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# EPOK RESEARCH ESSAYS

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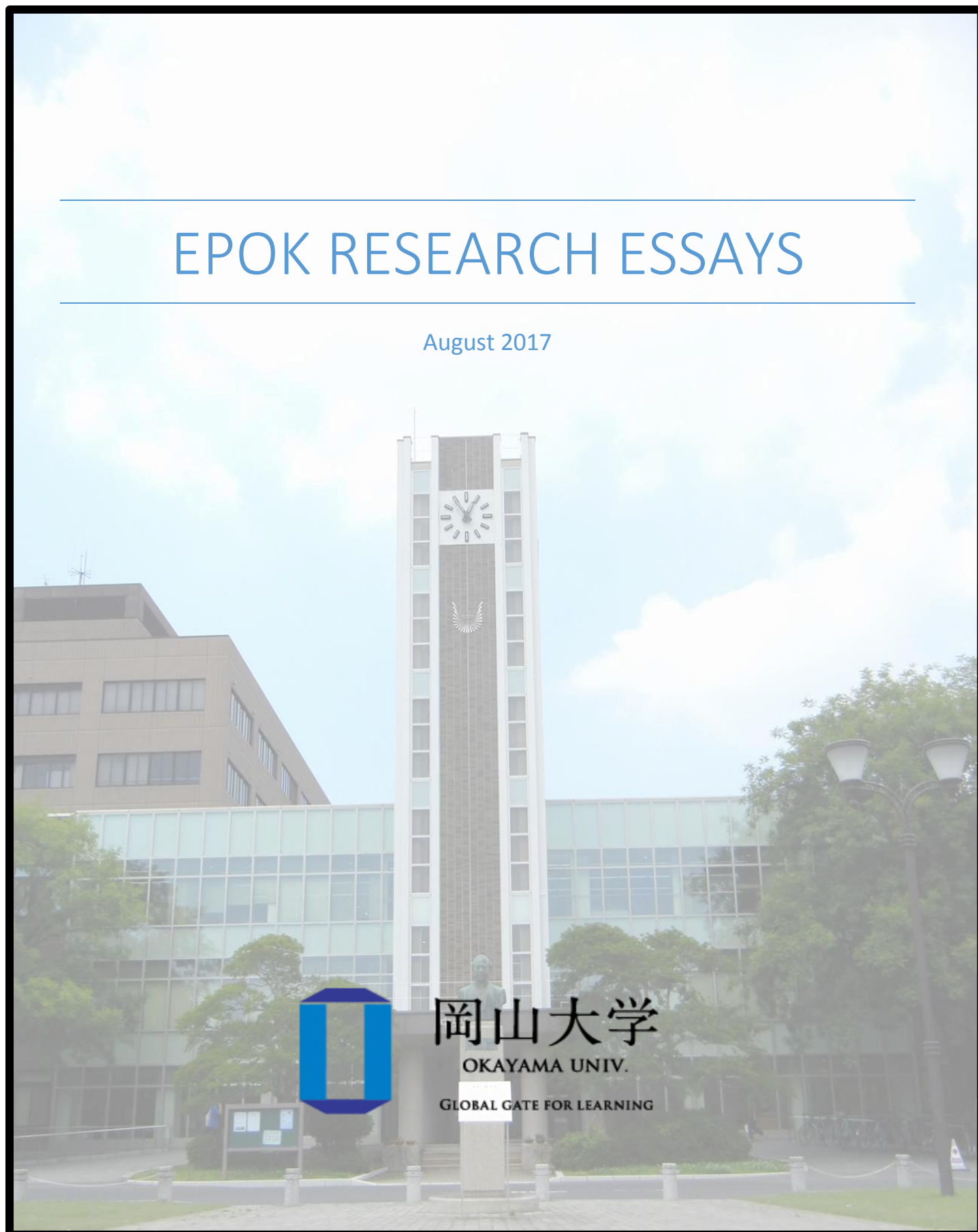
August 2017



岡山大学

OKAYAMA UNIV.

GLOBAL GATE FOR LEARNING



## EPOK Research Project 2017

岡山大学 EPOK プログラムでは、EPOK 留学生は日本語コースと EPOK 教養教育科目から科目を選択履修し、日本の文化や社会、グローバル社会におけるコミュニケーションを複眼的かつ実践的に学びます。修了課題として日本研究の視野から、個々に取り組む EPOK リサーチプロジェクトを行います。その過程では、単なる情報収集ではなくフィールド調査に根差したオリジナルな学びを重視しました。研究テーマは、文化的遺産から現代カルチャー、ビジネスから政治的課題まで多岐にわたり、日本を学ぶという地域研究の学際的取組があらわれています。

2017 年度夏期に修了する EPOK 生 40 名が作成したリサーチペーパーをここにエッセイ集として纏めました。願わくば、このエッセイ集が、皆の見出だした“日本”はもちろん、そこに至る過程を、懐かしく思い出す小さな窓の一つとなってほしいと思います。

In summer 2017, 40 EPOK students complete EPOK Research Project as the final product of the exchange program at Okayama University. In this EPOK research essay collection, the students share their individual research interest, analysis and findings, which they pursued as their own research theme in learning about Japan especially through a fieldwork in the local community of Okayama. The compilation of the writings shows a great variety of the students' interest in Japanese cultures and society.

I hope the process of researching own theme as well as findings are acknowledged through original experience for each of the EPOK students in learning about a culture that is not of their own. May this collection of the essays be a token of their fresh eyes and endeavor in Okayama, Japan.

2017 年 7 月

大林 純子

Obayashi Junko

Center for Global Partnerships and Education

Okayama University

## Editor's Note

Dear reader,

This year the EPOK students have created another annual collection of essays. We decided to take a more academic approach this time. The topics are varied and while some students wrote about their interests in Japan, some of us wrote about Okayama University, asking the students about Japanese customs and culture. This is the first time the EPOK class has focused specifically on Okayama city, for in the past the vast majority of EPOK essays were researched only by online research. The narrower scope inspired some people to conduct surveys, manage interviews, and generally talk to Okayama university students. Moreover this class has taught us how to organize independent research papers, from the conception of the idea to the preliminary research. It was a valuable experience for some of us, especially for those who have never had academic paper published before. This is why we editors took care to make this book look decent and professional. We are proud to show those who read our collection how devoted the EPOK students are to Japanese studies. We hope you enjoy reading our essays and see how much time and care these students have put into writing these academic papers.

We thank everyone who took part in creating this book. I want to thank Simona Pakutinskaite for taking everyone's photos, Sydney Williamson for organizing our presentations, Donna Dinh for creating the poster, and to the editing team who helped us format the essays. Big thank you to Junko sensei, who strove to make sure everything, for all 40 EPOK students in her class, was perfect. Alivia and I worked hard for the past week to make this book is the best it could be. Besides, it was the collective effort of all the authors of these essays who really made this book a reality. Thank you!

Aleksa MacDonald & Alivia Hancock

July 13, 2017

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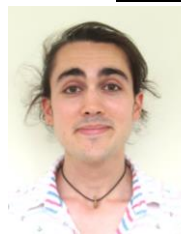
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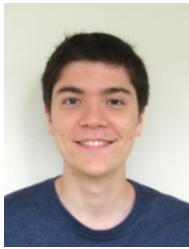
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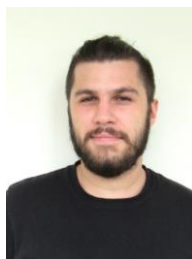


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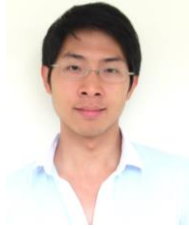


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## Minka, Its Characteristics and New Roles in the Modern Day

David, Tocchini

San Jose State University (USA)

**Summary:** 簡単に言えば、日本の伝統的家屋である民家に使われる材料は全て地表から得られるものである。より分かりやすくいうと、もし空っぽの民家が焼かれたとすれば、後に残るのは灰の山とちりだけに他ならない。民家の素材には、様々な種類の木、ロープ、タイル、茅、そして泥や土などが含まれる。一方で、民家を建てる時とりわけ避けられる材料として、鉄くぎ、セメント、合成品または人工物などがある。このエッセイでは、主に民家とは何か、またその構造、床、芯柱、梁を含む重要な要素を扱う。その後なぜ民家が田舎の活性化という今注目を集めている問題との関連性において、一般大衆の関心や繋がり失くしてしまったのかを提示し、田舎において民家式の建築を復興させることがなぜより有用であるか、田舎の活性化の根本的な問題点はなにかを推察する。そして、民家がどのように日本の文化やまちそのものにおいて中心的なものとなっているかを述べ結論とする。

**Characteristics of a Minka:** Minka(民家) or; “The term *minka*, literally meaning “house of the people,” covers a great variety of residential types” (Nishi, 1983, p.80), usually housing any member who would fall below the samurai class in Edo Japan. Because this is such a generalizing term, I will specify that as far as the context of my paper is concerned, the particular Minka I will be referring to most is that of farmers. I will do this in part because of the simplicity of their construction, usually consisting of a single level, an earthen floor, visible arches, and a single main open space.

Certain parts of the floor consisted of tatami mats, however the area near the stove or the entrance usually was an earthen floor made out of a material called Tataki 三和土. Tataki is a clay like material made from three components, “earth, lime and bittern” (Tataki, 2015). The mixture is similar to the consistency of clay but with much less water content, it is evenly dispersed and compacted down over a layer of gravel. This process is done two more times, creating three layers in total, all within the same day to ensure that it all settles evenly and does not crack or shrink.

The construction of this particular type of Minka was very similar to various other types of traditional Minka where you had a singular main load bearing pillar that usually was comprised of the entirety of a hug tree. These houses differed greatly from western houses in two main ways. The walls took no load off the structure itself at all, and instead the beams themselves were the only load bearing structure throughout the Minka. The second main key component is that the house itself was not anchored to the ground. Instead main load pillars were either built on top of the bedrock or atop large rocks to help disperse the load. The building itself was designed to sway and move; walls were comprised of bamboo halves lashed together then covered in plaster. In the event of large storms or earthquakes, the whole structure would move, breaking the plaster walls, but ensuring the structural security of the building.

As mentioned before, most Minka have a Central pillar (大黒柱) : one that takes the majority of the weight in the house, this pillar also has a special meaning apart from its obvious key function, “*Daikoku sama*, of course, is the name given to the Shinto god of good-fortune, a guardian of well-being and success of the *ie*. The spirit of *Daikoku sama* is also transferred to the physical form of the house by calling its ‘central’ supporting pillar the *daikoku bashira*” (Jeremy, 1989, p. 39). The central pillar is much more than simply just a structural component. It is a key part of the house, a center piece that all members must walk around, live around, and be around. It often still has many of the original features of the original tree it came from, as the house ages it too picks up the life of the house. It is arguable that the main pillar is the soul or epicenter of a Minka and you could even say it serves an even more significant function as well. The combination of the curves in the mighty tree making up the central pillar, and the curves of great branches reaching up lifting the ceiling toured the heavens. In sync with the cool Tataki

grounding your sense of being back down to the Earth. The very sense of nature most houses are designed to keep out, is built into the very structure of every Minka.

***Minka's Role in the Future:*** Now from an outside perspective it is very hard to understand why anyone would want to not live in such a wonderful house. And the answer to “why” is simple, Japan is a monoculture that follows popularization to the letter of the law. No sector has taken advantage of this trend more than the housing sector in Japan, which has used this to drastically change what the people wish to purchase. To add some perspective of the issue as of 2015 about “635,000 couples married” (Statistics, 2017, p. 18) in Japan, the fact that they married is not the issue, but instead is meant to give a level of perspective as far as numbers. Keeping that number as a point of perspective also in 2015 the housing sector was in the process of making “0.91 million housing units” (Statistics, 2017, p. 72). This figure of course included apartments and mansions, but the data can be interpreted as meaning you could have one and a half new homes for every new couple married that year. However this is not all, it is still a ridiculously high number, even in perspective of the entire population. With a population of “126,702,133 (July 2016 est.)” (The World Factbook) the data can further be interpreted to say that roughly there is enough housing for almost one new building for every 120 people in the entire country built in just one year. However this is something not everyone sees as a necessarily bad thing, this type of housing market can create an affordable safe house within one to two months. From a governmental perspective, it is also great because houses that only last one generation then need to be rebuilt this requires a large construction labor force which in turn produces more jobs and lowers unemployment rates, but does it really? Yes it does create jobs, many more jobs, but they only last a few months on each job site, skill levels are low which doesn't attract many young educated students to want to learn a new trade. Because the job is too simple and mostly manual labor the job unintentionally discriminates the entirety of the older, experienced generation from being able to seek the employment. This issue can easily tie into another major issue in Japan failing rural cities or Inaka.

***Inaka:*** So first we need to look at the principle fact, and that is what is an Inaka, in Traphagan's book, he gives the definition of an Inaka as follows; "inaka is often tied nostalgic imagery of community and belongingness within the context of rural areas exemplified by fishing villages and rice-farming hamlets in which cooperative, substance-based work efforts tied people together" (Creighton 1997:242, cited in Traphagan:33)

Now this statement can be seen by most people as quite vague, and that is because it is. Inaka is a blanket term that is used to describe many cities in Japan that fall within those two of those main Categories. Now a key issue is that not every town that is identified by those who live in big cities as inaka, necessarily identifies itself as an Inaka. Unfortunately, there is no general registry for towns wishing to claim to be inaka. To give the scale of just how many could potentially exist we can look at Japan Geographically. Japan is an island Nation, now despite most of the population residing in heavily urbanized cities, the country still is highly forested, to give a quick point of reference I have mentioned previously published by the Japanese government “Japan's forest land area is 25.08 million hectares (approximately 70 percent of the entire surface area of the country). Of this, natural forests account for 54 percent while planted forests, most of which are conifer plantations, make up 41 percent.” (Statistics, 2017, p. 56) The reason this is important is a recurring theme of many definitions of inaka, is that they are usually cut off from the main urbanization of big cities usually through three main obstacles. Those being water, earthen features, and forestation. Now unfortunately even for the sake of argument it is not impossible, but highly impractical for cities to reroute, major water ways, or clear mountains, and destroy millions of hectares of forests just to unify the infrastructures of cities. So taking this into account we could safely assume that many cities either voluntarily or involuntarily could fall into the definition of inaka.

Now one could assume that one quick thing that will help inaka grow is deforestation, a problem seen in many parts of the world, however in Japan currently this seems very unlikely to be a leading factor. Despite almost half of the forests in Japan being planted for the lumber industry, currently most of Japanese homes are made up of composite materials of which; “In 2014, Japan's self-sufficiency rate for lumber was 29.6 percent. Currently, Japan depends mostly on imported lumber for pulp, woodchip, and

plywood materials.” (Statistics, 2017, p. 56) Which is ridiculous when almost 35% of the entire land mass of Japan is harvestable materials.

**Solution:** However switching to Minka as a go to for housing construction would solve quite a few of these issues and here is why. A Minka takes roughly 2-3 years and requires a variety of skilled workers from multiple trades to complete said house. The cost is significantly higher however is more suitable to that of a family something Japan is in a growing shortage of. Beyond just addressing population needs, it is also a property that is meant to gain value over time, rather than losing all said value like western style houses in Japan. Because of this Minka would be seen not just as a necessity but as an investment that not only provided financial support in times of unemployment for the family. It would also greatly support local craftsmen whose incomes would be more, likely to be put back into the local economy, than that of a migrant low skilled labor force.

**Counter Point:** This comes all the way back round to the concept of what is an Inaka? And that could be summed up into solitude, open space, and a marketplace that requires community cooperation to thrive. Now before I give my opinion I must first make a reference to Mazlow, in Mazlow’s hierarchy of needs, now since this is a pretty widely accepted theory of human needs for the sake of this argument we will make the assumption that cultural nuances would not cause too much of an outlier.

Now we can easily say that an Inaka that fulfils the definition of what is a inaka would 100% satisfy the first three levels or the basic levels of Mazlow’s hierarchy of needs. However, as we move up we have issues. Firstly, Japan as a whole, and Inaka’s especially value the many over the one, they are an exemplification of a monoculture. However, there are draw backs that clash with basic Human phycology that Japanese culture are not immune to. And that is simple wants and needs, it is simple to say we all desire success, to what extent we desire success depend greatly on the person but it isn’t un heard of for a town to want to grow and be more then what is currently is. However now is where we get in the zero-sum solution. Inaka’s in general are struggling whether it is because of money or simply a lack of a populous which intern hurts their lack of money.

However, Inaka are in a debacle, because an inaka “by definition” could never truly be a successful thriving town, and this is why. A towns size, is greatly determined by its populous, as towns grow, so too does the populous. Alongside the visible growth the infrastructural needs to satisfy the basic needs of survive and must too expand. Therefore, towns can seem greatly dependent on the number of residences in order to be successful, which leads to a simple solution to the inaka problem just add people. But they don’t seem to add many people, now to prove my point I will use Yakage as an example. Yakage is considered a prime example of Inaka revitalization. However, why? Clearly billions of yen have been invested, the town looks nice in some areas but the town is still empty, from a western perspective...no from any perspective this would be considered a failed investment. And, it is a failed investment, however it is because it was never intended to succeed in the obvious sense.

Here is why, as stated previously if you simply urbanize a inaka, revitalize it add a million people then add the infrastructure need to support that populous, you no longer have an inaka, you just have another Japanese city. And that is the key fundamental problem, the concept of a flourishing large financial successful independent community and that of a Inaka are not one in the same, they can never go together without sacrificing a part of the other. This key point of compromise is considered unacceptable by most papers published on Inaka revitalization, and their intern is why is as a zero-sum solution. Inaka’s in a globalized economy or any independent economy will never be independently feasible, and its simple they never were meant to. Inaka are in short, are a faint reminder of the social class system left over from the Edo period, where farmers would live in small towns and focus heavy on production, to feed the needs of bigger cities, the bigger cities in turn would help maintain infrastructure, commerce, and protections from hostile factors. It was a symbiotic relationship, however these towns as they stand were not designed to be economically viable as independent entities without undergoing radical change. And here in my opinion is the fundamental problem, you can’t hope for improvements while fearing to change.

**Counter Point Conclusion:** Feasibility of traditional construction is not an easy subject to grasp. Traditional houses require significantly more lumber to build then a modern western style prefabricated

house. However Japan as a country has the infrastructural means to build far more Minka than it does prefabricated houses. Prefabricated houses are in fact not made up of a majority of Japanese materials but instead are made from imported materials instead, “In 2014, Japan's self-sufficiency rate for lumber was 29.6 percent. Currently, Japan depends mostly on imported lumber for pulp, woodchip, and plywood materials.” (Statistics, 2017, p. 56) in contrast, “Japan's forest land area is 25.08 million hectares (approximately 70 percent of the entire surface area of the country). Of this, natural forests account for 54 percent while planted forests, most of which are conifer plantations, make up 41 percent. Meanwhile, Japan's forest growing stock is 4,901 million cubic meters, of which 3,042 million cubic meters are from planted forests.” (Statistics, 2017, p. 56) What this means in a nutshell is that 58% of the land mass in Japan has been cultivated to supply Japan with the necessary resources it needs to build a sustainable Machi, and not prefabricated houses.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion just as the center pillar of the house or daikoku bashira is the heart of the Minka, so too can the Minka be the heart of a town both culturally and economically. It has the ability to create jobs and add a town atmosphere of camaraderie that has not existed in Japan since the Edo period. In conclusion, I have found it both feasible, and economically sound to go back to cities centered around the Minka. I surmise that in the future the key elements of a “successful Japanese Machi” will have daikoku bashira at its center.

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## Namako-kabe: Connecting Architecture and Culture

Sarah Booze

Appalachian State University (USA)

**Summary:** このレポートの目的は海鼠壁を説明して、建築と文化の接続も説明ののです。研究方法はウェブ記事とフィールドワークです。まず、トピックを導入されます。それから、海鼠壁の詳細を提供提供されます。最後に、結論があります。結論部分で、概要があつて、海鼠壁の大切についてディスカッションがあります。結論部分で、歴史と建築と文化の接続についてディスカッションもあります。

### 1. Introduction

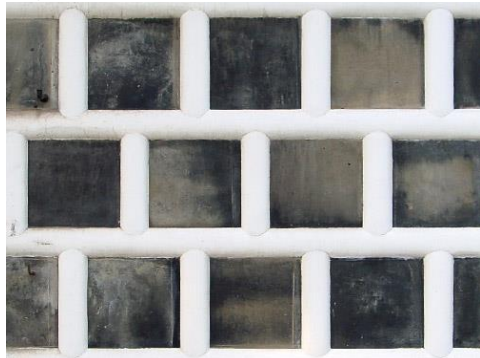
One only needs to spend a little time in Japan to discover that there are many interesting and unique elements of Japanese culture. One such aspect is architecture. Though Japan is home to beautiful pieces of modern architecture, traditional architecture can be found throughout Japan, as well. This traditional architecture is an important feature of Japanese culture because it gives an invaluable insight into the past. One can learn a great deal about a country's culture by studying the architecture of that culture. For example, looking at the structure of houses can yield information about how the people lived and about their relationship to their surroundings. Analyzing the materials used in architecture can be used to discern what resources were readily available at the time of the building's construction. These are just a few examples of how architecture is related to history, and in a broader sense, culture. The purpose of this paper is to further explore this connection between architecture, history, and culture, and to illustrate how this connection applies to Japan specifically. In Japan, there are many unique, well-known factors of architecture which are important. But it is equally valuable, if not more so, to explore lesser-known aspects of architecture. Therefore, this paper will focus on one little-known, but incredibly fascinating, feature of Japanese architecture: Namako-kabe.

### 2. Characteristics of namako-kabe

Namako-kabe directly translates in English as “sea slug wall”, and it is an important element in Japanese architecture. The details of the origins of namako-kabe's name will be discussed shortly but first, a more in-depth explanation of namako-kabe will be presented. Namako-kabe is a type of wall made from tile and plaster that was created during the Edo period of Japan (1603-1867). When the walls were built, wooden structures would first be constructed and covered with thick layers of earth. Afterwards, small, black tiles would be affixed to the walls with nails. From there, the joints of the tiles would be covered in thick layers of white plaster (“Matsuzaki - Town with Namako Wall Buildings,” 2011). The thick plaster joints (as can be seen in **fig. 1** below) resembled namako, or sea slug, and were therefore called namako-kabe. The plaster used to join the spaces between the tiles was created from a mixture of natural ingredients such as hemp and straw, sand, and seaweed glue (“Eye-Catching Designs in Picturesque Townscape,” 2016). The combination of tile and plaster gave namako-kabe a stunning and unique aesthetic. There are a few different designs of namako-kabe with varying elements such as shape and pattern. Two of the most basic types namako-kabe are shihan-bari (**fig. 2**, top) and umanori-meji (**fig. 2**, bottom). Umanori-meji is recognizable due to its horizontal pattern, whereas shihan-bari exhibits a diagonal design. While both designs are visually appealing, shihan-bari was more commonly used. The

reason for this is the fact that umanori-meji was more susceptible to damage than shihan-bari ("Namakokabe 海鼠壁," n.d.). Therefore, shihan-bari became the main type of namako-kabe used on buildings. However, it is common to see buildings in which both umanori-meji and shihan-bari are used (**fig. 2**). Buildings which exhibit both umanori-meji and shihan-bari have much visual contrast making the buildings fascinating to look at. While there are many visually pleasing elements of the tile and plaster of namako-kabe, there are also many functional uses as Namako-kabe has extremely valuable protective qualities.

**Fig. 1**



*Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System*

**Fig. 2**



### 3. Uses of namako-kabe

Namako-kabe's many protective qualities include being waterproof and windproof ("About Namako Walls," n.d.). These two qualities were especially important in port towns where water and wind damage was more likely to occur. Indeed, many port towns have structures protected with namako-kabe. While water and wind resistant properties are incredibly valuable, there is another protective quality of namako-kabe that is perhaps the most important. Namako-kabe was also fire resistant ("About Namako Walls," n.d.).

As stated above, namako-kabe was first used during the Edo period. During this time, fires in many towns were quite common ("Matsuzaki - Town with Namako Wall Buildings," 2011). Thus, it is easy to see how valuable a fire-resistant wall would be. Namako-kabe could protect a building from fire, wind and water, so why was it not used on every building during the Edo period? The answer to this question? Cost. Namako-kabe was an expensive feature to construct ("Matsuzaki - Town with Namako Wall Buildings," 2011). As can be seen in **fig. 2**, namako-kabe tiles do not cover the entire surface of the buildings on which it was used. The high cost of namako-kabe explains why only portions of a building would have the special tile and plaster wall. Because namako-kabe was expensive, only a select few people could afford to use it on their properties. Usually elites, samurai, and rich merchants were the only ones who could afford the expensive wall, and even they did not use namako-kabe on all of their buildings ("About Namako Walls," n.d.).

While structures such as castles and castle walls often utilized namako-kabe, the protective walls were most commonly found on warehouses (see **fig. 2** below) ("About Namako Walls," n.d.). For merchants, protecting their goods (which were directly related to their income) was the upmost priority. It was for this reason they invested in namako-kabe to protect their wares. These warehouses, and other various structures, which utilized namako-kabe could be found throughout many regions of Japan. However, the use of namako-kabe was more common in western Japan than in eastern Japan ("Namakokabe 海鼠壁," n.d.).

**Fig. 3**

Kurashiki Koukokan (Okayama)  
*Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System*

#### 4. Location of namako-kabe

In western Japan, namako-kabe was especially popular. A good example of a city in which namako-kabe is extensively used is Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture. When walking through the streets of the historical quarter, or Bikan Chiku, of Kurashiki, it is almost impossible not to notice the striking tile and plaster walls. Kurashiki was once a bustling mercantile town which acted as a storage hub for a variety of goods such as cotton and rice ("Eye-Catching Designs in Picturesque Townscape," 2016), so it is no surprise that there are so many buildings which have namako-kabe. Kurashiki is one of the most famous towns which contains namako-kabe; however, there are many other towns in Japan which have an abundance of namako-kabe, not all of which are in western Japan. While namako-kabe is more common in western Japan, there is a region in the east of Japan in which namako-kabe can be easily found. In Matsuzaki in the Izu province of Shizuoka Prefecture, there are many buildings which showcase the beautiful namako-kabe. Because the merchants in that area were quite rich, they could afford to have many buildings with namako-kabe constructed ("Matsuzaki - Town with Namako Wall Buildings," 2011). If one were to visit either Matsuzaki or Kurashiki (or many of the other cities in which namako-kabe can be seen), one could see namako-kabe as it was hundreds of years ago. In many places across Japan, namako-kabe is well-preserved as it is a unique and precious part of Japanese architecture. In this way, preservation shows that architecture can be used to explore not only the culture of the past, but the culture of the present, as well. The preservation of historic sites and various architectural elements illustrates a culture's dedication to keeping the past alive and furthering education about history. This connection between preservation and the values of a society is just one example of the countless ways in which architecture can be connected to culture, and namako-kabe only helps to further illustrate this connection.

#### 5. Conclusion

After analyzing the characteristics, uses, and location of namako-kabe, it is clear to see that namako-kabe was not only incredibly valuable in the past due to its protective qualities and aesthetic appeal, but it is still important today as it can provide information about the history and culture of Japan. Through exploring elements of Japanese architecture such as namako-kabe, we can delve deeper in

Japanese culture. Namako-kabe is a wall that is more than just a beautiful design. It protected the livelihood of Japanese merchants and the homes and storehouses of the elite. Namako-kabe is truly a fascinating and unique element of Japanese architecture that continues to capture the eye, connect the past and present, and lead to a better understanding of Japanese culture.

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## How Japanese Swords Are Made and Their Popularity in The Western World

Ryan Butler

York St. John University (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** 日本刀とその作り方は世界でとても有名ですよ。日本刀はどうやって作られましたか。そして、西洋で日本刀はどうやって人気になりましたか。熟練した刀工は鋼を鍛えて日本刀作ったので、昔の侍は素晴らしい武器と道具がありました。全ての戦争は終わった時、日本は最早武器を必要としませんでした。そのころ、アメリカ人は西洋にたくさん日本刀を持って来ました。今世界で色々な日本刀はたくさん博物館がみせます。

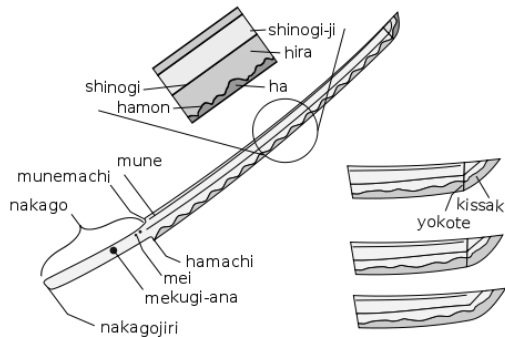
In a very general sense, thanks in most part to the media industry, each country has their own stereotypical image associated with their people. Need a British person? Dress them up in rags from the 1800s and give them a cockney accent. French? Black and white striped shirt, beret and a necklace of garlic. As for the Japanese people, the common stereotype is usually dressed in a kimono, with their hair in a top knot whilst carrying around a sword. It is very likely this came about from old samurai movies once they started becoming popular outside of Japan, although the events of World War II also helped Westerners discover for themselves how good Japanese swords are. As such, Japan is now famous for many things including their expertly crafted bladed weapons. In this essay I will be briefly discussing about the various iterations of swords made in Japan since they were introduced from China, an in depth look at each part of a sword and its purpose, the processes used to forge these blades, and how they came to be so popular outside of the country as well.

When talking about swords in Japan, there are many many different types. The three most common types known are the famous Katana which is commonly used with a Wakizashi and/or a Tantō. To classify Japanese swords, there are a number of things to take into account. The main components of sword are the blade and the mount. The blade is fairly self explanatory – It is the long sharp metal part which is the primary attacking piece. The mount is pretty much the rest of the weapon and decides what kind of fighting style the weapon will be used for. The mount is made up of the scabbard, hand guard piece and grips. Using these combinations, you can make over a dozen different types of weapons.

To classify these weapons even further, you can look at the time periods that they were made and used. The earliest of which is the Jōkotō or “ancient sword” era (before 900AD). This particular era's style of swords were mostly derived from Chinese designs and the most popular sword type at that time was the Chokutō or “straight sword”. This was the beginning of the Japanese version of the craft but a lot of the swords at that time were imported from China. That era was then followed by the Kotō or “old sword” period (987 to 1597AD). It was during this period that the famous method of folding the steel was conceived. As such, this was also the birth of the long, curved katana as we know today. The katana was not invented until the later part of that time period. It's predecessor was known as the Uchigatana, which were very similar to katana. The only major difference in the two is that the katana has more cutting power. The katana and uchigatana were developed as the main type of sword for members of the military to use during that period. Before this, they were using a Tachi or “big sword”. The key difference between this and later models is that the tachi was designed to be worn suspended with the edge facing down. This meant that whenever it was used, the drawing motion and the first attacking motion were separate. The uchigatana and the katana were created to be worn suspended with the blade facing upwards

instead, which meant that the drawing motion could also be the first attacking motion as well (Gilman et al, 1906 p.765).

After this, there was also the Shintō ("new swords") era (1596–1780), followed by the Shinshintō ("new new swords" 1781–1876), Gendaitō ("modern swords" 1876–1945), and finally the Shinsakutō ("newly made swords") era (1953–present). During all of these periods, the main sword type created was the katana. As such, when classifying weapons, you can specify the sword type as well as the time period that it was created in (e.g. a katana that was created very recently would be known as a Shinsakutō katana).



Each blade is unique, depending on who made it and how they made it. The most noticeable part is the middle ridge, or shinogi. This sticking out edge on the weapon is used to separate the usually flattened back edge of the sword from the front cutting edge. Different swords have different shapes and some of these are dependent on the shinogi. Most commonly, the back edge is flat to the shinogi, then tapered towards the blade. However, swords can narrow down to the shinogi, then narrow even further to the blade, or even grow outward towards the shinogi then shrink back to the blade (making a kind of trapezoid shape). A flat or narrowing shinogi is called a shinogi-hikushi, whereas a chunkier blade

is called a shinogi-takushi.

The shinogi, while usually placed in the middle, can be placed near the back of the blade for a longer, sharper, but more fragile tip. More often than not though, the shinogi is towards the middle of the blade to give a balance between durability and sharpness.

Another important part of the sword is the tip. It has an exact tip shape, which is thought to be a very important characteristic in Japanese swordsmithing. The tip can be various lengths: long (ōkissaki), medium (chūkissaki), short (kokissaki), or even hooked backwards (ikuri-ōkissaki). In addition, whether the front edge of the tip is more curved (fukura-tsuku) or more straight (fukura-kareru) is another important thing to decide. The more curved option is better for slicing attacks, whilst the mostly straight edge is better for thrusting and piercing attacks.

The most defining feature of the tip of a Japanese sword is the kissaki. Kissaki have a wavy profile, and smooth three-dimensional curves across the surface towards the blade edge. Although they are anchored by a straight line known as the yokote, they have clear definition at all of their edges. Despite common misconceptions, the kissaki is not a straight basic sloped point, similar to that of a chisel, but traditional Japanese kissaki have many flowing curves and a complex surface. As such, the Western version of "Japanese" swords tend to be made with the flatter chisel-like point as it is easy to grind. This gives it an appearance of a true Japanese sword. Many people believe that this kissaki originated in America due to the overuse of this design by American bladesmiths. Examples of it being of Japanese heritage are shown in the book "The Japanese Sword" by Kanzan Sato.

As for the other end of the blade, this part (the tang) is inserted into the handle. A hole, which is punched through the tang (nakago), is called a mekugi-ana. It's main use is to anchor the blade using a small pin made from bamboo (mekugi) that is then put through another hole in the handle (tsuka) as well as the mekugi-ana, therefore stopping the blade from falling out. To remove the handle from the blade, you have to take out the mekugi. Like most artists, the swordsmiths like to leave their signature (mei) on their work. As for weapons, swordsmiths carve theirs onto the tang.

When making traditional Japanese swords, it is important to use the best materials that you can. The best metal that was readily available in Japan is a type of steel known as tamahagane ("jewel steel"). Tamahagane is made from iron sand (a type of iron ore) and is also used, on top of making swords, many other useful weapons and tools.

The smelting process is quite different from the process used to mass produce steel in modern times. A clay box, known as a tataru, about 1.1 m tall, 3 m long, and 1.1 m wide is first built. After the clay has set, it is fired until dry. A soft pine charcoal fire is started, then the smelter will wait for the fire to get hot enough. At that point he will then start putting in some of the iron sand (satetsu). The next steps are to add another layer of charcoal followed by more iron sand. This is done a number of times over the next 72 hours. This is a big job and usually requires four or five people to constantly do this part of the process. From building the tataru to finishing turning the iron sand and charcoal into steel, it usually takes about a week. Because the charcoal can not be hotter than melting point of iron, the steel can not become fully molten, and this allows both high and low carbon material to be made and separated once it has cooled. When finished, the Tataru is broken to take out the lump of steel, known as a kera. At the end of it all the tataru will have used about 10 tons of satetsu and 12 tons of charcoal leaving about 2.5 tons of kera left, from which no more than a ton of tamahagane can actually be produced. Despite the long winded process, making kera can be very profitable. One single kera can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, making it many many times more expensive than modern steels.

The swordsmiths will carefully break the kera apart, and separate the different carbon steels. The lowest carbon steel is called hocho-tetsu (soft iron), which is used for the shingane of the blade. The high carbon steel (tamahagane) and higher carbon pig iron (nabe-gane) will then be forged in alternating layers, using very delicate and intricate methods to make the very hard steel for the edge, called hagane (edge steel), and the springy metal jacket, called kawagane (skin steel). The most useful and famous process is the folding, where the metals are forge welded, folded, and welded again, as many as 16 times. The folding takes out any impurities and even helps out the carbon content, whilst the alternating layers combine hardness with malleableness to greatly improve the toughness. Currently, tamahagane is only made three or four times a year and is only sold to the master swordsmiths to use once it is made. The best known part of the manufacturing process is the folding of the steel, where the swords are made by repeatedly heating, hammering and folding the metal. This process of folding metal to improve strength and remove impurities is frequently attributed to specific Japanese smiths in legends.

Between each heating and folding, the steel is coated in a mixture of clay, water and straw-ash to protect it from oxidation and adding too much carbon. At around 900°C, the heat and water from the clay help the formation of a wustite layer, which is a type of iron oxide formed in the absence of oxygen. In this environment, the silicon in the clay reacts with wustite to form fayalite and, at around 1,200°C, the fayalite will become a liquid. This liquid acts as a flux, attracting impurities, and pulls out the impurities as it is squeezed from between the layers. This leaves a very pure surface which, in turn, helps facilitate the forge-welding process. Due to the loss of impurities, slag, and iron in the form of sparks during the hammering, by the end of forging the steel may be reduced to as little as one tenth of its initial weight. This practice became popular due to the use of highly impure metals, stemming from the low temperature yielded in the smelting at that time and place. The folding did several things. It provided alternating layers of differing hardenability. During quenching, the high carbon layers achieve greater hardness than the medium carbon layers. The hardness of the high carbon steels combine with the ductility of the low carbon steels to form the property of toughness. It also harmonised the metal, spreading the elements evenly throughout - increasing the effective strength by decreasing the number of potential weak points. It burned off many impurities, helping to overcome the poor quality of the raw Japanese steel. It created up to 65000 layers, by continuously removing carbon from the surface and bringing it into the blade's interior, which gives the swords their grain (hada).

Generally, swords were created with the grain of the blade running down the blade like the grain on a plank of wood. Straight grains were called masame-hada, wood-like grain itame, wood-burl grain mokume, and concentric wavy grain ayasugi-hada. The difference between the first three grains is that of cutting a tree along the grain, at an angle, and perpendicular to its direction of growth (mokume-gane) respectively, the angle causing the "stretched" pattern (Japanese Sword Smithing, 2004).

Under the United States occupation at the end of World War II, all armed forces in occupied Japan were disbanded and the production of nihontō with edges was banned except under police or government

permission. The ban was overturned through a personal appeal by Dr. Junji Honma. During a meeting with General Douglas MacArthur, Honma produced blades from the various periods of Japanese history and MacArthur was able to identify very quickly what blades held artistic merit and which could be considered purely weapons. As a result of this meeting, the ban was amended so that the military swords (guntō) would be destroyed while swords of artistic merit could be owned and preserved. Even so, many nihontō were sold to American soldiers at a bargain price; in 1958 there were more Japanese swords in America than in Japan. The vast majority of these one million or more swords were guntō, but there were still a sizeable number of older swords.

After the Edo period, swordsmiths turned increasingly to the production of civilian goods. The Occupation and its regulations almost put an end to the production of nihontō. A few smiths continued their trade, and Honma went on to be a founder of the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword (Nippon Bijutsu Tōken Hozon Kyōkai), who made it their mission to preserve the old techniques and blades. Thanks to the efforts of other like-minded individuals, the nihontō did not disappear, many swordsmiths continued the work begun by Masahide, and the old swordmaking techniques were rediscovered.

Modern swords manufactured according to traditional methods are usually known as shinsakutō, meaning "newly made swords". Alternatively, they can be termed shinken when they are designed for combat as opposed to iaitō, training swords.

Due to their popularity in modern media, display-only "nihontō" have become widespread in the sword marketplace. Ranging from small letter openers to scale replica "wallhangers", these items are commonly made from stainless steel, which makes them either brittle (if made from the same stainless steel used for cutlery) or poor at staying sharp (if made from higher grade stainless steel) and have either a blunt or very crude edge. There are accounts of good quality stainless steel nihontō, however, these are rare at best. Some replica nihontō have been used in modern-day armed robberies, which helped contribute to the enactment of a ban on sale, import and hire of samurai swords in the UK. As a part of marketing, modern historic blade styles and material properties are often stated as traditional and genuine, spreading disinformation.

In Japan, genuine edged hand-made Japanese swords, whether antique or modern, are classified as art objects (and not weapons) and must have accompanying certification in order to be legally owned. Some companies and independent smiths outside Japan produce katana as well, with varying levels of quality.

In conclusion, the Japanese have found a very good method for creating strong and beautiful looking weapons. Although the initial production of these swords was purely for military purposes, Japan has found a way to turn these weapons into art and preserve them for many years. On top of this, they have created something that people all across the world now admire. My hope is that these fine pieces of craftsmanship stay in this world for many more years to come.

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## The Cult of the Mountain in Shugendo

Caterina Bertoli

Ca' Foscari University (Italy)

**Summary:** 四月に三朝の御幸行列に参加した。あの時、お坊さんと話した。初めて修験道のことを聞いた。そして、日本に様々な宗教であること気がついた。さらに、意外と全部の宗教は平和にあり続けある。特に修験道は仏教の真言や神道に様々な要素をもらった。修験道の支点は山である。ですから、山の概念について小論文を書くことをきめた。山に登る時に、特別な変換が起きる。山伏は、山に登る時、そんな心の変換を探している。その理由では、山は大切である

What we call Shugendō was born around the X sec. In Japan, when some ascetics started to organise their beliefs in a more rational way, around some masters. In this way, the Shugendo was born as a new Way to experience the holiness, without all the rules of the monastic institutions. The Shugendo was broadly influenced by Esoteric Buddhism (most likely by Kukai's Shingon Buddhism), Taoism, ecstatic experiences of the Shintoism. In this newly born system of beliefs, human body and senses were considered a fundamental means to reach the enlightenment. For what we know, there was not a founder of the Shugendo, the myth progressively was born. A man called En no Gyoja (役の行者) appears for the first time in Japanese literature in the Nihon Shoki and he was described, with skepticism, as an ascetic living in the mountains, whose job was to chain up demons and spirits. Notions about the mysterious father of the Shugendō are a few but, besides that, we can say that the unify element of the Shugendo is the mountain and the importance it has in its religious practices. This strong bound with the mountains can be seen, first of all, in one of the name we give to the devotee: Yamabushi (山伏), that is “the one who is lying down in the mountain”. Other way to call the ones practicing Shugendo were Shugenya (修験者) or Shugyosha (修行者). Practitioners, as a general rule, have to spend most of their time in the mountains, since it is seen as the point of conjunction between what is human and what is supernatural, performing seclusion, fasting, meditation, magical spells, recite sutras, and engage in austere feats of endurance such as standing or sitting under cold mountain waterfalls or in the snow.

Now that is more clear what the Shugendo is and how it was born, I find extremely important two aspects I would like to analyze in my research. First of all, the Shinbutsu Shugo (神仏習合) or, in other words, the association between Kami and Buddha. On the other hand, I would like to analyze how the mountain was fundamental for this process of syncretism.

As told before, the Shugendo has always integrated, from its origin, elements of different cults and religions. In this process of unification the Shinbutsu Shugo had a central role. Literally, the Japanese terms means assimilation of Kami and Buddha. This process appeared in its first form in Nara period (710-794 a.D) and developed more in Heian period (794-1185 a.D). Shinto's deities, Kami, were considered to

be worldly manifestation of Buddha. This perfectly represents how, until the Meiji Era (1868-1912 a.D.) Japanese religions were rather fluid when it came to unify different systems of beliefs. This fluidity was one of the main traits that allowed Shugendo to come into the world and develop. Indeed, since from its first appearance, Shugendo was linked with two of the most important Buddhist sects: Tendai and Shingon. Although bonds with those two sects date back to the Medieval period, it is only in the Edo Period that the connection becomes tighter to the point that two new schools come into the world: Honzan-ha (本山派) which was a Tendai Shugendo school in the Kumano mountain and the Tozan-ha (当山派) in the Kinpu mountain, which was a Shingon Shugendo school. At this point, Shinto, Buddhism, Shugendo and other minor beliefs were well integrated in the same fluid system, they were interacting with each other in a way that can be called 'paradigm of combined truths', where none of the beliefs was rejecting the other. Of course, these relationships haven't always been peaceful, however, contrasts before the Meiji Period were not so many if we consider the points where all those beliefs were in harmony. From the point of view of a Shugendo adept, during the practices in the mountain he experienced a religious experience that was broadly and complex.

In this eclectic experience of what the Shugendo is, the cornerstone is the mountain. In so many cultures from around the world mountains have been defined as a magic and divine places: from the Mount Olympus in ancient Greek mythology to the Mount Everest in Nepal. They are considered as the places where a man can be the nearest possible to the God. In Japanese culture there is the same concept: we can also see how nowadays people worship the Mount Fuji as a sacred place. Regarding the concept of mountains in Shugendo, various are beliefs on the reason why a mountain is worshipped. First of all, it is possible to divide the space in two categories: Yama (山) and Sato (里). Yama is the mountain, it is 粗 (ara), a wild space, not under control. Sato, on the other hand, is the place where people are supposed to live. Being in the Sato means to live with harmony in a social order, being in the Yama means, on the opposite, to loose social relations. At this two ecosystems correspond two cultural spaces: the human world is only possible in the Sato while the nonhuman one, inhabited by dead, monsters and Gods, is only possible in the Yama. The mountain is, thus, associated to the experience of the death but, at the same time, this experience is not seen as completely negative, thanks to the presence of divine creatures. The mountain is, at the end, the place where divine and human, sky and earth can meet. Saying this, one of the most important practices in the Shugendo was the Nyubu Shugo, the act of entering the mountain. It is possible to distinguish 3 different variants of this practice: the first one is the easiest, the initiate goes to the mountain just to offer flowers, reading Sutra for Kami's and Buddha's sake. The second one consists in a retirement for a long period of time during the year, in every season. In this process, which is clearly linked to the Esoteric tradition of the Shingon Buddhism, the initiate is accompanied by his master, who is helping him to become enlightened. The third kind is perhaps the most interesting rite of Shugendo: the fuyumune. During this ceremony, the initiate spent the winter alone in the mountain, meditating, fasting, purifying himself in freezing water.

Religiously speaking, in the Shugendo ascending the mountain implied an inner transformation for the initiate: he was leaving the area inhabited by men for a dimension which was completely different. Ascetics were willing to live an experience which was linked to death and that, in a certain way, resembled the path that dead people were believed to take. Once he entered the mountain he has to purify in the temple at the slope of the mountain, then he can start the path for becoming a new, enlightened man. It is also important to notice that the Shugendo developed even more the idea of the sacredness of the

mountain: the Yama became the concrete projection of a Mandala (an holy picture used in Shingon Buddhism for meditating about the nature of the world and reaching the enlightenment). Thanks to this concept borrowed from Shingon Buddhism, the mountain become a metaphor, a text made by nature that explain the nature itself. The Yamabushi is the one who have the knowledge necessary to understand the meaning hidden in the mountain. While travelling through the path, he is, at the same time, understanding, living, meditating the Mandala of the mountain. The means that he uses to do are secret and orally transmitted but, in the Shozan Engi (1180, a remarkable text describing the mountains in the Yoshino-Omine-Kumano area) it is documented the idea that Mt. Yoshino and Mt. Kumano were the natural depiction of the two Shingon Mandalas: the Taizokai and the Kongokai.

Thinking the mountain as a mandala is probably conveying the most authentic meaning and reason of the ascetic path of the Yamabushi: his travel in a physical space that is, at the same Time, a travel in the mind and, the more he is progressing to the top, the more he is progressing in a spiritual way, towards the enlightenment.

Shugendo is teaching that the travel through the mountain – mandala was the equivalent of a travel in the Buddhism's 10 reigns of existence: from the lower one of ravenous spirits, towards the one of the animals, the one of the humans and deities. During his Journey, the Shugenya is purifying his mind and his senses, he is becoming every moment more similar to a Bodhisattva. For reaching this status he has, evidently, to pass a lot of trials. When he reaches the top of the mountain he is a different man from when he started, the journey deeply changed his mind and his soul. At the peak of the mountain there is, usually, a small temple. In this place it is possible to experience the absolute. We can say that he did the same path as the dead people are believed to do after death in the mountain: he left the human world, he experience death and then he revived, at the peak of the mountain, with a new consciousness. All of this was possible thanks to the experience he had during his journey.

During my stay in Japan, I was able to take part at the Matsuri in Misasa (三朝), Tottori prefecture(鳥取県). The experience in the Matsuri was unique but what really caught my interest was the interesting story of the Mt Mitoku (三徳山). Indeed, the mountain, which is located near the city, is a rather popular Shugendo site in Japan. According to legend, the mythical founder of Shugendo, En No Gyoja, in 709 threw in the air 3 petals of lotus. He Promised To Establish 3 Temples In The Place Where They Fell. One fell in Yoshino, one in Ishizuchi mountain (Shikoku) and one in the Mitoku mountain. The bond between Shugendo and the Mitoku San is still really strong nowadays. The path for Yamabushi starts at the slopes of the mountain: from this area every year a lot of people try to reach the top where The most famous temple of the place is located: the Nagareido (投入堂). It is said that En No Gyoja used the power of Buddhism to throw the temple in the mountain. The pilgrimage to this temple has been one of the 2 main purpose of Mt. Mitoku Belief. The other one, more interesting for the aim of the research, is the belief that the pilgrimage in this mountain could purify people's bodies and spirit. This practice is know under the name of Rokkon Shojo (六根清浄). Rokkon refers to the six roots of perception in Buddhism: eyes, ears, nose tongue, body and mind. Shojo means purification. It is said that climbing the steep ascent of Mt. Mitoku and praying in its temple purify those six roots. This

practice is rather similar to the idea of a rebirth that accompanies every Shugendo practice. The ascetic is climbing the mountain and he's purifying himself, in order to become a new person. In addition to this, in Mt. Misasa, during the summer, the Yamabushi usually practice also the ritual walk on the fire, which is again part of the Shugendo culture. Another interesting feature that can be found on Mt. Mitoku, is the presence of some Temples along the path of the pilgrimage; one of those is the Sanbutsuji Temple (三仏時). As said before, the Honji Suijaku was really important for the development of Shugendo and, in this case, the temple is dedicated to both Tendai Buddhism and Shugendo.

As shown in this example, Shugendo is a belief which is extremely syncretic: not only it is gathering together a lot of elements of the Japanese culture but it is combining them together in a different way. Common Denominator is the mountain. It became, thanks to the analogy with the Mandala, a way to meditate inside the nature while reaching not only ascetic purposes but also philosophical ones (for example, the journey in the 10 reigns of existence). The mountain represented, in Shintoism, the reign where the dead people gathered with Kami. The Shugendo is recalling also this concept: the Shugunya die during his climb up to the peak, so he can reborn as a new being, who is no more human, but more like a purified God. The same process happens to be in Mt. Mitoku in Misasa, where pilgrims could purify their souls. The mountain acquires, in this way, not only a negative meaning, but also a positive one. Unfortunately during the Meiji Era this belief became bandit, with the process called Shinbutsu Bunri (神仏分離). At this time Shugendo sites become or Shintoist or Buddhist. But, at the end, traditions were able to survive until today. Shugendo became legal again in 1946 And Is Still Practiced Today.

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## Dance Culture of Japan: Ballet vs. Traditional

Mariah Armstrong

Arizona State University (USA)

**Summary:**日本の食文化と技術と独自の文化と、世界で知られています。文化めぐって、エンターテインメントとげいじゅつは大切です。他の国に住んでいる人は日本に旅行する時、エンターテインメントは大切なようそが特定な市に訪れさせます。日本では日本の踊りがあるのに、他の国からいくつかげいのうがあります。例えば、岡山で日本の踊りのサークルを見えました。その反面、社交ダンスやヒップホップダンスやバレエも見えます。私は数年間まいを待っています。ヨーロッパのバレエはどうやって日本に来たを学びたいです。また、日本の社会でバレエと日本の踊りのたちいちを見つけて、どうバレエと日本の踊りをお互いに影響することを学ぶつもりです。

Dance is a significant medium through which cultures all around the globe have used for self expression, entertainment, rituals, and other traditions. Movement and dance can withstand time, transcend boundaries, and can easily be changed. With a vast history, the dance styles of Japan can be characterized as either being traditional or modern. If asked about common art styles of Japan, people from foreign countries would most likely mention kabuki, taiko, noh, or any art performed by a geisha. All of these have undermined the existence of both traditional Japanese dance styles and the recent popularization of Japanese ballet in the world perspective of Japanese pop culture. As traditional Japanese dance and ballet have existed side-by-side in Japanese culture for almost a decade, it causes one to wonder how they have been affected and changed over time. In this paper, I will address the roles of traditional dance and ballet in modern-day Japan, as well as explore if and how they affect one another.

Just as there are various occasions for which dances are performed, there were also many styles of traditional dance in Japan. Dances in Japan date back to ancient times, and were used mainly to entertain kami (or gods), pray for a successful farming season, and sometimes for the entertainment of those of a high status. According to Louis Frederic in his book *Japan Encyclopedia*, dances "with the suffix -mai, -asobi, or -odori, are extremely numerous and often specific to a village or region. Considering how the regions of Japan are popular for providing certain types of food (buckwheat and milk in the north, sugarcane in the south) it makes sense how dances in Japan would vary by region." Frederic also states that "the oldest of the 'classical' dances are the Bugaku", and how "Noh and kabuki theater," along with maiko and geisha, also created their own specific dances (Frederic). Over time, these dances led to the creation and dispersion of various other styles. Traditional dances were performed along to the rhythm of taiko, a horn, or a singer's voice and consisted of simple, repeated movements, little to no facial expression, and, of course, traditional garments. Depending on the occasion, these dances were performed in a courtyard, in the main quarters of a castle, or near a shrine or temple. Whatever the occasion, though, these dances were always performed in a small square-shaped area or elevated "stage". One traditional type of Japanese dance that I am very familiar with is Soran Bushi. Usually performed by elementary school-aged children, the dance is very upbeat and repetitive. Writer Philip Seifi, who says it is "one of Japan's most popular min'yo (folk songs)," describes it as a "sea shanty that originated with migrant fishermen in the northern island of Hokkaido and is now performed all over Japan" (Seifi). The

movements of the dance mimic both the lyrics of the song and movements that symbolize fishing: pulling nets and rope, throwing barrels of fish over one's shoulders, and ocean waves. Seifi also notes how Soran Bushi is fast-paced with an energetic nature since the migrant fishermen would "sing songs like soran bushi to stay awake" while they worked for "days without sleep" (Seifi). Other than being performed by children, soran bushi is also performed in the summertime at festivals and group dance competitions.

I was introduced to Soran Bushi during my freshman year at Arizona State University. As a student passionate about Japanese culture and dance, I sought out to join a club that would give me an opportunity to do what I loved. Once I heard about a group that performed a traditional Japanese dance, my friends and I decided to join, and I fell in love with it right away. Since a majority of the members were either of Japanese descent or exchange students from Japan, we were able to learn the same dance that they had learned and practiced from childhood. In the same way that the dance and music united the fishermen for a day's work, it also united our club members each time we practiced or performed the dance. Our group performed many times around campus and the community throughout the year, with a festival in mid-February as our busiest and most important appearance. Known as Arizona's Japanese Matsuri, the annual festival has many different types of food, activities, and entertainment that allow people to get a taste of Japan. Almost similar to the venues of ancient Japan, we danced on an elevated square-shaped stage, though ours was more modernized to accompany sound wires and microphones. A year later, in the beginning of my study abroad in Japan, I was able to observe and learn about another traditional Japanese dance. At the time, my classmates and I were participating in a field trip for our Study of Japanese Inaka course to a town in Kasaoka city. Located in Okayama Prefecture, the town of Ooshima was located on the seaside, and it fulfilled its reputation as a fishing city with a display of countless boats and fish markets. Under the warm autumn sun in a large sand lot, there stood a group of middle aged men and women wearing blue and orange kimono. They stood in two lines on either side of the lot while holding paper umbrellas, and we realized that they were about to perform a dance. As they began to step and sway to the sound of a taiko drum and the voice of a chanter, we learned that the dance, called Kasaodori (umbrella dance), was performed annually by people of the town and used to be used to pray for rain and a bountiful harvest. After they concluded the dance, we were cheerfully invited to learn the dance, and eventually try on their costumes. The dance was simpler than it originally appeared, with uniformed steps, sways, and the opening and closing of the umbrellas. As we stepped in sync with the drum and singer, exchange students and dancers side by side, I felt the warmth and energy that comes when performing a traditional Japanese dance. Since then, I have become aware of other common forms of traditional dance such as Urajya (performed annually in Okayama) and Bon Odori (performed at summer festivals).

The broad history of ballet and its journey from European countries to Japan is equally as fascinating. Contrary to popular belief, ballet was conceived in the mid-15th century in the Italian Renaissance courts (Ballet Hub). At the time, it looked nothing similar to how ballet is commonly known today: women wearing big, ruffled tutus, ribbon, and lace. Rather, in its early stages, it was performed by dancers who wore their everyday dresses, and was actually "very similar to court dances, and encouraged audience members to join in at the end" (Ballet Hub). Decades later, ballet experienced a rise in popularity, and it made its way into the courts of French nobles. It was then in France where the most common style of ballet was developed. After ballet fell into the hands of King Louis XIV, who was a "passionate dancer and is responsible for both popularizing and creating a standard form of ballet," it was further spread throughout Europe and Russia. As it branched across different corners of the Asian continent and into Russia, French ballet experienced major modifications, creating another form of ballet. Not only had the technique of ballet been changed since its emergence from Italy, but the costuming,

language of instruction, and even gender roles of ballet (originally performed by males, but overshadowed by a growing number of female dancers once they grew in popularity) were also altered.

Almost 200 years later, ballet was brought to Japan. Although ballet had experienced many changes due to its dispersion throughout other western countries, it was difficult to imagine what kind of effect it would have when introduced into an eastern country. Japan was a land with a completely dissimilar set of ideas, customs, and art forms. Despite cultural and linguistic differences, the importation of “Vaganova-style” ballet (named after Russian dancer Agrippina Vaganova) was successful, and caused a surge of interest in western arts. While a few Russian dancers immigrated to Japan, they shared their style of ballet by performing at events and recitals, and thus Japan’s first ballet studios were established. In the literary work titled “Ballet in Japan: Reconsidering the Westernization of Japanese Ballet,” Dr. Sayako Ono (PhD) discusses Japan’s “consumption” of ballet, as well as how the presence of ballet affected Japanese people. In terms of consumption, Ono refers to her study of “okeikogoto [which] literally mean practice or lessons” (Ono). What started out as a form of entertainment for wealthy aristocrats, as it also was in western countries, in Japan ballet became a leisure activity that middle-class and even working-class families could enjoy. Stories with ballet themes began appearing in manga, magazines, and books (Ono). These paper mediums were a cheaper and easier way to live a luxurious life, as well as an escape from the aftereffects of the World War II and the resulting economic downturn.

In the present day, ballet is still perceived as an aspect of western culture. Yet through the years it has a more Japanese style. Alluding to the aforementioned theme of okeikogoto, ballet is known mainly as an “afterschool or extracurricular activity for children and hobbies for adults” (Ono). Women who enroll their daughters into ballet lessons do so in order for them to make new friends, emphasize an importance on health and exercise, or to strengthen them for other extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, women participating in ballet lessons do so to stay active and limber. Despite the popularity for ballet, Japan “has no national ballet schools, entrance exams or grades, entrance qualifications, or [even a] licensing system for ballet teachers or ballet schools and companies” (Ono). A number of Japanese dancers have traveled far from home in order to perform at theaters in Tokyo or train with other international ballet companies. Before coming to Japan, I searched for a ballet school where I could continue my prior training and improve my dance technique. It was upon visiting the two dance studios that I realized how ballet in Japan differed from American ballet. Although I had already expected the technique of Japanese dancers to be different, I was not expecting the simple bars (which were thick and pliable rather than thin and sturdy), the raw dance environment, and even the order in which the class was taught. I learned that most of the dancers who regularly took lessons at the schools began at a very young age, and usually continued their training at the same place until they left to become members of a company or lost interest with ballet altogether. During the ballet school’s fall festival, I witnessed performances of groups who embodied different dance genres. Many different styles were represented from hip-hop, jazz, step, and traditional dances to dancing in morph-suits and a giant peach head. Eventually my search led me join the Okayama University Dance Club. More involved and demanding than a regular club, the club practiced contemporary dance, ballet, modern, and occasionally hip-hop several times within a week. It intrigued me to learn how different the type of ballet practiced in the club compared to the local schools I had visited.

Curious of the opinions at Okayama University, I surveyed students to assess their thoughts on traditional Japanese dance and ballet. In the survey, I questioned them on any experiences they have had, and their views on the two types of dances. When asked if they have ever participated in ballet lessons and if they like the dance form, a surprising 83% of students had. They commented that they joined because it looked beautiful and fun, it has historical properties, and because their mother made them do it. This shows how even in Japan, it is common for mothers to invest in their children by sending them to

ballet class at an early age. A few other students were also said to have taken ballet lessons in order to improve their flexibility and strength for their involvement in other dance or sport activities. Contrary to the popular belief that ballerinas are dainty and prim, a copious amount of strength, flexibility, stamina, and precision are needed when they turn, run, and leap on stage. Despite the number of students who had received ballet lessons, only about 58% of students surveyed had ever performed a traditional Japanese dance, which was less than I had anticipated. When asked about their thoughts on traditional dance and why they wanted to perform, they answered that it looked cool, and was one of the many things that make participating in a matsuri fun. As traditional dance is popular in Japan, it is something that most people, Japanese and foreigners alike, look forward to performing or watching at almost any matsuri. There are many different types of traditional dances in Japan, yet the students were most familiar with bon odori and noh. Although there were more students who had experienced a ballet lesson than instruction for a traditional dance, most of them seemed to prefer traditional dance. Both ballet and traditional dances were thought of as fun, cool, and interesting. But, many claimed that ballet was very serious, and was even intended for people who had a lot of money.

The last question in my survey asked if the students thought that ballet and Japanese dances affected each other. Due to their stark differences, the students concluded that they do not affect each other. Although both drastically different in origin, practice, and feeling, the two styles of dance still play an important role in shaping Japanese culture and society. Traditional dance, with its bright, ornate clothing and exaggerated movements has gone from solely entertaining kami and elites to a form of celebration and a way that people connect culturally with their ancestors and each other. At the same time, ballet, with elegant costumes and precise motions, has created a way for people to escape pressure from gender ideas and other social expectations, and to connect with people who have similar interests. From my perspective, traditional Japanese dances are seen as strictly ritualistic. But to Japanese people, it is so much more. Both traditional dance and Japanese ballet actively bring people together, teach them and others about Japanese heritage, and give us a hope for the future. Ballet and traditional dance may not affect each other, but it is unquestionable that they have impacted Japan.

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## On Taketori Monogatari

Luigi Aumento

University of Kent (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** 日本の文化はとても面白いです。伝統的な物と現代的な物との関係は、研究の挑戦的な分野なので、このエッセイは古典日本文学の探究です。特に「竹取物語」という古典的な物語です。竹取物語は 2 つのテーマを使って探索されます。一つ目は「期待と女性の役割」であり、二つ目は「精神性」です。物語が普遍的であるため、竹取物語の分析は他の文化にも適用されるかもしれないと思います。

### Introduction

*Taketori Monogatari* tells the story of an old bamboo cutter, who finds a little girl inside a bamboo shoot one day. He takes this little girl home to his wife, and together they raise her through childhood and into adulthood. This girl grows to become ‘Nayotake no Kaguyahime’ (which means ‘Radiant Maiden of the Pliant Bamboo’) due to her otherworldly grace and beauty; in other texts, particularly English translations, she is sometimes known as Princess Kaguya. In due time, the princess receives the attentions from five of the richest and the highest-ranking suitors in the land: Prince Ishitsukuri, Prince Kuramochi, Minister of the Right Abe no Mimuraji, Major Counsellor Outomo no Miyuki, and Middle Counsellor Isonokami no Morotari. These five men wax poetic about the princess’ beauty, comparing her to various treasures that cannot physically exist and as a result, she is unwilling to choose from these five suitors. The princess then formulates a challenge, whereby the suitor who manages to bring to her these obscure and rare treasures can win her hand in marriage. Time passes and the suitors reveal their shallow affection through fake treasures and flowery words, and Princess Kaguya refuses to marry all of them. At this point, however, she catches the Emperor’s attention and he visits her in an attempt to start a courtship. She refuses, claiming that she is not his subject and can therefore not go to the palace with him and be his wife. The story continues, and it is finally revealed that the princess was in fact not of this world, and was actually from a distant kingdom on the moon. Depending on the source material, she was sent away either due to a crime she committed or for her own safety. In the end, the princess returns to the moon and leaves the bamboo cutter family behind.

This tale is heralded as “the ‘ancestor’ of all monogatari” (Kristeva), dating back to at least the late 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Japanese word monogatari, of course, means ‘tale’ or ‘story’, and to claim that *Taketori Monogatari* is the ancestor of all stories denotes its importance to all Japanese prose fiction. The tale itself includes “two basic traits of the romance *tsukuri monogatari*” (Craig); that is, that of very detailed and very accurate descriptions of places and events, and that of the concern regarding the innermost thoughts and emotions of the main characters. This makes for a very interesting starting point for anyone’s exploration into Japanese classic literature, particularly if one has a non-Japanese background. The aim of this paper is to examine the parallels and connections between traditional and modern literature, particularly in that of Japanese tales such as *Taketori Monogatari*. While Japan does not have the monopoly in contemporary art forms that intersects a lot of tradition with modernity, but it is

remarkable to note how Japan's contemporary culture allows for so many ways for the traditional to manifest itself.

The story of Princess Kaguya will be discussed from the perspective of two overlying themes. The first is the concept of expectations, something in which all the principal characters in *Taketori Monogatari* will have experienced. There will be more focus, however, on the relationship between expectations and the female role, as depicted by Princess Kaguya's actions. The second theme is that of spirituality; there is a very recent adaptation of this classic tale by the animation supergiant Studio Ghibli. Released in November 2013, the movie has won multiple international film awards, and is consequently beloved beyond the original Japanese audience. It is refreshing how classic tales, seeped so much in history and tradition, still manages to capture the audiences of today – this can be seen in more than just Studio Ghibli's films, but also in other forms of international media. For example, the 2017 remake of *Beauty and the Beast* is an adaptation of a Disney animation of the same name, which in turn was also an adaptation of an 18<sup>th</sup> century French novel *La Belle et la Bête* by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. It is worth noting how each version of the same tale, despite retaining the key points in the narrative – Princess Kaguya refuses the Emperor, Belle is treated as a pariah by her fellow villagers – that the creative powerhouses behind these retellings appear to change little details to reflect the values and morals that their audience should have. In particular, there is a scene in the 2017 *Beauty and the Beast* film where Belle is fashions a device to help her do laundry. This is different in the 1991 Disney film where all is shown regarding Belle's intelligence is the fact that she reads a lot. In Studio Ghibli's *Taketori Monogatari*, it is heavily implied that one of the reasons why Princess Kaguya refuses the Emperor is because she had fallen in love with her childhood friend, Sutemaru. Her being from a distant moon kingdom was not her sole reason to refuse an offer for her hand in marriage anymore. With these examples, it must be said that the reinvention of classic works will always be affected by the era it is created in.

### **Expectations and the Female Role**

A common theme in folklore is the idea of the “supernatural wife” (Craig). Princess Kaguya is certainly an example of this ideal. The pastoral narrative of her growth from infant into womanhood is interrupted when the old bamboo cutter, presented by gold and other riches whenever he goes up into the forests to cut bamboo, decides to uproot his entire family into the city. There, the bamboo cutter, his wife, and their child-princess live in a spacious town house, complete with fine silk kimonos, subservient domestics helpers, and an in-house etiquette teacher to transform the formerly countryside bumpkin that is the bamboo cutter's daughter into a courtly noblewoman. What is interesting, however, is that in various editions of *Taketori Monogatari*, the princess is described as already knowing all the airs and practices of the noble court. In the Studio Ghibli film, she behaves with perfect grace whenever she wants to, and she plays the *koto* (a traditional Japanese musical string instrument) expertly despite having no past experience with it whatsoever. Our protagonist, it seems, innately has the skills and talents of the perfect woman, and consequently that of a perfect wife as well.

The concept of ‘supernatural wife’ brings up the question: how has the role of wife become Princess Kaguya's only goal in life? Despite whatever reason she is sent away from her home and instead sent into earth, it is interesting how she has grown into acting out the expectations of human society:

behave demurely, act gracefully, attract suitors and get married. Arguably, she does not become aware that she is not human until the second half of the narrative yet we, as the audience, are well aware of her supernatural origins – in fact, both the bamboo cutter and his wife are aware of this too. As the sole managers of Princess Kaguya’s education as a youth, it is fascinating how they fall back on societal norms and values in raising their child. Perhaps this is due to the tale’s history; that is to say, prose fiction was “widely read by the court people” (Janeira) which means that the target audience of such stories were the very people who would appreciate the reminders that perfectly behaved woman attracts generous marriageable suitors.

On the other hand, while the ‘perfect woman’ is groomed into marriage, the story of *Taketori Monogatari* provides an alternative regarding Princess Kaguya’s challenge to the five suitors. She is no longer a passive instrument that symbolizes womanhood and femininity, but a principal character with some form of agency. One of the morals of the narrative is to test the sincerity of people’s claims, whether they are noblemen wanting to marry you or simple if the man who raised you really wants you to marry because it is good for you as a person, or for his potential social standing in noble society. This was a fairly powerful narrative point in the tale’s setting, and it could be argued that Studio Ghibli’s film included these scenes to iterate the importance of choice, and option of breaking away from expectations. The film studio is known for giving its characters a lot of freedom, particularly the young children and young women, and it is quite heart-warming to see this empowering theme in a modern adaptation of classic literature.

### **Spirituality**

Spirituality is defined as the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. It can be argued that the opposite of spirituality is secularism, meaning the separation of religious or spiritual matters; it places more focus on the material aspect of living. In this case, the relationship between spiritual and secular iconology in the Japanese entertainment media is truly interesting. It would be easy to explore this relationship from a Western and predominantly Christian background, where most debates are essentially summarised into the binary of secularity and spirituality. In other words, to be preoccupied with the material aspects of life would entail some form of sacrifice from your sense of spirituality.

This aforementioned relationship is more difficult to unravel regarding Japanese media, for the Japanese culture manages to intertwine the spiritual features so well and so intricately into their popular media. An obvious example would be 1995 animated film *Ghost in the Shell*, directed by Mamoru Oshii: the film is set in a not-so-distant future with cyborgs and Artificial Intelligence, and yet one of the overarching themes of the film’s narrative is idea of humanity (what makes humans human?), and that of regeneration (is there life after death and in fact, what is the definition of death?). Furthermore, the sheer contemporary aesthetic of the film cannot be denied, from the urban landscape to the overabundance of technology. Yet, there is one particular scene that features traditional Japanese music that is often used at weddings – why was this particular piece used during this sequence? Possibly, it could symbolise the two independent concepts of humans and robots becoming one on Artificial Intelligence, just as two

independent bodies become one in marriage. To extend the metaphor further, marriage is a symbol of unity, where two separate families are renewed through this union.

*Taketori Monogatari* can be split into two halves: the soft charm of Princess Kaguya's childhood as a bamboo cutter's daughter, and that of the harsh, courtly lifestyle as the most eligible bride-to-be in the land. Arbitrarily, one can assign these two binaries (the countryside and the city) into representations of spirituality and secularity. Furthermore, one can find Buddhist and Taoist themes represented in Studio Ghibli's film adaptation, from the moon kingdom wearing Buddhist sauwastika to the fact that Princess Kaguya, at the end of the story, 'returns to her source,' her home in the moon. These spiritual ideologies are carefully woven into the story, which adds another layer to its interpretation and the appreciation from its audience.

### Conclusion

The classic tale of *Taketori Monogatari* is multifaceted and complex, and the same could be said to other classic novels similar to it. It is gratifying to see its universal appeal to a wide variety of audiences, regardless of age or nationality. Each individual would retain something different from the story, irrespective of whatever form of media they choose to consume: the Japanese novel, an English translation, an animated film, or even a ballet adaptation. As long as the story retains its key narrative points, and that it should not lose the main themes that make the work distinctive from other pieces like it, then there is no shame in adapting and re-adapting classic works for an ever-changing audience. After all, each demographic would always demand something that interests them, whether it is romance or fantasy fiction or detailed action sequences between two warring parties. That is to say, the reinvention of past work will, as mentioned before, be affected by the era it is created in.

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## Peach Boys – A Comparison Between Ancient and Modern Fairy Tales

Elena Testa

Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy)

**Summary/ 要旨:** おとぎ話は無駄な娯楽手段として見られるかもしれないが、現実はこのような仮定と相違する。民族の信念と考え方についてもっと深く知識を得たかったら、彼らの文化の部分を考える必要がある。さらに、私の注意を喚起したのはおとぎ話は違う伝統に属しても同じパターンを示すということである。その理由でこの小論文には日本の『桃太郎』と英国の作家のロアルド・ダールによって書かれた『おぼけ桃の冒険』はロシアの人類学者のウラジミール・プロップの研究に基づいて比較・分析するつもりである。最後に、おとぎ話は進化する伝統の部分なので、おとぎ話も進化するものである。そのため、20世紀の芥川龍之介の『桃太郎』の翻案について簡単に討論するつもりでもある。

In a world that is constantly changing and surrounding us with new items and conceptions, we often find ourselves mesmerized when we come to think of the beliefs that accompanied us throughout our history and that still remain with us, even if we do not perceive them. What surprises us even more is when we realize that peoples and culture different from ‘ours’ have patterns of thought and behavior, and traditions, which have many shared points. This happens because cultures and societies of course evolved on their own, but from an ancient common basis. We carry on these processes – which often deal with the most ordinary things – without being aware of the very fact that we are doing so, and ignoring their ancestral and shared nature.

Between all the things we might overlook but which possess these characteristics, I am choosing to focus on fairy tales. This topic may seem simple and irrelevant, maybe even naïve – a means of entertainment for kids and nothing more. Still, fairy tales date back to centuries, if not millennia, ago (the exact time is difficult to establish because of their oral origins, but some scholars state they go back to the Bronze Age, around six thousand years ago). According to a definition, they are ‘short stories which usually feature folkloric characters and elements of magic or enchantments, with a formative or of moral growth aim’. Many studies have been performed about tales from different backgrounds with the intent of presenting their common points, such as characters, features and elements of the plot.

Yet, regardless of the similarities and common points, every nation or culture has its own most representative folk tale, widely known and passed through an indefinite number of generations (and, also, often with quite a consistent number of variants). Japan, for example, has the so-called five great fairy tales (五大昔話, *go-dai mukashi banashi*), five folktales which originated around the seventeenth century, between the end of the Muromachi period and the beginning of the Edo period. One of these is *Momotarō* (桃太郎), the peach-boy or peach Tarō (in the Japanese language, *momo* means peach and *Tarō* is a common first name given to the eldest boy in a family). Even though different versions of the story do exist, it originated in Bizen province, the current Okayama prefecture. The story itself presents many locations that can be identified with places in this prefecture. For example, the island of Megijima, in the Seto Sea, is told to be the tale’s Onigashima (‘island of the demons’), where *Momotarō* fights the oni. It is interesting to note that some suggest that *Momotarō*’s tale originated well before the seventeenth century,

at the time of the legendary emperor Kōrei, between the fourth and third century B.C. According to the *Kojiki*, Kōrei was the emperor who conquered Kibi, a region in the area in the middle of the current Hiroshima and Okayama prefectures. Another explanation for the origin of the tale is that it was influenced by the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, written in the sixteenth century, whose Buddhist contents in turn partially derive from the Indian epic poem *Ramayana*. The reason is the fact that in both works, one of the main characters is the wise king of the monkeys. This animal also appears in the Japanese tale.

According to the Okayama version of the tale, an old woman who never had children once found a peach floating down the river. When she brought the fruit back home and tried to eat it with her husband, the two of them found inside it a child. The child explained them that heaven sent him to be their son and was given the name of Momotarō. Years later, when he grew up, he started hearing stories about an island far away called Onigashima, populated by evil oni (demons in Japanese folklore), and decided to leave his house on a quest to fight them. On his way, he met a talking dog, a monkey and a pheasant. By giving to each one of them a kibi dango (a kind of sweet), he persuaded them to become his companions. Once arrived to Onigashima, they fought the demons and won over them. Momotarō then came back home to his family, bringing along with him the king of the demons and its treasures, and living happily ever after with his family.

Years later and on the other side of the world, another author decided to write down the tale of a young boy who travels the world with his animal companions on board of a peculiar vehicle – a peach. *James and the Giant Peach*, by the British author Roald Dahl, was published in 1961. The main character, James, is an 8 years old boy who lives with his two evil aunts after the death of his parents. One day, a man gives him some magical ‘crocodile tongues’, which will bring him great adventures if watered. The aunts throw them away, but still a peach as big as a house grows out of them. James manages to sneak into the peach through a hidden tunnel and there he finds a room inhabited by seven talking invertebrates (a grasshopper, a glow-worm, an earthworm, a centipede, a silkworm, a ladybug and a spider), each one as big as a human. One of them, the Centipede, bites the stem of the peach so that it rolls away through the Atlantic Ocean. From there, after a fair amount of adventures, they land to New York. After some initial fear, James and his friends establish themselves in the city, becoming heroes and living happily ever after.

These two tales are not similar at all. First, their genesis is very different. *James and the Giant Peach*, for example, was written in a certain moment by a certain author – and these two data can be easily identified, which is not true for *Momotarō*, about whose origin many theories have been proposed. With all possibilities, this tale was born at first from oral narrations, and then transposed in writing. Of course, the setting is diverse as well – the ancient Japan versus the modern Great Britain and United States. Finally, *Momotarō* is a short story (no more than a few pages), according to the definition of fairy tale itself, while *James and the Giant Peach*, with the 160 pages of the first edition, is a short novel for children. At the time of the composition of his book, Roald Dahl had probably never heard of the Japanese tale of a boy who leaves his home on an adventure and ends up being rich and successful – pretty much like his James does. Thus, the similarities between these two works are not due to the fact that he took inspiration from *Momotarō*, but because in order to write his story Dahl followed a pattern already established from a long time. He created a tale using existing stilemi (stylistic features and elements) in the same way as the more-known Hans Christian Andersen (*The Little Mermaid*), Lewis Carroll (*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*) and Lyman Frank Baum (*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*) did.

The first scholar to assume that the same sort of stilemi existed for fairy tales from different periods and parts of the world was the Soviet folklorist Vladimir Propp with his essay *Morphology of the*

*Folktale* (published in the Soviet Union in 1928, but translated in English only in 1958). Propp assumed that, regardless of the place of origin and the culture that created them, every folktale presents a common structure with the same characters who have the same functions related to the history. He then divided a large number of tales in segments as short as possible which could be analyzed and focused on the unifying elements – not from the viewpoint of contents, but from the one of actions and functions. Propp identified thirty-one functions (the unities in which the tale is divided) and seven kinds of characters. They can also be defined as actants – not mere characters of the story, but roles who are fundamental components of the narrative, and without whom the story is incomplete.

The first actant to be presented in any tale is the hero – the main character, in these cases Momotarō and James. Every hero has a villain to fight in order to complete his quest. The villains that Momotarō defeats are the evil oni, while James needs to face his two evil aunts Spiker and Sponge. Usually, the hero defeats the villain towards the end of his journey and of the tale (as in *Momotarō*), but in Dahl's work the villains die relatively early, just before the hero leaves on his quest. Other important actants are the dispatcher and the donor. The dispatcher is the one who sends the hero off his adventure. In both the analyzed tales, the hero also acts as a dispatcher. Momotarō decides on his own to leave and fight the demons, as well as James leaves his house to see the giant peach and then discovers the secret tunnel which leads to its interior. The person who gives the hero some magical aid, or item, that he will have to use to complete his tasks or that is in any way useful to him, is the donor. For example, Momotarō's parents give him three kibi dango when he is about to leave home. He will use them to persuade the monkey, the dog and the pheasant to follow him. Also, the old man who gives James the crocodile tongues and promises him great adventures plays the role of the donor. The last actant to be presented is the helper, who accompanies the hero and supports him. Momotarō's helper are, as said above, the monkey, the dog and the pheasant, while in *James and the Giant Peach* they can be identified as the seven invertebrates living inside the peach.

Every tale begins with the depiction of an initial equilibrium. After this, the functions start giving tension to the storyline, breaking the former equilibrium. This is the very starting point of the tale. Usually, the first function to appear is the *absentation*, or when the hero leaves his safe home environment – Momotarō's parents' house towards Onigashima, or James' aunts' house towards New York. Usually, following the absentation comes the *villainy*, when the villain harms someone. Spiker and Sponge treat their nephew as if he was their servant and throw away his magical crocodile tongues, and the oni prey all over the island. The *mediation* is the following function, when the hero comes to know the negative factors of the villain, just like when the Japanese peach boy finds out about the demon wrongdoers and decides to fight them. After this, there is the *departure* of the hero, in order to achieve his goals or complete his task. Two other functions are strictly related – the *first function of the donor* and the *receipt of a magical agent*, which for *Momotarō* and *James and the Giant Peach* have already been described. The *guidance* expresses the deliverance or transfer of the hero to his destination. Then, he conducts a *struggle* against the villain, which is always concluded by the *victory* over evil. The hero then makes his *return* home after the obvious *punishment* of his enemies. The last function is the *wedding*. Of course, neither Momotarō or James marry at the end of their tale. This function indicates the conferment of a reward to the hero. This reward can be the marriage with a princess, a valuable treasure (as the one Momotarō brings back home with him from Onigashima) or happiness and success (which James and his friends find after settling in New York). In *Momotarō* and in *James and the Giant Peach* the order in which the functions appear is slightly different, but they remain however the same.

From the end of nineteenth century to the end of World War Two, Japan engaged in a colonial enterprise in the south-east of Asia, China and Korea. During this period, in order to accomplish those conquests, the emperor and the government also tried to strengthen the sense of cohesion and to construct

a sense of national identity between the Japanese people, reinforcing the sense of belonging to a group with ancient, shared roots and traditions. In this sense, the wide-known tale of Momotarō was used as a national allegory of the Japanese people (Momotarō, of course) conquering and defeating foreign populations (the Oni). It is noteworthy mentioning that the author Iwaya Sazanami published his adaptation of *Momotarō* – which is still the best known nowadays in 1894 – immediately before the Sino-Japanese war. Iwaya’s adaptation, however, had no more than a folkloristic intent and had nothing to do with politics. This is not the case for Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s version of *Momotarō* (1924). Akutagawa elaborated many Japanese and Chinese classics in his production. In *Momotarō*’s case, he re-wrote the story from an opposite viewpoint of the colonial government of the time. The tale presents many differences from the one told by Iwaya, which is in turn based on the Okayama version. Momotarō is a naughty boy, whose parents can’t wait to get rid of. The Oni are described as living peacefully on their natural paradise and scaring their kids who don’t behave with stories about the evil humans. When defeated by the Peach Boy and his companions, the king of the demons asks him why he decided to conquer and slaughter them all. The answer is lapidary: “Because for a while I’ve wanted to conquer this island”. Akutagawa often depicts Momotarō waving his fan, which has the emblem of the rising sun drawn on – a clear reference to Japan, and a critique to his expansionistic aims between nineteenth and twentieth century.

Many researches have been done on the comparison of the elements and features which can be found in a vast number folktales, e.g. Propp’s work, but not between two (or more) of them specifically. With this paper, I hope to have been able to convey the analysis of a traditional Japanese tale from different point of views – first, by comparing it to another story for children from a different time and cultural background, and then by looking at his evolution depending on the historical circumstances in the country it originated in.

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## Japanese Folklore and Legends

Shou De Zhang

San Jose State University (USA)

**Summary:** 毎世代伝えた伝説は多いです。生き残ったの伝説は社会に特別の意味があるはずですが。違うの国の文化間価値観は差異がありますので、日本の伝説中にユニークなポイントはなんですか。この伝説たちはどうやって進化しましたか。

### Abstract

Stories are purposely passed down the generations for its representation of morality, ethics, culture, and history. This paper explores the interaction between the stories and the people. What is the relationship between the moral of the story and the people whom pass them down. Do Japanese folklore represent a reoccurring trait in character that is valued in Japanese society. Upon establishing a definition premise between the terminologies: myth, folklore, and legend. This paper aims to analyze the current usage trends of mascots in marketing. A combination of literature review, questionnaire, and results of field studies will be used to facilitate the research.

### Definitions

To begin our diagnoses of Japanese legends and folklore we must first distinguish the terminologies from others of its kind; myth, folklore, and legends. The exact differentiation of these terminologies is still debated among folklorists. Though for the sake of proceeding with the research goal of this paper, all definitions will be based on a comprehensive definition compiled by Mr. Bascom in 1965.

- Myths- compared to the others tend to focus more on the grand scale of events and attempt to provide explanation to the workings of our world. Often tied to faith such as early religions of the Greeks which consequent the actions of the Olympian gods to the events of our world. Main characters often are non-humans carrying human attributes. Unlike the timeframe of folklore and legend, myths may take place in another world.
- Folklore- can be regarded as pure fiction and though passed down through history these stories are not taken as seriously as the others. Folklore do on the other hand provide lessons of morality and are often told as “nursery tales” to children. The story line often revolves around the adventure of human or animal characters and it’s time and location being timeless and placeless.
- Legend- can be considered as historical fiction. These stories often tell tales of heroes, kings, and war.

### THREE FORMS OF PROSE NARRATIVES

FORM	BELIEF	TIME	PLACE	ATTITUDE	PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Myth	Fact	Remote past	Different world: other or earlier	Sacred	Non-human
Legend	Fact	Recent past	World of today	Secular or sacred	Human
Folktale	Fiction	Any time	Any place	Secular	Human or non-human

Figure 1 Bascom, W. (1965). *The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives*. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 78(307), 3-20.  
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## Literature Review

### Interpretation

In a way story telling is a form of art and being art, it is subjected to a myriad of interpretations by the listener based on the situation, manner, and the context. Following the starting of World War II, the once innocently told stories written by the Grimm brothers received accusations of inspiring Nazi ideologies (Naithani, 2014).

### Evolution through Time

Stories of Tanuki, a creature that made its earliest appearance in written documents in 720, is also beginning to witness the change of time. Often being addressed as creatures of mischief and magic such as its appearance in *Shokoku Hyaku Monogatari* (諸国百物語) in 1677. The modernizing Tanuki has found its way into more recent stories. Many stories of trains on a one-way track having to make sudden stops because of signs of approaching rains from the opposite direction; only to find dead Tanukis between the rail and the wheel. Though these stories have picked up its own name of *nise kisha* (偽汽車) or *yurei kikansha* (幽霊機関車). Comparable stories have existed in the past such as stories of phantom ships, but they carry a much more ominous aura compared to the stories of phantom trains which narrate a rather humorous tone. Foster suggests that the new phantom train story express an underlying concern for nature as the human auto industry is put up against the flesh and blood of nature (Foster, 2012, p.12).

### Reflection of Folklore in Reality

Resistance to the development of the railway was also present in Japan during the same time (Foster, 2012, p.13). This is not the first-time Japanese folklore have been used as an outlet for public sentiment. Within the world of Japanese *yukai* stories, creatures can be found usch as the *Hyakume* (百目)- which is a creature living in old temples whose job is keep thieves away at night. When a human being enters the temple perimeter, an eye detaches from the body of the *Hyakume* and attaches to the body of the human to deter crime and the eye remain attached until the visitor exists the temple ground. Stories of Yuki-Onna and Tsurara-Onna tells of the heartbreak of love to the tragic passage of time (Myers n.d).

## Conclusion

If the premise holds true that folklore and legends exist to suggest deterrence and/or public concern then what are the suggestions made in Japanese folklore and legends. Those stories which had survived the passage of time, told by a generation to the next, must have held significance to the ever-changing social system. In other words, these surviving stories must hold truth despite the changing attitude in Japanese society throughout the eras. What do the characters in these popular stories offer to its listeners and how does that fit in with the values of Japanese society?

## Methodology

### Participants

The participants of the survey were Japanese volunteers. The scope of this survey was narrowed down to only domestic Japanese students because questions asked in the survey required prior knowledge of Japanese legends and folklore. The goal was to inquire distant impressions not immediate impression upon reading the story for the first time.

### Apparatus and Materials

Survey was made with Google Forms and distributed via LINE.

### Procedure

Participants were self-chosen and completed the survey with no incentives. Survey questions were structured to encourage unique responses. The question also was designed to compare the perception of two very similar characters: Robin Hood-being a western character and Goemon-being a Japanese character. Questions asked were as followed:

1. ロビンフッドの名前を聞いた時、どんな印象が思い浮かびますか？二つ言葉で説明してお願いします。物語を知らないなら、空白のままにしてください
2. 武蔵坊弁慶の名前を聞いた時、どんな印象が思い浮かびますか？二つ言葉で説明してお願いします。物語を知らないなら、空白のままにしてください
3. 桃太郎の名前を聞いた時、どんな印象が思い浮かびますか？二つ言葉で説明してお願いします。物語を知らないなら、空白のままにしてください
4. 石川 五右衛門の名前を聞いた時、どんな印象が思い浮かびますか？二つ言葉で説明してお願いします。物語を知らないなら、空白のままにしてください
5. 日本民間伝承の女の人キャラクターの中で誰が日本人の精神が一番体现していると思いますか？
6. 日本民間伝承の男の人キャラクターの中で誰が日本人の精神が一番体现していると思いますか？
7. 日本民間伝承のキャラクターの中で共通性格があるかどうか？どちらだと思いますか？

## Discussion

### Perception of Goemon and Robin Hood

There was a big variation in the responses for the two similar characters whom ultimately met the safe deathly fate. The responses towards Robin Hood were aimed more at his outfit and adventures than a thief whom stole from the rich and gave to the poor. On the other hand, “Hero of the Weak”, “Boiling Water Execution”, and “a person from the Edo Period” were often mentioned. Perhaps this is due to the constant appearance of Goemon in popular culture in our modern time. *Ganbare Goemon* (がんばれゴエモン), and *Goemon 2009*(movie) all feature the character as the protagonist of the story. As Japan continues to absorb western ideas of individuality and social justice, perhaps the perception of Goemon's criminal accomplishments will continue to shift.

### Representative Characters

Amongst the results of the survey, Momotaro(桃太郎) and Princess Kaguya (かぐや姫) were of the mode response. Since the participants of the survey were all Okayama University students, there is a possible correlation between Okayama's connection to Momotaro and the responses received from the participants. Both tales are known to be amongst the oldest generation of stories and the flexibility of Momotaro no Monogatari is demonstrated during World War II propaganda. Where the Japanese government is portrayed as Momotaro, the Japanese people as the animals, and the United States of America as the onis that Momotaro must defeat to reach the treasures (Dower p.253). The rising popularity of Princess Kaguya could be a sign of the growing discontent especially amongst the young people of Japan against the rigid system of living that Princess Kaguya had to ultimately face before making her departure away from the problems of the Earth.

### Conclusion

The characters of Japanese folklore and legends are constantly being molded as liquid into shapes that the listeners and the storytellers want them to be presented as. Each story holding its own message and theme, though heavily influenced by the choices of popular media, it is interesting to see the shuffling of these characters. To take this topic into research, it is highly advised to look at this topic on a broader scope of not just Japan alone but also the transitions and characteristics of the stories in Asia- for a better understanding of what is truly unique to Japan.

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## Liberal and Literal Translation: Finnegans Wake's Impossible Japanese Translation

Kyle Andrew Langston

University of Adelaide (Australia)

**Summary:** 言語の特定のニュアンスを別の言語に翻訳する際に固有の困難があるため、文学翻訳は文学的な追求とみなされています。しかし、翻訳が困難であると思われる作品には、どのような翻訳スタイルが好まれるかについて、争いがあります。この論文は、ジェームズ・ジョイスの「フィネガンズ・ウェイク」の 2 つの日本語翻訳の異なるスタイルを調べて、「一般的な」日本の読者がどのバージョンを読むのが好きかを理解しようとしています。

As there are considerable and fundamental differences in structure and culture between the English and Japanese languages, translation of fictional works between either languages is a commonly discussed issue of contention within communities of those interested in foreign literature translations. Due to these differences, translators may be required to take certain liberties with the original text in order to properly convey the author's intentions better within the target language. But as some people believe that a translator's job is to communicate the author's original intention without sacrificing the exact words used, some may prefer a translation to outright explain aspects that might be considered 'untranslatable', rather than attempt to make changes to the text that could be viewed as 'tampering' with the original intention of the author.

There are many cases of translated works not properly conveying nuances from the original text. For example, Japanese classical literature fans may be dissatisfied with the English title translation of Natsume Sōseki's 「<sup>わがはい</sup> <sup>ねこ</sup>吾輩は猫である」, which lost the nuance of arrogance and self-importance with the archaic first person pronoun 「<sup>わがはい</sup>吾輩」 when it was officially translated simply as “I Am a Cat”, due to the English language lacking variances of personal pronouns. A more liberal translator may have decided to outright change the title to better reflect the nuances that would be impossible to portray with a literal version, but some may consider that to be interfering with the original meaning too much. To use another example, the Japanese translation of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter is also reportedly considered to have lost numerous cases of the original's nuances due to the story's reliance on rhymes, acronyms, riddles and invented words, all things which can be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to properly express in translations unless certain liberties or changes are made to the original text. However, even if certain liberties were taken with a text such as Harry Potter, the translator themselves would have to have considerable creative talent to match up with the original author, as even if liberties are taken, they are not necessary well-written liberties, and some might not dare take the chance.

The piece of literature this paper will be focusing on is Irish writer James Joyce's “Finnegans Wake”, published in 1939 and considered for the most part of history to not only be the epitome of text's considered ‘impossible to translate’, but also the most difficult to read pieces of English literature. This is largely because of Joyce's constant usage of idiosyncratic language, which means he invented new words specifically for Finnegans Wake, with Joyce doing so by blending standard English words with lexical items from up to 40 other languages to create portmanteau words and multilingual puns (a style often called ‘Joycean’, as Joyce is known to have done similar things in his other work ‘Ulysses’). This, combined with his stream of consciousness writing style and almost complete abandonment of narrative norms and conventions, means that almost every word and sentence of Finnegans Wake is highly based upon personal interpretation and analysis. The most common reading method being to say the sentences aloud and speculate as to what it could mean by hearing what it sounds like. Because of this perplexing

writing style, translation was considered impossible for many years, up until it was translated into French in 1982. Afterwards many other languages began to follow, such as Dutch, German, Greek, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Chinese and Japanese. It has been translated into Japanese twice, once in 1991 by Naoki Yanase (柳瀬尚紀), and in 2004 by Kyoko Miyata (宮田恭子). Both versions have considerably different styles of translation and attempts at conveying the ambiguities of the original text, and can be considered translations of significant effort when compared to translations done into European languages that share the same Roman alphabet. If a translator from a European language encounters a ‘Joycean word’ that they genuinely have no idea of how to translate, they could potentially decide to leave the word with no changes at all. This is because the language not only shares the same alphabet, but because many words from the English version of *Finnegans Wake* cannot be considered ‘English words’ in the first place, so the argument that leaving some of the words alone maintains the original’s intended allusion could definitely hold ground as a justification. This is also considering Joyce’s preference for mixing words with those from European languages, so the translator may discover words that were already created from their own language. However, when it comes to translating *Finnegans Wake* into Japanese, this kind of rendition is exempted from the beginning, and both translations confront this problem in very different manners.

To put it simply, it could be said Yanase’s is the ‘liberal’ translation, and that Miyata’s is the ‘literal’ translation. Similarly to Joyce’s use of idiosyncratic language, Yanase attempted to recreate Joyce’s abstract linguistic style into the Japanese language by creating new words and phrases, and perhaps somewhat adventurously, transposing the original historical backgrounds and cultural contexts into Japanese ones. Interestingly, Yanase added *furigana* to every single *kanji* character to indicate its pronunciation and implication, and would frequently utilize obscure and uncommon readings of the characters, on what were often already obscure characters, to implicate more than the word itself. This can be seen as an attempt to capture how many of the words Joyce created would have multiple (if not infinite) and equally correct interpretations of their meaning. As a side-effect of this translation style, there are many cases where Yanase’s translation either adds meaning that were not necessarily there in the original, so it can be said that Yanase was somewhat less concerned with translating the exact ‘meaning’, as he was with translating the ‘style’. To use an example, Yanase translates ‘riverrun’ (the very first word of the English text) as 「川走」 (*sensou*). Similarly to how ‘riverrun’ only resembles an English word and is not something you will find in an English dictionary, Yanase does the same by creating a word not found within the Japanese language. But the difference here is the *furigana* Yanase added to indicate the pronunciation, which in the case of *sensou* reminds Japanese readers of 「戦争」, meaning ‘war’. Whilst it is true that this translation adds meaning to the word ‘riverrun’ that was not originally intended, the theme of ‘war’ is still something which can be found throughout *Finnegans Wake*, so this is an example of Yanase translating Joyce’s tendency of interpretive style in creating words with more than a single meaning, rather than translating the exact meaning.

Conversely, Miyata’s translation attempted to make Joyce’s exact meaning understood, rather than translate his specific style. Unlike Yanase, Miyata uses standard Japanese words and sentences by translating the book’s surface meaning (both translators were cited as using several published *Finnegans Wake* analyses to fully understand the proper meaning) and then supplemented it with detailed notes explaining the original linguistic effect that Joyce had intended. To contrast, Miyata translated ‘riverrun’ with a much more standard Japanese phrase 「川は流れる」 (“the river flows”), and added a translation note explaining the significance of the original phrase. Miyata’s version is also considered an ‘abridged’ translation, with the story’s text being half of the original 676 pages (but with roughly the same length being dedicated to translation notes), and only decided to translate the beginning and ending parts of each chapter, along with sections that Miyata considered too thematically important to leave out. She would then briefly summarize the parts that were removed.

Whilst Yanase's version is much closer to the style that Joyce intended, it is as a result just as alienating and esoteric for regular Japanese speaking readers as the original English version is for English speaking readers. Miyata's version makes it far more understandable and accessible for the general reader, but it could be said that due to Joyce's main emphasis being on linguistic style rather than story, that Miyata's is actually less faithful to the original than Yanase, despite Yanase's version potentially losing the specific meaning that Joyce intended. Conversely, it could also be said that Miyata is merely trying to find her own way of delivering the content and spirit of *Finnegans Wake* in a manner more accessible to a wider audience. In summary, whilst the style of both translations are wildly different, it can be said that each versions have their own pros and cons, so it would be meaningless to attempt to discern which is the 'better' version. However, it can be researched which version your 'standard' Japanese reader would be more interested in reading, which in this context refers to Okayama University students of roughly ages 20 to 23.

The main method of researching this was through informal interviews, and as such, the research is qualitative and based upon personal opinions expressed by the interviewees. The interviewees would be given an explanation and historical background on *Finnegans Wake*, such as the original English version's specific writing style and why it was widely considered incredibly difficult to translate for so many years, along with information on the two Japanese translations. They would then be given a small excerpt (roughly a page for each translation) of the translated text from the very first section and chapter of the book (which very quickly showcases what kind of style is prevalent throughout the rest of the book), and be given a couple minutes to form an impression and opinion on the translations. Afterwards, they were asked a few questions about their first impressions on each version, and then asked that if they were interested in reading *Finnegans Wake* in Japanese, which version would they have more interest in reading, and for what reasons. Interviews would typically take 5-10 minutes to complete, as some interviewees were more vocal and detailed in their opinions than others.

Out of the 13 Okayama University Japanese students interviewed (all from varying faculties), there was a largely mixed reaction towards which translation held their interest more. The original hypothesis for the research was originally that more people would be interested in reading Yanase's version, but the interviews proved more diverse than expected. 5 answered that they would prefer to read Yanase's translation, 6 for Miyata's version, and 2 were overall undecided. Those more interested in Yanase's translation typically noted that whilst it was definitely far more difficult to understand than Miyata's version, it seemed like the more interesting one to read, with one interviewee likening the translation to a puzzle that seemed enjoyable to attempt to solve. Another interviewee gave the opinion that after having heard the reason that *Finnegans Wake* is considered famous in classical English literature is more because of the linguistic style, rather than specific story, cited that they would wish to read Yanase's version because he felt it better captured the spirit of the original. Interestingly, this is a similar reason that those who preferred Miyata's translation gave as well. Because it did not take any liberties with the script in attempting to convert the style into Japanese, some cited that this made it closer in meaning to the original, and as a result, they considered it more worthy of reading. One interviewee gave the opinion that if, as a result of the vast changes in text required to translate Joyce's writing style at all, Yanase's translation, whilst potentially interesting in its own merit, may as well have been a completely separate book. However, the majority opinion and argument for reading Miyata's version was mainly due to how simpler and more easily understandable it was than Yanase's translation. Overall, while there is a slight single person curve towards those favouring Miyata's translation, the distribution is mostly even, not showing particular favouritism towards either version.

When doing qualitative interview based research, it is important to note the inherent drawbacks that this style of research has. The large issue being with sample size, as the question has to be asked whether or not 13 people is large enough of a sample to be considered representative of the age group

interviewed. It is possible that a larger sample size could have resulted in vastly different results, and that the opinions of those interviewed were specific only to them, and would not be commonly found within the population. Secondly, there is also the issue of the language barrier, as whilst a Japanese explanation was prepared beforehand it is possible that certain nuances were lost attempting to explain the background of *Finnegans Wake* before showing the interviewee the translations, and were left with an unsatisfactory explanation regarding the text in question. Thirdly, and perhaps the biggest problem encountered in this research, is the widely considered impression that *Finnegans Wake* is a book that many people merely give up reading after a few pages, and as such, is often thought of as a book well known and respected within literature enthusiasts and literature/linguistic researchers, but not as a one that many people manage to finish. Due to time constraints, and being brief enough to keep the interviewee's interest, they were only given a relatively small portion of the text to form their opinions. It is certainly possible that they would have expressed a different view were they given more pages to read. Those initially interested in Yanase's version may have concluded that it was too dense for a book of such length, and those initially interested in Miyata's version may have thought that hers was too dull for a book of supposed well-renown, were they given more time to read through more pages at their own pace. The same can be said for the two people that were undecided in which version they preferred, and perhaps they merely needed more time to form their opinions.

In the end it all comes down a single question: what is a 'correct' translation? Perhaps Miyata's translation should be considered 'more correct' because it contained explicit explanations about the original text's nuances and style, and technically contains a clearer explanation of the author's original intent. However, if Joyce's 'style' was considered of more importance than the specific meaning of the words used, than Yanase's liberally translated version could also be considered 'more correct', regardless of what words and cultural contexts were altered to gain that translation. After all, *Finnegans Wake* was never a book that was intended be easily understood through standard language, yet that is the express purpose of Miyata's version. That in itself could be considered a major diversion from the author's original intent. It would just depend entirely on who you were asking, as their own thoughts of what they wish to gain out of foreign language literature translation could merely differ.

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## Teaching English in Japan: The Student's Voices

Justin David

Oregon State University (USA)

**Summary:** 私の EPOK エッセイでは、私は日本での英語教育のテーマについて書いていきます。非常に長い間日本に住みたいと思っていた人として、これは私とその夢を実現するために取ることができる最高の機会として私にとって重要です。私のエッセイを研究するために、私は日本語の英語の学生にインタビューしました。そして、これらのインタビューが私の研究の焦点になります。また、岡山大学の教員と英語教師としての経験について相談し、観察しました。具体的には、私が見た先生は Susan Meiki と Mike Lamite でした。この講義では、「どのような人が日本人学生にとって快適な学習ですか?」「英語を教えることは何から成っていますか」という単純な質問です。「このエッセイは重要だ。なぜなら日本は経済が他国への輸出に依存しているからだ。輸出のバックボーンはコミュニケーションであり、認知しない限り、英語は日本人が学ぶ最も重要なスキルの1つです。日本の英語教師のキャリアを追求したい人のためのガイドの役割も果たします。

It may sound cliché, but I have entertained the idea of being a teacher ever since I was a young man. Eventually though I forgot about the thought and for many years I sought employment in many other venues. Eventually the thought resurfaced when I made the decision that I was going to fulfill another dream I had as a young man: I wanted to live in Japan. I decided I would try to meld these two when I learned about the opportunities being offered to speakers of the English language to teach. What kind of person does it take to teach the English language in Japan? How to make the students excited to learn English? It is a long journey, and I feel that I am only at the very beginning, but I will share what I do know with you, dear reader.

But how does one teach. The profession of education has, since it's very beginnings in ancient times, been struggling to find the best method to educate and train. The problem is: all students take to learning a little differently. They learn at different speeds and in completely different methods. In order to better understand the techniques of older and wiser teachers, I have gone to observe the teaching methods of two methods that seem almost diametrically opposed to one another. First, we have observed Ms. Susan Maeki, who has a more direct and authoritarian method. And second, I have observed Mr. Lamite, who takes a more laid back and friendly approach to educating. I hope that by the end of this essay, I will have condensed the teaching methods of these two teachers into a few sentences, and come up with a teaching method that works for me personally. Teaching any subject is a career that involves dealing with hundreds of students in a day. The temperament of these students can range from energetic and excited to learn, to bored and morose, and perhaps even aggressive. Being a teacher means dealing with many different situations all in a single day. So someone who can handle a scenario that is always changing and shifting is ideal. Once someone loses control of oneself, that person loses control of their class. Teaching is difficult enough when the students speak your own language. Imagine how much more challenging it will be when the students don't even share a language with the instructor. In addition to dealing with students, a teacher in Japan must contend with potential loneliness that comes with taking your whole life

to the other side of the world. Some people may find that missing the families that they left behind might be too much to bear. Having spent time in the military, I have some experience with missing my family while I was far away. In short, the sort of person who might succeed at teaching the English language in Japan is a stoic and unflappable type of personality. Someone who can stand up to the day-to-day rigors of dealing with students and fellow faculty and wake up the next day to do it all over again.

My education in Teaching English in Japan began with taking a series of classes about that very subject, offered by the university. At first these classes involved going to a real English class to observe teachers with their students. But in time these observations turned into real-life, small-scale, private lessons with English students. How does one teach? The profession of education has, since its very beginnings in ancient times, been struggling to find the best method to educate and train. The problem is: all students take to learning a little differently. They learn at different speeds and in completely different methods. Our class, in order to better understand the techniques of older and wiser teachers, has gone to observe the teaching methods of two methods that seem almost diametrically opposed to one another. First, we have observed Ms. Susan Maeki, who has a more direct and authoritarian method. And second, we have observed Mr. Lamite, who takes a more laid back and relaxed approach to educating. I hope that by the end of this essay, I will have condensed the teaching methods of these two teachers into a few sentences, and come up with a teaching method that works for me personally.

I will start with Ms. Maeki, as she is the teacher I had observed the most. In our discussions, we have seen that Ms. Maeki is very similar to a traditional Japanese teacher. Her style is direct and authoritarian. She has a somewhat intimidating demeanor, not afraid to tell students when they have made a mistake, and giving compliments in a stone-faced manner. Ms. Maeki's demeanor was intimidating even to us students that were observing her. Ms. Maeki teaches almost exclusively from the textbook and uses very few exercises that she has crafted herself. Ms. Maeki's approach to teaching firmly establishes a student-instructor relationship. The students certainly respect Ms. Maeki, perhaps because they are intimidated by her. It is this factor of intimidation that holds me back from agreeing completely with Ms. Maeki's method. Students in Ms. Maeki's class are very reluctant to speak, likely afraid of revealing a mistake of that they do not know how to say what they are thinking in English. But this extends even to when the students are working with each other, with partner conversation activities carried out in low mutters and bare-minimum answers. I would say that Ms. Maeki's style could be efficient. But a language class that refuses to even speak is hardly efficient.

On the opposite end of this spectrum, we have Mr. Lamite. I have only observed Mr. Lamite twice, but his highly active teaching style was more than enough for us to understand his vector of approach. Mr. Lamite speaks and acts with a great deal of energy, which helps to uplift the students. When students make mistakes, Mr. Lamite pretends to go into a comical frenzy rather than chastise the students for their mistakes. Also unlike Ms. Maeki, Mr. Lamite very rarely used the textbook to teach his class, instead opting for more lessons and activities of his own design. Students seemed to react very well to Mr. Lamite's attitude. They spoke with more confidence in their answers. (Though they still spoke very quietly). And when Mr. Lamite addressed the class, rather than blank stares and silence, Mr. Lamite was answered by students even if they didn't understand what he said. My only concern with Mr. Lamite's method is that his willingness to play the fool may cause students to not take him or his lessons seriously.

Though Japanese students are conditioned to be extremely respectful so perhaps it has not been a problem for him.

If my goal of becoming a teacher does come to fruition some day. I think I will draw techniques from both teachers. Like Ms. Maeki, I wish to establish a relationship of mutual respect with my students. But like Mr. Lamite, I don't have much problem making a goof in order to help my students relax a little bit. While I think a book is a good tool for teaching, it is just that, a tool. I would rather use the book as a guide to see what students should be learning at their level, and craft my own activities around the ideas presented in the book. During my time in Okayama, I have observed and interviewed both teachers as well as students to glean insight into my hopeful future profession. In coming so I think I have learned a great deal and made myself extremely employable by the Japanese education system.

During my time in Japan, I had the opportunity to meet students from various school and grade levels. While these trips were usually related to another class, it gave me an opportunity to interview the students about their experiences learning English. Students typically begin learning English at secondary school level (middle school in America). Though some schools begin teaching as young as kindergarten. I found that, naturally, those who had begun learning English earlier had a better grasp of the language, though all were reluctant to speak. I have been told by some students that their parents began teaching their children English even before they begin their proper schooling. I am not sure if this is a good idea, as maybe parents could teach their child something incorrectly, and one doesn't want incorrect methods to become habit, especially at such a young age. Alternative Language Teachers (ALT) from foreign countries aid students in their learning. The students claimed that ALTs did help in the learning process, and the students felt most comfortable learning with an ALT who was friendly and outgoing. Despite hearing that students disliked learning English, the students claimed to enjoy learning English. Perhaps they get the same feeling from learning English as I do from learning Japanese.

I asked about the challenges that Japanese students face when learning the English language. Logically, challenges for the student's learning create challenge for the teacher's instruction. Students claimed that their biggest challenges from the actual language come in the form of grammar and pronunciation. This makes some sense, those who learn alternative languages might have trouble shaking a thick accent and sometimes an accent can cause embarrassing accidents in pronunciation. Though the students talked about another challenge. One that I think plagues the Japanese school system throughout, not just in English classes. Students confided in me that there was a great deal of pressure to perform. Both parents and teachers place a lot of weight on students to make good marks. I am conflicted on this issue. On one hand, the students that graduate from a Japanese high school form the platinum-standard of educational facilities the world over. On the other, to pressure otherwise average students into high levels of performance can place extreme stress on them, and this attitude that all students must perform to a high level could do more harm than good. I am only one man, and I certainly cannot change a country's entire educational system with a simple essay. But it is my hope that some day Japanese schools find a sweet spot that balances student stress and performance.

From everything I have heard and read about in my research, teaching the English language in Japan is a highly rewarding and challenging experience. Rewarding in that it allows one an opportunity to travel and make a living in an exotic and faraway land where otherwise such an opportunity simply would

not exist. Challenging in that the job of a teacher is rigorous work every day. Not all people are cut from the same cloth. The job of teaching the English Language in Japan may prove too much for some. But if one can find that one thing, that technique that gets the students enthusiastic to learn and the teacher willing to educate, the opportunity is one of a lifetime.

## Tips for Teaching English in Japan

Shifeng (Tony) Ou

University of Northern Iowa (USA)

**Summary:** 日本語は英語に本当に異なっている。英語について日本人の読むことと書くことはとてもいいが、話し方は英語学習を助長されることができない。日本語の片仮名の音は英語の音と異なるがあるので、日本人社会に英語の教育を行うのは大変だ。

私は英語の先生になりたいと思う。今、英会話で日本人の学生に英語を教えたり、岡山大学の英語教授の助手を担当したりしている。英語の授業が分かりやすく教えなければならない。それで、日本人の学生によく教えるために、現代の教育方法も変えないとはいけない。

この文章の目的は効果的に英語を教えることである。自分で経験したり、インタビューをしたり研究を行っている。また、将来の英語の教師にいつくかに助けを与えたいと思う。

Most of the young generation in Japan has taken English classes for three years in junior high school and three years in high school. However, Japanese educators put the focus on English grammar and reading, and listening, pronunciation, and speaking are not taught as effectively as they should be. One of the reasons that these three skills are not taught well is that most English teachers in junior high and high schools have never lived in an English speaking community, and they themselves are lacking these skills. Hence, Japanese students are strong in their grammar and reading, but not in listening, pronunciation, and speaking. It is common for a Japanese speaker who has majored in English at a Japanese university to come to the United States and realize that he cannot communicate in English at all. He has a vast knowledge of English in his brain, but is unable to use it. The ESL teacher needs to be aware of this point and give assistance to the Japanese student in this area of weakness. The teacher especially needs to take this point into consideration when he wants to place the students into different levels.

The teacher can establish a good rapport with the class then it makes is so much easier. It's good to chit-chat with them before and after class, and with some classes you can even get a group conversation going. The downside of this is that you can end up getting shanghaied into going out with them after class (not too bad if they pay, but sometimes they don't, and even if they do it can feel like you have to "sing for your supper")

If you ask a question and you get a short answer, use this golden phrase: "That sounds interesting. Tell me more about it." They won't use this on each other, but it's a good way for you to subtly let them know that they should elaborate. If they still don't give enough, make a gesture like a wheel rolling forwards to get them to keep going. Also, make sure that they reciprocate with questions of their own. Another golden phrase to get them using is: "How about you?". They need to know that unless they ask questions back, other English speakers will quickly lose interest. Give some corrections (accompanied with lots of positive feedback): what you can do is make notes as you go around the class monitoring them while they talk away in their pairs and groups, and then after you tell them to sit down again you can write the mistakes and corrections up on the board while they all take notes. This means that: you don't interrupt the flow of the interactions, and they all pay more attention afterwards, so they all benefit from

the corrections. If a student who keeps making the same mistake over and over then you can do on-the-spot correction, and private Japanese students often request this anyway. Getting the balance of correction is up to you: if you don't give enough then they might feel dissatisfied, but if you give too much then it will erode their confidence.

In a multicultural class, the teacher usually notices the obedience and politeness of Japanese students. They always do their homework and never disturb the class. This ethic comes from their society. From a very young age, they are taught to do all of the assignments they are given. They are also taught to respect the teacher and do whatever she tells them to do. However, this ethic is not always good. Since they do not want to disturb the class, Japanese students often do not ask the questions that they have. Instead, they ask their peers questions or check in the books after class. And, since they are very reserved, they do not outgoing participate like Europeans and Latin Americans. They believe that saying their opinions in front of the class is a form of "showing off". They believe that their job is to memorize the things which the teacher teaches. Since they are so quiet in the class in this manner, the teacher might wonder whether they understood or not. The teacher needs to pay special attention with regards to this point and assist the students by calling on them by name, encouraging them to participate more freely, giving some kind of leadership responsibility in class, etc.

Aside from their reservedness, there are other factors to be aware of due to cultural differences. It is better to avoid putting the Japanese student on the spot. It is okay if the student successfully accomplishes the task, but if he does not, especially if he is older or is socially at a higher position than the rest of his classmates, he will be very embarrassed. It is better to avoid physical contact and winking. Since the Japanese are not accustomed to these situations, they feel uncomfortable, or in a bad case, they get the wrong idea. The Japanese usually do not use eye contact while they are talking with others. This does not mean that they are insincere or guilty of wrongdoing. Also, they do not accept compliments because accepting compliments means that they admit that they are good, which they believe to be conceited.

The articles, such as "a" and "the" not only do not exist in the Japanese language, but are also function words, which mean that they do not contain any meaning and are necessary for functional purposes. Therefore, Japanese students often cannot hear them while they are listening to English speech. This makes it hard for them to learn English articles. Besides, the rules on when to use the articles are so complicated that even the native English speaker cannot explain them exactly. The teacher needs to be aware that this is one of the biggest challenges for Japanese students. Furthermore, Japanese students are often frustrated with in English grammar is that the grammar rules that they have learned in Japan are different from the ones which are actually used by native English speakers. In English class in Japan, the teacher teaches strict, traditional grammar and excludes all other rules. For example, the teacher may say that "May I go to the restroom?" is correct, but not "Can I go to the restroom?". When the student actually talks with native English speakers, he realizes that the natives do not follow the rule. The teacher needs to help the student realize that both ways are used, and while some people believe that only one way is correct, others believe that both ways are acceptable.

One of the goals of an ESL curriculum is not only about speaking a foreign language. It also aims to have a deeper understanding of different cultures. Hence, part of what the teacher should share in the classroom are teachers' or other countries' practices, traditions and special occasions. However, lessons do not have to one-sided. When you use examples in class, it would also be exciting for them to hear Japanese-related examples. If you are a fan of anime, integrate Pokemon monsters and Dragon Ball characters. If you love travelling, mention your favorite tourist spots in Japan. If food is your game, then bring some pictures or samples of sushi or yakitori. It will brings smiles and giggles to the students.

Nothing is more likely to get students chatting than conflict. When they are passionate about a subject they may go on forever. Play devil's advocate, oppose everything they believe, wind them up and let them go. However, be careful not to go too far with courting controversy, particularly around emotive subjects. Again, this is where knowing students well comes in handy, knowing which buttons to push, how to provoke them and, most importantly, what to avoid and when to pull back. Perhaps, a teacher holds a doctorate in Japanese culture. Maybe the teacher knows more about Japanese history than the students ever will. But by masking this, the teacher can open up whole new avenues of conversation. Many Japanese presume that 外人 (gaijin, foreign people) know little or nothing about Japan, so use this. Remember, students will more readily talk about topics they know something about, so by pretending ignorance in matters that to them are everyday, they may be more relaxed in opening up to the teacher. However, don't go too far. Asking "so, what's this sushi stuff I keep hearing about" is probably going to get the teacher rumbled. Perhaps every teacher's best friend in a conversation class is the open ended question. This is probably the most important tip of these golden tips. In class, as in life, nothing stils a conversation like one word answers. If in doubt, ask 'why?' "How are you?" "I'm hungry" "Why?" "I didn't eat lunch." "Why?" "I was busy". "Why?" "Because my boss gave me extra work." "Why?" "He hates me because I ran away with his wife!" Why, why, why until you are blue in the face. Sometimes their answers might be really surprising.

Teachers should also be prepared to sometimes stop the conversation and do a bit of good old fashioned teaching. In conversation based classes, make notes as students talk (as well as giving some important on the spot correction or vocabulary) and then, when it is half way through or at the end of the class, focus on language teaching. First, choose the language points that are generalizable, then get students to practice them using substitution drilling as well as getting them to give their own examples. With vocabulary, make a sentence with some gaps on the board so they can do a gap fill together at the end, or do a game like backs to the board. Also, try to focus on some pronunciation points too. Most importantly though, get them to write it down in an organized way in their note books and (ideally) start the next class with some questions they have made using the language we have looked at.

When I talked to Susan Meiki, one of the English Language Instructor here in Okayama, She strongly recommended future possible English language teacher in Japan to take a TEFL training, because it will give you the essential skill to teach English in a foreign country rather than in an English speaking nation (Meiki). Mrs. Meiki has been teaching English in Japan since 1987, she advises future teachers to be more open-minded to different culture. Many students even today do not believe that English is relevant to them, although English writing is often seen on the label of many products and signs in Japanese nowadays. Future teachers should show the importance of the lessons and to motivate students to want to learn. That being said, an English language teacher should always has alternate lesson plans to accommodate different students with different personality. Also, teachers should be able to catch up what is new about the society and what is happening within students' groups, should be able to immerse in students current culture and should be able to challenge himself to accept new things (Meiki).

Teaching in a different country or culture is difficult, teachers themselves should be able to teach themselves about what is better in what situation. They should encourage student to speak up more and motivate students to believe in themselves: they can do it. It is hard for Japanese students to get used to reading and writing the English alphabet. Most of the Japanese writing is written in Chinese characters, in which each character represents a meaning instead of a sound. Therefore, when the Japanese student learns to read English, it requires a lot of effort. The students whose native languages are of Latin origin usually learn to read English very quickly, but Japanese students need to spend more time and effort to get used to reading English. The teacher needs to be sensitive of this point.

The Japanese student has a head start in learning English vocabulary. Although the origins of Japanese and English have no relationship, the Japanese use English words for many imported products, names of food, technological terms, medical terms, concepts and ideas, etc. When the student begins to learn English words, he has already known many words, which he uses daily. However, these English words could be a drawback. Since Japanese changes the pronunciation of these English words into a more Japanese style, when the student pronounces these words in English, he tends to pronounce them with a Japanese accent. The teacher needs to be aware of the student's pronunciation of these English words. But in fact, by focusing so much on proper spelling, sentence structure, and conjugation, the net impact is that many Japanese people are less likely to use English, rather than more, because they realize the chances of screwing up are sky high. To remedy this, what teachers should be doing is encouraging students to try, to make mistakes, and to stop correcting them so much. Just keep introducing them to large volumes of information, and stop focusing on minutiae. Or is that minutiae? I really gotta look that up. Eh, anyway, small stuff.

Japanese students like to have something tangible to evidence their learning i.e. a textbook, a handout, something written on the board that can be copied. If you are talking to the students, practicing ad-lib(spontaneously) conversations, drilling or doing correction techniques, you are teaching on your terms, but perhaps not to the satisfaction of all your students. They can't visibly see or 'show' such learning to friends or family and there is a tendency for them to believe that this is wasted or idle time. It lacks relevance on their part, and surely cannot be important as otherwise the teacher would make them copy it down. Never forget that that old practices die hard. Many people pursue hobbies very successfully and are willing and studious. Teachers will have to commend students linguistic aspirations, but you are beginning to appreciate that the level of foreign language input may certainly be a factor in students confused English output in class. The '*jack of all trades and master of none*' may spring to mind. **Your students will have a lot of latent vocabulary.** Unfortunately it was devised and memorized purely for testing purposes at High School and tertiary educational levels and has little relevance in useful life skills. Nevertheless, teachers will have to wean them off rote learning and soothe their constant concerns for accuracy rather than fluency.

Some students really do try to improve their English ability. They surprise you with their activities and make your job feel worthwhile. It may be a diary page they wrote, a report they want you to check, a thank you message etc. and even if it's a baby step into the world of English we must be proud of their achievements and make them feel truly valued. We can't always fathom why they come to class, but we know why we are here and even if students don't try today, we must always dream that they will tomorrow.

Teaching English in Japan is relatively easy compared to other countries. Japan and its people are very unique in many ways that you have yet to imagine on your TEFL journey. It is said that to know is to understand and being culturally aware is vital to your teaching in Japan. Before coming to teaching in Japan, or any other country, please do a research and clearly understand the purpose and answer this question deep in your heart: Am I able to challenge myself?

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## The Perfect English Teacher – Ideology vs Reality

Ashley Bowron

York St John University (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** 日本の英語科目の必須科目が増えたことで、外国の英語教師が日本で教えることが増えています。しかし、学習者には動機づけの問題があり、英語を使用して流暢になり、さらにはコミュニケーションできる人もほとんどいません。「効果的な」教授法と高等教育を受けた教師は、多くの方法が認められていますが、英語教師が実際に望むものとはどのような違いがありますか？英語を使うことができる人の成功は、以前の教師の何らかの資質に反映されているのでしょうか。自己収集データとオンライン調査を使用して、いわゆる効果的な方法は実際には実際に機能し、どのように学生が望むものと比較するのでしょうか？結局のところ、英語教師としての成功を定量化するのは何ですか？

### Introduction

Before arriving in Japan for study abroad, through interactions with other Japanese students at my home university, I was excited to further continue communicating on both a casual and more professional way in terms of teaching. At this time one question that was on my mind was with regards to what English education is like in Japan. Throughout my time of studying abroad I have spoken to many different kinds of students and English teachers living and working in Japan with the goal of finding out what it is that makes a great English teacher. With this goal in mind I set out to use what I had discovered for myself through these interactions and see if this was actually effective in practice in various situations and different kinds of classes.

### Primary Research Methods

Upon beginning the research project I wanted to gain a realistic and modern view on English teaching in Japan. In order to do this I wanted to make sure that the majority of the research was done first hand as opposed to but not excluding, reading others research and publications. My main method from the beginning was to speak to students ranging from as early as elementary school students to university students and other adult learners. These conversations would consist of casual questions leading into the research area. I chose this method to get a more realistic answer from students in a relaxed and friendly kind of conversation in which students can feel comfortable enough to say what they really think. In these kinds of conversations there were no set questions and ideas gained will only be summarised from my findings. I felt that if students were informed and given set questions for a research project that this could have influenced their answers.

In addition to this I spoke to and observed a variety of English teachers ranging from part time teachers, to assistant teachers and full time experienced teachers. Observations were done in real classes and conversations were posed more as advice seeking or discussion in order to receive and seek specific questions to find the morales of the teacher in terms of teaching.

To further research what I found from these conversations I would then implement what I was told into my own teaching opportunities and other interactions and gauge the reaction and feedback given when trying each different idea. I would ask for frequent feedback during and after classes and try everything with different classes for a more accurate result.

Following this a small amount of students and teachers were selected for a more in depth conversation on the most common areas I discovered during my research. These students and teachers were informed that this would contribute towards a research project and agreed that their thoughts and opinions could be used anonymously as a part of the project.

### **Results – What Makes the Perfect English Teacher**

While results were not all the same in terms of both peoples thoughts and those thoughts put into practice, I will mention the most common findings while also touching lightly on the less common areas and why although this is not within the majority, this still remains significant. I will discuss how each area of thought came to be and how this played out in practice.

Possibly the most frequent element of research regarding teaching related to the opportunities and facilitation of students communicating in English. Many students recalled on the lack of English used within the classroom as well as the lack of communication practice and clearly stated that they would have liked for these opportunities to be more frequently available from an earlier age. This is also evident in practice when trying both lessons with a main activity of communication as opposed to lessons with more instruction and learning through theory with most students saying they preferred the communication style lessons after trying both and those who did not choose the communication style preferred a mix of both theory and communication practice.

Through communication practice I was also able to notice a large difference in the kind of question and the way in which the question is asked. Through practice I noticed that instead of simply asking question after question, students would give a more in depth and interesting answer, revealing more about their personality if I asked the question in a new way. For example instead of asking what their favourite food is, altering the question into something like; if you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would you eat? By doing this students gave varying answers to simply naming their favourite food. Some students would even consider health options over taste and say that their favourite food is one thing but they think it's too unhealthy so they would eat something else instead, revealing some of their personality traits and morales. I think of this as a more creative approach which was also requested by students to differ from learning from a textbook.

Although I was unable to put any form of grading as an English teacher into practice myself, I was able to learn from many students that part of their motivation to study English and enjoy class comes from their grade. There was a fairly strong correlation between students who received higher grades and how much they enjoyed class. This was also evident in my own study of Japanese. I would find myself studying more in order to continue achieving a high grade and put more effort into maintaining this level of grade.

Throughout my research, the research itself served as somewhat of a reflection which allowed for me to continuously improve my performance as a teacher and proved to be an important and valued quality by students. Furthermore this showed students that I was listening to their ideas and involved them in the lesson decisions. By frequently asking students their opinions on the class and actually changing this allowed students to give further ideas and participate more in class.

This kind of environment seemed to allow students to become more comfortable and in combination with continuous language and communication practice allowed students overall confidence in using English to improve. Some students said that they felt pressured into the language ideology of their teacher and that if they did not say something the way the teacher or textbook wanted it, they would lose confidence. In addition when giving official feedback students felt as if there was no actual change made. As well as this many students would prefer a more frequent kind of feedback so that if changes were made it would actually effect them.

### **Discussion – Is it Possible**

As mentioned as part of the results communication was the most frequent and evident aspect of learning that students would like increasing. Before reflecting upon communication it is important to realise that communication and language are two different concepts. While language is a specifically intended message sent through various forms such as spoken or written, “communication is the sending and receiving of messages” (Crystal and Varley, 1993, p. 4) cited by (Bloomer, Merrison & Griffiths, 2005, p. 15). As communication is the sending and receiving of any messages, this includes those which were unintentionally sent such as natural body language, smiling or even a red face when someone is embarrassed can be considered as communication due to the message, intentional or unintentional that it has sent. Because of this difference, many students are only able to learn language and are unable to communicate in English due to the lack of opportunity to even practice using language, let alone communication.

I was able to notice while many students had a high level of understanding and speaking in English, many things that usually go unnoticed such as natural body language that often aid with understanding language in more complex and natural situations were either not apparent or not used by most. For example when a British person wants to show clearly that they are being very sarcastic there is often some form of body language naturally accompanied with what is said as well as a change in intonation or even a roll of the eyes. In this case it is easy for students to mistake what was actually meant or not fully comprehend the meaning behind the communication. This is something that cannot be directly taught to students and can only really be developed through actual practice and use. While this is just one example there are many other natural communication methods used by speakers of English that can often only be learned by communicating in English with an advanced or native English speaker.

It is also important for an English teacher to be creative in planning a lesson while keeping some form of measurable improvement or learning. “If teachers are to adopt innovative ways forward in their English teaching, they need to reconcile the tension between the drive for measurable standards on the one hand and the development of creativity on the other.” (Cremin, 2009, p. 4). Using creativity to make lessons more fun can improve engagement of students as well as improving the engagement of the teacher with the students. If students are enjoying learning English then they are more likely to be more motivated to study and want to attend class or learn more English. Much like for myself if I enjoyed my Japanese class one day I am more likely to go home and study more in my free time. It is also important to make sure that the lesson stays productive and does not limit the creativity to fun alone which can be a challenge with students unmotivated to learn which in itself requires a creative approach.

It is fairly well known that not every Japanese student enjoys studying English. As an English teacher it is easy to see the benefits of English personally as a world language rather than a school subject. Similar to maths or science, for many Japanese students English is just another subject. Because of this it is probable that many students will be as enthusiastic about learning English as other subject areas they have already realised they are good at. Partially due to the age most students start studying English in Japan, many students have already realised which subjects they like and want to commit more time to. At this point students with a prior interest in English are the likely candidates to try harder and receive the grades to motivate them to carry on studying. From a standpoint of motivating students based on their grades, is it possible for an English teacher to please everyone? As an example, if a teacher was to award all students the same grade for varying qualities of work, would this further push students away from studying due to the lack of effort required for the grade? In the life of a busy Japanese student it is likely that they would devote more time to other weaker areas to improve their overall grades. In addition to

this, when a student takes a more formal test and does not receive the high grade they are used to, this could also be another factor for losing motivation as opposed to actually increasing it.

When reflecting upon what went good and bad, which turned out to be an unintentional result of my research, learning that reflection itself is an important feature for teachers that is often not mentioned by students. “It is in working through and reflecting upon these events and challenges that you will develop as a teacher, and it is in this very process that the greatest rewards of teaching are to be found.” (Green, 2011, p. 1). It is important to use reflection in order to develop in any area to develop. However in teaching specifically this is something which should be done on a regular basis. As students abilities improve a teacher should be able to adapt and reflect on what is and is not working as well during student development. In addition to this, all students and classes are different therefore, likely require a different approach.

In an ideal world, the perfect English teacher should be able to adapt each lesson plan and their approach to each class they teach. However in reality this does not prove practical. Through my own experience I was able to feel how tiring and time consuming this approach is and instead found that making a plan to suit the majority and making small changes was much more manageable but not always the perfect lesson plan or level of balance for what each student wanted. It is also not always possible for every teacher to adopt the approach of another teacher. All teachers have their own personality and style of teaching, each differing from person to person and while one teacher can have a completely different style to another, it is completely plausible that the same student can learn and enjoy classes with both teachers and even benefit from these differing styles. With this in mind, if the perfect English teacher does exist, can this only be one individual or is this a variety of different individuals. Under this assumption the ideals of these teachers would be different, therefore going against the ideology of a single perfect type English teacher.

### **Conclusion or something like that**

When considering everything that has been mentioned it is difficult to quantify what would even make the perfect English teacher. As it has been discussed both students and teachers are all different meaning that one teacher or one quality of a teacher might be good for some students, but not for all students. Taking this into consideration there are some elements of teaching that can be taken on and adapted by many English teachers in order to develop both their own and their students abilities such as reflection and creativity. However in the full scope of English teaching in Japan as a profession amounted with other factors, although there are many great English teachers, in reality, I believe it is fair to say that these teachers are not perfect and cannot meet the needs and wants of all students. With this in mind I think that a good English teacher is able to consider their own performance in a way that results in a positive effect upon their students.

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## How to Modernize the Japanese University Education System

Enoch Chan

Dallas Baptist University (USA)

**Summary:** 日本の高等教育は、多くの専攻が存在する制度です。これは、日本の大学生が自国の国境の中で高等教育を受ける中心的な方法です。日本の大学の構造は、日本固有のものであり、知識と文化の両方の人口に対応しています。日本の教育制度は、大学の西洋の理念と、大学で成功を収める東洋の哲学とのハイブリッドです。2つの教育システムを統合すると、時には学習、情報の普及、研究の機会など、いくつかの個人が出現するいくつかの欠陥が見られることがあります。例えば、西洋の大学は、研究機会、学生の生活/文化、知識の両方において進歩しており、その中には現代的に利用可能なツールセットを利用して教師が知識を普及させる方法も含まれています。西側の多くの大学では、試験を管理し、教員が学生とのコミュニケーションを可能にするハブサービスとしてオンラインウェブサイトを利用するなど、学生に情報を中継する新しい方法を開拓してきました。日本の大学ではこれが欠けており、日本の大学はそのような機会を増やし、西洋の大学制度に合わせたインフラとサービスを改善するために何ができるのでしょうか。

### Introduction:

Japanese higher education has existed in Japan for over 150 years. During this time frame, many ideas from the West, such as new knowledge in science and philosophy, migrated back to Japan from Japanese scholars returning home from abroad. This new-found education at first was established for the elite, such as Keio University in Japan which was founded in 1858. The university system in Japan was created for the sole purpose of enriching the Japanese population with knowledge both developed at home, and gathered from abroad. This was part of the cultural revitalization and globalization that Japan had recognized as part of the expansion into modernization, and by keeping up with the rest of the world. Japan had finally achieved modernization with the introduction of new knowledge gathered from abroad, this exchange of ideas fueled the hunger for expansion which is seen in later moments of history in Japan.

The Japanese education system was so crucial in the development of modern Japan, it failed to recognize and adapt to more modern higher education systems, such as adopting modern technologies and utilizing them in everyday teaching. The world is rapidly developing and growing, and the exchange of ideas and improvements to the methods in accessing school information has become easier for students and faculty. At its core, the Japanese education system seems to have not changed, but the outward appearance is slowly morphing into an internal transformation. The Japanese education has had a slower time matching the other universities rapid development in infrastructure. This can be noted in many key features such as online access to grades, education materials, online access to talking with educators, schedules for classes, and the ability for the student to check information regarding finances relating to the university. This has been a growing trend in the difference between Japanese universities and Western universities, and as such the Japanese university system recognizes a need for improvement.

### Main Body:

In the West, the ability for a student to access critical information pertaining to finances, grades, a class portal (to find online classes or notes on lectures), and homework help is all found online. Utilizing methods such as an online portal, is very common in America in many universities nationwide, from community colleges to 4 year universities an online portal is an essential tool that is invaluable for both educators and students alike. A commonly used online portal in American universities is known as Black

Board, which is used in schools such as Dallas Baptist University in Dallas, Texas, Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona, Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, Texas, and College of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, Nevada. Blackboard provides access and tools for both educators (teachers and staff of a university), as well as students with resource materials for research, online classes with the ability to view lecture notes and homework submissions, as well as providing a message board to connect with both faculty and other students to allow for communications and relaying of ideas.

Blackboard provides a hub station for all these tools under one convenient webpage, the ability to customize and mold the outward appearance as well as internal structure to suit each individual type of class based on subject is also a positive aspect about Blackboard. This web portal also allows for tests and quizzes to be taken online from any internet ready device such as smart phones, tablets, and computers. Another interesting and very unique fact about Blackboard is that you can view grades and university GPA/GPR, after taking a quiz or test, or submitting homework, or written assignments on some occasions the score can be viewed almost instantaneously. Blackboard is a very easy tool to use for educators, since they can automatically grade assignments and calculate GPA based upon submission by students quickly, which can free up time for the teacher to utilize on other aspects of the class or his/her job at the university.

If the online portal malfunctions, the company behind blackboard supplies a 24/7 help desk to resolve issues. The company also provides many methods to work around problems with the online portal, such as a forum for alternative login methods, troubleshooting, and tips and tricks for a myriad of listed malfunctions. Blackboard also provides contact between student and educator in case a problem involving grades or loss of internet when attempting to complete an online assignment causes a negative outcome to happen. Access to an online database such as connections with other university libraries, and your own university's library is a tool provided by Blackboard as well.

Utilization of Blackboard by educators takes a bit of training, and most universities in America offer introductory courses to train and mobilize staff to better utilize Blackboard. The company behind Blackboard also provides basic seminars online to help adjust and introduce latest updates and concepts to staff working at a University that utilize the web portal, this includes training videos on how to accomplish setups for each unique feature provided to establish an online course portal for the given subject. The integration of outside webpages into the main framework of Blackboard helps to tie and better streamline the easy accessibility of the product for students and teachers. Another prominently used web portal that works side by side with Blackboard is a website known as Web Advisor.

Web Advisor is a tool that helps a university administration better funnel information that can be viewed by students and faculty alike, such as important notices to upcoming events from the university, financial reports for students, grades and teacher ranking for classes offered by the school, and this web portal provides for a place to email extended or visiting faculty from other institutions. Web Advisor provides the administration with a portal that is easy to use, and fully functional independently from Blackboard, and another aspect that differentiates Web Advisor from Black Board is that students can register for courses on Web Advisor, and setup each upcoming semesters courses in a schedule. Financially, Web Advisor allows for students to search up information for available financial aid that can be awarded to the student for the semester, and accept grants, scholarships, and loans to pay for school. Web Advisor fills in the role that Black Board cannot do, and each of these web pages balances each other out, so when used together they form one complete package.

In Dallas Baptist University (DBU), both websites are integral for a student to live an academically fulfilling life. Both websites when accessed from either a smart phone or a personal computer offers an easier method to learn the subject matter that is being taught by a professor. Since a student can access essential information from any internet enabled device from anywhere in the world, this doesn't hinder the student's developmental education, but only offers more reliable freedom. The only major downside for this is if a computer is down or broken, or if the internet is not fast enough or

lack of internet access. For studying abroad, this method helps the students to not fall behind in their studies, but also provides a lifeline for the student to access vital information pertaining to the university.

The adoption of such a method for Japanese university students can help streamline the education process. A sizable percentage of Japanese youth own mobile devices that have some form of connection to the internet. (Thornton & Houser, 2005) In theory, if such a beneficial application that has access to such a service as Blackboard becomes available for Japanese university students, the possibilities can be endless. Such services can also help the often times cubical structured organization system of the Japanese university administrative departments, to be more unified and all information can be passed around effectively. The adoption of an online tool such as Web Advisor for Japanese administrative staff can also help in relaying important university notifications, and upcoming announcements to the students and faculty in a more up to date and streamlined process. Accessing such vital information can become easier, and the possibility of changing classes, checking grades, checking financial aid applications, and paying university bills can become more structured. This up to date scenario can also save on money, and the money can be used by the university to improve other infrastructural needs.

**Table 2.** Frequency of use of mobile phone features, as reported by 333 Japanese college students

Feature use	M	SD
Send e-mail	194.0	619.0
Receive e-mail	82.8	91.0
Voice call	6.6	7.0
Web	3.9	7.3
Photo	2.8	7.6
Calendar	2.6	4.4
Game	1.6	7.0
Dictionary	0.9	2.4
'to do' lists	0.4	2.1
Record video	0.3	1.0

M denotes the mean response (number of times that feature was used per week) and SD the standard deviation.

(Thornton & Houser, 2005)

A need for such a technological infrastructural upgrade helps to motivate the administration and the government to seek out finances, and help to resolve such a lack in programs. The greater need that is expressed by the student body can in turn help to adopt such innovative technologies into the school structure at a more rapid pace. Often, this means that influencing or through suggestion and a push for change towards a new resolution can sway administrators that have the power to make such decisions become reality, become motivated and push this agenda forward. (Clark, 1983)

### **Conclusion:**

The adoption of such technologically advanced tools, that can further assist and simplify difficult processes in higher education is a must. This can further enhance the ability of the Japanese student to streamline and easily access information that is critical to the success of his or her education. The usage of such technology can also influence the teaching methods, and provide the teacher with a platform that can enhance a class, by taking the class on the go, this can further the education of each individual student. These tools can help the teacher easily grade and receive submissions for work from students, even students that are ill can submit homework online, and receive a grade for work accomplished. Having online tools such as Black Board and Web Advisor can help the university stay up to date with their online and technological infrastructure, and open doors to further enhanced opportunities. So, the

integration of such tools can help both administration relay information to students, and for easier student/faculty communications.

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## What's Good in a Language Textbook?

Nicholas Fishlock

University of Adelaide (Australia)

**Summary:** Textbooks are the unchanging companion of the foreign language student and yet the literature on their nature is surprisingly sparse.

In this report, I look at the current trends and designs of textbooks in the world, using a variety of resources accessed mainly online and an interview with Banno Eri, one of the four authors of *Genki: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese*. The ongoing trends of internet use in text-based education and the ramifications of that on textbook construction are also observed, while noting the particularly unique case of an online only textbook-like website dubbed “Robo-Sensei”.

The result is a conclusion that optimal textbook construction contains matters of interest to the student consumer, accessible layout, and opportunity for self-study without the brain giving up and walking off on its own through the nearest window (to wit, not be tedious). Ms Banno provides a revealing insight into the creation of one of the world's leading Japanese textbooks, and evidences an ongoing interest in supporting Japanese education through innovative means, such as the online distribution of *Genki* tie-in videos. The internet exclusive resource “Robo-sensei” however is found to be unintuitive and unpopular, but the ideas leading to its conception, those of consistent updatability in line with the evolution of language, and economy of distribution are strong indicators of what the future may hold for language education.

This is possibly the poorest overall piece of work I have submitted, in English or Japanese, so please enjoy its horrific splendour.

私は9年間日本語を学んでいるうちに、10冊くらい様々な教科書や辞書を使っている。自習のためインターネットでダウンロードして、授業のため高く買って、友達の勧めによって読んでいる。先生の授業とともに教科書の内容を説明された。また、自由にテキストを繰った。役に立つ本である、役に立たない本でもある。簡単に自由に使える本である、先生の説明なければわからない本でもある。母語にかかわらなく、世界中の外国語の学生は教科書を使っている。そうであれば、外国語の教科書の使い方や作り方や内容を検討するべきである。このレポートでは、様々な報告書や論文をまとめ、自分の経験で使え、世界の一番人気がある日本語の教科書の作家、坂野永理先生とインタビューをし、教科書の効果や特質を検討する。

文部科学省のウェブサイトによっては、教科書とは、「小学校、中学校、義務教育学校、高等学校、中等教育学校及びこれらに準ずる学校において、教育課程の構成に応じて組織排列された教科の主たる教材として、教授の用に供せられる児童又は生徒用図書であり、文部科学大臣の検定を経たもの又は文部科学省が著作の名義を有するもの」とされている。この定義は少し廃れ、特に文部科学省に注目しているが、一般的に生徒は学べるように書かれた図書の教材である。日本の生徒にはもとより、世界中の生徒は教科書を使用しているか、先生が使用させている。その上、文部科学省の定義を使うとなると、第一印象は授業と一緒に使われている教材であるが、特に外国語に関して、生徒は自習の教材として疲れている。

図書といえることであるが、やはりこの世の中には新しいタイプの教材が出てきている。インターネットの教材や言語を生で見える、聞こえる機会が多くなっている。それで、教科書を使い方や手に入れ方も変えていた。自分も違法ダウンロードで興味がなくなっている授業の教科書をダウンロードして、タブレットでちらっと読んでいた。オーストラリアでは珍しくない。

また、この世の学生のために作っている教科書も使っていきそうだが、まだ完璧ではない。いうことは、インターネットの教科書である。日本語の教育には、Robo-Sensei というウェブサイトが作られた。これは教科書とアーティフィシアル・インテリジェンスで日本語を学べるウェブサイトである。アーティフィシアル・インテリジェンスというより、ベーシックプログラムというの方が適当かもしれないが、基本的な考え方は説明書と例のオーディオと例文で日本語の文法を学んでから、テストをとって、あのテストはグレードされたあとアーティフィシアル・インテリジェンスが文法の間違いを指示されて理由を説明している。このようにアーティフィシアル・インテリジェンスは先生のロールをとっている。

Robo-Sensei は成功せれていなさそうだが、アイデアがいいし、20年のあとこれは普通のシステムになるかもしれない。一番強いポイントはアップデートの可能性で、安さである。言語はいつも変えているから、違う書籍版が必要である。インターネットでいつでもアップデートできるなら、現在の辞書のように新しい言葉をすぐ入れられ、もう廃れた言葉をとって捨てられる。それに、教科書の印刷費、特にカラーイラストのは高いだから、ある教科書の値段も高く学生はよく買えない。

一般的に外国語の教科書の内容は文法と語彙と使い方である。言語ということである。だが、ある議論もある。それは日本語の場合で文法や語彙より文化や儀礼の方が大切なことである。カリフォルニア州のネルソン博士による、アメリカの日本語の教科書に書いてある状態は事実性から遠く離れたと言われる。たとえば、学生と先生の関係やインタラクションはアメリカの見通しから書かれた。

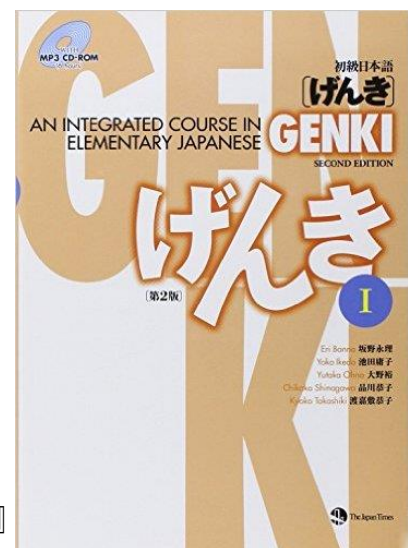
## 坂野永理先生とのインタビュー\*

現在岡山大学で働いている坂野永理先生は4人の友達と一緒に1999年「げんき」という大人気の日本語の教科書を出版された。2017年06月29日2時10分ころ、坂野先生の意見と教科書を書いた体験に関してインタビューをしていた。

いつ、なんで教科書を作ろう決めましたか。

「1990年くらい、私たちにとってはあのときの『日本語の』教科書はほとんど使いづらい」坂野永理先生はこう答えた。

「それに、外国の日本語学習者の数が毎年増えていた。教科書の練習が少ないし、単調だった



おかげで、説明や練習は教室の先生に頼られた。先生が説明し方や練習し方を自分で考えなければならぬが気付いて、教科書は意味がないでしょうと思った。」

「『この理由にしたがって』同僚の友達と一緒に自分の教科書を作ろうかなと思っていた。」

どうやって内容を決めましたか。よくこれは必要か不必要な情報かを判断しましたか。

「最初にあの夏休み、毎日集めて考えたり、相談したりした。夏休みだったけど、休みじゃなかった。あのとき私たちはまだ若かった！まあ、まずはニーズ調査を行った。アメリカから来た留学生、もちろんイギリスもオーストラリアから留学生も訊いた、『日本にいるうちに』どこ行って、なんの日本語を使うかというような調査だった。どんな日本語を教えるのは必要かの調査だ。その調査の結果で考えた。」



「一人の友達の英語が一番いいだから、普通に彼女は英語の説明や例文を考えたら、みんなと一緒に話し合っ、使うかどうかを選んだ。『あの時にももう廃れた』An Introduction To Modern Japanese という教科書に基づいて自分の教科書を作った。」

「このような書類を作って、私たちの『日本語の』授業で使った」坂野先生は簡単に印刷された分厚い書類を指示している。内容は日本語の練習や説明書で、げんきのレイアウトとイラストに似ている。「『結果は』良かったら、本物の教科書で使った、悪かったら書き直したか捨てた。」

げんきを作る際、使っている学生の使い方をどう予想しましたか。いつも授業と共に、また自習で使うか。

「自習だけで使っていると思わなかったけど、他の教科書よりげんきは自習しやすいと思う。私たちの経験は日本語の授業で教科書を使っている学生なんだから、そのイメージにしたがって自分の教科書を作った。教科書だけで使って日本語を習うつもりじゃなかった。」

今時代はインターネットの時代でしょう。教科書というものがまだ本ですが、将来に関してどう思いますか。紙の代わりタブレットとかを使うと思いますか。

「あ、確かに最近授業でよく見えるね。授業中スマホを使っている。だけど、やっぱり本が欲しいね。本がいい。この．．．ぴらぴらの感じがいい。」

「だが、現在の教材ももっと使いたい。たとえば、最近げんきの例で使える動画を編集してインターネットでアップロードした。このように学生がどこでも教科書とともに日本語の使い方が聞こえる。」

【\*注：インタビューのオーディオを登録しなかったのせいで、全部の答えはノートから推測していた。直接話法ではない。】

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外国の教科書は複雑な図書であるね。

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## 外国人から見た日本の部活

イーサン・ジェニングス

アメリカのアリゾナ州立大学

Before coming to Japan, I have always had an interest in Japanese clubs. Particularly in the way that they are structured, and the way that the members of the club communicate with one using the different formalities contained within the Japanese language. After coming to Japan, I had wanted to try to join a club with a sport that I have not done before, such as Kendo or Judo, but I instead decided to join a tennis circle. I played tennis in high-school and I thought that joining a club that I had experience with would allow me to focus less on learning the sport, and more on learning the culture and interactions revolving around clubs in Japan. Throughout my study abroad, I have participated in many practices, and events that are organized by the circle I am in. Using this experience, along with a survey that I distributed among the Japanese tutors, I will present the differences between clubs and circles in Japan, as well as what Japanese people think about certain aspects of them. Also, I will present a very brief and general comparison of Japanese and American clubs.

本では、クラブとサークルがある。外国人として、クラブとサークルの違いは全然分からなかった。日本に来る前に、私はクラブとサークルはあまり差がないと思っていた。もし差があるとすれば、クラブは学校に所属しているが、サークルはそうでないと思っていた。何かルールなどの差はあると思えず、実際に私は部活については具体的に何も知らなかった。それで、日本に来る前にも、日本のクラブやサークルに興味があったので、それらに参加して外国人として分析しようと決意した。私は部活についてのアンケートを行って、そのアンケートの結果と自分自身の体験を表す。

まずは、クラブとサークルの違いはいったいなんだろうか。実際にサークルに参加してから、私の意見が変わった。例えば、大学のクラブの練習を見ると、皆は非常に真面目な顔をして練習しているが、一方ではサークルの練習を見ると、皆は笑顔で楽しそうに練習している。これはクラブとサークルの目標が違うのだと思う。クラブは恐らく大学の代表として試合に出て戦うが、サークルはスポーツなどを楽しむためであるかもしれないと思っていた。

クラブとサークルの違いをはっきりわかるために、日本人の大学生に聞いた。様々な答えが返ってきたが、二つの答えが多かった。一つ目は単純に言うと、「クラブは大学公認だが、サークルはそうではない」ということである。これはどういう意味なのだろうか。クラブは大学の名前を背負って、大学の代表として試合に出る。そのため、大学から支援を受けるので試合で結果を出す必要がある。一方で、サークルは大学の名前を背負っておらず、支援も受けないので、試合の結果を問わず友達と楽しめる。

二つ目の違いは「サークルよりクラブのルールは厳しい」ということである。よく挙げられた例は「クラブは毎日行かなければいけないが、サークルの練習は好きな日に行けばいい」ということである。一つ目に出した違いを考えれば、二つ目の違いは当然だと思うだろう。クラブは大学のチームとして戦っているので、何よりも結果を出したいだろう。それで、練習をよくしないといけない。練習をしない限り、他の大学の代表に勝つことはできないだろう。サークルには、そのようなプレッシャーはないので、練習は好きな程度すればいい。それに加えて、クラブは大学の名前を背負っているため、外国人は短期学生なので、クラブに入っただけではいけな

いと言われているが、サークルは誰でも入ることができる団体である。それで、私はサークルに参加することにした。

私は日本語の専門で、日本語にとっても興味があるので、サークルに入ってから、私が初めて気になったことは日本語での上下関係であった。この関係は大変面白いと思うが、外国人として、私も日本の伝統的な文化や社会的なルールを守るべきなのだろうか悩んでいた。念のために、私は最初から皆と敬語で話したが、時間が経つにつれて、サークルの友達が増えた。日本では仲良い人と仲良くない人との話し方が違う。例えば、友達と話す際に友達言葉を使うが、よく知らない人とは敬語を使う。私にとって日本語自体難しいが、それに加えて、誰と話すかによって話し方を変えるのは無理だと思ったので、友達言葉ばかりを使うようになった。面白い点は、それでも周りの人はあまり構わない気がした。それは私が外国人だからである。日本人の立場から見ると、私は日本の社会的なルールを守るべきなのだろうか。それに加えて、外国人の立場から日本の上下関係は厳しいように見えるが、日本人はどう思うだろうか。この二つの問いを日本人の大学生に聞いてみた。

まずは、外国人としての話し方についての意見をみてみよう。一番返ってきた答えは「敬語を使うことに賛成だ」という意見である。よく聞いた表現は「郷に入っては、郷に従え」ということである。つまり、他の国、地域などに行けば、その住民と同じように社会的なことにも、規則にも、礼儀にも従うべきなのである。しかし、そうであっても、外国人は心配しなくても、できるだけ頑張ってお話することが期待されるらしい。外国人は失敗しても、頑張っていれば許せるが、もし頑張っていないなら、簡単に許せない意見もある。

次は、上下関係についての結果を見てみよう。上下関係に関する意見は多くの人は厳しいと思ったことがあるが、それは日本の文化なので仕方がないという意見である。さらに、私は「後輩として任務を取ったことがあるか？あればどう思うか？」と聞いてみた。アンケートを受けた人は全員任務を取ったことがあると答えた。そして半分以上の人は厳しくはないという意見で、残りの人は厳しくはあると思ったが、それは日本だから仕方がないという意見だった。これは厳しくても、優しくても、アンケートを受けた皆さんの個人の成長のためにも、日本の文化に慣れるために大事なことだと思われる。

他に気になったことは、日本のサークルの組織、特に私の入っているサークルの組織についてである。アメリカでは、クラブの係員は通常、大学の3-4年生だが、ここでは2年生が係員となる。私はこれを知った際に、びっくりした。2年生として、そのような任務を取るのには厳しいだろうと思ったが、友達に聞けば、それは普通のことだと返事をした。係員の責任は後輩に教えたり、助けたりしてあげることなので、2年生は1年生の先輩としてリーダーシップを発揮するのである。それで、大事な役に立つと思われる。

役に立つと言えば、他に分析したことは、どうやってクラブやサークルの経験が将来につながられるのかということだ。アメリカでは何でもクラブやサークルの経験は将来に活かせると思われる。日本人の意見もそうである。多くの人はクラブやサークルで学んだ礼儀は役に立つと思っている。それはいいが、他の方でも活かせると思う。特に三つの例を挙げたいと思う。

一つ目はコミュニケーションである。これは言葉の使いばかりでなく、むしろ、後輩にも、先輩にも、言いたいことをはっきり伝えるようになることが必要である。就職する際にも、こ

の伝える力は必要である。例えば、後輩に仕事の仕方を説明する際、きちんと伝えなければ、将来何か失敗したら問題になるだろう。または、接客する際、会社の商品や勤務を売るためにコミュニケーション力が必要だろう。

二つ目は仲間との協力することである。クラブとサークルにも、成功を収めるために協力が必要なのである。テニスのダブルス試合は一人で勝つわけではない。職場でも、同僚との協力は必要である。例えば、協力をしなければ、全部の仕事を一人でしないとイケない。それは時間がかかるし、一人でしてストレスが溜まるし、大変だろう。しかし、もし数人で協力して仕事の役割を決めると、もっと楽になって早く仕事を完成できる。クラブやサークルに関する例はイベントの企画や、合宿がある。合宿とはクラブやサークルの参加できる皆さんと一緒にどこかへ行って数日泊まってそこで練習することである。合宿の計画は一人でできないことである。練習する場所や泊まる場所を予約したり、食事を考えて準備したり、行き方を調べて皆さんに伝えたりするのだ。しかし、係員の間で役を分けて協力すればその計画は楽になる。

最後に私は少しだけで日本とアメリカを比較したいと思う。まずは、アメリカにも日本と同じようにクラブとサークルがあるが、英語での名前は異なる。英語でクラブは「チーム」と呼ばれている。もし大学の名前を背負っていれば、それはチームと呼ぶ。例えば、アリゾナ州立大学にはテニスチームやフットボールチームがある。そして、サークルは「クラブ」と呼ばれている。アメリカではクラブと言え、大学の名前を背負わなくて、支援を受けない団体である。また、アメリカで上下関係は日本のようではない。もちろんお年寄りを尊敬するが、日本とは異なる。英語には敬語はないのだ。また、尊敬するのはお年寄りだけで、クラブの先輩には尊敬はしない。またはクラブやサークルの行うイベントは異同である。アメリカでは、大きいグループで飲み会などに行かないが、日本ではそれは通常のことである。それ以上、日本で様々なイベントは行われる。例えば、合宿や祭りや飲み会やボーリングなど行われる。

アメリカと日本は確かに異同があるが、思ったより似ている。しかし、具体的に言うとアメリカは日本より恐らくもっと大会を中心に練習していく。なぜかという、アメリカは「チーム」と「クラブ」があるが、クラブは減少で支援などを受けないにも関わらず、通常に大会を目指していく。一方でサークルに入っている人々は大会などを目指しないで、部活を楽しむ。もちろんクラブでも恐らくサークルでもその勝ちたい気持ちがあるが、それ以上全体的に日本の部活は様々なイベントで親睦を染めることが必要を中心に練習していく。





## Shuukatsu: Job-Hunting in Japan

Donna Dinh

California State University (USA)

**Summary:** 大学生が持っている一般的な目標は卒業後に仕事を見つけることで、この欲求は広く世界に共有されています。しかし、それは日本でより真剣に受け止められています。日本の就職制度は「就活」と呼ばれ、就職活動に特化した多くの時間とステップを有し、欧米とは様式が大きく異なります。日本の就職活動は非常にユニークでそのシステムについて日本人、外国人、特に日本で働く留学生が議論しています。就職活動は、大学3年生の秋に始まり4年生の初夏まで、場合によってはそれより長く続きます。このプロセスは長く時間とプレッシャーがかかります。最近の企業や大学の就活への態度は変わり、それは近い将来起こる変化を明確に示しています。

In Japan, there are quite a few words to describe job-hunting. *Shokusagashi* 職探し and *kyuushoku* 求職 have the same meaning as “job-hunting” in English, which refers to the activity of searching for employment. *Tenshoku katsudou* 転職活動 refers to looking for a change of occupation. *Shuushoku katsudo* 就職活動, or *shuukatsu* for short, refers to the job-hunting process of fresh high school and college graduates. Although job-hunting can be done throughout the year with different reasons and situations, the most common and ideal time is during a student’s third year in college or university where there are more opportunities and resources to start the *shuukatsu* process.

Unlike other countries, the Japanese job-hunting system is well known for its unique style of offering third year college-students a promise for employment before they graduate. Also, the *shinsotsu ikkatsu saiyou* 新卒一括採用, a term for hiring new graduates, is a distinctive feature of *shuukatsu*, where many companies simultaneously hire students in bulk. Before 1997, there was an official date where companies could start their recruitments. If anyone started before this day, it was called *aotagari* 青田刈り, which literally means “harvesting rice while still green.” After 1997, the new guidelines suggested that companies should announce recruitments on December 1 (for third year students) and start screening applicants on April 1 (for fourth year senior students.) Some companies requested these dates get pushed back further so that students could focus on their studies. Thus, today, hiring periods depend on the companies and their desired timeline.

The *shuukatsu* process begins for most students in their beginning of their third year of university. This is when they start attending career seminars at their schools and elsewhere. Third year university is full of self-assessment testing where students begin preparatory research in their own interests, skills, strengths, and possible career paths. These tests are commonly undertaken to gain a better understanding of one’s aptitude. Universities provide their students with information about job openings, hold career seminars, and operate career centres where students can receive individual guidance about finding a job. Through these activities, the universities seek to achieve a rapid transformation of their students from “children” who lack essential social know-how into functional “grown-ups.” In that sense, this is a form of education. Since university employees generally have no real-life experience working in the corporate world, schools rely on outside experts to provide guidance. Japan has a low birth rate and universities are competing fiercely for shares of a shrinking pool of prospective students. The job placement results for the students graduating from each university are reported by the media, and good results are a key sales

point for the schools, so they give their students considerable support in their job hunts – to the point where some complain that the public advertisement saps the students’ own initiative.

Industry-wide seminars are amongst the many events that are organized to attract students. These seminars are arranged to attract and encourage students to learn and develop their understanding of the industry. It is hoped that this will assist students in writing meaningful applications. Companies can eventually filter students who are enthusiastic to work for them by using these sorts of methods. Mynavi.com and rikunavi.com are two of the most popular websites to support students and companies with job information and entries. Recently, mynavi.com held its Global Career Expo in Tokyo and Osaka where there were job fairs for global and bilingual people. This type of event is very helpful in assisting job-hunters to gather information and get the chance to have a “face to face” interview on a same day.

By the middle of the student’s third year, it is expected that by May or June they will have a strong grasp of the companies that hiring and the type of positions they have available. However as is common in Japanese recruitment, students will not be hired for particular positions. Instead, they are hired as general employees that will eventually find a role that suits the company, ideally, but not necessarily, in line with the individual’s strengths. Around June, once a student has determined a list of companies they are interested in, they will submit an “Entry Sheet.” This is similar to a cover letter in western countries, where students are asked to write essays on why they want to join the company. Many companies utilize the “Entry Sheet” as the first round of the screening process. Determining the students motivations for joining the company and understanding how a candidate intends to connect their experiences and education to the company are of particular importance at this stage. It should be noted that the most recent DISCO survey, conducted in January 2012, revealed an average of 46.9 “entry sheets” submitted per candidate.

If a candidate meets the initial screening requirements, they will proceed to the next round of the recruitment process. In this round, potential candidates are invited to write tests and interview with the company. This stressful process usually takes place between June and August. Most companies will conduct multiple rounds of interviews, with the final interview usually carried out by senior management of the CEO. Successful candidates will receive a *nainaitai* 内々定 or informal offer of employment six months before graduation, which will hopefully lead to formal offer of employment, *naitei* 内々, in October, securing them a promise of employment by the time they graduate.

Getting a job creates a lot of pressures, especially in Japan where there are many rules and orders to go along with it. During the job-hunting season, there are many students dressed in suits waiting for buses or getting in lines to attend job conventions. In June 2017, at the Mynavi Job Career Expo in Tokyo Big Sight, hundreds of students attended with the hope of getting their job offers. Rather than the American system of dropping off hundreds of resumes and getting only a few interviews, in Japan there are better chances of getting an interview with one resume. Some people question which system is better.

In Japan, many people do not agree with the intensity of the job-hunting system. One of the distinctive features of job-hunting in Japan is its strict customs. During the third year in college, students start to prepare for their job-hunting by cutting and dyeing their hair black, purchasing an “Interview Suit” – black pants and jacket, white shirt, black tie and black bag – to prepare incessantly for the company tests. Everyone has to rehearse the exact same lines that they will use during the interview. Since individually is not a desirable quality in corporate Japan, this is the time when potential candidates seem to completely lose the qualities that make them unique. As the old saying goes: “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.” There are a few exceptions, of course, but mostly this is the time where the individual gives way to, and subsequently becomes, the team member and company employee; putting his or her own needs and desires aside to satisfy the company.

Furthermore, the proliferation of interviews can be daunting to the unprepared job-hunter. Unlike a normal “face to face” interview like in America, Japan’s companies often have multiple interviews. Generally, students have to participate in a group’s interview for their first round. Students are divided into small groups and enter the room all together at a same time. They will take turns to answer interviewer’s questions. The purpose of this type of interview is to see how an individual can collaborate in a group of people, especially the ability to maintain and “keep face” of him or herself amongst others. Companies in Japan would prefer hiring students or employees with no previous working experience rather than those who have a lot of experience. They believe that it would be easier “to draw and design on a white paper” rather than to deal with people who are resistant to their customs. Therefore, in an interview, it is very stressful since students have to present themselves at their best by showing their humbleness and respect to their interviewers.

Particularly for younger applicants, many companies feel it is necessary to not only review their work and college history, but even their high schools and sometimes even middle school history. Questions about marital status, current or foreseeable children, what their parents think of their choice of companies are all fair questions in the Japanese job-hunting process. As much as it may be confusing for many foreigners, this process is normal in Japan. In Western countries, privacy and personal information are kept very much between work and daily life. However, Japanese companies expect to know everything about their candidates to judge them as a person, rather than their intelligence and skills. People will have to be ready for a lot more explanations if they have something different on their resumes, such as having attended several different schools, gotten a Master’s degree, or taken a year off work and school. In Japan, everything is linear and there are no breaks between education and work for most people. If interviewers see something that does not fit their company’s “life ladder,” the interviewee will get disqualified.

At Okayama University, many students are struggling at this time of year. “Whether we get a job when we graduate decides our whole life”, said Ai Yamada, a third year student in Okayama University majoring in agriculture. She shared that in Japan, people are married twice – once to your company and once to your spouse. The intense pressure of getting a job after graduation triggers students to become so depressed that they commit suicide. In 2016, according to the Japanese Cabinet, there are more than 21,000 people took their own lives which is about 60 people per day. Although it is the lowest rate of suicide in 22 years, Japan’s suicide rate is still the sixth highest in the world.

By taking this issue under serious consideration, companies and schools are working to assist students during their time with job-hunting with the hope of decreasing stress and depression. Okayama University provides students with information and support to make informed choices about their academic career and future path. Okadai students find that by talking to their department’s counsellor, they feel less stress and have more ideas about their plans for job-hunting, and what they should prepare to do if they could not get a job’s offer right after graduation.

Narumi Teramoto, a third year law student in Okadai, shared her own *shuukatsu* story. In the last three months of doing job-hunting, she had to do interviews and attend seminars almost every week. With the help and understanding of her professors, she was able to miss some classes but still had the chance to finish and submit her assignments. This created a less stressful environment for her to complete her job-hunting. After talking with Okadai students, this new approach has helped many of them to balance their schoolwork and job-hunting at a same time. However, Narumi, like a lot of her peers, could not avoid the stress of uncertainty of not getting a job offer during her third year in college. After multiple interviews and trips to Osaka and Tokyo, she successfully completed her goal by getting a *naitei* in her dream company.

The journey of *shuukatsu* in Japan is stressful and nerve-racking for the hopeful young students freshly out of the comfy confines of university life. This is an important step to help students explore themselves and look for what they want to do in their careers. During the job-hunting process, they gradually grow out of their “young self” and become more accountable for their decisions. In today’s new generation, young people are starting to rebel against corporate Japan and its strict rules and codes of conduct. Today’s generation has more outside exposure than any other generation in Japan. Hopefully the traditional “one size fits all” *shuukatsu* will be cautiously innovated to a more efficient and effective hiring process.

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## Group identity in Matsuri

Jenny Bozzer

Ca' Foscari University (Italy)

**Summary:** 2017年04月29日に岡山大学のおかげで、三朝の「三徳山御幸行列」という祭りに参加しました。その時、他の参加者と一緒に御神輿を担いだり、儀式に列席したりしましたので、そんなイベントは非常に日本らしい協力関係を立証していると考えました。だから、その説についてこの小論文を書くことにしました。ですから、次に日本の協力的な社会やお祭りなどを紹介して、私と様々な学者の経験に基づいて自分の考えを説明します。

Japanese society has been believed for a long time to be based on a “group model”. In particular many scholars have defined it as a “hierarchical organization, with a paternalistic leader at the apex, who is the source of satisfying both affective and instrumental needs of subordinate members [...] and all the members are selflessly oriented toward the group goal and are loyal to group causes” (Befu, 1978, p.170 - 171). I think the origin of this group oriented behaviour can be found in and reflects on various religious aspects. Most of religions create bonds between members of a society and, consequently, establish a community that shares the rites and beliefs, that works and lives in accordance with the principles of that religion. As regards Japan, it is a country in which many different cults, such as Shintō, Confucianism and Buddhism, coexist and has blend together. In my opinion the origin of the typical Japanese group identity can be explained through the analysis of the first two cults mentioned above. First of all Confucianism, that was introduced in Japan during the Edo period (1603 – 1878), had a profound influence on the fabric of Japanese society. In fact the social aspects of Confucianist philosophy are hierarchical and based on filial piety, so we can relate this feature to the explanation of Japanese “group model” proposed by Befu.

Furthermore, what had the most important impact on Japan’s group mentality is its indigenous religion: Shintō. This religion has developed in ancient rural Japan, that was based on an agricultural society. In this context the wealth of the community depended mainly on the agricultural products, which in turn depended from various natural factors, such as good weather conditions, land fertility, and so on. And it’s exactly in the natural elements that the *Kami* (Shintō deities, spirits or phenomena that are infinitely numerous, and united in peace and harmony. They have both good and evil characteristics and are not only elements of the nature but also spirits of venerated dead ancestors) are thought to live in. So, considering these factors, it can be said that “just as the life of the village depended upon the co-operation of the group, so too, the religious faith in *Kami* depended in the community for its expression” (Moriarty, 1972, p.91). This means that members of the village had not only to work together for the cultivation of the lands, but also to collaborate in the propitiation rites and prayers addressed to the deities to ask fertility and protection from the elemental forces of the nature with which man had to work in harmony. From these earliest forms of communal religious worship developed the *matsuri*, Japanese traditional religious festivals celebrated also nowadays. It’s the *matsuri*, indeed, the feature of Japanese culture where I think not only the origin of the “group model” of Japanese society as considered before can be found, but also the expression of this group identity.

First of all it's important to explain what a *matsuri* is. *Matsuri* are Japanese traditional ritual festivals that shouldn't be confused with other festivities. In fact, Japanese holidays, festivals and other ceremonial occasions are gathered into two main categories: *matsuri* (祭) and *nenchū gyōji* (年中行事, rites celebrated during the year). The first ones are native Japanese festivals deriving from ancient Shintō rites for the propitiation of the gods and related to the cultivation of rice. The latter designate a sort of general schedule of community religious ceremonies and is the result of the overlapping of the agricultural calendar, the Chinese lunar calendar and the cycle of Buddhist rituals. In other words the *nenchū gyōji* are the holidays and observances formalized into a calendar of annual events by the court in the Heian period (794 - 1185) to affirm the welfare of the state and of the imperial line. An example of these festivals are the "New Year's Day" (正月, *Shōgatsu*) or the "Children's Day" (子供の日, *Kodomonohi*). However, this research deals with the *matsuri*, in which, as said before, expression of Japanese group identity can be found.

The *matsuri* have their origin in Shintō rites used in favour of the cultivation of rice. For this reason they are characterized by a cyclic timing that follows the growing of rice. They are ceremonies that symbolize the encounter and communion of people with the deities, through moments such as purificatory rites, offerings and communal banquets between gods and humans. During the celebrations people pray the *kami* for prosperity of the harvest, thanksgiving and protection from natural disasters and illness. This is possible because during the rites, the deities that are thought to live in the shrines in the mountains, are taken to the village thanks to special portable shrines (神輿, *mikoshi*), so they can protect rice paddies, residing in the fields to watch over the growth of the rice plants and to protect the population. The carriage of the *mikoshi* can show another aspect of the *matsuri*: the communion among people. In fact all the community takes part to the festival somehow: some the participants string their forces together to carry this heavy palanquin through a harsh path, other represent characters of the ancient Japan (and this shows how also in the past all members of the community used to participate), and others help in the preparation of the event. Actually, it has to be said that in premodern Japan only those who had undergone a purification process called *monoimi* were allowed to participate to the *matsuri*. Furthermore only a small group of Shintō priests and laymen selected from the so-called *ujiko* community (a group of people linked to the local shrine called *ujigami*) conduct the ceremonial organization of *matsuri*. Nevertheless, in recent years the *monoimi* purifications have been greatly simplified and the *ujiko* groups have been replaced by voluntary groups that take care of the festival functions. These structural changes have been caused mainly by the "rearrangement of the economic structure [that] caused a flow of population into the cities, and the decrease in farm population [...] the influx of a heterogeneous population and high social mobility caused considerable restructuring of urban residential groups" (Kodansha, 1983, p. 258). This flow to the cities produced also an increase of the city festivals, which can be separated from the village ones by looking at the period of celebration and at the social aspect, even though they have the same origin. In particular the first ones occur mostly in the summer and emphasize human camaraderie, while the latter take place in spring and autumn and are centred on man-god communion. However, in my opinion, both of them can explain the Japanese group mentality that emerges in Japanese traditional ritual festivals. For this reason I will try to present my idea through the analysis of a little known village *matsuri*, the *Mitokusan Miyuki Gyoretsu*, and also of a famous city *matsuri*, the *Gion Matsuri*.

During my stay in Japan, on 29th April 2017, I took part in the *Mitokusan Miyuki Gyōretsu* Festival (三徳山御幸行列) held in Misasa (三朝, Misasa, 鳥取県, Tottori Prefecture). Though this *matsuri* is not very famous, the village is well known for *Mount Mitoku* (三徳山, “Mount of three virtues”) where is located the *Sanbutsu-ji Temple* (三仏寺), which *Nageire Hall* (投入堂, *Nageire-dō*) is designated as National Treasure of Japan. This place was founded in year 706 by *En no Gyōja* and dedicated to the religion he founded, Shugendō (syncretic religion that combines Shintō, Buddhism and other beliefs), and to Tendai Buddhism. The legend says that he threw three petals of a lotus flower saying that they “should fly down to places related to gods and Buddhas, one of them fell on *Mount Mitoku* and since then it has been a sacred mountain designated as a place to practice Shugendō. It is also said that in year 849, a priest of Tendai Buddhism, placed three Buddhas in the temple, and this is why the temple is called *Sanbutsu-ji* (literally “the temple of the three Buddhas”). This is the reason why the festival held in Misasa is characterized by Shugendō ceremonies and its main purpose is to carry the three deities from the mountain to the people in the village, so they can give them offerings and the gods will protect children and give long life, take fortune and donate wisdom. Two of these deities are symbolically carried on the *mikoshi* and one on the horn of a terrific animal embodied by one of the participants.

The main features of a village *matsuri* can be recognized in the *Mitokusan Miyuki Gyōretsu*. In fact the event takes place in spring and there is a continuous relation between man and god. For example common people participating to the festival are called *jinnin* (神人, god- person) and their purpose is to serve the deities while the monk is serving the Buddha (since this festival is based on Shugendō rituals). For this reason the *jinnin* wear white clothes and, in the past, they had to purify themselves for a week before the ceremony (for example abstaining from drinking alcohol) and the role was handed down from generation to generation and reserved to male members of the family. Nevertheless, as explained before, this tradition has expired and now everyone can be part of the *matsuri*.

Among the various functions Japanese shrine-related festivals perform, many scholars claim that communal bonding is an essential component. According to my personal experience of the fieldwork in Misasa, I can support this statement. In fact, many moments of the festival express Japanese group identity. First of all, all the community helps for the success of the event. People wear traditional clothes personifying various characters and collaborate in harmony during the parade, for example by carrying all together the heavy *mikoshi*, a thing that can be done only by the cohesive group force of many individuals. Monks and authorities celebrate the rites. Other members help at the beginning, throughout and at the end of the festival by assisting the participants during the change of clothes and providing food and drinks. Other people take part indirectly, for example the audience, all children and adults, that cheers and supports the people passing by. Additionally, the group stays together all the time: when gathering at the temple on the mountain, where the procession starts, people wait together for the beginning of the rite speaking and drinking *sake* (alcoholic beverage often used during religious ceremonies) together. After the ritual at the temple and the descent from the mountain, people eat all together and then solemnly assist to another ceremony. Afterwards the procession continues and at the end of the day people have dinner together, thanking each other for the hard work of the day (with the peculiar Japanese sentence “お疲れ様でした”, *otsukaresamadeshita*) and pour beer and sake to the companions. In this moment each person can feel really part of the group, commenting the success of the event and expressing gratitude to all the members.

As an example of a city *matsuri* I will consider is the *Gion Matsuri* (祇園祭). This takes place in Kyōto (京都) throughout the entire month of July and the most important moments are the parades with the portable shrines (*mikoshi*) on July 17th and 24th. So, according to one of the city *matsuri*'s characteristics, it is celebrated in summer. The other feature, or the human camaraderie, can be displayed through Michael K. Roemer's study "Ritual Participation and Social Support in a Major Japanese Festival". In his work, Roemer examines "how some of the main participants in this month of rites and festivities gain a sense of belonging and emotional support based on their roles in this historically and culturally significant shrine-related festival. Specifically, highly involved male participants form intimate and exclusive relationships and develop enduring networks that offer feelings of unity and spiritual guidance" (Roemer, 2007, p. 185). He had studied the involvement of some leaders living or working in the neighborhoods that organize the festival and through some interviews it emerged that their responsibilities in *Gion Matsuri* allows them to create a positive sense of community and makes them interact in an enjoyable atmosphere during the year. These communitarian moments affect them in a so strong way, that many of the interviewees have considered the relationship with their comrades not only as a friendship but more as a family-like connection.

In conclusion, according to my direct experience, I can claim that two main moments can be recognized in a Japanese traditional festival and each of them somehow affects the involved community creating a group identity. One is a more spiritual and religious dimension, consisting of a solemn ritual performed in tranquillity and order. As Roemer explains, "it is through these collective ceremonies that those involved gain a stronger sense of communal identity and receive social support. Their roles in the festival require frequent interaction with other participants and encourage sustained friendships" (Roemer, 2007, p. 188). On the other side we can find a more playful moment which exhibits a collective excitement, spontaneity, and festivity. This leads the participants not only to a sense of belonging during the event, but enables a strong friendship also outside of this context and throughout all the year.

In addition, I would say that among the main elements of a *matsuri* such as the ritual part, also communal bonding is an essential component. In fact, in my opinion, this union between people makes possible not only the festival to be celebrated with success but also to not extinguish with the passing of years. In fact due to social and economic changes some festivals had faded out for a period but thanks to the wish of the community were revived. An example is, indeed, the *Mitokusan Miyuki Gyōretsu*. This *matsuri* has been taking place every year before Second World War, then its celebration stopped, and in 2003 it has been revived and is celebrated every three years.

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## Between Friends: A Look at Semantic Differences in Japanese and English

Sami Calonkey

University of Northern Iowa (USA)

**Summary:** 各言語は自分の「友達」という意味の言葉があるという事実を言って、必ず世界中の「友達」は全部、同じような人という事になる？よく考えたら、「友達」とは誰？友達とはどういう意味？その質問を答えるために、ソシュールというフランス人の言語学者の「記号学」を基づくアンケートを作った。

アンケートによると、その質問の答えはちょっと不明である。一般的に「友達」と「フレンド」は同じような関係だと思えるけど、めぼしい相違点もありそうだ。例えば、アメリカ人より日本人は「友達と一緒に定期的に時間を過ごすことは大切」と答えたけど、日本人の友達に比べてアメリカ人の友達の理想的な距離は近いである。他には、アメリカと日本の「家族」と「友達」という関係はちょっと違う一位に存在しているだと思える。

A fundamental and basic problem that learners of a new language must overcome is the simple fact that words tend to differ between languages. Grammar is eventually mastered and alternate registers will become second nature, but the acquisition of new words never ceases. Indeed, people even continue to learn new words in their own languages throughout their entire lives. This is because words are symbols – they represent something, a given thing or idea – and we need new words to label and understand new information. Thus, a large part of learning a new language is simply learning new labels for old ideas.

Ideas, however, are malleable things: while objects like *tree* or *mountain* may exist independently of culture, I propose that other such ideas are intimately linked to their respective cultures. While I think that many such ideas may differ in some way between cultures, in this project I focus on the topic of *friendship* in Japan and the US. Concretely put, my thesis is that because friendship is a social phenomenon and social rules between cultures differ, this will also cause what exactly a friend “is” to differ between cultures. In other words, the fact that *friend* translates to *tomodachi* does not necessarily mean that the two words are wholly congruent. My goal here is to highlight and discuss some dimensions of meaning that *friend* and *tomodachi* hold in common, and perhaps more interestingly, also where they differ.

**Literature Review:** My argument is rooted in Ferdinand Saussure’s “theory of the sign”, which basically states that words are ideas that are three part entities (Saussure, 1916). The first, the *sign*, refers to a concrete object existing in the real world – like the paper this essay is written on. The second, the *signifier*, refers to the means used to reference that sign – the 5 letter combination that spells “paper”, or the particular sound “paper” makes when it is read. Finally, part three is the *signified*, which is the thought evoked by the signifier – the paper you picture in your mind upon reading the word “paper” is merely a thought. It is not the same as an actual sheet of paper. The *signified* exists only in our minds, can differ from person to person, and in some cases may only be able to be communicated through language because it does not ostensibly exist – meaning, simply put, that there is room for error and misunderstanding.

One does not need to bend their minds around cultural differences to witness these potential issues, however. They occur even among people who live in the same place and speak the same language – in fact, a central premise of Adler and Van Doren’s 1972 classic *How to Read a Book* was just this: much confusion occurs because a reader does not “come to terms” with an author, mistaking which potential “signified” meaning the author meant upon choosing to use a given term. To give a concrete example, say that person A invites person B to exercise. If person A means “exercise to lose weight” but person B hears “exercise casually for fun”, they’ve miscommunicated: they may have used the same *signifier* (exercise), but that one *signifier* had more than one *signified* meaning. The same word, depending on the context, may have more than one meaning.

Though I earlier said that concrete signs will likely remain consistent across languages, this isn’t always true. For example, English and French share a common word (*signifier*): mutton and mouton. They both refer to sheep meat, but the French version possesses an additional dimension of meaning that the English one lacks. While *mutton* can only refer to sheep meat, *mouton* can refer to both sheep meat and living sheep. The same word across two languages does not necessarily mean the same thing. This process is furthermore complicated once we leave the concrete dimension and move to more abstract things. Again, a *sign* is a concrete thing that you can touch, to which a signifier/signified pair is connected. That being said, it is impossible to touch things like love, patriotism, or endurance. Such ideas, lacking a physical root, exist only in the very malleable and inconsistent realm of thought and emotion.

I thus make the assumption that while concrete objects like trees likely hold consistent “meanings” across cultures, the “dimensions of meaning” ascribed to intangible ideas may differ from culture to culture. In the same way that to what degree pain is endurable will differ from person to person based on their physical and mental composition, I posit that ideas like gender, love, and more specifically friendship will differ on some level between cultures due to their unique history, values, and world-view.

This phenomenon has already been documented: it has been shown that different cultures have different ideas about what makes a person intelligent. Cocodia (2014) for example, notes that Western notions of intelligence tend to be individual-centered; what can a person do? How large is their vocabulary, how adept are they at solving problems? Eastern notions, on the other hand, tend to suppose that intelligence is grounded in morality or character: an intelligent person acts according to what is right and abstains from behaviors/habits which might hinder their learning. The same meta-analysis further suggests that social competence is viewed as integral part of intelligence in many African communities. Despite all of these languages having the same word for intelligence (in some cases, more than one), their signified meanings are each slightly unique, reflecting the culture from which they are oriented.

A similar study was done with US students and Korean students, focusing specifically on individualism/collectivism, intimacy, and confucianism. The results of the study were that, aside from Koreans exhibiting more exclusivity in their friend circles, friendships did not seem to differ significantly based on the above criteria (Yun-sun, 2003). Part of my survey questions differ in goal from her study, however, in that I am more interested in the importance and role of friendship relative to other relationships (with the self, good friends vs acquaintances, with family, with coworkers) than in the qualities of these relationships, per se. Other questions are indeed similar in format to hers, where following Sullivan’s (1953) research suggesting that (a) closeness and (b) individuation are integral aspects of any friendship, I sought to gain insight into the role of friends in each others’ lives – and who, exactly, these friends are.

**Survey Demographics:** Twenty seven people responded in total, 12 people from Japan and 15 from the US. Of Japanese respondents, 5 men and 7 women responded; the vast majority of these people were in their 20’s, with one person in their 50’s and one in their 70’s also responding. US respondents were overwhelmingly female (3 males, 1 unlisted) but had more age diversity. 8 of 15 respondents were again

from the 20-29 age bracket, while the 7 remaining respondents were between 30-69.

**Discussion of Interview/Survey Results:** Japanese and US responses look quite similar upon first glance at the graphs. Both nationalities unequivocally responded that they enjoy spending time with friends, that friendships persevere through time and distance, and that friends are people whom we at least generally like or feel comfortable being ourselves around. Friends in both countries offer security and support, think friendship is an important type of relationship, and that friends are people we look to in order to have fun. People from either culture should be able to recognize whether people in the other culture are or aren't friends without difficulty.

### **On Connection**

That being said, after leaving this base, values and perspectives seem to diverge a little bit. When comparing free responses about what words come to mind upon thinking about the term “friendship”, almost 2 in 3 US respondents responded with “fun” (among other words), while only around 1 in 4 Japanese respondents chose words related to entertainment in their definition of friendship. Contrarily, Japanese respondents tended to frame friendship in terms of togetherness – whether that was physically (being together or doing something together) or mentally (supporting each other in difficult times). A similar number of US respondents used “trust” in order to define friendship as those who used “fun”.

This trend seems to be reflected in other questions. Respondents from each country almost unanimously denied that becoming physically separated would end a friendship and then almost unanimously agreed that friends from previous stages in life were still important to them today. This seems to suggest that some sort of strong connection exists between friends, but the majority of US respondents held neutral opinions as to whether or not it was important to regularly spend time with friends. In fact, of non-neutral US respondents, there more people who disagreed that spending regular time together was important than people who thought it was. Contrarily, Japanese respondents almost unanimously stated that regular time spend together was “very important”, and of these a majority gave the strongest agreement possible (rated their agreement as being 7 of 7).

Finally, responses also differed when asked to note the ideal closeness of a friendship in terms of personal disclosure (the extent to which friends should know each others' dreams, reason for existing, intimate details about each others' lives that normally wouldn't be shared, each others' joys and sorrows, etc). For Japanese respondents, the average closeness to a “friend” was 6/9 and a best friend was 6.6/9, while US respondents said 6.5 and 7.9 respectively. Furthermore, more than twice as many US respondents as Japanese respondents rated the ideal closeness of a best friend as being 9/9. In summary, while connection and vulnerability are important aspects of friendship in both cultures, Japanese respondents seem to place more value upon everyday togetherness while US respondents seem to value having stronger emotional relationships.

**On Values:** A particularly interesting point of divergence is that US respondents tended to agree that it was important to have similar opinions about politics/the world, while almost all Japanese respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. In other words, Japanese respondents seem to be more tolerant of conflicting opinions than US respondents. While the brevity of this survey did not allow for a detailed explanation of respondents' thoughts for this question, and the growing polarization of US politics is beyond the scope of this essay, I can't help but wonder if this difference is not at least in part due to the US tendency to communicate very directly in contrast to Japan's tendency to prefer more indirect communication styles.

**On Family and Friends:** The final part of my survey had to do with comparing the relative importance

of friends, family, and others in a variety of situations. Interestingly, this section is where the two groups tended to differ the most. Responses converged on two points: when asked whether they had become who they were today due to (a) their own choices or (b) the influence of their peers, both groups almost unanimously responded (a). Later on, when asked who would be appropriate to ask for a small loan of money if they became unemployed (family, friends, coworker, other), both groups again almost unanimously responded with family. Interestingly, despite Japanese emphasis on mutual support and US emphasis on trust and closeness with friends, neither group would ask friends for money.

Respondents were next asked whom would be the most suitable person/group to talk with when they feel very sad. US respondents almost exclusively chose non-family members (10/15 – friends, 3/15 – partner/lover) whereas Japanese respondents placed a more significant value upon family, with almost half saying they would look to family for help. Uniquely, two Japanese respondents chose “other” and self-listed “myself”. This emphasis on family emerged again in the final question when respondents were given three groups (friends, family, lover) and asked to choose only two to have in their lives. More than two-thirds of Japanese respondents chose to have family and friends but no lover, whereas US responses were more diversified; nearly half chose to have family and a partner but no friends, and the other two options were chosen equally.

**Conclusions:** The sample size was quite small, but if further research shows it as being representative of the general populations of Japan and the US, there are a few interesting things to note that might be particularly relevant to US or Japanese students studying abroad in the others’ country. The first is that, by and large, both groups place quite similar values upon friendship – so if in doubt, the international student should simply be themselves. In particular, US students should be mindful of the importance Japan seems to place on “checking in” for casual social activities like lunch, and that it might be a good idea to avoid talking about controversial topics. On the other hand, as US respondents saw “friends” as being similar in closeness-level as Japanese view “best friends”, Japanese students should do their best to be patient knowing that they may be drawn into conversations that may seem very personal from people they perhaps wouldn’t normally have those conversations with.

I believe that the most interesting takeaway from this survey for future research is that all of our relationship-groups are connected, and though they occupy similar roles, they seem to occupy positions of somewhat different importance and be entrusted with different types of emotional work. I think it would be interesting to see research in which respondents are given multiple groups (self, friends, best friends, family, significant other/spouse, coworkers, teammates, others) and asked to assign them as being suitable for different tasks (helping with homework, packing things to move houses, talking about an alcohol problem, etc). Perhaps shedding light on the relative importance of these groups in relation to one another can help paint a more clear picture of how these individual relationships differ across cultures.

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## Blood Types in Japanese Society

**Jonathan Bentham**

York St John (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** このプロジェクトでは、日本に存在する比較的現代的な信念について議論する予定です。個体は、彼らがどの血液型を持っているかに基づいて4つのグループのうちの1つに分類することができる。各グループには、それぞれのメンバーが分かち合うと信じられている特徴と個性の特徴が含まれています。それぞれの血液型に関連すると考えられる主要な属性は、A-Well-organized、B-Optimistic、O-Selfish および AB-Eccentric です。それが触れられる間、このプロジェクトの主な目標は、この信念を立証したり、反証したりすることではありません。日本と西洋の文化、環境、社会的な要因や相違点について議論し、探求し、探求し、日本ではこのような信念が普及している理由を説明するかもしれないが、他にはあまり知られていない。

The belief originated in 1927 when a psychologist named Takeji Furukawa wrote a thesis named "The Study Of Temperament Through Blood Type. It was soon adapted by the Japanese government during World War II to train better soldiers, and group them into battalions according to their blood type. However, after the war ended, and without the theory gaining much scientific backing from fellow academics, it quickly fell out of popularity. "scientists were skeptical in Japan at the time, and remain so today, with most seeing no basis for a correlation between blood type and personality."(Atlas Obscura, 2017) That was until the 1970s when it was revived by a journalist named Masahiko Nomi, who despite having very little scientific or medical evidence to support it, wrote a series of bestselling books as a rebuttal to the ethnic stereotypes that were coming out of Europe at the time. Resulting in the topic appearing in all forms of media, where it has managed to retain its popularity to the present day. Blood type grouping can usually be found located the creators of the content seek to efficiently convey a character's personality to the audience. This can be in the context of a television show, manga or band, whereby showing the blood type, Japanese people are able to understand and gain a general idea of what kind of person they being introduced to. For foreigners on the other hand, these blood type indicators are sometimes seen in imported media such as video games character creations and booklets, and are at best ignored, or at worst a cause of bewilderment. With the user of said media, having no context as to why it is necessary to know this information, or how blood type would have any relevance to a story not set in a hospital.

The methodology which was used to research the topic was one of a quantitative approach. Consisting of a multiply choice survey with the aim that the data could be analyzed, revealing a clear pattern to indicate the quantity of people who believe that blood type can be indicative of a person's personality. The survey also asked for information regarding age, sex, blood type, and subject of their degree. With the intent of discovering if there is any sort of correlation between the demographic or educational background of those who believe that blood types represent personality. Furthermore, see if they hold any other similar beliefs, such as a belief in astrology signs. Also, if any correlation between answers of a shared blood group appeared, it may have lent credence to the belief that blood type is indeed indicative of an individual's personality. Furthermore, to ensure that the results found were fair, the survey was written in Japanese and English so it was clearly understood, and allowed for the answer to be given in either language. The survey was also done anonymously so the participants would answer

freely and honestly. The results of the survey revealed that 60% of participants answered that they do believe that personality relates to which blood group an individual belongs to. With 75% of those who answered yes, believing in horoscopes, and 80% also falling into the 18-24 age group bracket. From all of the factors considered in the survey, age was the most prevalent similarity between the participants who answered yes, with degree, sex and even blood type most notably, posing no correlation with the results. Though 60% may not seem all that impressive, it is when it is taken into consideration that blood groups have little to no scientific backing, and compared to recent studies that reveal only 30% of Americans believe in horoscopes. The reason many gave for their belief in blood type groups was due to it being based on something physical, that was contained within the body, and blood groups themselves were discovered through science. Therefore, providing the belief more credence, than for instance a more astral belief system such as horoscopes, which has no direct relation to our bodies, and has been around for millennia. Furthermore, whilst many stated they believe it, many of them indicated that they did, simply because there was no harm in doing so, choosing to see it as more of a trivial and harmless way of perceiving others than as something to base their lifestyle and decisions on. As a result, none of the participants stated that it would have any affect over important decisions in their life, such as lying about their blood group in a job interview or when taking it into considering when deciding who to date. Although two people did refuse to answer the question regarding job interviews. `Would you lie about your blood type if asked in a job interview` This is interesting, when considering that the survey was anonymous, so there should be no reason to refuse to answer this or any other question. However, whilst this could simply be a cultural difference in answering surveys. Whereby, they would rather decline to answer the question than write that they would lie during an interview, even on an anonymous survey, for risk of being found out. It could also be seen as an admission of guilt.

Similarly to the creation of blood type groups during Japan in the 1920s. In the west during the same time, Swiss psychologist created a personality test based on multiply choice questions, called the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator. The test designates an individual into 1 of 16 personality types. This test is still used in some businesses today to place employees into position within the company best suited to them, similar to how blood types are sometimes said to be used in Japanese society. However, just as blood typing did not become popular in the west. The Myer-Briggs test did not catch on in Japan. It is believed that this is due to the inherent differences in both cultures. Predominantly, the difference between emphasis placed on the individual and the group. The Myer-Briggs questionnaire is aimed to discover what the individual would do in various situations, however it is considered that Japanese people do not develop their self-interest or awareness to the same degree as those in the west, instead being taught that putting that aside is preferable, for the well-being of the group. "Increasing one's self-awareness, and hence one's sense of one's own individual identity, conflicts with the desire to maintain harmony."(Japan Interculture Consulting, 2017) These two distinct styles of behaviour, one which is individual focused and the other which is group focused, can be seen to be reflected in the styles of both personality tests. The Blood type personality groups, only containing four possible groups, allowing for harmony to be maintained easily and conventionally fit people into set groups on a factor such as blood which they have no control over. Whilst, the Myer-Briggs test contains sixteen personality groups, allowing people to be allotted a group but still maintain a feeling of individuality, using factors that were more personal to them.

The differences between the blood type groups and the Myer-Briggs` groups can also be seen as a difference between Nature V Nature. Asking the question, whether our genes or environment matter more. Which is an ongoing western psychological debate referring to whether our behavioural pattern and personality can be attributed more by interior factors such as our genes, or in this case our blood, or external factors such as upbringing. Various studies have been done to try and ascertain an answer to this

question. One notable way of studying this, is by finding mature identical twins who were adopted as babies and raised by two different families in different locations. For the purpose of discovering how their environment has shaped them despite having the same genes. Many of the studies suggest that while environmental factors do make a difference, the genes do make up a significant part of how we act. Which is why most of these cases resulted in the twins acting similar and having a lot in common upon meeting years later. "When visiting the nature versus nurture debate, there is overwhelming evidence that both genetic and environmental factors can influence traits and diseases"(Medical Daily, 2017) While possible, it is unlikely for identical twins have varying blood types. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the reason for the commonalities found in the twins years later, is due to both of them having a shared blood group. Unfortunately, as no blood types were recorded during these studies to verify this, there is no scientific evidence to support this.

In conclusion, just as it remains unclear as to whether the blood type belief is true or not. It also remains unclear why this belief resonates so strongly in Japan. Though there are two popular theories, the first being that because Japan is a country populated by less diversity than most, being able to separate one another into these blood type groups is an interesting question to pose upon first meeting someone. In addition, to an easy method of discovering a distinguishing feature between people in a culture, which has a less than diverse population, with 99% of Japan's population being Japanese. "in a relatively uniform and homogenous society, it provides a simple framework to divide people up into easily recognisable groups.(BBC News, 2017) The second theory is because of Japan's focus on group culture, it is more popular to belong to a group, with the standing of the group reflecting an individual's social standing. Therefore, being inherently part of a group is a very appealing idea. "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.(Tofugu.com, 2017) This serves as a stark contrast to people in the west who are usually more eager to stand out from the crowd, and prefer to not be treated or seen a certain way as a result of one factor or the group they associate with, instead still retaining individuality within the group dynamic. Nevertheless, despite the lack of a clear reason for its popularity, it appears that blood type grouping will continue to survive and flourish in Japanese culture, just as it has managed to for almost a century. Perhaps, in the future, even becoming part of western culture.

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### Survey:

Male or Female? 男 女

How old are you? 何歳ですか?

18-24                       25-35                        
 36-50                       50+                     

What is your major or profession?

せんこうは 何ですか/しよくぎょうは何ですか

Do you believe in Astrology? (Star Signs)

ほしうらないをしんじるか

If yes -はいとこたえた人なんで

Do you believe a person's blood type reflects their personality?

けつえきがたはそのひとのせいかくにえいきょうするとおもうか?

If yes -はいとこたえた人なんで

If yes -はいとこたえた人

Would you lie about your blood type in an interview?

しごとの めんせつで けつえきがたを きかれたとき うそを こたえますか?

Would you date somebody with an unpopular blood type?

けつえきがた かんけいなく いせいとデート しますか?

What Blood type are you?

あなたの けつえきがたは 何ですか



## 日本人の働き方

### —日本らしい働き方とほかの国との比較—

**Bethany Cummings**

University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)

#### 要旨 Abstract

Japan is well known throughout the world for its strict work culture, incorporating various systems or rules very different from other countries, thus being considered strange to those not a part of it. There are many articles and journals on the topic of Japan and work, focusing on numerous aspects such as gender gap, uniform, work time, holidays, overtime and so forth. This paper will first explore what aspects make up Japanese work culture. It will also create a comparison with other countries, to determine what specifically makes the way Japan stand out from other countries. By using blog accounts exploring the opinions of work of both foreigners residing and working in Japan, and Japanese people residing and working abroad, this paper will explore how culturally where you are brought up affects how you see work – and thus how work is deeply embedded in a country's culture.

#### 本文

##### 1. はじめに

本稿は、日本人の働き方・「働き文化」に焦点をあてるものである。日本は、厳しい働き方と、ほかの国と異なるシステムやルールを組み込んでいることで世界中で知られている。したがって、体験したことない人や慣れていない人によって異常な文化だと考えられている。日本の仕事や働き方に関してジェンダー、働く時間と休み時間、残業などの様々などところに注目している論文や記事が世界中別々の国でも多く書かれている。このレポートは、日本人の働き方の文化を説明して、ほかの国の働き方と比べながら、“日本的”働き方について考察する。はじめに日本の戦後から現在までの働き方について説明する。次に、「日本の働き方」の中の好きではないところと驚いたところについてブログを書いた日本に暮らしている外国人と、逆に「外国の働き方」を日本と比べてどのようなことに驚いたかについてブログを書いた海外で暮らしている日本人の意見を比べて、「仕事に対しての日本らしさ」を解析する。

##### 2. 日本的な働き方とは何なのか

日本の働き方について研究した結果、日本的な働き方といえば、特徴はいくつかある。それは、制度・社員旅行・労働時間や残業。まず、本稿は、日本の働き方に関する基本の制度を紹介する。そのあと、「はじめに」の部分で言及したブログを用いて、ほかの特徴を説明しながら、ほかの国と比較する。

最初に、日本人の働き方の基本コンセプトであるとみなされるのは、高度成長期を支えた「年功序列制度」と「終身雇用制度」という二つの制度。1. 終身雇用制度は、一つの会社に就職したら定年までその会社で働き続けるというシステムである。終身雇用制を、江戸時代以前に成立された終身雇用制に似たような制度と一緒に求めて考える人はいるが、現在みられる長期的雇用の原型が作られたのは大正時代の終わりだとされている。2. 年功序列のシステムでは、役職ともらえる給料は、同一の会社で働く年数と年齢などによって比例する。この二つのシステムをまとめて言い換えれば、日本の働き方は、卒業してからすぐ就職した会社で定年まで働き続けてれば、どんどん、会社での役職ともらえる給料が上がっていくということである<sup>1</sup>。この二つのシステムのおかげで就職して会社に入ったら家族は安心して生活が保障されるといわれていた。そのため、良い大学に入って、大きな会社に入ることが幸せにつながると信じられていた。

しかし、1990 年は入り、不景気の結果で、成果主義賃金体系を導入する会社が増え始めた。その年収の変化により、会社に入っても安心とは言えない状態に変わった。パートナーの年収がひくいために、子供を生んでも働くしかないと考えている女性は増えて、私たちから見たらきみょうなのだけれど、少子化の問題につながってきている。

日本人の働き方を実際に経験したことがある人の意見を知りたかったので、日本で働く外国人の意見と海外で日本人の意見を両方集めて、「日本人の働き方」の日本的な特徴は何なのかという仮説を立ててみた。様々なブログ記事や論文を読んで、同じような意見を持っている人が多いということが分かったが、このレポートで紹介するのは最も特徴的な二つだけである。まず、日本に暮らしている日本人と結婚したアメリカ人女性、グレイスさんのブログ記事よりの「日本人の働き方で、どうしても理解できない6つのこと」<sup>2</sup>を紹介する。次は、海外で暮らしている日本人の、海外の会社で働いて驚いたことについての意見をまとめている記事を紹介する。この二つの記事を用いて、ほかの国と異なる点が考察する。

この中のどうしても理解できないことの一つは、就業時間以外の余暇を会社の人と過ごす活動。例えば、社員飲み会とか社員旅行など。論文中で前述年功序列と終身雇用の制度が実施されたとき、一生同じ会社で働くので「会社の人とは家族同然だ」という意見で、このような活動はコミュニケーションをよくするために使われた。強制ではないし、必ず参加しなければいけないものではないが、みんな行くから、行かないと悪く思われるかもしれないという考えで、ほとんどの社員は行くことにするという。「同僚と別に友達になりたくない」とブログで書いたグレイスさんは、仕事での関係はあくまで職場だけの関係である方がいいという意見の理由に、「もし同じ会社で働いている人と友達になって、その友達とけんかしたら、悪くなるのは人間関係だけではなくて、同僚としての関係も悪くなるじゃない?」<sup>3</sup>のような理由を挙げる。

<sup>1</sup> “Workers become employed right after their graduation from school with a particular company. The employer will not lay off his workers if possible even in the course of depression. The employee in turn will not quit his job at this company but tend to continue working there until he reaches his retirement age” (Kazutoshi, 1984)

<sup>2</sup> Translated from “6 Things I don’t Understand About Working in Japan”

<sup>3</sup> “I don’t want to be BBFs with my coworkers because when hiccups happen (and they always happen), you can lose your professional and personal relationship in one fell swoop” (Mineta, 2015)

グレイスさんが言うことがわかるし、日本の会社の制度は戦後とは変わってきているので、社会は二つ目の家族のように考えることはただ古めかしいと考える人も増えてきているようである。

逆に二つ目のブログによると、海外で働いている日本人はその家族のような関係が全くないということに驚いたらしい。例えば、ロシアでは、新社員や下僚は上司と全く違い世界に生きているかのように、上司と仲良くなるチャンスなんてない。相互作用も少なく、カジュアルな態度は失礼だと思われる<sup>4</sup>。上下関係に厳しくて、上司が命令を下して下僚は命令の通りにする横の関係である。同じく、インドでは、同僚と全然話さない。自分のやらなければならないことに集中して働くべきである。

最後の日本的な特徴は労働時間や残業である。どの先進国に行っても残業はあるが、日本の残業は多いことで知られている。しかし、日本に比べると、海外のほうが残業は少ない。二つ目の記事による、スペインやドイツで残業はないらしい。労働時間もそんなに長くはない。多くの国では仕事がまだ終わっていないという理由で残業するが、日本では仕事が終わってやることなくても残業することが多い。それに、上司が帰宅する前に帰るのは悪く思われている。

もちろん、本気で一生懸命働き続けなければいけない残業もある。例えば、レストランや居酒屋の接客業である仕事。それに、極端の場合なのだが、日本では時々、とても厳しくて肉体的にも精神的にも負担のかかる残業や長い労働時間を一例のとして、過労死や過労自殺は大変問題になった。事例を挙げると、ワタミグループの居酒屋で働いていた新社員の26歳女性（森美菜）が2008年に過労自殺したという例がある。神奈川県横須賀市で働いた美菜さんは、開店前の午後3時までに職場に着いて、平日は午前3時、週末は午前5時まで、普段から12時間以上も働いた。しかも、ワタミはタクシーの使用費を払ってくれないため、始発電車を職場で待っていたという。十年前のケースなのだが、近年起こした両親が起こしたの裁判では、ワタミに対して約1億5300万円の損害賠償を求めていたという。同じような事件はいくつもある。

過労死とか少子化などの問題を解決するために、日本である働き方を改めたいと考えている人はいる。今年プレミアムフライデーという個人消費喚起キャンペーンが作られた。プレミアムフライデーというのは、毎月末金曜日に15時に仕事を終えることで普段よりもっと幸せや楽しさを感じられる“プレミアムな生活”を推奨するキャンペーン。早めに帰るのは、日本の働き方を改めて欲しい見直して欲しいという効果を期待されている。しかし、「働き方」というのは国の文化に深く組み込まれているので、働き方を変えたい人はいてもなかなか難しいことである。カルチュア・コンビニエンス・クラブの調査に答えた仕事をしている18~69歳の男女によると、プレミアムフライデーを「導入しない」企業は68.2%にも上った。だから、現在のところでは働き方の改革を実現するのは希望的観測といえるのではないだろうか。これから日本の働き方はどのように変わっていくのだろうか。少なくとも、現在二分されている、終身雇用制や成果主義的な働き方では日本の経済的な地位は脅かされてしまうので、これをこえるパラダイム的な働き方が求められている。

日本の会社で働いている外国人が「日本の働き方」について驚いたこと	海外の会社で働いている日本人が「外国の働き方」について驚いたこと
オープンオフィス	休みは多い 昼休みも日本より長い
残業 特に、やることないのに残業すること	残業はない、もしくは少ないということ
社員旅行と社員飲み会 会社は家族同然という考え	“The obvious ‘I’ in TEAM” “自分 “が大事 会社の人との関係は職業的だけ

Fig. 1 MADAMERIRI & HOWIBECAMETEXAN, JAPANTODAY による

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## Japan: A Story of Dating, Love Dolls, and Line

Adrian Ubiarco-Ortiz

California State University East Bay (U.S.A.)

### Summary:

本稿では、日本の高齢化社会、日本の高齢化社会、育児、日本の景気停滞、労働力の減少、男女平等問題などの社会的・経済的変化の影響を受けている現在の少子高齢化率 日本の独自の職業文化の中に存在するもの、そして本稿で述べた問題に対処するための日本政府の政治的行動。調査には、日本の厚生労働省が主に提供するニュース記事や統計データが集中しているほか、ジャパンタイムズやNPRなどの信頼できる情報源による調査も含まれます。

### *Idols, Love Dolls, Line, and Men*

When it comes to Japan's declining population, one thing that catches the world's attention is Japan's unique and interesting dating culture. Due to changes in the economy as well as cultural reasons, a good percentage of Japan's young male demographic (roughly 40%), according to a government survey, are not interested or want a romantic partner. In contrast, 60% of those surveyed voiced interest in a relationship but to some, it's mendokusai (面倒くさい), or in English, tiresome.

A recent episode of NHK's (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*, 日本放送協会) *Close-up Modern+*, analyzed why Japanese are so hesitant to get into relationships. Pop idol group, AKB48's handshake sessions, is an event that gives fans the opportunity to meet and shake hands with members of the idol group, experiencing a false sense of a love life. "[It's not because] of AKB, but long hours of work! I don't have time for love." Female idol controversy has gained new attention due to a new dating trend known as, *kosai zero nichikon*, roughly translating to "marrying without dating." Similar trends follow in Japan's love and dating industries such as Japanese dating video games, virtual reality simulators with virtual girlfriends, love dolls, online dating, and even plutonic relationships through texting apps like Line. In Tokyo Japan, Akihabara is well known to be an *otaku* (Japanese for geek) heaven, where Japan's subculture of anime, manga, video games, and maid cafes give *otakus* and everyday people a chance to tune out, and immerse themselves in a fantasy world, away from the everyday busy life of Tokyo Japan. This trend has suggested the creation of "herbivore" men, a term used to describe passive, shy, and lack of carnal desire for Japan's women. This social trend has steadily increased to a point that some Japanese couples, even if they are literally next to each other, cannot fundamentally communicate intimately with each other that they resort to texting each other through common texting apps such as Line. Although it is easy to scapegoat Japan's declining population to the cultural trends mentioned above, Japan's declining population may be due to more than certain dating trends.

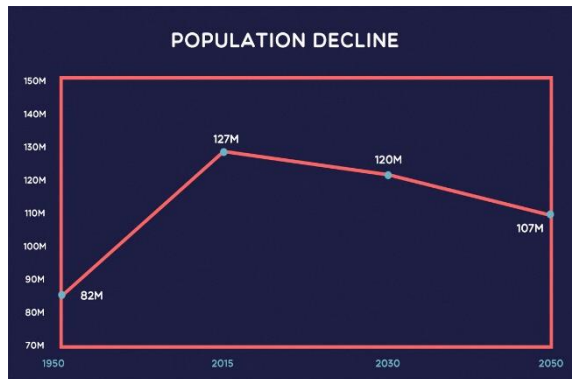
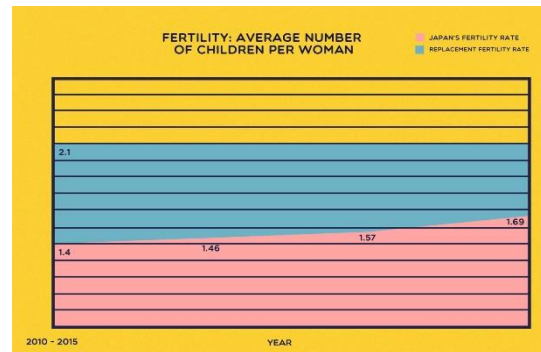
### *Economic Barriers When Starting a Family*

Masahiro Yamada, a sociologist at Chuo University in Tokyo, explains that many Japanese are financially pressured to the commitments associated to dating, that it's come to a point that marriage has shifted to more convenient alternatives. In addition, the Japanese government is aware of young Japanese males' lack of interest in dating. The Japanese government in response, has made efforts to promote marriage through spouse hunting events hosted by companies and private organizations known as "*konkatsu*." Furthermore, the Japanese government has been allowing tax exemptions to promote long

distance couples, those going fertility treatment, marriages, births, and child rearing, as well as the creating a new holiday system to give couples more time to spend together.

### ***Why Japan Will Lose 20 Million People by 2050***

To start, we look at the Fertility rates in Japan which, according to the Health, Labor, and Welfare Ministry of Japan, is currently 1.46 compared to 1.42 in 2015, a healthy increase but an unhealthy number in comparison to a healthy overall fertility rate replacement of 2.1, which is considered a growing population; any number below 2.1 is considered a shrinking population. Although fertility rates are up, the average number of children has fallen for the first time in nine years. The average age for women to give birth is currently 30.7, reflecting the societal pattern of women putting off marriage and childbirth. While we're on the topic of marriage, newly married couples are currently 635,096, down by 8,653, the lowest level after the postwar period. Average marriage for men is 31.1, while for women it is 29.4; unchanged from the previous year however, number of divorces has risen from



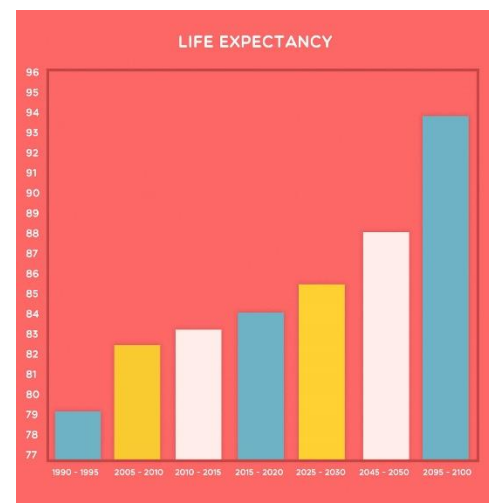
222,107, to 226,198, a 2 percent increase. Furthermore, the Japanese population is expected to continue falling due to a sharp increase in death rates across Japan. The number of babies born has slowly increased to 1,005,656 however, number of deaths are at a postwar high of 1,290,428, topping the number of newborns per year by roughly 285,000. In terms of fertility rates per prefectures, Okinawa has had the highest total fertility rate (1.94), followed by Shimane (1.80), Miyazaki (1.72), and the lowest birth rates per prefectures being Tokyo (1.17), Kyoto (1.26), and Hokkaido (1.29) respectively.

### ***Aging Society and It's Social Impact on the Economy***

In terms of Japan's aging society, long life expectancy is not a bad thing however, Japan's life expectancy is projected to get higher rather than lower. More people living longer lives means younger generations will need to produce more money and food to support the elderly but with 20 million less people in the Japanese work force, the younger generations will collapse under the weight of the aging society; contributing to the declining birthrate due to economic instability.

### ***Women, Politics, and Policies***

In order to encourage women to bear more children, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is seeking to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020, through an initiative that he calls, "Womenomics". He has left this task up to Katsunobu Kato, whose goal is to raise the total fertility rate up to 1.8; .34 points more than the current fertility rate of 1.46. Through *Womenomics*, the Japanese government intends to double the number of female managers in national government positions such as senior manager positions in the private sector by 10 percent by the end of 2015.



Although these implementations are well intended, they do not change the patriarchal corporate culture that exists in domestic companies. Prime minister Abe's cabinet has been criticized for his lack of priority in *Womenomics* and previous actions such as discarding a bill that would have made companies employ and promote a certain percentage quota of female workers, compromising opportunities to employ *Womenomics*. Even so, due to many cultural aspects inside of Japan, government intervention is necessary if any meaningful societal change is to occur. If *Womenomics* is successful, working environments will become more flexible with a projected GDP growth of 15%, possibly delaying the negative effects of the aging population's negative effects up to 20 years. If *Womenomics* is to succeed however, there are some major issues that must first be addressed.

One major problem impacting Japan's declining population, exists within corporate culture and the mistreatment of women during maternity leave known as マタハラ (*matahara*), or in English, maternity harassment. Once women become pregnant, employers mask their harassment by "encouraging" women to quit their jobs, often forcing them to rely heavily on their spouses or family members and in some extreme cases, leaving newly acquainted mothers economically stranded. This has prompted the health, welfare, and labor ministry to conduct its first surveys regarding マタハラ, addressing the experiences women endured when they became pregnant or who took time off to spend time with their children.

Results showed that 48.7% of women encountered victimization that ranged from dismissal from work, demotion, unfair treatment, and verbal abuse. Since 2001, the number of complaints has risen by 16% and has been on a steady rise. In 2010, 46% of Japanese women reporting keeping their jobs after giving birth, compared to 32% in 2001. 48% had been accused of "causing trouble" or were encouraged to quit their jobs after becoming pregnant, roughly 20% were dismissed, and 17.1% saw their bonuses reduced. When comparing jobs that require equal work and skills, on average, salaries of Japanese men and women differ significantly with women making just over 70% for the same work in comparison to men. Steps have since been made to end マタハラ, such as the supreme court ruling enacting a ban on work demotion due to maternity leave. In comparison to other countries, Japan performs poorly when it comes to gender equality, ranking 104<sup>th</sup> out of 142 countries, according to the World Economic Forum's global gender gap index. Even if companies are willing to support newly acquainted mothers through their maternity leave, mothers face another major obstacle; where will their children be while their off-pursuing careers or at work?

In Japan, childcare is outsourced to non-family members, making it difficult for women to have a career and children simultaneously. Existing daycare centers have long waitlists, currently 23,000 as of 2015, leaving many young women in Japan to make a choice; pursue a career, or settle down to have children. Competition for daycare slots is so tough that it has its own name, 保活 (*hokatsu*), meaning day care/kindergarten hunting. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recognizes that resolving the child care crisis now, is essential to Japan's economy by retaining young, educated women in the Japanese labor workforce. Measures have been taken to increase child day care centers and reduce child care waiting lists to zero by implementing 400,000 new day care slots by 2018, including government subsidies based on family income and number of children. This in turn, increases Japan's female labor market potential, which is currently 64% of Japan's females in comparison to 84% of Japanese men, one of the lowest among the 34 leading economies however, if this potential labor market is used, women in Japan will become essential for the revival of Japan's economy.

### **Conclusion**

If prime minister Shinzo Abe is to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020, campaign strategies addressing equal, and fairer treatment of women in the work environment needs to be addressed through fair and equal opportunities, secure maternity leave, and post-maternity support. Laws protecting women from maternity harassment ( マタハラ ) need to be

implemented to encourage women to start families to combat Japan's declining birth rate and population decrease. In addition, investments in daycares or other innovative solutions to address the issue of daycare/kindergarten hunting (保活) in the form of government or work intervention is necessary for mothers to keep careers, even after having children. By actively addressing these issues, Japan's labor force will not only significantly grow, it may potentially reignite another economic boom; assuring Japan's place as a global leader in innovation, and technology.

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## Japan: War on Dance

**Simona Pakutinskaite**

University of Sheffield (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** 日本では、1948年から2014年まで、午前0時から午前6時の間踊ることができませんでした。それは、風俗営業等の規制及び業務の適正化等に関する法律というのがあったからです。40年代に日本では売春に問題があったので、売春防止のため、政府は、風俗営業等の規制及び業務の適正化等に関する法律が作成しました。

One of the most surprising facts about Japan is its ban on dancing past midnight that was in effect until around three years ago. This ban was in place for 67 years, only being lifted in 2014. While there might have initially been a plausible reason to introduce this law, opinions on whether the ban should have lasted this long vary. Some even argue that the ban being introduced not only didn't solve the problem, it made the problem worse and therefore did not fulfil its aim.

In 1948 Business Affecting Public Morals Regulation Law (Fūzoku Eigyō Torishimari Hō), in Japan more commonly known as Fueiho law, was introduced. This new law wasn't targeting and regulating dancehalls only, but also pachinkos, businesses that sell alcohol and food, bars, arcades and soap lands. The aim of the part of the law stating that no dancing was allowed past midnight was aiming to stop and prevent prostitution that was said to be flourishing at the dancehalls. Those kinds of places were perfect for young women to promote themselves and find the potential customers, who often happened to be American GIs. The government saw this kind of behaviour as a threat to the public health and so it was decided by the government to pass a law that would prevent such threats; the Fueiho Law. After the introduction of this law, unlicensed dancehalls were forbidden from allowing their customers to dance. The dancehalls that did want to allow dancing had to receive a special license that was only given if the dancehalls were bigger than 66m<sup>2</sup> and if dancing was stopped after midnight, or in some cases 1am.

However, while the law against dancing after midnight was officially passed in 1948, there are earlier cases of dancing being regulated in some way. In Taisho period (1912-1926), there was a son of nobility who had eloped with a girl of common class, who he had met at the dancehall. His parents were horrified by this behaviour and requested a friend of theirs, who happened to be a police commissioner, to investigate this case. Even prior to this incident a lot of parents were worried that their children would meet and elope with someone they met at a dancehall instead of going through with an arranged marriage as was expected at the time. With this scandal, they became even more worried and because of the investigation being carried out and as a result of parents putting more pressure on the government and the dancehalls, the dancehalls became more strictly regulated.

Another influence for stricter dancehall regulations at the time was the conservative side of the Japanese population. They saw dancehalls as an evil place where people became morally corrupt. They thought that the men and women dancing in close proximity was inappropriate and that it would lead to lust and eventually pre-marital sex. With stricter regulations regarding dancehalls, students were not allowed to enter. Furthermore, many employers, especially department stores, also forbid their employees from visiting dancehalls. As it was difficult for women to go to dancehalls male customers were left with little or none dance partners. Not wanting to lose their customers dancehalls began hiring female dancers. How this worked was that male customers would buy a "ticket" to dance with the female dancer for one song. Some dancers would flirt with the male customers to sell more tickets, and if the customer became a

regular they would occasionally go out for a meal too. Eventually they became seen as half-prostitutes and that led to 1948 Business Affecting Public Morals Regulation Law being introduced.

While the Business Affecting Public Morals Regulation Law was originally passed to prevent prostitution, it was amended several times to suit the public needs. For example, in 1959 the law was amended to add an aim “to prevent delinquent influence on the youth”. This was a response to the newly developing delinquent culture that was especially prevalent in the second half of the 50s. As these delinquents would often hang out at the dancehalls, the law was amended to prevent them from causing trouble. In the 80s and the 90s the nightclub culture started growing rapidly so Fueiho law was amended yet again so that the nightclubs fall under its scope. However, while there were laws against dancing after midnight in nightclubs, police more often than not turned a blind eye to it, unless something major occurred. With no interference from the police, nightclubs were free to run their business freely, with most of them starting to operate in the grey zone. These grey zones gave way for mega clubs like Gold and Mission to open their doors. Then at the start of the new millennium, super clubs Womb and AgeHa appeared in Tokyo. However even with the new-found popularity of the clubbing culture, a large part of the general public still saw nightclubs as something scary and dangerous, partially due how they were portrayed in the media.

In 2004, Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) started a “purification mission” to clean up Kabukicho, an area in Shinjuku famous for its nightlife and its many sex-related businesses. While night clubs did not sell anything sex-related, at least directly, they too became targets of the mission. However, while the law was amended a number of times, and there were small-scale crackdowns on the night clubs, like those that were part of the purification mission, the Fueiho law was not strictly enforced until 2010s, when the crackdowns became large-scale. The big scale crackdowns originated in Osaka in 2010 and then made its way to Tokyo and the rest of Japan. Between 2010 and 2013 many clubs were forced to close their doors, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

The reason for the raids beginning in Osaka is the death of a student. In one of the clubs at Amerika Mura, an area in Osaka known for its considerable number of nightclubs, a fight broke out that led to a death of 22-year-old student. This incident led to the questionings of whether the nightclubs were safe, which eventually resulted in more police raids being carried out. During these raids a lot of clubs were found not following the regulations set out by the Fueiho law, and six clubs in Amerika Mura alone were forced into closure in 2011 due to licensing violations.

Another reason for the increase in the raids is said to be police wanting to put more pressure on the Yakuza by disrupting their cash inflow. Before the Organized Crime Exclusionary Ordinances was passed in 2011, clubs would often pay Yakuza to act as their security and to keep their customers in line. At the time the clubs often operated in the grey area, that is they often stayed open until the early hours and allowed their customers to dance. If a fight occurred after the official open hours, club owners were very hesitant to call the police in fear of getting into trouble with the law. Therefore, they hired the Yakuza to solve those problems for them. However, after the Organized Crime Exclusionary Ordinances was passed, club owners could no longer have business with the Yakuza. This is when semi-organized groups like Kanto Rengo came into the picture. Kanto Rengo was a biker gang created in 1970s and disbanded in 2003, but the gang members still engage in criminal activities. As they had officially disbanded, they weren't an organized crime group therefore, club owners could legally have business with them.

However, the trouble was, unlike the Yakuza, Kanto Rengo saw the clubs as a place for their criminal activities. They would often sell drugs and prostitutes, therefore making the clubs a more dangerous place than it was before. With criminal activities committed in the clubs increasing, naturally

the raids increased too as it was easier to catch the criminals red-handed, that is in the middle of selling drugs, than it was to issue and arrest warrant.

The incident that added more fuel to the fire was the Club Flower incident. In 2012 Taichi Ishimoto, the former leader of Kanto Rengo, and his 9 accomplices who also happened to be former members of Kanto Rengo, attacked a 31-year old Ryouzuke Fujimoto at the VIP area of Club Flower. Witnessed reported the gang came in through the back entrance holding what appeared to be metal pipes. The whole incident was reported to have only lasted a couple of minutes before the gang disappeared again. Fujimoto was quickly transported to the hospital but died 2 hours later from a blunt force trauma. Club Flower incident was not the only violent incident involving the members of Kanto Rengo. In 2011 one of the Kanto Rengo members got into the fight with a famous kabuki actor Ichikawa Eizo. The actor was left with a chipped tooth and a broken cheekbone. These two cases have subsequently lead to increased police raids making it harder for nightclubs to operate and still make profit.

Instead of operating in the grey area, clubs no longer had a choice but to either operate in the white area, that is follow the regulations and stop the dancing at midnight, or fear a risk of being closed down at possible arrested. This lead to club owners putting up “no dancing” signs and if somebody did start dancing they soon found themselves facing one of the staff strictly asking them to stop dancing. Some clubs also started promoting themselves as “entertainment space” instead of “dancing club”, to avoid unwanted attention from the police. Often if clubs did allow their customers to dance past midnight, the DJs would be suddenly told to turn the music off, or switch it to calm jazz music, if a policeman was spotted outside the club.

Fueiho law soon became seen as archaic and old fashioned by those into the clubbing culture. Moreover, Tokyo became seen as “the city that goes to bed early” by the foreigners. Furthermore, it wasn't the clubs itself that were causing the violence, or crime in general. Often it was something completely out of the club' control. For example, the death of a student at one of the Amerika Mura's clubs could just as well have happened at some other establishment that sells alcohol. Therefore, it can be said that forcing clubs to stop dancing early is treating the symptoms of the problem and not the actual cause. It's like banning the cars because some people might choose to drive under the influence. The clubs themselves are not the cause of the crime, it's biker gangs like Kanto Rengo. In addition, if clubs could operate legally after the midnight, they wouldn't have had to rely on crime groups for security as they wouldn't have hesitated to call the police if something happened. In other words, if clubs weren't forced to work in the grey area, they would have been more secure and had more control over what happens in their club and therefore safer for the customers. While the initial aim of Fueiho law was safety, it could be argued that it lead to more crime instead.

In 2013, inspired by the arrest an owner of the club called “Noon”, an organization called “Let's Dance” submitted a petition with 155, 879 signatures to the government in an effort to revise, or update the Fueiho law. This organization consists of mainly high profile musicians and DJs and there is also a sub-group to the organization consisting of lawyers only, called Dance Lawyers. Initially the club owners didn't want to put themselves in the spotlight by joining this organization, as by doing this they would make themselves more visible to the government and to the police and put themselves at risk of facing even more raids. While the club owners were hesitating to step up, it was up to the DJs, who worked with the clubs a lot, to bring the issue of this law to the light.

Let's Dance organization not only fought to change the law on dancing, they also worked to raise the awareness of the issue and in turn change public's perception of the nightclub culture. With the Fueiho law in effect, the nightclubs themselves did not have a good image and were often associated with the crime. This kind of image made it harder to convince the government to revise the law, and as that

image did not represent what the club culture actually is, it had to be changed. To do this high-profile DJs and musicians, like hip-hop artist and DJ Zebra and musician Ryuichi Sakamoto, along with the representatives from the ballroom dancing clubs and tango clubs used. In addition, Asahi Shinbun has also run a few articles about how clubs have developed their own thriving culture. Raising the awareness on what the clubs truly are and showing they are not hotbeds for crime helps to change the public's perception of the clubs. However, it wasn't just the public's perception of the clubs that had to be changed but also the government's. Generally, the politicians did not go to clubs in their youth, due to nightclubs having a bad image and because of the restrictions that were placed upon the clubs. As they haven't experienced the nightclub culture, they didn't fully understand it and in turn didn't understand why the laws regarding clubbing had to be changed. Therefore, in order to bring that change, Let's Dance organization had to bring the awareness to what the dancing culture actually and show people that nightclubs are not a dangerous place.

In the end the petition was successful as in 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 the government announced their plans to potentially revise the Fueiho law on dancing and few months later, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, Abe Shinzo's government finally revised the law. The new law came fully in effect on the summer of 2015. Instead of regulating the hours the new law started regulating the lighting levels. Now all the licensed nightclubs are required to have a lighting of at least 10 lux, for decency's sake. However, it wasn't just because of Let's Dance organizations activism that the law was changed. The upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympics have also had an influence on the government's decision to revise the law. There being restrictions on dancing would not leave a good impression on foreign tourists, therefore in order to leave the best impression and also to maximise the profits, the law regarding the nightclubs and dancing had to be loosened up.

Even though the law has changed, there is a big part of the population who continues seeing nightclub dancing in a bad light. However, considering the history of the night club culture, and the fact that dancing after midnight became legal only 3 years ago, such results are not unexpected. Moreover, with the laws regarding dancing and nightclubs being loosened up, the nightclub culture will continue to develop, as will the perceptions that people have of this culture.

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## Konkatsu (Marriage Hunting) : The Image Among Japanese Young People

Supattra Sriploy

Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)

**Summary:** This study is designed to describe the image of Konkatsu (Marriage Hunting) among Japanese young generations. Konkatsu is the activities for people who looking for their marriage partner in Japan. It includes match-making parties, match-making sightseeing trips, match-making websites – an abundance of them. Some of these activities are organized by private companies, others by local governments. Spreading broadly into Japanese society, the term, Konkatsu, has been used in many ways these ten years, whether it be product concepts or movie plots. There are also studies indicated that this activity is one of the countermeasures against the falling birth rate which is the problem Japan is facing now. But what about Japanese people's thought on Konkatsu? Especially, the opinion of Japanese young generation, who grew up in this changing society. Do they think Konkatsu is a good idea and necessary? To explain those question, I'll study on how actually Konkatsu's been organized as well as the reason why it gained lots of popularity around Japan. Also, I'll conduct a questionnaire study among Japanese male and female young generations (ages 18-25) aiming to summarize the image of Konkatsu in their point of views.

現在日本は深刻な少子高齢化・人口減少の問題に直面している。その背景の一つは未婚率の上昇、または出産率の低下だと言われている。厚生労働省の国立社会保障・人口問題研究所が公表した『人口統計資料集 2017年版』によれば、50歳まで一度も結婚をしたことない人の割合を示す「生涯未婚率」は、2015年に男性のうち23.37%、女性のうち14.06%であるという。10年の前回調査より男女とも3ポイント以上増加し過去最高を更新しており、「結婚離れ」が進行しているということである。こうした状況で、現代日本は晩婚化・未婚化時代に突入している。

人口減少社会問題への取り組みとして、政府と自治体の子育て支援をはじめ、様々な結婚支援にも踏み込んでいる。結婚活動（略して「婚活」）も少子化社会対策になる可能性があると言われている。婚活は、自分を磨くといった積極的活動であり、結婚を目指す男女の出会いを創出すると言われ、言葉自体も商品のコンセプトに使われたり、ドラマのテーマに取り上げられたりと、広く日本社会に浸透している。だが、婚活での出会いが自然な出会いではないという声もあり、婚活に対し良くないイメージを持っている人もいる。更に、現代の社会における交通やIT技術の発達により、男女の出会いの機会も増加させてきた。そのため、今後の婚活業界はどのように推移していくのか、減少傾向にあるのかと社会から注目されている。

本研究は変化しつつある現代日本社会で育ってくる若年者が実際に婚活に対しどのようなイメージを抱えているかを把握することを目指し、日本の婚活の将来推移傾向について考察する。本研究の方法は婚活に関係する文献調査を行い、婚活現象の背景、種類と方法を明らかにする。また、18～25歳の日本人男女を対象に「日本の結婚活動に関する意見」というアンケート調査を実施する。こうした2通りの調査により、日本人男女の若年者の婚活に対するイメージと婚活業界の見通しに関連する情報を取りまとめる。

### 婚活の定義と背景

婚活という言葉が最初に登場したのは、2017年11月の週刊誌『アエラ』の記事のことである。結婚活動（略して婚活）とは、結婚相手を見つけるために様々な活動することという意味である。山田（2010）は、就職活動を表す「就職」という言葉になぞらえ、結

婚も就職の同じように積極的な活動が必要になってきたと指摘した。小学館の『日本大百科全書(ニッポニカ)』によれば、婚活にあたる行動としては、従来のお見合いや知人からの紹介に加え、結婚相談所や情報サービスの利用、合コン（合同コンパ）やお見合いパーティへの参加などがあげられ、更に、晩婚化や少子化問題の対策として、自治体が婚活イベントを実施している地域もあるという。2008年3月に刊行された山田昌弘・白河桃子共著の『「婚活」時代』（ディスカヴァー・トゥエンティワン）で、婚活という用語が広く知らせ、様々なところで使用されるようになった。

1980年以後、結婚したくてもできない独身者の数が増加してきていると言われている。1997年の金融危機を機に、雇用が不安定である非正規雇用が増加し、男性の収入も低くなった。それに伴い、将来生活の見通しが立たない若者も増加してき、終身雇用を望む新入社員や主婦になることを望む未婚女性も多くなった。かつ、結婚ができないと社会から落ちこぼれてしまうのではないかという意識が広がっており、経済的に独身生活を楽しむ余裕がなくなり、結婚に焦りだす未婚者が増加した。このような背景で婚活が流行になったと考えられている。

### 婚活の種類と方法

婚活には、主に以下の3つの種類があり、それぞれによって違うやり方がある。

1つ目は、結婚相談所ということである。利用希望者が、まず入会希望者が学歴、職業、年収、身長など自分の条件を登録し、次に希望する相手の条件を登録する。入会后、条件に合う相手のプロフィールが1か月に何通か送付してもらい、会ってみるかどうかを決定する。その後、気に入った相手と連絡先を交換し、日時を決定することになる。相談所によるお見合いのセッティングサービスもある。費用は20万円から60万円程度であるという。

2つ目は、お見合いパーティという男女約15から20人ずつが参加するパーティである。参加費は男性が4500円から6000円程度、女性は無料もしくは、払う場合でも1000円程度であるという。会場においては、まず参加者が自己紹介カードを記入し、次にトークタイムになる。男女それぞれが円になって向き合い、順番に会話していき、時間は1人につき5分から10分程度である。その後、参加者は中間インプレッションというカードにトークタイムでの印象を参考にして気になった相手を記入する。次に、スタッフがその結果を集計し、フリータイムになる。フリータイムには参加者が気になった相手のところまで話しに行ける。最後に、参加者が投票用紙に最終希望を記入し、相思相愛であればカップル成立になる。こうしたパーティは、大体ほぼ2時間で終わると言われている。

3つ目は、合コンということである。「合同コンパ」の略であり、男女が出会いを求め参加する飲み会ということである。合コンは通常、男女に幹事があり、男女メンバーを誘い、夕食会または飲み会という形で行われる。また、春に「お花見」、夏に「バーベキュー」「ビアガーデンに行く」など季節によるイベントを開催されることもあるという。社会人の場合は「グルメ会」「ワインを楽しむ会」のような名前で開催されるものもある。更に、街を盛り上げる大規模な合コンイベントである「街コン」ということもある。参加者は少ない場合でも100名以上、規模の大きいものでは3000名弱にもなる言われている。街コンにおいては、同性2名以上1組で申込み、会場で受付、リストバンドなどの参加証を受け取り、開催地区の決定された複数の飲食店を廻る。古田（2013）が街コンについて、「『出会いの場創出』『飲食店等の販促』『地域活性化』が融合した大型合コンイベントとして注目を浴びており、今後も更なる拡大が予想される」と主張した。

### 若年者の意見

日本人若年者が婚活に対し実際にどのような意見・感想を持っているかを把握するため、2017年6月に18歳～25歳の日本人男女若年者35人を対象に「日本の結婚活動に関する意見」という調査を実施した。その結果は以下の通りとなっている。

図1：婚活参加意向

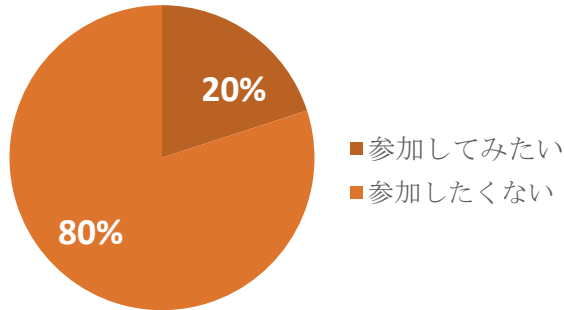
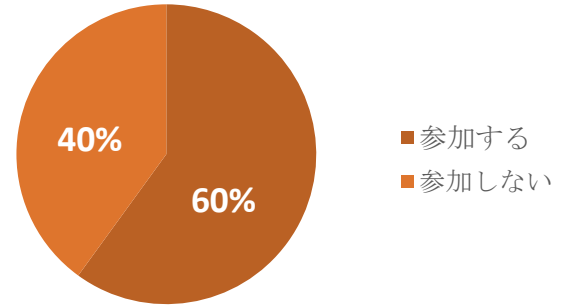
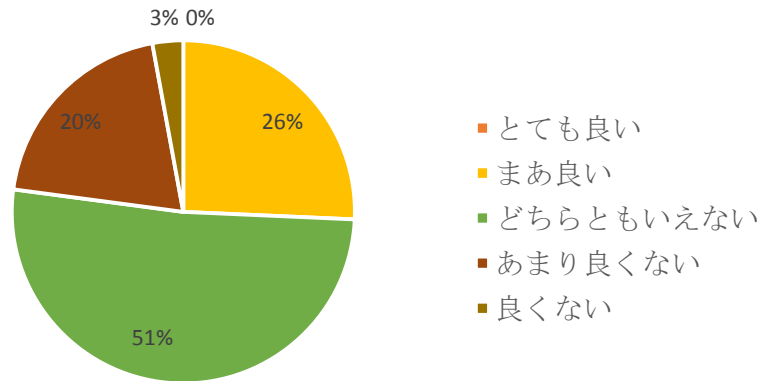


図2：婚活参加意向  
(婚活相手が見つけれない場合)



まず、「婚活に参加してみたいと思いますか」（図1）という質問に「参加したくない」と回答した人は80%で最も多いが、「参加してみたい」と回答した人は20%にあたり、大きな違いがある。一方、少しの参加意向率に対し、「もし将来結婚相手が見つけれなかったら婚活に参加しますか」（図2）という質問に60%の人が「参加する」と回答している。この結果によって、日本人の若年者が婚活に参加する意向があまりないが、多くの人が将来結婚したいと希望しているということがわかる。

図3：婚活という言葉の印象



次に、婚活という言葉の印象に関しては、「どちらともいえない」と回答した人の割合が最も高く、5割に達している。「まあ良い」と回答している人が25.7%を占めている。一方、「あまりよくない」という人も2割になっている。婚活の印象についての意見が2つに割れており、良いか良くないかどうか判定されないのである。

更に、婚活に潜んでいる危険性に関しては、危険が「ある」回答した人が最も多く、約75%を占めている。最後に、「婚活が日本における未婚化・少子化の問題に役に立つと思いますか」という質問に対しては、85%以上の人が「まあ役に立つ」と回答している。また、婚活の必要性に関しては、「まあ必要」と回答している人は7割ある。

このように、日本人の若年者が婚活に対し、危険性のある活動であり、良いイメージを持っているとは言えないが、未婚者・少子化の問題解決として意識していることがわかる。

#### おわりに

現代日本における未婚化・少子化が進行するなかで、将来の労働力の減少、税収の減少、年金、社会保険の維持が難になるのような不安が募っていると言われている。その人口減少問題を食い止めるため、結婚を希望する人のへの婚活イベントの実施等様々な結婚支援が行われている。婚活は、ミクロレベルにおいては、男女の出会い機会の創出、自分磨きのための活動であり、マクロレベルにおいては、少子化と地域の過疎化問題の解決につながりがあると指摘されている。若年者の意見からみると、未婚化・少子化の問題対策としてある程度必要な活動だと意識している若年者が多いということがわかる。だが、その婚活の必要性に対し、危険性も潜んでいると思う若年者の割合も少なくない。例えば、結婚目的ではない人が混じってきて詐欺を犯したケースもあるということである。更に、婚活での出会いは、「自然な出会いではない」ため、必要ではないと参加したくないと思う若年者も多くいると調査からわかる。

男女のが簡単に出会えるようになった今のスマホや SNS の世代には、以上の状況であれば、今後婚活業界が減少していく可能性がと考えられている。将来の結婚支援のために、関係者が今後婚活にある危険性を取除き、あるいは新たな結婚成立への活動を創造すべきである。

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## 日本の少年漫画における女性キャラクターの役割とイメージ

### The Role and Appearance of Female Characters in Shounen Manga

呉羽柔

國立台灣大學 National Taiwan University (Taiwan)

**Summary:** This research is about the role and appearance of female characters in shounen manga (少年漫画) in Japan. Shounen manga are comic books aimed at elementary to high school aged boys. However, in recent years, the market for shounen manga has widened. Not only boys, but also women, adults and people out of Japan have begun increasingly reading shounen manga. That being said, the main characters in shounen manga are still mostly males. Female characters tend to be dressed sexily while having an innocent, good-looking face. They are usually characters who have the power to heal their team mates rather than defeating enemies. I think that this is important to note because every work of art is a reflection of a given society's values. The goal of this research is to discuss about the image of female characters in shounen manga and how that image connects to Japanese society.

## 本文

### 序論

少年漫画とは、日本の青少年の男性を対象読者と想定して書き上げた漫画である。具体的には、少年漫画雑誌に連載される作品が少年漫画とされる。日本の漫画産業において不可欠なジャンルである。恋愛や青春を中心とする少女漫画と違い、少年漫画は男性読者の好みに合わせるため、スポーツ、あるいは激しい戦いや冒険を主題とする作品が数多くある。

時代の流れにつれ、女性読者の比率も高まったが、少年漫画の主要なキャラクターは今でも男性が多い。それだけではなく、女性キャラクターは主に色気や応援役を担当し、衣装と言動も男性キャラクターと相違がある。

漫画は日本社会と繋がっていると思われる。漫画家は社会の価値観を受け、作品を作り出す。一方、作品も読者に影響を与え、社会の気風を変える可能性がある。少年漫画における女性像と社会の関係を研究するため、本稿では、集英社の「週刊少年ジャンプ」という少年漫画雑誌に掲載されたバトル系漫画の名作品を研究対象として、日本の少年漫画における女性メイン・キャラクターのイメージと役割を検討したい。

### 少年漫画の男女比率

少年漫画では、女性キャラクターの数は男性キャラクターより遥かに少ない。ウンサーシュッツ (2013) の研究によれば、彼女の研究対象とした五作品の少年漫画シリーズでは、女性キャラクターの総数は全体の 12.77% である。更には、少年漫画で登場した女性は、登場回数も発言数も男性より少ない。

主要人物から見ても、このような男女差は猶も大きい。多数のバトル系少年漫画では、主要人物はチームになり、共に敵と戦うという流れである。このような「主人公チーム」に、女性が男性より人数多い場合はほとんどない。「週刊少年ジャンプ」の近年の人気作品「ONE PIECE」

(尾田栄一郎)、「NARUTO ナルト」(岸本斉史)、「HUNTERxHUNTER」(富樫義博)、「BLEACH」(久保帯人)、「家庭教師ヒットマン REBORN」(天野明)、「D. GRAY MAN」(星野桂)、「僕のヒーローアカデミア」(堀越耕平)を対象に分析すると、「主人公チーム」にいる女性キャラクターは<表 1>の通りである。

<表 1・少年漫画に「主人公チーム」の女性比率>

作品	主人公チーム人数	主人公チームの女性キャラクター数	主人公チームの女性比率
ONE PIECE	9	2	22%
HUNTERxHUNTER	4	0	0%
NARUTO ナルト	3	1	33%
BLEACH	7	2	28%
家庭教師ヒットマン REBORN	11	3	27%
D. GRAY MAN	7	2	28%
僕のヒーローアカデミア	20	5	25%

これらの作品において「主人公チーム」の平均女性比率は約 23%である。すなわち、女性の割合は4分の1以下である。その中で、女性が主役を担当する作品は一作もない。

### 女性キャラクターの外観

各作者の作風が異なるが、外見から見ると、少年漫画の女性キャラクターのイメージは大抵固定的なパターンにまとめられる。雲野(2005)によると「少年漫画に出ている少女は、かわいい子供っぽい表情で、胸が大きく腰は細く成熟した大人の肉体を持っている」という。少年漫画の女性衣装もそのような形象を表すため、太ももが見えるミニ・スカートやショートパンツに胸や腰を強調する上着が多い。「ONE PIECE」のナミとニコ・ロビンや「家庭教師ヒットマン REBORN」のクローム・髑髏は代表的なキャラクターである。色付きの場合、女性の純潔さとかわいさを表現するため、ピンク系の衣装を着せることが多い。「NARUTO ナルト」の春野桜、「BLEACH」の井上織姫、「僕のヒーローアカデミア」の麗日お茶子と芦戸三奈がその通りである。男性読者の好みに合わせて、男性目線からのお色気シーンの場面も少なくない。例えば「僕のヒーローアカデミア」の第4巻では、女性全員がチアリーダーの衣装に着替え、男性を応援するシーンがある。この段落はストーリーの流れと無関係で、所謂「サービスシーン」である。

研究対象作品には、「BLEACH」の朽木ルキアはより中性的なキャラクターである。短い黒髪に真っ黒な着物を着ている。前向きで積極的な性格に加え、朽木ルキアは他の女性キャラクターと区別され、JUMP の作品において特別な存在になっている。

### 女性キャラクターの役割

役割から見ると、少年漫画での女性キャラクターは主に補佐役や守られるキャラクターであり、作戦の主力になる場合が少数である。例えば、「BLEACH」の井上織姫と「NARUTO ナルト」の春野桜は主にチームのケア役を担当し、「家庭教師 HITMAN REBORN」の三浦春と笹川京子は応援役である。このような役割は、日本社会における伝統的な主婦の立場と近いと思われる。「男は賃金労働、女は家で家事やサポートをする」というステレオタイプの名残であると言っても過言ではない。一方、「ONE PIECE」、「D. GRAY MAN」と「僕のヒーローアカデミア」は女性が参戦する画面が多いほうであるが、男性キャラクターに比べると猶も少ない。破壊力の強い特殊能力や攻撃力を持つ男性と比べ、女性は補助的な技能を使うのが多い。前に言及した

少年漫画で比較的に中性的なイメージであった「BLEACH」の朽木ルキアでさえ、ストーリー前半で大半の能力を失い、「尸魂界篇」では主人公の救い出す目標に設定されている。マ・ワンイン(2012)が述べるように、「少年マンガのヒーローを『花瓶の中の花』だと喩えれば、ヒロインはその花のきれいさをあらわすための『花瓶』だ。そんなの彼女たちは、『弱い』、『守られる』とのイメージを漫画に定型化されてしまっている」。

マンガの構成から考えると、「主人公チーム」の各キャラクターに特徴を持たせ、差異化する必要がある。そこで、「女性」という設定は常に「キャラクターの特徴」として付加される。要するに、スーパー戦隊のヒーローのように、チーム内には必ず熱血主人公、イケメン、三枚目と一人の「女性」がいる。「女性」との設定は「男性」とは違い、異常や特殊な属性として加えられている。また、その「女性」は単純に生物的な性別を指すわけではなく、社会的なジェンダーでもある。彼女たちは性別のためそのチームで特別な役割を担当し、その役割により、女性キャラクターは男性と区別でき、「主人公チーム」の中で特殊な立場を占める。

### 女性キャラクターの言動と性格

少年漫画では、男性と女性が使う言葉は異なる。元々、日本語では男性と女性の言葉遣いが違うという特色がある。ウンサーシュッツ(2013)の述べるように、このような性別による言葉遣いの違いは強制ではないが、言葉から発言者の立場や相手との関係を判断するのが可能である。例えば、「-ぞ」、「-ぜ」に対し、「-の」、「-わ」等の使い方は女性の使う文末表現と見られる。一人称代名詞も「私」、「オレ」、「僕」、「わたくし」など使い分けがある。現代においては、日本語の性別の境界線が次第になくなっていくといわれるが、少年漫画で性別により言葉の表現の選択は依然として目立つ。ウンサーシュッツ氏の研究で指摘されているように、文末表現の用法に限って言えば、少女マンガの登場人物の方がより現実を反映した言葉遣いであるのに対し、少年マンガではとくに女性の登場人物にステレオタイプの女性語の使用が多い。

個性面からいえば、理想や目標を追う主人公に対し、女性キャラクターは感性的で、恋愛依存の人物であることが多い。「BLEACH」と「NARUTO ナルト」の両方にも主人公に長年の片思いをして、最後に結婚した女性についての描写がある。主人公に恋愛感情を持つ女性キャラクターは「家庭教師 HITMAN REBORN」(三浦春)と「僕のヒーローアカデミア」(麗日お茶子)にも見られる。

### 結論

以上、バトル系少年漫画における女性キャラクターの比率、外見と役割を検討した。そこで問題視すべき点は、彼女たちが現実の女性というより、男性目線から見た女性像であるということである。上記のように、少年漫画の女性はほぼ官能的な服装あるいは短いスカートを身に着け、性格が明るくて単純で、力が弱くていつも他人に助けられ、微笑みして主人公のそばで見守る。運動系漫画で登場した女性人物もやさしくて親切で、隊員にマドンナとして見なされるマネージャーであることが多い。要するに、少年漫画で登場した女性は、大抵、男性あるいは家父長制社会における女性に対する幻想や期待の実体化に過ぎないと思われる。

このような女性像は一部の日本社会の女性に対する概念を表したものであろうか？このような作品は、幼い読者にどのような影響に与えるか？作品によるジェンダー・ステレオタイプの

形成は、特に団体主義の強い日本社会において、女の子の性格の多元化を制限する恐れがあると思われる。漫画をはじめ、小説、アニメあるいはゲームのキャラクターをデザインする際に性別の配置または性格に注意すべきではないか。日本社会における男女の格差は長年問題視されているが、それを改善するために、今後デモや法律改正だけではなく、文化面の努力も必要であると思われる。これからの少年漫画がより多元的で、斬新な方向へ向かって進展することを期待する。

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## The VOCALOID Phenomenon

Anna Mackinnon

University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)

### Summary:

VOCALOID (ボーカロイド) とは YAMAHA (ヤマハ) という会社が 2004 年 2 月に開発した音声合成技術とその応用製品の総称である。まさに果てなく、VOCALOID のアプリケーションの人气が世界中にうなぎ登っているようだ。メロディーと歌詞を入力することで、サンプリングされた人の声を元にしたバーチャルシンガーが何でも歌うことができる。2011 年現在、日本語だけでなく、VOCALOID3 のリリースで、英語や中国語や韓国語やスペイン語でも利用可能となる。最初にプロ作曲家に向けていたが、今は「ただ一つの限界はユーザーのスキルだけです」という考えで売っている。この特別な道具で、多くのアマ歌手や作曲家や画家でも VOCALOID を通して、有名になっている。VOCALOID のバーチャルシンガーたちは日本でのヒットチャートのトップになっただけではなく、全世界の目に留まって、新しい崇めたべき音楽生成方法を作っている。このレポートは広い文化的と技術的な脈絡から見て、どうして VOCALOID はそんなにアピールがあるのでしょうか？他の音声合成技術の中で、どんな利点があるか、それでどんな事情が VOCALOID ユーザー作成コンテンツ (UGC) の成長を齎しているのでしょうか？そして最後に、日本の人たちは VOCALOID に関して、どんな意見があるのでしょうか？この作文はこの質問を考えて、日本でプログラムの効果を評価するつもりです。

### Introduction

Within the world of music production, no production tool has ever amassed as much attention as Hatsune Miku. On March 9<sup>th</sup> 2010, the ankle-length teal-haired VOCALOID “performed” her first solo concert at the Zepp nightclub in Odaiba, Japan. Before an audience of more than five thousand people and with backing from a live band of (human) musicians, she was given “physical” form on stage thanks to a team of 3D modelers, animators and the magic of the Pepper’s Ghost technique. A technique originating in the world of theatre, in which her image is projected onto a mirror on the floor which then reflects onto a screen visible to the audience.

The sheer celebrity of this 16-year-old “android diva” is a phenomenon that has not only taken Japan by storm but the western world as well. Her third concert ever, taking place a year later in July of 2011, was held in Los Angeles, USA as part of the 2011 Toyota Corolla’s advertising campaign. She not only performed in concert but also appeared on national TV in specialized commercials for the vehicle as it’s mascot.

Led by the success of Miku, dozens more VOCALOID have since been created with a few, most notably Kagamine Rin and Len as well as GUMI (or Megpoid,) enjoying much of the same popularity as their predecessor. This popularity, steered by the Japan-based video sharing website NicoNico (formerly Nico Nico Douga) - one could consider the home of VOCALOID, provides the starting point for this essay; which intends to examine VOCALOID and the collaborative creativity that encompasses it.

## What is VOCALOID?

Vocaloid (stylized as VOCALOID) is a voice synthesis program commercialized by world renowned music company: Yamaha. The term itself both refers to the software as well as the virtual singers that embody it. The key element that has brought the VOCALOID community, as a whole, into the music industry spotlight is without-a-doubt the presence of not only music-lovers but music creators within its fanbase. In fact, the fanbase itself is quite literally the driving force of VOCALOID. The music production that has ensued due to the popularity and usability of the product has brought amateurs from not only the realms of music production but singers, artists and animators to the spotlight and many then onto commercial success.

The software itself consists of three main parts; the Score Editor, the Singer Library and the Synthesizer Engine. The Score Editor is the main interface of the program. It uses a piano roll style editor in which the user may input lyrics, musical notes and expressions. For a Japanese Singer Library, the user can input lyrics in hiragana, katakana or romaji (3 of the 4 writing systems of Japanese.) Then conversely, for an English library (and most other languages the software is available in,) the Editor automatically converts the lyrics inputted into the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) using the built-in pronunciation dictionary.

The Singer Libraries, one might consider the essence of the program, are developed by third-party companies, such as Crypton Future Media; the creators of renowned Hatsune Miku. These singer databases consist of fragments of the human voice sampled from real people (most commonly professional singers and voice actors.) All possible phonemes (the smallest elements of our speech) are recorded in the target language and added to the database. To further explain: the voice corresponding to the English word “learn” can be synthesized by concatenating the sequence of diphones "#-l, l-e, e, e-r, r-n, n-#" (# indicating a voiceless phoneme.) These samples are recorded at a fixed pitch and tone. In order to more closely replicate a human voice: dynamics and vibrato, breaths and other small details are also added to each VOCALOID’s voice bank. All of which are then given a name and most, a persona by their creators. A basic description of the persona is also given such as; age, height, and suggested vocal range. Finally, the Synthesis Engine is the unseen component within the program, responsible for adjusting the pitch and timbre of the selected samples as well as splicing them to synthesis singing.

While all this is unquestionably innovative, it is in actuality not a new concept within the world of technology. IBM 704, a computer model introduced in 1954, already stole the title of ‘first computer to sing’ back in the year 1962 with its rendition of the classic piece by Harry Dacre: “Daisy Bell.” The beginnings of VOCALOID, on the other hand, can only be traced back to 2004 when music software company, previously mentioned above, Crypton Future Media first released Meiko: the voice-in-a-box sporting a bright red leather 2-piece and a brunette bob. Later accompanied by Kaito in 2006, a blue-haired male counterpart to his predecessor. What separates the two innovations however is that while the former, IBM 704, was revolutionary there was no initiative taken to formulate this creation into a product for commercial use. Whereas owning VOCALOID meant that, for just above 13,000 yen (around 100 GBP), anyone with a computer could become a songwriter using these virtual singers.

## VOCALOID from within the Otaku Subculture

It wasn’t until Hatsune Miku’s release in 2007 that the VOCALOID phenomenon really kicked off however. Crypton CEO, Hiroyuki Itoh, apparently blown away himself by its sudden surge in popularity. Not only were 40,000 copies of the program sold that year but they witnessed a boundless wave of VOCALOID fan art. The cause of Miku’s success over her processors remains unclear. It could be attributed to the prevalence of social media during her release, or perhaps her more exaggerated anime-like appearance in comparison to Meiko and Kaito.

Some scholars have gone as far as to claim her success be due to the stereotypically male-dominated Otaku culture's susceptibility to the young female schoolgirl image. Otaku being the term used to describe avid anime fans often stereotypically male and socially inept in nature. The term accruing a notably more negative connotation in Japan than the recently more accepted western counterparts: nerd/geek.

This tendency to associate Otaku culture, and products associated with such, with crude male sexuality is quite deeply rooted in Japanese society. Associations to sexual predatory and criminal activity are not uncommon either. The Japan-based newspaper, Otakuma Economic, which centres its content around the otaku culture, has noted that they have often been approached by major media outlets seeking to interview self-proclaimed Otaku and introduce them to their audiences. However, quite absurdly, their interviewees are regularly turned down due to them not fitting the desired "Otaku image."

The distaste shown towards Otaku subculture can also be seen crossing over into the West. Writer Kate Hutchinson for the guardian observes: "In Europe and America, Miku is still seen as a bit of a gimmick, a symbol of Japanese kitschy-kook." (Hutchinson, 2014) Which many others would most likely agree. Proof of this is perhaps glaringly obvious in the fact that the western news outlet, Vulture (owner of New York Magazine), when covering Miku's appearance on the well-respected "Late Show with David Letterman" has yet to notice the thoroughly reprehensible typo "Hatsune Mike" within their article from 2014 (almost 3 years ago now.)

#### Unmatched Mass UGC (User Generated Content)

The buzz from this "kitschy-kook" phenomenon largely extends, of course, from the bizarreness of a holographic idol. However, as evident in the popularity of, and sheer number of songs sung by Miku (being more than 100,000 and in every genre imaginable) the very conceivably more revolutionary aspect of VOCALOID is the fact that all the music, both in concert and online, is written by fans. Some who amazingly have never studied music, or even learned how to read it. VOCALOID has become not only a 'creative tool' but a path for those creative individuals that may have never felt empowered enough to realise their careers as singers, producers and artists otherwise. As a reporter from New York Magazine remarked: "Miku is... a wildly new model of pop stardom that's both participatory and anti-hierarchical." (Zoladz, 2014)

Upon Hatsune Miku's release in August 2007, Crypton Future Media gave the go-ahead for users to reuse its character for derivative works providing their original license: Piapro Character License. It's this executive move that truly opened the door to the mass user-generated content that we see at the heart of VOCALOID today. Niconico, a Japanese video-sharing site much like Youtube, quickly became the host of many original compositions using the product. With the large majority of these compositions including their very own amateur-made music videos to boot. The production of music using VOCALOIDs like Miku quickly became a very professional-like process, with producers outsourcing art as well as animation work from fellow talented enthusiasts within the community. This community, hosting people from all walks of life (within Japan and abroad) then went from doing favours for their fellow VOCALOID fans to earning money as professionals.

#### VOCALOID as an Influencer in the Music Industry

VOCALOID is constantly bending old and creating new concepts within the music world. The very construction of "bands" is evolving through this community. A senior within the Vocaloid community, composer Ryo is the leader to well-known band: Supercell, and could be consider the father of VOCALOID music. He found fame in the year 2007 after uploading his first original song using the VOCALOID software to Niconico. The song, "Melt," quickly became a hit within the community and as of now has over 11 million views. It is still recognised to this day as one of the founding songs of VOCALOID subculture. Through this success, he founded the 11 member band "supercell." The "band,"

however, does not consist of the maybe more traditional lead singer, guitarist and drummer etc. It instead is simply, Ryo with the other 10 members being artists and designers who provide the artwork for his compositions. They then whilst using Miku for their music in the past, work in collaboration with (human) singers, most notably Yanagi Nagi (a girl who found fame covering the aforementioned song: Melt) to create their music.

Yanagi Nagi, now a signed artist, found her roots as an “utaite” on Niconico. Utaite, a word coined from the two words “*utai*” (to sing/want to sing) and “*te*” (a suffix used to pertain to someone with skill in a particular area of work) being the term used to mean singers of the community. Many others like Yanagi, such as Choucho, Soraru and Mafumafu being other notable utaites who have gone from uploading covers to the internet to releasing professional albums under high-end companies like Sony Music. Many of their works have gone on to appear in anime and dramas within Japanese mainstream media.

As well as vocal covers and arrangements, people have also been known to choreograph dances to VOCALOID music and, just as with vocal covers, others will then “cover” those dances. Rebecca Flint (aka Beckii Cruel) became famous through her dance covers (many VOCALOID songs being a part of her act.) She has now released singles and is now a paid entertainer in Japan despite being from the Isle of Man in the UK. VOCALOID has even released games (e.g. Hatsune Miku: Project Diva) featuring the popular songs found on Niconico and Youtube. Famous VOCALOID composers such as; supercell, wowaka, and DECO\*27 having their songs showcased on them. Through VOCALOID a whole new community has been created on the internet. With this collaboration of efforts and creativity bringing millions of people together to experience music and art.

### Conclusion

Miku is not only the mascot for VOCALOID but an icon of participatory culture. With her as the catalyst, a community where people can share their voice, their art, and their creativity without boundaries has been born. This is undeniably the selling point of VOCALOID: while not absolutely free from copyright restrictions now that VOCALOID and its more prestigious creators find themselves sinking more and more into mainstream media, the music is allowed to be elaborated on by those who wish to do so in any way they wish to so. Be it through a remix, a cover, fan art, animation or dance.

Some sceptics may question whether these virtual singers will “take over the music industry” but this author is compelled to disagree. Instead, VOCALOID has brought about a new era for the people behind the music to shine: the composers, the lyricists, the illustrators and animators. When people of this wide community hear a new song, they don’t ask “who sang it?” - they probably already know - they ask: “Who made it?”

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## Mission “Impawsible”; Finding All the Cat Stuff in Japan! And Why is it so Popular?

Madeline Meyer

Dallas Baptist University (USA)

### Summary:

猫の恋人として、私はいつも店で猫関連の商品を探しています。日本に到着すると、私は実際に私が入るすべての店で猫のテーマを見つけることにうれしく驚きました。すべての猫の商品に加え、ハローキティ、迷子の猫、ペットの猫、猫のカフェ、猫の島々のような猫のテーマの食品、有名な猫（有名人）、アニメの猫の文字があります。、古代の神話的な猫の物語などが挙げられる。日本のすべての猫関連のものを見て私はなぜ日本で人気のある猫ですか？私は理由を挙げようとするいくつかの記事を読んだ。一部の人は、他の情報源がそれが猫が含まれている日本の長い歴史と文化にそれを信じている間、彼らがどれほど鎮静しているのかもしれないと言う人もいます。猫は日本の歴史や民話に長く入っているセンス。当初は、齧歯類の倉庫の食糧を守るために日本で猫が使われていました。少なくとも、世界の他の地域では、猫が家畜化された主な理由です。この論文では、日本の猫の人気が高い理由を見つけようとしながら、日本のさまざまな猫関連のものを探求する予定です

Cats were first introduced to Japan by China many years ago and have been intertwined in Japanese history for a long time. Like I mentioned above cats were first used to protect grain and that is how their relationship with humans started. However, the history of cats in Japan is more than that. The Japanese people have created several mythical cat tales which tell of cat monsters that can shapeshift or of cats which have been alive for hundreds of years so their tail splits in two and they become a yokai. There are even numerous shrines and temples dedicated towards worshiping cats such as the Maneki-neko. The Maneki-neko aka lucky cat is a cat which is thought to bring luck and fortune to those who worship it<sup>2</sup>. Over the years merchandise in the shape of a Maneki-neko has become very popular as it is thought that if one displays a Maneki-neko in their shop or home they will receive luck and fortune. Someone one can even find a Maneki-neko on fourth and ninth floors of buildings as those numbers are considered unlucky in Japan. The Maneki-neko is placed on those floors in an attempt to balance out the unluckiness of the numbers with luck from the Maneki-neko. It makes sense that something which brings luck and fortune would become popular. Besides the luck and fortune aspect of worshiping the Maneki-neko there are numerous other temples and shrines devoted to the worship of cats.

However, I think a main reason why cats are popular today is due to their soothing effect. Similar to other animal stroking a cat can help lower blood pressure and decrease stress<sup>1</sup>. Cats in particular have the ability to purr. There have been studies that show that a cats purring can help heal damaged tissue. The fact that cats help lower blood pressure and stress is likely a major reason for their popularity. At least for cat cafes and as pets. I have heard that in Japan many are often stressed out from over work so cats are good medicine for them. Cats in general are a small animal rather than a lot of dog breeds and are also easier to care for as you do not have to take them on walks. For Japan it makes sense that a smaller animal would be a more common pet because many live in small apartments which do not allow large dog breeds plus many are busy and may not have time to walk their pet. So a cat is a good choice for those who wish to keep a nice adorable fluff ball as a pet to help reduce stress. That and who wouldn't want a cute squishy cat around to cuddle. But anyway for those who can't even have pets in their apartment that is where cat cafes come in. Cat cafes are extremely popular in Japan and there are numerous ones everywhere. For those who cannot have a pet in their apartment or do not have the money to pay for a pet they can just pop in a cat café for half an hour or more and cuddle a cat for a bit. This way they get to

decrease their stress at a much lower cost than owning their own cat. Plus most cat café come with a soothing cup of coffee or tea.

While the decreasing stress bonus of petting a cat is nice, cats in themselves are just so cute it is hard to resist the urge to want to cuddle them and be cat paparazzi. Many agree cats have taken over the internet with the numerous cat memes, pictures and videos. I searched the term “cat” on google and 2,270,000,000 results popped up and there are 72,400,000 cat results on YouTube. Whether cats are just being cute or doing something strange only cats would do they have become very popular as video or picture subjects. So it makes sense that cats are desired in Japan as well. Over the past few years’ famous internet cats or celebrity cats have begun appearing on the internet. For example, the celebrity cats Maru and Shironeko. Maru in particular is considered one of the most popular cats on the internet if not the most popular one. Maru has received a Guinness World Record for its’ YouTube video having the most views for an animal video<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to the real life cat celebrities are the famous cat characters Japan has created. For example, Hello Kitty or Tama the station master (who is based off of a real cat). While Hello Kitty was revealed to actually be a little girl rather than a cat, everyone still considers her to be a cat due to her appearance. Hello Kitty stuff is everywhere in Japan. It is part of Sanrios character line and is the most known character from them. While exploring shops in Japan I have seen an abundance of Hello Kitty merchandise throughout the stores which demonstrates its immense popularity. I have seen Hello Kitty on buses, benches, signs, cups, blankets, pens, stationary, food etc. You name it and there is probably some sort of Hello Kitty variation of it. Hello Kitty is so widely popular that it has even become well known outside of Japan. In addition to Hello Kitty there is the popular train station master character Tama. Originally Tama was a cat who was adopted by a station master and later appointed the station master. Once Tama took office the station saw an increase in passengers by 17% for that month<sup>4</sup>. Just because a cat was appointed a station master. Tama has since passed, however a mascot character of Tama was created and is commonly seen on many trains and busses throughout Japan. You can see a bus with Tama on it drive past Okayama University every day.

Other than famous cat merchandise I have found all kinds of cat merchandise throughout Japan. You can walk into practically every store in Japan and find at least one cat themed item. Most of the time the item will be of a Maneki-neko, Hello Kitty or another cat icon. However, there are numerous other cat items for sale with realistic cats depicted or unique animated cats drawn on the item. There are even stores just for cat merchandise. There is one particular store in Aeon mall which has a small black cat depicted on every item they sell. It is the businesses’ trademark you could say. In comparison, if I want to buy cat merchandise in America I have to search far and wide to find even a trace of good cat merchandise. There are some cat related things for sale in America, however the cat depicted on the item is usually for Halloween or it is realistic kitten with rainbows on it aimed at the hipster audience. Even then these items are not very common, unless it is Halloween time of year. Yet in Japan the cat merchandise is around all year long. If the cat items were not selling in Japan they would not be so abundant. But retailers have discovered the Japanese peoples love of cats. I have also noticed many people in Japan wearing cat shirts, using cat wallets, bags or phone cases. I can go to the café and always spot at least a few people sporting those cat themed items. While in America I’d be lucky to find one person wearing a cat shirt in a week. Cat items are just not nearly as popular in America as they are in Japan.

Japan also has the unique cat attraction, cat islands. I recently visited Sanagishima one of Japans 10+ cat islands. There I found less than 15 people, but found hundreds of cats. The cats definitely outnumbered the human residents on the island. I stepped off the boat and saw around five to six cats coming to greet me. And as I explored the tiny island I continued to find groups of stray cats. Many of them approached me and began rubbing against my legs while others just stood and watched from a distance. There were even a few that followed me around the island for a while. I mentioned that Japan

has cat islands to my twin brother and his first response was “that is awesome, but how and why do the cat islands even exist?” For many cat islands the cats were brought in to protect the grain from being eaten by rats. However due to there being few natural predators on the islands the cats multiplied over the years. It did not help that many of the townspeople would feed the cats. On some of the cat islands the villagers believe that feeding the cats will bring good fortune to them and they have cat shrines to worship the cats. This has caused an increase in the cats on these islands. However, some of the cat islands have had a sharp decrease in their human population over the years. The number of jobs on the small islands were not enough so many of the villagers moved off the islands into bigger towns in order to find jobs. But this has left the small islands with very few people. Thus the cats now outnumber the people on the islands. For example, Sanagishima where I could hardly see any people and most the houses were abandoned or run down. There was not even a single restaurant or vending machine on the island. Trying to capitalize on Japanese’s love of cats some islands have been trying to use the many cats to promote people to come live there to increase the island population.

Cats are so popular in Japan that they even have their own holiday. Of course, you will not get off school for this holiday as it is primarily for fun. February 22<sup>nd</sup> is known as 猫の日 or Cat Day in Japan. The reason February 22<sup>nd</sup> was chosen as the official cat day in Japan has to do with what February 22<sup>nd</sup> sounds like in Japanese. February is the second month so the date is 2 which is pronounced に in Japanese which sounds similar to the Japanese onomatopoeia for a cat’s meow which is ニャー or Nya. So the day February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2/22 sounds like ニャー ニャー ニャー or Nya Nya Nya similar to the sound of a cat meowing. On Instagram, Facebook and other social media sites you can find numerous cat selfies, pictures, cat themed food and cat themed art being posted. The internet is already overflowing with cat pictures and videos, however on Cat Day the cat pictures and videos just take over social media. Of course there are even cat themed restaurants filled with cat themed food. You can find cat themed restaurants any time of the year in Japan, however there are more pop up cafes specifically for Cat Day in Japan. Japan has come up with cat themed foods such as cat shaped donuts, cat cakes, cat rice balls, cat manju, cat ice cream, cat themed parfaits and many more. Basically if it is food it can become cat themed or shaped in some way. Some other countries do have cat holidays, however many are not widely known and none are as widely celebrated as Cat Day in Japan.

Well that is everything cat related I have managed to find in Japan. I found several plausible reasons why cats are so popular in Japan. It may be due to the long history between felines and the Japanese, or it may be due to their soothing effect on many stressed Japanese people. It might be because of the pure adorableness of kitties or because of the strange amusing things cats do. I think the secret to the popularity of cats in Japan is due to a combination of all these reasons. There must be some reason after all for Japan to have so many cat related things ranging anywhere from cat shrines, cat themed foods, famous cats, animated cat characters, cat cafes, cat islands, ancient mythical cat stories, holidays dedicated towards cats etc. Whatever the reason for the immense popularity of cats in Japan, I will definitely be back to find more cat themed things in the future!

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## Grocery Shopping in Japan

William Wolfkiel

California State University Monterey Bay (USA)

**Summary:** 日本に住んでいる人は日本で買い物をします。でも「日本に住んでいる人たちの食べ物は他の国の人たちの食べ物より高いかな?」と考えました。私は毎日料理を作っているからアメリカと日本食べ物のプライスを比べてほしかった。一年ぐらい岡山に住みました。ずっとフレスタとらむマートとディオとイオンモールで買い物をしました。それでアメリカの方が安い見たいです。プライスを比べるため、円は大体です。それと円は大体です。どうやって日本とアメリカが違っているとどうやって日本でいいものを買ってできるとどうやって日本で美味し安い食べ物を作るためにこのレポートを読んで下さい。

**Everybody eats.** Obviously everybody eats, but what do we eat? If it were simply to sustain ourselves, we would all be eating lard and vitamins for every meal. That might be affordable, but it would not taste very good, and it would not be healthy long term. Restaurants and fast food are expensive, so it is a good idea to make meals at home. Overall there are probably 3 things that one keeps in mind while shopping to make meals: affordability, taste and nutritional balance (not just vitamins and lard). Let's take a look at the importance of each aspect.

**Nutritional balance** refers to a decent balance of fats, carbohydrates and protein (necessary for long term health)<sup>[1]</sup>, as well as vitamins, minerals<sup>[2]</sup>, and fiber<sup>[3]</sup>. In Japan, same as other places, carbohydrates such as rice, bread, flour and pasta are cheapest, although a notable difference with many countries is the price of fruits and vegetables, among other things.

**Fruits and vegetables** in Japan are quite expensive. For example, 1 Tomato costs around 120 円, while it may cost 40 円 in the US. 2 large carrots would cost 120 円 in Japan, while in the US one can find a gigantic bag of carrots for 120 円. For 120 円 in Japan, one can get 2 large onions, while in the US, one can get 4 onions for 120 円. Fruits, on the other hand, are on an entirely different level of cost. In the US, one can find a one whole large Watermelon for 150 円. In Japan, a medium sized watermelon would usually go for 600 円. A small package of grapes in Japan would usually cost around 400 円, while a bag of grapes twice that size would cost 200 円 in the the US. An orange in the US costs maybe 50 円 per orange, while in Japan one orange costs 100 円. The cheapest fruits and vegetables are at the store Dio, although some fruits and vegetables can be found at the same price at Ramumart. The cheapest fruits and vegetables are at the student run cooperative, which runs from 13:30 to 14:30 on weekdays, and is located on the road next to the agricultural department's field.

**Some exceptions** to the high cost of vegetables are fresh spinach, which can be quite expensive in the US, but is very affordable in Japan. In addition, bean sprouts are super incredibly cheap, and are a great source of nutrition. Ramumart and Dio have the absolute cheapest bean sprouts.

**Meat and fish** in Japan can actually be pretty affordable, because of how much of both are imported to Japan<sup>[4]</sup>. At the right store, ground beef can be found at the same price as that in the US, and fish as a whole is around ½ the cost of fish in the US, although, as source of protein, it is still more expensive than chicken.

But still, depending on one's budget, fish can be a part of one's diet that is affordable. Some beef is at a decent price, although for the majority of the cuts of meat available, pork is the cheaper option. Also tasty, and at a decent price, are arabiki sausages. Ramumart and Dio have the same price on meat, although Ramumart does not sell fresh fish.

**Another source of protein** that is incredibly cheap in Japan, however, is tofu. A block of tofu can be bought for 38 ¥, while a reasonable price for a similar amount of tofu in the US is around \$1. For the price of eggs, in Japan on a good day it is around 150 ¥ for 10 eggs. In the US, 12 eggs cost \$1.80. Adjusted for price variations, these are similar costs, and eggs can be an affordable yet nutritious part of someone who is living in Japan's diet. Ramumart and Dio sell the cheapest tofu, but the cheapest eggs are when they go on sale at Fresta.

**Dairy** is more expensive in Japan. In the US, 1000 ml of milk (approximately one quart) would cost about 90 ¥, while in Japan milk would cost around 150 ¥. Considering the cost of butter, which is 270 ¥ for 150 grams, compared to the US 500 ¥ for 450 grams at the most expensive, or 167 ¥ for 150 grams. Usually butter is cheaper than this price. Cheese is also incredibly expensive, and cheese that is not insanely expensive is also a bit harder to find. The very cheapest cheese is 6 slices of processed cheese for 100 ¥, weighing about 108 grams for those 6 slices. 24 slices, or 453 grams, is around \$3.98, which is around the same price. For cheddar, the cheapest has been 1000 ¥ for 600 grams. 3.98 for 450 grams cheddar. The cheapest milk is sold at Fresta, the cheapest processed cheese is sold at Ramumart and Dio, and the cheapest real cheeses like cheddar and parmesan is sold at the grocery store at Aeon mall. Other rare foreign foods are sold at Aeon mall as well, so be sure to stock up on taco spice, granola,

**Carbohydrates** are cheap in any society, and in Japan acquiring them is no financial difficulty. However, when compared to the US, this form of nutrition is still on the more pricy side. The cheapest pasta is 500 grams for 170 ¥. The cheapest pasta that can be found in the US is 500 grams for \$1, although it should be noted that pasta this cheap in America does not taste as good. In Japan, the cheapest bread can cost 70 ¥ for 100 grams (5-6 slices), while in the US 100 grams in the cheapest form of bread costs from my estimations \$0.60 per gram. The slices of bread in the US tend to be smaller. For rice in Japan, 340 ¥ per kilogram would be a good price. In the US, Japanese style rice can be bought for \$3.30 per kilogram<sup>[5]</sup>. In Japan, 1 kg of flour costs 218 ¥, while in the US 1 kg of flour costs \$0.83. It should be noted that for rice, as well as many other food items, cost can vary considerably based on location and provider, although the cost differences listed are a useful base cost comparison. Ramumart and Dio are cheapest.

Probably the cheapest and easiest dish to make in Japan would be **egg on rice**. Crack an egg onto a bowl of rice, stir it a little, and pour a little bit of soy sauce on the egg. For more flavor, try some fried chicken from the supermarket placed on top, or flakes of salmon, which can be bought dried or in a jar.

There are many other different easily made **dishes that can accompany a bowl of rice**. Furikake is a rice seasoning that can be eaten with rice. Flavored toasted seaweed can also be eaten with rice (or by itself). If the rice is to be eaten as a meal though, it would not be healthy eat so many carbohydrates. Buying some meat or fish to fry and put over the rice would be good, or also natto, which are fermented soybeans, are good options for rice. To season meat, yakiniku sauce is pretty easy. A lot of the fish that can be bought in Japan is already seasoned, but if not, salt or a miso sauce work well, with the recipe for the miso sauce as follows. In around ½ a cup of water, add a large dash of miso paste, sugar and soy sauce and boil the fish for 10 minutes in this sauce. Sashimi is a bit more expensive for the amount purchased, but because no cooking is involved, it can just be placed on top of the rice.

A cheap vegetable side dish to make is **boiled bean sprouts**. Boil the bean sprouts for 1-2 minutes, then pour a dash of sesame oil, a dash of soy sauce, and salt and pepper to taste. Cheap and healthy, and can accompany other dishes.

Another good dish to accompany many different meals is **miso soup**. It is cheap and easy to make, and a recipe for it is as follows. For some easy miso soup, get some wakame, some miso paste, packets of dashi powder, and tofu. 1 average brick of tofu will make a large pot of soup that creates a lot of leftovers, so using only some of the tofu and refrigerating or freezing the rest might be a good idea. But for a whole brick of tofu, add 3 miso bowls of water into a large pot, and boil the water with 2 packets of dashi powder. The amount of miso paste that should be used can depend on the miso paste. Some miso paste is saltier than other miso pastes, so when adding in the miso paste, add a little at a time to the miso soup until the miso soup taste fine to you. Add a small handful of wakame (it expands a lot), and dice the tofu into bite size pieces and put them into the miso soup. Serve it shortly after.

**Champulu** is an Okinawan stir fry, and it uses a lot of affordable ingredients that also happen to be filled with protein. By its very nature it is meant to be very modifiable, so more expensive ingredients can be replaced, although the normal ingredients are as follow: tofu (as firm as can be found), bitter melon, bean sprouts, eggs, dashi powder, sesame oil, soy sauce, salt and pepper, pork belly/spam. The pork belly and spam is expensive, and can be omitted, although they are very tasty. But in any case, on how to make the champulu. First, put the bitter melon in boiling water for around 1 minute, to help remove the bitter taste. Then add a small amount of oil and cook the pork, adding more oil depending on how oily whatever meat you add at this step. When the meat is partially cooked, add the bitter melon in, then stir fry. Crumble the tofu into the pan with the meat and oil. When these ingredients are close to done, add in the bean sprouts, While those are cooking, beat an egg (or more), and when these ingredients are done, add the egg, along with a small amount of dashi powder, a dash of sesame oil, a dash of soy sauce, and salt and pepper to taste. When the eggs are done, serve one a plate, and if desired, put some bonito flakes on top.

**Mashed potatoes** aren't a bad option food option, and can be quite filling with a good amount of delicious butter and cheese. For mashed potatoes, cut potatoes into cubes as big as 4 centimeters (1½ inches), then boil them until right before their skins start to loosen. One can peel the potatoes if they like, but the skin provides more nutrients and doesn't taste bad. In another pan, heat about half a cup of milk and a large scoop of butter, and heat them on a low heat. Drain the potato water, and combine the butter and milk and potatoes, either in the pot for the potatoes or in a large bowl, and mash them all together until they reach an agreeable consistency, adding salt and pepper to taste. A nice accompaniment to mashed potatoes is shio-saba, or salted mackerel. This fish isn't too expensive, and if they are intended for mashed potatoes, then there is no need to add more salt to the mashed potatoes. To fry the mackerel one just needs to place them in a hot pan with some oil, flipping them as needed.

One dish that goes well with mashed potatoes or rice is some nice **delicious steak**. In Japan, steaks of beef but also pork can be found, so let's take a look at how to cook the pork steak first. Place the steak in pan around medium-high heat. The goal is to cook it quickly, so that it cooks all the way through without rendering too much of the fat in the meat. When it is done, put the steak on a plate, and fry slices of a clove of garlic in the oil of the steak. To peel a clove of garlic quickly, place the clove on a cutting board, hold the flat part of the kitchen knife onto the garlic clove, and smack it with the heel of your hand so that the papery skin of the garlic bursts. This will make it easier to peel the garlic. When the garlic is done frying, pour a little bit of wine into the pan to remove some of the burnt meat bits and if the pork isn't seasoned already, pour a dash of soy sauce into the pan. When the alcohol has burnt off, take it off the heat and put it on the steak. For a steak of beef, a lot of these steps are the same except for the cooking of the steak. For a well done steak, this step is still the same, but for a good rare steak, the steak should be at room temperature before cooking, especially for a thicker steak. The goal is to have a reasonably interior, so the more room temperature it is, the easier it will be to have a rare steak. One way to go for this ratio is to cook the steak on medium heat until one is sure that the steak is most of the way done, then launching the heat into the highest possible to get a nice sear on the outside. If the interior still isn't done enough, then cheating and putting the steak in the microwave for a little bit is an option. For most cuts of steak, the steak will need a little additional oil to help itself fry.

**Curry rice** is a great tasty option, and isn't too expensive, especially if it is vegetable or chicken curry. For chicken curry, chicken thighs, onions, garlic, carrots, cubes of curry roux (the spicier the tastier) and optionally, one apple (makes the curry sweeter and the pectin makes it thicker) or one ripe lime, are required. First cut everything into the size desired (the apple should be as cut up as possible, if not shredded, with the skin removed), then if the chicken came with some skin, then one can cut up the skin and start frying that until the fat renders out. If the skin produces a good amount of oil, then add the onions and garlic, stirring until they start to turn translucent. Then add the chicken breast and stir until the chicken breast is mostly cooked. Then stir in the carrots and add water until most of the vegetables and chicken are covered. As the vegetables soften, there will be room for the other vegetables, although if a more runny texture is desired, then more water can be added. At this stage, if apples are used, then add them now and mix. Bring the vegetables and chicken to a boil, then lower the heat to let it simmer. How much time is needed may depend on how thickly the vegetables are cut, but ideally until they are soft. Then add in the blocks of curry roux a little bit at a time, letting them fully dissolve before adding more until a desired consistency is reached. Eat the curry with some rice, squeezing some lime juice in the curry and mixing that in if a lime is used. Also, a nice way to stretch the leftover curry out is to make curry udon. Packages of udon can be bought pretty cheaply, and just boil the udon in some water for a little bit, then combine with the curry and mix them together.

Another good dish, this one using many cheaper ingredients, is **oyakodon** 親子丼, which is egg and chicken over rice. This requires eggs, chicken, negi or nira (nira = Asian chives?), soy sauce, honey or sugar, dashi powder and mirin (sweet cooking sake). If the chicken has skin attached, cook it skin side down until the fat renders, then cut the chicken into cubes. Then cook the cubes of chicken. If there isn't enough oil, then add some. Combine around half a cup of hot water with a good amount of dashi powder, a dash of soy sauce and a dash of the honey or sugar. When the chicken is most of the way done, then add a large dash of mirin until the mirin mostly dissolves, then add the soy sauce dashi mixture. Add the negi or nira and bring the contents of the pan to a boil, partially covering the pan. When the vegetables are partially cooked, lower the heat then beat a few eggs and pour them over the chicken and negi or nira, then partially cover the pan. While the eggs are still a bit runny transfer everything over a bowl of rice then eat. For slightly easier oyakodon, I have fried chicken and nira or negi in oil, adding yakiniku sauce when they're halfway done, stirring around then adding the beaten eggs over until runny then serving on rice, and that turned out alright.

At many grocery stores, **ready made food** food such as fried foods, bentos and sushi are made at the store. These foods are usually at the pricy end when compared with the food of other stores, but starting an hour and a half before the store closes, discounts start to be placed on these foods to clear the remaining stock. The discounts increase as the time to when the store closes nears. In addition, on rainy days, a lot less shoppers come to the store so a lot of things become discounted very early. It can pay well to come to the grocery store on rainy days if pre-prepared food is desired.

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## Natural Disasters of Japan

Brandon Hurlock

York St John University (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** このレポートのテーマは日本の地震です。毎日日本ではたくさん地震が起こります。でも大半はとても弱いです。たくさんげんちじんは地震になりました。日本人のオピニオンがほしいですから日本人に質問をあげます。たとえば、「地震は何ですか」とか。そして昔話やたいしんのビルや地震の理由を調べます。それで文化のちがいを知りたいです。だから外国人のオピニオンがほしいです。日本人のオピニオンと外国人のオピニオンをくらべます。

Japan is country which is rather well known for having earthquakes quite frequently, whether they be small and unnoticeable or on a larger scale. Many people have gotten accustomed to earthquakes in their daily lives, as some earthquakes can last for just a few seconds with a very small intensity. This can be seen as a minor inconvenience, such as train delays and minor discomfort. Earthquakes are caused due to the movement of tectonic plates and the resulting energy built up by this action. Although the plates move every day, rough contact with one another may cause them to get stuck. This causes pressure to be built up that subsequently leads to an earthquake when released.

The reason why Japan has earthquakes so often is due to its geographical position in the Northern Hemisphere. The country is located on the 'Ring of Fire', which is a large ocean basin of the Pacific Ocean spanning around 40,000km. Japan resides on the boundary between the Pacific Plate and the Philippine Sea Plate, resulting in Japan having around 10% of the world's active volcanoes in its vicinity. Japan's most major earthquakes in the last one hundred years include the Great Kantō earthquake (1923), the Great Hanshin earthquake (1995), and the more recent Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami (2011).



Ring of Fire

<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/ringfire.gif>

Japan also uses a different type of seismic scale to measure the intensity of earthquakes. While most of the most have used the Richter magnitude scale or the more current Moment Magnitude Scale, Japan uses the Japan Meteorological Agency seismic intensity scale. Unlike the other methods that focus describing the energy released by an earthquake, the JMA scale describes the amount of shaking at different points on the surface of the Earth. Instead of the earthquake being based on its magnitude, it is determined by the event's distance and depth. The shindo scale ranges from 0-7, with 0 being the lowest intensity.

During my time in Japan, I have interviewed various people on the topic of earthquakes, including Okayama University students as well as some local high school students. I asked them some set questions on what they knew about earthquakes, such as:

- Do you know any Japanese folktales about earthquakes?
- Do you know what earthquakes are?
- What do you know about earthquake resistant buildings in Japan?
- What are you taught in school about what to do when an earthquake happens?
- What are your opinions about earthquakes?

- How do you think foreign opinion differs to Japanese opinions about earthquakes?

When asking these types of questions, I was slightly concerned about the level of vocabulary I was using. However, I was surprised when some of the questionees were able to understand and use subject specific words such as 'plates' and 'tectonics' in a response to my questions. From this, a couple of people could describe the causes of an earthquake and give a brief explanation on what happens, which I did not expect.

Normally, the first question I always opened up with to the questionees was 'What are your opinions about earthquakes?' All of the students said scary or 'こわい', which I fully expected. I decided to start with this question as I found out from talking to non-native Japanese people that some of them wanted to experience an earthquake. There are a number of factors which were the cause for this.

One of the main reasons for this was that in a lot of other countries earthquakes are unheard of. For example in the United Kingdom there have only been around twelve earthquakes above a magnitude of four over the past 440 years. Due to the reason of many people never experiencing an earthquake before, many non-native Japanese people I talked to told me that they wanted to experience an earthquake at least during their stay in Japan. Many of these people did not share the same type of fear that native Japanese people had about earthquakes, with many of the non natives believing that they think they are fun or exciting. This can possibly be explained that due to earthquakes being unapparent in many different countries, people do not fully understand the consequences in which they hold. For example deaths, loss of homes, and other destructive outcomes. It also is related to the fact that due to Japan being quite well known for its frequent earthquakes, many of the foreigners I asked slightly viewed it as part of Japanese culture, and therefore they wanted to experience this aspect.

From all of the various people I asked, only one university student at Okayama had heard about the Japanese folktale of Namazu. The person was able to give about a three sentence long summary of the myth, with correct use of English vocabulary and grammar, which included the key points of the story.



*Namazu and Kashima*  
<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/history-of-geology/files/2012/03/namazu.jpg>

When researching about the history of earthquakes in Japan, I came across one main folktale in regards to how earthquakes occur. Of course in that time the technology of the world was much less advanced when compared to today's modern technology, and therefore people would have to guess what caused the frequent tremors in the ground. Japanese mythology explains that under Japan's islands there lives a giant catfish that goes by the name Namazu (鯰) or Ōnamazu (大鯰). This catfish is guarded by the Japanese god Kashima, who is considered to be a god of thunder and a sword god. When Kashima drops his guard of the catfish, it crashes about and causes the earthquakes in Japan. Smits (2006) claims that the catfish also became worshipped after the Ansei Edo earthquake (1855) as the God of World Rectification. Today in modern Japan, catfish are used as illustrations on various earthquake warning items, such as the Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) logo by the Japanese Meteorological Agency (JMA) for their early warning machines and another early warning mobile application called Yurekuru Call.

Going into more detail about earthquake warning systems, the EEW is divided into two schemes. One of the schemes is for the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, and the other scheme is for the general public. Throughout Japan there are around 4,235 seismometers which are able to detect P-waves emitted by incoming earthquakes. Through this the JMA

is able to estimate the earthquake's epicentre and emit warnings via the various methods put in place. These include television, mobile phone networks, radio receivers, and the internet. An EEW alert is only issued to the public if the shindo level is '5-lower' or higher, and for the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services shindo level 3 or higher. After receiving a warning via any of those means, a person would normally have a few seconds to a couple of minutes to prepare for the incoming earthquake, but of course a person would have less time if they are closer to the epicentre.

When asking the students what they knew about earthquake resistant buildings, practically all of them did not know anything about different types of mechanisms. I half expected this, as it is quite a specific topic that I assumed would not be included in the Japanese school education system. After the students told me they did not know anything about earthquake resistant buildings, I briefly gave them a simple explanation of the different types of mechanisms.

There are multiple different ways an building can be built to be earthquake resistant, including shock absorbers, pendulums, and core-wall construction. Looking at shock absorbers, their purpose is to slow down and reduce the magnitude of vibratory motions by turning kinetic energy into heat energy, which can be dissipated through hydraulic fluid. This process is otherwise known as dampening, and therefore shock absorbers are often referred to as dampeners. Harris (2013) states that engineers place shock absorbers on each level of a building, with one end attached to a column and one end attached to a beam. Each shock absorber contains a piston that moves inside a cylinder filled with silicone oil. When an earthquake occurs, the horizontal motion of the building causes the piston in each shock absorber to push against the oil, which converts the earthquake's kinetic energy into heat energy.

Another similar form of dampening is via the use of pendulums, particularly in skyscrapers. These are otherwise known as tuned mass dampers. This involves suspending a very large mass near the top of the structure. Steel cables support this mass, and liquid shock absorbers lie in between the mass and building being protected. When an earthquake strikes and causes the building to sway, the pendulum moves in the other direction, dissipating the energy. An example of this type of proofing can be seen with the Akashi Kaikyō Bridge near Kobe.

Relating this back to Japan, the Tokyo Skytree uses these types of seismic proofing. The central shaft is made of reinforced concrete, with its main internal pillar being attached to outer tower structure for the first 125 metres above the ground. From this point until 375 metres, the pillar is attached to the tower frame with oil shock absorbers. Additionally, the structure uses tuned mass dampers in order to keep the centre of gravity as central as possible to the tower's base. According to the structure's designers, these dampers can absorb around 50 percent of the energy caused by an earthquake.

Another thing I wanted to find out about was the extent of knowledge the students had about what to do during an earthquake. The students all had similar answers, saying that during elementary school they are instructed on what to do when an earthquake strikes. Of course during that time, they would listen to what the teacher told them as they would have been much younger and inexperienced. At public elementary schools in Japan, earthquake drills are held quite regularly in order to teach the children from a young age. One of the main actions that they were taught was to climb under their desks head first and to hold onto the legs of the desk until the earthquake has finished. Afterwards the teacher will gather up the students in the class and take them outside, in order to carry out a register to make sure all of the students are present and safe. If the earthquake strikes whilst they are outside, they are taught to convene away from the school building in an open space so to avoid falling debris. In buildings with more than one floor, the children are able to practice using chutes out of the windows so that they can arrive at the

ground floor quickly and safely. Additionally there exists special earthquake rooms that shake, which act as simulation devices.

In conclusion, earthquakes have been ingrained in Japanese culture even though people may not think about them on a daily basis. This is seen through the country's folktales, building infrastructure, warning systems, and native beliefs. Comparing this to other countries where earthquakes are very rare, the difference in opinion can be explained more easily. Researching into these topics has been enlightening, and my knowledge of earthquakes in Japan has greatly improved.

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## Arcade and Gambling Culture in Japan

Harvey Helmer

University of York Saint John (United Kingdom)



**Summary:** 日本のギャンブル文化、そしてそれが人々にどのように影響するかを示します

### Introduction

In this essay, we will look into the culture surrounding Japanese arcades, otherwise known as ゲームセンター (game centres) and gambling. The main points that will be tackled include; why arcades in Japan are still a successful, booming industry whilst they eventually died out in western countries, what links can be found to the gambling industry with particular interest in the pachinko and ‘pachislot’ market, and what effects the home and work culture of Japan have on the concerned industries. Reference will be made to various articles that deal with these questions with a narrower view so that they may be seen in a broader light.

### The state of arcades and gambling world wide

After seeing a friend off at Okayama Station I make my exit to cycle home, on my way to the bike park, however, I take a detour through skymall 21 to a small, somewhat rundown, building with ‘STARDUST GAMEZONE’ plastered on the façade. As I enter I become wrapped in humidity and warmth produced by the 20 or so 7ft tall boxes housing an assortment of games, controls and flashing lights. A myriad of sound assaults my ears as I stroll past a few machines to find my game of choice, I push a 100-yen coin into the marked slot, push a card up against an e-reader and begin what should be about 15 minutes of entertainment for a fifth of what my lunch cost.

In 2016 the games industry across all platforms garnered a revenue of around 101.1 billion USD the largest share of which was in Asia Pacific region (APAC) which saw around 47% of the total (McDonald, 2017), In Japan alone in 2017 it is predicted there will be around 64.8M players who will contribute to a

total revenue across all platforms of 12.5 billion USD, making it the third largest gaming market worldwide (McDonald, 2017). Most of these gamers play on smartphones, often logging time on their games of choice on the commute to and from school or work. It's undeniable that gaming isn't going away anytime soon, especially in Japan.

Japan is no stranger to gambling, even during the Tokugawa Shogunate when private gambling was made illegal, the populace found a way to circumvent laws to gamble using card sets such as Unsun Karuta. Currently gambling in Japan is generally banned by the Criminal Code chapter 23, there are several exceptions however such as betting on horse racing and motor sports. At the centre of this essay we will focus primarily on Pachinko due to its connection to gaming. The Pachinko industry in Japan is a market monolith and thanks to certain laws granting Pachinko an exception on being considered gambling parlours can be found in abundance across Japan. As of 2011 there were around 12,480 pachinko parlours in the country.

Pachinko itself is a traditional Japanese game where players fire balls in a pinball-like slot machine. If players can hit special goals with the balls they stand to win a jackpot, often a reward of more balls. Parlours can get away with not being considered gambling because the rewarded balls can only be exchanged for prizes, or special tokens. Most players will exchange their balls for tokens which they then sell for money at stores generally close to the parlours and because the players aren't getting money in the parlour itself, no laws are being broken.



Pachislot is a permutation of the classic pachinko game, the only real similarity in most machines being the reward of little metal balls. One of the largest attraction to the Pachislot variant is the wide variety of styles. Pachislots generally have the player using a slot machine to hit certain targets, the player keeps hitting away at the luck based slots until they score a win, while they are rolling the slot a repeating CG cutscene is played on the machine's screen, the scene does not change until a player hits a win. This means that to 'win' the game the player must rely on the luck of the slots to see the continuation of the story being played out on the machines screen. This often leads to players spending a lot of money very quickly as the player feeds more coins into the machine for more spins to gain more jackpots and continue watching the movie.

### **The cross over between the gaming and gambling worlds**

Inherently Gambling and gaming are one in the same, a player will follow a set of rules to achieve a goal or a 'win state'. The main difference is that gambling involves a real-world reward, money. Outside of Japan the links stop there, gambling stays generally to card games and slot machines but within Japan and other parts of Eastern Asia video games and gambling are somewhat more homogenous. It's fairly common practice the world over for popular media entities to receive video game adaptations, take for example popular blockbuster movies such as Spiderman that regularly get video game releases along-side their movie counterparts. In Japan, this goes for Pachinko too, it's highly common for anime,

popular amongst an older male demographic to receive Pachinko or Pachislot releases such as ‘Fist of the North Star’ and games particularly from Konami Digital Entertainment such as ‘Metal Gear Solid’ and ‘Silent Hill’.

It is also common in Japan for Pachinko Parlours and Game Centres to be situated close to one another often due to proximity to stations or roads frequented by the target audiences which happen to cross over, adult males on their journey home from work or school. Therefore it’s important to note the market share of mobile gamers and gamers as a whole in Japan, in recent years Japan has finally succumbed to the creeping death of the Arcade industry, home and mobile gaming. In a report published in 2016 by Dentsu they stated that “The number of game arcades has almost halved in the past 10 years to its lowest level ever” meanwhile “The Smartphone game market has been rapidly increasing since 2011, and reached almost 900 billion yen in 2014” (Dentsu, 2017).

The cross over extends past mere proximity and mechanics though, one of the most popular items in any game centre by far and away are the prize grabber machines. The best way to drive an obscure market generally for a very specific audience is to boast something that anyone from almost any demographic can enjoy. The premise is that you are presented with a large glass box containing a prize you generally have some desire for like a figure of an anime character, a large box of your favourite snack or even a towel. These machines don’t quite fall into gaming nor do they fall into gambling, you have a goal to reach, grabbing the prize, but you’re also making a money investment to win a pay out, and many ‘skilled’ players do indeed reach a payout after selling off their prizes for often almost twice the amount they paid into the machine.

### **The rise of the home console and mobile gaming, and why it took so long for the arcade to fall in Japan**

One of the largest killers of the arcade industry particularly in the western world is the market for home consoles which eventually became so available and convenient that by the late 90’s game arcades were all but dead, today arcades in the west aren’t what they used to be, new games are released less and they exist almost as a showcase of how games used to be, revenue is also dwindling as the average game costs a dollar, or a pound in the face of inflation. Due to this and despite a recent surge in popularity for games that used to be homed in arcades like fighting games and rhythm games, many manufacturers and developers don’t see much of a market in the western space for arcades anymore.

In Japan, however, the popularity of home consoles didn’t subtract from the popularity of arcades. For many before the 2010’s work culture meant that time spent at home was often time for eating and sleeping, particularly in large cities like Tokyo homes were and still are incredibly small with very little space to spare for large items like televisions and video game consoles which seem to grow in size each generation. Another boon to arcades was that until the early 2010’s mobile gaming was undeveloped and still going through a fairly rough naissance meaning that the only way to grab a quick game of something to wind down on the way home really was going to a game centre or a pachinko parlour.

Something else that factored in the favour of arcades in Japan was the maintenance of the cash based society. While other countries began moving over to cards for almost all transactions as far as to become the predominant form of payment in places such as most of Western Europe, Japan stood by paper and metal money. After researching reasons for this there doesn’t seem to be a consensus but suggestions as to why ranged from banks, sticking to old archaic systems forcing fees on people daring to pay by plastic over paper and a lack of trust in retailers after strings of thefts where retailers stole customers card details to steal money from their accounts. Proper sources for these claims weren’t found but whatever the answer, to this day the system remains predominantly paper based. Due to this, most everyone in Japan ends up with a back pocket full of change, and what better way to get rid of those

floating 100 yen coins than to spend them in the arcade or pachinko parlour on your daily commute for a quick 15-20 minutes of entertainment.



As with all good things, however, the tell-tale signs of an end to the arcade hayday have come. With the rise of the smartphone, getting a quick fix of entertainment on the train, bus or just when sitting about with nought better to do, the smartphone and the abundance of ‘free-to-play’ (f2p) games services just fine. These games lord many advantages over the arcades of old, portability, free at the point of use with the option of spending real world money for extra goodies in the game, and increasingly competitive levels of graphics

and gameplay capability. The fact that arcades are locked in their sweltering rooms and blocked by a paywall of 100-300 yen leaves the arcade and indeed the pachinko parlours with only two things, innovative new ways to play their games that can’t be done on a touchscreen and the social aspect of going to a place full of real people to play games together often with or against complete strangers.

### **Rolling the dice, shuffling the deck**

While it is technically illegal to gamble, pachinko and various other forms of the game have clearly subverted the laws. Recently however there were movements within the Liberal Democratic Party government to open casinos under claims that it could boost tourism, to date however no legislation to such end has been passed. To date there are only a few ways to truly gambling, prefectural lotteries, public sports, pachinko and pachislot machines.

As the situation is at current it seems that the arcade scene may continue to decline but may very well retain its core fanbase, often users who become very dedicated to their games of choice, while the more casual players stay away. The same can be said for pachinko arcade as more and more gambling games with real money payouts like online poker are increasingly found on the mobile with very few laws banning them in the country. Today the Japanese arcade scene remains somewhat unique save for the similar South Korean scene, and due to this interest in arcades has once again grown in the west.

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## Agriculture Production of Japan

Sydney Williamson

Arizona State University (USA)

**Summary:** この論文は日本の農業の生産についてです。日本の農業の生産はほとんど米や魚や大豆などです。しかし日本で三種の生産は減られています。今は日本の自給自足は 39%です。外国からたくさん輸入される、農業者が少ない、日本人の食生活が変化しているなどの理由です。そのため、この論文の目的は日本の農業の生産を、自給自足の割合を説明し現代の農業問題をはなして将来に問題がもっと悪くなる前に現在の問題を直します。

It is well known that Japan is one of the many capitals for rice production. By being able to produce so much rice, Japan has been able to feed its population for centuries. Even in the modern world, Japan continues to excel at rice production by breaking the country's rice exporting records. But rice alone is not enough to keep a nation fed. For years, Japan has been struggling to be self-sufficient when it comes to producing food. The main reason being that Japan has continued to rely on importing products from foreign countries. Furthermore, a decrease in farmers and arable land prevents Japan from producing more crops. Food self-sufficiency rate refers to the ratio of food consumed and supplied by domestic producers. Japan measures its self-sufficiency rate by calculating the amount of calories consumed from domestically supplied produce. While living in Japan, I noticed that many foods in restaurants and in grocery stores are not traditionally Japanese. Additionally, I noticed that imported goods are a common sight. After observing these elements, I have decided to research the current state of Japan's agriculture production and discover if Japan self-sufficient nation.

From 1875 until the early 1960s, Japan maintained a self-sufficiency rate of 80% by consistently having 5.50 million hectares of farmland, 14 million people employed in agriculture, and 5.50 million farming households (Yamashita). As the 1960s progressed and the economy improved, Japan's agriculture production slowly began to fall for a number of reasons. Advances in mechanized farming lessened the working hours for full-time farmers, thus enabling them to find employment in other industries; especially those that were not related to agriculture. As a result, many people became part-time farmers that would only maintain their farm on the weekends and dedicate more of their time to other forms of work. In some households, adolescent family members would move into cities to search for a life outside of farming, leaving the parents to maintain the family farm well into old age. Overtime, the number of farming families declined, and soon non-farming families became a common place. Since 1961, more than 40% of farms around Japan have disappeared due to abandonment and land conversion for growing cities. Although Japan has lost nearly most of its farms, there still manages to be a surplus of rice for nearly 50 years. But even with a surplus of rice, the Japanese diet is gradually becoming westernized. As a direct result of influence from America after World War II, the Japanese diet which previously consisted of a hearty serving of rice, fish, and soybeans, now contains non-traditional foods such as wheat; mainly in the form of breads and pasta, as well as red meat.

Japan continues to adopt new habits from the west. As of 2015, Japan's self-sufficiency rate has settled at 39%. The result of this poor sufficiency rate comes from many factors. One of the reasons as to why Japan has a low sufficiency rate is simply due to there not being enough farmers. For the past seven years, Japan's population has been declining at an alarming rate. Roughly 30% of the Japanese population

is above the age of 60. The senior population is responsible for majority of the agricultural production in Japan. Sadly, as the population grows older, and the amount of young people moving into cities, those residing in the rural areas are unable to hand their farms over to next generation farmers, thus leading to the inevitable abandonment of farms. Encroaching cities also play a part in loss of farmland. Cities with growing population eventually expand into farmlands and destroy the farm.

Farmers who make healthy profits often do so by following corporate-style farm management. Other farmers make substantial profits by producing rice, barley, and other land-intensive crops. Others make profits from small plots of land owned by part time farmers. Farmers that produce “luxury” fruit found in Japan are often not counted for in Japan’s self-sufficiency because the farms do not produce an efficient amount to be distributed throughout the country. Efforts to export “luxury” fruits have made little progress due to many buyers not wanting to pay for such expensive fruit, even if they are “perfect”. Additionally, even if the priceless fruit are to be sold abroad, there would only be few buyers who can purchase a low quantity of fruits because they are not grown in large quantities. Rural areas that are suffering from depopulation often have elderly farmers making low income. As the elderly population increases, more cases in which some towns are cut off from larger ones. Towns that have limited or no access to the outside world are unable to sell their crops to other towns for profits leave other townsfolk vulnerable to starvation. If the town is only able to produce enough food for themselves, they are also unable to sell their products. Low farming income and low self-sufficiency are making Japanese agriculture unprofitable.

As times changes, the food preferences often change first when non-traditional foods make their way into a new country. The Japanese diet is a great example of this kind of change. Instead of consuming natto and rice for breakfast, one might have a slice of bread. For dinner, a family might decide to have spaghetti rather than udon. This change is mainly due to the “Japanese diet no longer being “Japanese” (Barrett)”. The Japanese diet is known as consisting of rice, vegetables (either pickled or fermented), and fish. Referring back to World War II, American influence paved the way for change in terms of dietary practice (Gianné). Now, more Japanese prefer bread over rice as well as meat instead of fish. This habit is mostly seen in younger people more so than in the elderly. Elderly people are more likely to continue having fish as a staple to their diet simply for the lack of desire to change their eating habits. The change in dietary habits for young people comes from their preferences in food and interest in foreign foods, which brings us to the topic of importation. To make up for their inability to produce a sufficient amount of crops for the country, Japan has taken to importing 61% of produce that was not traditionally consumed. The need for soybeans continues to rise; however, there is a greater need for corn and maize to feed Japan’s livestock. The country’s growing appetite for meat also adds to the costs of importation. Heavy importing from the U.S, Australia, and China has led to an increase of various commodities to compensate for the expenses needed to pay for the imported goods.

The Fukushima Daiichi disaster resulted in a heavy drop in agricultural production due to contamination from radiation. The 20-kilometer-wide exclusion zone of radioactive contamination also caused many to cull their livestock and destroy their crops. Six years after the incident, fears against consuming products from Fukushima and the surrounding prefectures have remained as many Japanese and foreign importers refuse to purchase any food-related products coming from the former exclusion zone. This fear prevents Japan’s self-sufficiency rate from rising. The lack of purchasing crops domestically or being able to export them to others leads to a low sufficiency rate when a country’s own population has no desire to eat produce from their own home.

In an effort to raise the country's calorie self-sufficiency rate, the Democratic party of Japan set a goal to have a food self-sufficiency rate of 50% by 2020 (Japan Times). However, this rate was deemed impossible, as the self-sufficiency rate laid flat at 39% for the sixth year in a row in 2015. After this sixth failure, the government decided to lower its goal and aim for 45% self-sufficiency in the near future. Toshiki Mashimo, a member of Consumers Union of Japan, stated that food self-sufficiency gains could be made if the country focused less on supply issues and more on reclaiming farmland, promoting local production and consumption, and on reducing meat intake. This would prove to be incredibly difficult to do because of the increasing generation gap and eating preferences of young people. There is a growing interest in turning smaller-scale farms over to large-scale industrial agriculture farms, but this would be more energy intensive, and would require heavy machinery to reap in the harvest.

The Transition Movement, a non-profit organization, offers the idea of socially changing how food is grown locally. It emphasizes growing crops locally and sustainably to help communities become more self-sufficient. Just outside of Tokyo in Shizuoka prefecture lies a tiny village called Konohana. Konohana has become known as an "eco-village" by returning to traditional farming methods. The farming methods are improved upon by having workers that come from various backgrounds to aid with the farming. Rather than plain farmers working, engineers, IT professionals, and other valuable specialists work together to create sustainable farms. Through community commitment and help from The Transition Movement, Konohana has become proof that sustainable agriculture is possible in Japan. After some time, Konohana has become a successful village that is self-sustainable at producing its own agriculture. Due to do its success, other villages around Japan have been inspired by Konohana to become "eco-villages" as well. Konohana's success has earned favorable praise from the local government, and even brought in residents to the area. This social change of how agriculture is produced gives Japan some small amount of hope at becoming more efficient. Although Konohana had been able to become self-sufficient, implementing Transition Movement's goal in larger cities would prove to be difficult since the transition has not been done on a city-level scale.

There is also the idea of being a half-farmer/half-x. The half-farmer-/half-x lifestyles would allow for people to work their personal job for half the time while the remaining time would be spent farming. This lifestyle aims to have people work the job that they are passionate about while maintaining a small farm. Although the idea sounds attractive at first, mainly for young people, many people have a romanticized image of farming. The half-farmer-/half-x lifestyle would give people the opportunity to experience what it would be like to have their own farm while learning agricultural sciences. The main goal of this idea is to gradually create more farmers overtime.

Companies such as Kirin, Asahi, and even Ito-en have looked overseas to produce their products in the land-rich Australia in order to make up for any production gaps that might occur in the future. Other Japanese food corporations are following similar paths but are establishing shops in other parts of Asia. These risks are being made so that Japan can reach new markets while at the same time supplying itself. Conversely, this will not substantially lower the price of commodities brought over from foreign countries immensely, simple because the harvest is being brought overseas- more money will be spent on retrieving the crops instead of importing them.

At the moment, there is little concern about Japan's self-sufficiency. Most of the nation's attention is being directed at the aging population problem and immigration laws, and agriculture is on the low end of the list. As a result of the unsubstantial amount of attention directed at Japan's agriculture production, it would seem that another nuclear accident or breakdown of some sort to undercut Japan's food security. The Fukushima Daiichi disaster had resulted in a devastating loss of food and land due to radiation. Should an accident as large as Fukushima occur again near Tokyo, at Hamaoka Nuclear Power

Plant, local food supply surrounding the area would suffer a tremendous loss that could potentially devastate Japan's agriculture production. If Japan does not suddenly have a life threatening food shortage, there is always the looming issue of Japan's rapidly aging society, which is Japan's current and biggest concern. In 2012 the Japanese government announced that by 2060 the population of Japan will fall to 87 million (Japan Times). With Japan just recently losing one million citizens in five years, concerns as to who is going to fill in the jobs left behind by the elderly are rising. If Japan's population continues to decline, many citizens will have to turn towards the half-farmer/half-x lifestyle to make ends-meet. But once the population declines, so will the food market. Although the idea of less people equating to more food might sound tempting initially, it still will not make up for the loss of revenue needed to pay farmers and expenses for importation.

Looking back at Japan's history, the country shows that it can adapt to dramatic changes when needed. However, simply because a nation can adapt when needed does not mean that they should wait until the last minute to do so. After researching Japan's agricultural production, I have come to the conclusion that the country has a long way to go before their agriculture is noteworthy again. It seems as though Japan will have to wait for its government officials and corporate leaders to be convinced that Japan's self-sufficiency problem can be solved without relying on other markets to meet the country's needs.

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## Comparative Study of Community Learning Centers

Alivia Hancock

Appalachian State University (USA)

**Summary:** 学校や大学を卒業したら、人間がいろいろなものを習い続けます。だから、0歳から100歳が日本の公民館に行けます。子供が年上に教えたり、年上が子供に教えたりします。数学と美術の授業も取れます。その反面、アメリカでその大人学校があまりありません。もしあれば、仕事の授業しか取れません。どうやってアメリカ人の大人が習い続けられますか調べています。日本とアメリカに比べて、政治や文化や教育は全然違います。

Lifelong learning is the concept of education outside of the classroom. It supports the idea of adult pursuing and developing an individualized education plan to be a knowledgeable, active, competent citizen. By developing intellectual curiosity, the hobby of learning is one that can be continued throughout one's life. "In self-directed lifelong learning, the learner owns the question. In contrast, in education the teacher owns the question. The key to learning empowerment is to follow the lead of the learner to nurture and support individual interests, rather than impose learning"(Norman). This provides not only self-enrichment but promotes community development through social skills and a dedication for the humanities. Simultaneously improving oneself and their community furthers the availability of such knowledge to future generations. One way to encourage this is through the implementation of community learning centers where both students and teachers can gather to share skills, ideas, and draw inspiration from one another. In a study concerning lifelong learning, Elmborg notes: "—our discussions of education and learning are deeply infused with social and political tensions about what kind of nation and people we want to be." This holds to be true for any country, and Japan is no exception. While America values the education of its youth, there are few programs to provide learning opportunities to adults. Japan, on the other hand, has "been very active in promoting adult education and has established and partially subsidized adult education centers throughout the country" (Han, Maniko). By comparing the differences in education rates and availability of community centers, one can see that the differences in intellectual culture between Japan and America.

These differences can be both quantitatively and qualitatively different. 14% of Americans have a "below basic" (10 years old) literacy level. This means they are functionally illiterate and cannot competently interact with society. American education is compulsory until the age of 16. However, only 98% of children are enrolled in primary school each year. While this may seem like a small number of out of school students, the dropout rate leaves most high schools with less than a 90% graduation rate. Alternative diplomas are available, but the resources to take the test are often not adequately provided.

While metropolitan centers may have available community learning centers, many are understaffed and unavailable for more rural citizens. In lieu of these NGO facilities many Americans turned to rely on the public libraries available in almost every community. In turn, libraries have taken it upon themselves to provide opportunities for education outside traditional institutions. "Lifelong Learning is enshrined in the professional consciousness of librarians through the American Library Association's (ALA) 'Core Values of Librarianship'" (Elmborg). Funded by individual municipalities, each library offered support for literacy and technology as well as community programs for children and adults. These programs offered guidance for literacy as well as basic life skills and community

relationships. Over time, the public library became synonymous with a kind of public forum. Because many of the schools—primary through graduate levels—are owned by economic institutions, conflicts between administrations and students are frequent. “The terms education and learning are often used interchangeably, one result being that education and, by implication, learning are often considered to occur only in formal settings” (Han, Maniko). Because of this, many learning centers outside of traditional school systems are viewed as illegitimate.

However, public libraries lack the restrictions that academic institutions and school libraries do. American public libraries focus primarily on the promotion of education. Allowing every person to “engage in teaching and learning” is the main goal of these libraries rather than financial growth (Elmborg). One librarian notes: “I believe libraries are in the lifelong learning business; we help people to find and use information every day in ways that support their learning needs and interests” (Norman). Whether this is as simple as allowing a mother to borrow a picture book or providing economic literacy classes, both provide learning materials to their audiences.

The provided case study as follows will draw on information from Barrett Memorial Library, located in Williams Bay, WI, USA. A variety of programs were offered during both 2015 and 2016, ranging from local history to dance lessons. Daily averages of patrons equaled approximately 6.5% of the total town population. However, it is interesting to note the demographic of these patrons. As age increases, the frequency of participants decreases by almost 220%. At the same time, the number of programs based on age group decreases by 150%. While the importance of early education is emphasized, many older patrons do not feel compelled to continue after high school. This is also noted by Han and Maniko’s research on the same topic: “Unfortunately, the educational needs of

older adults (in this article defined as age 65 and over, unless otherwise noted) are often overlooked due to prejudicial and typically inaccurate beliefs that they lack the interest and/or abilities to continue education.” Once again, the cultural importance of youth-centric institutionalized learning heavily influences the perceived audience of learning centers. Older adults are assumed to have learned “everything” and no longer require the assistance of learning centers. The shift occurs early in adulthood, where the cultural importance of learning is focusing on employment and job skills. Personal and community improvement were ranked almost 35% lower when asked about motives for adult learning (Han, Maniko).

	2015	2016
Children’s Programs	180	177
Participants	2600 Children	1900 Children
	735 Adults	817 Adults
Teen Programs	100	130
Participants	1600	2200
Adult Programs	104	117
Participants	662	862
Literacy Programs	1	15
Literacy Participants	n/a*	n/a*
Total Programs	389	426
Total Participants	5558	5831
Daily Participants	167	168
*Participant number not available due to patron privacy		

Unlike America, the Japanese government has an established policies to promote life-long education (Han, Maniko). Simultaneously, Japan is recognized as having some of the most educated people in the world. Over 99% of the population is literate, meaning they can adequately meet the written demands and challenges in their everyday life. Perhaps this is due to the fact that 100% of Japanese children are enrolled in primary school. By the time these students reach graduation, high schools retain over 95% of their students.

Kominkan (公民館 lit. “public place of democracy”) were established in the mid 1940s to support communities in the

aftermath of World War II. Specifically they provided activities to further the learning of out-of-school children and adults. These classes ranged from physical exercise classes to mathematics tutoring. As stated on the Basic Act on Education, Kominkan defined their goals as:

“Education shall aim for the full development of personality and strive to nurture the citizens, sound in mind and body, who are imbued with the qualities necessary for those who form a peaceful and democratic state and society”—Takaaki Iwasa source

With these loose definitions, the community can decide to customize their schedules with classes they deem important to improving their community. With national literacy rates at nearly 100%, the Kominkan has turned to social education and living in harmony with neighbors. Life skills as well as healthful living classes are open to all ages of the public to attend. “[kominkan] offers courses on lifestyle patterns, mental and physical health, issues of importance in Japanese society, hobbies and traditional arts, and community activism and social skills” (Nojima, 1994). Han and Maniko observed that these courses were offered in hopes that community members (specifically older generations) would sustainably pass these skills on to younger people within their social circles.

Whereas America values formal, individual learning over community learning, Japan strives to create a system where both methods are equally important. Informal activities such as hobbies and volunteering are being reviewed and incorporated into an already diverse educational systems to reach all generations (Han, Maniko). In fact, many kominkan are the primary educational providers for elderly community centers. Beginning in the early 1970s, government sponsored programs became available to increase life and living quality. By carefully monitoring and improving the elderly care, some of the pressure of Japan’s rapidly aging society can be alleviated.

Due to Japan’s increased focus of adult learning, adults and older generations have had their educational opportunities greatly expanded over the past few decades. After these policies were implemented on a national level, most communities are now aware of the importance of adult education and its benefits on both individual, community, and national levels.

While America could learn a lot from Japan’s lifelong learning policies, it is highly unlikely that they would advance past independent community centers. At a national level, “cultural differences between Japan and America preclude either nation adopting the other’s policies” (Han, Maniko). Even if Japan has proved that empowering citizens through cultural education is an achievable and desirable standard for countries, American culture does not provide a viable environment to develop these ideas. While one of the keystone elements of Japanese culture is the recognition of the group as a whole over the individual, American culture has the opposite view. Though both countries operate under a capitalist economy and democratic government, the substance and nature of educational policies directly reflect their cultures. While America allows each state to decide on the content and availability of adult education, Japan centralized core learning values to “extend standardized lifelong learning opportunities to the entire populace” (Han, Maniko).

However, American education systems would widely benefit from educational support from informal learning services such as Japanese kominkan. Economically both kominkan and public libraries are quite similar. Publically funded by their respective municipalities, their economic stability greatly relies on the people who live around them. A problem that both countries have faced is that of funding. Lower-income areas have less money to offer to these educational centers, and are subsequently less educated than higher-income neighborhoods. In America, however, the disparity between the highest-income families and the lowest is much greater than those in Japan. This isn’t to say adult learning programs are completely unavailable, but that there is no policy to provide and encourage lifelong

learning. To survive in current American economic conditions many programs are forced to cooperate with professional for-profit institutions with goals other than education. Though they may be able to conceptually survive, many original cornerstone concepts and freedom are lost when they are recognized as a legitimate educational institution. In addition to this, centers may also be forced to adopt for-profit policies and lose a lot of the low-income learners.

Even more extreme is the rate of violence in both countries. Comparing crime in Japan and America is almost impossible, as America holds the highest incarceration rate in the world. Even more shocking: 70% of these inmates are illiterate. Could this could have been avoided if America provided a more comprehensive view of education for all ages and demographics? Providing additional resources for those who are not able to attend conventional educational programs gives students of all ages a sense of purpose as well as the cultural competency to handle their issues with a more in-depth, sympathetic view. In a study of lifelong learning, Emborg supports this by saying, “The more we learn about and understand the world and ourselves, the better we assume our lives will be, both economically and personally.”

Only 50% of Americans over 16 have visited their community library in the past year. The other 50% seemed to have slipped through the cracks. The stigma surrounding what qualifies legitimate education and who is eligible has skewed not only American test scores but also the morale of students after high school. If America could adopt a slightly more community-based view it would soon see that providing all ages with resources to pursue their desire to learn about the world around them would benefit not only the individual but the nation as a whole. Privatizing education and limiting those who attend will only continue to restrict knowledge and strain interpersonal relationships between all citizens. Even unconsciously, those preexisting community learning centers in American libraries are already catering to this. While providing youth with alternative educational programs, it does very little to pursue to the concept of *lifelong* learning. Encouraging multigenerational programs would provide a diverse group to teach each other as they grow and age, teach and learn, and most importantly: improve and continue to question to the world around them.

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## Creating a Sustainable Future Through Community Building and Cooperation

Chris Hart

Appalachian State University (USA)

### Summary:

持続可能性と福祉に興味があるので、私は日本の中で持続可能性と福祉について書きました。お互いに助け合って自然を構うはとても大切だと思います。人間は持続可能性を練習したら、社会は強くなれます。それから、一緒にキャピタリズムを崩せる。そして一緒に地球を助けます

Wind turbines, solar panels, biofuel, agriculture, climate change, for many people these are a few things that might come to mind when the word ‘sustainability’ is mentioned. And of course these things are all relative to that topic, but in my time here in Okayama, I’ve learned that sustainability also encompasses the things like public/cultural education, healthcare and social outreach/service programs to all ages. I’ve always imagined those things to fall under the umbrella of social justice and crucial for societal cohesion, but thought of them as separate to the topic of sustainability, but in fact all these things are part of a complex system that constitutes the fabric of our societies.

So far during my time studying in Japan I’ve gotten to experience a variety of approaches to social and environmental sustainability. Both facets of sustainability occur at the local and state level. I would describe the social aspect of sustainability as encompassing healthcare, community outreach programs and education. It’s important to note that education incorporates not only academics but also cultural, nutritional, ecological and social relationships.

There were a number of ways I found that the state approached healthcare and also the way the state (as in national & prefectural government) and locals of Okayama collaborated to improve health and wellbeing for citizens. First the most obvious, I noted when coming here that unlike my home country the United States, all people here can receive national healthcare, and it was surprisingly affordable. It cost me less than 30\$ US dollars a month and covered 70% of medical expenses. I even was able to get it raised to 90% coverage because I was considered a low income resident. Even at the university here, all students get a health checkup at the start of every semester. According to an article by the Washington Post “The Japanese visit a doctor nearly 14 times a year, more than four times as often as Americans.”(Harden 2009) Healthcare in Japan has a much more preventative approach, by making it more accessible to everyone, frequent visits can catch health issues before they become a problem, and for situations that may arise suddenly, people can go to the doctor before it becomes worse without fear of medical fees putting them in debt as many do in the US. A CNN article published in 2013 stated that “Some 80 million people, around 43% of America's working-age adults, didn't go to the doctor or access other medical services last year because of the cost, according to the Commonwealth Fund's Biennial Health Insurance Survey.”(Luhby 2013) A system in which the majority of its citizens lack the means to afford adequate health care is bound to see negative impacts on other aspects of society and seriously hinder its sustainability. The more people who have health issues that they cannot afford to take care off the harder it will be to sustain a society’s productivity.

I also had the chance to visit a few Kominkans, which are essentially community centers. What I really liked about them was that every Kominkan I visited was different, and they focused their activities and workshops they offered based on the needs or interests of the community members involved. The Kominkans are funded by the government but are community controlled. Some of the activities they offered were geared towards cultural preservation, they offered Ikebana classes, a couple even taught

people how to use an old Japanese wooden loom and one even made an educational film about the local folklore. Some kominkans offered affordable day care services because there are fewer pre-k schools/daycares as a result of the shrinking younger population. They also offered life skills classes such as cooking, instrument lessons, free Japanese language classes for foreigners and activities where young children had the chance to talk and play with elderly people.

One of my only critiques of the Kominkan was that it primarily engages young children and older generations. Middle school, high school students and young adults don't seem to take much interest in the activities. When I asked a Japanese friend's parents and grandmother if their small town in Maizuru had a Kominkan they found it somewhat odd that a person my age would have any interest in one. And of the young people I asked (if they even were aware of kominkans) most said they were for old people and didn't really know much about them. I don't think that the lack of the younger generation's involvement rests solely in the kominkans hands though. Japanese middle and high school students are under immense pressure to do well and get accepted by either prestigious high schools or colleges respectively. These students often attend Gakushū juku (cram school) to rigorously study for several hours after regular school in order to maximise their chances of acceptance into good schools. So I feel that most students in general already have too much on their plate to really think about being involved in playing an active role in the kominkan or even just participating in kominkan activities.

I thought it was great that several kominkans offered cheap day care services, because according to a 2015 article from the Japan Times “there are 1.24 million single-mother households in Japan and 223,000 headed by single fathers. Of the total, 54 percent have incomes that set them below the poverty line — the highest rate in the developed world.”(Brasor, Tsubuku 2015). I think that kominkans offer the potential for communities to create better networks to help low income/single parent families like these. One Idea I have is for the kominkans to establish community tool sheds. Community Sheds are a place where donated tools can be stored and rented for free by everyone in the community. Sometimes household repair jobs or small projects require the use of tools, whether it's a specific sized screwdriver someone doesn't have or a power drill that they wouldn't use often enough to make purchasing it worthwhile, the shed would have. At the Kozai kominkan, they had a volunteer service that I thought was awesome. The volunteers were older member of the community and services they provided other members were helping out with things like grocery shopping, pulling weeds and cleaning around the house. There was a time limit on services provided to ensure that volunteers could tend to everyone equally. I thought this was a great program because it keeps the older volunteers active and connected to the other members of the community as well.

I also had the chance to talk with the leader of an NPO called Akane Freespace. They provided support in a couple different ways to kids of all ages who are not able to attend school or had to drop out (usually due to social or financial problems). Firstly, they provide a space where kids come and hang out, play games, study and eat meals together. And it's at a regular house so I think it helps the kids to feel more welcome and comfortable and they perceive it less like a standard institution such as school. Secondly they help rehabilitate students in order for them to return to school. For older kids they help them with night classes and finding a job. Even if the students do return to school or graduate, they are still encouraged to stay involved and are always welcome to visit. Although high school in Japan is not mandatory, it greatly increases one's job opportunities. And according to a Japan Times article published in 2015, “Fees for public high school add up to ¥400,000 a year, while private schools average roughly ¥1 million.”. The same article states that in Japan 1 out of 6 children lives in poverty. Additionally this article also states that “less than a fifth of low-income students make it to university, compared with more than 51 percent of the general population.”(Hagiwara, Reynolds, JP Times) Organizations like Akane Freespace are crucial in providing a safety net for kids who would otherwise fall through the cracks. Because children of adults with poor education background and are low income are much more likely not to finish secondary education, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Aside from Kominkans, I got the opportunity to visit the ESD(Education for Sustainable Development) department of Okayama. I was really impressed by all the different programs and initiatives they had going on, ranging from ecological sustainability to social outreach programs. One initiative they had concerning ecological sustainability was through the energy division, where they would give a small stipend to people who wanted to install solar panels on their homes. I thought it was amazing to see the city actually helping residents to pay for solar panels, because in my home state of Florida, big energy companies lobby government officials in order to keep them from implementing tax breaks and other incentives, that make solar installations affordable. This way citizens remain dependant on big energy companies that rely on less environmentally friendly methods of producing the state's energy such as nuclear power.

There was another division of the ESD department that focused on providing counseling/guidance and financial aid to community groups who have project ideas. They gave me a couple pamphlets for projects they'd been involved with. One was to inform and encourage families to become temporary foster parents for children. The other pamphlet given to me was about gender identity and introduces the reader to a spectrum of gender identities within the LGBTQ community. Which I was surprised to see in Japan because I don't think of LGBT issues to be talked about much here. And after doing a little reading on LGBT rights in Japan I found out that in Japan "National law mandates people to obtain a mental disorder diagnosis and other medical procedures, including sterilization, to be legally recognized according to their gender identity."(HRW.org)

I was really impressed by the variety of programs and initiatives to environmental and social sustainability here in Okayama. I really think that these organizations could be an excellent agent for a broader and positive social change. Our planet and societies face challenges like no other generation has before, with the effects of climate change becoming worse along with pollution and poverty, communities must begin a movement to combat the social and financial inequality that our governments have allowed and fostered for decades. We need programs that help those in need, that teach us understanding and compassion even for those who are considered different or marginalized, programs that promote equality/solidarity between age, sex, ability, gender and class. In all the places I visited I felt cooperation and understanding were at the core of their values and I think those things are the foundation for a much larger sustainable revolution. When society is full of inequity, it's harder for people to care about the bigger global problems that may not be as visible, because they are too busy struggling just to get by. Whether it's families who are struggling to pay rent or a graduate that can't afford their student loan payments, it's easy to feel powerless in the face catastrophic global climate change, mass species extinctions and seemingly endless pollution. But my conclusion is that in order for us to start taking the necessary steps to truly turn conditions around on our planet, we must first begin community lead movements to take care of each other and form support systems that will allow us to all tackle the larger issues together.

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## A Japanese Perspective on the Effects of the Presence of Foreigners Within the Communities of Tsudaka & Kyoyama in Okayama City

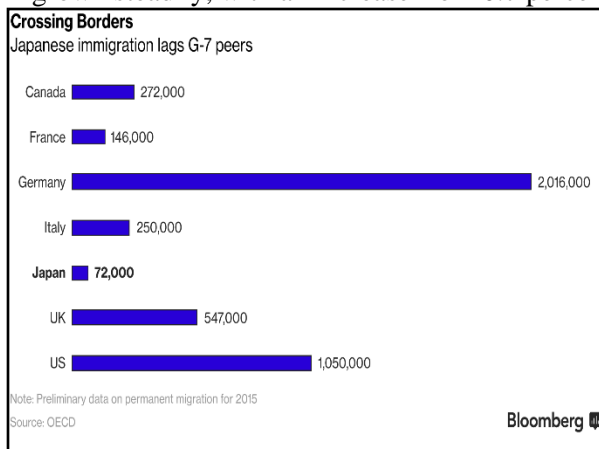
Jonathan Nuwanyakpa

The University of Kansas (USA)

**Summary:**本論では、訪日外国人の増加のより、日本人が持つ彼らに対する印象がどのように変化したを明らかにする。この心象調査にあたり、岡山県の2つの地域、津高と京山を調査対象地として選んだ。この2つの町の立地には特徴的な点がある。津高がショッピングセンターやレストランがほとんどない町なのに対し、京山は岡山大学周辺に位置しているため、多くの人々を引きつけている街である。

The purpose of this research paper, was to gain an insight from a Japanese point of view on how the possible increased presence of foreigners and interactions with them have positively or negatively affected their communities. Taking into consideration the vastness of Okayama City, two areas were chosen. Tsudaka and Kyoyama, as they were remarkably unique in regards to their location. Tsudaka, being located in the northern part of the city is very rural, and has few amenities such as shopping centers and restaurants that would prove attractive to local residents and foreigners. Whereas Kyoyama, situated near Okayama University and the center of the city, is more metropolitan which subsequently draws more people to the area. Within these two areas, interviews have been done that will clarify the images held by Japanese towards foreigners.

Japan's strenuous immigration policies often make it difficult for foreigners to come and settle into the country. Amongst the G7 nations which include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, The United States, and The United Kingdom, Japan is behind its partners in regards to the numbers of immigrants that are accepted annually. Although, due to factors such as Japan's rapid aging population which includes people aged 65 and older, accounted for 26.7 percent of the 127.11 population as of 2016 (See Figure 1) ("*Japan census report shows surge in elderly population, many living alone*". [japantimes.co.jp](http://japantimes.co.jp), 2016). As well as a significant decrease in its working population, with official government data showing that the number of workers in Japan is projected to decline by 12.4 percent or 7.9 million by 2030 ("*Japan running low on workers as proportion of over-65s hits record level*". [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), 2016.). Efforts have been made by the government to relax some of these policies to help stabilize and bolster the Japanese economy. According to official government data, the foreign share of the total population has grown steadily, with an increase from 0.7 percent or just under 900,000 in 1990 to 1.8 percent or



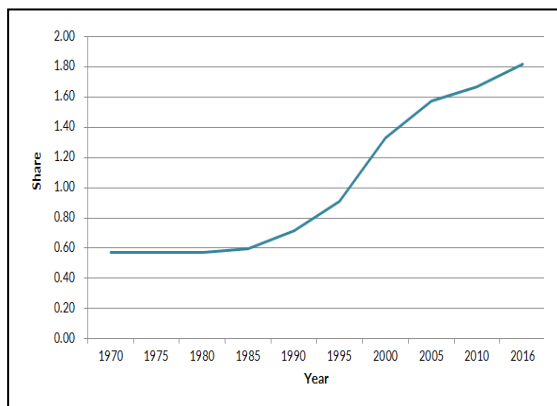
approximately 2.3 million in 2016 (See Figure 2). ("*As Its Population Ages, Japan Quietly Turns to Immigration*". [migrationpolicy.org](http://migrationpolicy.org), 2017.) It was still fairly surprising being able to recognize a stark amount of foreigners around the local communities of Okayama at the onset of the New Year. This observation was especially prevalent within the Okayama University school grounds, around the Okayama Station and the central part of the city, where an abundance of restaurants, cafés, and stores are located. In turn this sparked a curiosity about some of the effects, and challenges that have resulted due to this notion.

(Figure 1: Data on permanent migration for 2015)

During the time spent visiting the Tsudaka and Kyoyama Kominakn's, interviews were conducted where the target group was that of three individuals, whose ages ranged from 14-29 years (youth), 30-59 years (middle aged) and 60 years onwards (elderly) were chosen. The four key questions asked during the interviews are as follows:

- 1) Recently have you seen an increase or reduction in the amount of foreigners in your community?
- 2) During what period of time did foreigners first begin to enter your community?
- 3) What past or recent challenges have occurred in your community as a result of an increased presence with foreigners?
- 4) What are the most common forms of interactions that you have with foreigners?

Figure 2: Foreign Share of Japanese Population 1970-2016



The interviews included three individuals whose names were Takaaki Nobue, (elderly age group), Noriko Nakatani (middle-aged age group) and Keiko Funamori (elderly age group) whom have lived in Tsudaka since childhood, volunteered to share their experiences in relation to the presence and interactions they have had with foreigners in Tsudaka.

Tsudaka is widely characterized by farmland, and is rural in nature. As compared to the areas neighboring Okayama University, local and foreign residents are scarce in number. This is due to two major reasons. One, Tsudaka is geographically distant from the central part of the city.

As the time taken to travel there spans from approximately 30 minute by car or bus, to around one hour by bicycle. Moreover, frequent public transportation to and from Tsudaka is nearly nonexistent. With only one bus that travels to the area every hour. Commuting conveniently is often problematic if one does not own a vehicle.

The first question that was asked to the participants, was whether there had been an increase or reduction in the amount of foreigners coming into their community. They explained that Tsudaka historically has been regarded as an *Adjustment Area*, or private land owned by farmers. This particular aspect has made it nearly impossible for the government, real estate agencies, and big factories to build property, and in turn has negatively impacted both the number of foreigners wanting to settle into Tsudaka as well as prospective local residents. Despite this, large plots of land remain available that can be used to help bring about development to the community. Yet farmers are unwilling to sell their property regardless of the high value and high demand from investors and companies. More so, with the unavailability of major offices and big factory plants, foreigners looking for job opportunities tend to overlook Tsudaka. Despite there not being any major endeavors to expand Tsudaka, this year one of the key developments that took place was the establishment of a supermarket. Although no significant increase in the presence of foreigners have taken place, this has created a small number of foreigners mostly made up of international students from China, India, and Vietnam to settle in the area.

The second question to the participants asked about the period of time they first began to see foreigners enter into their community. Between 1992 and 1997, marked the first arrival of foreigners whom consisted of foreign students and teachers attending Okayama University from China, Vietnam, and Philippines. As they began to become more familiar with their surroundings, a large number of them intermarried with Japanese. Due to the lack of conveniences in Tsudaka as well there not being schools that had English in their curriculum, it was extremely rare for Americans and Europeans to come to Tsudaka on a frequent basis.

The third question addressed to the participants asked them to describe some of the past or recent challenges that have occurred in their community due to the increased presence of foreigners. One of the

main challenges that occurred when foreigners arrived in Tsudaka, was a lack of knowledge regarding the disposal of garbage. Since many foreigners and local residents were unable to communicate with one another, this often led tensions and slight conflict between both parties. In order to overcome this obstacle, pamphlets providing information on how to follow the correct methods to dispose of garbage were initially printed out in Chinese, and English, and then distributed to the homes of foreigners. Since then, relations between foreigners and residents of Tsudaka improved. As local residents were encouraged by the proactive steps foreigners took to respect the cleanliness of the community, and their recognition of the rules and regulations of waste disposal.

The fourth and final question asked the participants about the most common forms of interactions their community have with foreigners. They responded that the best opportunity to meet and discuss with foreigners occur during community events. These events attract foreign residents, whom are wanting to learn more about the local community and its members. Often, foreigners who are newcomers to Tsudaka attend these events, and express finding difficulties adjusting to their new life in the community. Primarily due to not being able understanding Japanese. As the vast majority foreigners living in Tsudaka speak English, few of the local residents who have a general understanding of the language are able to provide information about the locations of supermarkets, clinics, bus stops and other important community meeting places such as the Tsudaka Kominkan.

Three individuals by the names of Ando Suzuko, (elderly age group) Yumiko Iwamoto, (middle-aged age group) and Ai Morishi (youth age group) whom have lived in Kyoyama for the majority of their lives, participated to share the experiences they have had interacting with foreigners and observations regarding an increased presence of foreign nationals in Kyoyama.

Kyoyama being close in proximity to Okayama University and the center of the city is surrounded by an abundance of eateries, entertainment centers, learning institutions, grocery stores, banks, and sporting facilities. Kyoyama in addition is considered fairly wealthy in regards to the make-up of its residents, some including full time university professors, doctors, and business people. Due to it being situated in a more metropolitan area, Kyoyama as a result has attracted people to take residence within the community. Along with a substantial amount of foreigners made up of South Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Pakistanis, Indians, and Brazilians.

The first question asked participants whether there had been an increase or reduction in the amount of foreigners in their community. Contrary to the case of Tsudaka where there had been no noticeable increase in relation to the presence of foreigners, Kyoyama had experienced a substantial rise in the population of foreigners. Majority of them consisting of Chinese. Supermarkets and convenient stores tend to be the sites where this increase can be recognized. Many Chinese are seen working at cash registers, and usually take shifts during the early mornings and late nights as they are able to earn more income. The increase of a foreigner presence has given local residents more opportunities to learn and practice speaking different languages, with English gaining the most attention. This is due to English being an integral component within the curriculum of high school, middle school, and university students living in the area. Other languages such as Chinese have also received ample large amounts of interest. A prime example of this, are Chinese language classes that are provided by the Kyoyama Kominkan free of charge to both residents of Kyoyama and around greater Okayama city.

The second question addressed to the participants asked about the period of time they first began to see foreigners enter into their community. Towards the end of the 1960's, marked the clear presence of foreigners in Kyoyama. Majority of them being international students in the department of Agriculture at Okayama University, who were often seen around the Tsushima Mall area and Okayama University's Campus. Furthermore, during the late 1980's there began to be a substantial increase in the population of foreigners coming to live in Kyoyama. Majority of them being made up English teachers from Then United States and The United Kingdom, as well as international research students. Lastly, during the mid-1990's a number of English teachers from The United States and Europe began to take residence in Kyoyama, as it was near to many of the elementary, middle schools, and high schools that they taught at.

The third question called upon the participants to describe some of the past or recent changes and challenges that have occurred in their community due to the increased presence of foreigners. Five years

ago, when there was a surge of international students coming into Kyoyama, this issue became especially prevalent. Due to the lack of effective communication between foreigners and local residents, this inevitably caused rift between both parties. In order to resolve the situation, flyers were produced, describing the appropriate ways to throw away trash, what items were and were not recycled, and the opening and closing hours of the garbage stations were printed out into four different languages: Chinese, English, Korean, and Portuguese. They were then distributed to the living accommodations of foreigners. This in turn alleviated the growing problem that was taking place, and spurred positive relations between the international community and the local residents of Kyoyama.

The fourth and final question asked participants to describe some of the most common forms of interactions they have had with foreigners. Though there still remains a lack of communication between Japanese and foreigners, they acknowledged that great efforts had been made by foreigners in their community to learn the Japanese language and enhance their knowledge about Japanese culture and customs. Which has immensely improved relations between both parties. As there are a considerable amount of foreigners with families, children in the community often play with each other. And usually foster friendships between mothers in the process. This is regarded as the most common form of interaction between foreigners and Japanese. In addition, events such as “Friendly Kyoyama” that are held on a monthly basis at the Koyayama Kominkan enable foreigners and Japanese to learn and exchange traditional cooking recipes. The event also provides opportunities between both members of the community to gain insight upon each other’s culture.

Based on the information collected from the interviews, it is evident that the uniqueness of the locations of Kyoyama and Tsudaka truly affected the presence and flow of foreigners entering each respective community. Tsudaka characterized by its long distance from the city and its rurality, is highly unattractive to foreigners. As there have been no increase of foreigners in recent years. Whereas Kyoyama, being adjacent to Okayama University and situated in a central location near grocery stores, learning centers, and entertainment houses, makes it much easier for foreigners to transition into the area. Therefore this has led to a continual rise in the population amongst the international community within Kyoyama. The general trends between that of Tsudaka and Kyoyama indicated a lack of understanding and problems with communication, therefore led to challenges such as foreigners not being able to understand the rules and regulations of garbage disposal. To resolve the problem both communities provided help and guidance, which as a result eased tensions between foreigners and local residents. Enabling both constituents to better understand and learn about each other’s culture. On a final note, the interviewees from Kyoyama and Tsudaka all expressed the desires of their respective communities wanting to reach out and interact more regularly with foreigners who may not speak Japanese. Yet the long standing obstacle remains to be the lack of communication.

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Tsudaka Kominakan- Takaaki Nobue (male early 60’s), Noriko Nakatani (female early 50’s), Keiko Funamori (female mid 50’s)

Kyoyama Kominkan- Suzuko Ando (female late 60’s), Yamiko Iwamoto (female mid 50’s), Ai Morishi (female mid 20’s)



## A Look at the Japanese Real Estate Market: Current Trends and Investment Outlook

Ryan Nishioka

California State University, Fullerton (USA)

**Summary:** 本稿では、第二次世界大戦後の日本の不動産史をまとめ、市場全体の詳細な評価を行い、最後に私の個人的な意見と今後の投資戦略を述べます。潜在的な投資を見るとき、あなたの目標市場を知ることは常に良いことです。この報告書では、日本がどのように人口中心を分類しているのかを分析する。私はまた、あなたの検索に焦点を当てる領域とその理由についても説明します。私は、年齢、場所、建築基準のために特定のプロパティを避けるべき理由について説明します。私は、日本の様々なタイプの住宅とその使用方法について簡単に説明します。私は、日本の不動産所有に関連するすべての税金について詳細に説明します。これには、包括的な説明、アクティブレート、およびその他の重要な情報が含まれます。その後、私は典型的な賃借人が日本で不動産を借りたいときに期待できる費用のサンプル予算を出します。私はこれを例として使用して、レンタル中に家主に何が支払われているかを確認します。最後に、今後の投資計画や日本の不動産市場全体の考え方を紹介します。

Japanese real estate has evolved a great deal since the end of World War II. By the end of World War II a large portion of Japan's buildings and infrastructure were destroyed. In order to get back on its feet as quickly as possible Japan went through a real estate boom. At this time Japan was churning out a large amount of homes with questionable building standards in the name of quantity over quality. This came to a screeching halt following the 1948 Fukui earthquake that leveled 60% of buildings in the area. In 1950, new standards were set in place to make structures more sturdy and resistant to earthquakes. This included requirements on the number of earthquake load bearing walls and the amount of extra framework that was required for wooden structures. Regulations were set so that buildings should not collapse in the event of earthquakes measuring between magnitudes five and seven. These regulations in addition to the 1971 amendment requiring wooden structures to be reinforced with concrete foundations became known as Kyu-taishin. Up until 1981, all homes were built to this standard. During this time Japan created its perpetually booming real estate market that is constantly demolishing old homes and building new ones (or in some cases just building new ones). With this system, Japan has created a stable real estate industry that can support a large number of jobs. In 1992, the Japanese asset price bubble popped and plummeted home and land values. Causes of the bubble include over-confidence in the market, cheap capital, speculation, and risky financing. The latter of which continued well into 1997. What followed was the "Lost Decade" known for its economic stagnation and deflation which continues to this current day. Real estate in Japan is completely different than any other developed country. When looking at potential investment properties there are a number of assumptions that must be taken into consideration. These assumptions are used as generalizations and rough guidelines, and should not be used as absolutes. They are guidelines to help narrow the search and make it easier to find ideal investment properties. These assumptions are the age of the property in regards to building codes and the location in regards to population and convenience.

In general building codes in Japan are updated following a major earthquake disaster. To simplify things there are two types of buildings in Japan. Kyu-taishin which were built prior to 1981 and represent roughly 20-30% of Japan's housing and Shin-taishin which were built after 1981. Shin-taishin buildings represent current building codes. Other building codes have been put into place, but are either optional or not required by law. In addition, standards for quality have been put in place to protect consumers and insure a high quality product. While not an immediate disqualifier, properties built prior to 1981 will need to undergo extensive and expensive retrofitting to bring them up to code. In many cases the cost to retrofit

a building does not make financial sense and it may be better to just build a new building. Another point of concern for mansion style buildings is that a four-fifths majority consensus is needed to approve any changes to the building. To further emphasize the difficulties that go along with retrofitting a pre-1981 property, here is an example. There is 12-unit building near Meiji Park in Tokyo that was built in 1957. After the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake some of the residents wanted to retrofit the building to make it more resistant to earthquakes. They were told by a real estate company that the cost would be 60 million (\$600,000) to 80 million (\$800,000) yen. Including other expenses the total would be around 10 million (\$100,000) yen per unit. Instead they decided to completely rebuild the property with an additional four units. Ten of the residents agreed, which satisfied the four-fifths majority. In the end the residents paid 28 million (\$280,000) yen each. Costs to the residents were offset considerably by the sale of the additional four units. While this may be an unusual example it does show the problem with retrofitting old properties and the costs associated with them.

While large cities may be the most popular to live in, they are also the most expensive and competitive. Japan has a classification system for their cities. In order from largest to smallest: Designated Cities, Core Cities, cities, towns, and villages. Currently Japan has 20 Designated Cities that have a population of at least 500,000 people. Japan also has 42 Core Cities that have a minimum population of 300,000 people. Japan classifies “cities” as places with a population that is generally over 50,000 people. In addition, at least 60% of households must be in a central urban area and be employed in commerce, industry, or other urban occupations. Japan currently has 684 cities that meet this criteria. While there are smaller towns and villages, I believe that the best strategy is to focus on Core Cities and their surrounding “cities”. Accessibility is also a concern, while some people do have cars a majority of people rely on public transportation. Having some kind of rail access point is a must as well as close proximity to essential services like hospitals, schools, and stores. For the purpose of finding solid investments we can omit any properties that were built prior to 1981 and are not located in a “city”.

Housing in Japan can primarily be split into three different categories: Apatto, Mansion, and Single-Family Homes. Apatto or apartments are usually two to three story wooden structures that are usually rented to individuals and couples. The main point is that you cannot own an Apatto you can only rent them. A mansion is similar to a condo or townhouse. They are usually higher than three stories and made of concrete and metal. Mansions come in all sizes, from single floor studios to multi-floor and multi-room units. Like condos, ownership is restricted to inside the walls of the unit. Outside of the unit and the common areas are maintained by the homeowners association. This results in a monthly maintenance fee that must be paid to maintain the property. Mansion owners may also be responsible for their portion of any unforeseen expenses that the building might incur. Single-family homes are similar to that of the United States except for the fact that 85% of homes sold in Japan were brand new. This is quite a shocking revelation that further emphasizes the differences between Japan and the west. It is not uncommon in the west to see the second-hand home market be well over 85% of homes sold.

Japan is known for its strong renting culture which gives potential investors more confidence in the market. Typically Apatto's are the only rentable type of housing that a person can get in Japan. Occasionally you will see mansions being rented, but the monthly “maintenance fee” will significantly lower your cash flow and hinder your overall return. The idea of renting a house in Japan may seem like a foreign concept to most Japanese. As a comparison to the United States, most Americans would prefer to rent a single family home as opposed to an apartment. This takes into account the following assumptions: they are relatively the same price, a single family home has more space, but the apartment usually has more amenities. Renting single family homes has been a relatively new trend in the United States and started increasing after the 2008 housing crash. Today, Japanese people are rarely ever offered the chance to rent a house in Japan. Living in a house is exclusively for the home buyer and single family investment homes are rarely purchased. If someone buys a single family home, they do so with the intention of living in it. Real Estate companies primarily offer apartments and occasionally mansions to rent. Japanese people are simply not given the option to rent a single family house. So, it is not clear how the market would react since there is no precedent for this scenario.

Taxes. Consumption tax is charged when a building is sold, it is assessed at 8% and is tied to the building not the land. In Japan, land and buildings are two separate legal rights. You can be exempt from this tax if you do not qualify as a “taxable enterprise” and have qualifying income of 10 million (\$100,000) yen in the fiscal year two years prior the transaction date. Fixed Asset Tax and City Planning Tax are similar to property tax in the United States. The Fixed Asset Tax is 1.4% and the City Planning Tax is .3% of the properties assessed value. These taxes are paid in quarterly installments to local city authorities. In addition, there is also the Real Estate Acquisition Tax, Registration Tax, and Stamp Tax which are simply known as the “Big Three”. Acquisition Tax is paid by the buyer every time land and/or buildings are transferred. The tax is levied at 4% of the properties assessed value and paid to the local government. Registration Tax is paid when recording a legal interest in the Toukibo (Official Real Estate Registry) at the Bureau of Legal Affairs. The tax rate depends on the desired transaction and is paid to the national government. For registration of ownership the rate is .4% for the first owner and subsequent owners pay 2% of the assessed value of the property. For mortgages the registration tax rate is .4% of the loan. The Stamp Tax is associated with a variety of real estate documents like purchase and sales agreements for land and/or buildings, easement agreements, land lease agreements, construction contracts, etc. Technically the drafter of the document is responsible for buying the physical stamps and attaching them to the document. In reality the cost is often subject to negotiation. The final tax we will talk about is the Rental Income Withholding Tax. This special tax rate is only for non-residents that have investment properties in Japan. Rental Income Withholding Tax is assessed at 20.42% of gross income minus deductible expenses. Deductible expenses include building maintenance fees, property tax, insurance, repairs, property management, other fees, and building depreciation.

When looking at the potential side-effects of being a property owner, I often imagine myself on the opposite side of the spectrum. Imagine that you are a renter in Japan looking for a place to stay. What can you expect? Japan is notorious for fees and renting a place to stay is no exception. To start, the next month’s rent or the prorated equivalent will need to be paid. Rent is calculated based on the beginning of the lease, not when you move-in. A deposit of 1-2 months of rent will cover any unpaid rent and repairs needed to the property beyond normal wear-and-tear. The remaining balance should be returned to you when you vacate the property. Key Money is a specific Japanese custom that dates back to the era of rapid post-war economic growth. During this time there were housing shortages and prospective tenants would pay extra to get ahead in line. Key Money is still common in Japan and will generally be 1-2 months of rent. When renting a property chances are high that you will have to go through an agent. Agent’s commission is the fee paid to the agent for their services. The law restricts an agent’s commission to be one month’s rent plus consumption tax. In most cases a landlord will also require you to have a guarantor who will be responsible for your rent in case you default on your payments. Guarantor is very comparable to a cosigner and helps reduce the risk of nonpayment for the landlord. Japanese people often use a family member as their guarantor. If you are a foreigner you may use a guarantor company that will sign on your behalf in exchange for an application fee of one month’s rent and a renewal fee every two years. Property Maintenance Fees are generally used to maintain the common areas of a property and are paid in monthly installments. Most residential property leases are for two-year terms. When signing the lease you will also be required to get property or fire insurance. The cost is usually around 20,000 (\$200) yen for a two-year policy and must be renewed along with your lease in the future. A Lock Exchange Fee is commonly charged when a new tenant first moves into a property. The fee is around 12,000 (\$120) yen and covers the cost of replacing the locks. Lease Renewal Fees are paid when your lease expires and you want to renew it. If you plan on staying at a place for more than two years, you should definitely consider negotiating out of a Lease Renewal Fee. There is no law that says they have to be a part of a rental contract. Your greatest bargaining power is when you first sign your initial two-year lease. Lease Renewal Fees are typically one month of rent and are legally binding after you sign your rental contract. You need to negotiate out of your Lease Renewal Fees prior to signing your rental contract.

Japan is known to be a landlord friendly country. This means that laws generally favor landlords over tenants when disputes occur. In addition Key Money, Guarantor, Property Maintenance, and Lock Exchange Fees are not common/do not exist in the United States. Key Money is a double edged sword for

me. While you do get the extra money, the renter does have the right to continue their lease indefinitely. While big maintenance projects can be put off, it also stagnates rents. In regards to insurance I like how it is built into the lease. It requires potential tenants to have insurance whether they want to or not. In the United States insurance is highly recommended, but still optional for landlords and tenants in most cases. These additional benefits make becoming a landlord in Japan more appealing in my opinion.

When investing in Japanese Real Estate an alternative approach must be taken. Appreciation is non-existent and cash flow will be minimal due to generally low rates of return and taxes. I believe that Japan is not the right market for cash flow, in many cases I would be happy to break even. My investment strategy in Japan would be to initially focus on single unit mansions in “cities” with close access to Core Cities and public transportation. The newer the better and a low maintenance fee is definitely a plus. Strategy for these would be to make them an Airbnb type rental with the intention of breaking even and possibly a little cash flow. Long-term strategy would be to buy small apartment type buildings and take advantage of the favorable conditions that landlords can expect from Japanese renters. This includes, but is not limited to Key Money, Property Maintenance Fees, Lock Exchange Fees, and etc. The idea that tenants are required to pay a certain amount monthly to maintain the property is quite surprising. In the United States a tenant is responsible only for the rent. Any repairs that the property needs comes out of the owner/land lord’s pocket. I would be happy to collect a “maintenance fee” from tenants in Japan. This maintenance fee significantly lowers the risk of cash flow volatility.

My personal end goal is to start a small real estate company in Japan. This company would operate/manage both my Japanese and United States based real estate portfolios. I feel that utilizing the Japanese work ethic and their dedication would be beneficial for both parties involved. The main function of my company in Japan would be to manage if possible my real estate portfolio in Japan (properties may be spread out across the country and hiring a separate property management company may make more sense). In addition I would have them do all the “back room” things for my personal and my family’s United States based Real Estate Company. This would include searching for potential investment properties in the United States and Japan, financial analysis of potential properties, marketing for current rentals and homes for sale, data input, and other administration type tasks. I also think that somewhere down the road my company would include a Guarantor type operation of some kind. The primary purpose of my Japanese Real Estate Company and real estate holdings is to support and make my United States businesses more profitable and efficient. The secondary purpose is having a convenient place to stay for family and friends when they visit Japan.

To conclude, after doing a lot of research and learning a lot about the Japanese Real Estate market, I have my final opinion. From a strictly investment standpoint I see the United States real estate market as the most lucrative market in the world. From a dollar to dollar comparison the Japanese rate of return is nowhere near that of the United States. Despite low interest rates, I would advise against investing in Japanese Real Estate for the sole purpose of investing. I do however think that buying a home in Japan with the intention of living in it is a solid investment strategy. I think investing in Japanese Real Estate with other intensions can be a nice supplement to any portfolio.

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## Japan's Commercial Advertisement: Marketing Strategy

Taggart Corn

Dallas Baptist University (USA)

**Summary:** 日本は豊かな文化、魅力的な歴史、そして美味しい食べ物を求めて世界中の多くの人々が旅行したい国です。日本語を読んだり話したりしていないと、特に日本に旅行するのが難しくなります。ほとんどの人が日本に来ると、世界で一番大きな都市、東京を訪れます。東京のほとんどの場所は、特に英語メニューを持つレストランやフレンドリーなホステルがたくさんあります。魅力的に見えるが、訪問者を混乱させるような問題は、広告です。20階建ての巨大なネオン漢字が飛び出し、外国人スピーカーは催眠術に陥り、宣伝や宣伝の内容を知らずに写真を撮ります。この問題は、岡山をはじめとする日本全土で広く発生しています。英語の話者は、ドアの上に日本の名前を持つ建物に脅かされる可能性があり、そのドアの後ろに何があるかを伝える方法はありません。私は、岡山への外国人の訪問をより良くし、この都市の企業に利益をもたらすことができる企業マーケティングの形式を変えるために取ることができるステップがあると信じています。

Coming to Japan was very exciting and my first two weeks here I spent traveling, during my travels I was visiting temples, going to local restaurants, and traveling to cities neighbouring Fujisawa. Luckily I was accompanied by a man who spoke both languages and that made my time in Japan run very smooth. If it was not for him most of my time would have been spent translating signs and pointing at dinner menus. Coming to Japan with no Japanese under my belt the language barrier was very difficult to deal with. American advertisement is very different compared to Japanese advertisement, In America there are a lot of use of pictures over text and the amount of information is at the minimum, on the other hand it seems that a Japanese bill board is cluttered with kanji and little to no information that can be understood universally. I believe businesses in Japan, who want to attract more business from foreigners, can be more successful if they advertise towards an American, or someone who is an English speaker. Back at my home university I worked for the visual communications department, this job gave me insight on what catches the eye of a college student whether that is through social media or a poster in the library. A student walking through a building usually does not have time to stand and read a poster, they only have time to find out important information; such as time, dates, and basic event information.

I often find myself in situations where I will arrive in a busy part of a city and look up at some advertisement that I would find interesting but I have no clue on what they are advertising. There could be a large sign that had the kanji for Korean barbeque and I could be in the mood for Korean barbeque but sadly I do not know the language being used. Being discouraged I decide to go along with my day without that meal. Instead I find myself eating at places like McDonald's and Krispy Cream Donuts because I know what I am getting served and I do not think that is the appropriate thing to do when you are in a different country but we are humans and we get scared when we are outside of our comfort zone. Japanese business who are interested in getting more business from foreigners they should try to make their business more approachable to them. For example, a kakigōiri store might try to have an image of a bowl of their product or even try to translate their product to the non Japanese speaker with the words, "Japanese Shaved Ice", on their window or building so an English speaker knows exactly what is being sold at that establishment.

Being able to go to a city and not be completely clueless on what is going on in the surroundings will help a lot with the traveller. Companies could try having a sign with a translated version of their product outside their store or separate menu inside the store. Small steps can make all the difference when it comes to someone's first impression of an experience. I know it can be frustrating to someone who is not prepared to communicate with someone who does not know their language. Americans are not pros at



this thing but it could make someone's day run a little more smoothly.

Photo: Bernard Gagnon

Exiting out the main entrance of Okayama station (the photograph above), one would find themselves seeing a unique water fountain and signs displaying hiragana, katakana, and kanji there is one English word, bank, seen in the dark building on the left of the image. There is one image and that is an Asahi beer can with the image of the beer liquid form acting as the background to catch the attention of the viewer. Besides those two things there is not much for the native eye to understand. If Okayama wants to attract foreigners to their city it should concentrate on appealing on the first impression of the city. When you get off the train and head outside to the downtown area the natural reaction if you do not have set plans is to explore. While someone is first introduced to Okayama by its surroundings they will see several people headed to AEON Mall and large amount of business across the street, if one finds themselves lucky enough they will wonder down an alley way and seeing the abundant amounts of great restaurants and stores. Some of these gems are hidden on the upper floors of building making it almost invisible to foreigners. The best chance of going to the places is getting invited by Japanese people, who then have to show you how to get there, especially if you are a kid from a small town in Texas.

While looking at American advertisement there are several trends; small amounts of text and a large photograph or graphic. The text used is usually the name of the company or the certain product that company is advertising and the images is either just the product or and celebrity indorsing the product. This is just to grab the intention of the viewers. American companies are also famous for using logos and once a company becomes famous enough they do not need to use their name anymore, Apple Inc. just uses their logo in front of their stores and people can look at it and know, that's Apple Inc., it helps that their stores are entirely made of glass so everyone can look and see what their business is. An example for a printed ad in the United States would be one for the Ford Mustang. This Ford ad displays a Blue Ford Mustang (an American muscle car) burning out on what I am guessing to be an air strip. On this billboard is a short phrase, "The new 2010 Mustang. Unleashed". The text is bold and in all caps and "2010" and "Unleashed" are in blue while the others are in black. This allows these words highlight the add, "Unleashed" being the fun word that makes someone think, "this car must be powerful" and "2010" reminding the viewer of the new decade coming up in the near future. Now, what if this add was in

Japan? The text would change but two things would stay the same; the image of a powerful car burning out and the year 2010, so universally it would be understood, this is a fast car and it is new. Billboards are everywhere in the United States because when you are driving you are not able to read an advertisement riddled with words they are only able to glance see the image a read a minimum of words.



When it comes to purchasing items I find it very often I choose items that I am familiar and when it comes to buying a snack I will choose something that shows the product in an image or by seeing the product through the package. Above there are two photographs, they are both cartons of milk, but one does a better job at showing the product. The left carton of milk looks like a carton of milk but no where in English does it say milk or shows anything that hints at milk (i.e. a cow or dairy farm) while the carton to the right is obviously milk, this company put an image of a glass of milk. If the carton of milk on the left was not in the same row on the refrigerated shelf as the rest of the milk cartons, I would not be a hundred percent positive in buying the product. I am not trying to say that every product needs a picture to show what product they are selling because there is a chance someone who is not a Japanese speaker can understand what their product is. But with a store like Fresta which is close to university housing for hundreds of international students I think it would be a good idea for their products to appeal to the students who simply can not read Japanese.

Douglas Goldstein, a Carnegie Mellon University student, wrote his H&SS Senior Honors Thesis over, *The Use of English in Japanese Advertising*, and in this this thesis he had an interview that I found very interesting,

In order to understand how English functions in Japanese advertising, I had the opportunity to go to Dentsu, the largest advertising agency in Japan and the world (Tungate 188), and interview some of the people who actually make the advertisements that I have been studying. I interviewed two copywriters, one television commercial planner, and one person who works in research (Dentsu interview). When I asked the four people who worked at Dentsu why there was so much English in Japanese advertising and what function it served, I received many of the same answers independent of each other. Three of the people I interviewed used the word *かつこいい* (cool) when describing the connotation that written English has as opposed to written Japanese. In addition one of the copywriters I interviewed said that kanji and katakana were *うるさい*, or “noisy”. He thought that they cluttered up the page, whereas English had a much cleaner feel. The

fact that they all had similar answers with regards to the connotations English has suggests the importance of the decorative function of English, even if the English is able to communicate as well.

With the use of English will have pull from both demographics, Japanese and English speakers. Some Japanese people find the use of English to be “cool and neat” and the average English speaker finds English in foreign advertisement to be safe and comfortable and that would make someone more like to participate with what is being advertised.

There have been times where Japanese companies have been very foreigner friendly, especially at the large mall in Okayama City, Aeon Mall. Several times I have seen large groups of tourist enter the mall and I am sure there were able to make there way around the mall easily. There were times that I did experience difficulty, when it came to ordering food at the large food court in the mall I was not able to order without pointing at the menu. I believe this could be fixed just my adding an English version of the language on the menu. Japanese restaurants also are great at having models of the food outside their store so everyone knows what they are getting into. I believe this is super helpful but if that restaurants do not have pictures on their menu that could put someone in an awkward situation. This all depends on how much they want foreign customers, but it seems that if someone visits a new country they should be able to be served.

The issue of not understanding a culture and a language will always be an issue but the cities that are in constant contact with foreigners should be aware of there struggles in that city. Because American/English advertisement is very different compared to Japanese there is this issue. A Japanese business can find more success from both the Japanese resident and the English speaker if they advertise with the understanding a little English goes a long way.

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## A Reflection of the Japanese Business Culture

**Marinette Monaton**

Université Grenoble Alpes (France)

**Summary :** 日本の文化は多面的で魅力的です。一方で、何千年もの長い歴史を持つ伝統の中で、絶え間なく変化する傾向、絶え間なく変化する境界、絶えず変化する技術革新を伴う急速な変化の中で、最も深い伝統に没頭しています。私はいつもこの文化に興味があり、それが国全体の運営にどのような影響を及ぼすのか、そしてより正確にはその経済に焦点を当てています。私は日本のビジネスのアプローチが日本の文化をどの程度反映しているのかを自分自身に問いかけることになりました。»この問題に取り組むために、私はまず、日本を世界の経済的地位に導く日本の経済成長の歴史を振り返りました。次に、日本のビジネスの振る舞いの特徴や日本の文化との関係について研究します。要約すると、日本の歴史の中で伝統の一部として表現された「コミュニティのための良い」と「安定的で無限の成長」を念頭に置くことは、日本のビジネスにも反映されています。ゆっくと、日本のビジネスは、日本の文化に深く関わり、その中で一つになっています。

Being today the world's second largest developed Economy, Japan has shown over the years its ability to take opportunities and to grow and bloom, rising among the great economic powers. Japan's spectacular economic growth and achievements through three different periods of time teased the curiosity of many, as Japan's Economic History is one of the most studied. From Edo period through Meiji Restoration and post World War II, this country, approaching business from an angle totally different from the western countries, has come along a great journey.

The beginning of the Edo period coincides with intense relations with European powers. The first ships taking the sea for Europe were built, following the western style, as well as armed trade ships destined to the Asian commerce. Even with such strong western influence, Japan knew how to stay focused on its own progress while studying western sciences and techniques brought by the Dutch traders. Ignoring the influence of Christianization, Japan enjoyed during this period an economic stability and development including urbanization, the expansion of domestic and foreign commerce and the diffusion of trade and handicraft industries. Additionally, this period had a high level of development in joint-enterprises (kyohdo kigyo). These type of businesses are referring to a model where a number of individuals invest their capital collectively, including unlimited partnerships (geomeigaisha), limited partnerships (goshigaisha) and joint-stock companies (kabushiki kaisha).

During the pre-war period, after the Meiji Restoration, Japan went through a spectacular social and economic growth making it the first non-European great power.

Zaibatsu made their first appearance at that time, correlatively with the development of big companies in Europe and the United States. A Zaibatsu (財閥) is, literally, a financial clan. It is an organizational form that dominated the Japanese economy until the aftermath of the Second World War. It is characterized by an essentially personal or family type of management. There is a kind of feudal lineage, the Zaibatsu having played a leading role in economic development from the Meiji era (1868).

During the post-war period, Japan's recovery from the devastation turned out to be a huge expansion, making it become the world's second largest economy. Japan also had a unique economic position during the cold war, with exports going to both the United States and Soviet aligned powers.

Today, the Japanese industry being known as an important supplier, customer and competitor by American and European companies, the Japanese approach to business and management remains distinct and contrasts on many level with the western approach.

The Japanese cultural traits are difficult to understand, which adds both mystery and magical aspect to this « Japanese school ». Historically ruled by Family businesses which main characteristics are their longevity their capital remaining undivided into smaller units and the practice of separating ownership from management; the notion of « ie » (家) covers the idea of a household. It refers to the traditional family organization, including ancestors and descendants living under the same roof and the real and symbolic heritage or which they are responsible. Group membership is therefore considered in terms of structure and not function and, because of its social belonging, the individual has a reduced autonomy in a vision of things that does not distinguish between private and public life. « ie » also refers to the authority of the head of the family to which the members must obey without discussion. This notion illuminates the place of each employee for life within the organization, which becomes a member of a household where work and private life are no longer distinguishable. It is the organization which gives meaning to the life of the individual. Therefore, it seems that Business management in Japan is entirely dependent on the culture of the country.

To begin with, when it comes to Business management, making a decision is a crucial step. On this concern, Japan has a decision making process that can be characterized by “consensus” and which opposes to the western method. Thereby, a **delay in reaching a decision is a not a reflection of a Japanese person's inefficiency**. The idea for Japanese is to focus before acting. The key element in the decision making process being viewed as the definition of the question, they debate a proposed decision throughout the organization until there is agreement on it. They then (and only then) make the decision. In the same way, the company conference room is not a place for discussion but rather somewhere to report progress. This might be have positive outcomes, as contacting the parties involved and reaching a decision before the meeting can make progress smoother. However, due to the nature of such meeting room, in addition to the Japanese culture and etiquette, when asked for their opinion only few will feel inclined to respond honestly.

Moreover, and as another contrast, the definition of self in Japan is totally different and is intimately linked to the conservative aspect of Japanese culture. With a very strong sense of nationalism and national pride, Japanese and Americans carry the belief that they are superior to all other races. However, the numerous racial conflicts in the United States lead to a reduction of the ability to work together, as a united group. In Japan, workers relationship within the group is very important psychologically. Even though each person is believed to possess a unique spirit, soul, mind and heart, the concept of self is believed as a barrier. Along these lines, the Japanese establish identities that incorporate friends, relatives and coworkers in an open way to share feelings and improve on weaknesses.

Whereas in western culture, drinking parties are usually something held separately from the work atmosphere (even if colleagues are taking part), in Japanese culture such events, called nomikai, are in fact an important part of the working life. Japanese employees are expected to participate to these get-together events, usually held in Izakayas, where coworkers gather around a big table and share drinks and food. Although it can appear as a casual event, Nomikai are a real battlefield, following a strict set of rules that you have to be aware of beforehand. As the Nomikai begins, everyone grabs the opportunity to win

the attention of the “Kashou” or “Buchou”, the top positions of the company hierarchy; and this special time is a privileged one for establishing not only great team connection and build a team work among co-workers, but also a strategic time to spot personalities and ambitions of every employee.

Furthermore, Japanese business management is famous for its concept of “lifetime employment” policy. Most employees in contemporary Japanese businesses have an assured job once they start working. While enrolled, they have almost complete job security only jeopardized in the case of extreme economic crisis or of bankruptcy of the employer. Moreover, they are paid based on seniority, as a rule, with pay doubling roughly every 15 years, regardless of the type of job.

This trait might appear as the biggest difference between the western and the Japanese approach to management. In western countries the least secure jobs and incomes are still often put up to the person that need security the most. Also, when we talk about « early retirement », it usually means that the employee decided to retire permanently. Meaning that once he accepted to retire early, he is out of the work force and unlikely to be hired back by another employer. Moreover, the psychological security in the West is not the same as the one in Japan. In the West, younger people fear that they would be let go first, at the critical moment when the economic needs of their families peak. The seniors fear that they will lose their jobs in their fifties, leaving them unable to be hired elsewhere. Indeed, the Japanese system gives confidence to both age groups : youngster have the liberty of looking forward to a secure job and regularly increased income while building a family and raising children, the older people have the feeling that they are still wanted, useful, skilled and do not represent a burden for society.

The psychological confidence of job and pay security underlies what is believed to be the most important secret of the Japanese economy : light-hearted willingness from the employees to accept steady changes in technology and process. They consider increasing productivity as good for everybody, which reflects the community oriented-set of mind the Japanese people show so often in their everyday life. This « secret » might lie in what Japanese people call « continuous training ». Indeed, every employee including top managers keeps on training as a regular part of their job until retirement. This shows the sharp divergence with western practices of training employees only when needing to acquire new skills or move to a new position in the company. Training in the west is clearly promotion-oriented while the Japanese one is performance-focused. As a result of this performance-oriented practices, the quality of work and procedures improves and is deeply built into the system.

As implied earlier, Japanese people apply their own traditions to work in business. A great example is the two great skills of the Samurai, members of the warrior caste that ruled Japan for 300 years until 1867 : Swordsmanship and Calligraphy. Both require never ending, lifetime training. Indeed, even after achieving mastery of a skill, one must keep on training, otherwise one would rapidly lose said skill. It shows that this idea of lifetime training in businesses is indeed a reflexion of the Japanese culture and philosophy.

Being humble is, for Japanese people, a natural behaviour omnipresent in their daily life. Accordingly, it's also heavily present in the Business behaviour, and if a Japanese person says they can complete the job, it is best to take them on face value. As it may seems like something not surprising, after taking a look on the foreign market, we can spot easily a lot of worker claiming to be able to complete a given task even when it clearly exceeds their capabilities. In contrast to that attitude, the Japanese modestly accept the job at hand while delivering exceptional results.

The Japanese workers having a clear comprehension of the production scale and necessary production time, they have a better anticipation of the work. Moreover, their deep respect of the hierarchy,

whether it be the person who places the order from the supplier, or those who deal with the transaction thereafter, from the beginning to the end the level of service will be consistently high.

Indeed, in one hand with the western business culture, the western worker can, to some degree, avoid the responsibility of the incompleteness of a task within the designated period by placing the blame on the superiors, claiming that their directions weren't clear. In the other hand, in Japan, if the business doesn't go according to plan, it becomes the problem of the individual undertaking the task.

Another point that is unique to Japan resides in the appraisal and assignment system. In Japan, there is no such thing as the well-known in the West « performance appraisal ». It indeed makes sense since employees cannot be rewarded for performance as much as they cannot be sanctioned for lack of performance. Managers don't get to select their subordinates forasmuch as the personnel management employees are the ones responsible for it and very often make the decisions without consulting with the manager concerned. Also, it is perceived as impossible for a young manager or young subordinate to ask for a change of team, a change of post or to even worse, think about quitting and going in another company. During the first 20 to 25 years, this process is applied and the attention is drawn to compliance, showing respect and deference, just doing what is asked. Then, when employees reach the age of 45, the Day of Reckoning comes and the goats are separated from the sheep. The « banto » picks a very selective small group of candidates to become company directors and top managers. These few people can, afterwards, stay in management way past any retirement age known in western countries. Seeing active company directors in their eighties is completely common thing in Japan.

It is with no mistake for the reasons explained earlier that Japanese workers are taking care of the juniors and making it the first responsibility of top management. This practice can once again be compared with the one of Samurais, when more than 300 years ago they, as adherents of military clans, were organized in hereditary castes without moving-forward requests possible. The leaders of the military clans had to recruit young people able to lead the clan when the time comes, without offending higher ranking but less gifted clan members.

To conclude, Japan can be presented as a contrasting mirror of western practices and behaviours in many areas and particularly in the management of collective activities or projects. The Land of the Rising Sun had to adapt to the growth of business through history and find a way to keep their traditions and culture reflecting in their approach to business. In the everyday life, Japanese people very often show a very intense step by step process of decision making and it is well represented in the business scene. Moreover, stability is something that Japanese people can be praised for, everything has a very well-thought order that, when respected, offers steady growth on a personal and community level. Finally, youth management is always emphasized since juniors always represent the future. Japanese approach to business found a way to promote young managers without undermining the skills and hard work of seniors.

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## Analysis of Taiwanese and Japanese Cement Industry and Current Market

彭樂家 (Charlie/ペンヤオージャ)

National Taiwan University (Taiwan)

**Summary:** As a business-related major student, I have been learning how to analysis the performance of public companies. During the studying period, I joined the independent study program and tried to put my knowledge into practice, so I have been working on analysing different Taiwanese companies. On the other hand, I am also trying to improve my presentation in different language such as Japanese, English and Chinese, and this study allows me to use different language which helps me a lot. The reason why I choose cement industry as my research object is because this industry has been undergoing business transformation since the decline of the whole market environment. They are struggling to survive and change their business model. I think it is interesting and worthwhile to find out how cement industry responds to the challenging market condition.

台湾セメントの背景:

1946年第二回世界大戦の終わるところ、台湾は戦争によって深刻な破壊が負わせられました。政府は戦後の再建を求めて、台湾セメントを生みました。当時台湾セメントは政府のもとで、主に台湾でのインフラの再建を支えました。その後1950の前半から、台湾政府は国営企業の民営化をはじめとする開放政策を施して、戦後の経済を改善しようとした。そのときから、台湾セメントは政府のコントロールから独立して、民営企業になりました。民営化になった台湾セメントは生産工場を増やして、セメント産量の激増を実現した。それから、1970の後半に入ってから、世界的な経済不況が生じて、台湾の経済に深刻な影響をもたらした。当時台湾政府は経済の改善を求める十大建設という政策を実行して、いくつかの公共建設を主導した。この結果、台湾セメントが急速な成長を実現した。1980に入ってから、台湾政府が外国からの投資を狙って、段々貿易障壁ぼうえきしょうへきを消しつつあった。台湾セメントも外国による競争を受け始めた。近年、セメントを生産する主な原料の一つの石灰岩は出産が減りつつあって、台湾セメントをはじめとするセメント企業は中国に移転し続けた。また、市場占有に関して、台湾セメントは最大のセメント企業として半分以上の市場を占有する。アジアセメントは25ぐらいを占有した。台湾におけるセメント産業は寡占の状態と見えるのは資本の制限だ。セメント産業自身の技術的な障害は高くないが、資本は主な参入障壁となっています。ここまでは台湾セメントの産業の背景です。セメント産業チェーンメント産業チェーンは三つの部分に分別できます。それぞれは上流の原料、中流の加工並びに下流の販売対象です。まず、セメントの原料について説明します。それぞれは「石灰石せっかいせき」・「ねん土」・「けい石」・「酸化鉄原料さんかてつげんりょう」並びに「せっこう」。この中でも、石灰石せっかいせきを使う量が一番多いです。

7580 を占める。次は加工の階段です。原料を焼成しようせいしてから、「せっこう」を混ぜてセメントになります。この階段は一番エネルギーを使う。一番のエネルギーは石炭で、40 のコストを占める。最後はセメント製品を下流対象に売ります。主なお客さんは建築業者と政府が主導する公共工程です。台湾のセメント業者は建築業に関する収入は70 を占めて、公共工程に関する収入は20 を占めている。一般的に、セメント産業の収入はセメントプライス、国際の石炭プライスに影響されます。現在、台湾のセメントとマーケットにつきましては、全面的な不況が続いている。それは2014年から、政府が高まる不動産の値段を抑制する政策を出したからです。したがって、不況な建築業は台湾でのセメント業者に悪影響を及ぼしている。台湾セメントの現状 まず、過去五年間でセメントとエネルギー部門は70以上の収入を占めていた。まずはセメント部門の収入を説明します。2013と2014年、台湾での不動産投資が活発で、全台湾の不動産の値段も高まっていた。そのため、台湾での建築業も積極的に不動産物件をしていた。その結果、台湾セメントのセメント部門の売上げが上がっていた。しかし、台湾政府は2014年から不動産の価格を抑える政策を出して、台湾での不動産投資は全面的に下がってきた。そのため、新築の数は減って、セメントの需要は急減した。また、中国は2015年の経済が減速して、セメント業界に深刻な影響を及ぼした。次は電力部門の説明です。台湾セメントはフォピン発電所を所有して、台湾電力という国営企業に電力販売の契約しています。販売対象は政府のため、契約値段が一定に制限されます。しかし、収入は契約に制限される一方、コストの変動の影響を受けています。この五年間、エネルギーコストとしての国際コールの値段が下がっていたので、電力部門の収入はあがってきた。ほかの部門の資料は不完全なのでここでは説明しません。これで、部門収入の説明は以上です。次は親会社と子会社の収入を説明します。台湾セメントの収入は大体中国と台湾からです。その中、中国は50の収入を占めて、台湾は45くらいです。だが、台湾セメント自身がもらった収入は少ないです。それは部門分業と移転の結果です。台湾セメントは2000以降生産基地を中国に移転して、中国の市場を狙っています。一方、台湾のセメントマーケットは既に飽和な状態です。そのため、台湾セメントは収入中心と生産基地を中国に移転し続ける見込みです。以上は収入分布の説明です。セメントおよび市場状況次はの国際コール価格の説明です。過去五年間での国際コールの市場価格によると、コールの値段がほぼ最低になったところだった。したがって、台湾セメントに一番のコストが下がるということです。それは電力部門の収入が増える理由です。しかし、セメントを生産する一番のエネルギーの価格が下がっても、セメント部門の収入が下がっている。前も説明したが、台湾からのセメント需要は大幅に減少するわけです。以上はコールの影響の説明です。次は中国でのセメント市場を分析します。中国での不動産と固定資産投資は成長するんです。不動産投資は去年より9を成長して、固定資産は6を成長した。不動産や固定資産投資が強いなら、建築企業はもっと新しいビルを建て、セメントの需要は上がるわけです。したがって、台湾セメ

ントはセメント部門は中国での収入は長期的に上がる見込みです。不動産の投資が活発が、中国ではセメントの過剰生産の問題があります。右のグラフをみてください。これは中国で生産されるセメントの使用率です。過去五年間で使用率が下がってきたんです。つまり、中国で生産されるセメントは全部で売られていないや使用されていないということです。一般的に、過剰生産は全面的な市場価格の激減をもたらすが、中国の強い不動産投資のおかげで、いまは問題ないんです。しかし、過剰生産の問題が続いたら、いつか市場価格の激減が生じる恐れがあります。以上は中国市場の説明です。

次は台湾でのセメント市場を分析します。まず、過去三年間で台湾での新建築のケースの数を説明します。2016年上半期の新築のケースは既に年最大量の44になって、建築の工事も15も減少した。というのは、台湾でのセメントの需要が減っているわけです。年台湾政府が不動産の値段を抑える政策を出してから、建築のケースが急速に下がっています。また、建築の修繕とリフォーム工事とも下がっています。それは台湾での不動産の値段が段々減っていて、不動産への投資も減少している。したがって、新築が減少するわけです。建築業は新しいビルを建てない傾向です。したがって、台湾でのセメントの需要は大幅に減少しているとわかる。それで、台湾セメントは台湾での収入は減る見込みです

日本セメント産業と太平洋セメント 日本がセメントを使い始めたのは幕末のころ、砲台を作るために外国から輸入してきたんです。だが、輸入品は高いので、幕府は自分の力で作るとした。それで、技術を学べて、国産化になった。あと約年から、民間企業もセメントを作れるようになった。その企業は小野田セメントの元のセメント製造です。これから、小野田おのだセメントは、日本セメント浅野セメント、秩父ちちぶセメントなどと合併して太平洋セメントになりました。そこで、太平洋セメントになりました。いまはセメント業界最大手の企業です

次は日本での市場の説明です。まず、日本での生産と需要を説明しましょう。セメント協会によると、2015年全日本でのセメント需要は43000千T(せんトン)で、官需と民需はほぼ同じです。ここは台湾と違うところの一つです。台湾でのセメント需要は75 建築業、25 公共工程です。日本での需要は比較的バランスしています。台湾でのセメント需要建築業界に大きく影響されます。また、日本が輸出するセメントは生産されるの20くらいが、台湾は30くらいです。それは台湾のセメント市場規模が小さいです。台湾のセメント企業は市場が飽和するとともに、中国に移転し続ける。日本でのセメント需要は経済の成長が減速するにつれ、遅く成長しても、国内の需要は生産を支えられる。また、セメントを生産する一番の原料の石灰石せっかいせきに関しても差異がある。台湾の原料を近年尽くされるや賃上げなので、近年台湾でのセメント企業たちは生産線を中国に移転している。一方、日本でのせっかいせき資源は台湾より豊富なので、生産はまだ日本国内にある。以上は日本でのセメント産業の説明です。次は太平洋セメントのビジネスデータの分析です。まず、今年の第二四半期以外、売り上げはあまり変化はない。今年の第二四半期の売上が減少するのは日本国内の需要が減るとのことです。また、純利益も前期より

10以上減少するんです。これから、支払い能力を見ましょう。このグラフによりますと、太平洋の短期支払い能力は強いです。短期資産は短期負債の倍以上からです。また、財務レバレッジからみると、台湾セメントと同じレバレッジはあまり高くありません。それは、参入障壁としての資本制限です。セメント業界に入るにはいっぱい資本がないとだめですから。これから、株価分析を見ましょう。まず、EPSはほぼ円以上からみると、太平洋セメントは実に設けるんです。また、P/Eが10くらいからみると、投資者が太平洋セメントをいい投資対象と認識している。最後は台湾セメントと太平洋セメントにビジネスデータを比較しましょう。まず、利益性という点、太平洋セメントは比較的に一定な売り上げとみられます。それは日本国内のセメントは近年変化が少ない傾向とのことです。台湾では建築業はあまりよくないので、需要がへるっぽうだ。また、支払い能力からみると、太平洋セメントのほうはより強い支払いの能力をわかる。ということは、太平洋セメントは決済リスクをちゃんと控えているということです。最後は株価の分析です。太平洋セメントは利益性が高いため、EPSもより高い。だが、三年間のP/Eは同じく10くらいです。これは台湾セメントと太平洋セメントとが一番大きいセメント業者から、投資者に信頼されるわけです。以上は、ビジネスの分析です。

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## Japanese Denim: Know the Difference

Bryan Hui

The State University at Stony Brook (USA)

**Summary/要旨:** 現在社会に日本のデニムどんなイメージが持っているかについて話したいと思います。日本のデニムは作り方やどんな原材料が作られたかなど詳しく説明したいともいます。日本のデニム文化にとって特に岡山の児島でどんな関係であるか日本に来て以来日本人にいつもデニムについての意見を聞いて、結局デニムがどう思うか断定できます。今から日本デニムの工業に対して人気になりつつあるかどうか自分の意見を話したいと思います。

### Introduction

In my research I will be discussing denim, more specifically the denim we use for jeans, and how Japanese denim, in particular, differs from others and that status of said denim in today's society. First we have to address what denim is exactly and how it came to Japan. Denim is a cotton twill textile constructed and weaved in apparatuses called looms. Denim has transverse thread called the weft which is usually left un-dyed and passed under 2 or more longitudinal threads called warp which are usually dyed indigo. Work pants made of denim dates back to the 17th century, but it was only until after World War 2 that denim jeans became a symbol of youth rebellion in America and began to become popular in Japan. Japan used to import their jeans from America until actual jean production started in Kojima in Okayama prefecture. Japanese attention to detail led Japan to produce some of the finest works of denim up to date. What separates Japanese denim from the rest of the world is the indigo dyeing process, the weight, the weave and the texture of the end product.

### What characteristics or qualities do Japanese denim have to offer?

The texture of denim is attributed to how the denim was manufactured. Japanese denim is often made using old shuttle looms as opposed to projectile looms which are used to mass produce much of the denim that the world uses today. It is often a misconception that Japan uses imported American Draper looms, but in reality, most of the looms used today are modeled off of a loom known as the Toyoda Model G. It was developed in the 1920's by the company we now know as Toyota Motor Company, which used to produce textile looms under the name Toyoda Automatic Loom Works.

All looms weave warp and weft alike, but the difference between shuttle looms and modern day looms is how the threads are weaved and that directly contributes to the difference in texture. In shuttle looms, the continuous passing back and forth with a single weft creates a finished edge which we all refer to now as denim having a "self-edge" or in other words, "selvedge denim." Back in the day, looms that created selvedge denim were the industry standard until demand for denim rose and companies favored machines that could weave the fabric at much higher speeds. Projectile looms became more popular as the denim industry began to scale. At the expense of the selvedge line, projectile looms created denim at almost 10 times the speed on textiles twice as wide. Projectile looms were actually an improvement on shuttle looms in that, it weaved the threads tighter because they were more precise and consistent, thus producing a smoother fabric. Japanese denim is unique in that it embraces the imperfections created by shuttle looms. By modifying how the looms weave, Japanese denim brands are able to create hairy, rough, and even grainy textures; some brands even keep their weaving methods a secret. This is just one of the qualities that sets Japanese denim apart from the denim around the world and also between individual Japanese denim brands themselves.

The way the cotton is dyed, prior to weaving, plays a role in how the final product evolves over time. The most common, and cheapest of dyeing methods is called vat-dyeing. In vat-dyeing, strands of cotton yarn are shocked in a tub filled with a synthetic indigo solution. In vat-dyeing, the indigo penetrates through to the core of the yarn. Most mass-produced jeans are dyed using this method. On the other hand a more expensive, and time-consuming dyeing method, known as rope-dyeing, is used for higher-end pairs of jeans. Cotton yarns are tied into a rope, hence “rope”-dyeing, and dipped in an indigo solution and left to oxidize in a process that repeats 40 times. However, during this process, the yarns are never left in the solution long enough for it to penetrate the yarns. This results in higher contrast fades as the core of the yarn is left undyed and is white while the exterior has layers of indigo from being dunked into indigo solution repetitively. Some Japanese denim companies incorporate a dyeing method called the kasuri method that originated from Japan’s rich history in textile dyeing, especially that of kimonos and yukatas. The Kasuri method is a precise and extensive process (longer than that of rope dyeing), which traditional indigo artists in Japan have preserved for generations. It is referred to as an art, and is revered by Japanese culture; it originated in our very own, Kurashiki region of Okayama. In contrast to the vat-dyeing in mass-produced jeans, kasuri does not use synthetic indigo dye, but uses a fermented solution formed from indigo leaves, sukumo (fermented indigo leaves), coal, sugar and lye liquid. The yarns are banded together to and hand soaked in the solution for about 30 minutes. The artists then begin to wring out the bands and slap them into the floor in order for them to touch oxygen and begin to oxidize.

While a new band soaks, the artist continues to carry out this dye-slam process up to maybe 50 times; the more the yarn is dyed, the deeper the indigo color begins to emulate and the harder it is for the indigo to fade. The indigo is washed, dehydrated and left to dry naturally in order to ensure that the indigo has properly oxidized and stuck to the fabric. The entirety of this process is repeated as much as 40 times and can take place over the course of the year in order to ensure the highest quality craftsmanship.

Throughout the dyeing process, the indigo solutions are stirred and checked on a daily basis so that they maintain a certain degree of color. They are kept between 20°C and 25°C during the winter, so that the indigo solution ferments properly and this is usually done using fire-beds. Japanese denim brands use either rope-dyeing or the kasuri method for their jeans depending on the degree of indigo color they want to achieve. We also have to keep in mind that some Japanese brands also dye not only their warp threads but also their weft threads. This results in unique fading properties when the weft color begins to blend with the warp color.

Another feature of Japanese denim is the weight of fabric used in jeans. The term “weight” of a pair of jeans comes from the weight per square yard of the fabric used; it is usually measured in ounces. In other words, it is the density per square yard of a pair of jeans. It is usually separated into 3 categories: lightweight, midweight and heavyweight jeans. Lightweight denim is usually categorized as anything below 12 oz. in weight while midweight covers anything between 12 oz. and 16 oz. leaving heavyweight for any weight about 16 oz. Although Japan does produce lightweight denim (almost the same weights as mass-produced denim), most denim 20 oz. and higher come from Japan. Denim weight is highly preferential and generally, the average consumer does not buy heavyweight denim. Lightweight denims, which most of the world wears today, are comfortable from the get-go and generally do not take long at all to break in. The drawback of wearing lightweight denim is that since the density of the fabrics is not high, the fade contrasts are not as sharp as those created by heavyweight denim. On the other hand, heavyweight denim is extremely uncomfortable and may take as long as one month of wear to actually be able to move; wearing heavyweight denim is almost comparable to wearing a suit of armor. Due to their density, they either keep your legs warm during colder weather, or be unbearable to wear during hotter temperatures. Midweight denim is basically the middleground between lightweight and heavyweight denim. Typically, the heavier the denim, the more expensive it becomes because more material is used.

### **Raw denim versus processed denim**

Raw denim can be categorized as denim that has not undergone any washes and has essentially come straight from production at a mill. They are stiff from stabilizing agents that give jeans form and structure during the weaving process. Washing the jeans will remove all of these chemicals, making the jeans more comfortable in the first few wears; raw denim is no longer considered raw if it goes through any washes. Most, if not all, Japanese denim created in shuttle looms is raw denim which is why when we refer to raw denim we often associate it with Japanese denim. However, they sometimes do have 1 washed versions in order to get all the shrinkage out of them. Processed denim, which is what most of the world wears today, not only undergoes 1 wash, but sometimes several washes. On top of that, processed jeans are pre-faded, pre-distressed, and pre-broken in by means of machine or even human hands. As opposed to raw denim, these jeans are made to be “synthetic.” Raw denim gives the wearer the option to “personalize” their jeans; the fading and breaking in process is based on what you do in your denim and how you wear them. The ability to create this uniqueness is what appeals to denim enthusiasts. In combination with Japanese craftsmanship, the degree of uniqueness through fading and breaking in is further amplified.

### **Pros and cons of Japanese denim**

One of the major setbacks of buying Japanese denim is the price. In Japan, fewer and fewer people are selecting factory labor as their profession. Since high-end Japanese denim can only be made by hand in shuttle looms, the labor costs for hiring skilled professionals who both know how to operate the machinery and fix the machinery is extremely high. As mentioned before, since the shuttle looms are highly inefficient, low production leads to increased prices. We can also attribute high prices to the quality of materials used in making jeans. High-end denim companies use customized buttons, rivets or zippers; brands like *The Flat Head* or *Samurai Jeans* use high-end quality cottons such as Pima cotton from Peru or Zimbabwe cotton. Since Japanese denim is usually raw, the fact that they take awhile to break in as opposed to mass-market jeans, might push people away. In addition, sizing can be troublesome as raw denim still has not been pre-shrunk. Indigo dye can also rub off easily from raw denim onto anything it may come in contact with.

The pros of Japanese denim outweigh the cons. Due to the build quality, the denim tends to last for years on years and if holes or tears break out, it can easily be fixed. Although the upfront-cost of Japanese denim is daunting, the actual value over time is better than that of mass-produced jeans. As mentioned before, the fact that the jeans are personalizable, gives the consumer something to look forward to; a pair of raw denim, looks more defined in the long-run than your ordinary mass-produced pair of jeans. If you can get over the temporary cons, then Japanese denim will inevitably prove to be worthwhile in the end.

### **What separates Japanese denim brands from each other?**

What separates Japanese denim from the world also separates Japanese denim brands from each other. The biggest differences in the products sold by one brand vs another can be attributed to weaving methods. The most iconic detail about Japanese denim brands is that they intentionally create impurities in their denim; however, the way each brand goes about doing that lies within their weaving methods. During the weaving process, brands modify the looms in different ways to produce variations in the fabric. For example, *Pure Blue Japan*, specializes in slubby fabric; slubby means that the density of the warp yarns is not completely uniform throughout the entirety of the fabric and may protrude in uneven patterns instead. Another example would be *The Flat Head's* products to tend fade vertically rather than normally fading horizontally. Another feature of *The Flat Head* jeans, although not related to the weave, would be its dyeing methods; during their rope-dyeing process, they would use twice the concentration of indigo dye compared to any normal rope-dyeing process. Overall, there is no real way of creating a “perfect pair of imperfect jeans”, thus there are always different ways things that Japanese denim brands can do that set them apart from each other, it is all a matter of experimentation.

## Personal thoughts and conclusions

One of the reasons why I chose to come to Okayama was because of the fact that I had an interest in the raw denim culture that was born from it. In the denim world, Kojima is not only known as the heart of Japanese denim but as the denim capital of the world. Every time I would meet Japanese people, they would always question why I came to study abroad in Okayama University even though I had the option of studying at, for example, Waseda University, a well-known and reputable university. I would point to the jeans I was currently wearing and tell them that my interest in Japanese denim culture was one of the core reasons. However, amongst all the Japanese I have met up to date (100+ people), none know about or have any knowledge about the denim culture born out of Kojima. Majority have heard of the name Kojima Jeans Street, but that was as far as they came. I would say that most of the people I have talked to were around college students; and since this is the era of fast fashion, the vast majority has become accustomed to buying mass-produced jeans and not raw denim. In fact, one of the non-college students, a teacher that I had met from Saitama University was the only one completely knowledgeable about Japanese raw denim; he was even wearing a pair of his own. In this way, I came to see Japanese denim as not a type of fashion but rather as an art form; only a select few people can come to appreciate the work. I can further prove this through my findings regarding the relationship with Japanese denim companies.

Japanese raw denim is more of an art than a business designed to rake in money from the masses. I can say for sure that the market for Japanese raw denim is a niche market; those who have interest in it or have a hobby in raw denim keep the industry alive. The market for Japanese raw denim does not come close to the mass-produced jeans market in terms of profitability. The low margins on each pair of Japanese denim in combination with how many pairs are actually up for sale at any given leads me to believe that denim brands are not in it for the money but rather to keep the tradition and craftsmanship of Japanese raw denim alive. If they wanted truly wanted to make money, they would just make the move to mass-produced denim.

Japanese denim brands would also not work together and have collaboration pairs if they were actually trying to compete with each other. These brands are more concerned with spreading Japanese denim culture than trying to make individual profits. Value of Japanese denim comes from not money, but from tradition.

Overall the Japanese raw denim industry will either continue steady as is or grow. The reason being is that the market for mass-produced jeans, its main competitor, is already saturated and could not really take any business away. The demand for Japanese raw denim will remain steady because this group of consumers will remain customers until a new generation of denim enthusiasts come into play. However, growth is also a highly possible option; it is really up to them to market themselves both nationally and internationally. At the moment there seems to be little to no effort in doing this which is why the Japanese raw denim market will never evolve.

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## How Successful Has the Ryukyu Separatist Movement Been?

David Joseph Lakin

University of Kent (United Kingdom)

**Summary:** 情報や歴史的な背景や自らの体験を使用しながら、このレポートにおいて琉球分裂運動がどのように成功してきたかということについて分析する。さらに、このレポートにおいて琉球の独立の成功について一次資料のみならず、二次資料も用いて、定量的かつ定性的にその展開をまとめる。そして、2月15日から18日まで沖縄において研修した際の経験を顧みる上に、岡山大学中央図書館にある沖縄に関する資料および文献を読む機会もあった。

### Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to create a concise summarisation of the progress to date of those movements and individuals that seek to create an independent state of Ryukyu. To achieve this, I will begin by presenting my terminology, which will aid in the explanation of my methodology, before I examine to what degree Ryukyu separatists have been successful. I will do this by providing a brief overview of Okinawa's history and politics since the end of the Second World War, and then analysing and comparing first and second-hand statistical information, and shall conclude with my personal determination, based on the evidence collected.

### Terminology

First, however, we must be clear on what is understood by the terms 'Ryukyu separatist movement', as well as the degree of achievement 'success'. The former definition refers to those individuals, and any political/cultural organisation established by these individuals, that seek to secede the islands of Ryukyu, or of Okinawa Prefecture, from the sovereign nation of Japan. The second definition is rather more complex; how does one measure the success of a separatist movement?

In a practical sense, as observed by Alexander Pavkovič and Peter Radan in *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*, most separatist movements share three common steps; the growth of a political movement in support of independence, the proclamation of independence by individuals, and the legitimation of the new state through international recognition<sup>5</sup>. The foundations for such a movement are explained by Alexis Heraclides in *The Self-determination of Minorities in International Politics*, as being concerned with territorial and cultural distinctiveness, and once having established this distinctiveness, a strategy of mobilisation and politicisation can be used to pursue arrangement, to secure this new identity<sup>6</sup>. We can therefore, for the purpose of this essay, define the "success" of the Ryukyu separatist movement as the extent to which the movement is mobilised, and politicised.

### Methodology

Having laid out our terminology with regards to the success of the Ryukyu separatist movement, this enables us to construct of methodology, which allows us to answer our research question. To study the extent to which the Ryukyu separatist movement is mobilised, we are able to gather second-hand data on the reported membership numbers from active political organisations which advocate Ryukyu

<sup>5</sup> Pavkovič, A. and Radan, P. 2007. *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp.8-11

<sup>6</sup> Heraclides, A. 1991. *The Self-determination of Minorities in International Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp.10-11

independence. From this quantitative information, therefore, we can qualitatively assess the legitimacy of the Ryukyu separatist movement.

Following this, we may determine how politicised the movement has become by using two opinion polls. The first utilises data collected by local sources in Okinawa Prefecture, predominantly the newspaper Ryukyu Shimpo, which should present attitudes towards independence and autonomy there. The second was conducted within the city of Okayama, Japan, used as an example of the archetypical medium-sized mainland Japanese city, to get a sense of attitudes towards Okinawan autonomy in the rest of Japan. Comparing these results should provide us with enough information to say if people view Ryukyu independence as palatable and, perhaps more significantly, as possible.

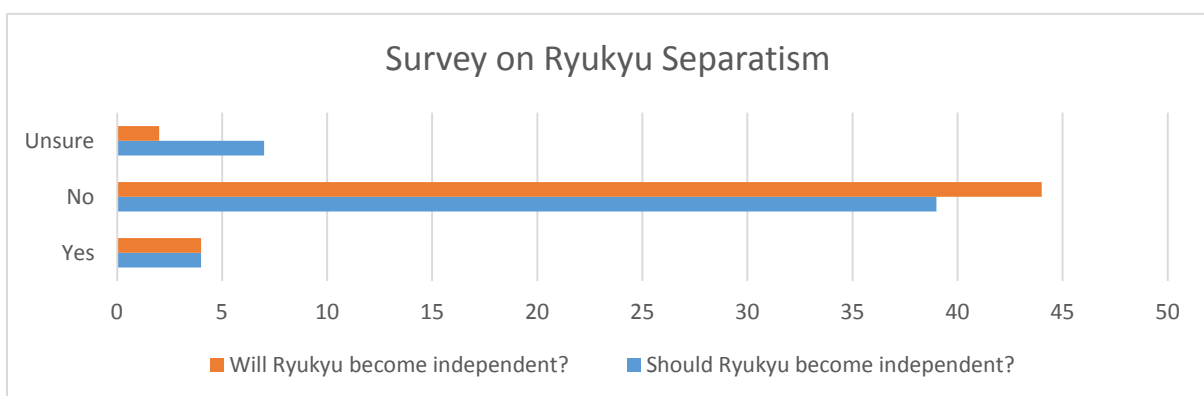
### **Historical Overview**

Before we move on to analyse these results in depth, we must first understand the origins of Ryukyu separatism, as well as the nation it wishes to create. Following the end of the Second World War, the United States Military worked to establish the islands as the heart of America's eastern army, utilising the resources left behind by the Japanese Imperial Army, and redeveloping the islands from an industry that had mostly centred on agriculture and fisheries. While the Treaty of San Francisco ended US occupation in mainland Japan, Article III provided that Okinawa would remain a US Trusteeship, and would not return to Japan until 1971. While today a full Japanese prefecture, Okinawa still hosts 75% of all US Military personnel in Japan, which controls 20% of its territory, despite making up only 0.6% of Japan's total territory.

Beyond these numbers, the relationship between Okinawan residents and the US Military can be described as bittersweet. While the US Military bases, and the tourism they bring, bring huge benefits to the Okinawan economy, there have been a string of incidents involving US Military personnel and locals, including trespassing, most notably incidents of rape and murder. The most notorious of these came in September 1995, and is seen as the point from which resentment towards the US Military presence became more than a fringe idea. Further incidents have cast a shadow over attempts by the US Military to improve matters, and the election in December 2014 of Governor Takeshi Onaga, a firm opponent of base relocation on Okinawa, is seen as representative of locals' disgruntlement.

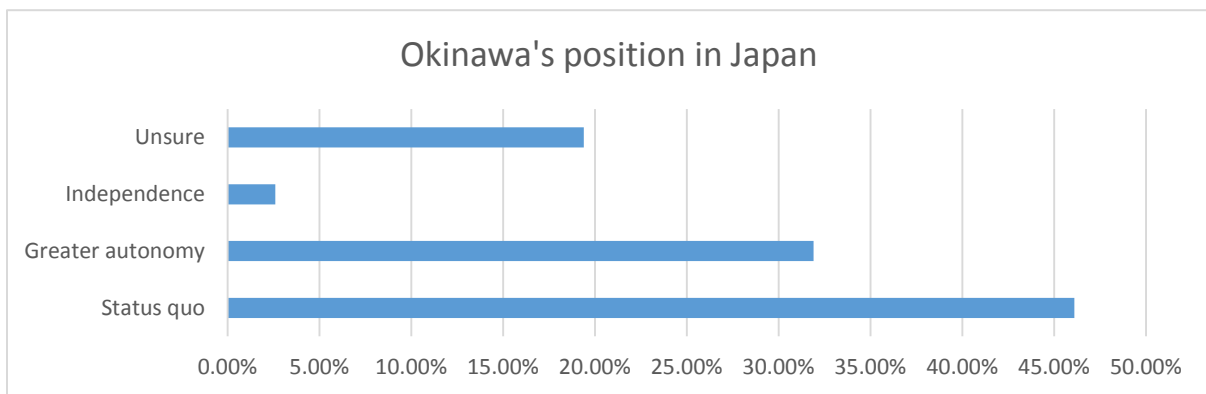
### **Statistical Analysis**

With this in mind, let us therefore move on to analyse the extent to which the Ryukyu separatist movement has made itself apparent, to both the people of the Ryukyu Islands, and the people of Japan as a whole. Beginning with the latter, the sample population for our survey, of 50 Okayama residents, had an average age of 28 with a range of 18 to 67, all were selected for surveying at random, and 68% of the population came from Okayama prefecture. Respondents were asked about their knowledge of Ryukyu separatism, and were asked whether they considered Ryukyu independence to be a good thing, or indeed possible. The statistical evidence gathered is displayed in the bar chart below (figure 1), and will be explained in further detail below.



Of our population, 28% was aware of the existence of a separatist movement in the Ryukyu Islands, while 4% was able to name a movement, or any people in connection to Ryukyu separatism. In response to the question of whether they thought the Ryukyu Islands should attain independence, 8% of respondents answered 'yes', 78% answered 'no', while 14% chose not to answer, or were unsure. Concerning whether or not independence would be achieved, 8% of respondents answered 'yes', 88% answered 'no', and 4% were unsure, or did not wish to say.

Bearing the results of our poll in Okayama in mind, we now turn to results of an official opinion poll conducted in Okinawa Prefecture by Ryukyu Shimpo, Okinawa's largest Japanese-language newspaper, in which respondents were asked "What do you think the Okinawa's position in Japan should be going forward?". The sample population numbered 1,047, all were aged over 20 years old and were selected at random, and came from all 5 districts of Okinawa. As with the first survey taken, the results will be displayed below in bar chart form (figure 2), and explained in greater detail below.



The Ryukyu Shimpo opinion poll reveals that out of the total population, 46.1% of respondents said that they wished to remain the status quo, of Okinawa as a Japanese prefecture, 31.9% responded that they wished to see increased level of autonomy and domestic authority in Okinawa, while 2.6% favoured total independence from Japan, leaving 19.4% unsure on the subject. Significantly, the figure of 31.9% is then broken down into two sub-categories, when regarding the ideal state of increased autonomy, with those wishing to see greater domestic authority to compile Okinawa-related budgets numbered 17.9%, while 14.0% favoured the introduction of a federal system, in which Okinawa's government would not only have increased domestic authority, but also equal authority with that of the national government in areas such as diplomacy and security<sup>7</sup>.

The final statistic which we must consider addresses the issue of mobilisation, as stated in our terminology, and is given as the number of active members in active movements which advocate Ryukyu independence. While this statistic has been difficult to determine, given the lack of a single political movement or party aimed at independence, a Japan Times article from January 2015, addressing the growth of the Association of Comprehensive Studies for Independence of the Lew Chewans, gives its membership as 250, though it does not mention whether they are active<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Ryukyu Shimpo. 2017. *Ryukyu Shimpo survey reveals 35% of Okinawans favour increased autonomy, less than half support status quo*. [Online]. [Accessed 04/07/2017]. Available from: <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2017/01/11/26302/>

<sup>8</sup> Japan Times. 2015. *Ryukyu pro-independence group quietly gathering momentum*. [Online]. [Accessed 04/07/2017]. Available from: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/01/26/national/ryukyu-pro-independence-group-quietly-gathering-momentum/#.WVpt8YSGPIU>

## **Statistical Interpretation**

After having presented the evidence collected by our survey in Okayama, and by the Ryukyu Shimpo poll in Okinawa, we can now consider the implications of these statistics, and determine whether the Ryukyu separatist movement has been successful up to this point. First, when we consider the extent to which the movement is mobilised, it would appear that 250 members of an active independence party, of a population of 1.4 million in Okinawa Prefecture, leaves the official independence movement in a difficult position. Being unable to muster a reliable turnout for demonstrations, electoral campaigning, or other political actions which require large membership turnout, the official movement for Ryukyu independence is severely lacking in political legitimacy, making any attempt to gain autonomy in future an uphill struggle.

Turning to the extent of politicisation of the movement, a comparison of our opinion polls shows clearly that there is little stomach for the idea of Okinawan separation from Japan, both in Okinawa and in Okayama, our representative city of mainland Japan. However, there are two areas of comparison that warrant particular interest. The first is that in either poll, there appears to be a relatively wide middle ground, of respondents who are unsure of where they stand, or unwilling to tell us where they stand, on this issue. The second concerns the narrowing down of options for our Okayama poll; had our survey been phased differently to have allowed options for greater autonomy, would it bear any similarity to the poll conducted in Okinawa?

When we put these results into the context of Okinawa's history and political position, we can begin to understand the complexity surrounding Okinawa's situation. While Okinawans have managed to establish a high degree of territorial and cultural distinctiveness from the rest of Japan, with 83.6% responding to the Ryukyu Shimpo poll as being "very much" or "somewhat" proud of being Okinawan, the poll also indicates that respondents feel that the time is not yet right for independence, and that the main concerns for those who are dissatisfied with the status quo are attaining greater autonomy, and of putting the Naha Government in a position to approve, or to reject, the construction of new US military bases.

## **Conclusion**

Having presented a brief historical overview of Okinawa since the Second World War, and putting into this context first and second-hand data collected in both Okinawa and Okayama, it would appear that, within the parameters of our terminology, the Ryukyu independence movement has not been successful, and has failed to capitalise on the feelings of territorial and cultural distinction that most Okinawans feel, and has been unable to insert into public discourse the idea of independence as a viable option, not at home, nor in the rest of Japan. I would say that these results reflect accurately my experiences on a trip to Okinawa from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. Perhaps rather ominously, any daily conversations concerning independence are likely to be drowned out by the sound of USAF aircraft overhead, and it is this issue with which Okinawan citizens are most concerned.

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## Extent of Political Awareness at Okayama University

Aleksa MacDonald

Bishop's University (Canada)

**Summary:** グローバリゼーションは、経済と貿易を結びつけるだけでなく、人々をより知的にする現象であると主張されてきた。本研究では、岡山大学の学生を対象に、東アジア政治と西洋政治との比較をどの程度知っているかを調べる。日本のアジアとの接近により、東アジアについて西側諸国よりも前提である。岡山大学の学生は政治についての知識が不十分であるが、調査の西洋政治分野では良くなる傾向があることが判明した。本稿では、グローバリゼーションの世界における個人の役割と、日本がそのような高い政治的無関心を持つ理由について論じる。

As global economies are more interconnected, international relations have become increasingly important in modern society. Cooperation is crucial. Countries can no longer solve their problems on their own given that challenges such as terrorism, climate change, financial crises, and virus outbreaks are now global. Products, too, are no longer made in one county alone, but rather many countries contribute to its development. For example, the consumers' decision to buy local produce or products from abroad, or the choice to buy clothes made by seamstresses paid with minimum wage or machines, makes the consumer a participant in international politics. An individual's involvement not only adds to the economies from all over the world, but also becomes a participant in social justice, peace, immigration, culture, economy, research, and other global networks.

One theory about the impacts of globalization is that globalization will make people more intelligent. With access to Internet, it is possible to search and learn anything. Academic scholar Marc Prensky proposed a theory in 2001 about the generation of millennials that grew up with their entire lives surrounded by technology. He suggested that with their extensive exposure, millennials should have deeper knowledge and understanding of the world than the pre-digital generation. These people, dubbed *digital natives*, are often expected to know more and learn quicker. To put this concept into a political perspective, does globalization mean that people are more aware of other countries' social, cultural, and political status?

Whether the digital native theory is true or not, it is a fact that technological advancements have increasingly become more knowledge driven rather than just capital and trade driven. As we strive to build the most intelligent artificial intelligence, access to information has become more available in rural and urban communities around the world. In a world driven by international and information exchange, perhaps it would be expected that young people are more aware of international politics than the past. In this study, I survey 100 Japanese students at Okayama University to find out the extent of their knowledge of East Asian politics compared to western politics. Although it is expected that students do better in the Asian politics, due to their proximity to East Asia, it is somewhat surprising to find that on average students had better scores in the western politics section. This essay will review the possible reasons for their poor scores, as well as investigate further into Japan's political apathy.

**Surveying Okayama Students** The survey consisted of ten multiple-choice questions. All of them were given 5 choices. The first half was about western politics. I tried to incorporate questions that related to recent events in the past year or so, such as the French and American elections, because of their recent media attention and their global controversy.

1. 前回のアメリカ大統領選挙はいつですか？(When was the last American presidential election?)
2. 現在のフランス大統領は誰ですか？(Who is the current president of France?)
3. EU加盟国はいくつですか？(How many member states are members of the European Union?)
4. どの国がEUを離れる準備をしていますか？(Which country is preparing to exit the European Union?)
5. アメリカの2大政党の名前は何ですか？(What are the names of the two major American political parties?)

The second half of the survey consisted of questions about East Asian politics. I defined East Asia as the region including Japan, South and North Korea, China, Taiwan, and Mongolia. Except for the question about South Korea's new president, for the East Asia section I asked more historical and factual questions.

6. モンゴルの政治制度は何ですか？(What is the political system in Mongolia?)
7. 現在の韓国大統領は男性か女性どちらですか？(Is the current president of South Korea a man or a woman?)
8. 中国の政治制度を表現する正しい言葉は何ですか？(What is the correct term to describe China's political system?)
9. 北朝鮮を支配する唯一の政党の名前は何ですか？(What is the name of the only political party governing North Korea?)
10. どの欧州植民地が台湾を占領しましたか？(What European colony occupied Taiwan?)

100 people responded to the survey. The targets were undergraduates of Okayama University, students between 18 and 23 years old. The average score for the survey was 51%. It is much lower than I expected. It is also interesting to see that students tended to fair better in the western politics than the Asian politics. I thought, since Japan is an east Asian country, that students would know more about their region. Certainly it is the case with Americans, Canadians, and European countries, where people tend to know more about the politics in their regional area.

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10
Answer A	3	11	12	8	10	35	36	10	59	15
Answer B	57	52	14	3	57	7	64	76	7	8
Answer C	0	23	8	1	18	45		2	11	49
Answer D	30	6	34	84	8	11		5	2	11
Answer E	10	7	32	4	7	2		7	21	17
<b>Correct</b>	<b><u>57</u></b>	<b><u>52</u></b>	<b><u>34</u></b>	<b><u>84</u></b>	<b><u>57</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>	<b><u>64</u></b>	<b><u>76</u></b>	<b><u>59</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>

**Why Did The Students Fair So Poor – Japan's Political Apathy** The importance of being aware of international politics comes back to the argument of uniting global forces to combat common issues. We are all familiar with global issues such as human rights, global poverty, climate change, and financial crises. The argument for globalization in the past was that if countries used their collective resources together, these issues would eventually be resolved. As it has become apparent, however, it cannot be done so easily. Thus my argument is that applying the lessons learned from international politics to ones own life can help make ones life, family, local community, and country a better place to live for everyone. This study proved that students in Okayama University do not know about international politics in their own region. The question as to why they do not know, or perhaps are not interested in international politics, will be discussed. There are two possibilities as to why the students faired so poor, 1) a lack of

interest in learning local politics due to a poor political environment in Japan in effect has negative impact on the interest to learn international politics; and 2) the decreasing quality of Japan's politicians in the past years have made people lose trust in their politicians and subsequently lost trust in any sort of politics, national and international.

Firstly, there is a lack of interest in learning politics in Japan. It is not a topic of daily conversation, and young generations are increasingly becoming less engaged in political involvement. (Jou and Endo) In high schools, students learn about Japan's political system but they are not taught international political systems. The lack of knowing how other countries are run is a significant factor in an individual's inclination to learn international politics. I have found from my own experience that the young Japanese people's awareness of international news does not seem to be as important as it is to average Canadians. Perhaps the attitude of Japan's foreign policy has also discouraged Japanese people from learning international politics. In the past decade, Japan has tended to behave neutrally and exclusively when it comes to international affairs. Japan's war legacy has apparently strained international relations, causing problems for bilateral relationships with other Asian countries such as Korea and China. The conservative Japanese government would rather promote nationalistic policies that discourage international matters. The war also left Japan with a constricting constitution in which the country could not engage in any form of conflict. When faced with threats such as China and North Korea, the Japanese government takes an even more defensive approach since their level of engagement is limited by post-war promises. Furthermore, external involvement in the international forum has been timid, perhaps due to Japan facing its own financial crisis and being ill equipped to engage in helping with international agendas. As a country with one of the lowest TOFL English scores in the world, and the fourth lowest in Asia, it is clear that Japan has been practically separated from the outside world.

The interest to learn politics starts with political participation at home. If there is no political involvement on the local level of government, then perhaps there is less interest in learning about international politics. Local governments do not promote active participation. In a system-affirming political environment like Japan, people rather engage in collaboration instead of confrontation. Collaborative political involvement includes contacting politicians, contacting politically influential persons, petitioning legislatures, and joining neighborhood associations. These types of engagements have been increasing over the past ten years according to the study by Jou and Endo, while confrontational activities such as participating in movements and demonstrations are becoming less common. There have been times in the past however when Japanese people were confrontational, and even protesting against foreign war. In the 1960's, thousands of citizens engaged in violent and passionate anti-war protests in response to the Vietnam war. In 2015, the Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy group took to the streets in Tokyo to protest Abe's decision to shift Japan away from a self-defensive constitution. On the other hand, historical events such as the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster have also affected the way people participate in politics, either leaning more to the left or to the right of the political spectrum according to Jou and Endo's research.

The second possible reason why Japanese people are politically apathetic might be due to the decreasing quality of their national politicians. When people lose faith in their political representatives at home, it would be of no surprise that they also have little hope for international politicians. Political participation is defined as a process of democracy where citizens have the power to influence the selection of their government body. According to academic studies, Japan has a very low participation rate in political affairs. The most accurate way to track political involvement is to determine voter turnout during elections. Compared with the United States (55.7% in 2016) and Canada (68.3% in 2015), the election turnout in Japan's last national elections in 2014 was only 52.7%. Indeed, in Japan there has been a rising inclination to avoid political involvement since the 1970's. (Jou and Endo) Perhaps Japanese

people think they have little influence on the election selection, because almost consecutively since 1995 the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been the head of government in Japan. The Japan Times claims that the “open recruitment” system allows basically anyone to join the government Diet. The article interviewed former DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) lawmaker Atsushi Kinoshita. “It used to be that you had to study really hard about policy and save up money to become a politician. . . . But today, in a sense, anybody can become one, without making much effort.” Politicians have reputation for gaffing in Japan. They make racist, sexist, or other crude comments that cause criticism. The parties blame Japanese journalism because it focuses more on what the politicians say rather than what they do, thus emphasizing their blunt remarks instead of their activities. Yet still, people lose respect for their political councils.

Could political apathy be a generational problem? The most politically active generation in Japan were those who were born in the baby booming years. Many people born between 1947 and 1949 were involved in the 1960’s student movements and reveal lifelong patterns of political involvement. (Takao) In 2005, the Dankai (Baby Boomer) Party was established to represent the generation born at that time. With the Japanese population aging faster than any other democratic country, it is also a concern for younger generations to be able to support them. As the numbers of workers in companies decrease, working people may have to work harder to produce the services and products for elderly retired people, or else rely on external sources from other countries to provide for them.

The Dankai generation is from an era where technology was not as abundant. Today with the unlimited access to information, it is easy to search for answers and learn about topics deeply. As it appears from the results of the survey, however, students at Okayama University did not seem to know as much as I expected about basic international politics. The argument of millennials being politically inactive comes to mind. This is not a Japan-specific challenge – many democracies are having trouble getting the youth and young adults to participate in local politics. It is believed, however, that the political environment that the children grow up in is not conducive to promoting political participation and engagement.

In terms of Japan’s endurance into the future, problems such as low birth rates, low average wages, and a poor economy have left some scholars to wonder if Japan will survive to the next century. While Japan deals with these internal problems, other Asian governments have been working together to establish friendly relationships and create mutual trade coalitions. ASEAN is an example of an Asian economic and political union that promotes peace, development, and diplomacy. If Japan were to adhere to conservative ideologies and close off the country, then the future of the country may be in jeopardy. In a time of global challenges, maybe Japan should be more internationally politically minded to confront these issues in unity with other countries.

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岡山大学

OKAYAMA UNIVERSITY

# Final Presentation 2017 By EPOK Students

*Epok International Students' Exploration in Japan with Interests in:*

University Education and Activities

大学の教育と活動

Okayama People and Community

岡山市民とコミュニティ

Cultures and Customs in Japan

日本の文化と習慣

etc.

場所: ROOM C32

07.25 (火) 16:20-18:30

07.26 (水) 16:20-18:30

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Poster designed by Donna Dinh  
(EPOK 2017 Spring)

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〒700-8530 岡山市北区津島中 2-1-1  
Center for Global Partnerships and Education  
Okayama University

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問合せ [epok-inbound1@adm.okayama-u.ac.jp](mailto:epok-inbound1@adm.okayama-u.ac.jp)  
<http://ouic.okayama-u.ac.jp/epok/index.htm>



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