天府宮 near Lotus Lake, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
This money often takes the form of a sycee, which is a type of silver or gold ingot that was formerly used as currency in China.

Although his dress, possessions, posture, size, the material from which he is made, and even the color of his skin can vary from place to place (and even within the same place), Tudi Gong is a happy, old man. Nearly always the face is old, the beard is long, and the mouth and eyes are smiling.

**Stories of Tudi Gong**

Most scholars say that each Tudi Gong is different. The understanding of the imperial metaphor—the notion that Tudi Gong is an appointed position represented by a different individual from place to place—was commonly held among my Taiwanese interviewees. With that in mind, then, a story of a historical man should lie behind each Tudi Gong. I was told that there is; but I was also told that no one knows the stories. When asked, “Who is *this* Tudi Gong?”—with the understanding of the metaphor, my respondents all said that they did not know. I spoke with individuals about the lack of knowledge of the origin or identity of their Tudi Gong. One respondent, a woman probably in her thirties who was visiting a temple, offered an explanation. She said that many people may not know. She thinks, perhaps, the current Tudi Gong took office over one hundred years ago—so long before she was born that she does not know the story herself. “Maybe it [the story] is lost,” she said.

I heard only one story about the provenance of a particular Tudi Gong, this one from a woman in her sixties who works as a volunteer at a temple. She passed along to me what she had been told by a co-volunteer, which was that—according to a news story—a month or so ago, somewhere in Taiwan (she didn’t remember where), a Tudi Gong had come to a person in his community in a dream. The Tudi Gong told the dreamer that he, the Tudi Gong, had been promoted. The Tudi Gong informed the dreaming man that the community needed to begin worshipping such-and-such a person as the new Tudi Gong of that place. That was the extent of the story. According to my informant, the co-volunteer remembered neither where this oneiric event took place nor who the old and new Tudi Gongs were.

In Kaohsiung, Taiwan, I met with a few middle-aged men one evening to discuss Tudi Gong. At least one of the men was a security guard; the others were his friends. I first determined that they were familiar with the imperial metaphor. I then asked them several questions including, “Who is your Tudi Gong?” Again, they said that they did not know. However, one did tell me that “there are lots of stories.” The respondents did confirm many things. They all knew who Tudi Gong is. They all knew his position and his duties. They knew he monitors both the living and the dead. They all knew how to worship him; and that they all do. They all report to him...
important things that happen. They confirmed that each Tudi Gong is different: Even if one is across the street from another, the two will be different Tudi Gongs. They knew he is everywhere. They take trips to visit the Tudi Gong where their ancestors lived. They worship the Tudi Gong of their current location, but they respect the Tudi Gongs elsewhere as well. They knew of Houtu at gravesites, and they knew he is Tudi Gong.

**Tudi Gong & the Taiwanese**

As important as Tudi Gong is to the people of Taiwan, he is important to them for certain purposes: to get what they need; to protect them; to keep them safe from illness, famine, and poverty. But, many, perhaps most, Taiwanese do not know the background or history of this dear god. Feuchtwang writes what my experience has confirmed: “The god of the smallest territorial division is to most people not a nameable person” (2001, 40). The people know what Tudi Gong is. They understand the imperial metaphor. They know that their Tudi Gong is an appointed position and that a deceased human being occupies the position. However, they do not typically know who that person is or the story of his life or how and why he became the Tudi Gong of that place. As evidenced by my conversations, they may be aware of some stories, but they often do not know the history of Tudi Gong, either. But all of these details are immaterial to the typical Taiwanese. Who Tudi Gong is and where he came from, while often interesting questions to the scholar, are not important concerns to most Taiwanese themselves.

Tudi Gong is truly the god closest to the hearts of many Taiwanese. “Tudi Gong is like a good neighbour or friend. In time of need he/she will come to see you, though you have not invited him/her” (Dell’Orto 2002, 198). This comment illuminates the familiar relationship the Taiwanese have with Tudi Gong. The proximity and duties of Tudi Gong make him easy to approach. His various roles make him a part of many aspects of life and the life cycle. “Tudi Gong is ‘the deity who offers the greatest convenience to the people’. . . . One feels free to ask anything of him, even children” (198). “I have heard that Tudi Gong is both the greatest and the smallest,’ one woman explained. ‘At a grave he guards just that grave. But he is also close to the God of Heaven reporting to him every three days” (Feuchtwang 2001, 101). In Taiwan, religion is everywhere in the various forms of Tudi Gong.

**Notes**

1 Many words in Mandarin translate to “temple” in English: *si* 寺 (Buddhist temple), *miao* 廟 (temple/monastery), *si miao* 寺廟 (temple/monastery/shrine), *gong* 宮 (e.g., *Tian Gong* 天宮, Temple of Heaven), *cha* 剎 (Buddhist monastery/temple), *ci* 祠 (ances-
central hall/temple), an 藩 (small Buddhist temple), sheng dian 聖殿 (temple), fo si 仏寺 (Buddhist temple), shen miao 神廟 (a [generic] temple), dao guan 道觀 (Daoist temple), zong miao 宗廟 (temple/ancestral shrine), and ci miao 祠廟 (ancestral hall/temple of one's forbears). I use the term “shrine” to mean a small area dedicated to a particular god. Sometimes this shrine is a small, standalone concrete box on the side of the road or at the edge of a field. Sometimes it is a table set up in a corner of a room or a shelf on a wall, a small area with icons and perhaps other religious paraphernalia. The term “temple” is used here to designate a larger building or compound usually associated with several gods. A temple may contain any number of stalls or shrines, small areas dedicated to particular gods.

This report does not necessarily break the relationship with the Tudi Gong from whence the person has come. When asked if they visit the Tudi Gong where they were born or reared, respondents in Kaohsiung all said yes—and they visit usually once per year. A respondent from Taipei told me that he annually visits the Tudi Gong of the town where he was raised, located near Sun Moon Lake in central Taiwan.

References


Philologist of an Abandoned Classic: Coterie Reading, Comic Commentary, and the Topos of the Found Manuscript in Ueda Akinari’s *Kuse Monogatari*

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Ueda Akinari’s 上田秋成 (1734–1809) *Kuse Monogatari* くせものがたり (Tales of compulsion, 1791) is a compelling case study for considering how alternative modes of literary production arose in resistance to hegemonies of print in early modern Japan. Conceived as a parody of the Heian-period (795–1185) classic *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語 (*Tales of Ise*, ca. 1100), *Kuse Monogatari* was circulated in manuscript form among a close coterie of Akinari’s literary acquaintances, with the intent of engaging these readers in the collaborative project of revising the main text and adding marginal commentary. The result was a collaboratively revised and annotated redaction of Akinari’s original drafts, carried out through epistolary exchanges between author and reader. In this article, I propose that this mode of textual production enhanced the parodic premise of *Kuse Monogatari* and made it a site for satirizing current philological scholarship on *Ise Monogatari*.

**Situating *Kuse Monogatari***

Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734–1809), although best known as an author of supernatural tales, also devoted much of his career to writing comic fiction and philological scholarship. These two seemingly incompatible pursuits are brought together artfully in *Kuse Monogatari* くせものがたり (Tales of compulsion, 1791), a short work of comic fiction that Akinari wrote during one of the most scholastically rigorous periods in his career, when he was more actively engaged in scholarly debate and the study of classical literary texts than in the business of writing popular fiction per se. The close resemblance of *Kuse Monogatari*’s title to that of the medieval classic *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語 (*Tales of Ise*, ca. 1100) appears to have been no coincidence, for by the time Akinari completed his first draft of *Kuse Monogatari* in 1791, he had already spent nearly three years of intensive philological study on the poetry and prose of *Ise Monogatari* via Kamo no Mabuchi’s 賀茂

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As I propose in this article, Kuse monogatari can be read more profitably as a satiric commentary on deficiencies within the regime of philological scholarship itself, particularly with regard to settling questions of textual authenticity among Ise monogatari variants. As a scholar actively engaged in the study of this and other classical Japanese texts, Akinari was in a position of authority to comment on current philological methodologies and points of debate. But rather than address these matters in a critical essay or other conventional format, Akinari took the unusual tack of using a work of fiction to engage his colleagues in discourse and debate, circulating manuscripts of Kuse monogatari in the guise of textual artifacts in order to solicit feedback and commentary from his readers—in short, to encourage his readers to approach the text from the critical frame of reference of a philologist. Thus was Akinari able to set in motion a satiric rehearsal of Ise monogatari philological scholarship, not by subterfuge—for Akinari’s readers were well aware that the manuscript in their hands was not really the artifact it was billed to be—but rather by opening up his text to a series of interpretive and critical practices that were customarily reserved for authentic, or putatively authentic, textual artifacts. In examining these complex circumstances of coterie reading and reception in greater detail, I seek to bridge the satiric premise of Akinari’s collaborative project with Kuse monogatari’s unusual material format as a scribally disseminated series of manuscripts. In the end, I conclude that the unique collaborative dynamic engendered between the author and readers of Kuse monogatari, mediated by the metafiction of the text’s provenance, could have only been possible in the intended format, and not with a printed book.

Akinari’s Early Writing Career

Ueda Akinari first honed his craft as a writer of popular comic fiction, making his debut nearly thirty-five years before Kuse monogatari with two satirical works: Shodo kikimimi sekensaru 諸道聴耳世間狙 (Worldly monkeys with ears for the arts, 1766) and Seken tekake katagi 世間妾形気 (Characters of worldly courtesans, 1767). A decade later, in 1776, he achieved his greatest commercial and critical success with a collection of supernatural tales,
Ueda Akinari’s Kuse Monogatari 115

_Ugetsu monogatari_ 雨月物語 (Tales of rain and moon). Other published works followed, including _Kakizome kigenkai_ 書染機嫌海 (Sea of enmity: New Year’s writing practice), a short work of satire that effectively solidified his return to comic fiction in 1787. Despite the popularity of these works, however, Akinari refrained from using them as springboards for greater commercial success. All were written and promoted under a variety of different pseudonyms, which in effect prevented readers from identifying them with the same authorial source. Unlike some of the more commercially successful writers of the time, Akinari neither branded his works with a consistently deployed literary handle nor used other strategic devices for parlaying the popularity of his earlier works to his later ones. In general, Akinari’s work is characterized by its consistent underutilization of conventional marketing apparatuses, a fact that bespeaks the author’s relative indifference to commercial success as much as his desire to disguise his identity from general readers. As the views he expresses in letters, memoirs, and other personal writings attest, Akinari viewed fiction as an avocation, not a profession. Accordingly, he sought to avoid the stigma of writing fiction for profit by adopting a preponderance of pseudonymous handles and fictional ruses in his works, all designed to obscure his authorship.

During the early years of his writing career, Akinari did not rely on the revenues from his published works for livelihood. By trade he was a merchant who inherited a paper and oil business from his adoptive father in 1761; he ran it with moderate success for years thereafter. Yet this situation changed in 1771, when a fire destroyed the building that housed both his home and family business. Bereft of the inventory or overhead to start the business anew, Akinari was forced to seek out alternative sources of income to support himself and his family. At first, he turned to practicing medicine and tutoring pupils in classical literature. In fact, Akinari earned a more stable and profitable income from these activities than from the commissions on his published works of fiction, even with the commercial success of _Ugetsu monogatari_. In time, however, declining health forced him to retire from medicine, and he consequently had to rely more heavily on writing and teaching to bring in money. In 1787, multiple ailments, including epilepsy, forced him to relocate away from Osaka to Awaji-no-shō, a provincial village on the outskirts of the city. There Akinari sought rest and recuperation in the confines of his literary studio, Quail House (鶉の屋_Uzura no ya_), and spent most of his days immersed in reading and writing.

By the time he began composing _Kuse monogatari_ in 1791, Akinari was living in reduced circumstances. In a letter to one of his readers, Morikawa Chikusō 森川竹窓 (1763–1830), Akinari confided his hope that the publication of _Kuse monogatari_ would eventually bring him some measure of commercial success, so that he could make enough money to defray the costs of ink and paper (Nakamura 1993, 463). This expression of pecuniary motive
would seem to indicate that Akinari intended to submit *Kuse monogatari* for publication once the work of editing and revision had been completed. However, there is reason to doubt the sincerity of these stated intentions. No submission letter exists for *Kuse monogatari* as it does for many of Akinari’s other works, which would lead us to conclude that it was never turned over to a publisher. In fact, *Kuse monogatari* was never published during Akinari’s lifetime. Despite seemingly pressing financial concerns, Akinari exercised no haste in preparing *Kuse monogatari* for publication, continuing to rework and revise it for over two years after composing the first draft, but he never brought any version of the work to recognizable completion. In view of the circumstances of its composition and extensive revision, it might well be argued that Akinari was indifferent to the commercial potential of *Kuse monogatari*—and perhaps even resistant to the idea of publishing it for a general readership.

**Metafictional Ruses in *Kuse Monogatari***

In the preface to *Kuse monogatari*, Akinari pits himself against the two-headed monster of mass publication and professional authorship by assuming the persona of a pseudonymous commentator named “Yaboden, Bumpkin of the Capital [Kyoto]” (Miyako no Yaboden 都のやぼ傳). Although Akinari himself was living on the outskirts of Osaka, he locates his alter-ego Yaboden in Kyoto:

> In the east [Edo] there is Kyōden, and here [Kyoto] Yaboden, the bumpkin of the capital, whose immobile brush is like a wooden pestle, fashioned from the young purple of Kasuga Plain. (Ueda 1993, 16)

In stark contrast, Yaboden is described as the literary antipode of Santō Kyōden 山東京傳 (1750–1820). Kyōden was one of the best-selling authors in Japan at the time, who brought out such well-known works as *Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki* 江戸生艶気蒲焼 (Edo-born playboy, skewered and grilled, 1785) and *Keiseikai shijūhatte* 傾城買四十八手 (Forty-eight moves for procuring a courtesan, 1790) for Tsutaya Jūzaburō’s 蔦屋重三郎 (1750–97) publishing house in Edo. While many writers in Tsutaya’s stable were compensated for their work through elaborate dinners, nights of revelry in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, and other junketings, Kyōden was the rare exception of a writer who received generous monetary remuneration for what he wrote (Kornicki 1977, 167). It is this distinction which Akinari seems to single out for criticism as he assumes the fictive persona of Yaboden, a reclusive scribbler who seeks neither fame nor fortune from his brush, and who is content merely to bring a found manuscript to the attention of interested readers.
In contrast to Santō Kyōden, who represents the ethos of a city that by this time was poised to eclipse Kyoto and Osaka as the largest site of literary production in Japan, Yaboden harkens back to a more traditional—and presumably more authentic—mode of writing. Described as working ever so slowly and deliberately on the commentary to Kuse monogatari, as if wielding a brush that were as heavy as a wooden pestle, Yaboden is unfettered by deadlines or other imperatives of the profit-driven publishing industry. Although this fictive persona may have represented some of Akinari’s own attitudes toward writing at the time—or a fantasy of what it might have been like to work outside the regime of print—this persona also afforded him a secure rhetorical position from which to embrace anti-establishment traits like amateurism, leisurely productivity, and disdain for commercial success. After all, Akinari was a published author with his own résumé of commercial success, and it would have been difficult for Akinari himself to come out and criticize Santō Kyōden, or indeed the institution of professional authorship, without seeming hypocritical.

Within the context of the preface, Yaboden also becomes the mouthpiece for explaining how the text of Kuse monogatari came to be. The preface opens with Yaboden disavowing authorship of the work at hand and asserting that he is really the custodian of a found manuscript who has taken it upon himself to add commentary and explanatory notes to the main text. Both claims serve to establish the discursive groundwork for a text in which narrative and commentary are closely integrated, albeit under the guise of two fictive contributors to the text: the anonymous author and Yaboden, the commentator. From this initial pair of claims, the preface proceeds with a series of corollary claims about the provenance and authorship of the Kuse monogatari manuscript, in which several points of debate in contemporary philological scholarship on Ise monogatari are rehearsed. Yaboden begins by serving up the outlandish claim that the original manuscript of Kuse monogatari was discovered in a brothel in Suzaku, on the western outskirts of Kyoto, and, as if this first detail were not sordid enough, that its pages were found stuffed into a lacquered wooden bucket. Maintaining the ruse that Kuse monogatari has been adapted from this manuscript, Yaboden introduces two contending theories about its authorship, the first of which holds that the author was a middle captain from the provinces and the second that the author was someone who had abruptly sloughed off the cares the secular world—and presumably with them any literary ambitions—in order to become a Buddhist monk.

When situated vis-à-vis current discourses on the authenticity of different textual variants of Ise monogatari, it becomes apparent that the preface to Kuse monogatari represents a revisiting of debates on the authorship and provenance of Ise monogatari. Akinari himself was a party to one of these debates. In 1791, the very same year that Akinari began writing Kuse
monogatari, a posthumously published study of *Ise monogatari* by Akinari’s putative rival, Takabe Ayatari 高部綾足 (1719–74), appeared on the market, billed as an edited version of a found manuscript. According to Ayatari, this manuscript represented the earliest, and hence most authentic, version of *Ise monogatari*, a claim strengthened by the fact that the text was written in the ancient script of *mana* 真名. Weighing in on this problem in his own study of *Ise monogatari*, Yoshi ya ashi ya, Akinari dismisses Ayatari’s *mana-bon* 真名本 manuscript of *Ise monogatari* as a fake, and with it dismisses the host of other, ancillary claims made by Ayatari on the strength of this supposedly “authentic” textual artifact. The preface to *Kuse monogatari*, which was written nearly two years before the publication of *Yoshi ya ashi ya*, therefore may be said to represent Akinari’s first documented critical response to the problem of authenticity in *Ise* textual variants.

Moriyama Shigeo (1989) draws convincing correlations between some of the details in the description of the fictive *Kuse monogatari* manuscript and issues raised in philological debates on the authenticity of certain textual versions of *Ise monogatari*. For one, he cites a correlation between the image of a lacquered bucket and the namesake of a textual variant of *Ise monogatari* whose authenticity was hotly contested in Akinari’s day, the *Nurigome-bon Ise monogatari* 塗籠本伊勢物語 (Lacquered casket *Ise monogatari*), so called because its original manuscript was believed to have been discovered in a lacquered casket in the palace of the retired emperor Suzaku-in 朱雀院 (923–52, r. 930–46) (Moriyama 1989, 125–26). The fact that a Suzaku brothel, not an imperial palace, becomes the site of the *Kuse monogatari* manuscript’s discovery illustrates how this text makes light of an otherwise serious philological debate. Elsewhere in the preface, we find a mock rehearsal of general debates about the authorship of *Ise monogatari*. Yaboden refers to a fictional discourse about the authorship of the *Kuse monogatari* manuscript, stating that there is some disagreement over the identity of the author. According to some, the author may have been a middle captain, or *chūjō* 中将, from the provinces—that is, the very same rank as one of the putative authors of *Ise monogatari*, Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–80). According to others, he may have been an anonymous renunciant.

It is doubtful that these metafictional ruses actually fooled Akinari’s readers into thinking that *Kuse monogatari* was found in a brothel or that there was any real question about its authorship. Their function in the preface instead seems to have been to remind readers of debates on the authenticity of *Ise monogatari* variants and, through invocation of this discourse, to prepare readers to approach this highly unconventional work of fiction as they would a textual artifact. This metafiction can be seen to have facilitated reception of *Kuse monogatari* in two respects: first, by offering an amusing explanation for the material format of the work, which Akinari’s early readers would have encountered in manuscript, not printed, form;
and second, by establishing the premise for the inclusion—and solicitation—of marginal commentary, a structural convention more commonly encountered in philological scholarship than in popular fiction.

**Kuse Monogatari** as Scribal Text

Among all of the works of narrative fiction by Ueda Akinari, *Kuse monogatari* is unique for its inclusion of marginal and interlinear commentary, as well as for the unconventional circumstances of its dissemination, which were predicated upon the private circulation and hand-copying of manuscripts by a select few of the author’s literary acquaintances. This exclusive, scribal mode of dissemination and reproduction makes *Kuse monogatari* an interesting case study for considering how alternative modes of literary production arose in resistance to the institutional hegemonies of early modern print, which by the late eighteenth century had come to dominate virtually all aspects of literary production in Japan. Though some scribal traditions had managed to survive as the circumstances demanded, albeit among niche constituencies of readers and writers like copyists of contraband books and initiates into strictly guarded transmissions of knowledge—the culinary arts and esoteric Buddhism, to name but two—manual copying and distribution of books was not seen as a viable way of bringing a work to the attention of a popular readership. During the latter decades of the eighteenth century in particular, it would have been incumbent on any writer with commercial aspirations to become aligned with a successful publishing house, such as that of Tsutaya Jūzaburō in Edo, and through its productive and promotional capacities reach readers numbering in the thousands, not dozens.

If Akinari’s decision to circumvent the usual modes of production and distribution with *Kuse monogatari* was disadvantageous to his own prospects for commercial success, it was not without other, practical benefits to his literary project. By forestalling publication of his work so that he could share it in manuscript form, Akinari was able to engage his readers in the editing and revision of *Kuse monogatari*, essentially opening up his work to a series of collaborative negotiations between author and reader that would have been impossible with a printed text. Moreover, this mode of coterie reading and editing served to complement and enhance the parodic premise of the work itself. Akinari’s day was witness to a number of debates about the authenticity of *Ise monogatari* variants, some of which were redactions with an extensive textual lineage, and others which were little more than hoaxes, concocted by dissembling scholars. Akinari plays to the topicality of these debates in the preface to *Kuse monogatari*. The congruence of this metafiction with debates over textual authenticity in current philological discourse on *Ise monogatari* would have been apparent to many of Akinari’s
readers, who were privy to this scholarship. Through their participation in the reading, copying, and editing of *Kuse monogatari*—an inauthentic variant of *Ise monogatari* in its right—these readers may be said to have caballed in a comic rehearsal of philological methodologies, embroidering glosses and comments on a text that was hardly amenable to such serious interpolation. However, as we shall see, Akinari had practical reasons for engaging his readers in this manner.

**Coterie Reading & Revision of *Kuse Monogatari***

Akinari completed his first draft of *Kuse monogatari* in the early spring of 1791, after only ten weeks of writing. Revision, on the other hand, would occupy him for the next several years, as he rewrote portions of the main text and added marginal commentary. During this process, Akinari circulated a series of working manuscripts among a small coterie of readers—mostly scholars, poets, and literary types like himself—beginning with one manuscript dated 1793. As stated in all versions of the preface to *Kuse monogatari*, Akinari intended to make his work available only to a circle of like-minded *share* 浪落, or wits. Presumably this handpicked group of readers would have been far better disposed to appreciate the recondite wit of this work than a general audience. *Kuse monogatari* was not, after all, a conventional work of literary parody which any reader with a smattering of classical learning could readily appreciate. Although patterned loosely after *Ise monogatari*, with citations of its famous recurring line—*mukashi, otoko arikeri*むかし、をとこありけり (*long ago, there was a man*)—*Kuse monogatari* presumed a familiarity with certain cultural institutions of the time as much as with major works of classical literature. As a narrative, it is conceived as a pastiche of satirical vignettes set in *haikai* 俳諧 (poetry) circles, *sencha* 煎茶 (tea) circles, and *kokugaku* 国学 (nativist philology) academies, featuring thinly veiled caricatures of personalities whom many of Akinari’s readers would have been in a position to know. Indeed, more so than its parodic premise, it was arguably from this referentiality to well-known institutions and personalities that most readers would have derived humor and enjoyment of the text.

A letter from one of Akinari’s most enthusiastic readers, Morikawa Chikusō, illustrates how *Kuse monogatari* was read in this manner. Morikawa was a well-known calligrapher and engraver in Osaka whom Akinari met in 1787 through the offices of Kimura Kenkadō 木村蒹葭堂 (1736–1802), celebrated doyen of Osaka literary circles. The two men met on at least eight more occasions after their initial introduction, all the while maintaining an active epistolary correspondence. In his letter to Akinari, dated 1793, Morikawa gratefully acknowledges receipt of the “much talked about *Kuse monogatari*,” explaining how he has read the manuscript more
than once and found its guiding premise, namely the idea that every person is afflicted with eccentric habits or compulsions—in Japanese, kuse癖—to be very true:

I have read your much talked about new work, *Kuse monogatari*, on two separate occasions, more carefully the second time around. The monk from Ten’oji Temple who practices medicine, the wealthy old man, and Horie the calligrapher—it is almost as if I am looking at all of these characters as you describe them, which may be one reason why I have read and reread your work without tiring of it. Truly it may be said that every person has his own kuse: people of talent make talent their companion, and tricksters make a habit out of duping others with their trickery. Either way, it is difficult to allow these eccentric talents, these kuse, to go to waste without using them. . . . I have made a copy of *Kuse monogatari*, and now send the original manuscript back to you. (Ueda 1993, 15)

This letter is an invaluable document in the study of *Kuse monogatari* for several reasons. First, it is one of only a few documented critical reactions to the text by one of Akinari’s hand-picked readers, one which highlights the work’s underlying premise of satirizing contemporary personalities and institutions rather than merely parodying *Ise monogatari* per se. Second, it explicitly refers to the process by which the text was disseminated and reproduced, that is, via hand-copying of manuscripts that were circulated by post. It is evident from the extant letters that epistolary exchange was an important means of communication between Akinari and his readers, through which readers could confirm reception of the manuscript, share their critical reactions to the work, and even offer advice on improving it. Equally important, since living in reclusion deprived Akinari of the propinquity of literary acquaintances with whom he had once comported himself in person, these letters—and the very pretext of sharing *Kuse monogatari* manuscripts—afforded him a practical means of sustaining important social ties when meeting face to face was impractical.

In addition to Morikawa, the identities of two other readers can be gleaned from the extant letters. These include Nakahara Kunite 中原国手, an Osaka physician, and Hashimoto Tsunezuke 橋本経亮, an aspiring philological scholar who studied under Akinari during the early Kansei 寛政 period (1789–1801). However, Akinari’s circle of readers is conjectured to have been larger than these three, including such figures as Kimura Ken-kadō; the poets Takayasu Ro’oku 高安蘆屋 (d. late 1790s) and Eda Nagayasu 江田世恭 (d. 1795); Fujii no Kō 藤家孝 (1751–1818); Ōzawa Shun-gyaku 大沢春邉 (1732–1801); sencha tea connoisseur Totoki Baigai 十時梅崖 (1749–1804); and Tsuga Teishō 都賀庭鐘 (1718–95), Akinari’s teacher of traditional medicine. For the most part, *Kuse monogatari*’s early readership was comprised of literati from Osaka and Kyoto, although Akinari is believed to have sent a copy of the manuscript to one notable exception from
Edo: famed poet, fiction writer, and essayist Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749–1823).

Ensuring that his text came into the hands of readers disposed to appreciate its content does not appear to have been the only thing Akinari had in mind when sending out copies of his manuscript. In a letter to Nakahara Kunite, dated 1793, Akinari explicitly solicits editorial feedback on his manuscript, explaining that his aim is to prepare *Kuse monogatari* for publication:

> I recently asked Hashimoto to return this manuscript of *Kuse monogatari* to me. He has made a number of very detailed corrections, and I have followed his advice by tempering my unrefined style. You may paste editorial notes throughout the text, for there will surely be things that you see fit to change. The manuscript will then be sent up to the capital after final revisions. I pray that it may sell well enough to cover the costs of paper and ink for this poor old recluse. (Nakamura 1993, 463)

While Akinari clearly invokes the qualities of reclusion and poverty in these closing lines for rhetorical effect, burnishing his image as a literary recluse, the other details of the letter concerning the manuscript’s editing and revision appear free of such embellishment. This letter serves as a valuable supplement to Morikawa’s letter, insofar as it includes the author’s own explanation of his intentions in circulating the text and more explicit details about the material aspects of textual revision. As is evident from this excerpt, Akinari was willing to cede a degree of editorial control over his text and to make revisions in line with the comments of his readers—remarkably, even those of his younger pupil, Hashimoto Tsunezuke, who is mentioned in the letter. Nakahara, who appears to have been the next in line after Hashimoto to receive a copy of the manuscript, is encouraged to peruse the manuscript and record his comments on *oshigami* 押し紙, slips of paper that could have been inscribed with editorial notes and pasted directly onto the page wherever editing was deemed necessary.

In this manner were Akinari’s readers encouraged to augment manuscripts currently in circulation with their own revisions or additions. Although no detailed attributions exist to establish who revised or added to the main text, or to assess how much textual accretion in the later manuscripts is attributable to reader contributions, there can be no doubt that Akinari engaged his readers in the process. Besides instances of textual evidence from his letters that reveal this process, there were also many practical reasons for wanting to do so. Akinari had set out to write a satire of various personalities and cultural institutions in Kyoto and Osaka, including the schools of philology that were so actively involved in deliberation over the textual authenticity of *Ise monogatari* redactions. However, since Akinari was living at a distance from both cities, he necessarily relied on the eyes and ears of those who still resided in Kyoto and Osaka to confirm
the veracity of his depictions, to confirm, as it were, the authenticity of his own text. A letter like Morikawa Chikusō’s, although it contains high praise for the work and its guiding premise of kouse, would have been far more valuable to Akinari as confirmation that his character depictions were true to life. For Akinari, the decision to include his readers in the review and revision of early Kuse monogatari manuscripts was motivated by a need to confirm the authenticity of the content contained therein.

**Comic Commentary**

Comparative analysis of extant Kuse monogatari manuscripts reveals that the most salient changes made to the text during its extensive period of coterie revision were a re-ordering of the sequences of vignettes and an expansion of the marginal commentary. A number of revisions to passages in the main text are also evident, although they are not as conspicuous. At least a few of Akinari’s readers, including Hashimoto Tsunezuke, saw fit to make revisions to the main text for stylistic reasons—although, if the gradual accretion of commentary from manuscript to manuscript is any indication, more readers contributed lemma of marginal commentary than revised the main text. In total, the number of lemma in Kuse monogatari increased by at least seventeen during its gestation in manuscript form. The two earliest extant manuscript copies of Kuse monogatari archived at Tenri University Library and Tokyo Kyo¯iku University include fifty-three and fifty-six lemma of commentary, respectively. Compare this with the first printed edition of Kuse monogatari, which includes seventy lemma of commentary (Nakamura 1993, 464–73).

In most manuscript versions of Kuse monogatari, the commentary is situated above corresponding passages of the main text in the top margin of the page; in a few instances, lemma can be found in the interlinear margins. Concomitant with this material division between text and commentary is a certain discursive incompatibility between the anonymous narrator, who regales the reader with his accounts of trends and happenings in the cultural enclaves of Kyoto and Osaka, and the pedantic commentator, Yaboden, who subjects this narrative to undue philological scrutiny. It is from the clash of these two discordant discourses that much of the humor of Kuse monogatari derives.

The commentarial mode used in Kuse monogatari is identified in the preface as kashira-kaki かしら書, literally, “writing in the top margin of the page.” Incidentally, kashira-kaki was the commentarial mode of choice in many of the most important works of early modern Ise monogatari philology, including Kamo no Mabuchi’s Ise monogatari ko’i. The fact that Akinari was at work editing Mabuchi’s study when he wrote Kuse monogatari may have had something to do with his decision to experiment with kashira-kaki; but
this decision could have also been informed by a convention, established in a number of earlier parodies of Ise monogatari, to employ this commentarial mode for the glossing of slang expressions and cultural references. One such work in this category is Kōshoku Ise monogatari, which, in its first printed edition (1686) was billed as a take-off on Ise monogatari with “vulgar commentary written in the top margins” (Yoshida 1981, 153–54). The so-called vulgar commentary, or zokuchū, is situated in the top margin of nearly every page of this text, with the beginning of each individual lemma indicated by a circular mark. Occasionally the commentary breaches the paginated margin, filling the indentations between individual episodes or the interlinear space between waka (poetic verses) and their surrounding prose contexts. Even when it encroaches on the main text, however, the text of the zokuchū commentary is easily identifiable because it is written in a much smaller script than the main text. In terms of content, the commentary of Kōshoku Ise monogatari is devoted almost exclusively to the explication of jargon of the pleasure quarters. Although an understanding of these terms is in some cases necessary for making sense of the story, more often than not the main purpose of these glosses seems to be to privy readers to brothel parlance.

Like the kashira-kaki commentary of Kōshoku Ise monogatari, the commentary of Kuse monogatari abounds in glosses of jargon and cultural references. However, since the setting of the narrative is not the pleasure quarters but institutions of cultural production like haikai circles and kokugaku philological academies, the content of these glosses consists primarily of allusions to canonical literary works and definitions of antiquated expressions. Of the seventy glosses in the first printed edition of Kuse monogatari, thirty-one are glosses of individual words and expressions, fifteen are allusions to Chinese literary works, thirteen are allusions to Japanese literary works including Ise monogatari, six are references to works of contemporary drama, five are references to arts like music and tea, and two are references to kokugaku scholarship. This distribution gives a sense of the range of interests that informed the commentary, which is characterized by an overriding concern for the semantic meanings of individual words and expressions, and for textual correspondences with canonical literary works like Ise monogatari and Genji monogatari. It resembles the commentary of Kōshoku Ise monogatari in several points of form, although it makes an additional, orthographical distinction between the commentary and the main text: whereas the main text of Kuse monogatari is written in kanji and the hiragana syllabary, the commentary is written in a combination of kanji and the katakana syllabary.

While Kuse monogatari co-opts a form of commentary found in philological studies of Ise monogatari, a few examples will serve to illustrate how it is repurposed for comic effect. In response to the following passage in the
main text: “All of a sudden, he was able to amass a vast quantity of gold like the girl who was born from a bamboo plant,” the commentator Yaboden makes a point of clarifying an all too obvious literary reference for the reader: “The girl who was born from a bamboo plant is a reference to Princess Kaguya (of Taketori monogatari 竹取物語). You can appreciate this if you have read the tale” (Ueda 1993, 49). Other lines of commentary go over the top in their explications of passages from the text, reading more like a laundry list of the commentator’s random thoughts than a precise gloss of the words or expressions in question. One such example of this may be found above the following passage from the twenty-second vignette: “Things that grow in the morning and the evening ripen before their time. He preferred things that ripened late. He never tired of them.” In glossing the expression “things that ripen before their time,” the commentator resorts to the enumerative rhetoric of mono-zukushi ものづくし and lists seemingly every vegetable he can think of that falls under this definition: “Things that ripen before their time: gourds and eggplants in the second month; raw radish that is dried almost as soon as its root is cut from leaves; bitter gourds at the end of autumn; bamboo shoots in the wintertime, and the like” (Ueda 1993, 49). In neither case can the commentary be said to aid or enrich the reader’s understanding of the main text; at times it becomes an unnecessary distraction which bespeaks, if nothing else, the all too obvious deficiencies of conventional philological apparatuses.

Posthumous Publication

In many ways, the posthumous publication of Kuse monogatari by four independent publishing houses in Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo in 1823 brought closure to the text’s long period of gestation. The transition from manuscript to print imposed a form on Kuse monogatari that may or may not have fulfilled the author’s aspirations for his work; however, since Akinari and nearly all of his early readers, with the notable exception of Morikawa Chikusō, had died before its publication, there was no possibility of further collaborative work on its revision. Its appearance in print, while signaling the end of the dynamic collaborative processes that had shaped and authenticated its content, also occasioned a sense of nostalgia for the original circumstances of its circulation and reception. As if to offer readers of the printed text a sense of what it might have been like to receive a manuscript copy of the text from the author directly, and to enjoy direct correspondence with him, all published versions of Kuse monogatari open with a reprint of the letter from Morikawa to Akinari, followed by Akinari’s preface in the voice of Yaboden, Bumpkin of the Capital.

Of course, no arrangement of front matter, however dedicatory in tone, could recreate the experience of being a coterie reader and collaborator dur-
ing *Kuse monogatari*’s early period of reception. This had as much to do with the material possibilities and limitations of the text as with the ontic problem of living in a particular moment. As a series of handwritten manuscripts which could be pasted over with commentary and editorial critique by readers, and in turn read by the author himself, *Kuse monogatari* occasioned a mode of collaboration between reader and author that would have been impossible in print. While challenging readers to confront the problem of authenticity on many levels, *Kuse monogatari* raises compelling questions about classical literature, philological scholarship, and the privileging of the text in both discourses.

**Note**


**References**


Extramarital Relationships, Masculinity, and Gender Relations in Vietnam

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In most of their forms, extramarital activities by Vietnamese men are not perceived as infidelity or adultery. Extramarital relationships often facilitate male bonding and are important signifiers of Vietnamese masculinity and male privilege. However, Vietnamese men face significant role strain as their wives become better educated, more independent, and contribute greater amounts to the family income. This article, based on both primary and secondary data—including 220 survey interviews conducted by Nguyen and three assistants in all three regions of Vietnam in 2006 and 22 in-depth follow-up interviews in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Vinh Long by Harris in 2007—presents a typology of extramarital relationships in Vietnam and considers their development and further evolution vis-à-vis issues of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.

Framing Vietnamese Views toward Male Sexuality

In Vietnam, extramarital relationships are viewed differently than they are in most countries in the West. Unofficial health-research statistics (Elmer 2001; Tran and others 2006) have shown that approximately 70 percent of Vietnamese husbands have engaged in extramarital relationships. In Vietnam, the concept of extramarital relationship carries a wide range of meanings and implications—including a man going to a masseuse, seeking a sex worker or party girl, having a sweetheart (or sweethearts), and even having a second “wife.” In fact, Vietnamese men are not likely to view most of these forms of extramarital relationships as adulterous or as signs of infidelity. As this article shows, extramarital relationships in Vietnam are seen as a form of male privilege and a process of male identification and bonding; they are not seen as causes or consequences of a failed relationship between a husband and a wife.

Extramarital relationships are an important signifier of masculinity in Vietnam. Historically, having more than one wife indicated a man’s high
status and wealth; currently, for many men and their male friends and colleagues, having sexual relationships with women other than their wives indicates “maleness,” sexual potency, and prestige. Sociologically, extramarital affairs transcend—and transgress—the dyadic relationship of a husband and wife. They are a phenomenon of men in groups: They are about male friends, business relations, and colleagues; about what each of these male cohorts thinks and admires; about how men cover for each other and keep their affairs secret from their wives; and about how men reproduce the signifiers of masculine identity in one another. These male relationships, so tellingly reinforced in various reference groups, are an essential component of Vietnamese culture and its views of sexuality (see Harris 1998).

This article, based on survey field research and in-depth interviews carried out by the authors, demonstrates how the concept of extramarital relationships is revealed to be culturally framed and enacted in Vietnam in the broader context of the reproduction of masculinity and gender relations.

Marital & Extramarital Relationships in Language

Traditional Folk Stories

Ca dao are a special type of traditional folk literature in Vietnam. Falling into a genre used by peasants in the Vietnamese language, they can be contrasted with poems in classical Chinese that were the preferred form of expression for scholars and mandarins (and were inaccessible to the majority of Vietnamese). Ca dao are an orally transmitted genre with a history of over one thousand years. Because ca dao remained outside the purview of feudal governments, they can be viewed as revelatory of the concerns of ordinary Vietnamese—as truthful sources of everyday life. Ca dao were indeed candid about many topics that were highly regulated by Confucianism, such as arranged marriage, polygamy, concubines, wives complaining about husbands and mother-in-laws, and conjugal infidelity.

For example, take this traditional Đông Hồ woodblock print (fig. 1), over three hundred years old, which tells a ca dao story with this accompanying text:

The wife says to the husband’s sweetheart:
“Măng non nâuvoigàđông. Thíchhoímòitrânxemchòngvèài.”
You’re the bamboo shoot [young]; I’m a field hen [old and experienced]. Let’s fight and see who’ll win him.

The son says to his mother:
“Mẹ vètamátmgìnhgoi. Ham thanhchưonglambilàctàytoivoíd.”
Mom, let’s go home and take a rest. If Dad wants adventures, let him be.

The husband says to his wife:
“Thòithôinòuônglamlành. Chi đieu sinhsinhthucminhnhuct.”
My dear, let’s calm down. You make a fuss out of this, and we all will be embarrassed.
Note the emphasis on permitting the husband to have his extramarital relationship, affirmed by the young son as merely an adventure, and expressed by the husband who exhorts his wife that her jealousy—not his behavior—is an embarrassment and will dishonor the family. A story of a husband’s extramarital behavior is not anachronistic even today. Vietnamese wives must endure them. When a Vietnamese wife is confronted with her husband’s extramarital relationships, whether with a sex worker or sweetheart, she may look inward to understand her “failure” rather than demand that he terminate his extramarital relationships.

This ca dao example shows that a man having relationships with several women is not a new phenomenon but is rooted in Vietnamese tradition. Today, even though polygamy and prostitution are illegal, extramarital relationships are common. Although only 18 percent of the respondents we interviewed admitted to having had extramarital relationships, 92 percent said they knew people who have had extramarital relationships. This discrepancy suggests that many respondents were probably not being honest about their own situations and that extramarital relationships are ordinary for Vietnamese men. In fact, contemporary language about sexuality and extramarital relationships is rich and can be divided into several categories based on the type of metaphors invoked: food, animals, and family.
Food Analogies & Metaphors

The Vietnamese refer to the wife as “rice” (com) the staple they eat everyday, and the sweetheart as “noodle” (phở). Vietnamese noodles are also made from rice, but they represent a fancier form—and one that the Vietnamese consume often but not necessarily on a daily basis. The concept is filled with imagery and can be expressed as follows, in contemporary parlance: The husband takes his “rice” [wife] to have noodles for breakfast, then takes his “noodle” [sweetheart] to have rice for lunch. In the evening, “rice” returns to rice’s home, and “noodle” returns to noodle’s home; the husband eats rice but thinks of noodles.

The wife is also sometimes called com nguôi, the term for the rice left over from the previous meal that is old and is no longer delicious; and pre-marital sex is described as “eating the rice before the dinner gong is beaten” (ăn com trước kềng). Similar to “rice and noodle” (com phở), but used mainly in the South, is nem and chả. One male respondent explained that nem (roll) and chả (pancake) have different tastes but are both made from pork. Because nem refers to a woman other than one’s wife, a man’s relationship with her could be described as “meaty nem” (nem mặn) if sex is involved—and as “vegetarian nem” (nem chay) if it is not. In the context of Buddhism, vegetarianism is the diet of monks, men who do not eat meat and do not have sex. Stereotypically, vegetarian nem is portrayed as a relationship between a man and a woman who work at the same office and share emotional intimacy. These emotional liaisons are threatening to the marriage because vegetarian nem can evolve into meaty nem, and the woman could become a sweetheart. For most Vietnamese men, going to sex workers means only a kind of service will be rendered. Metaphorically, such relationships are described to emphasize the economics of a sustenance-based transaction: “if you eat the cake, you pay for the cake” (ăn bánh trả tiền). These relationships are absent of emotional intimacy. Finally, if one is engaged in an extramarital relationship, one is said to “eat on the sly” (ăn vừng).

As briefly described, then, the Vietnamese have an entire metaphorical vocabulary borrowed from the language of food for talking about relationships between a man and many women. As should be expected, the food analogies mentioned above go hand in hand with how women describe their relationships with men. Women often use slang terms that typically refer to the capturing of prey: to “catch a fish” (bắt cá), to “go hunting” (săn), or to “trap” (bẫy). Because men like to eat, women provide “bait” to trap, hunt, or catch men. The Vietnamese language clearly indicates that the men are the eaters and the women, the feeders.

Animal Analogies & Metaphors

In addition to food, Vietnamese men and women describe themselves and their relationships with language about animals. Many Vietnamese men
assume that they have the “blood of the goat” (máu dê), an animal that is believed to be sexually hyperactive. It is no surprise that Vietnamese men drink wine mixed with goat blood and eat goat testicles with the hopes of increasing their sexual stamina. If a man is being cheated on by his wife, he is a cuckold and is “wearing the horn” (câm sừng). After having children, a wife becomes “an old sow” (lợn sề) with unappealingly flabby breasts.

Extramarital relationships are expressed as “chasing the bird, catching the butterfly” (duỗi chim bạt buóm). The “bee and the butterfly” (ong buóm) is a phrase used to indicate the wife and the other women; and “the cat eats fat” (mèo mồ) implies that one cannot say “no” to an attractive person, just as the cat never turns down fat. Vietnamese men also say they expect, after several years of marriage, that “the cat wants fresh fish with which to play” (mèo nào chẳng muốn ăn cá mới).

Forms & Hierarchies of Extramarital Relationships in Vietnam

The concept of extramarital relationship is divided into sexual and non-sexual relationships, each of which contains a wide range of meanings. Within sex relationships is the following hierarchy: at the bottom is engaging in manual or oral sex with a masseuse—acts that many Vietnamese men do not even consider to be extramarital sex—followed by the seeking of sexual liaisons. Sexual liaisons occur on three socio-economic levels: (1) with low-income sex workers who work on the street; (2) with middle-income sex workers in small restaurants, hair salons, clubs, or cafés; and (3) with high-income sex workers in discotheques, night clubs, and other expensive entertainment venues (Rekart 2001). Another way of classifying relationship levels is to refer to a party girl who is a young and attractive as a “girlfriend” who has no commitment and easily leaves one man for another man, depending on who spends more money on her. The next level involves emotional attachment: a sweetheart or a second “wife.”

In Vietnamese, a party girl is called an em út, the youngest sister in a family who often receives a lot of attention and money from older people; and a second “wife” is called “small wife” (vợ nhỏ or vợ bé), which indicates a strong relationship and commitment that is slightly less than that with a “big” wife.

Most Western cultures normally recognize four main categories of adult male–female relationships: wife, mistress, affair, and prostitute. Boundaries are significantly ruptured when a married man engages in an extramarital relationship with a mistress or prostitute or by having an affair. However, in Vietnam, because extramarital relationships have a hierarchal and categorical structure, moving from one category to another does not create such a great rupture. Consider table 1 as a summary of the relationship patterns just identified. Note that, as one moves toward the top of the table (within
either the Western or Vietnamese columns), increasing amounts of financial and emotional investment are made in the relationship. Not listed on the table are “normal” marital relationships between a husband and a wife.

The categories of extramarital relationships shown in table 1 could be considered consumption categories, and they mirror the processes of industrialization and globalization that create class-based societies. In a class-based system, the masseuse is at the bottom and the small wife is at the top. As rank in the hierarchy increases, so do monetary investment and emotional attachment on the part of the man involved. When a man has a sweetheart or a small wife, he also holds the reciprocal status of boyfriend or husband; with such status comes the role of a provider. That is why having a sweetheart or a small wife entails both financial and emotional responsibility. The class system and its connection with industrialization also mean that some of the categories of extramarital relationships did not exit in the past (such as masseuse, party girl, and small wife), or, in rural areas, they were not as clearly differentiated (for example, the three-way division among classes of sex worker).

### The Construction of Vietnamese Femininity

Vietnamese women are constructed as the keepers of morality. The strongly held Vietnamese belief of *phúc đức* (merit and virtue) works against the interests of women. *Phúc đức* is similar to karma: the merits one gains can pass on to succeeding generations. Vietnamese believe that *phúc đức tai mâu*: merit and virtue are caused by the mother. A good woman of proper conduct
and morals can bring happiness and good fortune to her family; and a bad woman brings tragedy and despair. Men, not restricted by this belief, are freer and are not judged if they engage in bad conduct, such as drinking, gambling, or cheating. When asked whether they were angry when finding out their spouses had had sweethearts, 48 percent of our male respondents said “yes,” because it meant their wives were unethical, while only 38 percent of our female respondents said the same thing of their husbands. If their spouses had sought sex workers, the gap between male and female responses was bigger: 55 percent for men versus 34 percent for women. As the morality keepers, women were also used as by men to excuse venturing outside of marriage: many male respondents said that, if the women with whom they hoped to have extramarital relationships refused, then they (the men) would not have engaged in extramarital relationships.

Second, a double standard exists regarding sexuality for men and women in Vietnam. Only women are expected to remain virgins until marriage. According to Go and others (2002), when questions on premarital sex were posed to participants in four focus groups of 24 adults (12 men, 12 women) in the city of Hai Phong in northern Vietnam in 1998, the focus immediately shifted to women, and only consequences to women were discussed. The omission of men in these discussions suggests two possibilities: First, the Vietnamese have an underlying assumption that men are inherently sexual, and, therefore, premarital sex for them is socially acceptable. Second, Vietnamese women are considered property that needs to be protected before being given to the owner—the husband. Most women and men in the 1998 focus groups believed that a woman should not have premarital sex in order to maintain the respect of her boyfriend or future husband and his family. The double standard, according to Phảm’s criticism (1999), means that women’s sexuality exists only for serving men. Respondents, male and female alike, believed that women, unlike men, have few sexual desires and are able to restrain their sexual passions; therefore, women should not have (or be interested in having) extramarital relationships. This belief masks the cultural construction of femininity and naturalizes a cultural construction: The Vietnamese do not want the women to have much sex, so they justify this position by claiming that Vietnamese women naturally have low sex drives.

Third, Vietnamese women are both oriented and bound toward their families. The Vietnamese believe that women cannot find happiness outside of marriage. Once in a marriage, the wife is the main caregiver and is responsible for family happiness and wellbeing. Because the role of the woman in the family is so important, she must make her family a priority and therefore is not allowed to have extramarital relationships. A male respondent in the research carried out by Go and others (2002) offered the following:
It is said that a man in the family is like the roof of a house and the woman is like the shoulder strap to raise the roof. A house has one roof but many shoulder straps. The woman has to take care of many tasks. If a woman has a love affair, she might not have time for her duty to look after the children so her sins would be considered more serious than a man’s. (475)

In the national contest launched in 2006 (and again in 2007) by the National Television Network to exemplify the “model” of a modern Vietnamese woman, “Vietnamese Women of the 21st Century,” one of the criteria was “has a career but her family is still the base” or “is successful in work outside the home but still manages the family well.” This criterion reinforces the double burden Vietnamese women have been shouldering (domestic work—which is unpaid—versus paid work outside the home) and makes the family most important for Vietnamese women.

The construction of women as family keepers socially and psychologically prevents women from having extramarital relationships. In our survey interviews, 93 percent of male respondents believed that their spouses have been completely faithful to them; however, the corresponding number for female respondents is only 61 percent.

Contemporary literature reinforces Vietnamese women’s attachment to the family. Numerous Vietnamese short stories have women’s search for love ending in disillusionment because, even though men talk about love, their love extends only as far as the bedroom—and because happiness in extramarital affairs is an illusion, not the solution to marital problems. Vietnamese society generally still assumes that a woman can find happiness only within her marriage, not outside of it (Phan and Pham 2003).

However, as more women become educated and independent, many choose not to follow the social rules imposed on them. Albert Hirschman (1970) presented these classic alternatives to loyalty: resisting through complaints and refusal to cooperate or exiting the system altogether. More and more Vietnamese women are leaving the system by getting married to foreigners, particularly Taiwanese and Koreans. They choose to exit because, as one 23-year-old Vietnamese woman in Ho Chi Minh City rhetorically asked: “Is it possible in this economic-driven time to still believe in ‘one cottage and two golden hearts’? If I stay home and marry a farmer who says he loves me but gambles and drinks all day—makes one but spends ten—would I be happy?” Some women who choose to exit the system are criticized for going after money. In fact, they are being attacked for their disloyalty and lack of nationalism and authenticity (since they are appearing to choose materialism over love) and for their insults to Vietnamese masculinity. (Vietnamese men feel ashamed and angry if not able to “protect” their women.)

Other women exit the system by choosing not to marry. Those who do not exit voice their discontent. Many female writers have begun to chal-
lenge whether marriage really brings happiness to women by writing about the bitterness and disappointment in marriage and its consequences on women, both married and unmarried (Phan and Phảm 2003). Still, these authors do not know what the way out is for their female protagonists. Others, such as the famous screenwriter and film director Lê Hoàng (2003), criticize Vietnamese men’s behaviors and publicly support women getting married to Taiwanese men:

> It is true that before judging a woman, the men have to judge themselves first, and 1,000 times more seriously. I go to the countryside many times, and I am very frightened to see that at 5 or 6 PM, most of the men go drinking. I see them going along the streets and singing, as they are drunk. If I were a woman marrying such a man and had to tell myself that I was happy because I married a Vietnamese man, that would be impossible for me.

At the same time, the Women’s Union, government institutions, and international organizations have been funding research on gender, particularly on marital relationships, family, and prostitution. These efforts to reshape masculinity and femininity may, in the long run, help create changes in gender relationships.

**Male Sexuality & Extramarital Relationships**

The dominant construction of women as keepers of the family and as sexually inferior to men is complementary of and necessary to the construction of men as familially disconnected and sexually superior breadwinners. The nature of this relation in Vietnam hinges on the binary view of yin and yang, two different parts that, together, create harmony. In other words, men and women have to be different; they cannot be the same and equal in order to live harmoniously together. Neil Jamieson (1993) comments that:

> Yang is defined by a tendency toward male dominance, high redundancy, low entropy, complex and rigid hierarchy, competition, and strict orthodoxy focused on rules for behavior based on social roles. Yin is defined by a tendency toward greater egalitarianism and flexibility, more female participation, mechanisms to dampen competition and conflict, high entropy, low redundancy, and more emphasis on feeling, empathy, and spontaneity. (12–13)

Vietnamese men believe that sexuality is one indicator of masculinity, and, since their wives cannot satisfy their sexual needs, they must engage in extramarital relationships. Sex workers are favored partners, because they are believed to be different from other women in terms of their sexual abilities. Although, regardless of gender, more of our respondents said the wife is not obligated to have sex with the husband than did those who said she is obligated, the response to the sexual obligation of the husband is different. More than half of our female respondents said the husband is not obligated
to have sex with the wife; but half of our male respondents said the husband is obligated (statistically significant at a 0.5 percent level). These data show that sexuality is an important component of masculinity.

Sexual drive is also one of the reasons respondents used to explain or rationalize men’s extramarital relationships. Among our respondents, 21 percent agreed that a husband could have a sweetheart, and 31 percent agreed that a husband could seek sex workers to satiate his sexual needs.

The construction of masculinity based on sexuality is so strong in Vietnam that this construction becomes quite homogeneous: gender, economic condition, education level, and age are not contributing variables in the consistent ideology about extramarital relationships. The only significant variation is along the urban–rural divide. More men in rural areas said it is acceptable for men to have extramarital relationships than those in urban areas. In fact, 31 percent of the rural men we interviewed indicated it was acceptable to have a sweetheart if the wife did not provide satisfying sex, versus 19 percent of our urban respondents. Correspondingly, 49 percent of rural men approved of using prostitutes, versus 29 percent of urban respondents. These data are interesting in light of the fact that, when a man refuses to seek sex workers, his friends label him “countrified” or “rural” (nhà quê). If the reverse is true, then, rural men engage in extramarital sex in attempts to become “sophisticated” and “urban.”

Sexuality is one of the main components of a Vietnamese “real” man, and it is more important for unmarried men than for married men, whose sexuality is confirmed by their marriage and children. Therefore, seeking sex workers is considered a rite of passage: Married men will take unmarried men to houses of prostitution to initiate their transformation into “real” men (Trần and others 2006). Sexuality is also related to male group behavior: Men visit brothels in groups to bond in order to keep the places among their social networks, after doing business with colleagues, or as a “bribe” for their bosses. Ninety-five percent of our respondents said that they went to sex workers with other men and that their male friends know about their ventures but do not tell the others’ wives. In Vietnam, then, visiting sex workers is typically a group activity.

The reasons for engaging in extramarital relationships include pursuing adventure, fulfilling sexual needs, sustaining jobs and social groups, proving one’s masculinity, producing children, and escaping marital problems. Even when men are satisfied with their marriages, many of them still pursue extramarital relationships. The conflicting attitudes and reasons demonstrate a strong masculine ideology: Vietnamese men have strong sexual desires (the “blood of the goat”); they cannot avoid bonding with other men; and they may wish to distance themselves from their wives and families.

In addition to being labeled “countrified” or “rural” if a man refuses to go with other men to visit sex workers, he may be judged as cheap, scared of
his wife, sexually weak, or cowardly. The “real” Vietnamese man, therefore, is rich or generous, authoritarian over his wife, sexually strong, fearless, and modern. Note how these characteristics are reflective of the ideas of industrialization and urbanization.

Vietnamese culture clearly displays a binary view toward masculinity and femininity. For example, women’s names are typically names for types of flowers or fruit, the moon, kinds of jewelry, or terms akin to “charming.” Men’s names, on the other hand, are those for kings, dragons, strength, or large trees. Women are therefore expected to live up to their names and be beautiful, sweet, fragrant, and gentle, while men should be strong, aggressive, and powerful. If men are not masculine enough, they are said to have the mix of both a man and a woman. Such men are believed to have “eight lives” (tám via), since normal men are thought to have seven lives and normal women, nine. These ambiguous men are also called “gasoline mixed with oil” (xăng pha nhọt); “hens” (as opposed to “cocks”); “hi-fi” (“hi” is pronounced similarly to the number two in Vietnamese, so “hi-fi” refers to a mixture of two different things); or even pê dê, a term meaning “homosexual” that comes from the French word pede, a short form for pédérast (“boy lover”). By calling unmanly men homosexuals, the Vietnamese also imply that gay men are not real men, as defined by a 29-year-old male we interviewed from Ho Chi Minh City: “A real man is one who feels desirous when looking at women, wants to see women who are scantily clad, and dreams of women’s bodies.” The double standard in the construction of masculinity and femininity regarding sexuality—a “real” man has a high sex drive and a “proper” woman has a low sex drive—suggests that a homosexual man is a feminine man and a sex worker is, conversely, a masculine woman.

In short, sexuality and extramarital relationships are strongly emphasized in Vietnamese culture as components of masculinity. However, some resistance to this value system has begun coming from both Vietnamese men and women. Some men have never had any extramarital relationships and refuse to go to sex workers when asked by friends. They come up with excuses: they may say they are exhausted, too drunk, simply not in the mood, or wish to return or remain at home to have sex with their wives (known as doing trìbar, or “homework”). The wives, in turn, have their own prevention strategies: they may have sex with their husbands before the men go out or may call them at pre-determined times (Tran and others 2006). Also notable, however, is that men who have never had extramarital relationships may not be sure how long they can maintain their behaviors.

Gender Relations, Gender Tensions

Heavily influenced by the ideology of yin and yang, Vietnamese masculinity and femininity are culturally constructed as inherently different but
complementary. The women are caregivers, creating stability and harmony through their female networks. They are traditionally confined to households and small business within their local environs. They are also constrained by the ideology of karma and merit (phúc đức), generating merit for generations to come. In other words, to borrow the concept of “integry” from Elise Boulding (1980), Vietnamese women, working in their small female networks (space), are the glue among generations (time) for the creation of stable families, the essential foundation and support of Vietnamese life. Women in the past have often been restricted in their domains—primarily the household, the paddy, and the village market; and the public spaces dominated by men are not frequented by women.

Vietnamese men, on the other hand, do not serve as familial glue and do not need to create and save up merit; they merely need to provide economically for their families. They spend more time working outside of the home and engaging in social interaction at the bia hoi (beer hall), café, or karaoke bar with their male friends. And they may also engage in extramarital relationships. They have little responsibility for critical matters of the past and the future, which include taking care of both the young and the old. To apply yet another food-related metaphor, it is not a stretch to say that a “real” Vietnamese man spends his married life moving among places outside the home and frequently “eating out.” This present orientation of the Vietnamese man is distinct and contrary to the generational responsibilities of a Vietnamese woman. In short, Vietnamese women concern themselves with the past and the future in the home. Vietnamese men, in contrast, primarily concern themselves with the present in the public.

The family is the key social institution in Vietnamese culture. Immediate family and extended kinship ties are important for business and income-generating activities, which are often controlled by women, especially in rural areas. However, women’s household economies have often been rendered invisible or are undervalued. After 1945, the Vietnamese government directed women to leave their homes and work at companies and factories because the government assumed that Vietnamese women did not “work.” Now, instead of liberating the women, as claimed, the government has put a “second shift” on the women: they work outside the home in addition to carrying out their domestic work. At the same time, industrialization has increased social mobility, breaking up the traditional extended family. A Vietnamese woman goes through significant transformations of space and time throughout her life: an extension in space (work outside home) and a decrease in time (a move from a multi-generational family to a nuclear family). This transformation obviously creates a strain on traditional Vietnamese femininity, and therefore, an adapted Vietnamese femininity is being built: Vietnamese women of the twenty-first century must be able to manage work both within and outside the home.
Extramarital Relationships in Vietnam

To a certain extent, industrialization has contributed to the growth of the sex industry in Vietnam. Industrialization has increased the gap between the rich and the poor—and between the urban and the rural—thus creating a supply of poor young women from the countryside willing to work as prostitutes and increasing the demand of rich men who are looking for leisure activity and an outlet for their discretionary income. Yet the sex industry is not only limited to poor prostitutes, and its clients are not limited to rich men. It is the sexual identity of Vietnamese men that enables a market of sex where women are commoditized in different forms (table 1) and where men of all classes, ages, and education levels are involved as consumers. The relationship of sexuality to the construction of Vietnamese masculinity is rooted in tradition, expressed in the past as legal polygamy, and expressed in modernity as a menu of possible extramarital relationships. Masculinity as constructed by cultural forms, not industrialization, is the primary cause of the commonality of extramarital relationships. However, industrialization has played a role in having transformed the traditions of polygamy and prostitution into a highly structured sex market that mirrors industrialization and modernization.

The social and educational improvement of women is threatening Vietnamese men’s identity and privileges as the “breadwinners” and household “heads.” The double burden women bear is creating strain for women, and also for their husbands; and women are now suggesting that their husbands share more domestic work, including both housework and childcare, with them. Lê Thị Nhâm Tuyết expresses this new harmonizing ideal as follows:

The new Vietnamese “good husband” shares in the responsibility for family happiness. He . . . provides economic and social care for his wife and children, and supports the social and economic life of his wife, demonstrated by showing confidence in her abilities and taking some of the domestic burden. The task is to nurture equality and equity in gender relations while embracing male–female difference. (Lê Thị Nhâm Tuyết 1996, 1, 16)

Even though the new “good husband” is required to share domestic burdens, his identity as the main provider remains a priority. This model pairs well with the ideal Vietnamese woman of the twenty-first century: she might work outside the home, but her family is still her priority and primary responsibility. Lê (1996) still holds a binary view of gender roles that embraces an essentialist view of the differences between men and women. After all, the cultural roots of yin and yang continue to influence the construction of gender identity in Vietnam; and the “new” gender models have so far been just a small step forward from traditional gender roles. It may be unlikely that young women will find this harmonizing ideal, with its reification of gender roles, satisfactory. One young, financially successful mother indicated in our interview that she expected a say in all things inside and outside of her marriage, that sharing decision-making represented her hus-
band’s respect for her, and that she is capable of leaving the relationship if he does not show this respect. To this woman, extramarital relationships would be a sign of disrespect and would be grounds for divorce.

Vietnamese men, too, are facing significant role strain. The status they have claimed based on being the main family provider is eroding as women begin to make increasing financial contributions. On one hand, there has been some pressure on husbands from their wives to be “good husbands.” On the other hand, husbands continue to be embraced by their male networks and tied to the cultural demands of masculinity, including the pressures of loyally defending the traditional rights and privileges of Vietnamese men. According to Joseph Pleck (1981), men experience a “paradox of power” in that they have power over women but have little power over their own lives, especially in power relations with other men. In defense of their manhood, a key dynamic of masculinity is shame. Michael Kimmel (2007) explains that men are always afraid that

other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men. We are afraid to let other men see that fear. Fear makes us ashamed, because the recognition of fear in ourselves is proof to ourselves that we are not as manly as we pretend. . . . Our fear is the fear of humiliation. (79)

The anxiety about masculinity and the fear of not measuring up suggest that men will continue to conform to male norms. In the Vietnamese context, this conformity means men will continue to assert their authoritarian rights at home and over their wives. They will continue to seek extramarital relationships that foster male bonding and demonstrate, sexually, that they are “normal” men. Indeed, two older men, interviewed together in Ho Chi Minh City, argued with certainty that industrialization was forcing Vietnamese women into commercial and industrial roles that made them unhappy—because, presumably, they were happier in their traditional role—and that modern ideas of gender equality would result in continued break-up of the extended family and higher divorce rates. In this reading, traditional gender roles should be affirmed, and women should be blamed for destabilizing the family.

The Communist political ideology of gender equality, the rapid processes of industrialization and globalization, the embedded traditional culture, and the pressures to conform to gender ideals are exerting different and conflicting forces on Vietnamese men and women. Within the limit of this research, it is very hard to tell if, how, and when gender roles in Vietnam may be restructured. Further research is needed to explore and detail how power is actually renegotiated within families by the husband and wife (and other extended family members)—and how this patriarchal system may be restructured both publicly and privately.
Appendix: Methodology & Case Demographics

The field research reported in this piece came from face-to-face survey interviews and in-depth follow-up interviews carried out in Vietnam. During three months in summer 2006, 220 individual face-to-face survey interviews were carried out by Nguyen and three (male) assistant interviewers. Respondents came from 28 out of a total of 63 cities and provinces in Vietnam. In early 2007, Harris went to Vietnam as an exchange scholar at the Vietnam National University (Ho Chi Minh City); in February, he and his wife conducted 22 in-depth follow-up interviews in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Vinh Long. Survey interviews and in-depth interviews were based on separate structured protocols drawn up by the two authors. Interviews ranged from 45 to 120 minutes in length.

Quota sampling was used for the survey interviews to ensure enough cases (approximately 50) in the sub-categories of sex, region, urban/rural area, education level, and economic condition. Because of the emphasis on extramarital relationships of Vietnamese men, the quota for men was greater than the quota for women, the quota for married people was greater than the quota for single people, and the quota for people old enough to be married was greater than the quota for those who are too young. Different quotas were established for the different regions of Vietnam: 100 from the north, 50 from the middle, and 70 from the south. Northern Vietnam has a history dating back more than four thousand years and represents the core of traditional Vietnam, while the other two regions are younger and less “Vietnamized.” More respondents came from southern Vietnam than from the middle of the country because the southern portion covers more area and is home to the economic heart of the nation.

In addition to quota sampling, we also used snowball sampling methods to recruit interviewees for both the survey interviews and the in-depth interviews. We began by interviewing people we know and asking them to introduce us to their friends or colleagues. This method allowed us to interview those who are state officials or members of the upper class, because approaching them without social connections would not have been fruitful. To approach individuals at or below the middle class, we traveled to the countryside or went to the markets, parks, pubs, cafés, stores, bia hơi (open areas on the street where men gather to drink), and individuals’ houses.

Of the 220 survey interviewees:

Sex: 170 (77 percent) were men; 50 (23 percent) were women.

Age: 69 (31 percent) were 36–45 years old; 67 (30 percent) were 26–35 years old; 54 (25 percent) were 46–60 years old; 28 (13 percent) were younger than 26 years old; and 2 (1 percent) were older than 60.

Marital status: 174 (79 percent) were married; 42 (19 percent) were single; 3 (1 percent) were divorced; and 1 (1 percent) was a widow.

Urban/rural area: 146 (66 percent) were urban; 74 (34 percent) were rural.

Religion: 167 (76 percent) reported following no religion; 38 (17 percent) were Buddhists; 13 (6 percent) were Catholics; and 2 (1 percent) were Muslims.

Ethnicity: 209 (95 percent) were Kinh; 5 (2 percent) were Chinese; 3 (1 percent) were Khmer; 2 (1 percent) were Cham; and 1 (1 percent) was Tay.

Education level: 80 (36 percent) had finished high school; 69 (31 percent) had undergraduate degrees; 64 (29 percent) had not finished high school; and 7 (3 percent) had postgraduate degrees.

Economic condition: 105 (48 percent) considered themselves economically “good”; 83 (38 percent) were economically “fair”; 22 (10 percent) were economically “excellent”; and 10 (4 percent) were economically “poor.”
Notes

1See the appendix (p. 141) for methodological details behind the data presented in this piece.

2Masaki Mori’s (2009) scholarly note in this volume of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies complicates the commonly held binary, dichotomous view of yin and yang.

References


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The Japanese displayed an extraordinary interest in Egypt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but their perception of Egypt changed radically during that period. From the 1860s to the 1890s, many Japanese thought Egypt’s situation was similar to Japan’s. When Egypt’s growing debt led to increasing intervention by European powers, Japanese officials regarded Egypt’s eventual loss of sovereignty as a cautionary tale and minimized Japan’s dependence on European loans. But after Japan’s 1895 victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese officials used European colonial administration as a model and justification for their own colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan. When Japan’s alliance with Britain destabilized after World War I, the Japanese contrasted their enlightened colonial policies with those of Britain, with Egypt then perceived as an example of British misrule. The ways Japan viewed Egypt between the 1860s and 1930s were strongly influenced by Japan’s changing relationship with Britain and its evolving status in the world community.

Accommodation or Confrontation

Since the mid-nineteenth century, when Western powers pressured Japan to sign a series of “unequal treaties,” Japanese leaders have often differed over how much to accommodate and how much to resist or confront the world’s leading powers. The young leaders who took power during the Meiji Restoration (1868), many from the regions of Satsuma and Chōshū in southern Japan, were often called the Sat-Chō hanbatsu 藩閥 (clique or coalition). They generally employed a cautious, pragmatic, accommodating approach in dealing with the great powers (Totman 1998, 22–26), since they believed it was necessary for Japan to become strong and wealthy in order to regain its national sovereignty and join the ranks of the great powers. In contrast,
many opponents of the Sat-Chó clique were hardliners who called for greater resistance to or confrontation with the great powers.

In the past, these contrasting tendencies during the Meiji 时代 (1868–1912) have been labeled “Herodian” versus “Zealot” (Toynbee 1953) and “realist” versus “idealist” (Conroy 1960). The contrast has also been expressed in terms of Meiji leaders who advocated a policy in accordance with “the laws of the world” and their opponents who called for “a more ideal international order” (Iriye 1989, 735). Conforming to taisei junnō 大勢順応 (world trends) is a Japanese concept that has been used to explain a policy of “international accommodationism” (Burkman 1998). Such labels emphasize distinctions that existed at either end of a spectrum—with accommodation on one end and confrontation on the other; but the degree of accommodation or resistance was always a matter of debate, even within the highest councils of government. Accommodation is used here as a label for the general policy that prevailed in Japan from the 1860s to the 1920s, before hard-line militarists came to the fore during the 1930s.

The Issue of Mixed Courts & Treaty Revision

Between Commodore Matthew Perry’s (1794–1858) visit to Edo (Tokyo) in 1854 and Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, many Japanese perceived their country’s situation to be extremely precarious. Japan’s position vis-à-vis the West was seen by many Japanese as similar to that of other “Eastern” countries, particularly Egypt. Egypt’s program of rapid Westernization (1863–79) under Khedive Ismail Pasha (1830–95) overlapped with the first decade of the Meiji program of modernization (1868–78). The nature of Egypt’s system of mixed courts, the reasons for its financial crisis, and the British occupation of Egypt were all of special interest to Japanese leaders of various persuasions in the decades after the Restoration (Bradshaw 1992, 2001, 2004).

Japanese and foreign observers frequently drew comparisons between Egypt and Japan during the early Meiji era. The British editor of the Japan Weekly Mail (JWM) wrote in 1876, “no one who has watched the recent history of Japan can fail to see that it presents many points of resemblance to that of Egypt” (JWM, May 27, 1876: 463). Egypt’s leaders were the “first in the East” to engage in an all-out effort to bring about rapid Westernization by decree, an effort in which the ruling clique of Japan was actively engaged as well. For several decades, however, the goal of achieving the revision of Japan’s “unequal treaties” was a high priority. These treaties, which allowed foreigners resident in Japan, when charged with breaking the law, to be tried by their own consular courts instead of Japanese courts, were regarded by most Japanese as unacceptable infringements on the sovereignty of their nation. Egypt was also bound by similar treaties; but in 1869 the Egyptian
Minister Nubar Pasha (1825–99) called for the abolition of “capitulations” at an international conference in Cairo and proposed the establishment of “mixed courts” for Egypt in place of consular courts (Brinton 1950; Wilner 1975). Nubar Pasha’s proposal attracted the attention of Japan’s ruling elite.

Léon Roches (1809–1901), French ambassador to Japan, may have provided the Japanese government with information about Egypt’s proposals; and a Japanese official in Istanbul may have received documents relating to Egypt’s legal system from Nubar Pasha himself in 1871, the same year that Japan established a Ministry of Justice and convened a conference to consider the compilation of a new Japanese civil code. To facilitate the process of revision, the government sent a mission headed by Prince Iwakura Tomomori 岩倉具視 (1825–83) to visit the leading treaty powers in 1871. Iwakura was a member of the faction at the Emperor’s court that actively participated in the anti-Tokugawa coup, which brought accommodationists such as Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909) and Inoue Kaoru 井上馨 (1839–1915) to power. After Japan’s major treaty powers refused to consider revision of the unequal treaties in 1872, the need to study the nature of relations between European powers and states such as Egypt became more urgent (Auslin 2006, 173; Medzini 1971; Nakaoka 1988; Perez 1986, 70; Sims 1969, 67–114).

A young member of the Iwakura mission to the West, Fukuchi Gen’ichirō 福地源一郎 (1841–1906), left the main group in 1873 and went to Egypt in order to conduct a special study of its legal system. Fukuchi then submitted a report to Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi 副島種臣 (1828–1905) in which he advocated the adoption of a mixed-court system on the Egyptian model in order to help gain credibility in the eyes of Japan’s treaty powers and thus support revision of its unequal treaties (Altman 1965, 134; Fukuchi 1873; Furukawa 1988, 50; Huffman 1980, 71; Inō 1966, 117–19; Nakaoka 1988). Another translated study on the judiciary rights of consular officers in Turkey and Egypt was submitted in 1873. Over the next few years, numerous documents relating to Egypt’s courts were collected and reports on them submitted to the government. Early in 1875 Mitsukuri Rinshō 箕作麟祥 (1846–97), a young Justice Ministry official who had just completed translating the French Napoleonic Code, began to collect information to write a report on Egypt’s legal system. Mitsukuri served as deputy minister of justice during the treaty revision crisis of 1889 (discussed below). He drafted a preliminary report and then, in 1878, submitted an official report on Egypt’s legal system for publication (Nakaoka 1988; Mitsukuri 1878). Even Minister of Public Works Itō Hirobumi (later Japan’s first prime minister) commissioned a foreign employee, John Davidson, to write a report in 1877 on Egypt’s system of mixed courts (Nakaoka 1979, 1988).

Heated discussions regarding treaty revision also took place in the emerging Japanese press. In 1873 Tokyo’s first daily newspaper, the Tōkyō
Nichinichi Shinbun 東京日日新聞 (Tokyo daily news, hereafter TNN) made its appearance; Fukuchi Gen’ichirō resigned from government service in 1874 and became its editor in chief.1 Opinions voiced by Fukuchi in this paper tended to support the ruling clique’s position on treaty revision and reached a wide reading public (Altman 1965, 123, 137; Bradshaw 1992; Kawabe 1921; Wildes 1927). Fukuchi’s interest in Egypt was evident in many articles he wrote for the TNN over the next decade. In 1876, following the establishment of the mixed tribunals in Egypt, Fukuchi advocated the adoption of a similar system for Japan. Between 1876 and 1880, there were on average fourteen editorials a year in the TNN (over seventy in all) that focused on the ways to rid Japan of extraterritoriality (Huffman 1980, 122; TNN October 27, 1874; February 5–7, 1876).

In 1880 the Japanese government promulgated a new penal code. Inoue Kaoru, now foreign minister, initiated a new effort to bring about treaty revision, but he asked for consular jurisdiction to be completely abolished in most cases, which the foreign powers promptly refused to consider. Thus, when Inoue presided over a diplomatic conference on treaty revision in 1882, he was careful to propose a system of mixed courts during a transition period of five years, after which extraterritorial rights would be abandoned. This attempt still proved unsuccessful, and the conference broke up after six months (Idditti 1940, 246; Inoue Kaoru 1968; Jones 1931, 98–99).

By this time, opposition to Sat-Chō domination of political power and growing support for a constitutional form of government had resulted in the proliferation of new political parties in Japan. The treaty-revision issue became a major weapon with which ambitious party politicians could attack the government. One such politician, Ono Azusa 小野梓 (1852–86), a leader of the Rikken Kaishin Tō 立憲改進党 (Constitutional Progressive Party), wrote an essay on treaty revision in 1884 that expressed many of the common criticisms Meiji intellectuals had of the government’s program for treaty revision. Ono had stopped over in Egypt on a return voyage from Europe in 1874, and Alexandria, Cairo, and Port Said “furnished important examples of political ineptitude leading to loss of independence for his later writings” (Davis 1980, 31). Ono worked as an official in the Ministry of Justice (1876–81) and was close to Ōkuma Shigenobu 大隈重信 (1838–1922), an intermittent member of the Meiji oligarchy who developed close links to Mitsubishi shipping interests (Lebra-Chapman 1973; Ozaki 2001, 69). Ōkuma and Ono advocated a swifter move toward constitutional government. Because Ōkuma’s growing power posed a threat to key members of the Chōshū faction, Ōkuma was forced out of the government in 1881, and so Ono resigned from the government as well (Davis 1970). In 1884 Ono wrote Jōyaku kaisei ron 条約改正論 (Discussion on treaty revision) in which he argued that mixed courts would increase extraterritorial privileges as they had in Egypt, a country which he considered a “colony of both Eng-
land and France” (Davis 1984, 157). Ono argued that Western judges in the mixed-court system there were not appointed by the government but by a diplomatic conference, which meant that the Egyptian monarch had no power to dismiss them. They were thus different from hired foreign advisers the government could dismiss at will. Ono was clearly convinced of the relevance of Egypt’s example for Japan.

As for Fukuchi, even after Egypt was occupied by Britain, he still argued that the positions of both Japan and Egypt with regard to the powers were in certain respects the same, and that British policy vis-à-vis occupied Egypt was therefore relevant for Japan. When Britain decided to allow the taxation of foreigners, Fukuchi was quick to point out the inconsistency in British policy. In March 1883 he published British Foreign Minister Lord Granville’s (1815–91) circular on the taxation of foreigners in Egypt in the TNN and commented as follows:

> We shared the apprehension of enlightened men that any attempt on our part to remedy it would give rise to an international question. Unexpectedly, however, there comes to us this wonderful circular concerning the situation in Egypt . . . the European Powers are in the same position in Egypt as in our country, the extraterritoriality system being in full force. . . . To remedy this it is proposed to subject the foreigners to the same taxation as the natives. (JWM March 31, 1883: 210)

Fukuchi then urged the Japanese government to make representations to Lord Granville at once in order to take advantage of the circular that he had issued. If England refused, he argued, then she would “expose herself to the risk of incurring the condemnation of all the countries of the world,” because the Liberalism her government professed would be exposed as a sham (JWM March 31, 1883: 210). This had little effect on the British government, however, and Fukuchi’s efforts, at least in the short-run, failed to achieve their aim.

Opposition to the acceptance of Egyptian-style mixed courts became more widespread in Japan after the British occupied Egypt in 1882. By 1886, when representatives of the treaty powers sat down again to discuss treaty revision with Inoue, opponents of mixed courts included party politicians and individuals in the government close to Ōkuma Shigenobu, who in 1882 founded the Constitutional Progressive Party. This party tended to represent the urban capitalist classes and to espouse an English utilitarian ideology (Ōtsu 1927, 2: 520).

The British and Germans nevertheless proposed that a system of mixed courts similar to those in Egypt be instituted in Japan as part of a wide-ranging reform of the legal system. In order to overcome continuing opposition of the foreign powers to treaty revision, Inoue proposed a plan in 1887 that agreed to a majority of foreign judges for all cases, civil or crimi-
nal, in which one party was a foreigner (Hattori 1963, 116; Inoue Kiyoshi 1955, 147–48; Jones 1931, 109; Pyle 1969, 109).

The liberal newspaper *Jiji Shimpō* 時事新報 (*Current events*), founded in 1882 by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1835–1901), got word of Inoue’s plan and strongly opposed it, insisting that Japan’s sovereignty never be compromised for the sake of treaty revision. Inoue’s efforts met with strong and determined opposition. Prime Minister Itō informed the powers that negotiations would be suspended, and Inoue resigned in September 1887 after having led the negotiations for treaty revisions for eight years. Itō took over the post of foreign minister temporarily and then persuaded Ōkuma to take the job (Brown 1955, 112; Hiratsuka 1929, 1: 31–32; Hirota 1930, 245–46; *Jiji Shimpō* June 24, 1887: 2; August 4, 1887: 1; Takeuchi 1935, 92–93).

Ōkuma resumed similar treaty negotiations with the great powers but adopted different tactics and altered Inoue’s plan to Japan’s advantage; but, in the end, he agreed to a transitory system of “mixed benches,” or the inclusion of naturalized foreign judges in the supreme court (Lebra-Chapman 1973, 86). The British agreed that in return for the end of extraterritoriality after five years and tariff autonomy after twelve, the Japanese would allow foreign residence, travel, and trade in the interior of Japan.

A draft of the treaty was finally submitted to London in January 1889 (Pyle 1969, 109); but after the London press got wind of it, a translated copy appeared in a new newspaper, *Nihon* 日本 (*Japan*), which led to an outburst of opposition to the “Ōkuma Treaty.” The *Nihon* 代表 an emerging group of influential journalists who advocated a middle path for Japan, a compromise between blind imitation of the West and the retention of what was best in Japanese tradition. Its editors championed a compromise between universalist and nationalist viewpoints. Ōkuma’s plan was nevertheless supported by editors of the following papers: The *Yūbin Höchi* 郵便報知, the *Yomiuri* 読売, the *Ōsaka Mainichi* 大阪毎日, the *Asano* 朝野, and the *Keizai Zasshi* 経済雑誌 (Hishida 1905, 141; Inoue Kiyoshi 1955, 147–48; Jones 1931, 110).

The British-owned *Japan Weekly Mail*, an advocate of treaty revision and supporter of the gradualist approach of the ruling elite, attempted to defend the proposed treaty by pointing out the technical differences between Egyptian mixed courts and the system of mixed benches that had been proposed for Japan. In contrast to the Egyptian system, in which the judges were appointed by the powers themselves, the Japanese system would have naturalized foreign experts who would be appointed by and responsible to the Japanese government alone (Fox 1969; *JWM* April 20, 1889: 372).

But by the time of this article in 1889, arguments of this kind were no longer convincing. Factions within the ruling elite, leaders of the new political parties, and ultranationalist activists such as Tōyama Mitsuru 頭山満 (1885–1944) all wanted full treaty revision and not half-way measures that
had apparently worked to the disadvantage of the Egyptians. In addition to Itô and Inoue, other Sat-Chô leaders, such as Yamagata Aritomo 山縣有朋 (1838–1922) from Chôshû, Terashima Munenori 寺島宗則 (1832–93) from Satsuma, Soejima Taneomi from Hizen, Gotô Shôjirô 後藤象二郎 (1838–97) from Tosa, and the conservative privy councilor Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818–91), were opposed to the Ōkuma plan. Mixed courts had been followed by Nubar Pasha’s “mixed ministry,” which was followed by revolt and British occupation. The Nihon argued that if the Japanese “tolerate interference, we shall be classed with Turkey and Egypt” (Kuga 1938, 561–62; Nihon August 22–September 5, 1889; Pyle 1969, 115).

Finally, in October 1889, a bomb was thrown into Ōkuma’s carriage by a member of the patriotic society Genyōsha 玄洋社 (Dark ocean society), the most active group among ultranationalists who were strongly opposed to compromise with Western powers. This event brought negotiations regarding treaty revision to a sudden halt. The would-be assassin obtained his bomb with the assistance of Tôyama Mitsuru, spiritual head of the Genyôsha. Moreover, members of the ruling elite and Japan’s new party leaders were against the domination of the Sat-Chô, so treaty-revision negotiations remained at a standstill (Fujimoto 1923; Norman 1944; Ogata 1940; Sugimori 1984).

The Demise of Egypt & the Question of Debt

The Japanese were also preoccupied by the question of whether to borrow money from Western powers to finance Japan’s rapid industrialization. Both the ruling clique and their political opponents took a particular interest in the nature of Egypt’s debt crisis in the 1870s, and the negative example of Egypt’s debt crisis was frequently used by those opposed to borrowing capital from the West.

Public debate on the relevance of Egypt’s case for Japan was stimulated in 1876 by an editorial in the Japan Weekly Mail. After Prime Minister Disraeli (1804–81) purchased shares of the Suez Canal in 1875, the British government sent commissioner Steven Cave to Egypt to investigate the Khedive Ismail’s finances. In April 1876, the London Mail published a copy of the commissioner’s report, which the Japan Weekly Mail commented on, pointing out the many similarities between Egypt’s and Japan’s situations and concluding: “Egypt has fallen into serious trouble. . . . We trust Japan will have wisdom enough to profit by the lessons they teach, and thus avoid them” (JWM May 27, 1876: 463).

The Meiji oligarchs had arranged for two small loans in 1870 and 1873, but they were not united on whether to contract more loans. Inoue, acting as minister of finance, reported in 1873 that the national debt was an estimated ¥140 million (ca. US$140 million), which greatly alarmed the public.
Ōkuma was called on to make a study of the situation and calmed the public by estimating the debt to be only a little over ¥31 million (ca. US$31 million), of which only ¥5.5 million (ca. US$5.5 million) had come from external sources. Inoue resigned to start his own trading company, and Ōkuma took charge of the Finance Department until 1880 (Idditti 1956, 146–47; Lockwood 1954, 253; Moulton and Ko 1931, 490–97; Porter 1915, 241; Roberts 1973, 92; Sugiyama 1988, 21).

Despite Ōkuma’s best efforts, the cost of crushing the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 and other problems put further strain on the government purse. A financial crisis thus emerged in Japan at exactly the same time as Egypt’s debt crisis. There was in fact so much talk of the similarity of Egypt’s and Japan’s positions that the governor of Hong Kong, when he visited Japan in 1879 and addressed the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce, took pains to point out the differences between Japan and Egypt to calm the public. He stressed, for example, the way in which Japanese leaders lived modestly in comparison to Egyptian leaders (JWM June 21, 1879).

In late 1879 Ōkuma encouraged the establishment of the Yokohama Specie Bank to deal in hard currency and handle the transactions of foreign exchange, hoping that this would attract gold and silver reserves out of private hands within Japan; but the amount of available capital in 1880 was still so little that Ōkuma proposed that the government borrow ¥50 million (ca. US$45 million) from foreign sources (Idditti 1956, 191–92). His proposal was supported by the Satsuma faction but strongly opposed by the Chōshū clique. A debate in the press ensued, with the example of Egypt serving as a warning to those who supported raising the loan. One newspaper argued that people “ignorant of the principles of political economy” feared raising a loan. Such people erroneously “quoted the examples of Turkey and Egypt,” claiming that the poverty of those countries was due to foreign loans (Smith 1955, 98; see JWM December 4, 1880). Former U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant, who was visiting Japan at this time, added his voice to the warnings against borrowing money (Keene 2001, 317).

Disagreement led to a deadlock that was settled by sending the matter to Emperor Meiji (1852–1912, r. 1868–1912) for arbitration. The throne decided against a foreign loan, which “nearly ruined [Ōkuma’s] career” (Smith 1955, 98). In August 1880 Inoue submitted a suggestion on how to resolve the financial crisis, and in 1881 a Chōshū man took over as minister of finance.

Japan’s ambassador to London at this time, Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–89), was also monitoring events in Egypt with great concern. From Satsuma, Mori studied in England and the United States before the Restoration and later served as Japan’s first ambassador to the United States (1870–72). He passed through Egypt on his way to London to study in 1865. In 1884, his primary task while ambassador in London was to facilitate the revision of
the “unequal treaties” (Hall 1973). Mori pursued this goal so forcefully that his conduct was not always appreciated by his British colleagues. One reason for Mori’s almost frantic behavior “might be described as [his] haunting nightmare of Egypt—spiraling foreign debts, financial disarray, rebellion, massacre of Europeans, a foreign occupation, loss of independence—all of which transpired while Mori was accredited to the government which conducted that occupation. The Western governments seemed to have a different set of rules in dealing with non-European states, and Mori took great pains to set Japan apart from other Asiatic countries” (Hall 1973, 69).

However, by 1884 Japan’s financial situation had improved so much that the Japan Weekly Mail suggested that “Japan is rapidly recovering from her unworthy and wholly erroneous apprehension that the result of pecuniary obligations incurred abroad might resemble the mishaps of Turkey or Egypt” (JWM June 28, 1884: 608–9). Nevertheless, another decade would pass before the Japanese would contract a new foreign loan.

The British occupation of Egypt and the European competition for spheres of influence in Africa in general during this period drew London’s attention away from Japan’s demands for treaty revision. This situation was frustrating to Ambassador Mori and other Japanese visiting London, as they often found that their British hosts talked endlessly about African affairs but failed to take sufficient note of Japan’s problems. One Japanese writer complained that, “If, after a week of continental politics, South African controversies, the Egyptian question . . . and everything but . . . Japanese affairs—if after a week of your London life, you do not begin to be disturbed by a peculiar sensation of your own littleness, you are not a true lover of your race and country” (Japan Times April 28, 1897: 2).

British diplomats did not hesitate to point out the importance of African affairs to their Japanese colleagues. Sir Ernest Satow (1843–1929), British Minister to Japan from 1895 to 1900, explained to Foreign Minister Aoki Shūzo 青木周蔵 (1844–1914) in 1898 that the British could do little in East Asia until Fashoda had been “arranged for” (Lensen 1966, 93).

After the Meiji Restoration, Mori had been an ardent supporter of rapid Westernization. While ambassador in London, however, partly due to his observation of the Egyptian crisis, Mori became more of a nationalist. After returning to Japan in 1885, he was made minister of education and became the architect of Japan’s patriotism-inspiring education system. His reforms nevertheless aroused the anger of conservatives, and Mori was assassinated in February 1889 (Hall 1973).

Japan’s fear of borrowing money from the West is often attributed to the example of Japan’s Asian neighbors falling dangerously into debt. Until 1897, it is said, the “Japanese were wary of financial imperialism, seeing it in operation among their Asiatic neighbors” (Lockwood 1954, 253); but “the Japanese were not only acutely conscious of what was happening in
China in terms of spiraling foreign indebtedness, but [were also] more than dimly aware of comparable developments in places such as Egypt and Turkey” (Lehman 1982, 174).

In 1897, the director of the Department of Finance’s Bureau of Computation, Baron Sakatani Yoshio 阪谷芳郎 (1863–1941), wrote that the most important reason for Japan’s reluctance to borrow capital was the fear of overdependence on foreign capital. He cited the examples of both Egypt and Turkey as having been particularly instructive (Lehman 1982, 174; Norman 1975, 222–23). The negative example of Egypt thus appears to have had a significant impact on Japanese policy.

**Pan-Orientalism in Japan & Egypt**

Egypt’s occupation by Britain enlivened Japan’s critics of accommodationist policy, who began increasingly to call for unity with the “Orient” to overcome the “Occident.” In 1890 a popular Japanese political novelist, Shiba Shirō 柴四朗 (1853–1922, whose pen name was Tōkai Sanshi 東海散士), published a short history of modern Egypt that was highly critical of British imperialism. Shiba had studied at the Wharton School of Business in Philadelphia, where his most influential teacher, an Irish-American, held very anti-British views. He began working on *Kajin no kigu* 佳人の奇遇 (Encounters with beautiful women) soon after returning to Japan in 1884. Between 1885 and 1897, it was published serially in eight parts and became not only the most popular political novel of its day but perhaps the most popular of all Meiji novels (Feldman 1952, 73; Fujimura 1932, 523; Sakai 2000; Sansom 1968, 42, 414; Tōkai 1890; Yanagida 1966–67).

Shiba’s novel took the reader on a tour of revolutionary movements around the world and voiced particular sympathy for followers of Urabi Pasha, the Egyptian nationalist whose uprising had been crushed by the British. Shiba capitalized on the intense Japanese preoccupation with international affairs at the time, and his characters’ espoused noble pan-Asianist ideals. Japan, one character said, would “preside over a confederation of Asia,” would “restrain the rampancy of England and France,” and would “thwart the designs of Russia” (Beasley 1982, 153; Feldman 1952, 72; Sansom 1968, 412–14). Shiba’s *Kajin no kigu* and history of modern Egypt both manifested a widely felt sympathy in Japan for the “oppressed peoples” of the world in the period before treaty revision was finally achieved.

Another work that expressed sympathy for “oppressed” Egyptians was called *Conversations with Urabi Pasha*, published in 1892. Several Japanese notables made a point of visiting Urabi (1841–1911) in exile on Ceylon on their way to or from Europe (Itagaki 1984, 524; Nakayama 1934, 601). Urabi’s revolt coincided with the height of a popular rights movement in Japan, and many leaders of this movement felt sympathy for him. Egypt was
seen as a fellow “Oriental” nation whose contributions to world civilization predated those of Europe. Urabi’s reputation as a fierce nationalist who wanted to free the Egyptians of foreign control and rid the country of debt also appealed to many Japanese (Fujita 2005; Itagaki 1984; Nakayama 1934, 601d; Tayara 2004; Tresilian 2005).

The ideology articulated by Shiba, Toyama, and others in the 1890s and again increasingly in the 1930s is often labeled “pan-Asianism,” but “pan-Orientism” is perhaps a more suitable appellation. Japanese who were highly critical of European colonialism were inclined to see the world divided into the “East” and the “West”; and their vision of the East corresponded to the area that Europeans regarded as the Orient. The Japan Weekly Mail noted that when “a party calling itself the Asiatic Society” was formed in Tokyo, its goal was to consolidate “the strength of the Orient” and that the “brotherhood included such names as Beloochistan, Turkestan, Afghanistan and Arabia” (JWM July 26, 1884: 91). The “Orient” stretched from North Africa and the Levant to Japan. There was a North–South split in the minds of many. As Japanese writer Nakamura Masanao 中村正直 (1832–91) explained in 1874: “northern peoples came to use the products from southern areas; southern countries imported the manufactures of the northerners” (Nakamura 1874, 134).

In 1890 pan-Asianist Miyazaki Yazo 宮崎弥蔵 (1867–96) proclaimed: “Let China once revive and base itself upon its true morality, then India will rise, Siam and Annam too will revive, and the Philippines and Egypt can be saved” (Miyazaki 1982, 47). These words had a powerful effect on Yazo’s younger brother Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天 (1871–1922), a critic of the “Europe-first” policy of the Meiji oligarchs (Jansen 1984, 75), who later wrote, “when I heard this, I got up and danced for joy. My longstanding doubts suddenly melted away under the influence of this vision” (Miyazaki 1982, 47).

This vision of the Miyazaki brothers was to assist the rise of the Orient against the Occident. Although the roots of Japanese pan-Asianism are often traced to this period, it is rarely pointed out that the vision of Japanese confrontationists in the late nineteenth century was confined not only to Asia but also to all lands where European imperialism was in evidence, including, in particular, Egypt.

**British Egypt as a Model Colony**

Japanese attitudes toward European colonialism in Africa began to change significantly by the turn of the twentieth century. By 1894 Japan had concluded agreements regarding treaty revision with Britain, and shortly thereafter the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) broke out. By terms of Japan’s victory in 1895, it attained equal status with Western countries as a treaty
power in China, received an indemnity equivalent to almost one-third of its total national revenue at that time, and acquired Taiwan as a colony (Beasley 1987, 39; Hou 1965, 23–24; Moulder 1976, 184; Young 1970, 27).

Japan’s victory greatly enhanced its international stature, improved its financial situation, and brought it firmly into the league of European colonial powers. Many Japanese stopped looking at Egypt as a victim of colonialism and began to regard British rule in Egypt as worthy of study for various reasons. The Japanese wanted their own attempts at colonization to succeed, and they wanted to at least appear to be acting as civilizing colonials. The sense of solidarity formerly felt by many Japanese for those under the burden of European colonial rule now gave way to a sense of community with European colonial powers (Bradshaw 1992, 1993, 1994). The administration of Lord Cromer (1841–1917), consul-general and de facto ruler of Egypt from 1883 to 1907, was of particular interest to the Japanese until the 1930s. The Japanese treated Cromer’s Egypt as a model, but they were more interested promoting a positive image of their own colonial rule than in actually imitating British methods of rule (Kibata 1994, 57).

Two foreign legal advisers to the Meiji government were consulted with regard to how to implement Japan’s rule in Taiwan. On April 22, 1895, the French advisor, Michel Joseph Revon (1867–1947), recommended that, following the example of France in Algeria, Taiwan be incorporated eventually—not immediately—as a prefecture of Japan. On April 30, however, British lawyer and advisor William Kirkwood (1850–1926) recommended that Taiwan be governed by a governor-general and legislative council responsible directly to the emperor, and thus not be directly subject to laws of the Meiji Constitution. On June 17, 1895, a rapidly organized Taiwan Affairs Bureau debated the alternative proposals, and foreign ministry official (and future prime minister) Hara Takashi 原敬 (1856–1921) supported the French proposal. To avoid the popular image of a “colony”—at this time associated with European rule over Africans—most members of the Bureau sided with Hara and the French advisor. But soon the outbreak of resistance to Japanese rule led to the implementation of direct rule by military officers on August 6, 1895. A civilian government was instituted on April 1, 1896, but de facto military rule continued. In 1898, the fourth military governor-general, Kodama Gentarô 児玉源太郎 (1852–1906), and the Chief of Civil Administration in Taiwan, Gotô Shimpei 後藤新平 (1857–1929), decided that regardless of what Taiwan was called, it needed to be governed like a colony and that Western colonial legal institutions would be instructive (Cai 2008; Wang 2000, 45–47). Under the Kodama administration (1896–1906), many studies of European colonial practice were undertaken, and, ultimately, “the experience of the Western powers in Africa was taken as a precedent for Taiwan” (Taga 1977–78, 67). Japanese colonial administrators made meticulous studies of many forms of European colonial rule,
including French rule in North Africa; but the British administration in Egypt appears to have provided a more important model, particularly in the early twentieth century after Japan and Britain became allies. Goto is said to have been strongly influenced by Germany during his medical education there, but he was apparently influenced more by the British example of colonial rule. When Goto introduced flogging as a punishment in Taiwan, he claimed that Lord Cromer advised him personally to adopt flogging when governing “uncivilized people” like the Taiwanese (Botsman 2005, 214; Lee 1999; Umemori 2006a, 2006b). The most prominent Japanese penologist at this time, Ogawa Shigejirō 小河滋次郎 (1863–1925), criticized the Japanese decision to introduce flogging as due to thoughtless “worship of foreign countries” such as the Western imperial powers that created a separate caste of colonial subjects who were not regarded as deserving equal treatment under the law. Ogawa’s opponents eventually responded by accusing him of having been too influenced by the “irrational fervor” and sentimental idealism of the Christian prison reformers (Botsman 2005, 216). Thus, the Japanese administrators of Taiwan defended their introduction of flogging by referring to similar punishments in European colonies such as Egypt, and they dismissed the Christian humanist critique of the practice as impractical idealism.

Japan’s establishment of de facto control over Korea during the Sino-Japanese War also offered an opportunity to imitate or emphasize the similarities with British rule in Egypt. In October 1894, after the outbreak of the war, Inoue Kaoru was sent to Korea as Japan’s extraordinary envoy (Conroy 1960, 271) and gave considerable thought to what policy Japan ought to adopt in Korea. Two months later he wrote Prime Minister Itō that he had decided to pursue the same policy “which England follows in Egypt” (Beasley 1987, 51). The British had showed in Egypt that increased economic involvement with a country provided one means to increase political involvement. Inoue clearly wanted to “Egyptianize” Korea (Duus 1995, 92, 105, 135, 168) by advancing loans to Korea. Inoue wrote: “What was England’s pretext for intervening in Egypt? Was it not in the fact that England had obtained a position of real interest there by supplying Egypt with capital? I firmly believe that if we wish to solidify our position in Korea and establish a pretext for intervention in its internal affairs, we must obtain real interests there” (cited in Duus 1995, 92). As it turned out, Inoue’s plans were short-lived since he did not obtain the necessary support from the Japanese government to carry out his goals. But studies of Egypt’s administration published in the next few years enabled future Japanese colonial administrators to carry out more detailed planning that owed much to the model of British administration in Egypt.

Part of the incentive for studying European colonial administration came from Japan’s own lack of experience in the administration of overseas
dependencies. But the Japanese were also determined to draw parallels between their own role in Korea and the role of the British in Egypt in order to give legitimacy to their rule on the peninsula. Itō and Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu 陸奥宗光 (1844–97) frequently took pains to impress upon foreign representatives in Tokyo that the Japanese saw their position in Korea as similar to that of the British in Egypt or of the French in Tunisia. The Belgian ambassador to Japan commented: “Count Ito and Mutsu always proclaim very loudly that they do not want to annex Korea,” but “Japan wants to establish herself as a protector in imitation of England in Egypt, France in Tunisia and Madagascar and Austria in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Lensen 1966, 41).

By the time the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) broke out in southern Africa, Japan and Britain were drawing closer. In 1899, British Rear Admiral and Member of Parliament Lord Charles Beresford (1846–1919) proposed that Britain and Japan cooperate in playing a role in China similar to that of Britain in Egypt (Williston 1937, 93). The precarious position the British found themselves in during the Anglo-Boer War and the mostly positive attitude of the Japanese press toward Britain during that war helped pave the way for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. Japanese criticism of British imperialism had diminished by the outbreak of the war, but the emerging socialist and Christian reformist movements in Japan at the time gave expression to a new dimension of criticism of British imperialism. In general, however, the Japanese press expressed considerable admiration and sympathy for the British cause during the war. Britain’s growing realization during the war that it needed an ally also contributed to the establishment of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (Bradshaw 1992; Fujita 2005; Nish 1985).

The successful establishment of British rule throughout South Africa had a strong but ambiguous impact on Japanese expansionism. To those who hoped to see Japanese trade with all regions of the world expand, British control of southern Africa helped reinforce the fact that much of the world was under British domination and that, if Japan intended to trade with these areas, close cooperation or alliance with Britain was going to be necessary. To those who dreamed of Japanese imperial expansion, on the other hand, the life and vision of Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) served as a source of inspiration. The tension between a search for world markets and a search for secure markets under Japanese control on the adjacent Chinese mainland remained a central feature of Japanese thought over the next decades. For a while the Anglo-Japanese Alliance allowed the Japanese to pursue both goals simultaneously, but the hostile reaction of European powers to Japan’s peaceful economic penetration of Africa contributed to Japan’s decision to place greater emphasis on control over the adjacent Chinese mainland (Asian-African Research Organization 1966, 3–24).
Soon after the Russo-Japanese War erupted in early 1904, the Japanese forced a treaty upon the Koreans, making Korea virtually a protectorate of Japan. The Japanese authorities at this time expressed their desire to obtain copies of Lord Cromer’s report on Egypt (Adu 1976, 50); and British diplomats, for their part, showed themselves favorably disposed toward Japan’s role in Korea, comparing Japan’s position there with Britain’s imperial presence in Egypt. In March 1904 the British Minister in Seoul, John Newell Jordan (1852–1925), reported that, in his opinion, Japan would undoubtedly “succeed in Egyptianising Korea” but, in doing so, would “receive less assistance from the native element than the British authorities need in Egypt.” In a June 1904 report, Jordan commented: “If England, the Japanese argue, has given her best talent for the reorganization of Egypt, Japan, if she hopes for similar success, must do the same for Corea [sic].”

The Egyptian model was clearly evident in the program of “reform” that the Japanese presented to the Korean government in August of that year. Jordan commented in October that the Japanese “appear to have followed with some closeness the model set by Britain in Egypt and to have given concrete expression at the outset to the functions which, as gradually defined, were exercised by the early British Financial adviser” in Egypt.

Another indication of the influence of British rule in Egypt on Japanese colonial administration was the number of books on this subject produced by Japanese colonial bureaus. In 1905 Katô Fusazô 加藤房蔵 authored a book describing Egypt as a model for the administration of protectorates; in 1906 Inoue Masaji 井上雅二 authored a book on British administration in Egypt that was meant to be useful for administering Korea; and Kamata Eikichi 鎌田栄吉 produced a book in 1909 on Egyptian financial affairs as a resource for Japanese administrators in Korea. A Japanese group in Taiwan also published an “Encyclopedia” on various methods for the administration of colonial territories that included information on British rule in Egypt (Rinji Taiwan Kyûkan Chôsakai 1909; Rûkasu 1898; Tsurumi 1983, 214; Wang 2000, 274–75).

**British Egypt as an Example of Colonial Misrule**

Ultimately, between World War I and World War II, the Japanese and British leaders began to criticize each other’s colonial practices, often with Egypt as a point of comparison. Anti-colonial agitation in Korea gave British arch-imperialist Lord Curzon an opportunity to share his criticism of colonial policy in Korea with his Japanese colleagues as early as 1919. The head of Britain’s Foreign Office Far Eastern Department asserted that, in India and Egypt, the British attempted to rule in the “interest of the natives with a view to educating them to take up a larger share in the government,” but “the Japanese do exactly the reverse” (O’Brien 2004, 273). In 1922, Ma-
ruyama Tsurukichi 丸山鶴吉 (1883–1956), the head of the colonial political police in Korea, wrote, “when we compare our rule to the British in India or Egypt we can see that we have done a much better job in a much shorter time. We have achieved higher literacy rates in Korea than the British have in India or Egypt” (cited in Robinson 1984, 330). As Britain and Japan became more hostile to each other in the 1930s, the nationalists in each country found more reasons to criticize the colonial policies of the other.

Thus, by the approach of World War II, Japanese interest in Egypt had come full circle. Egypt was initially perceived as a country whose efforts at modernization and attempts to revise its treaties with the West were worthy of imitation. Then Egypt’s debt crisis and occupation by Great Britain served as a cautionary tale for the Japanese. Many Japanese sympathized with Egypt and felt a sense of solidarity with all victims of Western imperialism. But once Japan had acquired her own overseas colonies and formed an alliance with Great Britain in 1902, the Japanese began to regard British colonial administration of Egypt as an object of study, both to glean ideas to apply in Japan’s own colonies and to use in defending their own colonialism from criticism. Finally, when the Anglo-Japanese Alliance fell apart during the interwar years, the Japanese and British began criticizing the colonial policies of each other, and Egypt was often the point of comparison. Egypt thus came to be perceived in Japan as a country where British misrule was evident.

Notes

The authors appreciate the very useful suggestions of several anonymous reviewers. For a more complete bibliography on works related to Japanese-African relations, contact Richard Bradshaw (rick.bradshaw@centre.edu).

1In 1911 the Tökyö Nichinichi joined with the Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun (Osaka Daily News) to form the Mainichi Shinbun (see de Lange 1998; Huffman 1997; Kawabe 1921). The British-owned Japan Weekly Mail (1870–1917) included English summaries of and comments about articles in Japanese-owned newspapers. Thus the Japan Weekly Mail is cited as a source about the content of Japanese newspapers.

2Fashoda (presently known as Kothok) was a village in southeastern Sudan that was the site of a major conflict of British and French colonial interests in 1898; Britain ultimately prevailed.

3The quotations in this and the following paragraph come from archival material cited in Adu (1976) and dated March 16, 1904; June 29, 1904; and October 19, 1904.

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Runner-up: Japan in the German Mass Media during the 1936 Olympic Games

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Japan and Germany both saw an opportunity in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games to use the publicity to promote their image in the world. In particular, the host country's mass media generated a wealth of materials, ranging from radio broadcasts to newspaper articles, cigarette-card photographs, and film footage. This study makes use of these primary sources to analyze their portrayals of Japan during the Games, revealing an overall image plagued by stereotypes and misconceptions. Japan, whose successes often came across as surprises, also appeared as a sort of lesser runner-up best suited for aping Germany. Given that the Olympics occurred only three months before the Anti-Comintern Pact of November 25, 1936, these unflattering depictions of Japan in the German mass media indicate that German-Japanese rapprochement resulted from a radical shift from previous cultural and social attitudes.

Politics, Mass Media & the Olympics

Although the ancient Olympics provided, in spirit, a sanctuary for peaceful sports competition, their modern successors have, in practice, become battlegrounds for ulterior conflicts precisely due to their universal prestige. The controversies surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics merely illustrate this phenomenon (see Lord 2009). In the history of entanglements with politics of the modern Olympics, the 1936 Berlin Games stand out as a notorious example. One does not have to be a historian to know that the Hitler regime exploited the event to trumpet Aryan superiority and Nazi organization. Less well known, however, is that an athlete also tried to use the Olympic spotlight to call attention to his native land. By winning the symbolically significant marathon for the Japanese team, Son Kitei 孫基禎 (1912–2002) became the most publicized Asian sportsman in Germany. Hundreds of thousands of spectators experienced the race along the route or on rudimentary public televisions, and untold more listened on radio across Germany and the world (F. Richter 1937, 335–43). The day following his victory, Son’s photograph dominated the front page of the newspaper Völkischer Beobachter (People’s observer); and Son even received a reception.
with the Führer himself (*Völkischer Beobachter* 1936). Nonetheless, despite the widespread and technologically sophisticated coverage focused on Son, most German descriptions of him failed to mention that he came not from Japan but Korea, even though Son tried to highlight the fact and was prepared to tell Hitler of the plight of his homeland (Walters 2006, 233). How could the German media neglect or obscure such obvious details?

This article explores the extent of German understanding of Japan through the lens of mass media depictions during the 1936 Summer Olympics and analyzes its significance in Japanese-German relations. Although the Games presented some Berliners with a rare occasion to see numerous foreigners from distant lands, most contemporary Germans had to rely on the mass media to inform themselves. The Games also imposed a unique moment on the media to report, up close, the appearances and activities of a group of Japanese of unprecedented size in Germany. As Japan and Germany would take the first step toward alliance by concluding the Anti-Comintern Pact just three months after the Games, such an analysis can reveal broader German attitudes toward Japan and put foreign relations in a cultural perspective. Moreover, while most studies investigate the regime’s exploitation of the Games to enhance its prestige and legitimacy, comparatively few examine the portrayal of non-German participants—other than anecdotes about Jesse Owens. The imbalance in scholarly attention partly reflects the wealth of source materials generated by the propaganda machine and its relative neglect of foreigners. This official inattention also benefits the purpose of this article, since editors, commentators, and reporters likely felt less pressure to politicize the appearance of Japan and more latitude to express unfiltered opinions.

This article first reviews Japan’s path to participation in the 1936 Olympics before introducing the primary sources consulted. This piece incorporates evidence from various forms of German mass media—newspapers, newsreels, cigarette cards, film—to assemble an overarching portrayal of the Japanese in the Games that suffered from stereotypes, ignorance, and arrogance. In addition, the media often depicted Japan as an imitator of Germany and did not give much credit to Japanese athletic successes. Even when the Japanese had full control of their public image, as during the Opening Ceremony, their behaviors did not appear particularly friendly or deferential to Germany and its leaders. These media portrayals indicated a level of German knowledge of Japan and a state of bilateral relationship that did not foreshadow Japanese-German rapprochement.

**Japan & the 1936 Olympics**

Most contemporary works on the Eleventh Olympiad label it the “Nazi Olympics” or “Hitler’s Olympics” and describe it as part of the regime’s
exploitative scheme to showcase Aryan supremacy and fascist order—but such assessments were not always the case. In fact, the Games almost did not take place in Germany at all. In 1931, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded Berlin the privilege to host the Games. Yet when Hitler came to power in 1933 he pondered rejecting the offer because he considered the Olympics “an invention of Jews and Freemasons” (quoted in Hilton 2006, 11). Josef Goebbels (1897–1945), the propaganda mastermind, managed, however, to persuade Hitler to change his mind and realize the prestige and legitimacy that holding the Games would confer on the new National Socialist Germany. In addition, the construction of the Olympic Village, stadium, and other infrastructure would create jobs for the unemployed masses. To these ends the regime poured its energy and resources into organizing competitions across the country, from skiing in the Bavarian Alps to sailing in the Baltic Sea. It invented the torch relay from Olympia to the host city and invested in the latest communication technology to advertise Nazi Germany’s achievements to the world. Yet threats of boycott from the United States and France to protest, respectively, the ban against Jewish athletes and the remilitarization of Germany could still derail the Games. Therefore, in order to ensure maximal international participation, the regime relaxed its persecution of German Jews, allowed foreign Jews to compete, and reassured France of its peaceful intentions. The Games thus proceeded as planned.

From the beginning, Japan took a keen interest in the 1936 Olympiad. Japan first participated in the Stockholm Games in 1912. By the early 1930s, Japan was already petitioning to host the Olympics for the prestige and symbolic significance of full, equal membership in the civilized world. Indeed, several Japanese advocates for the Olympics welcomed the ascension of Hitler only because he had made known his hostility to Germany hosting the Games—thinking, then, that Japan might become the replacement venue. When Germany decided to hold the Games after all, Japan instead devoted itself to bringing the 1940 Olympics to Tokyo. As part of the campaign, members of the Japanese Olympic Committee, such as judo master Dr. Kanō Jigoro 嘉納治五郎 (1860–1938), visited their German counterparts and other Nazi sports officials several times to garner support (Völkischer Beobachter 1933). Japan also sent a large delegation of athletes to Berlin in 1936 to demonstrate that it could compete on the international level in multiple events and would serve as an enthusiastic host country.

**Reporting & Historicizing the Games**

In early July 1936, the main body of Japanese officials and athletes arrived in Berlin amid the publicity campaign orchestrated by the regime’s mass-media apparatus. The group of 240-odd Japanese, hitherto the largest to set
foot together in Germany, drew a warm welcome by German Olympic officials on the train platform and brought together a throng of excited spectators outside the station, most of whom were seeing real Japanese for the first time (*Ufa-Tonwoche* 1936). Those in Berlin and the rest of Germany unable to witness the arrival could hear about it through public loudspeakers or receivers at home or on radio news later in the day. The next day they could read related articles in the *Völkischer Beobachter* and other newspapers. By the following Wednesday they could watch cinema footage of the recapitation in the weekly newsreel *Ufa-Tonwoche* (*Ufa* weekly with sound), produced by Universum-Film. This media blitz not only offered sports fans numerous means to follow the Olympic festivities and competitions but also left a trove of primary-source materials for scholars investigating the presentation of events.

The most immediate channels of information for audiences outside the Olympic venues—and for historians years removed—are real-time television footage and play-by-play radio commentaries over the airwaves. Though ephemeral as mass media, live radio and television as primary sources enjoy the advantage of undergoing relatively little tempering. It is unclear whether any original television footage of the 1936 Olympics still exists, though some may survive as reincarnated materials in newsreels and documentaries. For radio broadcasts, the German Radio Archive preserves a number of sound clips from the Games and makes them available for academic use.

From the day after the events and throughout the week, the populace could read about events in the *Völkischer Beobachter* and watch footage in the popular Ufa newsreels. Since 1933, the *Beobachter* had been the official and most widely circulating daily across Germany. Although its political reporting and editorial arm operated as government mouthpieces, the paper also contained substantial sections on sports, culture, business, and entertainment that were largely free of ideological baggage. During the Olympics, sports news came to dominate front-page headlines, and, similarly, Ufa devoted its two shows during the Games entirely to the Olympics. Both the newspaper and newsreel understandably concentrated on German performance, and Japan enjoyed at best secondary coverage, but this relative negligence also shielded Japan’s images from excessive distortion due to political considerations.

A few months after the Games, Germans could relive part of the excitement of the event by collecting Olympic-themed cigarette cards and pasting them in the two albums of *Die Olympischen Spiele 1936* (The 1936 Olympic Games). Each volume contained pages with blank areas for the cards, framed by descriptions of the competitions and charts tabulating the results. An uncommon primary source, this card collection provides a lasting record of the pictorial portrayal of the Games. The texts, composed by the publishing staff of the private tobacco concern Reemstma (based in
Hamburg), appeared not to have labored under heavy censorship, since the theme was not overtly political.

The last large-scale public commemoration of the Berlin Games appeared in April 1938 as *Olympia*, a two-part documentary motion picture directed and produced by Leni Riefenstahl (1902–2003). Among the activities Japan participated in, the film shows the Opening Ceremony, track and field, life in the Olympic Village, aquatics, and equestrian events. As a primary source for the Games, *Olympia* had an advantage, since the regime granted the film crew funds and access to events—but this official support might have subtly influenced post-production editing. Nonetheless, Japan’s image might have escaped most ideological tempering, since it did not have a major starring role, and Riefenstahl maintained a degree of artistic independence. Finally, the diverse sources used in this article should mutually reinforce each other and paint a variegated image of Japan in the German media.

**Japan & the Nazi Salute**

Viewers saw in *Olympia* a telling episode from the Opening Ceremony that shed light on the state of Japanese-German relations around the time of the Games. After Hitler entered the stadium and emerged on the dignitaries’ balcony, the crowd rose and greeted him by giving the Nazi salute. The ceremony began as participants of various nationalities marched into the stadium, passing the balcony to pay homage to the host country’s head of state. The footage shows Greece leading the procession, followed in order by Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, India, Japan, the United States, Austria, Italy, France, Switzerland, and finally Germany. In an eerie foreshadowing of events to come, the delegates from nations Germany eventually conquers deliver the Nazi salute, while those from lands that remain outside German control only remove their hats or give the standard hand salute. In particular, the film shows the Japanese athletes simply walking past the balcony without making any special gesture of acknowledgment to the Führer.

Declination on behalf of the Japanese athletes to give the Nazi salute likely resulted from deliberate calculation rather than mere coincidence. To put Japan’s action in perspective, one should realize that most of the nations whose athletes saluted had reasons for doing so. Many Austrians supported a union with Germany, especially one headed by a fellow Austrian. For Italy, Germany had by 1936 become its main source of material and political support since its internationally condemned invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. Indeed just two months after the Games, Mussolini delivered a speech proclaiming the Rome-Berlin Axis. The French delegation might have wanted to avoid giving Germany an occasion to claim provocation, particularly
since the Popular Front had been in power for only two months in France and a right-wing rebellion had broken out south of the border in Spain.

Likewise, the countries that refused to salute did so because they also invested much significance in the gesture. Britain had already wrestled with the question of the salute in 1934 when a soccer team from Derby County visited Germany. At that time, the British ambassador instructed the players to comply and give the salute because the Foreign Office did not want to appear to snub Hitler or other top Nazis (Rippon 2006, 58). In 1936 in Berlin, the British athletes reached the opposite decision and did not raise their right arms to honor Hitler, possibly because the honor of a nation and not just a county was at stake. The American team likely felt distaste for anything related to Nazism, if the opprobrium proto-Nazi groups attracted in the United States serves as any clue. The behaviors of the various countries at the Opening Ceremony therefore indicate that the decision over saluting was made with full recognition of its diplomatic implications.

This realization brings into question the Japanese team’s decision to march by Hitler without saluting. After all, at the time Hitler had a reputation as the most dynamic and popular leader in Europe and was at the head of a transformational movement. World War II and the Holocaust had yet to occur; in any case, Japan was not touched by Nazi militarism and anti-Semitism the way France and America were, and fascism as an ideology was gaining attention in Japan. It was also beyond doubt that the Japanese delegation recognized the significance of its moment in the stadium. Generally speaking, Japanese missions overseas, from the Iwakura Embassy 岩倉使節団 (1871–73) on, took seriously their role as representatives of all Japanese and the importance of upholding Japan’s reputation. For the Japanese Olympic delegation of 1936, the stakes stood even higher than usual. On the day it marched into the stadium before the world’s journalists, the IOC met in the afternoon to vote on Tokyo’s bid for hosting the 1940 Olympics. Any last-minute gaffe or misstep could ruin Japan’s chances to welcome the Games and would bring disappointment and humiliation on the whole people. To this effect, the vice president of the Japanese Olympic Committee, Ōshima Matahiko 大島又彦 (1872–1953), gave a speech from Japan over radio to remind the athletes to uphold Japan’s honor and conduct themselves as if they were soldiers for the emperor. He wanted “them to show the Japanese spirit and power to all the world, and display their firm attitude and stern discipline in their sporting events” (quoted in Nakamura 2003, 132).

Seen from this perspective, the Japanese most likely reached the decision not to deliver the Nazi salute and thus risk slighting Hitler after a careful consideration of all factors involved. First, the IOC’s impending meeting and decision must have weighed heavily on the delegation’s collective mind. Since the Nazi gesture carried much political baggage, the team leaders probably decided to avoid it so as not to draw Japan into any unnec-
necessary controversy and jeopardize Tokyo’s candidacy. The procession leader seemed to have arrived at a compromise by giving a military salute, though, oddly enough, the rest of the team did not even remove their hats, as the Swedish and American teams did in lieu of a hand gesture.

Second, the Japanese might not have wanted to sully their country’s image by appearing as stooges of Germany. Austria, Italy, and France each had their own reasons to pay homage to the dictator, but Japan at that point owed no allegiance to Germany. Certainly Tokyo could use Berlin’s votes in the IOC; but Germany by no means controlled the whole organization. Moreover, other former host countries—in particular the non-saluting Sweden, the United States, and Great Britain, and perhaps also democratic France, Belgium, and the Netherlands—would likely frown upon Japan appearing too close to dictatorial Germany, which won its bid to host the Games back in its republican days.

Third, the Japanese might not have been familiar with the Nazi salute and thus refrained from performing it lest they commit any mistake in front of the world. Few photographs or film footage captured Japanese ever complying with the Nazi custom: Japanese diplomats usually greeted German dignitaries by shaking hands and removing their hats. Even when Hitler descended on the signing ceremony of the Tripartite Pact in 1940, the Japanese present still did not deliver the Nazi salute, even though every German and Italian right arm stood erect. When the Führer personally greeted Japanese Ambassador Kurusu Saburō 来栖三郎 (1886–1954), the two shook hands before Kurusu erroneously raised his left arm in an attempt to salute (Deutsche Wochenschau 1940). If even a seasoned ambassador could fumble the gesture, it should be no surprise that the athletes did not try their hand at it in the stadium.

This episode in Olympia hinted at a formal and polite—but by no means extraordinary—level of Japanese-German interaction. By contrast, Italy enjoyed an enthusiastic reception by the crowd, foreshadowing the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in October. The spectators in the stands treated Japan as just another participant country, neither seeing nor showing any clue of the upcoming rapprochement. Likewise, the Japanese representatives expressed no special affinity for Germany, certainly not enough to submit to Nazi rites, and projected an image of stoic discipline. During the rest of the Games, though, they came to have less control over their public appearance as they became the subjects of reporters and commentators who had certain ideas about Japan and its people.

**Those Short Japanese**

To this day persists the stereotype of the Japanese as short, and this image unsurprisingly prevailed more strongly in Europe and America before
World War II. Correspondingly, the German mass media’s portrayals of the Japanese during the Olympics fell in lockstep with the dominant perception of Japan as a collective nation of short people. A news article on a victory for the Japanese field hockey team described how the “short, fast Asians” defeated the Hungarians with a 3–0 score (Völkischer Beobachter 1936i). Speed likely contributed to the positive outcome for Japan, though the reporter did not elaborate on how height played a role to warrant attention. In the men’s 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay, the Japanese champion swimmers once again appeared “short, compact,” as if their statures rather than their strokes or speed made victory possible (Völkischer Beobachter 1936f).

The media painted individuals in the Japanese team also with the same brush. Two of the most nail-biting events, the men’s 5,000- and 10,000-meter races, featured seesaw battles between Japanese runner Murakoso Kōhei 村社講平 (1905–98) and three Finns running as a team to space out opponents. The lone Japanese struggled furiously with the Finnish pack for the crucial lead and inside track, and the several lead changes and surges by each side kept live radio listeners on the edges of their seats. In the 10,000-meter race, the narrators breathlessly and excitedly shouted, “Attention! Attention! . . . The Japanese charges! Murakoooso finds the strength to move in front! . . . With small strides the yellow man fought his way to the lead! . . . Now the Finns are fighting with the short Japanese! . . . And the short, brave Japanese Murakoso took fourth place.” The voiceover of another commentator for the documentary film also exclaimed, “The short Japanese breaks out one more time” (Riefenstahl 1938). And in the 5,000-meter race, the radio announcers similarly blared, “Murakoso the short Japanese is still very fresh” (Deutsches Historisches Museum 1996). Unfortunately for Murakoso, he finished fourth in this race also. As if to press the point by exaggeration and caricature, a cartoon (fig. 1) in the cigarette-card album projected a potential reversal of fortune for Murakoso in the 1940 Olympics: three short Japanese runners swarming and overtaking a single tall Finn (W. Richter 1936, 2: 35).

![Figure 1](image-url)
Remarkably the radio and film commentators seemed unable to find many adjectives other than “short” to describe Murakoso, particularly since the outcomes of these contested races had less to do with stature and more with teamwork and strategy. Murakoso was certainly shorter than the Finns in the 10,000-meter race (165 cm versus 174 cm, 176 cm, and 181 cm); but in film footage he appeared within the normal range of heights among the other runners (fig. 2). More balanced comments could also have mentioned teamwork and perseverance rather than size as decisive factors—after all, Murakoso did outrun taller competitors.

Son Kitei, the marathon gold medalist, also suffered from similarly skewed descriptions. The day after his victory, the *Völkischer Beobachter* devoted two articles to the race in which the phrase “the short Japanese Son” appeared no fewer than three times; one even labeled him “zierlich” (diminutive) (Storz 1936; *Völkischer Beobachter* 1936). The text in the cigarette-card album praised Son’s body as the ideal physical build for a marathon runner: “short and light” (W. Richter 1936, 2: 55). All media sources agreed that Son’s spirit, perseverance, and will enabled him to win the race (he trailed for much of the course until the leader quit from exhaustion); but the portrayals of Son as short stood on shaky grounds. Son by no means towered over anyone, but he was not short; rather he was of average height. The silver medalist, Ernest Harper (1902–79) of Great Britain, provided the

![Figure 2](image-url)
most convenient point of comparison, since Harper and Son ran side by side until Son pulled ahead in the final stretch. Whether in the documentary, cigarette cards, or newspaper photographs, Son and Harper clearly stood shoulder to shoulder (fig. 3). In fact, Son was actually a little taller than Harper (170 cm versus 168 cm), yet no one called Harper small, short, or diminutive. Instead, the German media persisted in calling Son the “short Japanese,” and some even attributed his victory to his stature. Stereotypes, it appeared, died very hard, indeed.

Considering the regime’s notoriety, one can reasonably expect Nazi racism to have informed the depictions of Japanese and misinformed the nationality of Korean athletes, but the evidence examined does not support this notion. Fundamentally, the commentators—even the writers for the propagandistic *Beobachter*—never pontificated about race or pronounced any conclusions on racial grounds based on the performance of Japanese athletes. In particular, they could well have used the result of the 10,000-meter race as “proof” of the superiority of whites over non-whites, but they did not. And when the Nazis really wanted to categorize and differentiate

*FIGURE 3* Marathoners Son and Harper ran side by side for much of the race, thereby demonstrating visually their similar height and build. Nonetheless, the German media repeatedly called Son “short” and “light”—labels they never used for the shorter Englishman. With permission of the International Olympic Committee, Lausanne, Switzerland.
humans—for example, into “full,” “half” and “quarter” Jews—they never lacked precision and fastidiousness. In this light, the media’s failure to differentiate Koreans from Japanese appears to have been a mistake of omission rather than of commission. More likely, entrenched prejudices and a lack of understanding of Japan lay at the root of the distorted portrayals. Observations about Japanese being of a smaller stature might have applied when Europeans first arrived in Japan in the sixteenth century, when the diet contained less protein, most of which was captured from unpredictable marine sources. Yet Japan had evolved dramatically since then, and all the participants mentioned in this article were born in the twentieth century and could afford to devote time and resources to become fit, well-nourished athletes. That the media held onto these outdated biases in the face of contradictory evidence indicated a limited and biased level of German knowledge of Japan and the Japanese.

In addition, depicting the Japanese as short provided an explanation for their successes at various events. Conveniently the media coupled “short” with “light” and “compact” to arrive at the corollary “fast.” When the Japanese soccer team pulled off the coup of besting Sweden, the reporter for the Völkischer Beobachter credited the Japanese team’s speed for the victory: “the Japanese simply doubled and tripled their exertions and raised the strong game tempo even more” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936d). In order to provide readers with a memorable visual image, the reporter added that the Japanese scored their three goals using “their weasel-like agile surges.” A comparison of the Japanese to weasels did not seem all that uncommon (Vossische Zeitung 1933); and, in German, “weasel” carries none of the English undertones of sneakiness. Nonetheless, equating someone to a small, furry creature could not have been entirely flattering or confidence-inspiring, especially in a culture that all but worshipped the tall, muscular, and strong. Thus, the portrayals of Japan not only suffered from stereotypes but also contained dubious analogies that perhaps reflected a lack of faith in Japanese performance.

Japan’s Unexpected Successes

In turn, this low confidence brought about conservative expectations, which created room for surprises. Indeed, the German mass media time and again allowed themselves to be taken aback by Japanese athletic accomplishments, even though they reported in some detail the Japanese team’s strengths and potentials. Before the Games, a reporter for the Beobachter wrote an article titled “Who are the Japanese?” wherein he examined the team’s roster and provided brief descriptions of all likely achievers (Völkischer Beobachter 1936m). Knowing that the Japanese excelled in track and field, another correspondent of the paper even traveled to Finland to interview the Japanese
athletes undergoing pre-Olympic training there (Völkischer Beobachter 1936b). Considering the efforts the media put into scouting the Japanese, they should not have expressed undue shock when the Japanese performed well in some of these competitions.

Nevertheless, “surprise” emerged as the word most frequently associated with Japanese athletic successes. When the Japanese soccer team defeated Sweden by a score of 3–2 the headline announced “Japan—the big surprise” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936d). Somehow the result took the reporter unawares, even though an article had appeared two days prior analyzing the strengths of the Japanese team, whose good technique Berliners came to know well through friendly matches with the local district league (Völkischer Beobachter 1936k). Two days after the match, the newspaper remained awestruck by Japan’s “sheer unbelievable” victory over Sweden (Völkischer Beobachter 1936e).

Son Kitei also endured low expectations by the German media until well into the 42.5-kilometer race. The day after the marathon, the Beobachter declared “Son, the Japanese, the surprise victor” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936j). It added that the result was “the greatest of surprises,” even though the earlier article (“Who are the Japanese?”) had revealed that Son had once broken the legendary two-and-a-half-hour mark and should perform well in the Games. The real shockers—those of Harper the English coalminer taking silver and Nan Shoryū 南昇竜 (1912–2001), another Korean on the Japanese team, fending off the Finnish pack runners to take bronze—received scant coverage. In light of the same newspaper’s pre-Games reporting of Japan’s track and field team, the surprise that Son’s victory evoked seemed unwarranted. Even after Japan had proven itself a competitor in Berlin, especially in aquatics and athletics, the cigarette-card album still cautioned readers to look for more surprises from Japan in the 1940 Olympics rather than to expect successes (W. Richter 1936, 1: 74).

Although the German media certainly knew of Japan’s strengths in a number of areas, they stubbornly insisted to be taken by surprise when Japanese athletes actually won events or captured medals. Most likely this reaction of shock reflected a low expectation of Japanese performance. On a rational level, the media understood that Japan featured real talents; yet, on an emotional level, the correspondents had trouble accepting reality as it occurred. Thus when Japan won, it often came as unexpected. Contrast this attitude with the media’s handling of German victories: not once did they present German successes as anything out of the ordinary, since Aryans were naturally expected to dominate. For example, when German horse riders swept all the equestrian gold medals, the media raised nary an eyebrow, because they saw it as the natural outcome in this military sport. Just as in the media’s depiction of Japanese statures, their indulgence in and power to perpetuate cultural stereotypes would play a powerful role in molding German’s views of Japan.
Japan the Apprentice

One image of Japan that the media took much pride in cultivating featured Japan as an eager student of German efficiency and organization. After the IOC voted 36 to 27 to confer on Tokyo the privilege of hosting the 1940 Olympics, the *Völkischer Beobachter* expressed its satisfaction with the result by devoting a long article to underscore the “Olympic” excitement preceding the outcome in Tokyo’s favor (Schn. 1936). The correspondent had an extended conversation with Kanō Jigorō, who was in Germany to advocate Tokyo’s candidacy, and noted with delight that Kanō was “no stranger to us” and that the Japanese had multiple opportunities to become acquainted with German sportsmanship. The article also approved Kanō’s sentiment that hosting the Games would demonstrate Japan’s status as one of the “culture nations” (*Kulturnationen*) on earth. Since Berlin administered the Olympics before Tokyo, Japan seemed to be following Germany’s footsteps.

This supposed teacher–student relationship appeared even more prominently elsewhere, and the media relished having an apt pupil in Japan willing to learn from the masterfully organized Berlin Games. Even a brief description of Japan’s Olympic team in the cigarette-card album found room to include this statement: “For Tokyo in 1940, they [the Japanese] want to study the organization [of the current Games]” (W. Richter 1936, 1: 74).

About a week after Tokyo was chosen as the next host city, the *Beobachter* published verbatim a “Japanese message to the world.” The statement, from Hiranuma Ryōzō (1879–1959), vice president of the Japanese Olympic Committee, no doubt made it appealing for the newspaper to transmit in whole: “The program of our host here in Berlin during the 11th Olympiad is unmatched in the history of the Olympic Games and deserves great attention and admiration. Whether we in Japan can repeat the program of 1936 in its achievement and excellence remains to be seen” (*Völkischer Beobachter* 1936h). Here it was, a Japanese official openly acknowledging that Japan would look up to Germany for enlightenment and guidance.

Another week later, after the closing of the Olympics, the *Beobachter* published an account of a long-distance telephone conversation between Bernhard Rust (1883–1945), the Reich minister of education, and his Japanese counterpart, Hirao Hachisaburō (1866–1945). The reporter quoted the Japanese minister: “You [Rust] can be assured that Japan will try to hold the Games after the German example and to the best of its abilities so that Japan will be able to stand honorably next to the great success in the 1936 Olympic Games in Germany. We hope that Germany will gladly share with us the advice that it learned from its experiences through these years” (*Völkischer Beobachter* 1936c). Rust was of course only too happy to play mentor: “I assure you in the name of the Reich government that Germany will put at Japan’s disposal its advice learned from experiences. And I
am convinced that the 1940 Olympic Games in Japan will continue the success of the 1936 Games.”

The newspaper had still more to elaborate on Germany’s tutoring of Japan. On the same day, it carried another article titled “Japanese want to learn more.” It related how the Japanese track and field team remained in Germany after the closing ceremony to soak up more of Germany’s superiority by quoting the trainer as follows: “We Japanese stay here for a bit more after the closing of the Games. . . . We are naturally pleased that the next Games will take place in Tokyo, and we want to see and learn as much as possible from the German organization” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936g). Two days later, the Beobachter took special delight in reproducing a handwritten note by the Japanese team to thank Germany for making such a learning experience possible. The reporter wrote that, even after the Games, the Japanese athletes “still stood absolutely under the effect of the previous days and of the overwhelming triumph of German organization and order” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936a). The article’s tone made it sound as if the Japanese had become enchanted and overawed by the spell of German efficiency and excellence.

These depictions of Japan as an imitator of Germany revealed an underlying perception of Japan as some runner-up trying to catch up with the Reich. Certainly Germany deserved some credit for achieving the goals it set for itself by winning the most medals and impressing the world with its organization and technology. Japanese admiration for Germany’s performances before and during the Games was quite likely genuine and enthusiastic. Since Japan was to hold the next Olympics, it understandably wanted to take lessons from Germany’s experience. Yet the nauseating repetitions—five separate articles in two weeks in the Beobachter alone—of the Japanese eagerness to imitate Germany indicated Berlin’s satisfaction in assuming the role of tutor for Tokyo, but this German exercise in self-aggrandizement also came at a significant expense to Japan’s pride. Also, this view of Japanese-German interactions reflected the unequal teacher–student interaction that the West maintained with Japan during the second half of the nineteenth century. Such attitudes downplaying Japan, should they exist in other segments of German society like the military and bureaucracy, may explain the dysfunction of the later alliance, particularly if an increasingly nationalistic and militant Japan did not willingly submit to becoming the junior partner.

Perception & Reality in Japanese-German Relations

As it turned out, Son Kitei never managed to bring himself to tell Hitler about Korea during the audience; he did not think the Führer would have understood or cared in the least bit (cited in Walters 2006, 233). The German media went about their business of celebrating Son as an unlikely
Olympian and chalking up a gold and a bronze medal (by Nan) for Japan on the ranking chart to calculate the points. Despite Son’s even more strenuous efforts off the track to emphasize his true identity, only a passing reference on the radio amid the broad coverage mentioned that he hailed from Korea (Deutsches Historisches Museum 1996). Son’s and Korea’s moment of restitution came not until the 1988 Seoul Games when Son, now properly identified as Son Ki-jong 손기정 and wearing Korea’s colors, carried the Olympic torch into the stadium during the Opening Ceremony.

The German media’s failure to report Son’s real origins could represent an attempt to placate Japan; but evidence points to simple negligence and ignorance of reality in East Asia as the likelier causes. Fundamentally, part of Son’s story got lost in translation, since his Japanese interpreter never conveyed in full the meaning of his statements. Other Western publications, such as the New York Times, also did not make a nuanced distinction concerning Son’s origins, and the United States was certainly not trying to appease Japan. While no one mistook an Indian athlete for British, Japanese and Koreans looked alike, and the media conveniently lumped them into one group—though, crucially, the commentators never pronounced any broad racial judgments about “yellow peoples.” Since the Japanese claimed Son as one of their own, the German media had little to gain by challenging or investigating this claim.

This interaction between reality and image takes center stage in the larger issue of cross-cultural portrayal and understanding. Indeed, as this article has shown, German understanding of Japan as seen in media coverage during the 1936 Olympics was plagued by stereotypes and ignorance. The peripheral role Japan played in the Nazi exercise in propaganda and self-aggrandizement partly contributed to this outcome, because the media devoted relatively fewer resources to cover Japan and might have had to rely more on old prejudices. Without a doubt, Germany enjoyed the prestige and self-gratifying perception—and perhaps reality, too—of being master to a Japanese apprentice in an unequal relationship involving a unilateral flow of knowledge and expertise. Meanwhile, Japan had its own reasons to cultivate Germany for its purpose of winning the bid and learning to prepare for the 1940 Olympics. Its handling of the Nazi salute indicated a reluctance even to appear to come under Hitler’s influence, as well as a possible unfamiliarity with Nazi customs and ideas. Neither case reflected well on the level of knowledge and cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, the German media clung dearly to the outdated anecdotes of Japanese being remarkably shorter than Europeans. Such lazy stereotyping led easily to conclusions of Japanese physical weakness and low expectations of their achievements, so that when Japanese athletes won events at which they always excelled, the media chose to be surprised rather than to see expectations fulfilled.
These aspects of Japanese-German relations, emerging just three months prior to the Anti-Comintern Pact, boded ill for future German-Japanese cooperation. Indeed, they foretold the imbalanced, dysfunctional nature of the eventual alliance. They also weaken arguments of a long-standing cultural or social affinity between the two countries; and, indeed, recent scholarship has painted a more complex portrait of Japanese-German diplomacy (see Kudô and Tajima 2008; Spang and Wippich 2006). Yet images, however inaccurate, outdated, or detached from reality, could still play a powerful role in motivating human actions. After all, for places as far apart as Germany and Japan, perceptions might matter far more than reality. One could already see the imagined closeness and bond between the pair on the closing day of the Games. Japanese Education Minister Hirao pronounced, “I am glad to be able to declare that the Olympic Games contributed greatly to the rapprochement and consolidation of the relationship between Germany and Japan. At the same time I give my sincerest thanks to you [German Education Minister Rust] for the great sympathy the German people showed to the Japanese” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936c). Rust, not to be outdone, proclaimed that, through the Games, “the long established cultural relationships between Japan and Germany were made friendlier still. . . . We Germans and the Japanese can cultivate real and worthwhile cultural relations with each other” (Völkischer Beobachter 1936c; 1936). These exchanges were all polite diplomatic formalities, perhaps; but in regimes that hinged on the propagation of and belief in myths and propagandistic half-truths, perceptions might well have been as powerful as reality.

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Engineering the Empire of Images: Constructing Railways in Asia before the Great War

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This article addresses how the construction of railways in Indochina and the Chinese province of Yunnan shaped representations of the French “civilizing mission” prior to 1914. In the early 1900s, Paul Doumer (1857–1932), as governor-general of Indochina, initiated a large program of railway construction in Indochina and Yunnan. There, French engineers created technological marvels such as the pont Doumer (Doumer Bridge), the pont sur Albalétriers (Crossbow Bridge), and the pont en dentelle (Steel Lace Viaduct). Railway construction demanded millions of francs; and over twelve thousand workers died while building the Yunnan railway. The French were ultimately able to use this railway line only until 1940—for fewer than thirty years. Nevertheless, images of railway masterpieces created illusions of French imperial presence in southern China. Such images also suggested that the French had a profound impact on modernizing Indochina and Yunnan, a perception that was far from the truth.

Representations: Image, Reality & Colonial Complications

Two decades before World War I, French railway engineers traveled to distant parts of Asia to construct railways. The modernization of transport frequently accompanied colonization, and French technological achievements in Indochina—Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina (together, present-day Vietnam)—and the Chinese province of Yunnan (Kunming) stand out as technological masterpieces. In comparison with such chefs-d’oeuvre of engineering, the railways in metropolitan France often looked dull. There was a strange dissonance between, on the one hand, expensive, sophisticated engineering solutions for railway construction and, on the other hand, their limited political and economic impact on both colonial economies and the advancement of French imperial goals in Asia. The wondrous images of railway viaducts and bridges mesmerized French contemporaries, who considered such images as ultimate proof of successful imperial expansion.

Tragically, however, over twelve thousand coolies working on the Yunnan railway lost their lives for the sake of French imperial ambitions in
China. Yet the French railway of Yunnan failed to make a dramatic difference in promoting French imperialism in China. Almost immediately after completion of the Yunnan line, China succumbed to civil war, and French dreams of integrating this Chinese province into the French sphere of influence were shattered. The French were able to use this railway line only until 1940, for less than three decades. Nevertheless, for the French and broader European audience, images of railway masterpieces created the illusion of the civilizing mission. Analysis of railway construction in Asia shows that the French administration wanted to build railways whose imagery would excite contemporaries and would convince them of the power of technology to expand the French Empire.

Blanchard, Bancel, and Gervereau (1993); Leprun (1986); Meynier (1993); Norindr (1996); Peer (1998); Schneider (1982); Silverman (1989); Thomson (2004); and others have underlined the significance of the visual in shaping political discourses in French history. In explaining how image became an important medium for forging contemporary society, Roland Barthes (1977) argued that a photograph resembles an illustration in a scientific text, an association that only adds to the credibility of the claim that a photograph represents objective reality. Barthes argued that, in the modern epoch, image became more important than text as a channel for shaping the perceptions of the world.

Adorno (2001) and Benjamin (1969) addressed the emergence of early mass culture, which included cinema, illustrated magazines, photographs, exhibitions, and the culture of visual spectacle. Mass culture and the new culture of the visual reordered the role of image in the French cultural landscape and, in particular, played an important role in redefining the place of technology in the French public imagination (Rearick 1985; Schwartz 1998). Visual aspects of early mass culture played an important part in shaping the relationship between colonies and the mother country: The visual became one of the main media for disseminating knowledge about the imperial project (Hartmann, Silvester, and Hayes 1999; Lutz and Collins 1993). Photographs were designed for the audience in the mother countries rather than for that in the colonies; they became advertisements of the colonial project. Photographs illustrated and promulgated unequal power relations between the white settlers and the indigenous populations (Harris 1999). Photographs claimed to document “objectively” the positive impact of European colonization (Mack 1991); they set a hidden agenda and sought to reinforce or redefine power relations (Barthes 1993; Tagg 1988). Images make a convincing case: with the emergence of journals such as L’Illustration, illustrated articles were able to become a principal source of knowledge for large numbers of readers. Images in the epoch of early mass culture highlighted the “exotic” Orient as a realm different from the West. Even though it was an invented concept, the idea of the “Orient” played an essential role in shap-
ing European identity through the justification of colonial expansion: Western powers needed to lend their leadership to develop the East (Said 1979).

In the view of many scholars, the construction of French colonial railways had less to do with the needs of colonial economies than with the French political agenda (Adas 1989; Binoche-Guedra 1992; Headrick 1981; Hobson 1948). France made considerable investments in railway construction to create a permanent presence in Asia and Africa. While approaching the history of railways in Indochina, most historians have concentrated on the social and economic aspects of railway construction (Bobrie 1976, 1977; Bruguière 1963; Lee 1989, Murray 1980). David Del Testa (2001, 2002) shows how significant the experience of working on Vietnamese railways was for the social mobilization of the native labor movement; many cheminots (railway workers) subsequently became members of the Communist party and took part in anti-colonial strikes in the interwar decades. Robert Lee relates a fascinating account of the French imperial penetration into China: Jules Ferry (1832–93), one of the most passionate promoters of the French imperial project, dreamed of bringing French goods to “four hundred million inhabitants” of China and Asia, “a chimerical vision” that, nonetheless, informed and shaped the policy of French imperial expansion in Southeast Asia (1989, 13). Particularly, the Chinese province of Yunnan seemed to offer an opportunity of becoming a “French commercial monopoly” (266). Lee argues that, between 1885 and 1901, French politics toward China transformed into “an economically based imperialism” (267). As Rudolf Mrazek explains in his study of Dutch technologies in the East Indies (2002), it took time for railways and other modern technologies to become integrated into the everyday lives of people. Modern technology also became a means of imposing imperial control: The fear of natives impelled Dutch engineers to create model villages. Inspired by the ideas of Michel Foucault, Mrazek concludes that modern technology transformed the East Indies to almost a “glass house” that was surveyed and observed by imperial power (67, 112, 130).

Recent scholarship has examined the political and social importance of engineers on the French political stage in the late nineteenth century (Day 2001; Kranakis 1997). As a number of authors have demonstrated, the elite of the French engineering corps—alumni of the École Polytechnique—enjoyed a privileged position in French society. Engineers oversaw substantial budgets and made important decisions about the political and economic development of regions. Kranakis demonstrates that the École Polytechnique forged a strong spirit of loyalty among its alumni by training them to become state officials. In comparison, the alumni of less prestigious engineering schools (e.g., École Centrale, Ecole des Mineurs at St.-Etienne, and École d'Arts et Métiers at Châlons and at Angers) received vocational training and frequently found jobs for private business and railway companies. Engineers played an important role in rebuilding interwar and post-
war France: For example, inspired by the philosophy of paternalism, Raoul Dautry, the Director of the Northern railway network, embarked on a social project of “garden-cities” in northern France that provided schools, maternity hospitals, clubs, and education opportunities for railway workers (Starostina 2007, 228–91).

The article considers the construction of several engineering marvels in Indochina and Yunnan and analyzes the representation of these masterpieces of engineering in mass culture: photographs in illustrated magazines, popular travel accounts, and works of fiction. Highlighting a gap between the glamorous symbols of the “civilizing mission” and their rather unsuccessful economic performance, this piece considers the role of images in shaping colonial discourse. Partisans of the French imperial project—including colonial administrators, engineers, journalists, and writers—became increasingly concerned with the imagery of railways and the ways such images conveyed this project. The construction of colonial railways also shaped the representations of French engineers: In official reports and novels, they were often described as “civilisateurs” (social reformers) and were represented as promoters of the French “civilizing mission.”

**Paul Doumer & Railway Construction in Indochina**

The history of French colonial expansion in Indochina is remarkable because, except for politicians such as Jules Ferry or Paul Doumer, most French statesmen were uninterested in the building of the French Empire in Asia (Andrew and Kanya-Forstner 1981). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Colonies experienced much miscommunication over colonial management; and a French colonial lobby promoted and pushed the idea of imperial expansion. The Comité des Forges, an important part of the lobby, saw colonial railway construction as an opportunity to sell steel. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu (1843–1916), a principal speaker for the colonial lobby, became distinguished by writing a history of European empires that emphasized the necessity of constructing railways for the success of the imperial project (1908). That the French colonies remained so disconnected from one another in the late nineteenth century appeared to jeopardize the French imperial project. Leroy-Beaulieu described the modernization of transport as a first, essential step toward a smooth integration of colonies into the French Empire—and as the best means for domination and colonization. Railways allowed the French “to preserve definitely” the French possessions; connecting different French colonies via railway network was absolutely necessary (“Les chemins” 1896, 300–302; Leroy-Beaulieu 1908). At the 1906 Colonial Exhibition in Marseilles, a hall devoted to the French “civilizing mission” featured maps of both the existing and planned railways (“Afrique Occidentale Français” 1906; Terrier 1906). Even though,
by this time, the “pacification” of Indochina was far from over, politicians and, especially, members of the Union Coloniale argued that now was the time for economic exploration of the French Empire. To them, the improvement of transportation was a necessary first step (Brunschwig 1966).

The building of the French Empire in Asia began in the 1860s when Napoleon III (1808–73, r. 1852–70) wanted to establish a military post in the Far East. France became the legal sovereign of Cochinchina after the expedition of Francis Garnier (1839–73), an expedition that resulted in the capturing of Hanoi and the death of Garnier. Charles Le Myre de Vilers (1833–1918), governor-general of Cochinchina from 1879 to 1882, initially pursued a policy of assimilation by passing judicial reforms and imposing the Western educational system; but these initiatives were of limited success (Thompson 1937). In 1881, the French Parliament voted for expanding French holdings in Indochina; conquests of Tonkin (modern-day northern Vietnam) and Annam (central Vietnam) followed. Through his supervision of the creation of a road network, Jean-Marie De Lanessan (1843–1919), governor-general of Indochina from 1891 to 1894, was the first governor-general to begin modernizing the means of transportation in the region.

But it was not until the rule of Paul Doumer, governor-general of Indochina from 1897 to 1902, that the building of railways became a priority (Brocheux and Hémery 1995; Lee 1989). A former budget reporter, Doumer came to Indochina with a great deal of ambition. He appeared to embody the visions of Jules Ferry about governors-general who are “to do and to dare” (Thompson 1937, 79). Doumer rushed toward the fulfillment of his plans, ruling in somewhat autocratic style, alienating local officials, and making diplomatic faux pas. He also demonstrated remarkable ignorance of local customs (see Lee 1989).

Doumer’s plans for railway construction were essential in his drive to create the Union Indo-Chinoise (Bruguière 1963; Doumer 1905; Lorin 2004). The construction of a railway between Hanoi and Saigon—the centerpiece in Doumer’s ambitious plans—sought to bring together the territories of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina. As a result, in 1898, the Conseil supérieur de l’Indochine and then the Chamber of Deputies considered a new project to construct six railways in Indochina, including the major line between Hai Phong and Hanoi to the borders of Yunnan, and the Transindochinois, from Hanoi to Saigon (Doumer 1905). According to Doumer, the railway in Indochina was “indispensable”: it was “the only means to achieve results,” and without it the development of the region would be “disastrous” (1905, 325). The railway, moreover, was a means to create “the foundation for penetration into China” (326). Ultimately, in summing up his achievements in the post of governor-general, Doumer was happy to report that a total of 2,398 kilometers of railway were constructed (327–28).
“Lace Projected into the Skies”: Hanoi’s Doumer Bridge

In constructing railways in Indochina and Yunnan, French engineers created an impressive image of the French Empire as the harbinger of modernity, an empire that relentlessly introduced and developed advanced technology. Juxtaposition of the tropical forests of Asia with the state-of-the-art railway appears to have convinced viewers of the superiority of French civilization and the necessity of colonization. Photographs of Indochinese railways captivate the imagination because viaducts, tunnels, and bridges are spectacular and because their images are dramatic and visually appealing. The French built a remarkable number of such engineering feats: on a 460-kilometer section between Lào Cai and Yunnan-Fu (Kunming), French engineers designed and built 107 viaducts and 155 tunnels. The 860-kilometer stretch between Hải Phòng and Kunming required a total of 3,777 bridges, viaducts, and tunnels (Lorin 2004). Three masterpieces of French engineering are the pont Doumer (Doumer Bridge) across the Red River in Hanoi; the pont sur Albalétriers (Crossbow Bridge) at kilometer 111 near Mengzi (then spelled Mong-Tseu in French sources), Yunnan; and the pont en dentelle (Steel Lace Viaduct) at kilometer 83 in Yunnan.

The bridge across the Red River in Hanoi—named the Doumer Bridge and now known as Long Biên—is one of most spectacular French technological masterpieces in Asia (fig. 1). It symbolized the role of French engineers in the conquest of nature, especially since the Red River was known for its changing currents and fiery temperament. Between 1897 and 1901, and at a cost of 6.1 million francs, the Eiffel Company drew designs and supervised the construction of the 1,668-meter-long bridge, the longest bridge that the French had built in Asia by this time (Weill 1995). Its deck rises 13 meters above water level and consists of eighteen piers separated by spans between 78 meters and 106 meters long. Its foundation descends more than 30 meters below the riverbed (Hulot and others 1990). According to Doumer, the foundations were the most difficult part to construct. At 33 meters below the surface of the river, air pressure reached 3 atmospheres and was “horribly painful” for the indigenous workers the French engineers supervised, in the words of Doumer (1905, 312). The length of each shift was four hours; workers were thereafter offered a drink, medical attention, and a massage. Doumer wrote:

This paternal treatment was more than one could ever imagine for [making] a good advertisement for [the job of] construction workers, and offers from workers poured in. . . . The establishment of the bridge on Hanoi definitely struck the imagination of the indigenous people. Indigenous and scientific techniques which were utilized and the result which was obtained made them aware of the beneficial force of French civilization. Our scientific genius, our industrial power morally conquered the population, whose armies we have subdued. (312)
Doumer proudly stated that the realization of the bridge made the local population believe that “the French do everything they want”; the local population now comprehended that “definitely, the French were more powerful, more knowledgeable than one could believe” (312).

The history of the Doumer Bridge reveals how the aesthetic appeal of technology shaped the blueprints of the railways. From the beginning, Doumer dreamed of constructing a bridge that would “attract the attention of the world” and would show how French engineers had successfully overcome the challenges of the local environment. Doumer poetically described the effects of his bridge on reordering the colonial landscape: “At a close look, this steel snake was tremendous. Its length appeared indefinite. But when . . . one looked at the bridge in its unity, it was only a weightless trellis, a lace projected into the skies” (1905, 312–13). His metaphor shows how the bridge came to be defined as a work of art.

The inauguration of the bridge on February 2, 1902, involved a special celebration. The emperor of Annam, Thành Thái (1879–1954, r. 1889–1907), took part in the festivities, as did Paul Beau (1857–1926), who was about to become next governor-general. The celebration involved a cavalcade of decorated carriages, a military parade, and numerous celebratory speeches.
Images of the Doumer Bridge were numerous in the French press (de Berques 1905; “Colonies Françaises Indo-Chine” 1902; G. S. 1902). The journal La Dépêche coloniale illustrée [The illustrated colonial dispatch] devoted the entire February 1905 issue to railway construction in Indochina, and, in particular, the new bridge, where a close shot conveys its powerful appeal (52). Describing its appearance in detail, the article described the cantilever of the bridge as “the new Colossus of Rhodes”: if the Red River were to dry up, the supports of the bridge would appear as nine giants, each with a height of 61 meters. The new bridge connected regional railways with the train station in Hanoi; the train station now linked Hanoi with Hải Phòng, Lào Cai, and the province of Yunnan. Hanoi tramways also used the bridge.

The Exhibition of Hanoi also celebrated the construction of the bridge and railways in Indochina (Vann 2004). Opening on November 3, 1902, a few months after the inauguration of the bridge, the exhibition marked the achievements of French colonial rule in Indochina, highlighted the accomplishments of Doumer’s administration, and acknowledged the positive role of financial loans to Indochina in transforming the colony. The exhibition also celebrated railways: maps and photographs describing railway construction were placed in several special galleries (“Exposition de Hanoi” 1902). The exhibition sought to redefine the perceptions and meanings of colonial space and to emphasize the role of railways in colonization.

The Doumer Bridge passed into legend for generations of French. Implicitly and explicitly, the imagery of the bridge and new railways were intended for a French audience because the photographs of the bridge were distributed in France through the media of photographs in illustrated magazines and memoirs of engineers and travelers. For French writer and dramatist Eugène Brieux (1858–1932), in his Voyages aux Indes et en Indo-Chine: Simples notes d’un touriste (Travels in the Indies and Indochina: Unpretentious notes of a tourist), the bridge appeared so gigantic, so long, that Brieux believed its length was several kilometers (1910, 37). The architecture struck him as “bizarre and bold”; using a poetic metaphor, Brieux described the arcs of the bridge as “protruding their enormous curves against surprised sky” (37). Henriette Celarié, who undertook a voyage to Indochina in the late 1930s and subsequently published her travel notes, included an account of the construction of the bridge (1937, 156–58). She integrated excerpts from Doumer’s memoirs into her book because the story of the bridge—as Doumer told it in his memoirs—had become a part of contemporary travel narratives. According to Celarié, an old Vietnamese (Annamite in the text) compared the Red River with a sleeper “who constantly fidgets in his bed.” The “rage” of the river along with its floods and changing currents made the construction of the bridge challenging. These metaphors and comparisons suggest that the construction of the bridge paralleled the epic of the conquest of Asia by the Europeans.
Empire of Images: Railways in Asia before the Great War

French Railways & Bringing the Aesthetics of Modernity to Yunnan

The construction of the Transindochinois line also became a political project for integrating the province of Yunnan, in southwestern China, into the domain of French influence (Bruguière 1963; Hulot and others 1990; Lee 1989). To the eyes of the French administrator, the isolated province of Yunnan was easy prey (“Revue des journaux” 1899b). In his zeal to expand French influence to China, Doumer had made many blunders, some of which contributed to his early resignation. His campaign for building this railway line invoked a sense of utmost urgency: According to Doumer, if it were not built, the consequences for the French imperial project would be dire. Painting a competition between France and England for its presence in Southeastern Asia in dramatic colors, an article in L’Indépendance Tonkinoise sarcastically referred to procrastination with which the Parliament treated the issues of railway-building and, moreover, colonial expansion in the region (“Revue des journaux” 1899a). This dramatic portrayal of Franco-British rivalry for Yunnan was, however, exaggerated: The British even helped the French obtain Chinese agreement to the concession of the Lào Cai–Kunming railway (Lee 1989).

The years between 1906 and 1909 were the most intense in terms of the amount of work accomplished in Yunnan (Hulot and others 1990). Paul Beau, the new governor-general, was equally concerned with the aesthetic appeal of the new railways. The railway to Yunnan became a showcase for French engineering. The creation of the bridge at kilometer 111, the Crossbow Bridge, designed by Paul Bodin (1847–1926), became a remarkable engineering feat (figs. 2–3). The bridge spanned a deep gorge with sheer sides. From each side, the railway approached the chasm through a tunnel. The depth of the gorge precluded the use of piers to support the bridge, and the tunnels at each end restricted access. Paul Bodin’s solution was to construct, on site, two trusses resting on hinges carved into the rock below the tunnel mouths. When complete, these trusses were lowered on steel wires into position, forming an A-frame. Two piers were constructed on top of each truss; and, finally, four steel spans were laid to form the deck between the two tunnels. Captured by camera, the process of the construction of the bridge itself became a spectacle. The most striking photographs document the events of July 16, 1908. The new “wonder of the world” attested to the precision and impeccability of French engineering and offered a powerful, symbolic representation of the relationship between France and China. Describing a triumph of French technology, the images alluded to effortlessness of transforming the Chinese landscape and implied that only the power of technology and superior engineering were need to build the bridge. In reality, however, the construction of this bridge demanded hard labor—endless persistence of the local population, aided by the horses and mules.
FIGURE 2  *Le pont sur Arbalétriers* (Crossbow Bridge), near Mengzi, Yunnan, taken the day the two steel girders were connected in July 1908. By describing the bridge as a triumph of French technology, this image was used to allude to the effortlessness of transforming the landscape of China, implying that only the power of technology and superior engineering were needed to build the bridge. The bridge still exists. *Source*: Compagnie Française des chemins de fer de l’Indo-Chine et du Yunnan and Société de Construction de Chemins de Fer Indo-Chinois, *Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan* [The railway of Yunnan] (Paris: G. Goury, 1910), between pages 164 and 165.

that delivered iron beams and girders—in the face of tremendous difficulties (Hulot and others 1990).

The construction of two trestles in Yunnan, the one at kilometer 83 (Steel Lace Viaduct) and another at kilometer 88, became a powerful visual symbol of French penetration into China. Constructing both required a total of twenty-five months of labor. Even though both viaducts are similar, the one at kilometer 83 achieved considerable fame (fig. 4). As Robert Lee suggests, even though steel trestles were common in the United States at the time, the Steel Lace Viaduct became renowned because it was built in a distant and isolated province and had a sharp curve. It rises more than 24 meters from ground level; seventeen piers support it (Compagnie Française 1910). Several photographs in Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan (The railway of Yunnan)—taken on December 16, 1907, and January 18, 1908—portray the still unfinished viaduct and show how dramatic and striking its finished appearance will be. Paul Bodin drew the blueprint of the bridge and chose steel as

FIGURE 4  Le pont en dentelle (Steel Lace Viaduct), Yunnan, completed by 1909. Contemporaries poetically described this bridge as having a “surface of disturbing fluidities.” Charles Valat devoted his novel Le Kilomètre 83 to the construction of this bridge, envisioning it as the symbol of French Republicanism and modernity. More than 12,000 coolies died while the French built this railway. One can still take a voyage across the bridge today. Source: Maurice Lécorché, Vint-cinq ans d’Indochine et de Yunnan: Souvenirs (1919–1943) [Twenty-five years in Indochina and Yunnan: Recollections (1919–1943)] (Toulouse: E. Privat & Co., 1948), 19.
the material for its construction. Acquiring a melodious name, “the bridge made of steel lace,” its photographs appeared in many publications. The luxurious 1910 edition of *Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan* contained this poetic description: “This viaduct, the most beautiful and the most interesting of the Yunnan railway, occupies one of the most picturesque positions. It . . . makes an impression of lightness and extreme elegance” (Compagnie Française 1910, 164).

**Railway Engineers as Visionaries & the Harbingers of Modernity in French Fiction**

The bridge on kilometer 83, the Steel Lace Viaduct, became truly celebrated when Charles Valat (1876–1930) devoted a novel to its construction (under the pen name Henry Daguerches). Valat, who had studied at the École Polytechnique, came to Indochina with the French army at the beginning of the twentieth century, becoming captain at age 26 (Geley 1996). Valat lived in Cochinchina between 1908 and 1909 and in Tonkin between 1912 and 1914; he remained in Indochina from 1919 until his death in 1930. First published in 1913 (with subsequent editions in 1928, 1947, 1993, 1996, and 2000), Valat’s *Le Kilomètre 83* was awarded prizes by the Académie Française and literary society Les Française d’Asie in 1930. As the publication record for this novel suggests, it has reached a receptive and sympathetic audience in France.

*Le Kilomètre 83* portrays the construction of the viaduct in Yunnan as a symbol of spreading the French “civilizing mission” in Asia (Daguerches 1913). Focusing on (fictional) French engineers named Vigel, Lully, and Tourange (among others), the novel portrays engineers as the harbingers of modernization. To emphasize the great scale of changes that happened in the colony with the arrival of the French, the novel incorporates a drastic comparison between two maps of Saigon, one of 1860 and another of 1910, and mentions the new train station of Hanoi that interwove the beauty of European architecture with indigenous features. For engineers, the construction of railways and the transformation of the colonial landscape are the means to modernization: “it is not citizens that create the city, it is the city that creates citizens,” one character states (122). In the novel, the desire to modernize Asia—nevermind French imperial ambitions in China—inspires the construction of the railway in Yunnan. Taking part in the construction, the engineers envision their mission not only for the improvement of transportation but also for the creation of a new social and cultural universe, the westernization and deep transformation of local culture. The ambitions of engineers to become the new elite thus shape the novel’s scope.

The construction of the railway entails the creation of a new religion and ideology based on Republicanism and its beliefs about progress. Republicanism inspires the credos of French engineers in the portrayal of *Le*
Kilomètre 83. Comparing the natives with children, the French engineers envision their function as “raising” and “elevating” the colonial population. The engineers make the natives understand that local deities are useless in the modernization of Indochina. One engineer declares that countless bags of cement, money, and immense human efforts are the only way to bring progress to Asia (Daguerches 1913, 24). The novel claims that civilization originates from one’s beliefs about technology. On the glorious day when the first train crosses the Steel Lace Viaduct, the French stage a ceremony to recognize the contribution of the native population in the construction of the bridge: One Annamese (a worker of Vietnamese descent) assists Vigel in driving the first locomotive across the bridge (323–26). The French engineers celebrate their victory as another triumph of Republicanism. On the evening of the inauguration, Vigel plays “Marseillaise,” the national anthem of the Third Republic, on a piano.

In Le Kilomètre 83, the work of Valat sets apart French engineers as dreamers, as new elite that money and power have not corrupted. Tourange compares Western civilization with a beautiful cathedral: He believes that he and his colleagues are among the chosen few who will erect a magnificent cathedral and will make the world admire its beauty. The novel juxtaposes the engineers, dedicated to the “civilizing mission,” with French administrators and entrepreneurs, who are greedy and wicked. Such administrators want to make up for their otherwise low status in France and to enjoy the status of “masters” and “sahibs.” Such Westerners succeed only in imposing corrupted morals and the spirit of slavery in Asia. For French engineers, the construction of the bridge represents “the glory of sacrifice, beautiful mysticism, self-sacrifice to the ‘oeuvre’” (Daguerches 1913, 308–9).

Spatial metaphors of the novel represent a dialogue between the rationality of Western culture and the mysteriousness of East. An observer describes the impact of the bridge as follows:

The architecture of the bridge is aerial, strangely intricate to the point that at certain moments one no longer understands what it holds. One may be troubled, if one looks at the bridge from a distance, to perceive the surface of disturbing fluidities. Yet, how amusing it is for an engineer who is capable to restrain this treacherousness by his formulae. (Daguerches 1913, 304)

The “disturbing fluidities” and “treacherousness” symbolize Oriental culture; it is the engineer who is capable of “taming” this “treacherous” nature. Indeed, this contrast between Western technology and nature plays an important role in shaping the narratives of imperial space. The bridge is built on a swamp, and its unstable surface symbolizes challenges that imperial power encounters in its colonies. The construction of the bridge thus symbolizes ways in which Western civilization conquers and pacifies colonial space, otherwise treacherous and unstable.
An Amusing Ride: French Railways in Asia in Contemporary Imagery

As demonstrated by the memoirs of Maurice Lécorché, the images of the railway in Yunnan captured French imagination in the interwar period. In 1919, Lécorché arrived in Southeast Asia to become the general inspector of the French Railway Company of Indochina and Yunnan and spent the next twenty-five years working on the railway (Lécorché 1948). In his memoirs, Lécorché included many photographs, including those of the Steel Lace Viaduct and Crossbow Bridge. When he traveled by train on the railway, he was initially disenchanted with views from a train window: views of the “monotonous spectacle of rice plantations” surrounding Hanoi (9). The landscape of Tonkin bored him. However, Lécorché became fascinated with the panorama when the train passed through Yunnan. A journey toward the Steel Lace Viaduct was an unforgettable experience for him. In the course of a “painful and slow rise,” the train passed over countless bridges and through numerous tunnels, when “torrents descend[ed] heights, reflecting the echo of their howling from cliff to cliff” (18–19); then the train emerged from a tunnel and passed over the bridge. Because the train needed to climb 350 meters over 18 kilometers, “tunnels follow tunnels, viaducts succeed viaducts in a stern landscape of an impressionist and savage beauty” (24–25): “This eighteen kilometers of railway was a show [featuring] fallen blocks, landslides, tunnels, etc.” (25–26).

Views of the Nam Ti Valley along the railway were spectacular: The right bank of the Red River is “an impetuous torrent, created . . . by a phantasmagoric conglomeration of stone, surrounded by a Dante-inspired landscape” (Lécorché 1948, 26). When characterizing the portion of railway in the Ta-Tchouang Valley, Lécorché poetically described the line as pulling off a series of “acrobatic” feats. The railway, Lécorché wrote, was in perfect harmony with nature: Buffaloes looked at the train as it passed through mountains, and cranes flew overhead (40–41). This idyllic picture painted the railway as an integral part of the new Yunnanese landscape.

Equally appealing images of the railway appear in a celebratory volume of Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan (The railway of Yunnan, 1910), issued to commemorate construction of the railway. The two-volume publication is a curious combination scientific report (comprehensive tables, schemes, and blueprints) and art book (over one hundred appealing monochrome photographs featuring bridges, tunnels, and viaducts). The volumes present an encyclopedic account of Yunnan, with chapters on topography, tachymetry, geography, the Chinese government, and lifestyle. The photographs highlight the drastic transformations in Yunnan after the arrival of French engineers.

New railways, bridges, viaducts, and tunnels appear to have quickly become intrinsic elements of the landscape; the Steel Lace Viaduct and Cross-
Empire of Images: Railways in Asia before the Great War 195

bow Bridge were elegantly inserted into the colonial landscape, where technological masterpieces and nature complemented one another (Hayes 1999). The images became a visual metaphor for the ideal relationship—according to the French elite—between Yunnan and France. But images of the French railway were deceptive: An unknowing viewer could (incorrectly) assume that Yunnan had become a French colony. The images also legitimize the French presence in Yunnan and embody imperial ambitions. Photographs of elegant, seemingly weightless bridges and viaducts symbolized the elegance and effortlessness of French penetration into Yunnan through knowledge and superior technology: They conveyed the message that imperial rule smoothly integrated itself into the fabric of non-Western societies (MacKenzie 1988). The refashioning of space revealed a presence of imperial power; state-of-the-art railway bridges eloquently displayed the artistry and gentility with which France penetrated Asia.

French intellectuals like Pierre Loti (1850–1923), author of popular novels about his travels to Southeast Asia and other French colonies, lamented a gradual erosion of local cultures under French influence (Harurgeaves 1981). Loti was nostalgic for Asia before the arrival of the Europeans, yet he nevertheless sanctified the French Empire. Emphasizing harmony between nature and technology, the images of the French railway in Yunnan were a response to these anxieties about the ruinous consequences of Western penetration. Such images were also used to dispel fears that French imperial efforts in Asia were doomed to failure. As French contemporary writers pessimistically observed at the beginning of the twentieth century, the wilderness of Asian jungles made the white newcomers feel destitute and powerless. In the Belle Époque literary tradition, the nature of Asia invoked a sense of oblivion and scantiness of human effort; it was reminiscent of merciless forces that were wiping off the traces of human existence from the face of the earth.¹ It symbolized the ruthless impact of time against which Western civilization appeared helpless. Images of the railway and tunnels amid the wilderness of Southeast Asia made China appear domesticated and redefined the representation of the landscape. Inscribing technological masterpieces into the heart of Asia alleviated anxieties and demonstrated that imperial power excelled in transforming Asian space (see Massey 1995; Vacher 1997).

Many postcards were created to commemorate the construction of railways in the French colonies. Such postcards, sold in shops and photographers’ studios in Indochina, were frequently sent home by French administrators. Many photographs of colonial railways were taken by Pierre Dieulefils (1862–1937), a photographer who lived in Indochina and produced the images for over five thousand postcards between 1902 and the 1920s (Vincent 1997). At least eight extant postcards show the Doumer Bridge, and at least eighteen postcards show the railway in Yunnan. Auguste François
N. Starostina

(1857–1935), a consul in Indochina between 1886 and 1904, also took many photographs of the railway in Yunnan (François 1989). Numerous photographs of the bridges discussed in this article are reprinted in Despierres (2008) and Hulot and others (1990).

**Ambiguous Modernity? Tragedies of Railway Construction in Yunnan**

Colonial railway construction became a centerpiece of French dreams of imperial conquest and imperial penetration. The novel *Monsieur le Consul* (*The French Consul*) by Lucien Bodard (1914–98) contains revealing passages about the railway of Yunnan. Bodard was born into the family of a French consul and spent his childhood in Indochina. He became a journalist and witnessed and reported the First Vietnam War (1946–54); and in the 1970s, he published three novels describing his childhood in Yunnan and his reminiscences of French Indochina. The novels unveil bitter and ironic realities of colonial rule in the region by exposing a tragic, if not grotesque, gap between the grand narratives of the French Empire and the petty realities of French rule in Indochina.

The characters in *Monsieur le Consul* understand that the French are not able to eliminate poverty, corruption, and misery in the region. In order to maintain their presence in colonies and to make the local elite their allies, the French need to befriend even the most notorious figures, including colonial drug lords. The noble idea of the “civilizing mission” becomes an illusion and, ultimately, a pipe dream; ironically, it is after smoking opium that the title character, Albert Bonnard, indulges in reveries of building a railway from Tonkin to Sichuan, China (Bodard 1977, 1999). An entire chapter of *Monsieur le Consul* describes Bonnard’s dreams of building and inaugurating this railway line. Intoxicated with opium, the consul first fancies that his name will appear in *Le Larousse*—a leading French dictionary: *Le Larousse*’s entry appraises him for building a railway and for extending French influence to a significant part of China. The railway that he has built (in his dream) uses the latest technology: numerous switches, platforms, and glass-roofed stations. The most pleasant and vivid part of the dream is the inauguration of the new railway: among the guests are a minister from Paris, the governor-general of Indochina, generals, admirals, renowned journalists—including Albert Londres (1884–1932)—a mandarin representing the emperor of Annam, and also many beautiful wives of officials. The consul dreams that “there’ll be a whole article on me in *L’Illustration*, and who knows, maybe my photo on the cover” (Bodard 1977, 243). A magnificent celebration, reminiscent of that of the Colonial Exhibition, follows the inauguration of the railway. In his dream, the consul also imagines that more than two hundred “bandits” were captured and executed for the occasion.
Opium fumes make the consul envision a moment when he receives assurances of his promotion: For the construction of the railway, he should expect nomination to a French ambassadorship. Apparently, the railway is important for the consul because it is a way for him to receive a promotion and become famous. Bodard wrote:

There on his divan, still up to his neck in bargaining, in mud, and in blood, in a medieval Chengtu [Chengdu] where nothing was settled and danger lurked everywhere, he let his pipes bear him off into a crazy but logical delirium in which he saw his triumph celebrated, his railroad brought into being. He was fêted, famous, recognized all over the civilized world, by eternal France, by the governor general of Indochina and his entourage, by the priests, the bankers . . . and all the other Chinese. (1977, 241–42)

His dream is not about bringing civilization to the region; rather, his visions are about him becoming powerful and influential and escaping the boredom of his vocation and life.

Bodard also highlighted the tragedies of railway construction in his novels, characterizing the railway company as “suppliers of human flesh” that “scoured entire China” (1975, 141). Because manpower was cheaper than machines, the company brought Chinese peasants to Yunnan. Arriving on foot, many coolies came from Tianjin (in the north of China); they were unprepared to live and to work in the jungles, a “completely unknown land” (140). Some coolies refused to work. According to Bodard, some even did not want to move rocks because they were afraid to offend “le genie de la montagne” (the spirits of mountains) (141). Sometimes coolies escaped to the jungle only to become the prey of wild animals or bandits. More than once, a railway engineer arrived at an abandoned construction site only to discover many corpses of Asian workers who had succumbed to various epidemics (Bodard 1999, 217). Bodard wrote that such coolies never rebelled and simply “allowed themselves to die” (1975, 141). At the inauguration of the completed line, many toasts were proposed to Sino-French friendship and, yet, the death of thousands of coolies was not even mentioned.

Indeed, there was a drastic gap between the grandeur of the French “civilizing mission” as it was represented in the imagery of railways and the tragic history of railway construction in Yunnan. At the beginning of the period of construction, many Vietnamese peasants willingly signed contracts with the construction companies, but harsh labor conditions and an outburst of malaria killed the majority of such volunteers during the first two years of work. Later, the French government resorted to coercion to recruit more than 65,000 workers (Compagnie Français 1910). During construction, more than 12,000 native workers died—approximately 20 percent of the workforce; eighty French and Italian workers also lost their lives (Compagnie Français 1910). The coolies thus paid an exorbitant price for
fulfilling French ambitions in China. Moreover, the railway hardly brought prosperity to the local population.

Railway construction raised many concerns among intellectuals at the time. Even though it facilitated the movement of people and goods, the modernization of transportation also disturbed life in Indochina in many ways. New railways ran through rice fields and burial sites; peasants were overburdened with new taxes and were pressed with their corvée duties (Lâm 2000). A bitter description of French imperialism appeared in the underground newspaper *Lao Nong* (Workers and peasants). Even though the following passage was written in 1927, it reflected the grim realities of the French "civilizing mission":

> To this day, some naïve people still think that France came to “civilize” the Vietnamese. Those people live in tall houses with wide gates; they occupy important jobs and powerful positions; they never open their eyes to see how the imperialists are pilfering our resources and how they squash our compatriots. Right now, imperialist France uses all of its exploiting power to steal from its colonies in order to support its own economy. That’s why, in Indochina, they are busily laying down railroad tracks, clearing wild forests, confiscating rice-fields and land, taking advantage of our cheap labor. (*Lao Nong* 1927, quoted in Lâm 2000, 71)

Vietnamese intellectuals wanted to spread knowledge about the extremely high human costs of imperialism: on rubber plantations, “countless numbers of people are dying everyday . . . from 1,000 coolies in Budop, 474 died” (*Lao Nong* 1927, quoted in Lâm 2000, 89). Doumer reformed the tax system in 1898 to make railway construction possible. In addition to changing tax payments from kind to cash, now the Frenchmen rather than the court would enforce the production monopolies for alcohol and salt (Marr 1971). Laborers who were recruited through the corvée system not only had to leave their villages but also had to rely on their own rice supplies. Overburdening people with taxes resulted in demonstrations and violence in 1908, with uprisings often spurred by scholars-gentry. The slogan “Don’t pay taxes to the French” became diffused rapidly in February 1908; many tax collectors were beaten, some fatally. The year 1908 witnessed dozens of casualties among Vietnamese peasants and French soldiers alike; the year culminated with a plot to poison the soldiers of the French garrison in Hanoi. Two hundred eighty-five riots erupted throughout China in 1910 (Chesneaux 1973), many encouraged by the building of railways.

Despite striking visual appearance, the railway of Yunnan attracted few tourists. Thousands of kilometers divided France from the province of Yunnan, one of the least accessible provinces in China. The railway between Yen-Bay (Yên Bái) and Lào Cai is located in a sparsely populated region of China; yet, 73 million francs were spent to build this railway—that is, 192,000 francs per kilometer (Hulot and others 1990). Even though
Yunnan was supposed to be a tourist attraction for the French, only 1.6 percent of tickets sold were for first-class passengers; thus the line was not a popular line for leisure travel (Hulot and others 1990). The dramatic change in climate between Tonkin and Yunnan made trains uncomfortable. No hotels suitable for capricious European taste were located along the line, and passengers often had to rely on the hospitality of railway workers. Even though voyages along the line required several days, food service on the trains was mediocre. Moreover, the collapse of monarchy and the Revolution, which began in China after 1910, put the railway at the mercy of numerous generals; political instability further undermined the new route as a tourist attraction. The considerable cost of the line, both in terms of human lives and money, presents a striking contrast with its limited usefulness to the goals of French imperialism in Indochina.

The same paradox rings true for the Doumer Bridge across the Red River: There was a dramatic contradiction between its symbolic value and its practical use as the hub for railway activity in Southeast Asia. In terms of functionality, the bridge was hardly effective. In his *Voyages aux Indes et en Indo-Chine*, Brieux (1910) noticed a perplexing thing about the bridge: It had just a single set of tracks, only two sidewalks for pedestrians, and no line for vehicles. Brieux highlighted a contrast between the extraordinary appearance of the gigantic bridge and its rather petty role in fulfilling regional transportation needs:

> It is with the greatest surprise I noticed that this enormous bridge carries just one line. . . I could not believe my eyes then. How could one spend a considerable sum of money which it [the bridge] cost to achieve no more than this petty result. . . ? If one did not believe in the future of Hanoi, [the bridge] was superfluous. If one did believe in it, then it was insufficient. (37)

Those who traveled by car or rickshaw and who wished to cross the river had to make a detour and to take a ferry, as was done one hundred years earlier. Brieux also suggested that, while resorting to the ferry, passengers looked at the gigantic bridge not without sadness and disappointment.

The railway journey in Indochina was, in general, a psychologically discomforting experience for Brieux. The railway failed his expectations. The train station in Hue appeared too big, out of proportions. Soldiers needed to accompany every train crossing Indochina because “pirates” could still assault trains in the countryside (Brieux 1910, 81). A train journey from Hanoi to Lang-Son seemed dull and boring because landscapes were monotonous to Western travelers. Brieux had seen only a few peasants waiting on the train platforms. Land seemed barren and infertile; it seemed to him that the country was deserted because land would not be able to nourish a larger number of people. Brieux was asking himself why this “boring” railway, which cost such an exorbitant amount of money, became famous (48–
and he could have found the answer only if he had taken a journey to Yunnan.

The construction of the railway inspired the French and, especially, the French engineers to be proud in the success of their “civilizing mission.” Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan emphasized the positive impacts of French engineers on the modernization of the region—impacts beyond the improvement of communication (Compagnie Française 1910). French engineers built significant medical facilities in the area that were “almost completely isolated from the rest of the world” (115). On a territory of the Yunnanese plateau, the Société de Construction established a hospital for coolies, and all coolies underwent a medical examination every month; a new military hospital also opened its doors in Laokay. Between 1903 and 1908, 10,440 coolies received treatment for different illnesses. As Le Chemin de Fer du Yunnan underscores, improvements in health service allowed the French to stifle two epidemics (of the plague and cholera), which otherwise would have had devastating effects on the provincial populations in 1906. The railway company created what it called “acceptable temporary housing” for coolies, which resembled tents and mostly consisted of mobile structures with metal pillars: “These accommodations, relatively comfortable, were very appreciated by the coolies, and certainly contributed to [the fact] that the workers remained on construction sites” (Compagnie Française 1910, 131). In the eyes of Doumer, other administrators, and engineers themselves, the efforts of French engineers in constructing the railway and in transforming Yunnan entitled France to colonize the Chinese province: “the work of the explorers and engineers gives France the incontestable rights over this territory, which it cannot forsake to others” (1905, 343).

Conflicting Doumer’s portrayals, Bodard used his novels to question the representations of colonial engineers as social reformers. According to Bodard, colonial engineers cared only about their obligations to the railway company: neither the suffering and death of coolies nor the grandeur of the French “civilizing mission” worried them. Monsieur le Consul contains a description of the chief engineer as a person who developed indifference to “horror and feelings” because he “faces up to everything” (1999, 217). While building the railways, colonial engineers dealt with “dying people, doctors who are adventurers without diplomas and without medicine, its infirmaries which are morgues, and its cemeteries” which are nothing but “common pits” for Asians (217, 218). The determination of the engineers to build the railway is grim if not frightful in their disregard for human lives. Bodard wrote:

He’s the man who built the Chengtu railroad, the director of the railway company. . . . Every year he thrusts his rails farther into unknown regions . . . goes on looping his line over abysses, making bridges like spider webs over canyons, tunneling like a mole through the crumbling mountains. He possesses all the
ordinary, average virtues of a typical Frenchman . . . but in him these respect-
able qualities, this devotion to established values, this respect for hard work, are all carried to a level so extreme, so impenetrable and sacrosanct, that they verge on the fanatic. (1977, 319–21)

Even with the hyperbole, Bodard described the French engineers as cold-blooded individuals who were concerned only with their obligations to the company. In Bodard’s works, colonial railway construction had a dehumanizing effect on French colonial engineers.

French Railways in Indochina as a Simulacrum of the French “Civilizing Mission”?

Yet this discrepancy between reality and representation becomes explainable if one considers the railway of Indochina as a simulacrum. *Simulacrum*, an idea or artifact, serves as a substitution for ideas and artifacts; similar in appearance, a simulacrum cannot or can only partially fulfill its task (Baudrillard 1994). When attesting to Western superiority and technological dominance, railways, however, were not effective for the promotion of Western interests. They should have brought revolutionary changes, but, as this article has demonstrated, they failed to bring French tourists or to integrate territories more tightly to the domain of the French Empire or to bring Yunnan into the fold as a French protectorate. The modest performance of the railway reveals the limits of the “civilizing mission,” and the construction of colonial railways thus manufactured simulacra. Breathtaking images of the Yunnan line concealed a story of the ambivalent position of France in China. The Doumer Bridge only partially resolved the transportation needs of the Hanoi region. Indochina attracted fewer resources and visitors from France than Doumer wished. Yet the dazzling imagery of the railways embodied imperial ambitions and dreams, obscuring the real story of imperial fiascos and frustrations. French administrators and engineers were concerned with images: the production of simulacra of the “civilizing mission” via the visual would do just as good. In comparison with colonial railways built in other parts of the French Empire, the railways of Indochina and Yunnan are remarkable and leave forcible impressions. The railway of Yunnan became, in the words of French geographer Henri Lartilleux, “probably one of the most extraordinary railways of the planet” (quoted in Hulot and others 1990, 147).

At the turn of the century, it was not only technology that came to define the superiority of Western civilization over the colonial worlds but also the aesthetic representation of technological artifacts. As this article has demonstrated, since the late nineteenth century, French engineers and administrators wanted to create railways whose appealing images would demonstrate the successful French “civilizing mission.” Technology itself be-
came transformed into an impressive visual spectacle of French imperialism. In particular, bridges such as the Doumer Bridge, Steel Lace Viaduct, and Crossbow Bridge attested to French imperial might and superior technology. Such imagery—both the visual (photographs) and textual (in novels and travel narratives)—redefined the perceptions of the French Empire in the public imagination.

Photographs of railways allowed French engineers and administrators to articulate imperial fantasies about the eventual conquest of colonies through the power of technology. Images of modern technological marvels transformed the concept of French colonies; they also emphasized the all-penetrating impact that the French presence in Southeast Asia had on the transformation of the colonial landscape. The construction of railways also changed the role of colonial engineers: They implemented their technological fantasies and fashioned their identity as the principal agents of the “civilizing mission.” It was in the midst of the jungles of Indochina and Yunnan that the stunning images of conquered nature appeared.

But the photographs of magnificent bridges and railways that may have reminded viewers of the “civilizing mission” could also be deceptive, as exemplified by the questionable usefulness of the magnificent and awe-inspiring Doumer Bridge. Photographs depicting bridges, viaducts, and tunnels constructed the image of a successful and civilizing colonial project. Ultimately, one cannot see the production of these images only as the dissemination of knowledge about the empire: The empire itself became the image, the simulacrum; and the visual, with its power to create perceptions and to make words “parasitic on images” (Barthes 1977, 25), became a powerful element for propagating the French Empire.

Notes

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1In this context, the ruins of the Angkor temple complex, smothered by jungle, appeared to fuel fears that all civilizations in this region would eventually succumb to decay.

2See also http://augfrancois.chez.com/index.htm.
Robert Lee (personal communication) suggests that, even though the cost of the railway construction was expensive, it was not outrageously expensive in comparison with other railways of the time. However, considering the low traffic the railway carried, its construction cost was indeed high.

At the time, “pirate” was an ambiguous term that could refer to actual bandits who attacked trains as well as to those who refused to accept French dominance over Vietnam.

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Interview with Sichan Siv

QUAN MANH HA
Texas Tech University

This piece presents a transcription of a March 12, 2009, interview with Sichan Siv, the 28th U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Economic & Social Council, by SEC/AAS member Quan Manh Ha, during the 2009 Vietnam Center Conference on “Cambodia, Laos, Thailand & the Vietnam War,” held at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

Brief Biography of Sichan Siv

Sichan Siv was born in Pochentong, Cambodia, in 1948. His father was chief of police of Phnom Penh district. He was educated in Cambodia, where the language of instruction was primarily French. On April 17, 1975, he and his family were forced out of Phnom Penh by the Khmer Rouge. Eventually, on February 13, 1976, he left his family and country in order to flee slave labor in the “killing fields” of Cambodia and seek a new life and freedom. His daring escape led him eventually to the United States and to further education at the Columbia University School of International Affairs in New York. Siv became a U.S. citizen in 1982; he is married to Texas native Martha Pattillo. In 1989, he was appointed deputy assistant to President George Bush, with an office in the White House; and in 2001, the Senate unanimously confirmed his appointment as the 28th U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Economic & Social Council by President George W. Bush. He continues to work actively as a lecturer on international affairs and as an advocate for the social and economic development of Cambodia and the recognition of Cambodian contributions to world history and culture. Golden Bones, his memoir, was published by HarperCollins in 2008.

Conversation between Sichan Siv & Quan Manh Ha

QUAN MANH HA: Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much for granting me this interview today. It is a pleasure and an honor to talk with you about your book, Golden Bones (2008), and about Cambodia. Let me begin by asking you about the reception of your memoir. How has it been accepted by audiences and readerships?
SICHAN SIV: It has been very well received. The reactions have been overwhelmingly positive. The common response has been, “Thank you very much for sharing your story.” My central message of hope—my mother’s message of hope—has been noticed and mentioned in the responses.

QMH: How long did it take you to write your book?

SS: I generally say that it took me thirty years. The minute I introduced myself, since I arrived in the U.S. in 1976, people asked me, “When are you going to write a book?” They would say, “You need to write a book.” I hesitated at the beginning because I knew it would bring back bad memories of painful experiences. So it took me a long while to find the right time to put pen to paper. The actual writing time, however, was seven months after I started to work at the computer.

QMH: Many people approach writing a memoir or an autobiography in an effort to reconcile themselves with the past. Do you think that in writing this book you also were attempting to reconcile yourself with aspects of your past or with the past of Cambodia and its history?

SS: No, I didn’t write this book to reconcile myself with the past. I wrote the book to share the story. I wanted, in a sense, to give some historical anecdotes. Many people, even some Cambodians when they read this book, said, “Oh, my goodness, I never knew this thing happened or that thing happened.” These details needed to be recorded, so producing the book entailed an educational process, too. One of the reviewers said that the book is very educational.

QMH: In your autobiography, you emphasize the importance of your own education, both in Cambodia and in the United States. I found your learning experiences with English and French very impressive, because back then you probably didn’t have a lot of educational opportunities, but you tried very hard to learn in Khmer, French, and English. What do you consider to be the primary motivation in your life toward learning, and what do you consider to be the most important elements in your education?

SS: I am glad you noticed the importance of the education element in my own life. My mother was the principal source of strength for me, and she emphasized education by telling me that I needed to go on. I was the first of my family to go to college; thus, education was probably the most important thing in my life, and that is thanks to my mother. You mentioned French and English. Those also were parts of the educational system. It was more French than English. French was taught in Cambodia as the second language. As I grew up, I spoke French just like everybody else in my generation. And English was taught as the third language, but no one took it
Interview with Sichan Siv

QMH: In your memoir, I noticed that there are two lines of development. One portrays the disintegration of Cambodian society, most precipitously under the rule of the Khmer Rouge. The other line portrays the potential for working one’s way into the establishment of American society. Do these two separate stories in your life actually converge in ways that might be further explained in a subsequent book?

SS: Yes, the two lines can be put together in two words: to *adapt* and to *be adopted*. I was able to adapt to the Khmer Rouge killing-fields society, and I was able to survive. When I came to America, I was able to adapt to America and to survive and to succeed at the same time because the United States is full of opportunity. If you work hard and put your mind on your work, you are likely to succeed. There is a strong possibility for my writing a second book, and in fact I am writing a second book already. It is a fiction book based on facts.

QMH: The Khmer Rouge systematically exterminated the educated and professional classes of Cambodia. Many of those who were not assassinated eventually escaped from the country, as you yourself escaped. Is a new middle class beginning to reemerge in Cambodia? And to what extent might the development of a new middle class depend upon the work of refugees now living abroad or possibly of former refugees returning to visit or to live in Cambodia?

SS: When I was in the White House with President Bush [the elder], we were involved with the peace process for Cambodia. We were meeting to discuss the role of Cambodians living overseas, and especially those in the United States. (The largest Cambodian communities in the United States are in Long Beach, California, and in Lowell, Massachusetts.) In our meetings, they asked me about the Cambodian Americans. I said that there would be three groups of Cambodians in the United States. The first group has a very well-established life here, and they may go back to visit Cambodia. They have children who have grown up here playing video games, and it would be difficult for them to move their families back. They would only go to visit. The second group includes those who have the ability to go back for longer periods of time. Then there is the third group who might go back to stay, so your question encompasses everything. For the past twenty years, since 1989, some Cambodians have returned to help out, to work either in government or in the private sector; some have become cabinet members. Others have returned with their families, particularly their children, to help the kids understand their cultural roots. The flow is constant. For me, I try to take my wife there once a year in order to introduce her to various
parts of the country and to stay in touch with friends. The new middle class that you mentioned is expanding slowly, but there is a degree of injustice, corruption, crime, and impunity that needs to be addressed as Cambodia becomes politically and socially mature.

QMH: The Vietnamese government, for example, now welcomes back the Vietnamese who live outside the country. Does Cambodia also welcome the Cambodians who live overseas and encourage them to return and invest in the economy?

SS: Yes. In fact, the Cambodian government started even earlier. They even offered overseas Cambodians permanent visas, which they call the “K” visas. Those who were born in Cambodia like me are issued permanent visas, stamped right here. They can go in at any time and stay as long as they want. Many people do go back to invest and help develop the country, and a few went back and became involved in the corruption. There are some bad elements, but overall good people have returned.

QMH: What do the Cambodians living overseas think of Cambodia nowadays?

SS: They think the country is moving forward on a good economic footing. The problems, which I mentioned earlier—with injustice, corruption, crime, and impunity—still remain. Therefore, Cambodia needs to work on these issues to correct them.

QMH: From photos, Angkor Wat is truly magnificent. My question is this: Might the policies of the Khmer Rouge for turning Cambodia into one great construction site under the central authority of the Angkor have been modeled on the supposed agricultural organization of the ancient authoritarian culture that produced the canals for rice production and the wats—or temples—that the wealth resulting from rice production allowed?

SS: No, I do not think that the Khmer Rouge had the idea of using the model of Angkor in building their Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge were trapped in their crazy ideology of trying to turn Cambodia into a utopian society, and no one knows why they went to such extremes—not even the Chinese, who were their masters. I do not think that the Khmer Rouge were adapting their Maoist ideology to the glorious past of the ancient Angkor civilization.

QMH: I have visited many museums around the world, and wherever I go I see works of art that have been taken from Angkor Wat. Does it hurt you when you see such pieces of art elsewhere and not in Cambodia?

SS: No. In fact, the pieces that were brought out before the Khmer Rouge period, a long time ago, are well displayed in public museums for people to
view. What hurts me are the thieves who broke statues to sell them on the black market, and which eventually ended up in private collections. But if works are in a museum or in a place for public display, I think they are safer there anyway, instead of possibly being stolen or broken by thieves in Cambodia. To make Cambodian culture known to the world, in 1997, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, organized an exhibition of Cambodian art, and that was the most-visited exhibition at that gallery, ever. During that summer, Cambodia and the United States joined hands to mount the exhibition, and it was a very good introduction to the glorious civilization of Cambodia.

QMH: Let me return for a moment to Pol Pot’s [1928–98, prime minister from 1976 to 1979] policies. Can you say that the model employed by the Angka was primarily Maoist and future-oriented, then, with the Cambodian Cultural Revolution taking that ideology to a deadly extreme? Would you say that Cambodia today has transcended that ideology and moved on toward modern and sound economic and democratic models?

SS: The ideology was taken to a degree that even Maoist doctrine cannot explain. It was criminal in its nature. I would say that Cambodia has developed a flawed economy and democracy. It will take Cambodia a bit longer to move on toward what you might call a Western-style democracy. Some of the serious domestic problems still need to be addressed—and again, they are the ones that I have listed already: injustice, corruption, crime, and impunity.

QMH: Which foreign countries are investing the most in the development of Cambodia today? Can you mention a few?

SS: The South Koreans are big investors today, along with the Singaporeans and the Thais; and the United States has a very high approval rating in Cambodia. I have asked Cambodians in Cambodia why the United States enjoys such a high rating, and I was told that the Cambodians have begun to realize that the United States has no agenda in Cambodia beyond helping the development of the democratic process and the economy. For example, we gave Cambodia quite a quota on garments, and that was quite helpful. Cambodia has been cooperating with us on a number of fronts—such as terrorism, for example. The Cambodian people now realize that the United States is there to help them to gain a better life, to understand the nature of freedom, and to pursue happiness.

QMH: Have you spoken with many Americans about investing in Cambodia, and have you encouraged them to do so?

SS: Yes, when the opportunity has arisen. At the United Nations, my job was to work with the other 191 member countries. Whenever possible, how-
ever, I would mention Cambodia and recommend that they consider investing there. American corporations are very long-term in their thinking. They go by the book, and they follow the rule of law. They obey the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of the United States. If they find people abroad who are involved in corruption—with what I call UTM, or under-the-table money—there is a problem. It might take a corporation two years to enter and bid on a contract. Therefore, they are the kind of corporation that Cambodia welcomes because they bring a lot of credibility to investment in Cambodia.

QMH: In *Golden Bones*, your autobiography, you place much emphasis on the traditional role of the family—speaking especially of your own family and of neighboring families. The traditional structure of the Cambodian family was broken down under the rule of the Angka. Can the traditional family structure and village life in any way be recovered, and is this recovery desirable in today’s world?

SS: Absolutely. You ask me now about family and the importance of family, and it almost did break down. Looking at the cover of my book, you notice that my face is not on the cover but on the back, and you should ask questions like: *who, what, where, when,* and *why?* These questions are answered in the book. *Who* are you looking at? You are looking at the back of Sichan Siv. *What* is he doing? He is kneeling and praying. *Where* is he praying? He is at Angkor Wat. *When* was the photo taken? It was taken in March 1992, when I returned to Cambodia for the first time. *Why* was this photo chosen from among the hundreds that could have been selected? Because to me it is the ultimate symbol of faith, family, friends, and freedom—and the second word in this sequence is *family.* Family is very important in Cambodian society and, I believe, in Asian societies in general. In Cambodia, when the Khmer Rouge tried to break up the family, which is the basic unit in the society, they were going against the rule of nature. The Khmer Rouge were crazy—these people were crazy!—they were idiots and they were stupid! They wanted to use their political ideology to transform a culture that is old and based on a strong foundation, so they lost in the end. They could kill my family; they could kill my friends; they could kill my neighbors; but they could not kill the cultural foundation of the society. Today, families are back together in Cambodia, and on weekends you see motorcycles or scooters with whole families on them—with the father, the mother, the children—and they are carrying bananas and coconuts—and this is very heartwarming. I lost my father when I was in fourth grade, so my mother brought me up, and for me she was everything. A child’s education depends, of course, on the family, and not just on the school. We always hold the family as the most important component of children’s upbringing.
QMH: Two very important things in your life have been family, as you have just said, and also faith. Can you speak further about your faith in Lord Buddha?

SS: Cambodia is predominantly a Buddhist society—as are Thailand and Laos—and to the religious community in Vietnam, Buddhism is also very important. I grew up in a Buddhist society, and my mother was a devout Buddhist, and she taught us many things about love, caring, and sharing. When I was a child, she told me never to give up hope, no matter what happens. That kept me alive under the Khmer Rouge for a year. It kept me moving on after I arrived in America. So, when I got to Thailand, after I escaped out of Cambodia, I was ordained a Buddhist monk, because it is the Buddhist’s belief that by becoming a monk, you earn merit and accumulate good deeds, and you can dedicate those to your loved ones, and I did that for my mother, for my sister, and for my brother, and for their families. It was during that period that I really learned how to meditate, how to organize my thoughts, how to be more patient, to be persistent, and to become focused.

QMH: Are you still going to temples in the United States? Are you still a devout Buddhist now, as you were back then?

SS: Yes, I still go to Buddhist temples. There are not many where we live in San Antonio. I think there are two Thai temples, there is a Vietnamese temple—which I have yet to visit—but I have visited one of the Thai temples. I go to the temples whenever I have an opportunity. The largest temple in that region is in Houston, so I go to that temple whenever I go there.

QMH: There is a great difference between Buddhism in Vietnam and Cambodia because in Cambodia you have Theravada Buddhism and in Vietnam we have Mahayana Buddhism, primarily. Theravada Buddhism has been very important in Cambodia since the twelfth century. To what extent did the Khmer Rouge effectively eradicate Buddhism in your country? Is Buddhism still important in Cambodia today as the nation is attempting to reconstruct itself?

SS: Yes, that is another very good question. The Khmer Rouge did not destroy just Buddhism in Cambodia—they destroyed all religions. There was a Muslim community, and there was a Catholic community in Cambodia, and the largest cathedral in Southeast Asia was in Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge leveled it to the ground, and no one knows why they spent so much time and energy tearing down that building. They destroyed; they destroyed; they destroyed! They wanted to bring Cambodia to the “Year Zero,” as one Catholic priest refers to that time [see Ponchaud 1978]. They killed Buddhist monks, they disrobed them, and they forced them into la-
bor camps. At that time, they considered that religion was the “blood sucker” of the society. Amazingly enough, I came across a Buddhist monk a few months after the Khmer Rouge came to power, and I thought I was hallucinating, but he was real. In fact, in my book, he was the one who told me to follow the sun and the moon to freedom. I didn’t understand what he meant until I escaped into the jungle, where I learned that I had to put the sun behind me in the morning and in front of me in the afternoon in order to get to Thailand—and the same at night, when the moon would rise behind me early in the evening and appear before me later at night or early in the morning. This is part of the wisdom that came to me at various parts of my life, and it led to my arrival and success in America.

QMH: Do you believe that there are forces that guide us that cannot rationally be explained?

SS: Yes, I do—and I think that you have taken the words right out of my mouth. I believe that everything happens for a reason. There was a truck driver who saved my life twice. I knew that he knew that I was not the man that I told him I was, but he didn’t say a word. He saved my life twice, and I cannot explain it. I spent a good deal of time looking for him each time I went back to Cambodia, and either by myself or with my wife I tried to find him. At the end of my book, I describe how we eventually found his two surviving sisters. That is an example of the occurrence of something that we simply cannot explain.

QMH: Let me return to the subject of ancient Cambodia. What importance do you give the memory of ancient Khmer civilization—as a continuing source of Cambodian national identity—for the development of a new Cambodia out of the ruins of the “killing fields”?

SS: As you mention, the ancient temples and the culture are the actual soul of Cambodia. Angkor Wat has been featured on the Cambodian flag regardless of the regime—even on the flag of the Khmer Rouge. Although they hated everything that represented or symbolized the past of Cambodia, they still used the image of Angkor Wat on their flag. Cambodia rose to greatness between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, and particularly during the Angkor period. It is a monument or symbol of architectural marvels built during the twelfth century, and it is the largest religious complex in the world. It retains its symbolic importance in the culture of the redeveloping modern country.

QMH: Can we say that the people of Cambodia today look in many tangible ways to their glorious past as they attempt to build a new sense of national identity?
SS: They do look at their glorious past, but they must be careful. They cannot rest on the fact that their ancestors built Angkor Wat. They also must demonstrate that they can address the economic and social problems they face in the twenty-first century. They can look to Angkor as a symbol of their ancestors’ great achievements, but they must work hard to maintain that standard. That standard was set so high because, at the time, Angkor was the center of their highly developed civilization. They can use Angkor as the standard, but they must try to reach that standard today. From an economic standpoint, they must use the standard of the past to eradicate poverty, to assure success, to provide health care for everyone, to provide education, and to give people an opportunity to pursue the careers that they want. When I recently was in Cambodia, I saw a female truck driver, which is quite unusual, because that is not a traditional profession for women. From my generation, females went into the teaching profession. You didn’t see women operating heavy equipment. Opportunities are expanding, and the people are trying to adapt to the new environment. Of course they still set Angkor civilization as a high standard, but they must reach that standard by living in the twenty-first century.

QMH: Having spoken of the ancient culture of Cambodia and the Khmer culture, what about the influence of French culture in Cambodia?

SS: The French influence in Cambodia was very strong up to my generation. People in my generation spoke French. They did business in French. When people go to Cambodia, they will still find French influence there. In small villages there are bakeries that bake fresh bread every morning. That became part of Cambodia’s dietary culture. It is true that some of the best French restaurants in the 1960s were in Cambodia. I still run into people who visited Cambodia at that time, and they ask me if they are still there. I value that cultural influence, but at the same time, Cambodia has already reached the stage at which people in every neighborhood speak English. If they want to succeed, they will want to learn English. So, most Cambodians speak English, even children. If you go to Angkor, for example, children will sell you a set of postcards for one dollar, and they speak English. Moreover, they know quite a bit about America. You tell them “I’m from the United States,” and they will ask “Which state?” If you say “Texas,” they will say “Austin?” If you say “Massachusetts,” they will say “Boston?” If you say “California,” they will say “Sacramento?” They read, they learn, they listen. And that is very heartwarming. In my day, we didn’t have anything. We had books, books, books—which is why I devoted a section of my memoir to libraries. Nowadays the Cambodians use the Internet and cell phones; they have access to information. The good out of all this is that they are able to use this information positively.
QMH: Are there particular villages where French culture predominated? Are there still buildings that are really French in their architecture? Does the government own the colonial buildings, or do they belong to private owners?

SS: There are French colonial buildings everywhere in Cambodia. Usually the old governors’ mansions were all French, but most of the French mansions were in Phnom Penh. Those need to be preserved. They should not be razed to the ground just for the sake of commercial activity. Those old buildings are part of the cultural heritage. The government probably owns many of the buildings, and some do belong to private owners. They keep them up for investment, or for other purposes.

QMH: As a Vietnamese national, I noted in your book the references to the North Vietnamese communists and their activity in Cambodia—because in Vietnam we rarely heard of this activity. In your memoir, you focused on the facts, and you avoided comment on the Vietnamese communists. Can you comment more about Vietnam in Cambodian politics?

SS: When the Geneva Accord was signed in 1954, the Viet Minh [predecessors of the Viet Cong] took a few thousand Cambodians with them to Hanoi, and those are some of the current leaders of Cambodia. The Vietnamese communists have been involved in Cambodian politics for a long time. Ho Chi Minh [1890–1969] founded the Communist Party in Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong began to use the eastern part of Cambodia as sanctuaries for R&R—rest and relaxation—and also for weapon storage. At one point, in 1966, there was a Cambodian government report stating that there were about 60,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in Cambodia. The Cambodian army was half that number, and they were poorly trained and ill-equipped. They were no match for the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. When the Vietnam War spread into Cambodia, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacked throughout Cambodia like a straw fire. Very rapidly they occupied villages and provinces. The Khmer Rouge really drew strength from the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. When we signed the Peace Agreement in 1973, the Khmer Rouge took over the fighting, and, two years later, they unexpectedly won the war.

QMH: What can you say about the current relations between Vietnam and Cambodia?

SS: The present relationship is very good between Phnom Penh and Hanoi. They are good friends. I don’t know that they are good allies, but as I said earlier, some of Cambodia’s leaders were trained in Hanoi. They help each other, but I do not agree with the idea that the Vietnamese went into Cam-
bodia to “save” Cambodia. They came in to topple the Khmer Rouge regime, but they stayed there for ten years before they finally moved out.

QMH: Do you discern much racial discrimination between the Cambodians and the Vietnamese who live near the border?

SS: I have not visited the area near the border recently; but in my book, I mention 1968, the time when I went to visit my brother who was the district chief near the border. At the time, I saw lots of boats, and later I was told that the boatmen were Vietnamese agents. They were working as fishermen, but many people knew that they were Viet Cong agents. I think, back then, there was no real discrimination against the Vietnamese, even when people knew they were ready to come out and attack.

QMH: I would really like to hear you talk about the role of China in Cambodia nowadays, because the Vietnamese are influenced by the Chinese economically, politically, and culturally. How do the Cambodians look at China?

SS: That’s one of my concerns—the Chinese influence—because China is so close to Cambodia. When the Cambodians start to learn Chinese, it becomes easy to overtake the country culturally and economically, particularly. The Cambodian leaders need to be careful about the long-term results. It is fine to have investments to add to the economic progress, but Cambodia should not become anything but Cambodia. Their influence is there; but for China, it’s more of a problem. For Vietnam, it’s even more challenging because of the common border. You do not want to turn Vietnam into a Chinese province, and we do not want to turn Cambodia into a Chinese province.

QMH: In the area of Southeast Asia, who would you say are the best friends or best allies of Cambodia?

SS: I believe that Cambodia wants to be friendly with all of them.

QMH: Thank you for that insight. If you would choose one important message, from your experience, to convey from the people of Cambodia to the people of the United States, what would that message be?

SS: Visit Cambodia and learn about its culture and civilization. Cambodia has been a friend of the United States for a long time. It is interesting that the United States has the highest approval rating in Cambodia in comparison with anywhere—in old Europe or new Europe or elsewhere, perhaps even in some of the states. That would be my recommendation. Go and visit Cambodia.
QMH: As a very important Asian person in America, what message would you convey to the people in Cambodia about the United States—as an ambassador?

SS: Believe in the fundamental principles of the United States, which was founded on the strong principle of freedom. This is what we want in Cambodia. This is not the Cold War; but there are chances of getting misinformation and misunderstanding. Believe that the United States is a friend of Cambodia, economically and politically. What I would say to them is that the United States wants Cambodia to enjoy what I call “democratic prosperity”; and the fact that Cambodia gives the United States so high an approval rating is already an example of their understanding that Cambodia and the United States are best friends.

QMH: Thank you very much for your time, sir.

Note

†Angka (“The Organization”) is the term used to refer to the central government by Cambodians living in the country during the Pol Pot regime (1976–79).

References

Using World History to Teach about Premodern Japan

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In this scholarly note, Thomas Barker provides five examples from premodern Japanese history that can be used in secondary or undergraduate world history classrooms. These examples could enable cross-cultural and cross-period comparisons, helping students to better understand how societies have changed, developed, and transformed over time.

Incorporating Premodern Japan into World History

A recent colleague of mine was asked how he would incorporate premodern Japan—that is, Japan prior to the 1868 Meiji Restoration—within the context of a world history course. His response noted such events as the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu (shogunate) in 1185, the Ōnin War (1467–77), and other political-historical events. Though these events are indeed important events in Japanese history, do they represent the basis of material that should be covered in a secondary or undergraduate world history course? In defining what constitutes “world history,” Patrick Manning (2003, 3) wrote that it “is about connections within the global community . . . to portray the crossing of boundaries and the linking of systems in the human past.” Similarly, Jerry Bentley (2007) explained the importance of world history as follows:

It draws attention to the mind-boggling processes of change, development, and transformation that human beings have generated and driven through time. . . . As the field of study that deals most directly with the whole record of human achievements, world history is essential as the enterprise that enables human beings to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Based on these definitions of world history, the curriculum of world history courses at both the secondary and university levels should focus on cross-cultural and cross-period comparisons to allow individual students to better understand how societies have changed, developed, and transformed over time. The goal of most secondary social studies courses—and some-
times university courses—is to help create “informed citizens” so that students can better understand their place in society. With that goal in mind, I believe there are indeed better examples from premodern Japan that could be incorporated into a secondary or undergraduate course in world history.

First, though, I must briefly mention the apparent disconnect between world history scholarship and the world history curriculum, especially at the secondary level. This disconnect is the reason for why my colleague answered the question about Japan the way he did. As an undergraduate, I was privileged to be advised by world historian Rainer Buschmann at California State University Channel Islands and to be a part of a history program that placed a strong emphasis on world history. My current institution, the University of Kansas, does not have a strong background in world history as either a field of research or as an important part of the curriculum. At first I felt this situation was the fault of the institution itself; however, I have come to realize that there are indeed few institutions that place serious focus on world history scholarship, although many are starting to move in that direction. This lack of focus on world history by institutions directly impacts those who are being trained as secondary educators, most of whom consequently do not understand that teaching world history should include more than the “geographic shuffle” of spending a few days of instruction on India followed by a few days of instruction on China and on to the next geographic region. Though I completely agree with Lucien Ellington (2008) that the main areas of research by world historians are beyond the comprehension of most secondary and undergraduate students, it is important to try to instill in students the importance of cross-cultural and cross-period analyses and comparisons. Doing so would drive home what I believe is the central focus of world history: connections within the global community. My experience at the university level and association with secondary educators has led me to believe that only a few understand the methodology employed by world historians and why individuals continue to focus on key political points in their instructional approaches to world history.

An oft-ignored resource that focuses on the connection of the global community and thus can be helpful in creating a world history curriculum is the College Board’s Advanced Placement (AP) World History Course Description (2009). Though this manual is designed for the teaching of the AP world history course and preparation for the AP world history exam, it provides useful material, ideas, and topics that could be used for the development of a world history curriculum at both the secondary and university levels. The strong point of this manual is that it breaks down the curriculum into five overarching themes that allow for cross-period and cross-cultural comparisons. The five themes are:
1. Interaction between humans and the environment;
2. Development and interaction of cultures;
3. State-building, expansion, and conflict;
4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems; and
5. Development and transformation of social structures.

These five themes are further broken into subcategories, which provide a framework for discussing almost all aspects of a society. More importantly, these themes and subcategories allow for a discussion of how societies have changed, developed, and transformed over time.

Using these five themes, I have chosen five examples from premodern Japan that can be used in the world history curriculum. In each following section, I provide basic information regarding each topic and how it can be used in course instruction. These five examples are important in that, although they may be typically ignored, they provide material that can be included in the world history curriculum as either central focal points or as bases for general discussion.

**Interaction between Humans & the Environment (Theme One): Introduction of Smallpox to Japan**

The arrival of smallpox in the eighth century had a dramatic effect on the Japanese population. Most likely this disease first arrived in Kyushu from the Korean Peninsula in the early part of the 730s and quickly spread to the main island of Honshu. Mortality rates were as high as 60 to 70 percent in some areas, though most places may have experienced rates as low as 25 to 35 percent (Farris 1985, 65–66). Although the disease affected people from all walks of life, the greatest impact was upon those responsible for agricultural production. To compensate for the decline in agricultural production and reduce the burdens of taxation, the *shōen* (manorial) system was developed. This system later served as the foundation for the rise of the samurai.

The example of the introduction of smallpox to Japan can be used to allow future cross-period comparisons to be made as a world history course develops. Two examples that can be drawn back to this event are the introduction of smallpox and other diseases to the Americas in the sixteenth century and the introduction of smallpox to Pacific Islanders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This discussion of how diseases travel between and among societies is also one that can be related to today, focusing on AIDS, SARS, avian flu, and H1N1 influenza. Ultimately, this discussion should allow for an analysis of how diseases impact societies. Also, because the historical introduction of diseases to a society is often associated with
Western exploration and colonialism, a discussion of smallpox in Japan will demonstrate to students the fallaciousness of that association.

Development & Interaction of Cultures (Theme Two):
The Arrival of Buddhism in Japan

The arrival of Buddhism in Japan is dated around the middle of the sixth century, with 552 being the most commonly accepted date. The arrival of a new religion from the Korean peninsula was met with some opposition by aristocratic families, but the adoption by the Soga 蘇我 family and their eventual triumph over rival families—who opposed the religion—led to official sanction. At first Buddhism appealed only to a small portion of the elite who read its scriptures as part of their scholarly pursuits. However, Buddhism was able to spread throughout Japan, due (in part) to a complex arrangement of political support and to the fact that the religion also introduced written texts, monumental architecture (temples), an organized priesthood, a highly developed ritual system with elaborate use of symbolism, and the idea of universality to the Japanese islands.

Most world history courses touch upon the spread of Buddhism from India along the Silk Road toward China. Discussing the introduction of Buddhism to Japan allows specific comparisons to be made with other parts of Asia—an important situation, given the symbiotic relationship with the native Shinto tradition that evolved in Japan. Students can therefore be encouraged to consider how other indigenous religious in other parts of Asia reacted to the arrival of Buddhism.

State-building, Expansion & Conflict (Theme Three):
The Mongol Invasion

Kublai Khan (1215–94) attempted two military invasions of the Japanese islands from the Korean peninsula (1274 and 1281) after several failed diplomatic attempts seeking “friendly” relations with the Japanese. Between the invasion attempts, the Kamakura bakufu developed defensive positions along the Kyushu coast by building walls and fortifications on beachheads and potential landing points. The second invasion ended when a typhoon destroyed or damaged a large number of the Mongol ships. The Japanese referred to this typhoon as kamikaze 神風 (divine wind), marking the first use of the term that became popularized—in a different context—during World War II. Because of the uncertainty over whether there would be a third invasion attempt, the bakufu continued to maintain a strong defensive position in Kyushu until word reached Japan of Kublai’s death. The massive amount of resources used to maintain this defensive position had negative impacts on the bakufu and contributed, in part, to its downfall in 1333.
In a world history course, the failed invasion attempt on Japan by the Mongols can be discussed in terms of Mongol expansion efforts and how various groups responded to this expansion. The twenty-year maintenance of the defensive position in Kyushu contributed to the weakening of the Kamakura bakufu, a situation that could be compared with how other societies were able to repel would-be invaders and how their political regimes were subsequently influenced. For example, students (or their instructors) could draw comparisons with Eastern and Central Europe, particularly Mongol attacks on Poland (1259) and the Kingdom of Hungary (1280s). This comparison allows for a better understanding of how states during this period dealt with expansionist desires of other groups and how the events and their reactions influenced the state. Furthermore, cross-period comparisons—especially with how societies handled Western expansionism in later centuries—could easily be made.

**Creation, Expansion & Interaction of Economic Systems (Theme Four): Spanish-Japanese Relations**

Many world history scholars have focused on the development of the Manila galleons with respect to the development of the Chinese and world economy (see, for example, Flynn and Giráldez 1995a, 1995b). The Spanish were actively engaged throughout the seventeenth century in establishing policies with the Japanese that they thought would best provide security for Manila and the Pacific trade. For the Spanish, the most important policy was the securing of a port in Japan that could be used by the galleons on their return voyage to Acapulco. Japanese authorities, under the leadership of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616), hoped to gain, by having Spanish experts come to Japan as instructors, technical knowledge regarding how to build Western-style ships, how to better exploit Japanese mines, and how to create more accurate maps and charts. Ultimately, the Spanish chose to end relations with Japan after they came to believe that the Manila galleons would be more secure if they were not to interact with Japan.

Spanish-Japanese relations can be used in a world history course to discuss the growing world economy and how various groups were not always interested in direct economic exchange for commodities: some, for example, were also focused on acquiring new technologies and the securing of long-distance trade routes. In addition, competition among the Dutch, English, Spanish, and Portuguese in Japan made it difficult for the Spanish to maintain strong relations with Japan. Students could also learn about the importance of the Manila galleons in East–West economic exchanges. By extension, one could also focus on how the Protestant-Catholic rivalry impacted relations with non-European groups.
Development & Transformation of Social Structures (Theme Five): The “SPAM” System

Near the beginning of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), a status system that can be traced back to Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536–98) became solidified. Influenced by neo-Confucian ideas from China, the “SPAM” system derives its name from the hierarchical organization of society into four groups: samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. This status system also contained a very comprehensive system of sumptuary laws that limited how members of certain classes could dress and wear their hair, where they could live, and what they could eat. These laws and this system were designed to support and reinforce the samurai-led political system.

Perhaps the best way to introduce the SPAM system within the world history curriculum is through cross-period or cross-society comparison. Although one can discuss intellectual influences from China that helped shape the system, it might be better to compare the SPAM system to other status systems in Europe, China, or India. Doing so will allow for a comparison of how a distinctive group in society used laws and other means to set themselves apart from other classes within their society.

World History: A Means to an End

The difficulty in teaching any course is the decision of what material to incorporate to meet the course goals and objectives. Taking cues from Manning’s (2003) and Bentley’s (2007) notion of world history and from guidelines set by the College Board for the AP world history course, the world history curriculum needs to have a strong focus on cross-cultural and cross-period comparison to demonstrate how societies have changed, developed, and transformed over time. The five examples germane to premodern Japan that I have briefly highlighted here meet these criteria. As someone who has been trained in Japanese history, I would incorporate these five topics because they are items and events I know well. Other instructors, of course, will wish to use material with which they are familiar for their courses.

In short, if we truly wish to better incorporate Japan and other non-European societies in the world history curriculum, then world history—not the “geographic shuffle”—needs to be explained and taught. From my observations, undergraduate courses in world history can be more successful than courses taught at the secondary level, because most secondary social studies educators are not trained by their institutions regarding world history methodology and how to incorporate it in classroom instruction. This disconnect needs to be addressed and mended if instructors are truly serious about incorporating Japan (or other parts of Asia or the world) at the secondary level.
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Science Innovation during the Cultural Revolution: Notes from the *Peking Review*

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In this scholarly note, Darryl Brock utilizes numerous articles from the *Peking Review* to argue that scientific and technical innovation among the “mass line” existed at surprising levels during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

The Cultural Revolution: A “Disaster” for China?

The story of the Cultural Revolution is well known. Chairman Mao (1893–1976) and the “Gang of Four” shut down universities, dismantled scientific institutes, and punished intellectuals for elitist, bourgeois inclinations. Millions of scientists and students suffered banishment to the countryside to spend wasted years being re-educated by peasants. The death of Chairman Mao ushered in an era of modernization by Deng Xiaoping (1904–97) and the new leadership. They focused not only on repealing the strictures of the Cultural Revolution but also on undoing its damage and implementing new, enlightened policies to support innovation, with a goal of eventually rejoining the world as a leading scientific nation.

That may be a familiar account, but it is an incomplete one. The “mass line” of the Cultural Revolution in fact catalyzed surprising levels of scientific innovation, particularly as revealed in the pages of *Peking Review* (later renamed the *Beijing Review*), a weekly English-language news magazine established in 1958 to communicate economic, political, and cultural news and developments with the rest of the world.

Science under Siege?

Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution moved swiftly to establish control of Chinese institutions. By 1967 “Revolutionary committees” composed of student Red Guards, members of the People’s Liberation Army, and party cadres assumed governmental authority in manufacturing, scientific institutions, and elsewhere. As 1968 commenced, universities had already been
closed. That fall Mao relocated to the countryside over ten million intellectuals, city cadres, and students, including Red Guards (Simon and Goldman 1989). One of those sent down to the countryside proved to be the future Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao (b. 1942), who had studied geology before his February 1968 exile to the deserts of Gansu province (Solomone 2006).

Scientists initially seemed protected from the Cultural Revolution. The *Peking Review* in 1966 encouraged the “soaring revolutionary enthusiasm” of the masses, but it also urged caution at scientific research establishments lest it “affect the normal progress of production” (*Peking Review* 1966; Wang, Chia, and Li 1966). Despite the *Review’s* assurances, the fact is that of the four hundred technical journals extant in 1965, most soon ceased publication, with only twenty journals remaining in 1969 (Jia 2006).

Joseph Needham (1900–1995), the eminent biologist and sinologist, commented in *Nature* on the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, based on a trip he took to China in April 1978. Needham branded the Gang of Four as “fundamentally anti-intellectual, and inimical to scientists and technologists in particular,” adding they had added to the list of eight evil kinds of people a “stinking ninth category” of intellectuals and scientists. An incredulous Needham cites various atrocities, including torture of scientists. In one case an esteemed pathology professor was required to “lecture on carcinogenesis to medical students while they were picking cotton” (Needham 1978, 832, 833).

Notwithstanding Needham’s sober assessment of the excesses, one should not overlook the achievements of the Cultural Revolution. China launched its first earth satellite in 1970 as a result of Mao-era innovation, followed by a scientific satellite in the subsequent year. There was also progress in lasers, semiconductors, electronics, and computing technology. Even in theoretical research there was the breakthrough of synthesizing the world’s first biologically active protein, crystalline pig insulin, using the method of X-ray diffraction. This development laid the groundwork for Shanghai becoming the cradle for biotechnology in China (Sigurdson 1980).

The *Peking Review*: A Chronicle of Innovation

Those are not isolated occurrences of scientific innovation; in fact, the Communist news publication *Peking Review* reveals high levels of technical innovation. During the 1966–70 period alone, which covers the early, most radical years of the Cultural Revolution, I have identified ninety-four individual articles that focus primarily on scientific and technological innovation. These cover agriculture, industry, military defense, and broad areas of science and technology such as chemistry, geology, and paleontology. Recognizing the critical categories presented by the post-Mao leadership, I have organized innovations into the categories of Deng Xiaoping’s Four
Modernizations of the post-Mao era: Agriculture; Industry; Defense; and Science and Technology.

**Agricultural Innovation**

Inadequate technical support has characterized a nation that through the Cultural Revolution found at least 80 percent of the population engaged in agricultural production (Sigurdson 1980). Even so, Mao’s policies before and during the Cultural Revolution to engage the masses did have a positive effect of upgrading peasant technical skills and capabilities. By the end of the Cultural Revolution, some 14 million peasant agro-technicians had upgraded their practical farming skills, their training varying from seminars on fertilizer application to multi-year agricultural study programs (Volti 1982).

Nine agriculture-focused articles appeared in the *Peking Review* between 1966 and 1970. These present research ranging from developing potato strains resistant to degeneration, to the design of China’s first self-propelled combine harvester. A charming example of peasant science—the science of the mass line—is the 1966 report on peanut research by the energetic peasant-scientist Yao Shih-Chang, who admitted to only four years of formal schooling. Selecting only two peanut plants for study, he admittedly exhibited flawed understanding of experimental design: the peasant-scientist had no idea of variability among treatments and no conception of the need for at least three samples per treatment in order to perform even the simplest of statistics. Even so, he demonstrated remarkable dedication, taking data several times a night and sometimes sleeping next to his plants. He claimed to have discovered a new method of cultivation, increasing peanut yields by 10 to 23 percent. The internal evidence supports this account as relatively accurate, for a thoughtful propagandist would likely have manufactured a more knowledgeable and impressive peasant-scientist (Yao 1966).

**Industrial Innovation**

Mao’s epistemology claimed that production represented the sure path to knowledge. During the Cultural Revolution, production workers grew more familiar with technology as experts worked alongside them. Industrial innovation, however, proved more an Edisonian “trial-and-error” approach rather than one relying on a theoretical, scientific basis (Suttmeier 1974). Innovation also served specific individual motivations: Technical workers recently from the university recognized that, by proving themselves with innovations, they could shorten their political re-education on the workshop floor, thereby securing promotions. Their management also valued innovation; it allowed them to pursue projects unofficially as worker-innovations when difficult state regulations could not be met. As a result, innovation came to be routine and desirable (Dean 1979).
Fifty-six articles that focused on industry appeared in the *Peking Review* between 1966 and 1970. Although most relate to manufacturing innovations, several of the articles focus on civil engineering projects, such as bridges, or launching of new merchant marine ship classes. A 1966 report on developing an indigenous-frequency clock for power metering represented a technical challenge: Such precision clocks must lose only one second per day. Representing significant mass-line experimental effort, worker-technician Fang Ku-Ken reported feeling shame that a Chinese-built hydroelectric power station would be equipped with a fragile 1920s era bourgeois, Western-imported frequency clock. Fang experimented for months in a small concrete cell, sweltering in the summer heat, until he detected the reason for a 0.3-second variance in a swinging pendulum. He then implemented an innovation of separating the pendulum from the gears, employing “oscillations by means of electricity” to signal the gears from the pendulum. A “triumph” of Mao-inspired thought, his team introduced the frequency clock in September 1965 (Fang 1966, 27, 28).

**Defense Innovation**

Military research and development occurred with much less interruption than in other areas, its scientists enjoying protection from the Cultural Revolution due to the national security considerations related to their work. These high-priority fields included nuclear physics, missile research, and military research (Ridley 1976). The result: remarkable technology achievements including the 1964 atom bomb explosion, the hydrogen bomb three years later, production of integrated circuits by 1968, and an orbital satellite by 1970 (Berner 1975).

Eight articles that focused on military defense appeared in the *Peking Review* between 1966 and 1970. Most of these relate to nuclear testing and nuclear delivery systems. China’s first hydrogen-bomb explosion claimed the headline on June 17, 1967. The *Review* proclaimed: “after five nuclear tests in two years and eight months, China successfully exploded her first hydrogen bomb over the western region of the country.” A tribute to Chairman Mao, their great helmsman, said: “In the fields of the struggle for production and scientific experiment . . . man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing.” Proudly reminding that China has atom bombs, guided missiles, and now the hydrogen bomb, the *Review* explained the importance of this achievement: “This greatly heightens the morale of the revolutionary people throughout the world and greatly deflates the arrogance of imperialism, modern revisionism, and all reactionaries” (*Peking Review* 1967b).
Science & Technology Innovation

By 1968 a Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) “Study Group of Mao Zedong Thought” had organized, soon denouncing a number of natural-sciences theories. The first target that emerged was Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity, which was viewed contrary to dialectical materialism (Hu 2007). Genetics research also came to a halt in 1966 with the last issue of the prestigious journal of the CAS Genetics Institute, though it began to revive somewhat by 1972 with Zhou Enlai’s (1898–1976) efforts (Schneider 1989). On the other hand, the mass line seemed to benefit various sciences, such as seismology. By the end of the Cultural Revolution, 100,000 amateur seismologists manned 10,000 stations, complementing 300 professionally staffed stations. Meteorology and national weather forecasting also benefitted. The post-Mao era inherited a network of 16,000 commune-run weather posts and rain-measuring stations, working in collaboration with weather stations and the Central Meteorological Observatory, primarily to serve agriculture (Sigurdson 1980).

Twenty-one articles that focused on science and technology in the broadest sense appeared in the Peking Review between 1966 and 1970. The disciplines covered are varied, including physics, chemistry, biochemistry, paleontology, geology, medicine, and science education. Some specific achievements included China’s first benzene workshop, a survey of Mt. Everest (Mt. Jolmo Lungma), and the locating of subterranean water. The world-shaking report of the first total synthesis of crystalline insulin appeared on January 1, 1967, oddly enough more than a year after the actual September 17, 1965, event. As Sigurdson (1980) has pointed out, this work had been initiated in the late 1950s, during the Great Leap Forward (1958–61). The discovery represented “man’s great effort to unveil the secrets of life and provides powerful new evidence for the materialist-dialectical theory on the origin of life.” The report accurately stated it to be the “first crystalline protein” and “the largest biologically active natural organic compound ever to be synthesized” (Peking Review 1967a). In an article published on December 25, 1970, the Review reported another achievement: the trial production of a Shanghai electron microscope capable of 400,000-times magnification. Although the Shanghai Electronics and Optics Research Institute had been working on such microscopes since 1958, this latest, most advanced model was presented as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The Review adds that such a precision instrument is a culmination of science and technology in “radio electronics, electron optics, high electric voltage, high vacuum and precision mechanical engineering” (Peking Review 1970).

Scientific Innovation: Victim or Victor?

The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution left a mixed impact and legacy. On one hand, the era’s reports represented the movement as a virtually un-
qualified success. On the other hand, post-Mao leadership typically viewed the Cultural Revolution as an unmitigated catastrophe for China. Sigrid Schmalzer cautions that “there are compelling reasons why we should not entirely abandon the earlier, positive accounts and follow the post-Mao narrative too slavishly” (2007, 579).

So what conclusions does the *Peking Review* reveal about scientific innovation during the Cultural Revolution? Universities shut down and academic research came to a halt, but state-protected science related to defense and national prestige remained. Innovation continued, but it was primarily related to production in an Edisonian, non-theoretical way. The physics of relativity and the science of genetics took major hits, but the mass line proved to have benefits in areas where millions of field assistants could be employed—fields such as seismology and weather monitoring. Future decades would witness a gap between science and talent among professionals, due to the “dead weight” of the poorly prepared Cultural Revolution generation; however, millions of rural peasants gained access to science and technology for the first time. Despite the general disaster of the Cultural Revolution, it may be argued that, in some ways, Chairman Mao’s science policy did have benefits to scientific innovation and that the mass line emerged better prepared to meet a technological future in the final decades of the twentieth century.

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**References**


232 D. E. Brock

This scholarly note discusses online and other resources particularly suitable for world history and geography courses and includes a draft of a diagnostic assessment tool that is intended for university and high school–level survey courses. The material herein should also be applicable to other survey courses in the humanities and social sciences.

Assessing Students’ Knowledge of East Asia

In the 2008 issue of this journal, one of the authors published an essay on advancing pedagogical scholarship through a discussion of particular materials that might compensate for undergraduate and high school world history students’ lack of knowledge about Asia (Ellington 2008). This scholarly note builds upon and expands the earlier effort through a first-stage development of a diagnostic East Asia assessment tool and a discussion of online pedagogical materials that emphasize East Asia’s regional and global interactions. Although geography and world history are afforded substantial treatment in this essay, both the assessment draft and the featured online resources have potential ramifications for other education, humanities, and social sciences survey courses.

We believe that, prior to the introduction of East Asia content in a general survey course, a systematic, diagnostic assessment of basic student knowledge (or the lack thereof) about East Asia constitutes crucial contextual information for instructors who desire to be effective teachers. Despite romantic beliefs on the part of many academics and teachers that students can comprehend more sophisticated content without knowledge of elemental East Asia–related facts and concepts, a consensus exists among cognitive scientists regarding learning any area of study: at virtually every level, comprehension of new content almost always depends upon prior related knowledge.
Our ultimate objective is to develop a statistically valid and reliable East Asia diagnostic test, perhaps 30 to 50 questions, that will be applicable to lower-level humanities, education, and social science survey courses such as world history, economics, philosophy, and foundations of education. Although well aware that the formulation of any objective test can be controversial and, by nature, an oversimplification of content, we think the benefits of learning initial student knowledge levels are a much greater advantage than the obvious costs of such a process.

As a first step in this process, we developed and field-tested an initial draft “East Asia Diagnostic Test” to twenty-eight students who were enrolled in two 2009 summer-term education survey courses at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The initial multiple-choice assessment draft—which included geography, history, economics, and contemporary-affairs questions—was administered prior to the introduction of East Asia components in the respective courses. The questions and percentages of students who answered each correctly or incorrectly are included in the appendix.

As with any objective assessment, the questions in our draft are not meant to probe nuanced or sophisticated knowledge or even challenge what is generally considered to be conventional (but correct at some significant level) knowledge about East Asia. We formulated questions based upon two criteria: our estimation of whether a correct answer positioned a student to learn more complex content and whether the content of the question encompassed regional or global content. For example, if students know the correct answers to questions 2 and 3, they have the necessary context to be able to compare and contrast the impact of physical and human geography on China, Japan, and Korea. If students correctly answer question 5, they are better positioned to comprehend East Asia as a region and engage in comparative understanding of historical—and some contemporary—similarities and differences among East Asian and other societies. If students correctly answer questions 11 and 12, they have basic understanding that positions them to better understand related content in recent regional and world history, political economy, and international relations.

Although it is impossible to generalize from the small level of data we collected, it is difficult to refrain from speculation based upon what particular questions a majority of students answered correctly or incorrectly. For example, a large majority of students answered question 5 incorrectly, which raises a variety of questions ranging from mistaken stereotypes based upon a Eurocentric approach to comparative religions to a lack of prior emphasis upon Confucius in earlier student educational experiences. A significant majority of students demonstrated rudimentary knowledge of East Asian political systems in answering question 12 correctly; but, conversely, substantial majorities, through missing 10 and 11, seem to demonstrate no basic knowledge of fundamental recent economic developments in the region.
Finally, we invite colleagues at other institutions to collaborate with us in field testing a more sophisticated version of our work. Please feel free to contact either of us by e-mail (see “Contributors,” pp. xviii–xxiv) with comments, critiques, and suggested questions for inclusion on the instrument.

**East Asia Comparative Resources: Geography & World History**

Once students have rudimentary knowledge of East Asia, understanding East Asia as a region and East Asia in a global context becomes both possible and highly desirable, relative to studying a particular culture as a primarily self-contained entity. The proliferation of Internet resources now makes it possible for survey instructors to employ high-quality and stimulating digital resources that emphasize East Asian regionalism and global interactions in a variety of ways. Here we include descriptions of exemplary digital pedagogical resources that are particularly applicable to geography and world history surveys. However, some of the digital resources have relevant content for art, economics, foundations of education, literature, government, and even earth and environmental science surveys. See the list of references for complete URLs to additional resources described in the following paragraphs.


*East Asia in Geographic Perspective* (EAGP) is a component of Columbia University’s *Asia for Educators* Web site (http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/), a site that includes a number of topical components featuring excellent videos, teaching guides, materials, and instructional aides that address Chinese, Japanese, and—to a lesser extent—Korean and Vietnamese history and society. Six essential geographic themes constitute EAGP’s organizational framework; examples include physical systems, human systems, the uses of geography, and environment and society. Each theme is illustrated by accessible online teaching materials ranging from a variety of maps to photos, useful links, and streaming video.

For example, to help students better understand human–environment interaction, a link to the Annenberg *Teaching Geography* site (2009a) includes a 30-minute video entitled *Global Forces/Local Impact* that shows the relationship between the booming economy of a Chinese province (Guangdong) and quality-of-life issues (Annenberg Media 2009b). In recent years, 150 million people have migrated from subsistence farms to factory jobs in this one area of southern China; the video focuses on several workers in a Nike shoe factory and reveals how their lives have changed dramatically since they began working there. Regional ramifications are also addressed:
Along with its low-wage but hard-working labor force, Guangdong’s geographical proximity to Hong Kong has been a major factor in the province’s rapid economic growth.

Historical geography also receives organized treatment in EAGP: When users explore the uses of geography, they find teaching activities on both the Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal and the geography of the Silk Roads.


In addition to *Teaching Geography*, two other Annenberg online resources contain varied East Asia content. *The Power of Place: Geography for the 21st Century* (2003) is designed for survey-level undergraduate and advanced high school courses. Free registration allows subscribers to view 26 half-hour videos and download supporting materials, such as maps and resource links, from the Annenberg Web site (http://www.learner.org). For no cost, survey instructors are positioned either to assign their class a particular video to watch on personal computers or to use a variety of videos in class, based upon student interest. *The Power of Place* videos are divided into nine regional units and include four videos on East Asia. All videos include case studies featuring interviews, maps, and video footage. Each region is examined according to its human and physical characteristics, along with the historical, economic, and cultural factors that differentiate it from other geographic regions and cultures within a region. For example, two videos on East Asia respectively explore Chinese modernization (*The Booming Maritime Edge*) and Japanese agricultural and economic geography (*Small Farms, Big Cities*). The effects of globalization on Chinese society are investigated in a 12-minute segment (“Globalization in the Pearl River Delta”) of the first video, while the effects of climate and technology on Japanese rice production is a focus of the second video. Viewers also learn about the problems and challenges of major East Asian cities, especially the overcrowding and suburbanization of the Tokyo metropolitan area, whose population is twice that of Los Angeles.

Another Annenberg video instructional series, *Human Geography: People, Places, and Change* (1996), consists of ten excellent half-hour videos that can also be viewed online for no cost. These videos explore relationships between people and their environment while considering the impact of government and economic forces. Two programs, “Global Firms in the Industrializing East” and “The World of the Dragon,” depict East Asian regionalism and its global interactions. “The World of the Dragon” focuses
on current issues in China and Japan and challenges Western accounts of globalization; college students considering East Asia in introductory geography or social science courses could particularly benefit from watching this program.


*China and Europe, 1500–2000 and Beyond: What Is “Modern”?* (C&E) is another free component of Columbia University’s *Asia for Educators* Web site (http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/). C&E is, in our opinion, one of the best online world history components ever developed. The general educational objective of the component is the utilization of a China/Europe comparative format to enable users to re-think their often erroneous misconceptions of both regions. The component features twenty-one 1–4-minute video segments by Ken Pomeranz and Bin Wong, with accompanying transcripts, interactive maps, related reading by scholars such as Derek Bodde, primary-source photographs, timelines, short excerpts for classroom use, and an extensive reading list. A sample of topics encompassed in the component includes “China and Europe: 1500–1800,” “Rethinking the Industrial Revolution,” and “What Do We Mean by Modern?” Pomeranz and Wong’s presentations in their respective video segments are superb examples of how to convey substantive, specific, and engaging information utilizing styles that are the antithesis of “the talking head.” The primary focus of C&E is economic history; but those instructors who have negative reflexive responses to the adjective “economic” should put aside that stereotype and investigate this component. Pomeranz, Wong, and their Columbia associates have created an approach to economic history that links cultural studies, geography, politics, and history in the construction of a superb educational tool. Our only qualm with C&E is the discernment, in our opinion, of a slight tendency toward “Asia-centricism” within the component, since even a brief description of some of the positive political and economic Western European internal developments that resulted in a higher quality of life in Asia is noticeably absent. Still, this component is highly recommended for its educational value, practicality, and usefulness to survey instructors. In approaching the component, consult the online index first for a roadmap of the territory.


*From Silk to Oil: Cross-Cultural Connections along the Silk Road* is an AAS award–winning, 375-page teaching guide developed by the China Institute
in America with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. It is available as a free .pdf download from the China Institute Web site (http://www.chinainstitute.org). Some of the leading Asianists and Islamic specialists from the United States and around the world, including Morris Rossabi, George Saliba, Stefano Carboni, Ron Knapp, and Chun-Fung Yu—as well as a host of university faculty and secondary teachers—served as pedagogical consultants in the development of the resource. This definitive Silk Roads online resource encompasses diverse treatment of the Silk Roads from the second century B.C.E. to contemporary times. The guide, which is intended for use in lower-level university courses, community colleges, and high schools, is divided into two parts, with each part organized around five themes: Geography, Ethnic Relations and Political History, Exchange of Goods and Ideas, Religions, and Arts. Part one consists of five 5–7-page introductory essays on each of these topics. The authors, four of the five scholars already mentioned (Knapp served as managing editor), employ highly accessible prose for students and general audiences. The essays are augmented by useful maps and photographs. These short but well-done readings may be used collectively or separately, depending upon the particular focus of the survey course.

Part two of the guide consists of twenty-three curriculum units that address the five themes. Although most readers of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies teach in higher educational institutions, we cannot emphasize enough that survey-level instructors interested in using the Silk Roads as a vehicle to teach about both East Asia and intercultural contacts should carefully examine part two. The units contain written and visual documents such as excerpts from literature and government documents; color and monochrome photos, maps, and tables; and student exercises. The majority are practical teaching tools for college- and university-level world history and geography survey courses and for other humanities and social science surveys as well. For example, the “Ethnic Relations and Political History” unit contains short primary-source excerpts addressing relations between the Han 漢 and the Xiongnu 匈奴; a 1231 letter from Chinggis Khan’s third son to the Koreans requisitioning (among other items) 1,000 princesses and ladies and 20,000 high-grade otter skins; and poet Abdukhaliq’s 1931 “Awaken,” which was a Uyghur nationalist clarion call against the Chinese during a particularly stormy period in relations.

Conclusion: Select Supporting Regional & Comparative Resources

Constant attention must be paid both to surveying student knowledge of East Asia and to learning how to effectively improve understanding of the region and its interactions with the world. We conclude this essay with a select list of supporting resources, both print and online, that better enable
teachers and students to utilize the digital content that was discussed above. Because of the paucity of Korean-related instructional materials relative to those for China and Japan, three of the five suggested entries exclusively address Korea. As always, we welcome any suggestions or comments about our ongoing work.


This lavishly illustrated 206-page .pdf document, developed by a team of Korea scholars, breaks new classroom ground in expanding student understanding of early Korea’s involvement in the Silk Roads.


Holcombe’s award-winning book is excellent for examples of the fluidity of interactions among emerging East Asian cultures.


Richey’s piece offers a practical example of how to teach these two great cultures comparatively.


Although the statistics are slightly dated, Schultz’s brief piece remains an almost ideal survey-level introduction to Korea.


Seth’s work offers the best available survey of traditional Korea.3

**Appendix: East Asia Diagnostic Test**

This diagnostic test is about East Asia, one of the world’s most important regions. China, Japan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) are addressed in the test. To the left of each question, we have indicated the percentage of students answering correctly (C) or incorrectly (I), based on our 2009 pilot study to twenty-eight students enrolled in two summer-term education survey courses at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Correct answers for questions 2 through 12 have been italicized.
1. Using the letters on the Asia map [not included], match the correct location of China, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea with the corresponding letters below.
   a. ________________  c. ________________
   b. ________________  d. ________________

2. China and the United States:
   a. *Each have about the same land area, but China has a much larger population.*
   b. Are unequal in land area and population; China has much more land and population.
   c. Are comparable; oceans played almost no role in each nation’s development.
   d. Are now the world’s richest countries in average family incomes.

3. Compared to the United States, Japan has:
   a. Almost half the population and approximately 40 percent of the land area.
   b. *Almost half the population and approximately 5 percent of the land area.*
   c. Approximately two-thirds the population and 10 percent of the land area.
   d. Approximately one-fourth the population and 25 percent of the land area.

4. The Himalayan Mountains serve as a natural barrier between which of the following pairs of Asian countries?
   a. North Korea and China  c. Vietnam and China
   b. *China and India*  d. China and Mongolia

5. Who is the individual who has most influenced these particular East Asian societies throughout history?
   a. Buddha  c. Laozi
   b. *Confucius*  d. Mao Zedong

6. In 1500, which was the world’s richest nation?
   a. Great Britain  c. *China*
   b. France  d. Japan

7. What country was responsible in the mid-1800s for ending Japan’s relative isolation from the world?
   a. China  c. Korea
   b. Great Britain  d. *the United States*

8. Which was the first East Asian nation to adopt a Western-style constitution?
   a. China  c. North Korea
   b. *Japan*  d. South Korea

9. Which East Asian nation, by the beginning of the twentieth century, was free of any unwanted foreign interference with its affairs?
   a. China  c. North Korea
   b. *Japan*  d. South Korea
C I Question

32 68 10. Beginning in the 1980s, which country changed much of its economy from socialism to capitalism?
   a. China  c. North Korea
   b. Japan  d. South Korea

32 68 11. People of which two countries have East Asia’s highest average incomes?
   a. China and Japan  c. Japan and South Korea
   b. China and South Korea  d. Japan and North Korea

71 29 12. Which form of government described below is correct?
   a. South Korea and Japan have democratic governments.
   b. China and Japan have democratic governments.
   c. South Korea and China have democratic governments.
   d. North Korea and South Korea have democratic governments.

Notes

1Readers unfamiliar with the term “pedagogical scholarship” will find a short definition in Ellington (2008).

2This scientific research, although critical to instructional preparation, is often overlooked amid a cacophony of romantic and educational rhetoric. For a lucid synthesis of cognitive science research on learning, see Hirsch (1996).

3For a brief review, see Métraux (2007).

References

In this scholarly note, Hal French explores the lives and legacies of several of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi’s (1868–1948) grandchildren and great-grandchildren, placing special emphasis on Ramchandra Gandhi (1937–2007) and his 1992 novel, *Sita’s Kitchen*. 

**Situating Gandhi’s Family**

Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi (1868–1948) was once asked the simple question, “How is your family?” He replied: “All of India is my family” (Fischer 1962, 162). Louis Fischer, one of Gandhi’s biographers, observed that this view made him behave rather impersonally toward his four sons—and made him perhaps too demanding and prescriptive of them (1954, 1962). While three remained engaged in his father’s activities, seven of his grandchildren seem to have actualized his ideals in rather remarkable ways. Likewise, three of his great-grandchildren have pursued similarly noble goals.

Although this piece briefly discusses the contributions of all of these descendants of Gandhi, the focus will be on Gandhi’s grandson Ramchandra Gandhi, who was born in 1937 and who died in New Delhi in June 2007. He was an outstanding scholar who taught at a number of universities in India and the West. I will draw on personal impressions from having met him on two occasions as well as from one of his chief works, *Sita’s Kitchen: A Testimony of Faith and Inquiry* (1992). This book, published shortly before the Babri Mosque was destroyed, was occasioned by Ramchandra’s visit to Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, site of tragic conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. His work suggests a way in which these conflicts in India and those in other settings might be bridged.

In *Gandhi’s Truth*, Erik Erikson asserts that Gandhi demanded the most and expected the worst of his sons. In other words, he associated his sons with what was worst in himself (1969, 320). In ordering and correcting them, he was combating those aspects of his own nature of which he was not proud. When asked “May not an artist or a poet or a great genius leave a
legacy of his genius to posterity through his children?” he responded, “Certainly not. He will have more disciples than he can ever have children” (Fischer 1954, 128). Many sources have faulted Gandhi for his parenting, and he himself acknowledged personal failures in this regard, particularly with reference to his firstborn son, Harilal (1888–1948), of whom he said, “I regard the birth of a bad son to me as the result of my evil past, whether of this life or previous. My first son was born when I was in a state of infatuation. He grew up whilst I was myself growing and whilst I knew myself very little” (Fischer 1962, 162). Gandhi stated that, although each of his sons had charged him somewhat with sacrificing them at the altar of what he wrongly believed to be the public good, only Harilal had not forgiven him.1 His other three sons actually made very significant contributions to India and beyond, embodying many of their father’s ideals.

Gandhi had a particular fondness for children, and this fondness seems to have meant that, as he matured, he was able to enjoy his grandchildren—as may be the case with many grandparents—without the need to control and discipline them as he had his sons. Originally, I intended to offer a piece focusing on the legacy of Gandhi’s life and thought through the lives of his descendants. But, because this task proved to be much larger than I initially imagined, I must restrict myself to sketches of five of his grandchildren and three of his great-grandchildren. I devote more attention to a sixth grandchild, Ramchandra, son of Devdas (1900–1957)—and the only grandchild of Gandhi I have met—and on his book Sita’s Kitchen. Some additional details about Gandhi’s four sons and some of their children and grandchildren are provided in the appendix.

On Being a Descendant of Gandhi

Each of Gandhi’s descendants has had to cope with being part of the lineage of such an illustrious man. Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee (b. 1934), daughter of Devdas, stated it this way: “While Bapu [father] had his own ideas about life and truth, I grapple with my own life and truth” (quoted in Rathore 2007). Each of us must. But being one of Gandhi’s 144 descendants must present a singular challenge. Tushar (b. 1960), grandson of Manilal (1892–1956), is a case in point. Called “Gandhi in Jeans” by the press, he eats non-vegetarian food and has been involved in several controversies. But he states, “I wish they [the press] could understand I am a descendant of the Mahatma, not Mahatma myself” (quoted in Rathore 2007). The same must be true of other descendants, who represent a pluralistic pattern, geographically and ideologically, including an American great-granddaughter, a Swedish great-granddaughter, a Turkish-American great-grandson, a Parsi great-grandson, and a Christian great-grandson.

Nevertheless, I have been powerfully impressed by the unique ways in which a number of Gandhi’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren have
continued his legacy. They seem to have forged their own significant paths, yet they have followed what seems to be a pattern of fidelity to his ideals.

The Children of Manilal: Sita, Arun & Ela

Sita (b. 1928), the eldest child of Manilal, is the subject of her daughter Uma Dhpupelia-Mesthrie’s biography (2003). The biography records some delightful letters from Gandhi to Sita and to her parents, such as the following, dated January 13, 1934 (when Sita was five years old), following a report to Gandhi by her parents: “Personally I like Sita being talkative and mischievous. It is for the parents to put these qualities to good use. They can in this way impart a good deal of education. Naughtiness and talkativeness are a kind of energy, like steam” (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2003, 53). Sita’s own early questioning of her father’s deference to Gandhi was modified when in 1944 she, too, fell under his spell.

In her biography of her grandfather Manilal, Sita’s daughter records how Gandhi asked Manilal to consider him “a friend” rather than his “prisoner,” giving rise to the title of the book Gandhi’s Prisoner? (2005). She elaborates, indicating that Manilal was not imprisoned by his father’s ideals, but was a fervent “disciple” of “simple living, high thinking and passive resistance to injustice” (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2005, 400). He seems, however, to have blossomed in his own right following his father’s death, being jailed several times by the British colonial government for protesting against unjust laws.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie also refers to the problems of writing biography of someone who is widely revered, and, in this case—given the family connection—of retaining objectivity: “how to phrase what must be told, how to force the seals, twist back the locks, burgle the cabinet of the soul” while taking “care to consider the feelings of my family.” Yet, she says, “There has been no censorship” (2005, 27).

Arun Gandhi (b. 1934) lived with his grandfather from 1946 until his assassination in 1948, after which he moved to South Africa until his father Manilal’s death in 1956. Arun then returned to India, working as a journalist for the Times of India. In 1987 he moved to the United States with his family, working for a time at the University of Mississippi on a study of prejudices that exist in India, the United States, and South Africa. Moving to Memphis, he founded the Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence, which was moved in 2007 to the University of Rochester. He has continued the legacy of his grandfather by giving many speeches on non-violence; and his own personal remembrances are contained in his book Legacy of Love: My Education in the Path of Non-Violence (2003).

Arun has a strong commitment to the Palestinian cause, urging Palestinian refugees to march home from Jordan en masse in order to shock the
world into taking notice. Comparing the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with the treatment of blacks under South Africa’s white majority regime, he stated in an August 29, 2004, speech cited by the Palestinian International Press Center that Palestinian’s fate is “ten times worse.”

Ela Gandhi (b. 1940), Manilal’s third child, has been notably active in South Africa’s political sphere since the 1960s. A member of parliament from 1994 to 2004, she aligned with the African National Congress, representing the Phoenix area of KwaZulu-Natal Province. She was one of the members of the United Democratic Front who met with Nelson Mandela before his release from Pollsmoor Prison in 1990. After serving in parliament, she developed a 24-hour program against domestic violence, founded the Gandhi Development Trust, and began overseeing a monthly newspaper. Interviewed at the World Parliament of Religions in 2004 in Barcelona (the second such parliament she had attended), Ela indicated her own commitment to interfaith dialogue as a way of promoting understanding and reducing violence: “Violence must be eliminated because it is the main cause of the world’s problems, including the destruction of the planet, of its resources. We manufacture nuclear and chemical weapons. What are we doing to the earth? What will be our legacy to the next generation? Violence must be stopped and we must begin by eliminating it at home” (Forum Barcelona 2004).

Three of Devdas’ Children: Rajmohan, Gopalkrishna & Tara

Rajmohan (b. 1935), the eldest of Gandhi’s youngest son, Devdas, is a scholar of the India independence movement and biographer of his two grandfathers. Devdas’ maternal grandfather, Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari (1878–1972), was a close associate of Gandhi and was the first Indian governor general of independent India. Devdas and his wife Lakshmi, Rajagopalachari’s daughter, wished to marry in 1927; but the fathers, despite their closeness, opposed the marriage because Lakshmi’s family were Brahmins and the Gandhis were Vaisyas, and the marriage was proposed as a love match. When the young people persisted, the fathers gave their permission if they still wanted to marry after five years of separation. They agreed and, passing the painful test, were married in 1933 in the presence of their joyous parents. Subsequently, Gandhi refused to attend any but intercaste marriages (Fischer 1954, 112). Apparently not resenting the extended waiting period, Devdas remained the closest son to his father, serving as secretary when invited, but sometimes observing that the Mahatma was more affectionate as a grandfather (1954, 128). Devdas’ professional career was that of a journalist, serving as the managing editor of the Daily Hindustan Times.
In addition to his scholarly and journalist work chronicling the Indian independence movement, India-Pakistan relations, human rights, and conflict resolution, Rajmohan has served as a member of the Upper House of India’s Parliament. His biographies of his two grandfathers, The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi (1995) and Rajaji: A Life (1997), have been supplemented by at least three other significant volumes, his latest being the massive Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire (published in India in 2006 and by the University of California Press, under a slightly different title, in 2008). A research professor at the Centre for Policy Studies in New Delhi, he is currently a research professor in the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Rajmohan’s writing style is often colorful, as when, in his biography of Rajagopalachari, he writes, “In 1959, the elderly watchdog became a greyhound!” (quoted in Rediff on the Net 1997). He then proceeded to indicate how, despite their long-term friendship, Rajagopalachari challenged Nehru and the Congress Party, which had become stagnant and corrupt, in founding the Swatantra Party, India’s main opposition party through the 1960s.

Along with Ela Gandhi in South Africa, the most politically active of Gandhi’s grandchildren has been Devdas’ youngest son, Gopalkrishna (b. 1945). A member of the Indian Administrative Service since 1968, serving in Tamil Nadu, he next became secretary to the vice president of India, then joint secretary to the president of India from 1987 to 1992 and again from 1997 to 2000. With other administrative posts in England, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Norway, and Iceland, he became governor of West Bengal in 2004, adding the same post in Bihar in 2006.

In a 1997 article, Gopalkrishna asked the insightful question, “Is there such a thing as Gandhi’s legacy?” And he answers:

There is, well, the name; a legacy for some. Legacy of a kind.

His natural heirs have come into it through the accident of birth. They have had an immeasurable advantage, as a result. For the name works. Let those who say Gandhi is irrelevant ask the heirs. But they, the descendants, would be foolish (apart from being insufferable) if they wore the name like a glowing badge on shirtfronts or shawls. Much better for it to be a tailor’s label on the inside; a point of curiosity, not proclamation. For if the name can work, it can also mock, depending on what the wearer is doing.

Then Gopalkrishna expands on Gandhi’s larger legacy, writing that many of us, particularly in government offices, prefer the meditative Mahatma, eyes closed in contemplation. The Mahatma who does not disturb. We do not like the inconvenient Gandhi, the one who raises questions, very inconvenient questions, about ends and means. About veracity. The legacy we rather did not have is the legacy we need. The legacy of the inconvenient Gandhi. The one who
assembles facts, lawyer-like, and who questions the accused in us. . . We need
that Gandhi legacy, not the encased, showcased, marigold-loaded Mahatma.

And again: “British India locked him up in jails; we have jailed him in mu-
seums. They placed him behind bars; we have put him on pedestals. We too
have immobilised him” (1997). Powerful words, indeed.

Devdas’ daughter, Tara Bhattacharjee (also spelled Bhattacharya), has
been particularly involved as an artist in the promotion of khadi, the hand-
spun and hand-woven cloth which was so vital to her grandfather. She is
vice-chairperson of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti in New Delhi.² Tara
shares the stance taken by her brother Ramchandra in stressing the Ma-
hatma’s universalism. In a recent interview she said: “People keep research-
ing Gandhi and discovering new things, which are relevant even today. I
find more people interested in Gandhi than, say, 30 years ago. We, his fam-
ily, lay no claim to him. He belongs to everybody. Or, in fact, he is beyond
belonging to anybody!” (Mehrotra 2007). These same feelings about her
grandfather also appeared in another anecdote: Once, when at a meeting in
Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, that had been organized to allow schoolchil-
dren to interact with her about her grandfather, the children flooded her
with many questions. One question referred to the movies being made of
him. She felt that entertainment media was one way of spreading Gandhi’s
way of life; and she also stated that while she was his granddaughter, he
belonged to the entire nation and the world in his message of non-violence.

Tara was present at the cremation of her brother and was quoted as re-
calling that he had told her just a week before that he wanted to make at
least one child happy a day. “It will be a long time before we fully realise
the impact of this loss. He was such a genuine person,” she said (IBN Live,
2007). Ramchandra’s brothers, Rajmohan and Gopalkrishna, were also pre-
sent, along with other notables and family members, including his wife,
Indu, from whom he had been amicably separated for some years, and his
daughter Leela (b. 1966), who performed his last rites.

**Devdas’ Son Ramchandra Gandhi**

As I was researching materials for my fall 2007 honors course on Gandhi, I
searched for Ramchandra Gandhi’s name on the Internet. I had not fol-
lowed him for some time and—to my surprise—found that he had died
suddenly on June 13, 2007. He was at the India International Centre in New
Delhi, where he often stayed to escape the summer heat, and it was just a
month short of twenty years since I had met him there. I was at the India
International Centre to speak, and Ramchandra had been asked to moder-
ate the session. I was very impressed with his gentle and gracious bearing,
his handling of the questions, and the depth of his own responses.
When I learned that he was to be in residence the following academic year (1987–88) as the first Haridas Chaudhuri Professor of South Asian and Comparative Philosophy at the California Institute of Integral Studies, I invited him to speak at the University of South Carolina in the spring of 1988. He accepted, and he spoke four times—twice at the university, once each at Columbia College and Benedict College—on the subjects “Gandhi,” “The Self and Survival,” and “Issues of Sex and Race”; he also presided over a roundtable discussion entitled “Peace and Nonviolence: Impossible Dreams?” And he was also honored at the local Hindu temple. In each of these appearances he was extremely lucid and challenging, sharing the same ideals of the Mahatma, yet he was very humble in not claiming for himself any special status with reference to his family origins. He was ten years old at the time of his grandfather’s death, and was with him almost every day in the last years of his life. Yet in his public appearances, he never indulged in reminiscences such as, “I remember when I was with my grandfather. . . .” He never referred to Gandhi, in fact, as his grandfather. It seemed that he was conveying Gandhi’s universals, the truths that belonged to everyone.

In his book *Sita’s Kitchen*, the same feature can be noted. Ramchandra refers to Gandhi only twice, each time with reference to the mural of Gandhi in Oxford University’s oldest church, St. Mary’s, where Gandhi is portrayed as “a small figure in the cross-legged posture, wearing what look like John Lennon spectacles, with upraised hands in *abhaya mudra* offering a double boon of fearlessness in a bold extension of conventional iconography” (1992, 2). He elaborates on these themes and their extension, in Gandhian teachings of non-violence and *advaita* (non-duality) philosophy, but never once does he refer to Gandhi in terms of his personal relationship. He speaks in several instances of his father and his mother, and of his mother’s father, but again, he does not describe Gandhi as “my grandfather.” It seems once more a calculated strategy, which accords with his own strongly articulated non-dualistic philosophy, stressing universal oneness and not separate, personal identity.

I return to a more detailed discussion of *Sita’s Kitchen* in the next section. First, though, who was Ramchandra Gandhi himself? Arindam Chakrabarti, professor of philosophy at the University of Hawai‘i, has shared a number of reflections written a few days after Ramchandra’s death, describing him as “by far the most original philosopher that India had produced in the 20th century since K. C. Bhattacharya. . . . He overwhelmed us with millions of absolutely fresh ideas. It was hard not to disappoint or offend him. He exemplified and held us to steep standards of humane, responsible, honest and authentic thinking. No one could meet such expectations” (2007).

His description continues: “Peppered with mannerisms—he would often close his eyes in the middle of a conversation, enacting the depth of the thought he was about to utter, then stretch his mouth in a smile, opening
up a pair of gleaming eyes unmistakably resembling classic photographs of the Mahatma, his grandfather—and with silly puns and jokes, his conversation would actually be exceedingly demanding in content and style” (2007). Chakrabarti refers, also, to Ramchandra’s only novel, *Sita’s Kitchen*, and remarks how in the novel he expresses his deep feeling for the unjust sufferings of Sita, while also suggesting that “in wisdom, courage and service, mankind ought to evolve into ‘Hanumankind’” (2007).

*Sita’s Kitchen*, by Ramchandra Gandhi

The novel *Sita’s Kitchen* was occasioned by Ramchandra’s visit to Ayodhya and, as stated near the outset of this piece, was published only a few months before the destruction of the Babri Mosque there, which occurred on December 6, 1992. In the book, he had warned against the dangers of the communalism that threatened the site and which he sought to forestall by stressing the interreligious commonalities that the site historically evidenced. “I had to go to Ayodhya,” he states (1992, 13). The imperative came because of the centrality of Ayodhya to communal differences, with both Hindus and Muslims feeling violated by the presence of the other on this site, sacred to each. The rhetoric of bigotry on each side seemed to preclude any rational dialogue. Could any solutions emerge, or was the intransigence of each destined to escalate toward tragic violence?

“The mosque,” as Ramchandra described it, “stands on a high and wide mound which Hindu piety identifies as the area somewhere within which Sri Rama was born datelessly long ago, and also as the area somewhere within which was situated his wife’s, Sri Sita’s, Kitchen. Now the existence of a mosque within this ambience of sacredness need not as such hurt Hindu pride; it can as easily be seen as proof of the accommodatingness of Hinduism’s spiritual sensibility” (11).

How is this so? In the construction of the sixteenth-century Babri Mosque, many materials were used from discarded Hindu structures, and spiritual motifs common to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism were carved on its pillars and stones. Further, Gandhi notes: “The location of the mosque in the sacred kitchen area of Ramkot draws pointed attention to the kinship of these traditions with aboriginal spirituality” (17). “I have no doubt at all,” he stated, “that the northern portion of the Ramkot mound in Ayodhya must have been in antiquity a sacred fertility grove, an aboriginal shrine of the Divine Mother which acquired the name ‘Sita’s Kitchen’ during the Ramayana age without the slightest loss of significance” (16). In claiming, then, the wider interreligious identity of the site, Ramchandra also refutes the Hindu claim to exclusivity: “The insistence that the sanctum sanctorum of the mosque is the precise and exclusive place of Rama’s birth is blasphemy, not faith, and of course it is not theology or archeology or history” (16).
Ramchandra supports the observation of the association with antiquity by an incident from Valmiki’s *Ramayana* (ca. fourth century B.C.E.), in which “the aboriginal king Guha and Rama embrace each other in a gesture of perfect equality, letting us into the secret that the truth of Guha and the truth of Rama are one.” This leads him to the wider conclusion: “Indian spiritual self-knowledge cannot become self-realization without encounter with non-Indian spiritual traditions, and without sharing space and time with them” (19).

If these are the general conclusions of *Sita’s Kitchen*, what occupies its main content? Here, in an unusual and creative format, Ramchandra has fashioned a fictional narrative based on a Buddhist *Vinayapiṭaka* tale, in which the Buddha gathers a group of wealthy young men who were sporting in a grove with their wives, except for one who has no wife. For him they had provided a harlot. But while they were distracted in love-play with the wives, the young men did not notice the harlot escaping with their possessions. They began to chase her when they came upon the Buddha, who counseled these young men to seek self and not the woman, from whom they would extract revenge. It is a story that supports Gandhi’s own *advaita* sensivities: seek the Self. In his fictional and philosophical narrative, Ramchandra envisions a cast of characters that includes two nihilist masters, along with the Buddha and Mahavira (599–527 B.C.E.), founder of Jainism. There is no historical record of the meeting of any of these individuals, but the resultant imaginative dialogue is richly provocative.

One incident may suffice to give a flavor of the book. The nihilists are refuted by the Buddha, who states that they have unfairly attributed a false teaching to Mahavira by stating that he teaches that “non-human life is an arena of unrestrained violence and slaughter of life by life. As far as I know,” the Buddha states, “Mahavira acknowledges that by and large non-human life exemplifies admirable and adequate ecological restraint: non-human living beings rarely kill beyond the needs and necessities of survival, and although their struggle for survival is relentless and violent, their lives also poignantly exhibit the non-violent dimensions of playfulness and love and nurturing” (41). This, Buddha says of Mahavira, pointedly contrasts with the human species, “which massively and dangerously violates life’s deeply embedded code of ecological honor, wildly beyond life’s claims of need and necessity being the scale of its slaughter of non-human life” (42).

How does this view relate to the tragedy of Ayodhya? This same propensity toward violence has also extended to our employment of it toward our own species, toward those whom we have regarded, by some bases, as “the other.” The whole substance of his “testimony of faith and inquiry,” then, is to examine this flaw, and it seems strangely prophetic that his warning was issued on the threshold of the mosque’s destruction, with all of the resultant violence that occurred. Ramchandra shares another telling re-
flection, pondering once more on the upraised hands of the Mahatma in the mural at Oxford: “Could it be,” he asks, “that Gandhi’s upraised arms in the mural are a despairing gesture, an anticipation of annihilation?” (18).

What has been the substance of the Mahatma’s teaching? How have so many of his progeny continued that legacy? We may be lured by this research into a further investigation of these questions, in exploring the depths of the lessons of non-violence, and their relevance to our times.

Appendix: Gandhi’s Sons & Some of Their Children & Grandchildren

Sons
Harilal (1888–1948): Troubled son, with addictions; converted to Islam and back.
Manilal (1892–1956): Editor of Indian Opinion from 1920 until his death.
Ramdas (1897–1969): Active in his father’s independence movement.
Devdas (1900–1957): Prominent journalist; editor of Hindustan Times, New Delhi.

Children of Gandhi’s Sons
Harilal’s Children (unknown; may have had four children with wife Chanchal)

Manilal’s Children
Sita ♀ (b. 1928): Subject of her daughter’s biography (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2003). Felt that her father was too deferent to Gandhi until she herself fell under Gandhi’s spell on meeting him in 1944.
Ela ♀ (b. 1940): Peace activist, member of South African Parliament from 1994 to 2004. Subjected to house arrest for nine years during apartheid, during which time one of her sons was killed.

Ramdas’ Children (uncertain)
Sumitra ♀ (b. 1929)
Kanu ♂ (dates unknown)
Usha ♀ (dates unknown)

Devdas’ Children
Rajmohan ♂ (b. 1935): Scholar of Indian independence movement, biographer of his grandfathers; currently a research professor at the University of Illinois.
Ramchandra ♂ (1937–2007): Noted philosopher, founder of Philosophy Department at the University of Hyderabad. Taught at Santiniketan, West Bengal; University of Punjab; University of Bangalore; and several universities in the West. Author of Sita’s Kitchen (1992) and other works.
Gopalkrishna ♂ (b. 1945): Governor of West Bengal since 2004 and, since 2006, also Governor of Bihar; formerly secretary to the president of India and high commissioner of India to South Africa and later to Sri Lanka.
Tara Bhattacharjee (also seen as Bhattacharya) ♀ (b. 1934): Activist in a number of causes; chairperson of Gandhi Smriti (former Birla House) in New Delhi.
Grandchildren of Gandhi’s Sons

Tushar ♂ (b. 1960): Son of Arun. Head of Mahatma Gandhi Foundation in Mumbai. Caricatured in some journals as “Gandhi in blue jeans.” Controversial for negotiating deal with an American firm, CMG Worldwide, to market Gandhi’s image in a credit card ad (withdrawn because of public outcry) and for his 2007 book, Let’s Kill Gandhi, indicting Pune Brahmins with plots to kill Gandhi.

Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie ♀ (b. 1956): Daughter of Sita. Associate professor of history, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. Author of Gandhi’s Prisoner? (2005), the life of Gandhi’s son Manilal, and three earlier books.


Notes

1 Interestingly, Harilal’s three granddaughters—Neelam Parikh, Sudha Vajanja, and Umi Desai—sought to rehabilitate Harilal’s image and deflect perceived misconceptions concerning him in a mid-1990s Marathi stage play, Gandhi vinudh Gandhi. (A film version of this play, directed by Feroz Abbas Khan, was released in 2007 as Gandhi, My Father.)

2 A profile of Tara can be found here: http://www.taragandhi.com/profile.asp.

3 The “mural” is actually an inconspicuous, small boss on the ceiling at the rear of the church.

4 I can take some personal, if whimsical, meaning in the fact that I am, through meeting Ramchandra Gandhi, just one handshake from the Mahatma himself! But Ramchandra was more of a pure Advaitan in this regard, again claiming no status toward Gandhi that was not available to everyone.

5 Hanuman refers to the ideal servant of the Hindu deity Rama; Chakrabarti was thus implying that Ramchandra, in Sita’s Kitchen, suggested we should all aspire to that servant mentality.

References


The Southern Dynasties (420–589)  
Buddhist Caves at Qixiashan, China

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Here Wei Lin introduces the late fifth to sixth century Buddhist rock-cut cave temple complex of Qixiashan 棲霞山, a collection of almost 250 caves and niches housing some 350 Buddhist carvings, near Nanjing in China’s Jiangsu province.

Locating & Contextualizing the Qixiashan Caves

The Buddhist rock-cut cave temple is one of the major architectural forms developed by early Buddhist practitioners. Cave temples were intended for such functions as meditation and initiation, along with the display of images for veneration. Usually located in remote mountainous regions, cave sites offered practitioners peaceful environments suitable for spiritual endeavors. At the same time, such caves were also generally accessible to major trade routes, thus fostering access and patronage. Throughout history, these caves have served as focal points of Buddhist pilgrimage and have stood as vivid testimony to the flourishing of Dharma—Buddhist law and teachings.

In China, the Buddhist rock-cut architectural tradition appeared and subsequently enjoyed great popularity during the Six Dynasties 六朝 period (220–589). This was an age of political turmoil, and the name Six Dynasties refers to the six contending regimes established in the southern region: the Wu 吳 kingdom (222–80) and the Eastern Jin 晉 (317–420), Song 宋 (420–79), Qi 齊 (479–502), Liang 梁 (502–57), and Chen 陳 (557–89) dynasties. The latter four, encompassing the years 420 to 589, are also known as the Southern Dynasties 南朝. In contrast to the lack of surviving remains in the south, artistic evidence demonstrates that cave-carving activities flourished in the north from the fourth to the sixth centuries. The Southern Dynasties Buddhist caves at Qixiashan 棲霞山 (Qixia Mountain) are by far the earliest and, despite their poor condition, the best-preserved examples of the few rock-cut remains in the south dur-
ing the Six Dynasties period. This essay examines the Southern Dynasties carvings at Qixia using textual and visual evidence, with the aim of understanding southern Buddhist practice of the time as well as of highlighting the importance of the Qixia site in the study of Chinese Buddhist art during the Six Dynasties period.

The Qixiashan caves, commonly known as the Qianfoya 千佛崖, or “Thousand-Buddha-Cliff” caves, are located 22 kilometers northeast of Nanjing in Jiangsu province. The city lies on the lower reach of the Yangzi River and serves as the capital for Jiangsu province. In early times, Qixiashan was also known as Sheshan 極山 (Health-preserving Mountain), or Sanshan 繖山 (Umbrella Mountain). The term Qixia, “Perching rosy clouds,” likely derives from the name of the Qixia temple, originally built at the site in the late fifth century, during the Southern Qi dynasty.

What we find at Qixiashan are mostly medium-sized caves no more than three meters in depth and smaller caves around one meter in depth (that allow only a small person to enter). In addition, there are still smaller niches carved on the empty wall surface of the cliffs. At present, there are about 250 caves and niches that house some 350 Buddhist figures. These caves and niches are carved out of the sandstone cliffs behind the Qixia temple and can be generally divided into three groups: Lower Cliff, Upper Smaller Cliff, and Upper Larger Cliff. They were excavated at different periods, ranging from as early as the late fifth century to the ninth century or later. The earliest eighteen caves, numbered 5, 9, 10–13, 15–24, 26, and 28, and two small niches (Caves 25 and 27) are datable to the late fifth and sixth centuries in the Southern Dynasties (Lin 2005, 275–308). They are scattered on the south wall of the Lower Cliff (fig. 1).

Offering us a substantial body of visual material of the early Buddhist rock-cut tradition in southern China, this group of carvings has helped fill a major lacuna in the scholarship of Chinese Buddhist art during the Six Dynasties period. More significantly, this imperially sponsored cave site is located at the ancient capital of the Southern Dynasties; thus, the Buddhist monuments at Qixia further provide important physical evidence of the mainstream southern Buddhist art of that time. However, owing to the unfortunate cement-coating of images during a large-scale “restoration” by Buddhist monks in 1925, conducting scholarly research on this site was very difficult until the late 1990s, when the cement was removed.

Foundation & Chronology: Evidence from Two Memorial Tablets

A rich body of literary sources informs us of the foundation and early history of the Qixia caves during the Southern Dynasties period (Su 1989, 389–414; Lin 2005, 275–308). The earliest account related to the founding of the Qixia caves dates to the late sixth century (Southern Chen dynasty).
It appears on a stone tablet referred to as *Jinling Sheshan Qixiasi bei* 金陵摄山栖霞寺碑 (A memorial tablet for the Qixia Temple at She Mountain in Jinjing [present-day Nanjing]), which was erected by the Chen-dynasty official Jiang Zong 江总. Another important piece of inscriptive evidence is recorded on *Sheshan Qixiasi Mingzhengjun bei* 摄山栖霞寺明徵君碑 (A memorial tablet for Ming Zhengjun [Ming Sengshao] of the Qixia Temple at She Mountain), erected by the Tang 唐 Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (628–83, r. 649–83) in 676.

The two tablets, hereafter referred to as the Chen Tablet and the Tang Tablet, provide the most detailed accounts of cave activities at Qixia during the late fifth to sixth centuries. Unfortunately, the original Chen Tablet was destroyed in the ninth century, and its later replica has also long been lost. Today the inscription survives in the *Jinling fancha zhi* 金陵梵刹志 (Record of Buddhist temples at Jinling) (Ge 1627, 416–23). The Tang Tablet currently stands in front of the Qixia Temple, and a rubbing of the inscription was published by the Nanjing Municipal Museum in 1980.

Both the Chen Tablet and the Tang Tablet reveal that the excavation project at Qixia was initiated by Ming Sengshao, a scholar-recluse held in high esteem by the Southern Song and Qi courts during the second half of the fifth century. The following is a transcription of two passages from the Chen Tablet (Ge 1627, 418–19), accompanied by my own translations.
居士嘗夢此巖有如來光彩，又因閑居依稀目見，故知神應非遠，靈相斯在。居士有懷創造，俄而物故。其第二子仲璋為臨沂令，克荷先業，莊嚴龕像，首于西峰石壁與度禪師鐫造無量壽佛，並二菩薩。

The layman [Ming Sengshao] once had a dream of the shining Tathagata on the cliff, and since he also vaguely saw it while he was at leisure here. . . . [Ming Sengshao] hence realized that the response of spiritual beings was not far away and their appearance was right here. The layman had thought about carving [images], but he passed away soon after. His second son [Ming] Zhongzhang, who was magistrate of the Linyi district, was able to carry on his father’s cause of embellishing [or carving] niches and images. He and monk Fadu first had Buddha Amitayus and two bodhisattvas carved on the cliff surface of the west peak. . . .

齊文惠太子、豫章文獻王、竟陵文宣、始安王等慧心開發、信力明悟、各捨泉貝、共成福業。

The [Southern] Qi Crown Prince Wenhui, Prince Wenxian of Yuzhang, Prince Wenxuan of Jingling, Prince Shi’an, and others, with their wisdom opened up [or developed] and their faith clear and awakened, each donated money, and altogether they accomplished the karma of blessedness [a happy karma].

Amitayus and the two bodhisattvas mentioned here refer to the three colossal images from Cave 19, located in the center of the south surface of the Lower Cliff (figs. 1–2). These three images, which mark the beginning

FIGURE 2 Relief statue of Amitayus Buddha, north wall of Cave 19, south face, Lower Cliff, Qixiashan, Nanjing. This central statue, flanked by two 7.5-m bodhisattvas (not shown), is approximately 7.8 m tall and is seated on a 2.1-m throne (also not shown). Photographed by the author in May 2002.
of the cave activities at the Qixia site, are by far the earliest-known Buddhist images of such grand scale found in the south. The excavation project, originally initiated by layman Ming Sengshao, was carried out and completed by his second son, Ming Zhongzhang, and his monk friend Fadu. Further, the cave was excavated under the patronage of a number of royal princes in the Southern Qi court. This was certainly a grand occasion of Southern Qi Buddhism during that time.

The carving activity at Qixia continued to flourish in the Southern Liang period. A closer chronological analysis based on textual and artistic evidence further proposes three stages of artistic development at Qixia during the Southern Dynasties (Lin 2005, 275–308). The first period (Caves 18–27) is datable to sometime after 484 (Southern Qi dynasty); the second period (Caves 5, 10, 12–13, and 15) can be roughly dated to the first quarter of the sixth century, sometime between 511 or 513 and 530 (early Southern Liang dynasty); the third period (Caves 9, 11, 16–17, and 28) is dated to around the second quarter of the sixth century (later part of the Southern Liang dynasty). The caves from each phase possess exclusive, commonly shared features in architectural layout, sculptural programs, and/or stylistic characteristics of the imagery. A careful examination of the site’s iconography within the historical context further reveals the popularity of the Amitayus and Maitreya Pure Lands as well as the Lotus Sutra during the Southern Dynasties period.

**Patrons & Patronage Activities**

Literature informs us that the carving of caves and images at Qixia during the late fifth and sixth centuries received support from the Qi and Liang ruling houses. According to the Chen Tablet, the Qi royal princes, including Crown Prince Wenhui, Prince Wenxian of Yuzhang, Prince Wenxuan of Jingling, and Prince Shi’an, “each donated money, and altogether they accomplished the karma of blessedness.” In addition, the Liang Prince of Linchuan was also responsible for reviving activity at Qixia in 511 C.E. This detail indicates that the Southern Qi and Liang courts greatly contributed to the flourishing of cave-carving activity at the site in the Southern Dynasties. Tang Yongtong, in his early work, provides a complete list of imperial princes who, as recorded in the literature, were known followers of the Dharma (Tang 1997, 322). Not surprisingly, all those participating in patronage activities at Qixia are included on this list. The Prince of Jingling, in particular, was one of the strongest supporters; he was credited to have widely spread the religion to the Southern Qi court. Hence, the direct involvement of a number of royal princes at Qixia is not a coincidence; rather, it serves as a testimony to the flourishing of Buddhism and Buddhist art under the support of the southern courts.
Of note, too, is the fact that we find that two women, a lay worshiper and a nun, participated in patronage activities at Qixia during the late fifth century. First, according to the Chen Tablet, Lady Huo 霍, a concubine of the Prince of Jiangxia 江夏, together with Tian Huan 田奐, the Regional Chief of Yongzhou 雍州, “widely spent money and had images carved out of huge rocks imitating Dharma body” (Ge 1627, 419–20). Second, the Biqiuni zhuan 比丘尼傳 (Biographies of nuns) records that Zhisheng 智勝 “had stone images at the Sheshan temple carved for the sake of the seven emperors of the Liu Song and the Southern Qi dynasties” (Baochang 1973, 943). Lady Huo’s presence in the patron group testifies to the significant role played by aristocratic women in sponsoring Buddhist art of the Southern Dynasties. This detail also corresponds with the historical fact that, during that time, there was a tradition of imperial ladies supporting Buddhism in the south (Tang 1997, 321). Zhisheng, who was influential at the Qi court, was one of numerous exemplary nuns of high social status during that time (Baochang 1973, 942–43). In her discussion concerning the role of women as supporters and benefactresses of Buddhism during the fifth and sixth centuries, Dorothy Wong (2000) mentions the importance of Buddhist nuns and the flourishing of their communities in the south. She further points out that these southern nuns’ “relative freedom and high status” should be considered “as an anomalous phenomenon rather than norm” (537–38). Zhisheng’s activity at Qixia, therefore, may reflect this particular phenomenon in southern Buddhism. The fact that she was able to participate in the state-sponsored site and to dedicate her images to the Song and Qi emperors further demonstrates the active roles of Buddhist nuns in the religious life of the south during that period.

The Importance of Qixia in the Study of Chinese Buddhist Art

The Buddhist rock-cut caves at Qixia, an imperially sponsored site of the Southern Dynasties, reflect a new experiment in religious and artistic practice in the south during the time of their creation. Beginning in the late fifth century, around twenty years after the earliest excavation of Yungang 雲岡—namely, the Five Caves of Tanyao 曇曜 (Caves 16–20), dated around the 460s (Su 1996, 76–88)—the question of the relationship between the Yungang caves and those of the south arises. Logically, the renowned Yungang caves in the north most likely won themselves a high degree of esteem in the south, including the time of artistic production at Qixia. In his early research, Soper (1960) suggested that the southern cave temples at both Qixia and Shicheng, while badly damaged, “are likely to have been directly inspired by the Northern Wei feats at Yun-kang [Yungang]” (50). Su Bai, on the basis of historical and artistic evidence, not only argues the possibility of Yungang impact on excavations at Qixia but also mentions that Qixia,
in turn, became a source for rock-cut cave traditions in the north during the second half of the sixth century (Su 1989, 406–10).

The availability of visual resources, namely, the Qixia caves and their recently restored images, provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive investigation of this cave site in relation to other major cave-temple traditions in the north. Through my examination (Lin 2005, 275–308), I have concluded that, while borrowing northern conventions, Qixia has developed a unique southern style in cave art and architecture throughout the Southern Qi and Liang dynasties. A contextual study of the Qixia caves informs us of the Yungang influence in the earliest stage of carvings at the site. The creation of a Qixia cave style, however, is better understood as a synthesis of the early Yungang tradition with distinctive southern features. Most significantly, this new cave style that developed in the south immediately provided models for the Northern Wei 魏 (386–534) caves during the end of the fifth and the first quarter of the sixth century. In addition, southern influence in cave art and architecture is also evident in northern cave-temple traditions, specifically art of the Northern Qi 齐 (550–77), during the later part of the Six Dynasties.

From the fourth to the sixth centuries, northern China was, for the most part, in the hands of nomadic tribes from the Asian steppes, while southern China was under the control of ethnic Chinese. The intercultural exchange reflected in the southern and northern rock-cut cave traditions, therefore, corresponds with historical evidence and testifies to the importance of Qixia during the process of sinicization—an effort of the northern regimes to consolidate their rule during that time (Wei 1974, 135–90, 398–404; Su 1996, 349–54). Given the fact that this was also an important period for the domestication of Buddhism in China, the impact of Qixia may further signify the role and contribution of southern China in the internalization of Buddhism and Buddhist art during this period.

Notes

1 The Chinese have historically divided their territory into the southern and northern areas, which developed very distinctive cultures from each other. Generally speaking, the southern region refers to lands along and to the south of the Yangzi River.

2 During a period of more than 270 years, from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties, we have only two major Buddhist rock-cut remains in the south. One is at Qixia, and the other refers to the Baoxiang 寶相 temple at Shicheng 石城 Mountain in Xinchang, Zhejiang province. For a detailed study of the Shicheng site, see Su (1989, 393–98).

3 The Lower Cliff, Upper Smaller Cliff, and Upper Larger Cliff are known locally as the Qianfoyan 千佛巖 (Thousand Buddha Cliff), Qianfoling 千佛嶺 (Thousand Buddha Ridge), and Shamaofeng 紗帽峰 (Gauze Cap Peak), respectively.

4 For biographies of Ming Sengshao, see Xiao (1972, juan 54: 927–28); Li (1975, juan 50: 1241–42). In addition, the two aforementioned tablets also bear detailed accounts of Ming Sengshao’s life.
Unless otherwise specified, all the translations in this essay are the author’s own.

The work of the Liang Prince of Linchuan in 511 C.E. was to add embellishment to the three colossal images in Cave 19. See Tang Ming Zhengjun bei 唐明徵君碑 (1989); Su (1989, 392).


My translation refers to Soper and Tsai’s works with some adjustments; see Soper (1960, 63); Tsai (1994, 75).

References


Japanese Simplification of Chinese Characters in Perspective

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In this scholarly note, Xuexin Liu explains simplification as a Japanese linguistic strategy, focusing on motivations for simplifying certain Chinese characters borrowed into Japanese and the resultant orthographic effects on Japanese kanji.

Beyond Linguistic Borrowing

Although numerous studies of lexical borrowing involving various borrowing languages and source languages have been carried out (e.g., Haugen 1972; Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller 1988; Weinreich 1979), few studies have investigated and explored the idiosyncratic nature of Japanese in relation to its borrowing of Chinese characters. This scholarly note specifically describes and explains the effects of Chinese characters that were borrowed into Japanese after morphological change (that is, a change in word form) or semantic shift or modification (that is, a change in word meaning). To do so, this piece introduces a comparative study of simplification of Chinese characters in Japan and China with a focus on the Japanese linguistic and sociolinguistic motivations for simplification. Accordingly, this paper considers several specific questions: What makes Japanese lexical borrowing of Chinese characters different from the traditional notion of lexical borrowing? What are the particular motivations for simplifying Chinese characters in Japan and China? What are the orthographic effects of simplified traditional Chinese characters in contemporary Japanese? What are the most important implications of the Japanese simplification of Chinese characters for understanding linguistic borrowing, in general, and lexical borrowing, in particular? Here, representative orthographic records are cited as linguistic evidence, assumptions behind and findings from a comparative study are presented, and some tentative implications are offered.

Some Chinese characters once borrowed into the Japanese language—that is, Japanese kanji—show semantic shifts or semantic changes. Certain borrowed Chinese characters, therefore, no longer contain their original
lexical content but carry different meaning in Japanese. These differences evince the relationship between lexical borrowing and semantic shifts or semantic changes. In addition, a few kanji, such as 峠 (tōge, a mountain pass), 働 (dō/hatara, work), 榛 (sakaki, a type of camellia), 畑 (hata/hatake, field or farm), and 交 (tsuji, a crossroads), though they look like Chinese characters, actually originated in Japan. These kanji are known as wasei kanji 和製漢字 (Japanese-made kanji, also known as kokujī 国字). Furthermore, since the Meiji 明治 period (1868–1912), many Japanese kango 漢語 (Chinese words) were created domestically through word combinations, such as 衛星 (eisei, satellite), 科学 (kagaku, science), 銀行 (ginkō, bank), 弁当 (bento, lunchbox), 寿司 (sushi), 人気 (ninki, popularity), 写真 (shashin, photograph), and 物語 (monogatari, story); these characters may or may not represent the same concepts in Chinese. Also, some words were created from translation of Western concepts to fit Japanese culture and modernization needs; such newly formulated phrases now appear in Chinese as recently borrowed lexical items (Chen 1999; Zhou 2003). Such linguistic phenomena involving lexical borrowing, lexical shift or creation, and new word formation need to be explored and described systematically (Myers-Scotton 2002; Romaine 1995), but these topics are beyond the scope of this piece.

Kanji as a Component of the Japanese Linguistic System

Different from most languages in the world, Japanese has its own peculiar componential linguistic system. Different from most types of and motivations for linguistic borrowing, Japanese borrows linguistic elements from other languages for its own set of special reasons, which are determined by the componential nature of the Japanese language itself. Japanese consists of three distinctive but related components: hiragana (平仮名), katakana (片仮名), and kanji, each of which plays a special role in the Japanese linguistic system (Kindaichi 1978). Below I focus on the role of kanji in structuring the Japanese language.

Kanji, which literally means “Han characters” (漢字), are Chinese characters that are used in the modern Japanese logographic writing system along with hiragana, katakana, and Arabic numerals. Unlike the most commonly observed phenomena of lexical borrowing, Chinese characters were actually “introduced” to Japan: classical Chinese characters first came to Japan on material articles imported from China. One instance of such an import was a gold seal given by the emperor of the Eastern Han 東漢 (25–220 C.E.) dynasty in 57 C.E. At the time, the Japanese language itself had no written form. It has not been documented when Japanese people started to command classical Chinese by themselves. What is known is that approximately from the sixth century onward, Chinese documents written in Japan
tended to show interferences from Japanese. This phenomenon suggests the wide acceptance of Chinese characters in Japan (Makino, Hasata, and Hasata 1998; Tohsaku 1994). In modern Japanese, kanji are a significant component of the Japanese linguistic system. Essentially Chinese 漢字 used to write Japanese, kanji have gone through some significant Japanese local developments.

The three components of the Japanese language are distinctive but related, yet each plays a designated role in the Japanese writing system. Hira-gana are used to write inflected verb and adjective endings, particles, native Japanese words, and words where the kanji is too difficult to read or remember; katakana are used for representing certain onomatopoeia and most if not all foreign loanwords; and kanji are used to write key parts of the language such as nouns, adjective stems, and verb stems. Different from the traditional notion of lexical borrowing, Chinese characters “borrowed” into Japanese are not simply for the so-called lexical-conceptual purpose but for the linguistic needs of the Japanese language itself. In other words, Chinese characters, whether they have gone through Japanese local developments or not, have become a fundamental component of the language (Seeley 1995).

Motivations for Simplifying Chinese Characters in Japan

Any language reform in a society is driven by particular motivations of a speech community, and such motivations may be linguistic, social, cultural, or educational. Characteristically, various factors are involved in any wide-scale language reform. One of the most important factors must be the government’s language policy and planning. It is in this sense that we say all language reforms are intentional, well planned, and highly regulated in order for societies to establish relatively standard and stable linguistic systems. For particular purposes and needs, language reform in a society can be gradual or drastic. Both Japan and China have witnessed some significant language reforms for some similar—but not the same—purposes. The simplification of traditional Chinese characters (often also called “Classical,” “complex,” or “non-simplified” Chinese characters) in Japan and China, to whatever extent it may be (partial or complete), can be recognized as a typical example of highly motivated and drastic language reform. In China, the main purpose of the large-scale script reform after the founding of socialist China in 1949 was to create equal educational opportunities for all by making reading and writing Chinese characters easier and more accessible than before. Another purpose was to establish and standardize the new writing system as part of the government’s language policy and planning. In the case of Japanese simplification of Chinese characters, the purpose was beyond making reading and writing easier. In what follows, I offer
a brief review of the motivations for simplifying Chinese characters in Japan.

Although hiragana and katakana are based on the Japanese phonetic alphabet, kanji embody a very complex orthographic system. The complexity of kanji writing is obviously created by the peculiar nature of Chinese scripts, especially classical Chinese scripts. Chinese characters introduced to the Japanese language ultimately turned out to be too difficult to read and write or remember. In order to read and write anything other than the simplest and most basic text, one needed sufficient knowledge of thousands of Chinese characters. In order to make the writing system of kanji less complicated in Japanese everyday life, especially in popular education, publication, and documentation, the Japanese government instituted a series of orthographic reforms following World War II (in 1946) that were carried out in several targeted areas. First, the Chinese characters in Japanese were selectively given simplified glyphs called shinjitai 新字体 (new character form). Second, the number of characters in circulation was reduced, and formal lists of characters to be learned during each grade of school were established. Third, many variant forms of characters and obscure alternatives for common characters were officially discouraged. These changes were made with the goal of facilitating learning for children and simplifying kanji use in literature and periodicals. Compared to Chinese, the Japanese reform was more directed, affecting only a few hundred characters and replacing them with simplified forms, most of which were already in use in Japanese cursive script. In 1946, according to a publication of the Japanese Ministry of Education, 131 Chinese characters were simplified; and in 1949, to help the simplification process further, another 96 Chinese characters were simplified, which brought the total number of simplified characters to 227 as reformed from kyūjitai 旧字体 (old character form). These characters were part of the “daily use” kanji known as tōyō-kanji 当用漢字 until 1981. In 1981, the tōyō-kanji were reclassified as jōyō-kanji 常用漢字 (also “daily use” kanji), of which there are 1,945. At that time, the total number of simplified Chinese characters—kanji that were the result of Japan’s orthographic simplification of traditional Chinese characters—reached 357 (Kindaichi 1978; Mitamura and Mitamura 1997; Seeley 1995; Takebe 1979).

Orthographic Effects of Simplified Kanji

Unlike most phenomena of lexical borrowing as evidenced in other languages, Japanese lexical borrowing took place not only because of so-called lexical-conceptual gaps between the borrowing or receiving language and the source language but also because of the compositional nature of the Japanese language itself. To develop and establish its own writing system, Japanese needed to borrow or “import” certain characters (lexical items)
from China to serve its own linguistic purposes. Also, unlike the traditional notion of “adaptation” of borrowed items to the existing linguistic structure of the borrowing language (for example, at the levels of syntax, morphology, and phonology), a good number of borrowed Chinese characters went through some orthographic reforms such as simplification to become kanji of their own orthographic features (Morohashi, Watanabe, Kamata, and Yoneyama 1967).

Again, such “reformed” lexical forms through simplification were intentional and selective. In addition to making kanji writing and reading easier or more accessible to the general public, the simplification of certain Chinese characters resulted in particular orthographic effects in Japanese lexical composition. In comparison with the orthographic effects of simplified characters in Modern Chinese, the orthographic effects of some simplified kanji can be categorized into the following four groups: (a) simplified kanji with the same simplified form in Modern Chinese (table 1); (b) simplified kanji with different simplified forms in Modern Chinese (table 2); (c) simplified kanji with variant forms of traditional Chinese characters that are different from the simplified forms in Modern Chinese (table 3); (d) simplified kanji with forms that vary from forms of traditional Chinese characters (table 4); (e) simplified kanji with right-side components simplified like simplified forms in Modern Chinese (table 5); and (f) simplified kanji with right-side components simplified differently than simplified forms in Modern Chinese (table 6). For the current study, the categorization and categories are based on the 1,945 jōyō-kanji and are intended to be representative rather than exhaustive (see Amanuma and Katō 1982; Kindaichi, Kindaichi, Kenbō, and Shibata 1982; Yoshida, Takeuchi, and Harris 1982).

Table 1 lists a sample of simplified Japanese kanji that share the form of simplified characters in Modern Chinese. These were formed either by coincidence or by a simple adoption of the simplified characters without further simplification or modification for convenience. As indicated most vividly by the reduction in the number of strokes in each character, simplified kanji clearly reduce the complexity of the traditional Chinese characters. (In this table and the five that follow, English glosses of the traditional Chinese characters are based on the most commonly recognized meanings of individual words in Modern Chinese, without considering combinations with other words. Also, these glosses do not indicate the parts of speech for individual words.)

Table 2 lists a sample of simplified Japanese kanji that are different from the simplified characters in Modern Chinese. Such characters indicate that orthographic simplification, in some cases, followed Japanese preferences, resulting in special “Japanese-only” forms of simplified kanji.

Table 3 shows a sample of simplified kanji with variant forms of traditional Chinese characters that are different from the simplified forms in
TABLE 1  Simplified Japanese Kanji with the Same Form as Modern Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplified Kanji</th>
<th>Traditional Chinese Characters (and Meanings)</th>
<th>Simplified Chinese Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>医</td>
<td>醫 (medicine/medical science)</td>
<td>医</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>欧</td>
<td>歐 (Europe)</td>
<td>欧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>画</td>
<td>畫 (draw/paint; picture)</td>
<td>画</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>学</td>
<td>學 (study/learn)</td>
<td>学</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>会</td>
<td>會 (meet; meeting)</td>
<td>会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>旧</td>
<td>舊 (old)</td>
<td>旧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>献</td>
<td>獻 (dedicate)</td>
<td>献</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>恋</td>
<td>戀 (love)</td>
<td>恋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>声</td>
<td>聲 (sound/voice)</td>
<td>声</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>国</td>
<td>國 (country)</td>
<td>国</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>辞</td>
<td>辭 (diction)</td>
<td>辞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>寿</td>
<td>壽 (longevity/life)</td>
<td>寿</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>党</td>
<td>黨 (political party)</td>
<td>党</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>尽</td>
<td>盡 (utmost)</td>
<td>尽</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>台</td>
<td>臺 (table/desk, platform)</td>
<td>台</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2  Simplified Japanese Kanji with Different Forms from Modern Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplified Kanji</th>
<th>Traditional Chinese Characters (and Meanings)</th>
<th>Simplified Chinese Characters</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>円</td>
<td>圓 (round; money)</td>
<td>圓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>応</td>
<td>應 (agree; answer; should)</td>
<td>应</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>歓</td>
<td>歡 (happy/pleased; like)</td>
<td>欢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>価</td>
<td>價 (price; value)</td>
<td>价</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>芸</td>
<td>藝 (skill/craftsmanship; art)</td>
<td>芸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>気</td>
<td>氣 (air; smell; spirit)</td>
<td>气</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>劍</td>
<td>劍 (sword; saber)</td>
<td>剑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>薬</td>
<td>藥 (medicine/drug)</td>
<td>薬</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>劑</td>
<td>劑 (chemical preparation; dose)</td>
<td>劑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>渋</td>
<td>滘 (astringent; rough; difficult)</td>
<td>涇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>従</td>
<td>從 (from; follow)</td>
<td>從</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>叠</td>
<td>叠 (pile up; fold)</td>
<td>叠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>焼</td>
<td>燒 (burn; cook; fever)</td>
<td>燒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>図</td>
<td>圖 (picture; chart; map)</td>
<td>圖</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>援</td>
<td>攝 (absorb; take a photograph)</td>
<td>攝</td>
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</tbody>
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The purpose for engaging in an alternative form of simplification might have been to make the traditional Chinese characters less complex yet still retain important features of the characters.

In table 4 are simplified kanji with forms that vary from forms of traditional Chinese characters. These are either partially created forms or partially variant forms of certain traditional Chinese characters that are not simplified in Modern Chinese. Naturally, the Japanese created certain forms or exploited some existing variant forms during the process of selectively simplifying the traditional Chinese characters.

Table 5 shows some simplified kanji where the right-side components, or radicals, are simplified like the simplified forms in Modern Chinese. Here, the left-side radicals retain the features of the traditional Chinese characters.

Finally, in table 6 are some simplified kanji where the left-side radicals retain the features of the traditional Chinese characters, but the right-side radicals are simplified differently than the simplified forms in Modern Chinese. In these cases, the Japanese simplifications retain more features of the traditional Chinese characters than do the Modern Chinese simplifications.

These six categories of simplified Japanese kanji make clear that Japanese simplification of traditional Chinese characters has undertaken various forms. In addition to the same simplified forms as those in Modern Chinese, a good number of simplified traditional Chinese characters in the Japanese language contain in their own particular forms—different simplified forms,
partially simplified forms, partially variant forms, or a combination of simplified components with traditional ones. These changes seem to indicate that the traditional Chinese characters borrowed into the Japanese language
have become a significant component of the Japanese writing system. That is, the borrowed Chinese characters—even when they remained unchanged from the traditional Chinese characters—have become appropriated by the Japanese and transformed into Japanese kanji to serve the purpose of the Japanese language itself.

### Implications of Japanese Simplification of Chinese Characters

The above categorization of some typical orthographic effects of simplified Chinese characters in Japanese offers the following important implications for understanding the nature and process of Japanese simplification of Chinese characters and the notion of lexical borrowing: First, unlike most phenomena of lexical borrowing caused by lexical-conceptual gaps, Japan borrowed Chinese characters mainly to develop its own writing system. Because kanji play a special and independent role in the Japanese writing system vis-à-vis hiragana and katakana, the linguistic motivation of Japanese lexical borrowing from Chinese is fundamentally different from that of lexical borrowing as observed in other languages. Second, unlike the established linguistic principle of “adaptation,” which governs the structural configurations of borrowed items in the borrowing language (e.g., borrowed items must be adapted to the syntactic, morphological, phonological, and semantic structure of the borrowing language), some Chinese characters borrowed into Japanese were orthographically reformed by means of simplification or creation to make borrowed Chinese characters into Japanese “kanji” as part of the Japanese lexicon. Third, all language reforms must be driven by particular motivations in a particular society, whether such motivations are sociopolitical, socioeconomic, linguistic, or educational. The orthographic reform of Chinese characters in Japan offers no exception. Like the simplification of traditional Chinese characters in China, modern-day simplification of Chinese characters in Japan was carried out to reduce

<table>
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<th>Simplified Kanji</th>
<th>Traditional Chinese Characters (and Meanings)</th>
<th>Simplified Chinese Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>駅</td>
<td>驛 (post; courier station)</td>
<td>驛</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>犧</td>
<td>犧 (sacrificial animal)</td>
<td>犧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>擴</td>
<td>擴 (expand/enlarge; extend)</td>
<td>擴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>騏</td>
<td>騏 (examine/test; check)</td>
<td>騏</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>輕</td>
<td>輕 (light; easy)</td>
<td>輕</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>讓</td>
<td>讓 (yield; allow)</td>
<td>讓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>読</td>
<td>読 (read)</td>
<td>読</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the complexity and difficulty of Chinese characters in order to make reading, writing, and learning easier and more accessible to the general public. Unlike the large-scale, nationwide language reforms in China, especially after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, orthographic language reform in Japan was selectively conducted. Only those characters which seemed to be too difficult were simplified. Lexical borrowing—together with highly motivated and well-planned language reforms, as evidenced by the Japanese language—provides a new window into not only the phenomenon of linguistic borrowing itself but also the nature of particular languages, language conceptualization, linguistic identity, and language use.

References


Hosting the World: Perception Management and the Beijing Olympics

Jim Lord
Bob Jones University

In this scholarly note, Jim Lord uses news reports and personal research to offer a general overview of political developments prior to and during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, focusing on the Chinese Communist Party’s attempts at perception management.

Opportunities & Risks of Hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics

Few facets of Chinese culture are as well developed as traditional hospitality. Generally speaking, hosting guests involves a great deal of responsibility borne in the hope of substantial gain. Inherent risks to the host may include potential embarrassment and even the subversion of the event for the guests’ own gain. Likewise, the prospect of hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics represented a number of reciprocal benefits and risks to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). On the one hand, the event was an opportunity to profitably showcase the country’s rapid development and modern veneer. However, one concern was that the trumpeting of such advancements could be drowned out by the West’s persistent commotion over China’s questionable domestic human rights policies and controversial involvement in unpopular foreign regimes. The presence of a large contingent of foreign businessmen, media, and politicians necessitated a strict system of perception management before and during the Olympic Games. Fighting the system was a less-than-organized group of journalists who sought to portray China completely within the repressive paradigm of 1989. Western politicians, with a great deal more at stake than their accompanying press corps, toed a fine line between an obligatory graciousness to their hosts and an acknowledgement to home constituencies that a visit during Beijing’s finest hour did not constitute an endorsement of China’s human rights practices. Despite orations to apolitical Olympic ideals, each side in the mix sought to use the event as a political communications platform for their respective agendas, with varying degrees of success.
**Historical Background & China’s Position**

Never have the Olympic Games in their modern incarnation been truly divorced from the political sphere. Regardless of hopes for an international platform free of geopolitical clutter, weighty disputes plagued the games throughout the twentieth century. The argument in 1924 over French occupation of the Ruhr (Germany); the attempted legitimization of the Nazi regime in 1936 (see Law 2009); the German and Japanese athletes banned from London in 1948; Japan’s much-touted development in 1964; the Munich tragedy in 1972; U.S.-Soviet bickering in 1980 and 1984—the Olympic Games have always involved a clear political dimension.

For much of the twentieth century, China seemed to view its own athletic success in the Olympics as secondary to improving the image of the CCP abroad. The tactics used by the Party shifted with its own evolving ideology, the current international conditions, and available technology. After the Tiananmen Square disaster of June 1989, the three major themes of foreign-focused propaganda were the overall stability of China, the government’s commitment to greater openness, and the legitimate rule of the CCP (Brady 2008). These themes saturated the media put forward by the government before, during, and after the 2008 Olympic Games, along with continued assurances of a commitment to human rights and equitable economic progress.

After two foreign public-relations firms, NewYork–based Weber Shandwick and London-based Bell Pottinger, helped Beijing in its early bid for the 2008 Games (Brady 2008), every mechanism in the CCP’s communicative and administrative arsenal was aimed at portraying the upcoming Olympic events in as favorable a light as possible. An estimated US$43 billion was spent on the 2008 Olympic Games, with measures encompassing security, new infrastructure, athletic facilities, personnel training, media outreach, and more. The actual cost may likely never be known; but current estimates place the amount at roughly three times the cost of the 2004 Olympic Games in Greece, which had set the previous record for the most expensive Olympics (Demick 2008).

The cost, it could be argued, was not unjustified. China had more to prove to the international community during the Games than had any other host before it. As the first truly developing country in recent memory to host the Games, China needed to demonstrate that it possessed the economic resources to organize and execute a global event. As the last major bastion of communism in the modern world, the country also had to show that its controversial policies would not prevent Beijing from hosting an Olympics free of serious violence, protests, or visible repression. The Games had the potential to be a coming-out party for the Middle Kingdom, a definitive demonstration of its status as a world partner comparable to any
power in the Western world. Like the new couple and its first dinner party, the CCP wished to host an event that was impressive and free from embarrassed by the children.

**Display of Wealth**

With the risks in mind, the CCP used every available tool to ensure that all the right talking points were given to the foreign guests. Of course, many of the messages dwelt on China’s domineering economic position. Through the use of its English news dailies, Internet media, foreign-based academic groups, and diplomatic agents, the CCP continued promoting the extravagance and stability of the Chinese economy. To reinforce this mantra, the government poured massive amounts of funding into the restructuring of the Beijing landscape. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the sites of the three “bird buildings”: the National Center for the Performing Arts, the new CCTV headquarters, and the Beijing National Stadium. However, Beijing residents mocked the clashing, obtrusive structures for their resemblance to a bird’s egg, legs, and nest, respectively. Though the cutting-edge, foreign-originated designs might have been lost on Beijingers, the CCP apparently felt the buildings would convey a needed sense of modernity to the city’s guests. The rest of Beijing’s construction projects were criticized by those who pointed to an estimate from the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions that up to 1.5 million residents were evicted as a result of Olympic preparations. Yet the Chinese media vehemently denied any inappropriate or unnecessary relocation efforts and, in November 2008, released a critique of the original research that initiated the charge (Ferguson 2008). In the end, however, the government’s attempts at crafting new iconography would not supersede the imagery shown of traditional sites like the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. These monuments were featured more often in advertising, signage, and foreign television graphical overlays.

The use of innovative architecture was not the end of the government’s efforts, however. Along with a number of smaller gymnasiums built on college campuses throughout the city for the Games, Beijing also opened several new subway lines. The trappings of the Olympic festivities also took priority, with foreign talent leveraged to ensure the opening ceremonies would be the most impressive ever. Though Steven Spielberg resigned as an “artistic advisor” in February 2008 (Cooper 2008), the incident proved little more than a minor public relations slip, and enough expertise was retained to continue with the proceedings. When the evening of August 8, 2008, finally arrived, the Opening Ceremony was flawless, the only real snafu arising from the intentional substitution of the original child singer of “Ode to the Motherland” with a more photogenic representative onstage (Yardley 2008). Some foreign viewers may have been astounded by the enormity and feroc-
ity of the presentation, but the grand, central message—that China’s history and current status made it a force to be reckoned with—certainly required little translation.

**Suppression of Criticism**

Concurrent with the Chinese media’s economic focus was its defense of the CCP’s human rights policies. China’s implicit support of the Sudanese government, suppression of independence movements in Tibet, and alleged persecution of various ethnic and ideological minorities made easy targets for politicians, journalists, and activist groups around the globe. The CCP, if it intended to host a large group of foreign guests, needed to address these criticisms. The default response was to minimize or deny domestic dissent and assert that foreign criticisms were unfounded and outrageous.

Within China are of course a number of organized groups that bear grievances against the government. All, however, were effectively suppressed during the Games. The Chinese government, legitimately or not, portrayed the East Turkistan movement as a band of terrorism-prone separatists who would stop at nothing to fulfill their own agenda. That Uyghurs were linked to an attempted hijacking and several bombings leading up to the Olympics (Xinhua Wire 2008a) certainly did not help the cause of the Xinjiang-based group. Likewise, the Chinese media’s publicizing of a weapons cache in Tibet (Barboza 2008) was an attempt to brand the Dalai Lama’s followers, who have garnered a great deal of support in the international community, as gun-smuggling insurgents.

Authorities silenced less-organized groups with even greater ease. Chinese citizens who made known a desire to protest around the Games were arrested and sent off to labor re-education camps or imprisoned (Wong 2009). Although a number of political undesirables were removed from the city prior to the Olympics, the CCP prepared for the rest by implementing a solution that advanced both public relations and domestic intelligence. To fulfill promises made back in 2001 to allow for some measure of free speech during the Games, the government announced a few days prior to the opening ceremonies that three “demonstration parks” would be open for protests (Lei 2008). The single condition was that would-be demonstrators would need to file, in writing, a request to protest with a local Public Security Bureau (“Protest Application” 2008). The form, submitted five days in advance, would need to indicate the reason for the protest, the method to be used, the number of participants, and each of the participants’ names. Despite 77 applications acknowledged by the Public Security Bureau, not a single one was approved, reportedly because all were either completed improperly or “withdrawn after amicable settlements between the parties and authorities” (Xinhua Wire 2008b). Some in the Western media, however,
presented an entirely different story, featuring dissidents who were arrested or sent to labor camps simply for submitting the application (Jacobs 2008).

The permit system was completely effective, as I can attest. When visiting Ritan Park, a garden area just a few blocks east of Tiananmen in Beijing’s old diplomatic quarter, I saw no signs of dissent among the elderly strollers and playing children. Despite August 9 being the first day possible for protests under the restrictions, the only signs of disturbance that morning were a few Western journalists scouring the park with their cameras. Also loaded with photographic equipment were several plainclothes security personnel, who stood at the edge of a few of the larger open areas snapping photos of passersby. The north entrance to the park featured a large red banner with yellow text in both Chinese and English: “I participate, I contribute, and I enjoy” (fig. 1). Ultimately, the idea for the protest zones seems to bear the marks of an intelligence-gathering operation targeting local dissent.

In order to stave off unannounced protests at particular events, as well as prevent any violent attacks, Beijing’s security forces inundated every prominent location and venue. An estimated 100,000 security personnel and volunteers were deployed to safeguard the events (Foreman 2008). While a few minor instances of quickly suppressed protesters mottled the days leading up to and during the games, including two in front of Mao’s mausoleum by a religious group (Blanchard 2008), public security efforts were a resounding success.

No public event so perfectly characterized the effective on-the-ground perception management than the celebrations in Tiananmen Square on the
night of the opening ceremonies. I arrived near the square a little more than an hour before the 8:00 P.M. start of the proceedings. Crowds of Bei-jingers packed every open space around the square, since Tiananmen itself was closed throughout the day. Workers in the southern end of the square prepared the rings of fireworks that would later launch the memorable “foot-prints” into the night sky. As crowds thickened in the sidewalks and parks surrounding Tiananmen, platoons of mixed-uniform security marched through a sea of revelers who sported Olympic paraphernalia and waved national flags.

With little more than fifteen minutes left on the giant Olympic count-down clock in front of the National Museum (see fig. 2), security personnel began to link arms and cordon off entrances and exits to portions of the area around the square. The lines would break only for members of the media, and the crowd was neatly partitioned so that only a measured group of celebrants was allowed into Tiananmen proper. Thus when police finally opened up a single entrance, the crowd surging across the eastern Guang-chang road into the square was just big enough to fill the northern edge, where state television cameras had already been placed. As lines of stiffened security personnel looked on, small clusters of flag-waving celebrants would spontaneously come together, ringed by down-pointing video cameras, repeatedly shouting “Zhongguo jia you!” (Go China!). The rest of the decidedly unorganized crowd glanced toward them with interest, a few holding up their cell phones to snap pictures of these instantaneous demon-

**FIGURE 2** A state television camera remains fixed on the countdown clock just east of Tiananmen Square, Beijing. The start of the Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 Summer Olympics is little more than an hour away. Photographed by the author on August 8, 2008.
strations of nationalistic fervor. The images and video captured that night by Chinese media would display only the packed, patriotic crowds and nothing of the rest of the celebrants, who were largely occupied with taking photos of themselves with friends, family, and even security personnel (fig. 3).

After the countdown clock across the street hit zero to the cheers of those assembled, a skirmish line of police began pushing the crowd north, pressing the revelers even tighter together. The line parted to accommodate those foreign cameramen who had taken up positions around large lamp-posts, but it stopped short of providing them full access to the rest of the square. The dozens of journalists who had managed to get into the area, including a few members of the U.S. presidential press pool, all seemed eager to capture anything of political interest. Yet nothing terribly eventful took place in the square for the rest of the night, though the hundreds of security personnel present seemed more than enough to handle any incident that might have occurred in the small crowd. Just in case the existing force proved inadequate for such a contingency, dozens of buses filled with additional police were waiting in the darkened side streets east of the square. The measures taken by the CCP may seem extreme, but any protest that took place at that crucial hour and in that historic place could have been a devastating interruption to China’s carefully crafted message to the world.
Yet despite all of the meticulous preparations, the media representatives of the Chinese government vehemently denied the pursuit of any political agenda on the part of the CCP. The Games would of course be expected to showcase the grandeur of modern China, but any political messages put forward during that time were supposedly divorced from the Olympic events themselves (BBC Monitoring Asia-Pacific 2008). Indeed, the standard defense against any and all criticism of China leading up to the Games was the assertion that the CCP’s detractors were inappropriately attempting to politicize the otherwise universal Olympic spirit. Critics were challenged to respect the ideals championed by the Chinese media in their promotional materials for the Games. The slogan for the 2008 Olympics, “One World, One Dream,” referred to a unifying ideal of “love for all mankind,” according to the pop-esque song of the same name included on the CCP-promoted Olympic album (Wang 2008). Accompanying signage and other materials also co-opted the tenets of the Olympic spirit to legitimize and support the government’s grand display. Reminiscent of Moscow’s use of the endearing bear “Misha” in 1980, the Chinese government sponsored the design of five anthropomorphic mascots for the Games, whose combined names spelled “Beijing Huanying Ni” 北京欢迎你, “Beijing Welcomes You.” Stuffed animals are difficult to hate, and trumpeted values like harmony, prosperity, and love are hard to criticize.

International Response

Perception management is an easy activity to identify, yet its success or failure is often difficult to determine. Reaction to the 2008 Olympics among the pillars of Western media was resoundingly negative (New York Times Editorial 2008), yet individual politicians were eager to praise the spectacular ceremonies, modern venues, and overall smooth proceedings. U.S. President George W. Bush spent most of his time in Beijing attending sports events, paying relatively little attention to the human rights issues important to his home constituency (Myers 2008a). He also heralded a strengthened diplomatic relationship with China when he spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new U.S. Embassy (Myers 2008b), the second largest in the world. His attempts to highlight religious persecution were limited to a single visit to a registered church that the China Aid Association (2008) claimed was actually filled with pre-selected Party members (fig. 4). Less tactfully, Nicholas Sarkozy, president of France and the most prominent representative of the European Union, offended many Chinese by his assumed support of the Dalai Lama prior to his arrival in Beijing (Erlanger 2008) and by his threats to boycott the opening ceremonies if the CCP did not affirm some commitment to progress in its human rights policies (O’Connor, Elliott, and Frean 2008). Once in Beijing, however, he seemed
careful not to offend his hosts. Of course, the presence and messages of Bush, Sarkozy, and other leaders were all but eclipsed by the spectacle created by the CCP; and if the effectiveness of the communications from China's government were to be judged in relative terms, the communications could almost certainly be called a success in extent, consistency, and clarity.

With the Olympics complete, the CCP may now rest assured that the world indeed knows that China can effectively host a global event. Ideally, China will garner further investment, new business ventures, greater political sway, and maybe even a higher degree of trust and respect. The full aftermath of the 2008 Olympics is yet to become known. For Greece, the 2004 Games left the country with little but debt and empty stadiums (Wood 2005). Indeed, the Bird’s Nest remains almost perpetually empty now; the Olympic subway line, barely used. However, Beijing had much more to lose during its time in the limelight, and theoretically much more to gain. There was no grievous loss of face, at least. Whether history will consider the Middle Kingdom as a worthy international host in the Confucian tradition is irrelevant as long as the Games served to further the aims of the Party.
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The Nagayama Criteria for Assessing the Death Penalty in Japan: Reflections of a Case Suspect

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Here Daniel Métraux recounts his involvement in the sensational 1969 case of serial killer Nagayama Norio 永山則夫 (1949–97) in Japan and details the resultant “Nagayama criteria,” used by Japanese judges to determine if a case warrants the death penalty.

Capital Punishment in Japan

Capital punishment is as controversial a subject in Japan as it is in many Western countries, but rather than moving to ban the severest of penalties, Japan has chosen not to follow the course set in recent decades by Great Britain, Canada, and even some states in the United States. Between 1945 and 2000, 584 executions took place in Japan; and 54 inmates were on death row in 2000 (Schmetzer 2000). The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a lull in the number of annual executions, but the pace picked up again in 1997 with the hanging of a number of convicted criminals, including Nagayama Norio 永山則夫 (1949–97).¹ Nagayama admitted to killing four men on a nationwide spree of murders in October and November 1968. The murders triggered a massive manhunt that rounded up over five hundred suspects—myself included.

Details of executions in Japan are hard to come by. Instead of formal confirmation by the Justice Ministry, news of hangings is generally leaked to the news media, or provided by the relatives or lawyers of the persons executed. Government policy is not to announce pending executions or confirm that one has taken place. The Japanese government says it refrains from comment out of deference to the survivors of the crimes and to the families of those put to death. But critics say officials are simply afraid of scrutiny.

Critics of Japan’s policies on executions say that the way convicts are killed is most inhumane. The condemned person himself does not know...
that he is going to die until 10 o’clock on the morning of the execution. When the appointed hour comes, he must be hanged, the only form of execution in Japan. Before the event he must sit in a tiny cell in virtual solitary confinement for years on end, often losing his sanity due to not knowing upon waking in the morning whether he is to die or to live for another day.

Supporters of Nagayama, including his lawyers and his former wife, begged for leniency. They claimed that, as he matured into adulthood, he received a good education (via correspondence), married, became a famous novelist, donated the proceeds from his books to the families of his victims, and was an active supporter of various charities. But their protests came to no avail. The Nagayama case did, however, have a very important impact on future cases in Japan, laying out clear criteria—the “Nagayama criteria”—by which judges in Japan to this day sentence criminals.

The Nagayama Case & My Involvement as a Suspect

The morning of Tuesday, February 11, 1969, was cold and snowy in Tokyo. I was living there as a junior-year-abroad student at Waseda University and was sleeping in late because it was National Foundation Day (kenkoku kinenbi 建国記念日), a national holiday. Suddenly, around 11 o’clock, my home-stay mother, Mrs. Endo, came banging on my door: “Daniel, wake up at once! There is a police detective downstairs who wants to talk to you.” I staggered down a short flight of stairs in my pajamas to find an earnest young detective flashing his wooden badge at me. The next hour was one of the most bizarre in my life.

The detective informed me that I was a suspect in one of Japan’s most sensational murder cases. I already knew the facts: Between October 11 and November 5, 1968, some unknown person, presumed to be a young man, had killed four young men. The first murder, on October 11, occurred at the Prince Hotel in Tokyo, where the assailant had fired two shots into the head of guard Nakamura Kiminori during a robbery attempt. A second robbery attempt, on October 14, took the life of guard Kamitsu Tomejiro near Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto, some 480 kilometers from the site of the first incident. The third murder occurred on October 27 in Hakodate, Hokkaido (over 800 kilometers north of Tokyo), where taxi driver Saito Tetsuhiko was found lying in a pool of blood and died soon thereafter. The fourth murder occurred in Nagoya (350 kilometers from Tokyo) on November 5, when another taxi driver, Ito Masaki, was shot during a botched robbery. Police surmised that the robber had netted about ¥16,000 (about US$46 at 1968 exchange rates) during these robberies (Asahi Evening News 1969).

Police were sure that the crimes had been committed by the same person, because all of the bullets had come from the same pistol. That pistol was an American-made gun and was rare in Japan. A pistol of a similar
make had earlier been reported stolen from the home of an American official at Tachikawa Air Force Base, then an American installation several kilometers west of Tokyo. The fact that an American-made gun had been stolen from a secure American base led police to surmise that the killer might be a young American.

The detective summarized these facts to me in a polite but official manner. He also informed me that I was a suspect because I had been staying in a ryokan (Japanese-style inn) very near the site of the Hakodate murder, that my Tokyo home was not that far away from the scene of the Tokyo murder, and that I had traveled to Kyoto near the time of the Yasaka Shrine murder. The detective then asked if I had ever visited the base at Tachikawa, to which I replied in the affirmative. I had gone there several times to buy American food and newspapers with other American students at Waseda. And, yes, my then-fiancée (now wife) Judy Menelly and I had indeed traveled together to Hokkaido during a school break and had gone to Kyoto for a weekend visit in October 1968. And, no, I could not substantiate my whereabouts on October 11, a school day, because I had already sent my notebook home and no attendance was taken at Waseda that day.

The detective asked me not to leave Tokyo until he investigated further and then looked at me with my wild, uncombed hair and red-striped pajamas and shook his head with a grin: “You really don’t look like a murderer.” Two days later he called to say that I was no longer a suspect. He had checked with the ryokan in Hakodate and was informed that Judy and I had been eating breakfast and taking a bath at the hotel at the exact time of the murder. The hotel clerk remembered us well, because very few American tourists came to Hakodate at that time, and we had been among the very first to visit the hotel. A hotel maid had apparently watched our eating breakfast from behind a window because she had never before seen an American couple eating a meal.

Two months later, in early April 1969, we read in the newspaper that a suspect in the four murders had been taken into custody. Nagayama Norio, a bartender in Nakano Ward, the very area where Judy and I were then living, had entered the teacher’s room of the Hitotsubashi School of Business in nearby Shibuya and had fired five shots at a guard before fleeing. When captured a short time later, the police identified the suspect as Nagayama, a native of Itayagi township in the northern prefecture of Aomori. Nagayama quickly confessed to the four earlier killings.

Later at his trial, Nagayama revealed that he had been born into a very poor family in Aomori. His father had died outside along a road shortly after the birth of his son, and his mother had abandoned him in a bleak house when he was only five. Nagayama stayed in Aomori until 1964, when, at fifteen years old, he moved to Tokyo. He changed jobs frequently and lived an unstable life in Tokyo. He witnessed a fierce gun battle in Shibuya in
1965 between police and Katagiri Misao 片桐操, who earlier had shot a Kanagawa policeman dead before being snared in Shibuya. At his own trial, Nagayama tried to defend his actions, saying that they were the inevitable consequence of his “poverty and ignorance” (Daily Yomiuri 2009b).

Nagayama received the death penalty in 1979, but two years later the Tokyo High Court commuted Nagayama’s sentence to life in prison, noting the following: “The government should have saved the accused from his poor surroundings. It would be unfair to ignore the lack of proper welfare policies and lay all the responsibility to him” (Hirano 2007). Japan’s Supreme Court reversed the High Court’s decision in 1983. The High Court subsequently sentenced Nagayama to death in 1987, a decision the Supreme Court upheld in 1990. Nagayama was hanged on August 1, 1997.

Few people were surprised with Nagayama’s death sentence. But as the years dragged on, Nagayama became quite famous because of his success as a novelist, after he put himself through college via a correspondence course. In 1971, his first published work, Muchi no namida 無知の涙 (Tears of ignorance), became a best seller. In 1983, he was awarded a major Japanese prize for the story Kibashi 木橋 (Wooden bridge), subsequently published in a collection under that name in 1984 with three other stories. The Japanese writing community was uneasy with Nagayama’s success, given his status as a convicted killer. He donated the resulting royalties to relatives of his victims as a sign of contrition, though some refused to accept them. He also donated funds to a charity to help poor Peruvian children visit Japan and to help school dropouts in Japan. His lawyer, Kyoko Otani, said at the time of his death: “Mr. Nagayama wanted to save poor children like himself from poverty and ignorance so they could lead decent lives, as he believed that is the best way to create a society without crime” (quoted in Hirano 2002).

A Controversial Sentence

Nagayama’s execution brought worldwide attention to the treatment of death row prisoners in Japan. Many writers, both in Japan and abroad, condemned the cruel manner in which people like Nagayama are kept, while others pleaded for Nagayama’s life, saying that he had become a far different person in prison and shown deep contrition for his crimes. Amnesty International (1997) wrote:

Four people were hanged in secret on 1 August, including the well-known writer Nagayama Norio, who had been in prison for 28 years. The four prisoners, all convicted of murder, appear to have been selected at random from some 55 prisoners whose death sentences had been finalized. As normally happens in Japan, they and their families were given no advance warning of the executions. One of the four was a woman.
D. A. Métraux

Nagayama Norio, then aged 19 and a minor under Japanese law, killed four people in 1968. He was arrested in 1969, tried over the next 10 years and finally sentenced to death in 1979. The Tokyo High Court commuted his sentence to life imprisonment in 1981 but in 1987, following an appeal by prosecutors questioning the reduction in his sentence, Nagayama Norio was again sentenced to death. In 1990 his death sentence was finalized by the Supreme Court. During his time in prison Nagayama Norio wrote two bestselling books. He gave the royalties from his first book to the families of his victims.

Prisoners sentenced to death in Japan are treated in a cruel and inhuman manner. They are generally held in solitary confinement cells where they are forced to sit in the same position all day. They are under constant surveillance by prison guards, are given no opportunity to converse with other prisoners and are denied visitors apart from their immediate family. Many suffer from psychological problems associated with the stress of knowing they may be executed at any time without warning. AI [Amnesty International] has urged the authorities to stop all executions and improve the treatment of prisoners sentenced to death pending abolition in law.²

During the last years of his life, Nagayama sought to turn his death sentence into an appeal to the conscience of the people of Japan. From prison, he pleaded for tolerance and sought to win sympathy with his novels and poetry. He won some support among opponents of the death penalty and was even married for a brief time in the early 1980s, but his efforts ultimately failed. Various surveys of the Japanese public over the past two decades have indicated that between 65 to 80 percent of all Japanese adults favor retaining the death penalty. In April 1990, several Japanese newspapers warned that “capital punishment should be imposed carefully but that it was appropriate in this [the Nagayama] case because of what one called ‘the coldbloodedness of the slayings, the motives for the crimes and the great pain suffered by the families of the victims’” (Weisman 1990).

The “Nagayama Criteria” for Assessing the Death Penalty in Japan

The Supreme Court’s decision to overturn the High Court’s sentence of a life term for Nagayama marked the first time since World War II that such a sentence had been rejected. The Nagayama case also brought forth criteria that Japanese courts thenceforth had to use when imposing the death penalty in Japan. These factors were: the nature of the homicide in question; the motivation behind it; the method employed in the killing; the number of people killed; the feelings of the bereaved family toward the culprit; the magnitude of the social implications of the case; the age of the defendant; whether the defendant has a prior criminal record; and whether the defendant has demonstrated any remorse for what he or she has done.

According to a retrospective article about the case in the Daily Yomiuri (2009b), “the Supreme Court said capital punishment should be allowed when such a decision ‘is considered inevitable after taking into consideration all nine of these factors, in a well-balanced manner.’”
The question of the death penalty in Japan is a controversial one, but the criteria delineated by the Nagayama case seem to have set the standards that courts in Japan follow to this day. Akira Toyoshi, who served as associate judge in the District Court proceedings in the Nagayama case—and who supported the death sentence for Nagayama—said during the court sessions he began to see a change in the defendant. He said that Nagayama, who had once been ignorant on many matters, seemed to be attempting to better himself through reading and trying to understand philosophy:

“Honestly speaking, there was more than one occasion [while I was serving] when I was unsure if the defendant should be sentenced to death before I eventually had to decide,” Toyoshi said.

“I think it was a good thing that the Supreme Court outlined its nine-point criteria [on applying the death penalty],” he added. (Daily Yomiuri 2009b)

Itsuuo Sonobe was one of the four judges in charge of the Nagayama case for the final proceedings at the Supreme Court that finalized the death sentence for Nagayama. Regarding the top court’s criteria, Sonobe remarked:

“Not all of the factors have equal weight when deciding whether a death sentence is appropriate. The criteria state that ‘particularly high importance should be attached’ to two of the nine factors, namely the method of killing, which has a bearing on the cruelty of the act, and the number of those killed.”

Sonobe added that ever since the clarification, there has been a deep-rooted belief among district and high court judges that, “only in exceptional circumstances can a death sentence be seen as appropriate when only one person has been killed.” (Daily Yomiuri 2009b)

The Nagayama criteria strongly influenced the verdict of a case in early 2009, when the Tokyo District Court imposed a life sentence on Hoshijima Takanori, a 34-year-old man found guilty in the gruesome April 2008 murder of a 23-year-old woman who lived near him in Tokyo. After the murder, Hoshijima dismembered her body in his apartment and flushed some of her body parts down his toilet. The following excerpt from a news story (Daily Yomiuri 2009a) describes the case:

Though prosecutors had demanded the death penalty for Takanori Hoshijima, a former dispatch worker, for murdering Rurika Tojo, who lived two doors down from him on the same floor, the district court concluded that capital punishment would be too severe for his crime.

“His act of murder was certainly malicious, but it cannot be described as an unparalleled atrocity,” presiding judge Kiichi Hirade said. “The defendant regrets his crimes, so the death sentence is too severe.”

Hoshijima will not be eligible for parole for at least 10 years.

The ruling initially touched upon the so-called Nagayama standard set out by the Supreme Court in 1983 regarding capital punishment. The Nagayama standard, named after serial killer Norio Nagayama, who murdered four
people in 1968, is a nine-point set of criteria for determining whether a death sentence should be imposed.

“To impose the death sentence in a case in which one victim was murdered, a significant level of maliciousness should be recognized,” the judge told the court before examining the defendant’s actions.

The ruling seriously criticized the defendant, saying his actions were self-centered and despicable as he treated the victim as if she were an object that could be disposed of.

But the ruling also pointed out the following facts as mitigating factors for the defendant:

- The defendant killed the woman by stabbing her once in the neck rather than through some more persistent, purposeful action.
- He did not sexually assault the victim.
- The murder was not planned.

Prosecutors had focused on Hoshijima’s actions of dismembering the victim’s body and dumping the body parts as a compelling reason for demanding the death sentence.

The ruling said the act was sordid and horrifying as it showed no regard for the victim as a human being and disregarded the bereaved family members’ feelings.

However, the ruling concluded that the court should not overemphasize the way in which Hoshijima disposed of the victim’s remains.

The judge said it would be appropriate to make the defendant pray for the victim for the rest of his life, referring to the fact that he had expressed regret during the trial.

The sentencing of Hoshijima, despite the brutality of his crime and the public outcry that resulted from his ugly deeds, demonstrates the clear limits surrounding the death penalty in Japan. The most notorious criminals on death row in Japan today are the former leaders of the religious sect Aum Shinrikyo, including Asahara Shōkō 麻原彰晃. The sheer brutality of their crimes—including the murder of nearly two dozen innocents—clearly earned them the death penalty, according to the “Nagayama criteria”; but the ugly murder of one young woman did not warrant enough points against the assailant to win him a trip to the hangman’s noose.

The strong support for capital punishment and for justice against brutal assailants guarantees that the death penalty will remain a possible punishment in Japan, but it will be assessed only against the most heinous of killers and will not be rescinded, even if the criminal shows contrition and becomes a better and reformed individual.

Notes

1 Between January 2006 and January 2009, 32 executions were carried out in Japan. As of September 2009, 102 prisoners were on death row in Japan, many of them elderly (BBC News 2009).

2 See also Amnesty International’s Hanging by a Thread (2009), a report that was released as this volume of the SERAS was heading to press.
References


Yin-Yang in *Snow Country*

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In this scholarly note, Masaki Mori shows how yin-yang is a latent structural basis of Kawabata Yasunari’s 川端康成 (1899–1972) *Yukiguni* 雪国 (*Snow Country*), published between 1935 and 1947, thereby ascertaining the novelist’s Asian affiliation in a broad sense.

**Yin-Yang as a Non-polarized Dichotomy**

As the terms “light” and “darkness” suggest, the Chinese system of *yin-yang* 隱陽 (*in-yō* in Japanese) explains the workings of the universe by placing its premise on the sharp contrast that a set of usually two elements, such as day–night, summer–winter, and man–woman, reveal. Far from being a straightforward binary opposition as it might be construed in the West, however, yin-yang reveals a complex interplay on the constant flow, at once oppositional and complementary, in the correlation of two contrasted aspects within a certain force field of operation. Kawabata Yasunari’s 川端康成 (1899–1972) *Yukiguni* 雪国 (*Snow Country*), published between 1935 and 1947 with minor revisions until 1971, provides a working example of a non-polarized dichotomic system, directly mentioning yin-yang at a symbolically crucial juncture. More significantly, the interdependent tension of light and darkness plays out metaphorically between two principal female characters. In spite of its pseudo-dialectic resolution at the end as a result of these women’s rivalry, the Japanese piece ultimately proves its cultural heritage of East Asia against a backdrop of the Western binary mode of thought.

**Kawabata & Traditional Japanese Themes**

Kawabata is known to have written extensively about traditional Japanese culture. Many of his later novels, such as *Senbazuru* 千羽鶴 (*Thousand Cranes*, 1949–51) and *Koto* 古都 (*The Old Capital*, 1961–62), readily exemplify this deep interest that stems from his close reading of classical pieces, such as *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*, ca. 1000). He clearly declared...
his cultural affinity in his 1968 Nobel Prize–acceptance speech, which he titled “Utsukushii Nihon no watashi” (Japan, the Beautiful and Myself). Accordingly, in spite of substantial influence from Western arts and literature in his young days, Kawabata tends to be considered a quintessential Japanese writer. One question here is what renders him an Asian one, apart from his biographical profile.

Critics have already pointed out Buddhist elements, such as samsara (the endless cycle of death and rebirth) and impermanence, which underlie his works, locating him within a broad Asian context. In Snow Country, for instance, Buddhist influences are prevalent with a direct reference to a nunnery and a strong undertone of ephemerality innate to such motifs as fleeting relationships, the fragility of life, and changing seasons. The passive, contemplative acceptance of inevitable change obviously derives from the Buddhism-induced, medieval Japanese worldview of mujōkan (the sense of impermanence) rather than from Daoism, which approaches vicissitude with a more dynamic, positive stance. In turn, such embrace of change accounts for the classical aesthetics of mono no aware (the pathos of things), with which the entire story is imbued—albeit twisted for the dilettantish consumption of the protagonist Shimamura.

By contrast, another Asian influence, that of the yin-yang system, is little noticed as a structural basis of his representative work, although it constitutes an integral part of traditional Japanese culture, embossing its mark on Kawabata as well. In fact, Kawabata’s novel does mention yin-yang once, when Shimamura makes a day trip by train from the hot spring resort, where he sojourns, to a few nearby towns that used to produce a special fabric called chijimi (a type of cotton crepe). The production of fine chijimi, now obsolete and forgotten, required both nimble, diligent hands of unmarried girls between fourteen and twenty-four and direct exposure to snow in the very cold weather. Shimamura, who wears it as his summer underclothes, feels special attachment to this textile because of the young female weavers’ labor and the sense of coolness it offers. An old local history book, Hokuetsu sekifu (The chronicle of snow in northern Koshi province, 1836) by Suzuki Bokushi (1770–1842), is cited a few times to explain the cool feeling one can savor in summer’s heat when wearing a garment made of chijimi.

Chijimi production requires snow at every stage of the process over a long, cold winter. Shimamura sends his chijimi garments to the snowy region every winter to have them bleached via a traditional method that lays them open to snow and the cold air after overnight soakings and early morning washings for several days. According to the history book, the chijimi thread “is difficult to work except in the humidity of the snow . . . and the dark, cold season is therefore ideal for weaving. The ancients used to add that the way this product of the cold has of feeling cool to the skin in the
hottest weather is a play of the principles of light and darkness” (Kawabata 1956, 154). This yin-yang inherent in *chijimi* is closely linked to the symbolic structure of the entire novel through two principal female characters: the geisha Komako 駒子, whom Shimamura visits at the hot spring resort, and the mysterious girl Yoko 葉子, who also attracts his attention.

**The Yin-Yang of Komako & Yoko**

Although yin is traditionally identified as female and yang as male, there is no need to follow the gender specificity, because yin and yang represent not ontological entities but aspects of the dynamism or “a matter of degrees of contrast” to be viewed “as a relation rather than as a quality” in a certain working of the universe (Cheng 2009, 75). In other words, “there is nothing that is ‘essentially’ yin or yang; whether something is yin or yang depends on what particular relationship is being expressed” (Ames 2003, 847). In the present case, Komako, who interacts with Shimamura most of the time, stands for the aspect of yang or light “as the visible,” while Yoko assumes that of yin or darkness largely “as the invisible” with interspersed appearances (Cheng 2009, 74). They reveal a number of sharp differences. Komako’s vital, physical being as Shimamura’s mostly sexual interest sharply contrasts with Yoko’s fragile, un-physical presence in his perception of her segmented beauty. One stands for passion of the desiring/desired, touched yet paradoxically clean body, whereas the other is reduced to the intangible, virginal purity of a clear voice and a cold, distant light. The contrast is also apparent in their respective names, occupations, financial obligations, and levels of maturity.

Two mirror scenes early in the novel, each of which shows a reflected image of one of the female characters set against the surroundings, illustrate the two women’s marked difference. In the first mirror scene, on a train window at deepening dusk, Yoko’s eyes glimmer ephemerally with a small fire of the distant hill while the rest of her translucent, superimposed image floats amid the indistinct, constantly moving wilderness, suggesting her aerial beauty. At sunrise the following morning, Shimamura sees Komako’s face and the snow outside reflected together on a mirror in his hotel room, with her vividly red cheeks set against the surrounding snow. Emphasizing the solid contour of her body, this mirror-reflected image distinctively relates her to the whiteness of snow and the color red (see Mori 2004).

It is important to notice, however, that the two women are not presented as polar opposites in spite of their emphasized differences. Rather, they closely associate with each other “in a relation of reciprocity and resonance” of yin-yang dynamics (Cheng 2009, 74). Both Komako and Yoko combine, in inverse proportions, a quality of heat-induced intensity with the snowy nature of coldness, which itself exemplifies the yin-yang system,
thereby complementing each other. For instance, in spite of the cold touch of her hair and the snow-like layer of white powder on her face, Shimamura often notices inherent warmth, even heat, in Komako’s body and character, as symbolized by the redness of her bare neck and cheeks. Yoko, on the other hand, initially keeps Shimamura away, partly with the earnest stare of her glistening eyes. But her tender, motherly care of others, such as a dying patient and a small child, sometimes mitigates such frigid aloofness, like the glimmer of a distant fire through her pupil in the first mirror scene. Curiously, despite of their strained relationship, they are concerned for each other, even sharing the same dwelling for a while. They are also close in age, although the text initially refers to Yoko as “the girl” and Komako as “the woman” due to Shimamura’s subjective assumption.

Furthermore, their mutual relationship as well as characterization does not remain statically fixed. As the story unfolds in its second half, each of them undergoes certain changes. Symbolized by many objects, such as dying moths in the autumn, Komako transforms from a teenage apprentice geisha to a full-fledged one in her early twenties, as Shimamura observes her slight, yet inevitable thicker neckline. No longer keeping her distance, Yoko comes to see him face to face. The only direct reference to her exposed physicality (calf) occurs during her fall in the ending fire scene. The two women’s intimate rivalry intensifies, with each expressing undisguised antipathy to the other as well as earnest concern for her future. This paradox associating the two women defines the story’s symbolic structure (see Mori 2007).

The chijimi episode with a reference to yin-yang must be understood in this context. In Shimamura’s associative mind, chijimi stands both for Yoko and for Komako. The fabric was woven by young girls like Yoko, whom he actually imagines would have sung at work over the handloom if she had been born decades ago. Likewise, in his imagination, aided by the information that the old book provides, the bleached white linen outdoors turns vermillion with the surrounding snow at dawn, similar to Komako’s face in the second mirror scene. Most importantly, the fabric’s paradoxical coolness in the midst of summer has a metaphorically significant affinity to the combination of heat/warmth and a certain sense of coldness that the two women exhibit.

In a word, Yoko is Komako’s inseparable counterpart, not in appearance or temperament but in the fluidity of her competing yet complementing functions. Two of them together constitute a whole of Shimamura’s perceived snow country, the only locus that offers the cleansing effect that he seeks as a man of keen modern sensitivity. His aesthetically inclined mind transforms the snow country into a circumscribed field of beauty beyond a long tunnel, in which their power dynamism plays out, at once vying for his attention and forming a still unimpaired whole of his desired
dreamland. In this sense, although they appear as two individual characters for the sake of the plot, on another level, Yoko and Komako represent different aspects of female beauty in Shimamura’s omnipresent perception apart from the reality of the two women and their locality.

Since the two women reveal common elements along with sharply contrasted differences at any given time while their close-knit relationship as well as their characterization undergoes change, their mutual relationship closely approaches the yin-yang system. In “the interdependence of proximate things” (Ames 2003, 846), Komako is manifest as the aspect of light and vital life force, while Yoko stays mostly latent as the aspect of darkness and a potential source of purification. As such, Yoko stands for “the invisible, pre-existing background of a thing” or the virginal phase of womanhood, from which Komako the experienced has emerged “as the visible thrust of the formation of a thing” (Cheng 2009, 74).

This yin-yang dynamic accounts for Komako’s otherwise inexplicable behavior in the ending. When Yoko faces serious injury or possible death due to her fall, Komako disregards her own safety and rushes into the fire in order to rescue Yoko’s unconscious body, while asserting that the girl is on the verge of insanity. On a symbolic level, it is the inseparable other that she—herself acting in a deranged manner—tries to salvage at the critical moment, because she cannot be her own self without the counterpart, thereby demonstrating the underlying yin-yang relationship between them for the last time.

Yin-Yang & Kawabata’s Place in the Topography of Asian Culture

Yin-yang is mentioned only once in a quotation from the old local history book to explain the coolness one can feel when wearing a chijimi garment in midsummer. In addition, Kawabata stated that he read the old book after he had written most of his novel but before he added a concluding chapter originally titled “Sekichū kaji” 雪中火事 (A fire in snow, 1940) that begins with the chijimi episode (Kawabata 1949, 388–89). Nevertheless, yin-yang turns out to entwine the two women implicitly throughout the story. As in the symbol of light and darkness, two competing yet complementing elements are present in a constant flow to achieve desired purgation of the protagonist’s excessive modern self-consciousness, while giving coherence to the apparently irregular plot structure. Thus, the yin-yang that underlies Snow Country ascertains Kawabata’s place in the topography of Asian culture beyond widely recognized Buddhist influences.

Notes

Yin-yang is often combined with wu-xing 五行 (five agents or phases). Yin-yang wu-xing offers a complex system that operates through cyclical change involving the five
elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. This paper considers the cyclical nature of wu-xing as unessential for the discussion at hand and thus focuses on the contrastive nature of yin-yang.

For a review of J. Martin Holman’s 2006 translation of Kawabata’s Koto, see Thorn-dike (2008).

References


Democratic Paradox:
What Has Gone Wrong in Thailand?

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In this scholarly note, Chunjuan Nancy Wei describes the recent political turmoil in Thailand and suggests an alternative approach that would permit democracy to bring stability to this Southeast Asian constitutional monarchy.

Thailand in Turmoil

Thailand has again been capturing global headlines in recent months. The political paralysis has been enhanced by two major events that pitted the government—backed by Bangkok’s middle class and traditional establishments (the so-called Yellow Power)—against former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s (b. 1949; in office 2001–6) rural and urban grassroots supporters (the Red Shirts).

In mid-April 2009, an astonished world witnessed the Thai nation plunge into chaos and anarchy. More than 100,000 of Thaksin’s red-clad followers blockaded the capital’s major roads with burning buses, attacked the Government House district, and called for the four-month-old government of Abhisit Vejjajiva (b. 1964) to resign, convinced he had stolen the country’s democracy. At least two demonstrators were killed, and one hundred more were injured. The most outrageous and stunning outcome proved the effort to embarrass the prime minister: The former prime minister’s demonstrators stormed the resort town of Pattaya, forcing cancellation of the East Asian Summit. Sixteen ASEAN leaders—called over to discuss joint efforts to combat the global financial crisis—fled a fractured summit, which was later rescheduled for October 2009 in Phuket, then moved to Hua Hin and Cha-an due to security reasons.

Only four months earlier, the opposite camp had adopted similar tactics, invoking comparable havoc to the Buddhist state’s peaceful image. In the name of defending democracy, the “yellow-shirted” royalists organized massive disruptive demonstrations. They occupied government headquarters and seized Bangkok’s two major international airports, causing an ini-
tial delay of the East Asian Summit (originally scheduled for Bangkok, then moved to Chiang Mai before being postponed yet again until the attempt at Pattaya) while leaving 250,000 foreign tourists stranded. Neighboring countries had to send helicopters to retrieve their nationals left in these airports. The royalists declared victory only when the court found the Thaksin-sympathetic prime minister guilty of electoral fraud, paving the way for Abhisit’s current regime.

The tussles between Thaksin and his enemies, in which different camps mobilized residents against others in the streets, have dealt blows to Thailand’s international prestige as well as its fragile tourism and investment, two of the country’s major sources of revenue. In addition, concomitant separatist violence erupting in the Muslim-dominated Deep South has also claimed more than three thousand lives in the past four years. All this leads one to wonder: What has happened in recent years to lead the Thai democracy astray?

The Rural–Urban Duality

Thailand has a population of 66 million, of which nearly 70 percent lives in the rural hinterland. Unequal income distribution has long plagued this Southeast Asian nation. The financial turmoil triggered in Thailand during the 1997 regional crisis exacerbated the problem, leaving a legacy of currency collapse; strong stock market devaluations; and massive layoffs in the real estate, construction, and finance sectors. While all citizens suffered, poor farmers in the North and Northeast bore the brunt of the crisis. Many of the newly laid off returned to their rural villages where living costs were lower, resulting in the doubly negative impact of increased job competition and high poverty levels in the agricultural sector. World Bank reports in 2000 (2000a, 2000b) found wealth concentrated in Bangkok and incidences of poverty high in the rural areas, rising from 14.9 percent in 1999 to 21.5 percent in 2000. Furthermore, the wealthiest 30 percent owned 80 percent of the national income. Indeed, Thai politics was a game traditionally played by Bangkok elites, having little to do with the rural poor.

Thaksin Shinawatra, a telecom magnate who was born in the rural North, decided to break the urban power monopoly by exploiting the numeric advantage of the poor. Promising cheap health care and microcredit development funds to poor peasants, the leader of the Thai Rak Thai (Thais love Thais) party attracted millions of rural followers. Compared with previous politicians who assured only roads and other infrastructure projects, Thaksin’s generous promises and quick deliveries—30 bhat (less than US$1) per doctor visit and a US$25,000 Village Fund per town—firmly built his political charisma and greatly mobilized the peasants’ enthusiasm for electoral participation. During his first term, Thailand ranked as one of East Asia’s best performers, with annual real GDP growth of 6 percent. “Thak-
sinomics” was hailed as the major factor lifting Thailand out of financial woes, and Thaksin was the first Thai prime minister in decades to successfully complete a full term.

Military Coup of 2006 & the Ensuing Political Crises

Ironically, in the eyes of businessmen and members of the urban middle class, Thaksin’s promises were seen as blatant policy vote-buying. On the pretext of corruption, tax evasion, and abuse of power, the Thai Royal Army orchestrated a coup d’état against the popularly elected government, exploiting the opportunity provided by Mr. Thaksin’s attendance in New York at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. They declared martial law, banned demonstration, and arrested Thaksin’s allies. Thaksin was exiled to avoid a two-year jail term on corruption allegations that he claims were politically motivated. The Army appointed a military officer with royal ties as prime minister and promised to hold an election in one-and-a-half years.

The election did not resolve Thai’s political crisis because it returned a Thaksin sympathizer with whom the royalists were very unhappy. They staged huge rallies denouncing the new prime minister, Samak Sundaravej (b. 1935; in office for approximately seven months in 2008), occupying his office and attacking large infrastructure such as trains and local airports (Fuller 2008). The Constitutional Court (ConCourt) terminated Samak’s premiership in September 2008 over two televised culinary programs in the name of violating the conflict-of-interest laws. A fresh new election in the Parliament brought in Thaksin’s brother-in-law, Somchai Wongsawat (b. 1947), as the premier. The hapless Somchai had to deal not only with the political turmoil but also the global financial crisis. He could not survive the murky political water; in two months, the ConCourt revoked his position, and Abhisit became his successor.

It is obvious that the Thai political arena has become a never-ending soap opera where one group’s victory harbinger is the inauguration of the next protracted power struggle, where protesters take a leaf from the playbook of their rivals in attacking public facilities and unseating cabinet members. In three short years, three prime ministers have been forced to resign, and the current prime minister is under similar pressure. Persistent political uncertainty has crippled economic growth. The post-2006 political paralyses have undermined both investors and consumer confidence.

Institutional Inefficiency & Democratic Paradox

The political system of Thailand, as a constitutional monarchy, has two major power centers: the monarchy and the military. King Bhumibol Adulyadej
(b. 1927, r. since 1946), the world’s longest-reigning monarch, is the head of state and commander-in-chief who consults the Privy Council for advice. He has the power to appoint prime ministers following a National Assembly election and to revise the laws if he wishes. But the shrewd ruler knows that the best way to maintain power is to appear apolitical, virtuous, and progressive. He warily distances himself from everyday politics, assiduously observing Buddhist rituals while claiming himself as an “elected king” (Handley 2006, 431) who is loved by all his subjects. As a result of mass manipulation and the strict enforcement of the lese majesty, King Bhumibol is revered as a semi-god and viewed as the most stabilizing factor in Thai politics.

The military is the other most important powerhouse. A cohesive, organized political force, the Thai military has long exercised undue influence in the government. Thanks to the king’s great charisma and wide popularity, military officers have no choice but to defer to the monarch for their own legitimacy. In contrast with the king (who holds the moral high ground) and the military (that holds the coercive power), the popularly elected prime minister is very weak. Often depicted as an evil politician, the Thai premier has neither moral appeals nor means to enforce social compliances. During the recent political crises, the prime minister’s office was occupied, his car attacked, and his life threatened. Unlike his modern British or Japanese counterpart, the Thai prime minister lacks the power to effectively constrain the generals. Any reform by elected politicians that aims to minimize military influence is directly or indirectly resisted.

The constitution, while serving as the supreme law in a democratic country, seems like a doormat in Thailand. Part of the reason is that the constitution has been carefully interpreted in Thailand to mean “rule of the state with Dharma,” a mixture of democracy, religion, and the king’s power. So long as the monarch rules with virtue and is protected by the generals, elected politicians can be sacrificed. The constitution is not to limit the government but to exclude the people. As a legal scholar has commented, “The Thai constitution has never been a social contract, never a set of rules for those with power to service the people. It has been a set of rules between those with power” (Handley 2006, 408). Nearly every time there was a power change, a new constitution was promulgated, only to be discarded in the next round of political struggle. In nearly eighty years (Thailand became a constitutional monarchy in 1932), Thais have witnessed seventeen constitutions, averaging one every four-and-a-half years. To date, the 81-year-old King Bhumibol has survived twenty-seven prime ministers. The close palace-military relationship has toppled eighteen civilian governments, the latest being the 2006 coup that deposed Thaksin.

If democracy is measured by whether a country has free and fair elections, Thailand is no doubt a democracy. However, Thai institutions that
hold the major powers are by no means democratic. The legislative and executive branches—elements that are most democratic—are often toothless. To protect the Bangkok elites, the king has allowed the military to resort to a simple and familiar solution: coups d’états. Since 2006, all three democratically elected prime ministers—Thaksin (eighteen months after 2005 election), Samak (eight months), and Somchai (only two months)—have been overthrown through undemocratic means. When political conflicts intensify, democratic rules do not help the nation solve problems; sadly, in fact, such rules are often the first to be jettisoned. In Thailand, constitutionalism has yet to be established, and democracy remains in its infancy.

Indeed, how can democracy bring stability to a country when its elected leaders are prevented from serving out their terms? To solve Thailand’s democratic paradox, constitutionalism and rule of the law may be the answer. Popularly elected government should be given the authority to govern. The king’s power should be curtailed; the military must be subjected to the elected government. Only when prime ministers are able to govern the nation under consensus can the urban–rural gap gradually be reduced and social crises be dissipated.

Note

For further reading on issues of democracy that pertain to the situation in Thailand, see Albritton and Bureekul (2008), Feng (2003), Laohasiriwong and Chee (2007), and Root (2006).

References


Here Kazuo Yagami, supporting and expanding upon Gar Alperovitz’s interpretation in *Atomic Diplomacy* (1965), examines the various arguments regarding the U.S. decision to use the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki toward the end of World War II.

**Rationalizing Use of the Atomic Bomb: Rhetoric & Debate**

In the argument of why the A-bomb was used against Japan, in general, historians agree that there are multiple reasons for the use of the bombs. Some of these reasons include ending the war as quickly as possible (to save millions of lives), making Stalin tractable, justifying the $2-billion cost of the Manhattan Project, and engaging in scientific experimentation that, at the same time, would allow for a subtle exhibition of racism against the Japanese. Scholars also agree that, among these possible causes, military and diplomatic considerations—or a combination of the two—ultimately compelled the United States to use the bomb.

In 1965, historian and political economist Gar Alperovitz published a book entitled *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*. The book had a revolutionary effect on the debate over why the United States used the A-bomb against Japan. Pointing out diplomacy as a primary cause for the use of the A-bomb, Alperovitz challenged the orthodox interpretation that the bomb was used primarily for military reasons—in short, to end the war as quickly as possible so that millions of lives could be saved. In the years since Alperovitz published his views, further publications have created a dichotomy in the debate, with some authors supportive of Alperovitz’s stance and others casting critical arguments against it. Alperovitz’s book was the catalyst in framing subsequent debate on the use of the A-bomb during World War II.

Alperovitz contends that Japan was already defeated by the early summer of 1945. After realizing the futility of continuing to fight, Japan was attempting to find a way to end the war. The United States intercepted ca-
bles on July 12 and 13, 1945, that indicated the intervention of the Japanese Emperor to attempt to end the war and the dispatch of a Japanese envoy to Moscow to seek mediation (Alperovitz 1995, 232–33). Also, there was almost unanimous consensus among U.S. military officers that Japan was literally defeated by the early summer of 1945. Alperovitz argues that it is, therefore, impossible that President Truman was unaware of the Japanese effort to end the war. Accordingly, Alperovitz raises a series of questions: Why did Truman have to make the decision to use an A-bomb against Japan in early August? With the planned invasion of Kyushu set for November 1, why did the bomb have to be used three months earlier? Why didn’t the United States make an effort to investigate the seriousness of Japan in their seeking of peace? Why didn’t the United States modify the demand of unconditional surrender? Why didn’t Truman wait for Soviet entry to the war against Japan? Considering the circumstances, Alperovitz argues that the combined effects of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan and the modification of unconditional surrender would almost definitely have made Japan stop fighting. Why didn’t Truman try any or all of these alternatives rather than authorize use of the A-bomb?

To Alperovitz, the reason is obvious: When the A-bomb became available, the United States shifted its goal from ending the war with Soviet entry to ending the war without Soviet entry. The war became winnable for the United States with virtually no loss of American lives. Soviet entry to the war, therefore, became unnecessary to save the potential loss of American lives. From that point onward, instead of being a military tool to end the war, the A-bomb became a tool of diplomatic leverage for the United States in managing Stalin in the postwar settlement of Eastern Europe and Asia. Alperovitz argues that this was the beginning of the period of “atomic diplomacy” that shaped the early stage of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In his well-researched book, Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956, David Holloway (1996) reaches a similar conclusion to that of Alperovitz. He admits that the bomb was originally developed for military purposes. It was not a matter of whether but when to use it. Like Alperovitz, Holloway contends that the successful A-bomb explosion at Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, changed the purpose of the use of the A-bomb. Soviet entry into the war became less desirable and less urgent for the United States. Holloway sees this as a turning point in U.S. policy regarding the A-bomb. From that point in July until the actual bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a diplomatic race with regard to how and when to obtain Japan’s surrender. Although the United States wanted to end the war before Soviet entry, the Soviet Union wanted to ensure the war would not be over before their entry. Holloway argues that each side conducted the diplomatic ma-
neuvering necessary to achieve its own goal. While Truman was trying to postpone the Postdam meeting, Stalin was making every effort to speed up the preparation of the Soviet forces for the war entry. It is clear to Holloway, therefore, that by the time of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, there was a shaky justification for military use of the A-bomb but a firm one for diplomacy.

Martin Sherwin does not deny the diplomatic aspect of the use of the A-bomb. He disagrees, however, with Alperovitz’s and Holloway’s assertion that atomic diplomacy was a primary cause for the use of the A-bomb. In *A World Destroyed* (1975), Sherwin argues that the diplomatic aspect of the use of the bomb was secondary to the military aspect. According to Sherwin, the Manhattan Project was initiated by Franklin Roosevelt only for the sake of developing a new weapon for military use. Although he admits that it was undeniable there was talk among policymakers, including Truman, about the diplomatic ramifications of the use of the A-bomb, Sherwin points out that, in their minds, such talk never became central. Instead, they never questioned the military use of the A-bomb when the bomb became available (Walker 1990, 100).

When Truman assumed the presidency, Sherwin argues that, like other policymakers, he did not find any compelling reason to question the military use of the A-bomb. Instead Truman found compelling reasons to use it. First, the A-bomb was legitimate, since Germany would have used the A-bomb if they had developed it first. Second, the use of the A-bomb would have a profound impact on Japanese leaders with regard to their decision to surrender. Third, there was strong public support for and expectation of the use of the A-bomb by the Truman administration. Finally, there had to be a justification for the use of $2 billion of taxpayers’ money spent to develop the bomb. Thus, Sherwin concludes, Truman did not see any reasons to hesitate from using the A-bomb but saw only compelling reasons to use it (1975, 203).

Although admitting that Truman did not see any other choice except the use of the A-bomb, Sherwin, nevertheless sees it regrettable that the Truman administration did not give serious consideration to any alternative. Particularly in his view, modifying the unconditional-surrender terms was worth consideration. According to Sherwin, such modification would have made the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki unnecessary and indefensible (1975, 238; see also Walker 1990, 101).

Barton Bernstein (1995) shares Sherwin’s view on why the A-bomb was used against Japan. He contends that the A-bomb was considered a legitimate weapon to use against an enemy. This assumption was neither examined nor challenged under President Franklin Roosevelt. According to Bernstein, Truman inherited this assumption and saw no reason to question it. Instead, he considered the bomb desirable. Like Sherwin, Bernstein
raises several factors which had a compelling effect on Truman’s decision to use the A-bomb: ending the war on American terms; avoiding the dreaded invasion of Japan; punishing the Japanese for Pearl Harbor; extracting revenge for the Japanese mistreatment of American POWs; fulfilling bureaucratic needs; responding to the wish of the American public; and intimidating the Soviets, thereby making them tractable in Eastern Europe in the postwar era (1995, 229).

With these factors, Bernstein asserts that the use of the atomic bomb against Japan might well have been inevitable even if the Bolsheviks had never taken power and the Soviet Union had never been formed (1995, 230). He emphasizes that U.S. policymakers indeed did not see any reason to refrain from using the bomb against Japan. They used it primarily to end the war and to save American lives.

Regarding Alperovitz’s support of the diplomatic causal explanation for the use of the A-bomb, although Bernstein agrees that the policymakers hoped that the bomb would bring diplomatic advantage when dealing with the Soviet Union in the postwar era, to him it was rather a “bonus.” Bernstein accepts that the use of the A-bomb had the effect to intensify the Cold War but did not cause it.

Concerning the alternatives for the use of the A-bomb, Bernstein differs from Sherwin. He does not see any reason to blame the Truman administration for not trying the alternatives. Bernstein argues that the most crucial key regarding the issue of alternatives to the use of the A-bomb is that insisting on the idea of using alternatives to obtain the Japanese surrender before November 1—with the exception of non-combat demonstration—represents not pre– but post–Hiroshima and Nagasaki thinking (1995, 235). In the period before the bombings, the alternatives were not considered as alternatives but as “strategies” to obtain Japanese surrender before the planned November 1 invasion. Bernstein emphasizes that “avoiding the use of the bomb was never a real concern for the policymakers” (235). To imply that before Hiroshima the policymakers saw those various approaches as the alternatives to the use of the A-bomb, he contends, is a “distortion” of history.

From this discussion, one key question emerges to help understand where the differences in viewpoints between Alperovitz and those who challenge his diplomatic interpretation come from in their assessment on the issue of the use of the A-bomb. That is the question of whether, as Sherwin and Bernstein assert, Truman truly did not have any compelling reasons to refrain from using the bomb or to question using it.

As stated earlier, Bernstein points out that Truman inherited from Roosevelt the assumption that the A-bomb was considered a legitimate weapon to use against the enemy and therefore never questioned its use. What makes accepting Bernstein’s assertion difficult is that he ignores the
quite different circumstances Truman was facing in his diplomacy with the Soviet Union. First, by the time Truman became president, Japan had almost totally lost its capability to keep fighting. The only question that needed to be asked was when Japan was going to surrender. Second, as Alperovitz points out, Japan was attempting to find a way to get out of the war. Truman and other policymakers knew this fact through the intercepted cables from Japan. It strains credibility to think that these changes in circumstantial conditions would not have caused Truman to question the use of the A-bomb and to think that he was as much compelled to use it as he would have been without those conditions.

**Concluding Why the Atomic Bomb Was Used: For Diplomacy**

Ultimately, then, why was the A-bomb used? Why did it have to be used in early August when the invasion of Kyushu was set for November 1? If the Japanese were already defeated early in the summer of 1945, it does not make any sense to claim that by using the A-bomb three months earlier the United States could somehow save “millions” of lives. To Alperovitz, an answer to the question is diplomacy. A careful analysis of the circumstantial conditions supports Alperovitz. If one looks into how the related events unfolded between late 1943 to shortly before August 6, 1945, the use of the bomb in early August is well explainable. From the Tehran Conference (November–December 1943) to the Yalta Conference (February 1945), Stalin repeated his intention of entering the war against Japan roughly three months after the defeat of Germany. Germany was defeated on May 9, 1945, making the Soviet entry more likely sometime in early August. The successful test of the A-bomb came on July 16, 1945, rendering Soviet entry undesirable for the United States. The major concern of the United States thus shifted from bringing the Soviets into the war to cut down the number of potential American casualties to ending the war without Soviet entry. There had to be, however, two weeks or so for the bomb to be ready for actual use. So the earliest day for the use of the bomb had to be early August. The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6. It was fortunate for the United States that the Soviet entry came two days later.

Historians often point out that there was no necessity or justification for the use of the second bomb. It was puzzling even to those who justified the use of the first bomb for a military purpose. If one assumes, however, that Truman used the A-bomb for a diplomatic purpose, nothing could be easier to explain than the use of the second bomb. The use of the second bomb actually makes a diplomatic interpretation of the use of the A-bomb more credible. On August 8, only two days after the bombing of Hiroshima, Manchuria had fallen under Soviet control. There was no clear signal from Japan indicating its surrender. Naturally the entry of Soviet troops into Ja-
The second bomb became necessary; it was dropped on August 9 on Nagasaki. Japan officially announced its intention to surrender on August 10. It is difficult to dispute, therefore, that the analysis of how events unfolded from a diplomatic perspective makes far more sense than asserting that Truman used the A-bomb because to him it was just another weapon to be used for military purposes.

Bernstein contends that Truman was not sure that Japan would surrender even with the use of the A-bomb. In fact, Bernstein points out that Truman and other policymakers were surprised with Japan’s unexpectedly speedy response on August 10 to indicate Japan’s peace effort (1995, 227). According to Bernstein, this was a clear indication that the only reason Truman had for the use of the bomb was to end the war sometime before November 1 to save the potential casualties which the United States would suffer if the planned invasion of Japan took place. Truman did not consider ending the war before Soviet entry.

If Bernstein is right, however, one has to ask: Why, then, did Truman order the dropping of the bombs on August 6 and 9, around the dates on which the Soviet entry was expected? Was it just a coincidence? Why didn’t Truman wait for another week or a month, since three months remained before November? What was the possible intended gain for the United States? Here again, the only possible explanation is diplomatic gain. The bomb was dropped in early August in order to end the war before Soviet entry.

Concerning the moral question over use of the A-bomb, those who support Truman’s decision do not see any reason to condemn him morally. The contention they make is that World War II was a total war. Mass killing was commonly used as a war tactic by almost all major powers, including the United States. Between March 9 and 10, 1945, for example, the U.S. air raids against Tokyo alone killed 80,000 to 100,000 civilians (Dower 1986, 40). Bernstein points out that this concept of a total war gave Truman another reason for not questioning the use of the A-bomb for military purposes. To Truman, the A-bomb was just another weapon to use. Under this interpretation, there are no justifiable grounds for the moral condemnation of killing about 200,000 Japanese in the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Bernstein contends that it is appropriate to judge and condemn bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki from today’s moral standards. But to attribute those same standards to the policymakers, the military officers, and the citizens of the United States during World War II is a distortion of history of the war (1995, 269). Bernstein’s contention seems correct and difficult to dispute. One has to note, however, that his assertion is correct only under the assumption that the A-bomb was used for military purposes.
The Nazi Holocaust overseen by Hitler and the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese military officers were condemned as war crimes not because of the mass killing but because they were carried out for non-military purposes. By the same token, Alperovitz condemns the use of the A-bomb on Japan not because of the great number of people who were killed but because they were sacrificed for a non-military purpose. It is, therefore, unjustifiable to categorize the mass killings in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, which happened to be carried out by one new weapon, as following the same pattern of many other cases. Indeed, such categorization is a “distortion” of the history of World War II.

References

Liza Dalby’s *Geisha*: The View Twenty-five Years Later

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In this retrospective review essay, Jan Bardsley considers the role of Liza Dalby’s *Geisha* (first published by the University of California Press in 1983) in both past and recent academic discourse, offering a description of how she uses the text in undergraduate classes to raise issues of identity, representation, gender, and race.

The Geisha Boom: From *Memoirs of a Geisha* to Academic Studies

Rarely does a dissertation-turned-monograph achieve the kind of wide readership enjoyed by popular author Liza Dalby’s 1983 book, *Geisha*. In 2008, the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition—the book’s seventeenth printing—appeared, complete with a new preface by the author. Supporting this new edition is Dalby’s skillfully designed Web site, which provides more information about geisha, includes numerous graphics, and offers responses to frequent questions for Dalby from readers.

As this review essay argues, *Geisha* still provides an important window on the arts practiced by geisha, a history of their profession, and their reception in modern Japan through the mid-1970s. Despite minor flaws in its structure and mixed reviews of Dalby’s methods by some anthropologists, *Geisha* has much to offer as a text in undergraduate classes on Japanese theater and geisha. I propose that Liza Dalby’s book deserves a fresh look in 2009, one contextualized by the worldwide attention to geisha of the last decade, Dalby’s own celebrity as an expert on geisha, and the history of geisha role-playing in Japan and abroad.

Discussion of Dalby’s *Geisha* must be prefaced, of course, with a few words about the “geisha boom” initiated in 1997 by Arthur Golden’s novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, and the 2005 film version written by Robin Swicord and released by Sony Pictures (Swicord 2005). Golden’s novel has been described as a Cinderella story, and therein may lay its success as well as its power to enthrall. *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a rags-to-riches tale of Chiyo, an impoverished girl from a fishing village who is sold to a Kyoto *okiya* 無屋
(geisha house) and trained in the arts amid the intense competition of dueling geisha. She eventually becomes the celebrated geisha Sayuri, endures the War and Occupation, wins the affections of the man of her dreams, and finally leaves Japan to live a wealthy, if circumspect, life in Manhattan. A favorite among book clubs in the United States, *Memoirs of a Geisha* enjoyed fifty-eight weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, has been translated into thirty-three languages, and has sold over four million copies worldwide. Reader responses to the novel posted on the U.S. bookselling site Amazon.com as of July 2009 number over 2,400. Although Dalby’s book has fewer postings (only forty-four) on Amazon.com, readers often recommend it for fans of Golden’s novel who wish to learn more about the real lives and history of geisha.

Not everyone is a fan of Golden’s story, however; *Memoirs of a Geisha* has also been criticized by scholars and Asian American artists, activists, and feminists for its revival of orientalist fantasies of Japan and Japanese women as erotic and exotic. (For a trenchant response, see Allison 2001.) Fans of MAD-TV can catch comedian Bobby Lee’s hilarious send-up of the movie trailer of *Memoirs*, replete with his own Sayuri impersonation, on YouTube. Guerrilla artist Scott Tsuchitani staged a similar protest in 2004, this time against a major art exhibit devoted to geisha in San Francisco, by papering the city with a brilliantly comic poster of himself posed as a nerdy geisha who wore thick, dark-rimmed glasses; the subtitle read, “Orientalist Dream Come True: Geisha: Perpetuating the Fetish.” Despite this dissent, *Memoirs of a Geisha* has created an enormous appetite for more revelations on geisha. The book’s popularity has no doubt paved the way for the publication of several other books on geisha in English, including academic studies. The question of geisha masquerades and their complex connections with orientalism, however, are issues to which I return in this essay’s conclusion.

In 1983, though, Dalby’s *Geisha* was unique as the first academic study devoted to geisha. As historian Gail Lee Bernstein wrote in her 1984 review of *Geisha*, even though “‘geisha’ is possibly the best-known Japanese word in the Western world,” before Dalby’s book “reliable information on these intriguing women was largely unavailable” (222). Although books in English (fiction, travel essays, commentary on the status of women in Japan, and Madame Butterfly narratives) referring to geisha or even starring geisha heroines had been published ever since the early Meiji era (1868–1912), no American author before Dalby (e.g., Bacon 1902; Fraser 1908) had conducted this kind of participant-observer research.

Today, over twenty-five years after *Geisha*’s initial publication, the situation is noticeably different. Readers can further their knowledge of geisha through autobiographies and biographies of actual geisha, cultural histories, photo-books, and scholarly studies of the geisha arts. One of the
newest and most important studies, *The Gei of Geisha: Music, Identity and Meaning* (2008), authored by ethnomusicologist Kelly M. Foreman, builds on Dalby’s explanation of the geisha arts, providing in-depth analysis of performance structures, geisha’s relationships to arts masters, and contemporary patronage. Superb essays on geisha history, their reception in Japan, and Euro-American fascination with them are compiled in *Geisha: Beyond the Painted Smile* (2004), a volume that grew out of the 2004 exhibit that Tsuchitani protested; it was curated by the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, and also presented at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco the same year. The volume includes an excellent essay by Dalby, “The Exotic Geisha,” on the topic of Western geisha fantasies, as well as a fine essay on geisha fascination by Allen Hockley.

Much can also be learned about geisha past and present in Lesley Downer’s *Women of the Pleasure Quarters: The Secret History of the Geisha* (2002), which is valuable for her several interviews with geisha; her biography of a Meiji geisha-turned-actress who became famous abroad, *Madame Sadayakko: The Geisha Who Bewitched the West* (2004), vividly depicts one geisha’s unusual life. John Gallagher’s photo-book, *Geisha: A Unique World of Tradition, Elegance, and Art* (2003), presents the history of the geisha profession, performance practices today, geisha costumes, and the geisha’s daily life in a colorful form. One can also learn about the geisha arts from the memoirs of Iwasaki Mineko, the geisha who took Arthur Golden to court for publicly acknowledging her help in the research for *Memoirs*; she charged that Golden had agreed to protect her privacy, and the two reportedly settled out of court. Iwasaki’s book, *Geisha, a Life* (2003) recounts her girlhood growing up in the Gion geisha district in Kyoto and her career as a geisha. She takes unabashed pride in building her case as the star geisha of her day. Although Iwasaki’s book has much to say about the artistic practices of geisha, many of my students took issue with what they saw as her “narcissistic and conceited” self-presentation.

In considering the library available on geisha, we must remember that countless women, also referred to as geisha, did not enjoy the glittering life of the Gion but, instead, worked in small establishments that forced them into sexual labor. This other side of early twentieth-century geisha life has been captured in Masuda Sayo’s *Autobiography of a Geisha*, translated by G. G. Rowley (2003), which describes her life in a rural okiya as one of violent abuse and forced prostitution. William Johnston’s *Geisha, Harlot, Strangler, Star: A Woman, Sex, and Morality in Modern Japan* (2004) traces the life of the notorious Abe Sada 阿部定 (1905–70), who suffered from advanced syphilis and, in 1936, severed her lover’s genitalia after killing him. Read together, these highly varied accounts of geisha reveal the twists and turns in the history of a profession that extends back to the Edo period (1600–1868), demonstrating the diversity of geisha experiences—glam-
orous, tragic, and sensational—and the elasticity of the term geisha itself. Moreover, Japanese novels translated into English, such as Kawabata Yasunari’s famous Yukiguni 雪国 (Snow Country, 1952), Nagai Kafu’s Udekarabu 腕くらべ (Geisha Rivalry, 1918), and the Meiji-era short stories of Higuchi Ichiyō (1992), provide still other portraits of how the figure of the geisha was understood in modern Japan.

Although Memoirs of a Geisha did not sell well in Japan, that nation, too, has experienced a rise of interest in the karyūkai 花柳界, “the flower and willow world.” This is true despite the impatience sometimes voiced by Japanese with Euro-American fantasies about “geisha and Fujiyama.” One can speculate that post-Memoirs of a Geisha excitement abroad has had some influence in renewed Japanese attention to the geisha. For example, Dorinne Kondo (1997) discusses how fashion advertising coaxes Japanese, imagined as cosmopolitan and worldly, to see Kyoto as “authentic Japan” and to participate in feeling Japanese by shopping in the old capital. Moreover, we can argue that, since geisha—along with samurai, sumo wrestlers, and sushi—are so fixed in the global imagination as signifiers of Japan, it is impossible for Japanese to regard them through eyes free of a westernized perspective. Still, it is crucial to observe that the geisha has had a remarkably more interesting history than her stereotypical fantasy images in the West or even today in Japan would suggest; for example, geisha cheered public speakers in the 1890s, launched patriotic activities during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), were maligned by the Japan Women’s Christian Temperance Union and supported by infamous New Women in the 1910s, and performed classical dance at the seashore in swimsuits in 1930. Books published in Japan today by and about geisha project a considerably more ladylike image, focusing on geisha etiquette and femininity training.

As I have discussed elsewhere (Bardsley forthcoming), the apprentice geisha in Kyoto known as maiko 舞妓 have attracted much curiosity in Japan of late. In April 2008, one hundred young women populated the maiko ranks, bringing their numbers back to what they had been in the 1950s. Moreover, blogs by maiko, books by and about maiko, maiko-related goods and services, and even maiko movies, maiko murder mysteries, and TV dramas, have all been part of the fad. Interestingly, Liza Dalby responds to this new excitement over the maiko in the preface to the twenty-fifth-anniversary edition of Geisha, observing how today’s maiko recruits are likely to have no training in the classical arts, apply for the job by e-mail, and may quit after a few years rather than graduating to careers as full-fledged geisha (2008, xxi–xxii).

Responding to interest in the maiko in both Japan and abroad, the photo-book A Geisha’s Journey, published in Japanese and in English translation, depicts the life of a young woman known as Komomo as she progresses from maiko to geisha (Komomo and Ogino 2008). Komomo’s con-
Retrospective Review Essay: Liza Dalby’s Geisha

temporary familiarity with Kyoto arts lessons, geisha parties (ozashiki お座敷), and preparation for public performances meshes with the descriptions in Dalby’s Geisha, despite the gap of over two decades between the women’s experiences. It departs radically from the geisha narratives of pre-war brutality told by Masuda (2003) and Abe (Johnston 2004). Thus, when speaking about geisha, one must be precise in delineating historical location, class status, and relationship to geisha hierarchy—all factors which bring us as well to Liza Dalby’s incarnation in the mid-1970s as the “American geisha.” As anthropologist Anne-Elise Middlethon wrote of Geisha, praising Dalby’s attention to historical context: “What [Dalby] so insightfully gives to us is a ‘snapshot of a particular era’ and of a particular segment of the geisha universe” (2000, 111).

Liza Dalby, the “American Geisha”

Liza Dalby’s Geisha has played a major role, too, in building an audience outside Japan for later geisha publications, although her work began decades earlier. Geisha had its origins in Liza Dalby’s fourteen months of field research in 1975 and 1976, conducted mainly in Kyoto, for her Stanford University doctorate in anthropology, which she completed in 1978. Dalby also made use of interviews with geisha, reporting that one hundred geisha from fourteen communities responded to her questionnaire (1983, xv). Although conducting fieldwork in Japan was not unusual for an anthropology student, some scholars were especially impressed with Dalby’s immersion in the geisha world. Historian Bernstein, for example, commended this aspect of Dalby’s research, writing that “the field work for Geisha was a tour de force” (1984, 223).

As an exchange student in Japan during high school, Dalby developed proficiency in the Japanese language and the samisen 三味線, the stringed instrument played by geisha and associated with them since the Edo period. Dalby’s linguistic and musical skills made it possible for her to live in an okiya in Pontocho 先斗町, one of Kyoto’s five renowned hanamachi 花町 (flower districts) where geisha work and many live, and to try her hand at performing as a geisha herself. The suggestion that she learn about geisha by actually working as one came from the mother of her okiya who said, “You know, you’ll never really understand geisha life unless you try it” (1983, 102). Finding herself “attracted to both the glamor and the discipline” (102–3) of geisha, Dalby took on the challenge, eventually making her debut as Ichigiku. She learned to walk gracefully, practiced playing ko-uta 小唄 ballads performed at ozashiki on her samisen for hours, and became adept at wearing kimono. She performed alongside geisha and formed friendships with many former geisha who operated teahouses and bars in Pontocho. As she attended one ozashiki after another and worked at her new
role, the more the other geisha, mothers, and customers began to accept her as Ichigiku, and the more she began to enjoy it. Dalby writes with pleasure of the moments in which the way her body language or the way she wore her kimono geisha-style enabled her to pass for Japanese. Thus, she was the first Anglo to become a geisha, or, as her critics might prefer, a “geisha.” Faulting Dalby’s interpretation of her experience as ethnography and viewing her as trying to become more Japanese than the Japanese themselves, anthropologist L. L. Cornell nevertheless empathizes with the way in which becoming a geisha allows for “discovering a role within Japanese society which is so marked by costume, makeup, and behavior that one’s identification as a foreigner recedes” (1986, 485).

Dalby has recounted the humor that ensued at ozashiki when the guests would realize that the geisha Ichigiku was an American interloper. Dalby never participated in the formal ritual of sisterhood or charged for her ozashiki appearances, but she writes in the original preface to Geisha of being interviewed herself in Japan almost as much as she interviewed others, becoming something of a curiosity as the Japanese-speaking American geisha (1983, xv). It was this firsthand experience that led to Dalby’s prominence as an expert on geisha and that continues to draw readers. Amazon.com postings frequently highlight Dalby’s own practice as a geisha in recommending the book to others. As we shall see below, it was Dalby’s accounts of her fieldwork, however, that prompted admiration as well as sardonic reviews of her work by senior anthropologists. Intriguingly, it is also her stint as Ichigiku that places Dalby within a long line of Anglo-women-as-geisha moments, and even more broadly, in a history of geisha performers that has included Japanese men on the kabuki stage and, more recently, ethnically Chinese actresses on screen.

Dalby’s research in Pontocho was only the beginning of what has been a vibrant career. The continued success of Geisha must owe something to the way she remains in the limelight as the expert on the flower-and-willow world who was once the American geisha. After the publication of Geisha, Dalby used her doctorate and her expertise to become an author and consultant rather than an academic. She has written prolifically and creatively. Her publications include Ko-uta: Little Songs of the Geisha World (1979); Kimono: Fashioning Culture (1993); East Wind Melts the Ice: A Memoir through the Seasons (2007); and two novels, The Tale of Murasaki (2000) and Hidden Buddhas: A Novel of Karma and Chaos (2009). Dalby has been interviewed by documentary filmmakers (Maltby 1999), given public lectures, and served as a consultant to television and film producers creating geisha-inspired dramas. Filmmaker Rob Marshall, who directed Memoirs of a Geisha and hired Dalby as a consultant on Arthur Golden’s recommendation, has spoken highly of her knowledge of geisha, her unique standing as the first American geisha, and her skill in teaching the film’s actresses how to play
the geisha role themselves. One of the featurettes on the *Memoirs of a Geisha* 2-disc DVD captures Dalby patiently training actresses in the *samisen*. Authors’ acknowledgements in other English-language books on geisha regularly speak of Dalby’s generosity as a consultant on their projects. What began as a year of field research in the mid-1970s launched Dalby on a lifetime of multifaceted, transnational work.

**Dalby’s Geisha: A Brief Summary**

Summarizing a book as richly varied in topic and idiosyncratically organized as *Geisha* is difficult, but a description is in order. *Geisha* has retained its distinctive format throughout numerous reprintings. Its rather square shape, wide margins, and several illustrations (maps, charts, photos, wood-block prints) give the book an appealing, informal air. There is no textbook primness here. The writing is accessible, informative, and often gently humorous. *Geisha* is divided into three major sections: “Relations,” “Variations,” and “Sensibilities.” It is fitting that the longest section by far is “Relations,” for, as Dalby emphasizes, being a geisha means fitting into a dense web of relations among members of one’s *okiya*, teahouse owners, clients, arts masters, and the many whose vocations support the *hanamachi*. Although outsiders may focus on the attention that geisha offer their predominantly male clients, geisha spend much of their time immersed in a women’s world that is tightly organized by fictive bonds of kinship, hierarchy, and the demands of running a commercial enterprise that remains loyal to long-held customs (*shikitari* 仕来り). Sadly, the geisha Ichiume, who served as Dalby’s *oïsan* お姐さん (older sister) and to whom she was close, died in 1978 in a fire in Pontocho, tingeing recollections of Dalby’s time as Ichigiku with poignancy. Yet it is with passion that Dalby explains the *ozashiki*, the holidays that geisha celebrate, and the rituals of sisterhood.

“Relations” includes two especially informative chapters on geisha history. These are my personal favorites in the book and the ones that I wish to highlight. I hope more research will be done in this area. Dalby’s *Geisha* is the first work in English that so succinctly presents how geisha history intertwines with histories of the pleasure quarters, prostitution, labor law, the changing status of women and work (as well as the cultural differences between wives and non-wives), and modern forms of entertainment. The first chapter, “Pontocho of Long Ago,” describes the inception of the profession during the Edo period, its relation to the Yoshiwara and other pleasure quarters, and the way the modernization efforts of the Meiji era forced changes in the way geisha organized, charged for their services, and became drawn into patriotic activity. The second history chapter, “Geisha Renovation,” discusses the pressures on geisha in the 1920s and 1930s to compete with other forms of sexualized entertainment, such as revues and
the services of café girls (jokyū 女給). One learns that Pontocho geisha experimented with the tango and other kinds of ballroom dancing in the 1910s and performed Rockette-style numbers in the 1930s. Dalby explains how geisha lost their edge as fashion innovators, became curators of tradition, and were given all kinds of conflicting advice about how to keep pace with the modern world by various men in a 1935 advice book known as Geigi tokuhon 芸妓読本 (The geisha reader).

The two other sections of the book take us to other geisha milieu and explore the arts. The section titled “Variations” describes the difference between geisha (unmarried, independent, and thus, beyond the pale in Japan) and wives (married, mothers, and respectable, if somewhat constrained by their wifely role), and introduces other geisha areas, specifically Akasaka in Tokyo and the rural Atami Hot springs. Anthropologist David Plath felt that Dalby, steeped in the “haughtiness” of high geisha culture of Pontocho, sneered at the rural geisha (1984, 459); but Dalby sees this as making “no secret of [her] own biases” (1983, xvii). Here, Masuda Sayo’s autobiography gives a more sympathetic view of the life of one hot springs geisha, recounting her own experiences in this world before the War. “Sensibilities,” the third section, gives an overview of the geisha arts—including the Edo aesthetic of iki 粋, the samisen, the grand dances, the language of kimono—and closes with a chapter on Dalby’s return to Kyoto six years later. A helpful glossary of Japanese geisha terms rounds out the book.

**Geisha in the Undergraduate Classroom**

I regularly assign *Geisha* in my undergraduate class “Geisha in History, Fantasy, and Fiction” for several reasons. Dalby’s explanations of geisha life, ozashiki, arts practice, and kimono work well to introduce these topics; and, as mentioned, the history chapters are unique. Echoing some early criticisms of the book, I, too, find that its structure, which strikes me as poetically haphazard at times, makes it hard to appreciate the work as a coherent narrative. As Bernstein pointed out in her 1984 review, the book’s seventeen chapters and subsections “make the text seem fragmentary”; chapter titles can be obscure and not informative; and the book can be “occasionally confusing, repetitive, or contradictory” (224). This may be due to the way that much is introduced as Dalby encountered it. For classroom use, I have found it most effective to assign chapters individually along with other articles or documentary videos as we take up such topics as the arts, parties, kimono, and so forth. If I were focusing more on geisha role-playing, however, then I would have the students read the book in one week with discussion questions geared to the persona of Dalby/Ichigiku as a performer. Others do like the structure of *Geisha*: Praising Dalby’s scholarship as “sound,” anthropologist Takie Lebra applauds the book’s organization,
finding that Dalby's "entire book reads like a drama, with picturesque flashbacks and interludes, wherein predominates a sense of time-flow as if emanating directly from the 'floating world'" (1984–85, 702).

Although many of my students report that they become fond of Ichigiku, and even root for her, they find it difficult at times to separate her story from that of the geisha she is studying. As one of my students wrote, "I found myself cheering for her to 'pass' as a geisha." The possibility of experiencing life as geisha has some appeal for many of my students, too. When I screened the Memoirs of a Geisha DVD featurette "Geisha Boot Camp" that showed the female cast being taught by Dalby and others to move like geisha, several students thought it looked fun to try. The students generally gave Geisha high marks, although some also mentioned that, like Bernstein, they wished Dalby had occasionally "stayed . . . with one person long enough for the reader to get to know her" (1984, 224). Dalby did gain unusual access and briefly recounts fascinating conversations with older geisha, such as one born in 1900 whose career had spanned decades. Personally, I would like to know more about the geisha questionnaires, to which one hundred replied, and what the responses showed. Dalby's experiences tend to dominate the narrative; and of all the geisha introduced, it is Ichigiku one is most likely to remember. Still, Ichigiku's story has earned a place in the history of geisha performances, as I discuss below.

Scholarly Responses to & Critiques of Dalby's Geisha

Reviews of Geisha by senior anthropologists have been most mixed on Dalby's accounts of her own experiences. Middlethon, reviewing the 1998 reissued Geisha, determines that the "deliberate inclusion of subjective material is a strength, as it facilitates a series of glimpses into a unique female community which otherwise could only be accessed through secondary sources" (2000, 110). Cornell (1986) found that Dalby's attention to her own experiences ultimately made the book entertaining, but were too much about "The Adventures of the Geisha Ichigiku." She thus excludes Geisha from consideration as "serious ethnography" but advises that "Geisha would be a valuable resource for those investigating the relationship between theater and culture" (486). Although he judged Dalby's history of geisha "illuminating," Plath (1984) was not impressed with the overall tone of the book nor with what Dalby termed her "interpretive ethnography" (1983, xvi); again, it was all too much about Ichigiku. Thus, he criticized the way "she conflates ethnography with autobiography" (1984, 456).

To be fair to Dalby and her critics, too, I should mention that the field of anthropology was in flux in the 1980s; and, amid new debates on subjectivity and the problem of positionality, many found themselves criticized for their "interpretive" ethnographies. Nevertheless, it is the entertaining
quality of *Geisha* that also gives Plath pause. He remarked that “*Geisha* might just be the first book by an American anthropologist that makes it to the screen as a feature film. . . . Here is a new challenge for Meryl Streep: to play Dalby the anthropologist playing Ichigiku the entertainer” (1984, 455–56). (In fact, a made-for-TV movie, *American Geisha*, loosely based on Dalby’s book, was released in 1986; but the main character was played by Pam Dawber, not Meryl Streep. See Marchetti 1993.) It seems Plath did not intend to be entirely complimentary when he wrote, “Ichigiku is a stunning performer” (455).

Such critique also draws our attention to the ways in which Dalby as Ichigiku caused such a stir when numerous other anthropologists of Japan—even those who have dressed the part of an aerobics instructor, a bar hostess, and a Shikoku pilgrim—have been neither hailed as “the first” nor inspired films (see, respectively, Spielvogel 2003, Allison 1994, Reader 2006). Thus, interest in Dalby as Ichigiku speaks volumes as well about the geisha’s place in American popular culture. Associated ever since the mid-nineteenth century with fantasies of the “exotic East,” the term *geisha* calls to mind sex work even today and colors expectations about Dalby’s geisha sojourn. No doubt many have wondered if Dalby’s fieldwork brought her into contact with the exotic erotic. *American Geisha*, the 1986 made-for-TV movie, apparently played up this possibility, imagining the Dalby character, Gillian, having an affair with a kabuki actor during her stay in Kyoto.

For someone who teaches classes on Japanese theater and geisha, however, the anthropologists’ references to multiple role-playing, Dalby as the stunning performer, and using *Geisha* as way to study theater’s connection to culture are tantalizing. Over twenty-five years after its initial publication, the text is not used in anthropology classrooms. Yet *Geisha* does offer a stimulating text for students of theater to explore the question of who can perform the geisha’s role. This is not an innocent question. Rather, it places Liza Dalby within a history of geisha performances that have crossed the borders of gender, race, and ethnicity in Japan and transnationally, often stirring controversy. Examining such performances pushes us to ask about the “before” and “after” of the geisha makeover—who plays whom, and for what audiences and under whose auspices. Sketching out even some of this history shows that Dalby/Ichigiku, although a compelling performance, is one among many that defy the boundaries of difference.

**Geisha Masquerades:**
**Using *Geisha* to Understand Issues of Gender & Race**

Even a semester-long class on geisha merely scratches the surface of this history, but I would like to give some idea of how we encounter multilayered roles worthy of “Streep playing Dalby playing Ichigiku.” The na-
tecture of the transgressions—the border crossing—changes with the times and the locations. We can begin with geisha masquerades in Japan performed by kabuki onnagata 女形 (performers of women’s roles, generally male). Following theater historian and critic Maki Isaka’s work (2006), we observe the close friendships among kabuki actors and geisha, and we attend to the ways that notions of ideal femininity circulated among onnagata, geisha, and audience members; we recall how an onnagata had trained Dalby in how a woman uses a fan (1983, 274–75). The discussion complicates our view of femininity as constructed and not always associated with women.

Western geisha impersonators are many. We may consider Anglo women’s geisha roles by looking at such historically disparate productions as the 1896 London hit musical-comedy, The Geisha: Story of a Teahouse, that featured English Lady Molly Seamore masquerading as the geisha Roli Poli, a prank that almost got her married to a Japanese Baron (see Hashimoto 2005); opera singers’ early approaches to the playing of Madame Butterfly, sometimes by hiring and then emulating Japanese housemaids (Yoshihara 2003); a 1959 episode of the popular TV show I Love Lucy which features Lucille Ball disguised as a geisha; and the 1962 movie My Geisha that starred Shirley MacLaine as the spunky American movie star who learns to be a more sensitive wife after performing incognito in Japan as a geisha (see Marchetti 1993 for an analysis). In all cases, the Anglo women-as-geisha manipulate their ancé’s or husbands’ fantasies such that the men never recognize their “exotic geisha girl” is actually their own betrothed.

Catching up with the times, we examine still more geisha masquerades. We discuss the controversy that arose when Rob Marshall cast three ethnically Chinese women in the leads of Memoirs of a Geisha, angering Chinese who felt insulted by these stars playing “Japanese prostitutes.” The debate drew opinions from many quarters; Asian Canadian actor Sandra Oh supported Marshall’s decision, arguing that hiring Asian actors along narrow lines of “ethnic correctness” would give them even fewer acting opportunities than they already had. Director Chen Kaige, however, saw the choice as proof that Hollywood didn’t know one Asian from another. Of all the topics we discuss, class debate over Memoirs casting is always the liveliest, touching as it does our own fraught relationship with representations of race and ethnicity, and provoking discussion about whether there is any way out of orientalism when focusing on geisha. Thus we consider Lee and Tsuchitani’s protest against the fetishization of the geisha in American culture as orientalist. We discuss how Lee and Tsuchitani deploy their own bodies in comic ways—Lee in his sketch and Tsuchitani in his posters—as a form of mockery, and also, in effect, for implying how feminized or even invisible the Asian man becomes in “geisha girl” narratives. How does the preponderance of images of exotic Asia affect American perceptions of Asia and Asian Americans?
Returning to Liza Dalby, who had been our guide to geisha history and arts throughout much of the semester, we now see her performance as Ichigiku in light of other border-crossing “geisha.” Her performance stands out because, unlike our other examples of Anglo geisha (such as Roli Poli), she spoke Japanese, studied Japanese culture, respected geisha, and sought to understand their history. Geisha themselves had collaborated in training her and making her performance possible. As with other Anglo masquerades, Dalby’s made mischief, too—and to the delight of customers and other geisha. Dalby’s account also demonstrated a kind of “learning through the body” evident in many other impersonations from the kabuki actors to the Chinese actresses that Dalby trained and, like these other geisha players, demonstrated that such performance was not unique to a Japanese female body. (One can add that Dalby probably accomplished this performance better than the Memoirs actresses.) Following Marjorie Garber’s (1991) argument about cross-dressing, one can say that Dalby also raises the possibility that she is not the “American who passes as a geisha”—an understanding that underscores an either/or binary and leads to geisha versus “geisha”—but, rather, that she is something new: She is Ichigiku. This does not mean that Ichigiku is beyond analysis or criticism, only that her performance can be analyzed as the cross-dressed one that she presents.

I shall close this essay by referring to a conversation I had with Iona Rozeal Brown, an African American artist who has worked in Japan. Observing her brilliant paintings that work with styles common to Japanese woodblock prints (ukiyo-e 浮世絵), I exclaimed how interesting it was to see her black geisha and how different they were from the line of Anglo impersonations going back to Monet putting his wife in a gaudy kimono and surrounding her with fans for “La Japonaise” (1876). Brown replied that my interpretation was possible, but she had seen the paintings as representations of some Japanese women’s desires to look black, not the other way around. If we take Ichigiku as our standpoint here, then maybe these paintings, too, imagine a third term that subverts conventional understanding of race, passing, geisha, and “geisha.”

Notes

The author thanks Elizabeth Gilbert, Steve Gump, Maki Isaka, Ronnie Littlejohn, and Laura Miller for their help with this essay.

2 Tsuchitani’s poster is actually a modification of the poster for the exhibit, also seen all over San Francisco in 2004, titled “Geisha: Beyond the Painted Smile.” The original poster can be seen at http://www.scotttsuchitani.com/pages/geisha/fantasy.html. Included on the site is a letter exchange between Tsuchitani and Dalby.
3 Other accounts of geisha lives and history that were published much earlier include Fujimoto (1917) and Perkins (1954).
For academic analyses of Sadayakko’s life that place her within Japanese theatrical and literary history, see Kano (2001) and Levy (2006).

According to Gallagher (2003, 25), Memoirs of a Geisha in its Japanese translation (Sayuri) sold only 50,000 copies in Japan.

Downer (2002, 4) recounts how telling a Japanese man on an airplane trip to Japan that she was studying geisha produced this response: “‘Fujiyama,’ he foamed, spitting out the word which foreigners mistakenly use when speaking of Mount Fuji and a symbol to Japanese of our inability to muster even the faintest understanding of their country. ‘Fujiyama,’ ‘geisha’!? he snarled. ‘Stereotype, prejudice!’”

Scott Nagel (2009), in his review essay in this volume of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies, corroborates this view with respect to the global perception of sushi as quintessentially Japanese.

One comical instance of identity confusion is as follows: Dressed in full geisha costume for the evening of Setsubun 節分, the February 3 holiday that geisha and their customers celebrate in masquerade, Dalby observed that passersby saw her height and her geisha gear and assumed that she “was a Japanese man, a female impersonator dressed in drag for Setsubun. ‘Still, he’s awfully glamorous,’ I heard one man comment” (1983, 133).

More recently, Fiona Graham, an Australian social anthropologist and attendee of Japan’s prestigious Keio University, debuted as a geisha in Tokyo in December 2007. For information on her and the geisha life in Tokyo today, visit Graham’s Web site at http://www.sayuki.net/.

See, for example, the interview with Dalby about her geisha experiences in Maltby (1999).


Downer writes (2002, xi): “Like everyone who studies the geisha, my first step was to turn to Liza Dalby’s brilliant anthropological analysis, Geisha, the bible of geisha studies. Ms. Dalby generously offered suggestions and encouragement in e-mails and phone conversations.” In the Acknowledgements to Memoirs of a Geisha, Golden (along with his ill-fated expression of gratitude to Iwasaki Mineko) thanks Dalby for lending him “a number of useful Japanese and English books from her personal collection” (1997, 434). Rowley thanks Dalby, among others, for her enthusiasm and suggestions for improving her translation of Masuda’s autobiography (Masuda 2003, 3).

Onnagata are usually men portraying women. In one case, though, a female onnagata played a man playing a woman, and she did so well that she earned this compliment: “nobody can tell that she is not a man” (Isaka 2006, 111).

The play is available online through Google Books.

Indeed, images of race and (mis)representations of Asian identity—both globally as well as within Asia—are themes that surface throughout numerous pieces in this volume of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies, including those by Creighton (2009), Finchum-Sung (2009), Jung (2009), and Law (2009).

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Book Reviews


A Need Fulfilled

Books that fill gaps in the literature are always a welcome sight. Even though education in Asia—especially East Asia—has been studied intensely in the West for decades, most of the works that draw comparisons across Asian countries seem to dwell on quantitative, measurable aspects. Indeed, such evaluations are necessary as benchmarks for comparative understanding. As I pointed out in a review published in this journal in 2007, however, explorations of the personal dimension of education—that is, insights into the lived experiences of students, teachers, and administrators—are infrequently included in comparative, cross-cultural volumes. Numbers are stronger, more sensational signals: Look at how well sixth-grade students in, say, Singapore are doing on a standardized international mathematics exam! Look at how many classroom hours of instruction primary and secondary pupils in Japan receive per year! Thus the qualitative side of education in Asia has historically received less coverage in the West. With Going to School in South Asia and Going to School in East Asia, two volumes in Greenwood’s Global School Room Series, I can no longer complain about this lacuna with respect to descriptions of education in Asia: the gap has now been addressed.

Together, these two volumes are most impressive: representing the collective work of thirty-five contributors, they include chapters on twenty-five countries and territories in East, Southeast, and South Asia. (Given its coverage, Going to School in East Asia should have been titled Going to School in East and Southeast Asia. Or, given its length, it could have been divided into two volumes.) They are the first two of a planned nine volumes in the Global School Room Series, which will cover education systems on all six inhabited continents. Series editors Alan Sadovnik (Rutgers University) and Susan Semel (City University of New York) explain, in the series foreword, that one purpose for the series is to enable primary, secondary, and
higher education around the world to be “understood in the context of each local culture” (Gupta, p. x). Authors of individual chapters present the history of education systems and offer descriptions of contemporary systems in their target countries and territories. They show, by describing curricula and presenting philosophical and sociological perspectives, how education is both informed by and informative of such contexts as social, political, and economic structures; religion; and national culture and identity. What makes the volumes in this series particularly engaging, however, are the vignettes that portray “a day in the life” of schoolchildren from different backgrounds. The portraits, unfortunately not employed in all chapters, focus on primary and secondary education and showcase a wide variety of urban, rural, public, private, boarding, and cram schools. Readers thus get a feel for what certain schools in the various countries are actually like—and how they fit into the fabric of schoolchildren’s (and their families’) daily lives. Alone, no amount of quantitative data can provide this type of descriptive window into an education system.

Schooling in South Asia

In Going to School in South Asia, Amita Gupta (City University of New York) has brought together chapters on schooling in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Her brief introductory chapter contextualizes the region of South Asia, highlighting the importance of religion (Hinduism in India and Nepal; Buddhism in Bhutan and Sri Lanka; and Islam in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Pakistan) and political structures (functional democracies in Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka; monarchies in Bhutan and Nepal; a military government in Pakistan; and a “transitioning” system in Afghanistan). She finds more similarities across these nations, especially with respect to educational systems, during the “ancient period” (p. 1), when Vedic teachings influenced educational philosophies and curricula. The introduction includes brief sections (straight out of Philosophy of Education 101) on educational philosophies (e.g., idealism, realism, pragmatism) and the relationship between culture and curriculum. Gupta succeeds in highlighting the recent political strife and obstacles that the countries of South Asia have had to endure and overcome—what Roozbeh Shirazi (Teachers College, Columbia University), in the chapter on education in Afghanistan, refers to as “formidable challenges but also encouraging progress” (p. 30). Before providing brief chapter overviews, Gupta also explains why her subsequent chapter on India—the lengthiest of the volume—is the cornerstone of the work: it “contextualize[s] the other chapters because historically, each of the other South Asian countries has been closely linked to and influenced by events that occurred within the political and educational systems of the land that has been known for centuries as India” (p. 11).
The eight alphabetically arranged, country-specific chapters that follow are organized relatively consistently (though some headings differ from chapter to chapter). Each chapter opens with a brief overview that locates the country geographically, religiously, linguistically, and demographically. Next is a substantial section, often divided chronologically or thematically, on the historical development of education in that country. A section on present-day education follows, often with descriptions of various levels of schooling, types of schools, and curricula. If vignettes on “everyday life” in schools are included—as they are for all countries except the Maldives and Nepal—they are within or after the section on present-day education. Chapters frequently conclude with an outlook to the future or with supplemental timelines or data tables.

For the North American student of comparative education, this volume provides a way to learn about the diversity of the historical layers of influences on education in South Asia. Gupta’s chapter on schooling in India, for example, chronologizes a fascinating palimpsest of religious influence on education: Vedic/Hindu (2000–600 B.C.E.), Buddhist (600 B.C.E.–700 C.E.), and Islamic (1000–1700 C.E.). Thereafter, French, Portuguese, Dutch, and British missionaries and traders began a period of European and Christian influences on education in India, a period that officially ended with independence in 1947. Shirazi includes ancient influences from Zoroastrians and Greco-Bactrians on Afghan education. Swarna Jayaweera (University of Colombo, emerita) describes Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences on education in Sri Lanka. The contemporary role of non-governmental organizations in providing basic education services and educational development in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, in particular, may also be a revelation to some readers. Finally, the realities of schooling in South Asian contexts—including the (comparative) lack of infrastructure, resources, and teacher training; discrepancies in the availability or quality of education based on a child’s sex, minority status, and social class; and relative brevity of school days in some regions—is presented quite tellingly in the vignettes, which are often written in the first person.

Yes, the vignettes are clearly a strength of Going to School in South Asia. I can easily envision them being used as standalone pieces in an undergraduate course on comparative education. Another strength is coverage: the chapters on education in Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Maldives, and Nepal were of particular interest to me, as they covered territory that is not frequently described in the academic literature. Helpful, too, is that the chapter authors present insiders’ views, for the most part. Language, typically an issue in edited volumes where not all contributors are native speakers of English, is remarkably consistent, with idiosyncratic use of commas my only major quibble. Since individual chapters include their own bibliographies, the slim bibliography in the back matter (which includes twenty-
four entries, only eleven of which are books), would better be described as “suggested resources.” This “bibliography” precedes the subject index and notes on the editor and contributors.

Schooling in East Asia

Going to School in East Asia, which again would have been better titled Going to School in East and Southeast Asia, is the second volume in Greenwood's Global School Room Series. Edited by Gerard A. Postiglione (University of Hong Kong) and Jason Tan (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore), this volume brings together the efforts of twenty-six scholars of international education and offers chapters on schooling in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, North Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Yes, entire chapters on education in Brunei Darussalam and East Timor! Omitted are only the territory of Macau (a special administrative region of China since 1999) and Myanmar, whose military regime ominously “vets publications for international publication” (p. xiii). Postiglione’s preface emphasizes the role of education in East Asia of the twenty-first century. He asks: How do the countries addressed in this book “use schooling to repackage cultural heritage within shifting sociocultural contexts in order that they may produce a national citizenry and at the same time maintain a common regional affinity necessary to fulfill the penultimate East Asian aspiration—that of being the major sphere of global prosperity in the second half of the 21st century” (p. xii)? The context of economic globalization is thus a key theme of the chapters in this volume.

Postiglione and Tan’s introductory chapter provides an excellent summary of education in each country and territory examined in the volume. They describe education in the region of East Asia as having been influenced by Confucianism; the region of Southeast Asia (with the exception of Vietnam) was connected to China primarily through trade. Postiglione and Tan consider the lingering effects of colonialism on the area and the rapidly changing global conditions that have called for reorientations and reorganizations of educational goals and systems. Ultimately, their presentation of various theoretical approaches (hegemony versus self-determination, world-systems theory, neo-institutionalism, postmodernism, and center–periphery frameworks) suggests that this nineteen-page introduction could function effectively in graduate-level courses on international and comparative education.

In light of the various theoretical approaches proposed, the emphasis on economics and development results in an approach that is more quantitative than the one used by chapter authors in Going to School in South Asia. Tables, charts, and figures are aplenty; but the overall organization of al-
phabetically arranged chapters parallels that of the earlier volume. Each includes a contextualizing introduction to the country or territory (though the quality is widely divergent among chapters), a presentation of historical effects on education, a description of the present schooling system, and a vignette offering a schoolchild’s “typical day” (except for the chapters on Hong Kong, South Korea, and Vietnam). Emphasis is placed on contemporary challenges to the systems; greater attention is placed on curricula, teacher training, higher education, and vocational and adult education; and less space is dedicated to exploring the early histories of education in these regions. Indeed, the cultural exchange and interaction of preceding millennia, highlighted in Gupta’s volume as the foundation for educational philosophies in South Asia, seem to mirror the globalization implicated in Postiglione and Tan’s volume as the future direction of education in East and Southeast Asia.

In their chapter on schooling in the Philippines, Antonio Torralba (University of Asia and the Pacific [UAP], Philippines), Paul Dumol (UAP), and Maria Manzon (University of Hong Kong), point out the difficulty in describing a “typical day” in the life of a Filipino student: “the ‘typical’ day is as varied as the ‘typical’ Filipino student” (p. 292). Nevertheless, most other authors who present vignettes of “typical days” seem more comfortable with the exercise. Particularly engaging is the vignette in the chapter on schooling in Laos (by Manynooch Faming, University of Hong Kong, pp. 194–99), which describes a day at a secondary boarding school for ethnic minorities in Oudomxay Province (in northwestern Laos). The complexities of education being viewed as a pathway to “modernity” and “civilization” are powerfully woven through this vignette of a boy named Bocher, the only child from his village to attend school.

Compared with Going to School in South Asia, Going to School in East Asia exhibits more divergence among chapters in terms of both the quality of writing and the extent of helpful contextualization (that is, some chapters would be less penetrable by readers with no background knowledge of the country or territory in question). Thankfully, the more “difficult” chapters cover countries about which much has already been written: the very surfeit of information on education in, for example, China and Japan, may have made it more difficult for the authors of those chapters to position their presentations and analyses. (Curiously, too, the author of the chapter on schooling in Japan, Akira Arimoto of Hiroshima University, felt compelled to cite practically the entire pantheon of major Western scholars of Japanese education: William Cummings, Ronald Dore, Herbert Passin, Thomas Rohlen, and Merry White. Or perhaps he was encouraged to do so to provide a suitable bibliography for English-speaking readers.) The back matter of Going to School in East Asia parallels that of Going to School in South Asia, but the collected bibliography is inclusive (and thus requires
twenty pages, as opposed to two), and the subject index displays a greater level of detail.

Throughout the volume, I wish more attention had been given to the accurate representation of Asian-language terms. Vietnamese diacritics are not attempted; Korean breves are missing (except in the North Korean bibliography, where at least one appears in the wrong place); and Japanese macrons are absent (though some words for school types are occasionally circumflexed, a quaint vestige of word-processor capabilities from over a decade ago). (Readers familiar with other Asian languages could comment on the accuracy of other representations.) These issues should not have been caused by production limitations, as a four-character quotation from Confucius appears—in Chinese—in the introductory chapter.  

Portraits of Education & Education Systems in Asia

Together, then, these two volumes succeed at presenting a window into contemporary education in East, South, and Southeast Asia. With a human population of over 3.6 billion—over half of the current population of the world—the countries and territories profiled in these volumes present myriad challenges, expectations, and hopes for the future. Education is clearly a reasonable vehicle for approaching these challenges, shaping these expectations, and enabling these hopes; and the chapters in these volumes show how historical, cultural, and social contexts have shaped—and undoubtedly will continue to shape—education in twenty-five countries and territories in East, Southeast, and South Asia.

The vignettes, I believe, will prove to be a clear highlight of the series. Still, the presentations would have benefitted from more photographs: Going to School in South Asia has none (besides the captionless color image on the cover—uniformed and backpacked girls walking to or from school in Bhutan); Going to School in East Asia includes only twelve monograph images (plus the captionless cover image—students holding their slate writing boards aloft in an elementary classroom in Kampong Cham, Cambodia). More representations of classrooms and school buildings and their grounds would support the focus on contemporary education and would add a level of immediate meaning accessible by less advanced audiences. Inexcusable, however, is the complete omission of maps of any sort from both volumes, especially given that the chapters are arranged not geographically (e.g., from north to south or east to west within a region) but alphabetically: Singapore, for example, is intertextually separated from Malaysia by Mongolia, North Korea, and the Philippines. The encyclopedic nature of these volumes is thus compromised by that cartographic oversight. Finally, inconsistencies as to whether first names or first initials are used in bibliographic entries should have been caught at an early stage, since several contributors are inconsistent within their own chapters.
Ultimately, these books should find useful homes in high school and college libraries; as components of international and comparative education courses (at the undergraduate and even graduate levels); as references for instructors of introductory-level Asian survey courses; and as additions to personal libraries of academicians who wish to understand better the diverse means, modes, and mechanisms of education across the countries and territories of East, South, and Southeast Asia.

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Notes


3 The phrase is 有教無类, literally “have education without class” (i.e., without distinction or discrimination), which has, in fact, been translated as “No Child Left Behind” (a policy I had previously not traced to Confucius). This phrase, alas, is the only Asian text (rendered in its natural form) in the book.

4 Investigative research was required to identify the provenances of the cover images, since no descriptions are provided in the books themselves.


Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864–1957), Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899–1983), and Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904–65), the premier painters of modern China, seem to divide among themselves the possibilities of thought and feeling, as if wary of overlap and repetition. Qi Baishi was luminous and naive, his art an expression of startled delight at the quizzical unlikelihood of natural beauty. Zhang Daqian was cerebral, versatile, and self-conscious, a master sagely resigned to the inescapability of the past and wittily aware of attendant ironies. Working within the landscape tradition while imprinting it with his own sensibility, Fu Baoshi was a turbulent lyricist whose visions of mountain, river, and sea are fundamentally inner visions, metaphors for his own spiritual solitude and unruly passion. These painters are by now enshrined in the history of Chinese art, and publishers are busy ratifying their work in lavish editions. Recently, Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe 广西美术出版社, a commercial firm, published a six-volume folio edition of Fu Baoshi’s
paintings, titled *Fu Baoshi quanji* (The complete works of Fu Baoshi). The edition offers somewhat gushing commentary in Chinese and a useful catalogue of seals, but its primary recommendation is its hundreds of color plates. These reproduce work spanning the years 1925 to 1965 and provide a thorough—allegedly complete—overview of Fu Baoshi’s artistry.

The revelation of the edition has little to do with its myriad masterpieces in familiar styles but with the extraordinary number of paintings that are *not* masterpieces. These fall into three categories: the immature, the botched, and the drunken (Fu Baoshi had a special seal to identify paintings rendered under the influence). These fumblings persisted through the 1950s, making Fu Baoshi’s an oddly late maturity. As these volumes present the chronology of his work, Fu Baoshi did not create a truly consummate painting—the kind of painting that elicits in collectors an almost erotic covetousness—until 1946, when he was forty-two. The breakthrough painting, in my estimation, was an elegantly spare snow scene—snow being the natural medium of Fu Baoshi’s spiritual purity and astringency (2: 247; for additional stirrings of greatness, see 2: 57, 99, and 149). His first masterpiece of world art, which depicts a scholar playing the *guqing* 古琴 (seven-stringed zither) as a chevron of geese breast a desolate expanse of sand and sky, did not arrive until 1956 (3: 168). The editors rightly observe a certain subtle advance in the paintings of the late 1940s and comment: “The composition becomes simpler, the ink lighter, and the outlines of the figures more fluid and graceful.” In other words, Fu Baoshi had finally mastered the essence of the literati tradition: the ability to make the simplest forms ramify with immense metaphorical and emotional implication.

The many overtly flawed paintings in these volumes are particularly enlightening as they clarify Fu Baoshi’s natural strengths and weaknesses. From the beginning he was a master of texture, rhythm, and mood. Even his earliest paintings escape flatness and inertness, the brush strokes themselves communicating energy and feeling. He was not, on the other hand, preternaturally gifted in the most basic work of composition: arranging space to achieve coherence and balance. Over and over again, he attempts to compensate for faults in composition by excrement rock formations and unnaturally angled branches. Invariably, his paintings sink under these belated rescue operations. (For examples of characteristically troubled paintings, see 1: 145, 151, 181, 183, 203, and 291.) Only in his final years did he achieve a consistent mastery of voids and solids. What seems a pattern of trial and error may, of course, have an entirely different explanation. In all such editions, forged paintings may appear as authentic paintings, and I have heard it said on good authority—though I make no allegations in this case—that collectors will sometimes bribe editors to canonize their own paintings. In this matter, as in so many, Chinese painting is a Borgesian phenomenon: instead of uncovering the truth, we learn to smile at the
very notion. The eleven editors of these volumes—including Fu Baoshi’s son—at least acknowledge the issue. They identify numerous paintings as being of uncertain authenticity, though they do not explain their reservations or justify the decision to err on the side of inclusion.

These volumes also shed light on Fu Baoshi’s most baffling contradiction. His imagination realized itself in visions of solitary contemplatives, lonely scholars who have followed hidden paths above and beyond the world; and yet he functioned successfully enough within the political apparatus of the Communist Party, apparently believing beyond mere lip service in the salvation of collectivism and the wisdom of Chairman Mao. Not for nothing does his famous collaboration with Guan Shanyue 關山月 (1912–2000), This Land so Rich in Beauty, prominently hang in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing (its red sun rising above a regress of snow-covered mountains interprets Mao’s poem “Ode to Snow”; see 3: 310). The inner and outer man must have intersected, but the logic of this intersection is by no means obvious. What can be said is that Fu Baoshi was one of the most brilliant iconographers of Communism, having a rare ability to reconcile genuine artistic vision with ulterior political purpose. His closest competitors in this regard, Lu Yanshao 陸俨少 (1909–93) and Li Keran 李可染 (1907–89), were neither as lofty in their art nor as blatant in their politics. In his greatest paintings extolling the Communist cause, Fu Baoshi depicts soldiers trudging in distant, wispy file under the red flag—scenes of the “Long March” of 1934–35. Placed against the backdrop of snowy, visionary mountain passes, the soldiers transcend their political context and become spiritual pilgrims, symbols of a weary but faithful humanity following a hidden star to some manger of transfiguration. The most technically correct scientific materialist might object to this dissolution of political and historical context in the interest of a broader mystic vision (the Cultural Revolution would certainly have been unkind to Fu Baoshi had he lived to see it), but such paintings express a vague romantic yearning that is at least potentially consistent with Communist sensibility, while being equally consistent with the literati aestheticism that is Fu Baoshi’s more crucial allegiance.

In some cases, Fu Baoshi slips in this balancing act and becomes propagandistic. There are, for example, a handful of paintings that dabble in journalistic caricature. In one, a U.S. soldier bestrides Taiwan while a Chinese figure strangles him from behind and red flags wave from a mountainside across the strait (3: 299). There are also numerous paintings in which Fu Baoshi attempts to imbue Eastern European industrial scenes with the poetic aura of the Chinese mountains. These paintings, though pretty enough in some cases, seem offhand and mechanical—labors of ideological rectitude. The most charmless is the depiction of the airport at Irkutsk in Siberia. The painting properly belongs in a government travel
brochure and may be the worst painting of Fu Baoshi’s entire career (3: 184–85). Closer to home, but equally bloodless, are two depictions of Sun Yat-sen’s tomb from the distance of an opposite mountain (4: 337; 5: 257). The scenes neither move nor breathe, as though Fu Baoshi had finally wearied of the effort to animate politically correct forms with his own spiritual vision. At other times, Fu Baoshi toys with sentimental visions of the landscape as a lightly industrialized or neatly farmed paradise-in-the-making, the red glow of sunrise making no mistake about whom to thank for the nascent golden age. (For a particularly egregious effort in this vein, see 4: 171.)

Fu Baoshi’s more essential self shows in his fascination with certain themes of classical poetry. These are represented in dozens of repetitive figure paintings. The emotional rationale of these literary preoccupations is difficult to ascertain, but the images themselves trace in face and robe, in metaphorical groves of falling leaves, a certain aristocratic disdain for all mere life: Even as he dispensed his duty as a party functionary, serving up cloying paeans like This Land So Rich in Beauty, his imagination immersed itself in the coldness of the ancient understanding. This being said, Fu Baoshi was foremost a landscape artist, and his figure paintings for the most part lack the highest distinction. If this distinction entails the simultaneous revelation of the momentary and the eternal, Fu Baoshi tended to favor the eternal: His figures are types, beautiful in their tragic sorrow, but their allegorical meaning is somewhat too fixed—their sorrow and beauty, a symbolic mask. Fu Baoshi was perhaps too much the transcendentalist entirely to sympathize with the passing blush of life. In this respect, he was not a natural-born portraitist, but his force of personality—his severity of vision—is enough to make his art compelling, even against its own grain.

Fu Baoshi was a supreme artist, but the twentieth century was a profoundly inappropriate context for his supremacy. At their most arresting, these volumes document the defiant attempt to uphold the solitude of the intellect and a world in the image of this solitude. Defiance is a mode of energy but also of self-consciousness; the one eventuates in vision, the other, in incoherence, self-doubt, or mere reaction. Page by page, these volumes unfold a quintessential modern drama—equally relevant to West and East—as Fu Baoshi toils in pursuit of the pure vision, his chief obstacle himself, the all-too-modern man.

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Ronnie Littlejohn’s *Daoism: An Introduction* is one of several introductions to Daoism to hit the market in the last few years, including James Miller’s *Daoism: A Short Introduction* (Oneworld, 2003) and Livia Kohn’s *Introducing Daoism* (Routledge, 2008). Where these other introductions are very general and present Daoism in a way that is accessible to those who are relatively unacquainted with the tradition, Littlejohn’s book focuses more intently and exclusively on the writings of Daoist “masters,” providing readers with a more detailed discussion of this important aspect of Daoism, even if it is forced in the process to avoid prolonged discussion of other equally important aspects of the tradition. It is what I call an “advanced introduction,” of greatest use to those who are already mildly acquainted with a broad range of Daoist ideas and practices and wish now to delve deeper into a particular aspect of the tradition, in this case, the writings of its literate elite. Readers of this book will thus encounter a detailed and complex introduction to the ways in which Daoism has been advanced historically by the writers and compilers of its authoritative textual traditions.

The book works primarily to interpret historically significant Daoist writings relative to the socio-cultural contexts of the people who produced, collected, and have used them over time. It goes far beyond discussion of obviously important texts like the *Daodejing* 道德經 and *Zhuangzi* 庄子, weaving a complex history of Daoist thought and practice as expressed in the writings of many lesser-known—but influential—Daoist masters. Using the image of a kudzu vine with its entangled roots and branches to represent the many lineages and traditions of Daoism, the book untangles and interprets these traditions in relation to the larger flow of Chinese culture and history in which they have taken root and grown. Littlejohn skillfully draws on the latest insights of a variety of disciplines, including archeology, art history, and literary studies, to show how Daoist traditions have been influenced by their surrounding culture and historical circumstances, as well as how they have influenced that culture and affected the flow of Chinese history at its core. The reader thus gains a nuanced understanding of the history of Daoism and its shifting place in China’s cultural landscape.

A useful feature of the book is its inclusion of lengthy quotes from source materials, allowing the reader to interact directly with the traditions discussed. Although it would be useful to read in conjunction with an anthology of primary readings, the book still provides sufficient examples from primary sources to give the reader a sense of their style and import. It also contains a comprehensive glossary of titles to aid the reader in coming to terms with the substantial body of literature with which the book interacts.
Of course, there are things I might like to have seen done differently. Although the book pays some attention to the roles and statuses of women in Daoism, the treatment is cursory, attending almost exclusively to the writings of the tradition’s few female masters. The book’s focus on the writings of elite “masters” also does little to reveal how average practitioners have understood and lived the tradition over time. This situation is compensated for somewhat by the author’s frequent discussion of the rituals and other practices advocated by the texts; the ideas of the texts themselves, therefore, are not the only focus. As noted above, the author also draws on non-Daoist art and writings to show some of the ways in which Daoist ideas and practices have been incorporated into the wider culture. The inclusion of such sources, at least, opens a window onto the ways in which average persons have understood and practiced the tradition over time, even if it does not treat the subject in detail. In the end, it has to be admitted, this might be the most that one can hope for in a text that focuses on the writings of the tradition’s elite masters.

I would also like to have seen more attention given to recent and contemporary developments of the tradition, in China and beyond. The book does address these subjects to a degree; but, again, the treatment is cursory. The reader can expect a complex and detailed discussion of the historical development of Daoism, from its origins in ancient China through the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), with only a hint of what has transpired since and in other parts of the world.

Finally, I was mildly disappointed that the author chose not to include a glossary with definitions of the many Chinese terms encountered in the text. He makes the right decision in choosing not to translate key terms like dao 道, de 德, qi 氣, and the like, whose meanings are complex and not easily translated into English. The uninitiated reader is likely to need time to incorporate these terms into his or her own vocabulary, however, and thus would be greatly aided by the inclusion of such a reference tool.

These criticisms are all relatively minor and do not interfere with my overall appreciation of the book. Its style is engaging, and it compellingly relates a complex history of Daoism as expressed among the writings of its masters. For those considering using the book in the classroom, it would be especially useful in upper-division (or even graduate-level) courses to help guide students through the vast array of Daoist writings and the many entangled traditions they represent. The discussion is also so well informed that it is sure to contain new and useful information, even for those who are well acquainted with Daoism and its history. I therefore recommend Littlejohn’s Daoism: An Introduction to all who share an interest in Daoism and its textual traditions.

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Sushi Ubiquity

In a review of the varied concessions on sale at the two baseball stadiums that opened in New York at the start of the 2009 season, New York Times food critic Frank Bruni opens his article with an anecdote of one fan’s bewilderment at the availability of sushi at the new Yankee Stadium. Actually, these days you might be more hard-pressed to find a decent hamburger at a sports arena than you would be to find a California roll (although there is no accounting for the quality of that California roll). The audacity of offering sushi at a ballpark became the target of jokes of a number of late-night comedians when the cuisine first started appearing at concession stands next to hot dogs and hamburgers in the late 1980s; but today no new stadium opens without a wide selection of food concession options, and sushi almost always makes it to the menu. Ballparks are not the only place sushi has made inroads in the United States. Supermarket sushi counters, often managed by national corporations that operate the counters on a franchise basis, can be found across the country. The recent relative ubiquity of sushi is not unique to the United States, as Australia and European, South American, and Asian countries other than Japan have also experienced sushi booms.

Together, the two books reviewed below provide fascinating insights into the gastronomic, economic, and scientific roots of a cuisine that has become increasingly commonplace around the world yet has maintained an identity that most still immediately associate as being uniquely Japanese. Informed by these authors, you will likely find your next trip to a sushi bar (or to a supermarket sushi counter—or even to a ballpark sushi vendor) a much richer experience.

The Globalization of a Cuisine

In 1971, a Japan Airlines employee took on the task of finding business opportunities to resolve the airline’s dilemma of unused cargo capacity on return flights to Japan after having shipped full holds of electronics and other exported goods on its outbound trans-Pacific flights. After having pored over voluminous trade statistics, Akira Okazaki concluded that seafood featured the “value and sensitivity to decay” that “perfectly matched the economics of air freight” (Issenberg, p. 5). A subsequent field trip to
Tokyo’s Tsukiji fish market convinced him that tuna’s size and weight made it an ideal candidate to fill the empty cargo holds of Japan Airlines’ trans-Pacific fleet. Until the Meiji era (1868–1912), Japanese consumers considered tuna a lower-quality fish with a fat content more appropriate for cat food than for human consumption. Preferences changed upon the influx of richer, fattier foods during the U.S. occupation of Japan after World War II, and prices rose alongside demand in the years that followed. Fortuitously, bluefin tuna was still grossly undervalued outside Japan in the early 1970s; Okazaki’s colleagues found in their research that sport fishermen in Canada often discarded tuna as garbage after having taken a commemorative photograph next to their giant catch. Hoping to exploit this apparent price arbitrage, Okazaki commenced a risky and expensive project to partner with Canadian fisheries, arrange for ground transport of the caught tuna to John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, and develop a new type of refrigerated container customized for the airline’s fleet of DC-8s that could keep the fish frozen without the unnecessary weight of chunked ice. When the first air-delivered Canadian bluefin was sold at a profit on August 14, 1972, a new era of sushi had dawned. Atlantic fishermen would see the prices paid for their catch rise as much as 10,000 percent in the following two decades.

Sasha Issenberg writes in *The Sushi Economy: Globalization and the Making of a Modern Delicacy* that “a book about what goes into the making of sushi has to really be a narrative about the development of twentieth-century global capitalism,” arguing that prerequisites for the production of good sushi include “historical exposure to business travelers, tourists, and skilled migrants; integration into international labor markets; intercontinental cargo connections; supply-chain expertise; and exposure to the worldly flavor currents of both haute cuisine and fast food” (p. xxiv). In his attempt to trace that narrative, Issenberg, a print journalist whose body of work has focused on political reporting, escorts the reader around the world and back again to introduce a myriad cast of characters and issues that have contributed to and sprung from the rise of sushi’s popularity in Japan and abroad. As the crown jewel of sushi fish, tuna more often than not is the star of this story.

Issenberg organizes his defense for sushi as a case study for globalization into four distinct parts: a section that examines distribution networks that support the sushi business; a section that reviews sushi’s impact on the restaurant industry outside Japan; a section on efforts to catch, raise, and even smuggle tuna for sale to the sushi trade; and a concluding section that considers the future of sushi. Each chapter is staged in a different international locale, with most chapters zigzagging between macro-level background histories of the industry and illustrative micro-level profiles of individuals involved in the sushi business.
In his section on the restaurant industry, Issenberg succinctly recounts the history of Japanese food in Los Angeles, including a description of the beginnings of what became one of the region’s largest sushi-restaurant suppliers in the 1970s and 1980s, Mutual Trading Company. The business originally sourced leftover canned goods (rationed before the end of the 1904–5 Russo-Japanese War) to Japanese immigrants in the United States, becoming a consortium in 1926. Likewise, Issenberg concisely outlines an occupational biography of Nobuyuki Matsuhisa (of the high-end “Nobu” restaurant chain), who, for Issenberg, serves as the archetype of an international chef focused on fusing Japanese tradition with locally sourced and globally influenced tastes.

Issenberg’s coverage of the impact of sushi on commercial fishing features three chapters: one on the boom and bust of New England fisheries following their participation in the supply chain for Japan-bound tuna (including an interesting aside on Reverend Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church’s entry into the Massachusetts tuna fishing scene via its subsidiary, International Seafoods Corporation); a chapter on tuna ranching in Australia; and a chapter on efforts to thwart international black markets that operate in violation of tuna-fishing quota regimes. Somewhat disappointingly, Issenberg does not give meaningful attention to the consequences of overfishing wild tuna apart from passing references to the diminished catches of Atlantic and Australian fishermen.

In his analysis of the future of the cuisine, Issenberg finds that sushi’s path in China has been not unlike that of other Japanese-branded or Chinese-manufactured goods: whereas Japanese sushi-related companies once turned to China mainly as a location where they could inexpensively locate processing facilities for frozen products, today China has become a source of consumers to whom those Japanese companies increasingly want to market their final product. Issenberg portrays China and other newly emerged economies as the next frontier for the sushi business, noting that “the speed with which a rapidly enriched elite takes to sushi is not a perfect index of the development of a Western-style business culture, but one could do worse in the search for such an economic indicator” (p. 266).

**Ichthyology & Rice**

Whereas Issenberg leaps from one continent to another in his book, Trevor Corson bases the bulk of his contribution to sushi literature, *The Zen of Fish: The Story of Sushi, from Samurai to Supermarket*, at a Los Angeles school for aspiring sushi chefs. In this documentary nonfiction work, Corson shadows the students and instructors through a semester at the California Sushi Academy, which shares space with a Japanese restaurant struggling in a competitive market when the story takes place in 2005. The narrative
of the semester is literally only half of the story Corson recounts: Throughout the book, he pairs intriguing anecdotes on the history, culture, and preparation of sushi with the experiences of the students as they progress through their syllabus. Despite the somewhat clichéd use of “Zen” in the title of the hardcover edition, the result is a surprisingly thorough walkthrough of all things sushi, placed in helpful and familiar context.

Corson focuses his attention on one student in particular: Kate Murray, who has the weakest culinary skills of anyone her class. As a novice, Kate provides an apt medium through which Corson can introduce a multitude of trivia about sushi topics, ranging from the tools she will use (e.g., when samurai were no longer permitted to carry swords in the late nineteenth century, the same artisans who crafted those swords turned their attention to forging kitchen knives, which to this day are among the sharpest in the world) to the sushi she prepares using those tools (e.g., *ura-maki* 裏巻き, or inside-out rolls, are an American invention resulting from an attempt to hide the seaweed used in rolls from customers unaccustomed to the ingredient). Corson also uses Kate to discuss the bias against women on both sides of the sushi bar in Japan: Sushi bars are traditionally male-dominated spaces where female customers are often given the cold shoulder when they sit unaccompanied by men and where female sushi chefs are erroneously rumored to have hands warmer than their male counterparts, thus running the risk of “cooking” the raw ingredients they handle.

The staff and other students at the school conveniently fulfill a number of sushi-themed motifs. The owner of the sushi academy is a native Japanese who, despite not having gone through the regimen of years of training that chefs traditionally endure in Japan, has an ideal combination of respect for the cuisine and showmanship to have thrived in the boom years of sushi in Los Angeles. The school’s main instructor, an Australian, is a staunch advocate of “traditional” Japanese sushi offerings, frequently dismissing the sauces and unconventional ingredients used in sushi dishes popular with American customers. As a Japanese-restaurant consultant, the director of student affairs aims to match graduates of the academy with future employment opportunities—which we learn are increasingly more prevalent in new markets, such as Stillwater, Oklahoma, than in sushi-saturated California.

On the cuisine itself, Corson presents the natural history, biological composition, and flavor characteristics of nearly every ingredient found behind a sushi bar. In the case of sushi rice, Corson walks the reader through a description of the physical structure of rice grains; the milling process; the vitamin-fortification process required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for most rice; and its preparation as sushi rice, including an enlightening revelation (to a sushi layperson, anyway) about an MSG additive often used as a shortcut in place of the traditionally used
kelp to add flavor to the rice. Corson also explains different degrees of sweetness of sushi rice, highlighting differing regional preferences for sushi sweetness in Japan and the immediate leap in popularity of sweet sushi after World War II. In his description of a sushi chef’s preparation of *nigiri* 握り sushi (hand-squeezed rectangles of rice upon which various toppings are placed), Corson tells of the importance of the density of the rice and how good sushi chefs will tailor their style depending on the customer (e.g., customers who eat *nigiri* with their hands should be served loosely packed rice, whereas those who use chopsticks should be served a firmer block of rice, lest the *nigiri* fall apart when picked up).

The book’s real strength is Corson’s skill at making the science of sushi interesting, presenting details in a playful and unintimidating manner for those of us without backgrounds in marine biology. He provides fascinating detail of a number of the most popular sushi toppings, imbuing his descriptions with just enough scientific trivia to capture the fascination of his mass-market target audience yet not give the impression he is watering down his presentations. Throughout the book, he covers topics such as the biology of tuna (which are, believe it or not, a warm-blooded fish); the composition of various types of muscles in fish and their differing flavor profiles; the antibacterial characteristics of sushi garnishes, such as shredded radish and perilla (*shiso* 紫蘇) leaves; and the (truly fascinating) life-cycle of eels.

**Fresh Perspectives on Sushi**

Although these books inevitably overlap in their presentation of some material (such as the historical origins of sushi, its rise to popularity in California, and descriptions of the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo), the difference in approaches that Issenberg and Corson take feels more complementary and enlightening than repetitious. In their chapters on the role of Los Angeles in popularizing sushi in the United States, Issenberg provides a more thorough historical account, whereas Corson’s description benefits from telling the story through the personal experiences of the owner of the California Sushi Academy, who worked at a restaurant popular among Hollywood stars in the 1970s. Although the two books were written for generalist audiences, the thoroughness with which they address and have researched their material is impressive. Both books feature extensive bibliographies of English and Japanese works, with Corson helpfully including both Japanese characters and Romanized spellings in his citations. Corson’s frequent mention of parallels between a Japanese comic book series about a female sushi chef and the challenges faced by the students of the California Sushi Academy are a particularly effective use of creative reference material.

The utility of either *The Sushi Economy* or *The Zen of Fish* in the college classroom would likely be limited to inclusion as supplemental reading on
a syllabus for a course on Japanese supply-chain management or a general introduction to Japanese culture and customs. Issenberg, for example, provides a user-friendly introduction to the workings of the Tsukiji fish market, but his approach lacks the depth or academic rigor provided in Theodore Bestor’s work that focuses exclusively on the market.  

Were I to limit my recommendation to only one of these books, I would opt for Corson’s more lighthearted approach to sushi. While Issenberg’s argument of sushi-as-globalization and his account of the commoditization of the cuisine are well-founded, his tendency to over-exaggerate his thesis (e.g., “More than any other food, possibly more than any other commodity, to eat sushi is to display an access to advanced trade networks, of full engagement in world commerce,” p. 267) detracts from the very interesting collection of supporting evidence he presents. Corson, on the other hand, is playful yet deceptively educational in his presentation of his material; throughout The Zen of Fish, I felt inspired to rush to a sushi bar to compare what I would see and taste to what Corson had described in detail. Both of these books provide readers with an abundance of interesting facts they can share with dining companions on an outing to a Japanese restaurant, but Corson’s scope and approach ultimately seem better suited to the limitations of a mass-market book with a generalist audience in mind.

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Notes


For the past six decades, the United States has assumed primary responsibility for the defense of Japan. During the last decade, American power in East Asia has been on the decline—while, in Tokyo, a group of revisionist politicians who want Japan to become a “normal” military power capable of charting its own military course has come to power. These recent developments are the consequence of substantial alignment changes in Japanese politics and mark a major shift in the way many Japanese regard Article 9 of their constitution, the so-called Peace Clause written into the document by the United States during its occupation of Japan after World War II.

Richard J. Samuels, Ford International Professor of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has written a substantial study of the stunning political and strategic changes occurring in the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese theater as Japan is rapidly shifting gears and assuming greater responsibility for its own defense. In *Securing Japan*, he focuses on the role Article 9 has played in Japanese politics since around 1950 and how conservative forces in Japan are today seeking to eradicate the article entirely.

Article 9 of the 1947 constitution gives Japan a national identity closely identified with peace and non-proliferation. When the 1954 Japan Self-Defense Establishment Law came into effect, the Japanese government interpreted the Article to mean that, as a sovereign nation, Japan has the right of self-defense and that it is allowed to maintain an infrastructure for homeland security. This interpretation specified that Japan could keep a self-defense military force (SDF) and that it could respond with “minimum necessary force” if invaded—but it could neither send forces abroad nor participate in any collective-defense arrangements. This interpretation limited the size of Japan’s postwar military and limited the use of force to self-defense. In other words, Japan could neither maintain the capacity to conduct full-scale “modern warfare” nor assist an allied nation, like the United States, if an ally were to come under attack. This proscription on collective defense even implied that Japan could not assist an American warship that came under attack while defending Japan.

The fact that Article 9 has never been changed revolves around the fact that any effort to amend the constitution requires a two-thirds vote in each house of the national Diet and a majority of voters in a national referendum. For the first five decades of the postwar era, progressive political parties led by the Japan Socialist Party controlled over a third of the seats in both houses of the Diet, thus killing any constitutional reform that they might oppose. Another inhibiting factor was the existence of three political blocs, two of which together had enough power to block reform of Article 9. Sam-
uels identifies three blocs with their own distinct views on Article 9: The antimainstream, the mainstream, and the pacifists.

Samuels’ antimainstream group consists of a conservative grouping of politicians within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) who built a strong alliance with various industrialists and other conservative groups in Japanese society: “They favored a combination of rearmament and conventional alliances. To achieve these ends, they called for revision of the constitution’s antiwar Article 9, argued that Japan should rebuild its military capabilities, and sought a reciprocal security commitment with the United States as a step toward their holy grail of ‘autonomous defense’” (p. 30).

Samuels describes the mainstream faction as a group of pragmatic conservative LDP politicians and their allies led by postwar Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878–1967, in office 1946–47 and 1948–54). These “liberal internationalists” held the view that “economic success and technological autonomy were the prerequisites of national security—and that an alliance with the world’s ascendant power was the best means to buy time until the former could be achieved. They rejected military spending in favor of a broader plan for state-led development of the private sector” (pp. 31–32). These pragmatists dominated Japanese government during the period when the three pillars of Japan’s postwar security apparatus were established: Article 9, the SDF, and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of 1951. Their power during the first five decades of the postwar era beat back attempts by the revisionists to change the direction of Article 9.

The “Yoshida School” stressed that the foundations of national security rested with economic success and technological autonomy. The United States, they noted, wanted very much to use Japan as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” (p. 32); close ties with Washington would encourage a great deal of economic development. If the nation returned to substantial economic prosperity, the day might come when further investment in military preparedness might be encouraged without doing anything substantial to alter Article 9.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, most Japanese favored the views of this faction. Samuels correctly states that public attitudes favored a passive stance over an active stance, with a policy of alignment with the United States over a policy of equidistance between the United States and the Soviet Union, political dependence over a policy of autonomy, and minimal rather than extensive military spending. The public favored economic strength, peaceful diplomacy, and a low-key consensus approach. Samuels notes that many of these same feelings persist, even today, although a higher number favor some form of revision to Article 9.

The third group—the pacifists—consist of intellectuals, labor activists, and leftist politicians who have viewed Japan as a “peace nation” and strongly oppose the use of organized violence. As strong supporters of Arti-
cle 9 and opponents of major rearmament and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, they have sought a doctrine of "unarmed neutrality" (hibusō chūritsu 非武装中立). "Pacifists did not trust Japan with a full military capability, preferring to rely on international public opinion, diplomacy, and passive resistance to counter security threats" (p. 31). They greatly expanded their grassroots networks during the 1950s, becoming a substantial political and economic force by 1960. Leftist parties led by the Socialists had considerable success from the 1950s to the 1990s. However, because the Socialist Party has virtually disappeared as a viable political force since the 1990s, the political clout of this third group has become severely diminished.

The significant strength of each of these factions inhibited changes to Article 9. The mainstream faction, working in an informal alliance with the Leftists, effectively preserved the integrity of Yoshida's goals long after he himself was dead; but in the 1990s the dynamic began to change. After swift international criticism of Japan's failure to provide anything more than money to support the United States and its allies in the Gulf War of 1991 stung the country, public support to deploy minesweepers to the Persian Gulf soared. Revisionists, eying this change in public sentiment, criticized Article 9 as a major obstacle to "international cooperation" and viewed it as a cause of significant embarrassment. They scored well in 1992 when the Diet passed the Peace-Keeping Operations bill, allowing SDF participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Throughout the 1990s and into the new century, Japan began to face new security challenges that enhanced public support for stronger military capabilities to defend the nation. The balance of power within the LDP also began to shift markedly as the pragmatists slowly but surely began a noticeable decline. Today revisionist leaders who strongly champion a stronger role for Japan in international affairs dominate the party and are pushing strongly for revision of Article 9 so that Japan might become a "normal" power once more.

Although Article 9 itself remains unchanged today, Samuels indicates that Japan nonetheless has made substantive moves to expand Japan's defense capacity and responsibilities. Japanese forces join peace-keeping operations throughout the world, patrol sea lanes far from Japan's shores, refuel American ships in the Indian Ocean, and even participated briefly on the Iraqi front. In fact, if not by law, Japan's revisionist politicians are slowly and deliberately transforming Japan into a "normal" political power. What these changes mean for the rest of Asia and China in particular remains to be seen.

Samuels' *Securing Japan* is a cogent, well written, and very well researched study that very clearly articulates the many changes in Japanese defense policy that have occurred since 1950. In a more general sense, this work is an analysis of Japan's gradual evolution from a defeated nation in
1945 to its full recovery as a modern great power. I would strongly recommend that every American policymaker, journalist, and scholar working on contemporary Japanese affairs read this volume with great care.

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Especially as it challenges certain stereotypes about Muslims in general and Muslim clerics in particular that abound in the world in which we live today, this book has an importance that is only enhanced by its timely rendition. The most basic contribution, however, is how Barbara Metcalf, a specialist in the history of South Asia at the University of Michigan, interweaves the biography of a significant Muslim figure from South Asia with the region’s history. This book is part of the “Makers of the Muslim World” series published by Oneworld, a series that is devoted to the Muslim leaders—men and women—whose lives and contributions have helped shape the Muslim world as it exists today. Oneworld has already issued more than two dozen biographies cutting across both time and space.

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879–1957), a theologian and political activist, was one of the longest-serving principals of Darul Uloom Deoband, the renowned Islamic seminary of the Indian subcontinent. Darul Uloom Deoband was founded in 1866 by a group of learned theologians with the purpose of imparting Islamic education among Muslim youth. Currently, hundreds of madrasas (Islamic seminaries) across India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, South Africa, and elsewhere are either affiliated or theologically oriented with this Darul Uloom, or “House of Knowledge.” Earlier, it was Metcalf’s genuinely empathetic and path-breaking doctoral research on Darul Uloom Deoband that challenged the common assumptions about the “traditionalist” ulama (Islamic religious scholars) being either confined to their own domain or antithetical to “progress” and “modernity.” Maulana Madani is an example of someone whose life and deeds best illustrate the contributions of an alim (pl. ulama) to the larger world—and not just the Islamic world. He was both a political activist and an influential Islamic scholar. A staunch anti-colonial activist throughout his life, Madani spent over seven years in British detention, opposed the demand of a separate homeland for Muslims, and argued that they could live and do better in a religiously plural society. Besides citing extensively from Islamic scriptures, he also used the “modern” vocabulary in beating the British in their own arguments. Metcalf convincingly shows how his life and thought contests
the general supposition about the incompatibility between Islam and democracy. Additionally, Madani accepted colonial categories such as census-based religious communities and concepts such as nation, resisting colonialism because of its inherent economic exploitation and not because the British were Christians. Furthermore, Madani’s “contextually based and informed arguments” on various issues challenged stereotypes of seeing “Islamically articulated arguments as narrow textual analysis” (p. 2). Moreover, it was Madani, not the secular Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948) or modernist Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), who argued for multicultural and pluralistic co-existence as the hallmark of Indian nationalism.

Historian Metcalf begins the story with the arrest of Maulana Madani and his colleagues, along with their revered teacher and guide Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, in Mecca in 1916 and their subsequent detention on the island of Malta until 1920 on charges of conspiring against the British Empire. Although he was not engaged in anti-colonial activities before, his detention on Malta shaped his future course in two ways: immersion in Islamic learning and spirituality, on the one hand, and anti-colonial activism, on the other. While in Malta, he also was exposed to “the nationalist vision of other countries” (Malta being a prison for the offenders of the British Empire) and developed a greater cognizance of being an “Indian” based on how others viewed him (p. 47). With a detailed flashback of Madani’s early life and how particular influences shaped his future, Metcalf delves into the growth of Madani as a nationalist and political activist. After having returned from Malta, he entered politics during the Khilafat Movement—aimed at preserving the office of the Ottoman caliph—and became deeply involved in India’s freedom struggle, led by Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948). The Khilafat Movement is commonly understood to have been led by a few Western-educated Muslims alone; but Metcalf credibly demonstrates the participation of people such as Madani. The fact that the ulama played a significant role in the anti-colonial struggle in India is indisputable yet missing from most historical writings.

Maulana Madani was a strong believer in “composite nationalism” and confronted the notion that only Muslims could represent Muslims, an answer not only to the British attempts to encourage Hindu–Muslim differences but also to the Muslim League and Jinnah’s claim to solely represent the Muslim community. In one of his most influential writings, *Muttahida Qaumiyat aur Islam* (*Composite Nationalism and Islam*), Madani justified a secular government for a society comprised of people of different religious backgrounds (p. 112). Expanding on his idea of pluralism and mutual coexistence, he also expressed the need for Muslims and non-Muslims to continue to work together in the spirit of the Constitution of Medina (p. 116). This constitution was drafted by Prophet Muhammad in 622 as a formal agreement between himself and different tribes and communities, although Madani
was not the first person to invoke it in the Indian context. Thus, Madani’s opposition to the partition of India and vision of a unified India was reflective of his unwavering faith in inter-religious unity, his engagement with Islamic scholarship, and his belief in institutions and practices of Islam. As a leader of the Jamiat Ulama (Assembly of Scholars), a leading organization of the ulama, Madani also insisted on swaraj (self-rule) alongside the need of tabligh (organization) and education among Muslims. This is precisely the point Metcalf drives home in countering the stereotypical conjecture that the ulama were bereft of worldly experiences and lacked civic initiatives or competency. On the other hand, Madani believed that it was the traditionalist ulama—neither the modernist nor the Islamist—who alone could speak for Islam and who were entrusted with Islamic education and guidance. How could someone who saw pluralism within Islam and India consider the ulama as a single, unified entity? This question is worth exploring.

Very few terms are as misused, misunderstood, and misinterpreted as jihad. Clearly, Ahmad Madani’s life represents a life full of jihad, or struggle. Metcalf presents this aspect of Madani in a most lucid manner. Madani’s (or his father’s) jihad began with him obtaining Islamic education, since his father himself could never receive one; his jihad continued through his resistance against the exploitation by the British and his long, yet failed, fight to keep India united. So what was the character of his jihad? Metcalf rightly concludes: “If Maulana Madani was a mujahid [struggler], his only weapon in this jihad was his words” (p. 129). Most interestingly, one of his disciples characterized him as Mujahid-i-Jalil (“The Glorious Warrior”), a person whose spiritual and moral standing was unparalleled (p. 126). After Madani’s jihad to keep India unified failed, he renewed his commitment to seminary education and Islamic guidance as a greater jihad of moral struggle through personal and community discipline, education, and moral reform. To him, jihad required “patience, forbearance, and high ethics” (pp. 148, 151).

This biography is intrinsically woven with several other biographies and historical episodes of twentieth-century India. Madani is studied in the light of his political contemporaries such as Gandhi and Nehru (1889–1964), while he is also frequently compared and contrasted with several Muslim personalities of his time, including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958), Maulana Muhammad Ali (1878–1931), Maulana Abul Ala Maududi (1903–79), Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Muhammad Iqbal, Inayatullah Mashriqi Khak-sar (1888–1963), and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1863–1943). While a plethora of writings exists on most of the others, a biography on Madani is a valuable addition. Metcalf analyzes episodes from Maulana Madani’s life in order to counter contemporary myths and stereotypes about the ulama. While the intent and contribution is more than acknowledged, the narrative loses its flow on one or two occasions. In addition, the repetitive discussion of different strands of nationalism could have easily been avoided (pp. 5–6, 133).
Overall, Metcalf makes some excellent points: First, Muslims and the *ulama* are multi-layered, as evinced by their varied stances on colonial and post-colonial India; second, members of the *ulama* have, contrary to popular belief, shown a long-term commitment to democracy and secularism; third, the concept of *jihad* has had a different connotation than how it is perceived today; and, last but not least, the Indian freedom struggle was a collective of different segments of the society, and the *ulama* played no lesser a role. For an illustration of such rich and thought-provoking contestations, this book is a must read for scholars and laypersons alike, with or without prior knowledge of the region or its history.

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**Note**


In *Where There Is No Midwife: Birth and Loss in Rural India*, anthropologist Sarah Pinto (Tufts University) has written a rich ethnography that examines rural Indian women’s experiences with reproduction and biomedical interventions across different social classes and castes. Based on the author’s fieldwork in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the research situates women at the center of global processes of development, showing why and how rural women accept, reject, or transform discourses that aim at reproductive “uplift.” Pinto lived with an upper-caste family but worked among all social strata in a rural village she calls Lalpur; and this ethnography draws a compelling, nuanced portrait of the suffering that women experience in everyday life. In the process, the author explores the tensions of caste and women’s complex responses to state and NGO interventions into their reproductive lives. It will be a welcome read for scholars interested in gender, caste, development, and the deployment of health-focused discourses on the subcontinent.

The book is organized into seven chapters, each of which is thematically structured. Chapter 1, “Work: Where There Is No Midwife,” describes Pinto’s entry into the field, when she set out to study *dais* (traditional midwives). Finding they did not exist, she describes the work of birth attendants, which is divided along caste lines, with *Dalit* (formerly untouchable) women responsible for postpartum care and disposal of the placenta.
The second chapter delves into the abject social meanings the placenta takes on in Lalpur. In this chapter, Pinto uncovers the multiple levels of significance involved in who handles the placenta, and she explains how it is disposed of according to complex schemes that highlight local notions of gender and kinship. She also shows how the placenta remains a fraught object for health workers, who are scandalized by the “primitive” practices of local birth workers even as they themselves maintain divisions of caste in their own treatment and training of traditional birth attendants. Chapter 3, entitled “Medicine: Development without Institutions,” explores how local, uncertified practitioners of medicine create authority in those spaces where biomedicine has not quite extended its reach. This chapter is among the strongest parts of the book and could be read independently as a study of local interactions with the discourse of “development.” Pinto compellingly describes how those ersatz local efforts to forge medical authority take shape along lines of class and caste, or how “socialities that resemble ‘untouchability’ are woven into ethoses of improvement” (p. 27).

In chapter 4, Pinto shares rural women’s responses to her own pregnancy, which gave her insight into local beliefs concerning visuality, the evil eye, and concealment, particularly where often devastating health outcomes are at stake. Chapter 5, “Dying: In the Big, Big Hands of God,” is devastating: a description of how rural women in both lower and upper castes deal with the horrible, yet still all too common, experience of infant death. This chapter shows how rural women seek biomedical interventions only to find that, at the moment those interventions are needed most, they are unavailable. Despite their efforts to adhere to what they believe the “experts” require of them in seeking medical care, they still experience tragic losses and failures. Pinto questions the extent to which these failures are those of the “individual” (as in popular development belief), arguing that women’s access to adequate pre- and post-natal healthcare is uneven, with a government still largely concerned with population “control” rather than with a genuine improvement in the health of rural women.

In chapter 6, Pinto offers a detailed historical analysis of Indian medical interventions and programs that aim to improve women’s health. She does an excellent job showing how medical discourses have both changed and remained the same over time, whether under colonialism or as a part of global health initiatives, always targeting traditional birth attendants as figures of either blame or uplift. Pinto shows how condescending efforts on the part of NGOs to give voice to the participatory knowledge and experience of traditional birth attendants are really just so much developmental window dressing. In reality, “no one listens when you use the voice you are told you are supposed to have” (pp. 241–42). Finally, the seventh chapter concludes with an examination of where the rural fits into national and
global efforts at intervention, showing why refusals of biomedical care are actually so much more complex than they may seem.

Drawing on the theoretical literature of medical anthropology as well as that of psychoanalysis, this is a complex, multilayered work. Pinto is a fine writer, and throughout the book her ethnography beautifully illuminates her theoretical arguments. There were a few moments, particularly toward the end, where the fit between ethnography and theory was not as strong, and where I would have liked to see more analysis of the ethnography. For example, Pinto’s moving portrayal of the slightly unhinged Dalit woman Pushpadevi, who is distressed by her life, her abusive husband (now in prison for murder), and her inability to control her family size, leaves the reader longing for more closure in considering what so much suffering means for this particular individual, and not just for Dalit and Muslim ambivalence toward medical interventions. However, this is a minor criticism, and in general the ethnography holds together brilliantly.

Where There Is No Midwife makes a significant contribution to the literature on reproduction, globalization, and development in India. It will be of interest to social scientists, feminist scholars, and Asianists concerned with issues of caste, development, and globalization on the Indian subcontinent, and it should be required reading for anyone working in development or reproductive health.

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Since my 2006 review in this journal of the three inaugural titles in Greenwood’s Food Culture around the World Series (on China, India, and Japan),1 the series has grown from twelve titles to eighteen, with Penny Van Esterik’s Food Culture in Southeast Asia among the most recent. Van Esterik, a professor of anthropology at York University (Ontario), thinks of herself as a “nutritional anthropologist who writes about both food and Southeast Asia” (p. xi). With Carole Counihan, Van Esterik co-edited Food and Culture: A Reader (1997), a work, now in its second edition, that “helped define and legitimize the field of food and culture studies.”2 Having studied Southeast Asia since the 1960s, particularly the peninsular countries that serve as a “barrier and bridge between India and China” (p. xv), Van Esterik is thus well positioned to offer a thorough, thoughtful look at the culture and cuisine of this vibrant region, memorably encapsulated in 2000 by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid as “hot, sour, salty, sweet.”3
Following the series format, *Food Culture in Southeast Asia* opens with a political map of the region. (Curiously, East Timor is completely missing, as are large portions of Indonesia and the Philippines—and the country label for Indonesia.) After a forward, preface, and acknowledgements, Van Esterik offers a useful introduction, geographical and anthropological in nature, that describes land features, climate, ethnic groups, language families, and religions of the region, which the author—brushing off counter-claims of colonial constructivism—believes “has an integrity beyond its arbitrarily drawn national borders” (p. xxiii). In an engaging move that suggests a target audience of high school students or college students enrolled in introductory-level area studies, anthropology, or geography courses, Van Esterik closes the introduction with an interactive exercise on the ubiquity of noodle soup that “reveals the heart of food culture of Southeast Asia” (p. xxv).

Next is a four-page timeline, over half of which focuses on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The final entries, the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 and Cyclone Nargis of May 2008, attest to the currency of this volume. Many of the entries on the timeline are discussed in further detail in the first chapter, “Historical Overview,” which describes early interactions among people of the region with travelers from China and India; the impacts of European colonization, the spice trade, and Islamicization; “culinary colonialism” from the Chinese, Arab, and Western world; independence and nationalism; and the 1967 establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This chapter nicely lays the groundwork for further exploration of the theme of culinary interaction, today implicated in globalization, that continues throughout the book. Van Esterik also introduces two of the book’s twenty-eight recipes in this chapter: Luang Prabang salad, named after the old royal capital of Laos and exemplifying the fusion of French and Lao cuisines (pp. 13–14); and Nyonya dipping sauce, which demonstrates the influence of processed sauces from Britain—HP sauce and Worcestershire sauce—on staples of Southeast Asian cuisine (pp. 14–15). I would not, however, describe this work as a cookbook: the recipes seem supplemental, intended more for description and contextualization than for replication. (Moreover, if the volume were intended to function as a cookbook, I would expect a separate recipe index.)

The remainder of the heart of the volume includes series-prescribed chapters on major foods and ingredients, cooking, typical meals, eating out, special occasions, and diet and health. In “Major Foods and Ingredients” (chapter 2), the sections on rice, fermented fish products, and seasonings are particularly engaging. Van Esterik memorably describes Southeast Asia as “a fruit lover’s utopia” (p. 36). And regarding meat, the author has provided a photograph of dog meat for sale in a market in Hanoi (p. 31)—one of twenty-five monochrome photographs in the book, most (presumably) by the author herself, and many taken in 2008. Most other photographs show
people involved in activities relating to food: farming, preparing, vending, serving, consuming. (Not by the author—and unfortunately uncaptioned—is the vibrant cover image of the floating market at Damnoen Saduak, Thailand.)

Van Esterik explores cooking (chapter 3) and typical meals (chapter 4) in a befittingly encyclopedic manner. In chapter 4, she details her fascinating thesis on “iconic dishes,” dishes “that condense meaning and stand for more than themselves,” including national or ethnic identity (p. 73). Among such dishes are Laotian laap, a spicy dish of minced fish or meat; Thai pad thai, stir-fried rice noodles with various accompaniments; and the components of a rijstaffel (“rice table”), an “invented meal” representative of the Dutch colonial experience in Indonesia (p. 73). (A rijstaffel is a banquet, of sorts, where myriad small dishes of meat, seafood, and vegetables are served alongside various rice preparations and numerous sauces.) Van Esterik is at her best when she introduces the contradictions of meaning behind food and culinary traditions, as she does with the invented tradition of the rijstaffel (still found in restaurants throughout the Netherlands). Those wishing to delve more deeply into the histories or meanings of these complexities can consult the numerous resources cited unobtrusively in each chapter.

In “Eating Out” (chapter 5), Van Esterik reminds readers that public eating outside the home is a relatively recent phenomenon in Southeast Asia: “the very best local food is [still] found in households” (p. 79). Nevertheless, she explores the world of “street foods” (where an “almost-infinite variety of foods [is] available on the streets,” p. 81), take-out vendors, “mobile food” (in the context of pilgrimage or travel), and Chinese restaurants in Southeast Asia. She considers the role of the hotel restaurant, initially catering to colonial travelers and wealthy locals, in both the development of a so-called restaurant scene in Southeast Asian cities and the infusion of Western foods into Southeast Asian cuisine. A concluding section on Southeast Asian restaurants abroad reveals how quickly the cuisines of Southeast Asia have made inroads around the world. In 1976, only nine Thai restaurants, for example, were to be found overseas; by 2008, that number had swelled to around 20,000 (p. 92). Today, Vietnamese restaurants, with their obvious French influences, seem to be increasing in popularity. Even I, in Central Illinois, now have access to freshly prepared bowls of phở—noodles in broth, typically garnished with variety meats, bean sprouts, Thai basil, cilantro, and more—and bánh mì—sandwiches of paté or charcuterie on French-style baguettes with pickled vegetables, cilantro, and various condiments. Van Esterik includes recipes for both of these iconic dishes of Vietnamese cuisine in her book.

Chapter 6, “Special Occasions,” emphasizes the connection between food and religion in Southeast Asia, where Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians (a religious minority, except in the Philippines), and animists practice their related ritual systems. Offerings, feasts, and celebrations are
described; and the role of religion and identity—as expressed through food—is explored, especially with respect to the Muslim majority of Indonesia and Malaysia. Clearly, as Nilanjana Roy has stated elsewhere, “food is the ultimate religious divide.”5 The final chapter, on diet and health, introduces native traditions (including shamanistic practices and Ayurvedic medicine); the problems of food insecurity and malnutrition in Burma, Cambodia, and Laos; and food safety (e.g., recent scares over SARS and avian flu).

In the back matter, also following the series format, Van Esterik includes a glossary (where the entry for coriander could have mentioned that it is also known as cilantro), a resource guide, a selected bibliography, and an index. The resource guide is particularly exceptional: in addition to URLs for seven excellent Web sites related to Southeast Asian food, all of which were active in September 2009, it also includes a valuable annotated review of resources. Therein Van Esterik herself points out what I determined to be the only content weakness of her volume: that it offers little about the food of the Southeast Asian island-nations, particularly the Philippines. She does, however, direct interested readers to Amy Besa and Romy Dorotan’s Memories of Philippine Kitchens, a glossy portrayal of Filipino cuisine and culture (complete with recipes)—although one author’s name is misspelled, as is the publisher’s name, in the bibliography.6

Overall, Van Esterik’s contribution demonstrates her in-depth knowledge of the culture and foodways of much of Southeast Asia. Her willingness to complicate the matters of colonialism and national or ethnic identity—as well as the impact of globalization on worldwide foodscapes—has raised the bar, I believe, on the academic value that can be found in the books in Greenwood’s Food Culture around the World Series.

Steven E. Gump
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Notes


4The term may be spelled with one t or two, and one f or two, in any of the four possible permutations: rijstafel, rijstafel, rijstaffel, or rijstaffel.


Program of the 48th Annual Meeting

Sponsored by Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
Held at the Emory Conference Center
January 16–18, 2009

Friday, January 16

4:00 PM  Executive Committee Meeting
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM  Registration
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM  Opening Ceremony & Reception, sponsored by the Director General of the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office, Atlanta; with a concert of Chinese, North Indian & Korean music led by Tong Soon Lee, Emory University Department of Music

Saturday, January 17

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM  Registration & Book Display
8:30 AM – 10:15 AM  Session I (Panels A–G)
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM  Break
10:30 AM – 12:15 PM  Session II (Panels H–N)
12:15 PM – 2:00 PM  Luncheon & Business Meeting, James T. Gillam, SEC/AAS President, presiding
2:00 PM – 2:15 PM  Break
2:15 PM – 4:00 PM  Session III (Panels O–U)
4:00 PM – 5:30 PM  Break
4:15 PM – 5:15 PM  SEARAS Editorial Meeting
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM  Presidential Address: “Korean Buddhism in East Asian Context,” Robert Buswell (University of California, Los Angeles), President, Association of Asian Studies

Sunday, January 18

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM  Executive Committee Meeting
8:00 AM – 11:00 AM  Registration & Book Display
8:30 AM – 10:15 AM  Session IV (Panels V–BB)
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM  Break
10:30 AM – 12:15 PM  Session V (Panels CC–HH)
12:15 PM – 2:00 PM  Closing Ceremony & Farewell Luncheon, sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan, Atlanta
Panels

A. The Korean Wave: *Hallyu* in Transnational Perspective

**Mark Ravina (Emory University)**, Chair

**Millie Creighton (University of British Columbia)**, “Ethnic Eroticisms Confront Nationality, Gender, and Racial Hierarchies: Exploring the Impact of the ‘Korea Boom’ in Japan and Japanese Drama Tourism to Korea”

**Okon Hwang (Eastern Connecticut State University)**, “No ‘Korean Wave’ Here: Domestically Produced Western Art Music in Korea”

**Eun-Young Jung (University of Wisconsin–Madison)**, “How Korean is the Korean Wave in Japan? The Repackaging of Korean Popular Music and Musicians for Japanese Consumers”

**Hilary Finchum-Sung (University of California, Berkeley & University of San Francisco)**, “A New Image for Korean Traditional Performing Arts”

**Myung Sook Bae (Emory University)**, “How Korean Pop Culture Is Shared among American University Students”

B. Buddhist Philosophy & Religion

**Tom Pynn (Kennesaw State University)**, Chair

**Steven Geisz (University of Tampa)**, “Karma, Minimal Psychological Realism, and Morality”

**Chang-Seong Hong (Minnesota State University Moorhead)**, “How Buddhist Nominalism and Psychoneural Reductionism Can Help Each Other”

**Tom Pynn (Kennesaw State University)**, “Are There Ethical Implications for Karma?”

**Jeffrey S. Lidke (Berry College)**, “From Nothing and Back: Reincarnation in the Case of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche”

C. Transformations of Gender: Chinese Revolutionary Narratives in a Global Context

**Anup Grewal (University of Chicago)**, Chair

**Paul Foster (Georgia Institute of Technology)**, Discussant

**Krista van Fleit Hang (University of South Carolina)**, “Sisterhood at the Nexus of Love and Revolution: Coming of Age Narratives on Both Sides of the Cold War”

**Max Bohnenkamp (University of Chicago)**, “From Daoist Immortality to Revolutionary Morality: Transforming the Immortal Hairy Maiden into the White-Haired Girl”

**Anup Grewal (University of Chicago)**, “The Making of a Revolutionary Womanhood: Gender, Genre, and Political Identification in the Work of Hu Lanqi”

D. Printing, Dubbing & Remaking: Identity in Cultural (Re)Production

**Jing Zhang (New College of Florida)**, Chair

**Jin Liu (Georgia Institute of Technology)**, “Performativity in Dubbing Films in Chinese Local Languages”

**Aijun Zhu (New College of Florida)**, “The Intercultural Transformation of Self in *The Departed and Internal Affairs*”

**Jing Zhang (New College of Florida)**, “Shared Dreams and Interpretive Authority in *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 (Eternal words to awaken the world)”
E. Markets & Economic Practices
DAVID BLAYLOCK (Eastern Kentucky University), Chair
ASHIMA SOOD (Hanover Research Council), “Informal Governance and Political Economy of Transport Policy in India: The Case of the Cycle-Rickshaw Rental Market”

F. Engaging Asia, Engaging the West
DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX (Mary Baldwin College), Chair
DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX (Mary Baldwin College), “Beware the Monkey Cage: Jack London, East Asia, and the Yellow Peril”
TODD S. MUNSON (Randolph-Macon College), “A Sojourner Amongst Us’: Charles Wirgman and the Japan Punch”
DOUGLAS R. REYNOLDS (Georgia State University), “China Discovers the West—in Meiji Japan, 1877–95”
LI QINGJUN (Middle Tennessee State University), “Women with the Golden Lilies: Constructions of Chinese Women in Early Modern Anglo-European Travel Narratives”

G. Explorations of Buddhism in Northern India & Sikkim
HAL W. FRENCH (University of South Carolina), Chair
GERALD T. CARNEY (Hampden-Sydney College), “Light into Light: Improvisations on Themes of Mirabai”

H. Georgia Teachers of Japanese Panel I:
Content & Language Integration in Japanese
YUKI TAKATORI (Georgia State University; President, Georgia Teachers of Japanese), Chair
NORIKO TAKEDA (Emory University), “Exploring Content-Based Instruction: Contemporary Japan through the Pacific War Experience”
ASAMI TSUDA (Harvard University), “Content-Based Instruction for Fourth-Year Japanese: Japanese Food Culture”
MAMORU HATAKEYAMA (Columbia University), “Content-Based Instruction: Sample Lesson on the Evolution of Housing Designs and Social Change”

I. Contradictions in Chinese History
JAMES YOXALL (Mary Baldwin College), Chair
JAMES YOXALL (Mary Baldwin College), “The Face of Hunger: China and India”
YUSHENG YAO (Rollins College), “The Main Contradictions in Rural China: A Case Study of Two Northern Villages”

DARRYL E. BROCK (Claremont Graduate University), “Science and Technology Innovation during the Cultural Revolution”


LI-LING HSIAO (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Chair

WEI-CHENG LIN (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), “The Missing Statue of Bodhisattva Manjusri and His Lion: Reconsidering the Iconographic Program in Dunhuang Cave 61”


JASON STEUBER (Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida), “The Daoist Immortal Wang Ziqiao: Literary, Archaeological, and Artistic Evidence”

LI-LING HSIAO (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), “Dreaming as a Butterfly: A Pictoral Metaphor in Chinese Painting”

K. Korean Literature: Creation & Reception
WAN-LI HO (Emory University), Chair

JAE-YON LEE (University of Chicago), “Aesthetics of Self-Awakening: Creating Writers in the Coterie Magazine Ch’angjo (Creation), 1919–21”

ANN SUNG-HI LEE (Academy of Korean Studies, Seoul, Korea), “Chosŏn Dynasty Fiction Written in Chinese: The Tongya hwijip 東野彙輯 (Anthology of unofficial narratives from the country to the east of China)”

L. Asian Studies at Spelman College
JAMES T. GILLAM (Spelman College), Chair

RICHARD LU (Spelman College), “Enhancing Cultural Awareness through Internet Communication: A Case Study”

XUEXIN LU (Spelman College), “Japanese Simplification of Chinese Characters in Perspective”


M. Borders & Frontiers in China
JAMES A. ANDERSON (University of North Carolina at Greensboro), Chair

JAMES A. ANDERSON (University of North Carolina at Greensboro), “Vassals as Lords: Markets, Migration, and Overlapping Frontiers along the Southwestern Silk Road through the Late Song Dynasty”

BENJAMIN RIDGWAY (Valparaiso University), “From River Byway to River Border: Reconfiguring Jiankang in the Wartime Writing of Ye Mengde 葉夢德 (1077–1148)”
**HONGJIE WANG (Armstrong Atlantic State University), “The Role of Shu in Tang China”**

**N. Japan in Context & Changing the Context**

**DAVID BLAYLOCK (Eastern Kentucky University), Chair**


**YULING HUANG (Kennesaw State University), “Superflat on a Multidimensional Scale: Murakami Takashi and the Success of Niche Marketing”**

**KAZUO YAGAMI (Savannah State University), “Japan’s Challenge to the Status Quo: The Rise and Fall of the Washington System”**

**O. Collective History & Public Memory**

**JOSHUA H. HOWARD (University of Mississippi), Chair**

**JOSHUA H. HOWARD (University of Mississippi), “The Death of Nie Er (1912–35): History and Commemoration”**

**LI HAN (Rhodes College), “News, Public Opinion, and History: Three Novels on Ming General Mao Wenlong (1579–1629)”**

**JISOO CHUNG (Northwestern University), “Reconstructing Public Memory in Post–Cold War South Korea”**

**JOO YOUNG LEE (Emory University), “Women and the Other: Comfort Women of World War II and Women Documentary Filmmakers”**

**P. Explorations in Chinese Film**

**QI WANG (Georgia Institute of Technology), Chair**

**QI WANG (Georgia Institute of Technology), “Those Who Lived in a Room with Wallpaper: An Exploration in Socialist Anti-Espionage Film”**

**SHU-CHIN WU (Agnes Scott College), “Lust, Caution as Understood in Taiwan, China, and the United States”**

**HONGBING ZHANG (Fayetteville State University), “Global Vernacular, Inflated Material Desire, and Populist Language in the Chinese Film Crazy Stone”**

**Q. Cosmology, Harmony & Manufacturing Mohism in Chinese Philosophy**

**JOHN S. PEALE (Longwood University), Chair**

**THOMAS RADICE (Southern Connecticut State University), “Manufacturing Mohism in the Mencius”**

**PAUL SLADKY (Augusta State University), “Harmony in Confucius’ Yueji 楊記: Speculations on What the Lost Book of Music Really Says”**

**JOHN S. PEALE (Longwood University), “The Great One Gives Birth to the Waters”**

**R. Asians in the West & Westerners in Asia**

**GRACE HUEY-YUH LIN (Appalachian State University), Chair**


**GRACE HUEY-YUH LIN (Appalachian State University), “Acculturation and Heritage Language Maintenance of Chinese-American Immigrants”**
MING-HUNG TSAI (National Chung Cheng University), “Historical Studies on African-Americans in Taiwan”
GAO BEI (College of Charleston), “Imperial Japan and the European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1938–45”

S. “China on My Mind”: Young John Allen’s Journey from Georgia to Shanghai (Roundtable)
ERIC REINDERS (Emory University), Moderator & Panelist
JOACHIM KURTZ (Emory University), Panelist
NAOMI NELSON (Emory University), Panelist

T. Georgia Teachers of Japanese Panel II:
Character Recognition & Technology Integration
MASAKI MORI (University of Georgia), Chair
NORIKO TAKEDA (Emory University), Discussant
TONY GONZALES (University of Georgia), “Teaching and Learning Kanji in a Digital Age”
SHIGEHITO MEnJO (Emory University), “Material Development with Wimba Voice and Podcasting/iTunes U”

U. Teaching Chinese for the Twenty-first Century: Technology & Beyond
HONG LI (Emory University), Chair
XIAOLIANG LI (Georgia Institute of Technology), “A Cognitive Approach to Teaching Chinese”
YU LI (Emory University), “Multimedia-Facilitated Learning Outside the Chinese Language Classroom”
HONG LI (Emory University), “Multimedia-Facilitated Group Projects in Chinese Language Classrooms”
ZHENGBIN LU (Spelman College), “Making PowerPoint More Powerful in the Chinese Classroom: Some Design Principles”

V. Education & Governance
BAOGANG GUO (Dalton State University), Chair
FANG ZHOU (Georgia Institute of Technology), “In the Name of Patriotism and National Uniformity: An Analysis of Education Policies and Reforms in the People’s Republic of China from 1949 to the Present”
BAOGANG GUO (Dalton State University), “Toward a Cooperative Governance: The New Politics of Environmental Regulation in China”
ISABELLA NOTAR (Mount St. Mary’s University), “Gateway to Cultural Evolution: The Catholic Church in Jiangmen, China”

W. Law & Legal Consciousness
JAMES T. GILLAM (Spelman College), Chair
Huey Bin Teng (University of the South), “Household Headship, Transnational Polygamy, and Law: Fujianese Migration during the Republican Period (1911–49)”
Yuan Gao (University of Memphis), “Chinese Historical Consciousness versus American Civil Religion”

X. Chinese Philosophy: Health, Cosmology & Political Theory
Ronnie Littlejohn (Belmont University), Chair
Yunqu Zhang (North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University), “Daoism and Health Sciences”
Daniel Coyle (Birmingham-Southern College), “Yin-Yang Cosmology in Chinese Strategic Philosophy”
Ronnie Littlejohn (Belmont University), “Principal Theses of Tu Weiming’s New Confucian Political Theory”

Y. Iconography & Spirituality in Chinese Art
Cecilia O. Jan (Independent Scholar), Chair
Noelle Giuffrida (Vassar College), “Theophanies, Miracles, and Conversions: Constructing Visual Narratives for Zhenwu in Ming China”
Li Zeng (University of Louisville), “Spiritualizing the Landscape: Chan and Chinese Landscape Painting”

Z. Recognition, Resistance & Railroads
Richard Rice (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), Chair
Natalia A. Starostina (Young Harris College), “The Construction of French Railways before the Great War: Representing the French ‘Civilizing Mission’ in Indochina and Yunnan”
Brent Whitefield (Valparaiso University), “Late-Qing Chinese Preachers Reflect on the Obstacles to China’s Christianization”
Richard Rice (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “Ainu Recognition and the Shiretoko National Heritage Designation”
Wendy Matsumura (Otterbein College), “Ryūkyū Resistance as Interruption of Popular Rights Discourse in Early Meiji Japan”

AA. Representations of Nationalism & the Postcolonial
Daniel A. Métraux (Mary Baldwin College), Chair
Leihua Weng (University of South Carolina), “Novel and the Concept of Nation: A Study of the Chinese Novels of the 1980s from the Perspectives of Anderson and Culler”
Yipeng Shen (University of Oregon), “Cyber Literature, Massive Discontent, and Chinese Nationalism in the New Millennium”
Clod Marlan Krister V. Yambao (University of the Philippines, Diliman), “Pabaon and Baggage as Tropes of the Filipino Global Diaspora: Unpacking and Repacking Postcolonial Representations in the Film Perfumed Nightmare”
BB. Teaching East Asia in Geography & World History Survey Courses

Lucien Ellington (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), Chair
Lucien Ellington (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “Japanese and Korean History in World History Survey Courses”
Craig R. Laing (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “Teaching the Physical and Human Geography of China”
Ronald V. Kalafsky (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “Teaching the Physical and Human Geography of Japan”
Alice Tym (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “Centripetal Forces in Japan’s Interactions with East Asia”

CC. Teaching Asia: Asian Studies, World History & Cultural History

Dorothea Martin (Appalachian State University), Chair
Salli Vargis & George Vargis (Georgia Perimeter College), “Experiential Learning as a Means of Infusing India into World History and Global Issues Courses”
Eric Kendrick (Georgia Perimeter College), “Developing a Broad-based Asian Studies Certificate”
Dorothea Martin (Appalachian State University), “Asia in the Context of the World History Survey”
Beth Vanlandingham & Amanda Ford (Carson-Newman College), “Teaching Chinese Cultural History Online: Madness, Methods, Resources”

DD. Governing China: Image & Perception

Charlotte Beahan (Murray State University), Chair
Zhen Qian (University of Louisville), “Models of China’s Democracy”
Charles Musgrove (St. Mary’s College of Maryland), “Chiang Kai-shek’s Fiftieth Birthday Celebration”
Harry Miller (University of South Alabama), “On the Behavior of the Jiangnan Gentry during the Three Feudatories Rebellion of the Early Qing Dynasty, 1673–81”
Shiping Hua (University of Louisville), “China in the Twenty-first Century: Confucianism, Liberalism, Clash of Civilizations, and Globalization”

EE. Sexuality & Identity in Asian Literature

Jie Guo (University of South Carolina), Chair
Yun Zhiu (University of South Carolina), “Jingju nandan 京剧男旦 and the Construction of the ‘New Woman’ Identity”
Jie Guo (University of South Carolina), “Fathering a Household: Intimacies between Men in the Social World of Jin ping mei 金瓶梅”
Xiaoqing Liu (University of South Carolina), “Tension of Translation: Lu Yin’s ‘Haibin guren’ 海滨故人 (Old men by the sea)”

FF. Lessons & Uses of Literature in East Asia

Rika Saito (Western Michigan University), Chair
Takushi Odagiri (Stanford University), “Rashomon 羅生門 in 1915: Its Surface, Aporetics, and First-Person Psychology”
YI SHIN LEE (Trinity College, University of Cambridge), “Martial Arts Novels as Literary Artifacts, Historical Documents, and Underutilized Teaching Resources”

DYLAN MCGEE (State University of New York at New Paltz), “Fictions of Marginality: Marginal Commentary and the Margins of Literary Production in Kuse monogatari”

RIKA SAITO (Western Michigan University), “Literarily Feminist: Writing of Otake Kōkichi”

GG. Sex, Politics, Science & Judo: Body & Identity in Modern Asia

HILARY SMITH (Meredith College), Chair
DENNIS GAINTY (Georgia State University), “These Legs Are Made for Colonizing: Imperial Bodies in Meiji Japan”
SUNG SHIN KIM (North Georgia College & State University), “Making Exile an Art: Longing and Love as Political Tools”
MEGAN SINNOTT (Georgia State University), “Love, Sexuality, and Desire as Interpreted through Thai Buddhist Narratives of Karma”
HILARY SMITH (Meredith College), “Making the Modern Chinese Patient: Changing Definitions of Disease”

HH. Negotiating the Post-Socialist Condition:
Dueling Representations in Chinese Film & Television

RICHARD LETTERI (Furman University), Chair
WEN WEIHUA (Communication University of China), “The Double Life of the Chinese Television Industry: When the State Meets the Market”
VIVIAN SHEN (Davidson College), “Renegotiating Lust, Caution”
HARRY KUOSHU (Furman University), “Art and Mental Illness in Post-Socialist China: A Reading of Wang Xiaoshuai’s Frozen”
RICHARD LETTERI (Furman University), “Heideggerian Homelessness in the Films of Wang Xiaoshuai”

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Minutes of the 48th Annual Business Meeting

Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies
Emory Conference Center, Atlanta, Georgia
Saturday, January 17, 2009

These preliminary minutes are subject to approval at the 49th Annual Business Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky.

President James Gillam opened the meeting at 12:40 PM in the Silverbell Pavilion and asked Local Arrangements Chair Wan-Li Ho to welcome members and guests. On behalf of Emory University, Ho thanked everyone for coming to Atlanta and announced several local exhibitions of interest. She invited everyone to attend a closing ceremony and farewell luncheon, sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan, on Sunday afternoon. President Gillam then suggested a brief break so that all could finish their meals.

At 1:15 PM the meeting was called back to order. Minutes of the 2008 Annual Business Meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, which had been distributed by Secretary-Treasurer Charlotte Beahan, were approved as written.

Program Chair David Blaylock thanked Wan-Li Ho and Martha Shockey of Emory for their work on the conference. He announced that, including papers from outside the region and country, the 2009 program has 34 panels with 118 papers. The three recipients of the $200 SEC graduate travel grants to this year’s meeting were announced: Qingjun Li (Middle Tennessee State University), Yuan Gao (University of Memphis), and Darryl Brock (Claremont Graduate School).

President Gillam reported the Nominating Committee’s slate of candidates for 2009–10: Cheryl Crowley (Emory) and Harry Kuoshu (Furman) for Vice President; and Tom Ellis (Appalachian State, in absentia) and Xue-Xin Liu (Spelman College) for At-Large Member of the Executive Committee. He reminded the audience that only dues-paying members of the SEC could vote. Ballots were distributed, and voting proceeded.

President Gillam then announced that AAS President Robert Buswell had called him that morning to report that his plane to Atlanta—which had departed on schedule—had been forced to return to Los Angeles International Airport. The next possible flight would not get him to Atlanta until late Saturday night; therefore, he would not be coming. The Presidential Address, scheduled for 5:30 Saturday evening, was thus canceled.
AAS Council of Conferences (COC) Representative Susan Walcott reported on the March 2008 COC meeting, held in conjunction with the AAS meeting in Atlanta. The AAS is seeking to broaden the number of active disciplines and attract younger members. The graduate student–prize panel, to be selected from regional graduate-paper prizewinners, will be continued at future AAS meetings. AAS panels will be revamped to encourage more audience involvement; and keynote speakers with media appeal will be scheduled in order to increase press coverage.

SERAS Editor Steve Gump reminded SEC members that copies of the 2008 SERAS were available at the registration desk (one copy had been included in dues and registration); back issues were also available. Twenty-seven scholars (including five graduate students) contributed articles, scholarly notes, and book reviews. Two-thirds of the contents were related to presentations at the 2008 SEC/AAS in Hilton Head. Editor Gump thanked his associate editors, Daniel Metraux and Ronnie Littlejohn. He asked all present who had ever played a role in the SERAS—as contributor, reviewer, or assistant of any kind—to stand and be recognized. The 2009 issue, Volume 31, will include a special themed section on the “Korean Wave.” Editor Gump announced a meeting in the Dogwood Room on Saturday afternoon (4:15–5:15) for all interested in submitting materials to the SERAS or in volunteering in an editorial capacity. President Gillam told the audience that Gump had done so masterful a job that it would take two to three to replace him; he thus encouraged those interested in working with the SERAS to come forward at the afternoon meeting.

Secretary–Treasurer Beahan presented the 2008 Treasurer’s Report, copies of which had been distributed at each table. She noted that SERAS and the graduate-travel grants were the two biggest annual expenditures—and that membership dues were the single biggest source of revenue that stayed with the Conference. She reminded everyone that SEC dues are required of all who are on the meeting program; if dues had not been paid, they can be collected at the registration desk. For the Auditing Committee, Past Past President Bill Head reported that he and Littlejohn had audited the books and found them to be in order. A vote for the acceptance of the report was moved and seconded; the report was then approved.

As chair of the Undergraduate Paper Prize Committee, Blaylock announced that no prize was awarded this year, since the only submission arrived well after the deadline. He urged those present to encourage their students to submit papers next year. Past President Mark Ravina introduced the winner of the Graduate Paper Prize, Christopher A. Hall (Union Institute & University), whose paper on Tudi Gong 土地公 in Taiwan had been sponsored by Vice President Metraux and will appear in the 2009 SERAS. Hall was encouraged to advance his paper to the Council on Conferences for a place on the AAS graduate student–prize panel.
President GILLAM encouraged members to urge their students to submit papers to the student conference of the Associated Colleges of the South, to be held in Atlanta at Morehouse College in April. Funds for travel to this conference are available; interested parties should contact President GILLAM.

LUCIEN ELLINGTON, editor of *Education About Asia (EAA)*, commended STEVE GUMP for a splendid job with the SERAS; he then asked all present who had worked with *EAA* to stand and be recognized. *EAA* is produced for teachers in secondary education as well as those teaching Asian survey courses at the college level; the blind peer-reviewed journal currently has three thousand subscribers. Anyone interested in submitting an article should talk with him at the conference. The Winter 2008 issue focuses on Asian youth cultures; the Spring 2009 issue will look at the construction of memory in Asia. The Fall 2009 issue, for which submissions are still being accepted, will have a theme of Asian intercultural contacts. Future issues will explore Asia in world history, specifically the twentieth century (Winter 2009); business and economics in Asia (Spring 2010); Asian religions (Fall 2010); and environmental challenges in Asia (Winter 2010). For the first time in six years, *EAA* has raised subscription prices—to $20 for AAS members and $25 for non-members. ELLINGTON also edits the series *Key Issues in Asian Studies*, fifty-page peer-reviewed publications for undergraduate students. Topics include the caste system in India, Japanese pop culture, and traditional China in world history.

From the floor, DOUG REYNOLDS (*Georgia State*) announced that, on March 23, TU WEIMING of Harvard will deliver the 2009 Helen Ingram Plummer Lecture at Georgia State University. DAVID JONES (*Kennesaw State*) reported that ROGER AMES of the University of Hawai’i is speaking at Kennesaw State on March 23; and THOMAS KASULIS of Ohio State University will be at the Oglethorpe University Museum of Art in Atlanta on April 1 and at Kennesaw State on April 2. Ed KREBS (*China Bridge*) spoke from the floor about the exhibition of terracotta warriors from Xi’an, China, at Atlanta’s High Museum of Art until April 19. Past President RAVINA reminded everyone that the next (2009) issue of the SERAS would include a themed section (on the “Korean Wave”); the following issue (Volume 32 in 2010) might have a theme of “Democratization in Asia.” He solicited ideas for future issues, noting that the SEC—the most solvent of the regional AAS conferences—is the only one to produce a print journal. Secretary–Treasurer BEAHAN reminded everyone to encourage entries to next year’s graduate student–paper prize—including papers presented at the conference, since being selected for an AAS graduate panel (as winners have the chance to be) would look great on a résumé.

Vice President MÉTRAUX was at last able to present the election results. The contest for Vice President had been a real horse race, with CHERYL CROWLEY emerging as the victor. XUEXIN LIU was elected First Year Member-
at-Large of the SEC Executive Committee. Both were told to remember to come to the breakfast meeting of the Executive Committee on Sunday morning.

**SHIPING HUA** (*Louisville*) announced that the 49th Annual Meeting of the SEC/AAS will be held at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, on the third weekend in January 2010; it will be sponsored in part by the Center for Asian Democracy (CAD) at the University of Louisville. **HUA** will serve as Local Arrangements Chair; his colleague **ZHANG SUMEI** (*Louisville*) will serve as Program Chair. [**YAWEI LIU** (*Georgia Perimeter College & The Carter Center*) was subsequently named Program Chair.] **HUA** noted recent conference experience of the CAD: a 2006 grant from the State Department has already resulted in six conferences. A March 2009 conference on China has so far attracted 160 applications, including 60 from the People’s Republic of China. **HUA** invited all present to come to Louisville in March for this conference, where **TU WEIMING** of Harvard will be the keynote speaker. The CAD has also produced five edited volumes and special issues of three academic journals. **HUA** again welcomed everyone to Louisville for the 49th Annual Meeting of the SEC/AAS in January 2010.

Vice President **MÉTRAUX** announced that Sunday morning’s meeting of the Executive Committee would be held at 7:00 AM in the Dogwood Room. He was overruled by President **GILLAM** (as a matter of presidential prerogative), and the meeting was moved to 7:30 AM. There was no dissent. Asking for and finding no other business, President **GILLAM** adjourned the meeting at 1:50 PM.
SEC/AAS Executive Committee, 2009–2010

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Mary Baldwin College

Vice President  
CHERYL A. CROWLEY  
Emory University

Past President  
JAMES T. GILLAM  
Spelman College

Past Past President  
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First-Year Member-at-Large  
XUEXIN LIU  
Spelman College

2009 Program Chair  
Yawei Liu  
Georgia Perimeter College

2009 Local Arrangements Chair  
SHIPING HUA  
University of Louisville

Council of Conferences Representative  
SUSAN WALCOTT  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

SERAS Editor  
STEVEN E. GUMP  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
On the Cover

“Mudra of the Highest Regard”: Photograph of the Kamakura Daibutsu at the Kōtoku-in, Kamakura, Japan, taken by Jim Leavell in 2003 (Canon GL-2 video camcorder, still image mode, 1/60, 20× lens magnification, circular PL filter, tripod). The photographer, who is Herring Professor Emeritus of Asian Studies and History at Furman University, is a former SEC/AAS president (1994–95) and former member of the SERAS editorial board. He currently directs the South Carolina Center for Teaching about Asia and also offers courses on travel photography. Below are his reflections on the cover image.

The image isolates the most common mudra—the zenjō-in (Dhyāna) mudra—of Amida Nyorai and the extended finger webbing, which is one of the thirty-two distinguishing physical characteristics (sanjū-ni-so in Japanese) shared by all Buddhas. I first photographed the Kamakura Daibutsu in June 1963 and have done so periodically over the years as the surrounding foliage and votive offerings changed with the seasons. One of my Fulbright years was spent within a thirty-minute train ride of the Kōtoku-in. Reviewing that series of images made of this one rather immutable subject has helped me document the evolution of my photographic vision. My early pictures sought to encompass the 13.35-meter-high figure in its entirety from a frontal perspective, while the image reproduced on the cover represents more recent interests. The cover photograph assumes that viewers, fellow Asianists, are familiar with the statue and will share with me the exercise of mentally filling in the totality, having been offered only the hint of the whole with these significant details. For those of you who have visited the site, I hope the economy of the photograph will inspire you to recapture the whole using your own memories, whatever the season or circumstances of your visits, of standing before this colossal invitation to religious faith—faith in the saving grace of Amida Nyorai. This statue is the supreme iconographic expression of the stream of Buddhist doctrine that would, more than any other, bring solace to the Japanese as they struggled with the hopelessness of mappō (the period of the Latter Law).

Just as the Nara Daibutsu, with its roots in the Kegon Sutra, exemplifies the imperial Buddhism of the Tempyō era (710–94), so the Great Buddha at the Kōtoku-in serves to remind us of the power of popular Pure Land doctrines during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Unlike the Nara image, whose origin is well documented, little is known about Kamakura’s great bronze statue. Casting was begun in 1251, but records neither indicate when the statue was completed nor agree on the name of the chief sculptor. An act of nature swept away the Amida’s sheltering building in August 1498, exposing this statue to the elements and the attentions of artists—and eventually photographers—ever since.