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## L'aube des light novels en France

### Abstract

The purpose of this article is to determine the ins and outs of the first wave of translations of light novels in France. This Japanese category of fictional works has become an important part of contemporary Japanese popular culture, particularly in the early 2000s. However, up until now, French editors have not been successful in introducing this new genre. The study intends to discover the reasons why, through an examination of undertaken editorial choices as well as through the representative case of the translation of Suzumiya Haruhi no yūtsu. We will show the inherent difficulties involved in the import of light novels into a French cultural context – where literature remains institutionalized.

### Introduction

Le basculement entre le XX<sup>ème</sup> et les XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècles est le théâtre d'une omniprésence des médias de masse, de l'augmentation et accélération des échanges internationaux et des transferts culturels contribuant à l'élaboration d'une Culture globale<sup>1</sup>. À l'évidence, le monde des lettres n'échappe pas aux changements drastiques résultant de cette globalisation. Sont ainsi observables, entre autres, un décloisonnement des littératures nationales, une dé-hiérarchisation et une provincialisation des anciens domaines « centraux » européens – notamment la France<sup>2</sup> – au profit d'une visibilité plus importante des sphères littéraires de pays autres. En somme, la Littérature majuscule, universelle et moderne, est devenue plurielle ; sous les effets du

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<sup>1</sup> Toshiko Ellis, 'Literary Culture' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, Sugimoto Yoshio (éd.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 213–214.

<sup>2</sup> Dominique Viart, 'Introduction – La littérature française dans le monde' in *La littérature française du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle lue de l'étranger*, Dominique Viart (éd.), Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion ; Paris: Institut français, Coll. Perspectives, 2011, pp. 17–18.

postmodernisme, elle tend vers « un *diversel* dont la loi essentielle reste celle de l'hétérogène<sup>3</sup> ». Les changements sociétaux de l'ère globale et leurs impacts sur l'écriture dans son ensemble accentuent l'importance des études dédiées aux mécanismes de transferts et de réceptions d'éléments exogènes dans le domaine littéraire d'une culture X. À la fois vitrine et laboratoire du XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, la littérature joue un rôle indéniable dans la circulation et l'hybridation de motifs étrangers, tout comme dans la représentation de l'altérité chez un individu. *In fine*, elle rend primordiale l'observation des interactions culturelles internes et externes aux textes.

Parmi ces dernières et les nouveautés du domaine littéraire mondial, le phénomène japonais des *light novels* vient récemment de franchir ses frontières nationales pour être introduit sur les marchés occidentaux, notamment aux États-Unis et en France. Ces œuvres, définies par le critique japonais Enomoto Aki comme des « romans de divertissement destinés essentiellement aux collégiens et lycéens<sup>4</sup> », rencontrent un franc succès au Japon, accumulant des ventes de plusieurs millions d'exemplaires pour certains titres phares<sup>5</sup>. Au sein de la culture populaire japonaise contemporaine, les *lights novels* sont fréquemment en interactions avec les sphères de productions de manga et de séries d'animations dans une stratégie commerciale de *média-mix*<sup>6</sup>. Toutefois, ils ont subi de nombreuses difficultés lors de la première vague de traductions en France, au cours des années 2000. Jusqu'à la récente création de la maison d'édition française spécialisée *Ofelbe*, en 2014, les diverses tentatives d'importations se sont, en grande majorité, soldées par des échecs. Outre l'absence d'un engouement immédiat sur le marché des livres, le peu d'intérêt que les *light novels* ont suscité chez les critiques et académiciens de l'Hexagone renforce un sentiment mitigé sur leur réception<sup>7</sup>. Dans le présent article, nous chercherons à en

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<sup>3</sup> Marc Gontard, *Écrire la crise: l'esthétique postmoderne*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Enomoto Aki, *Raito no beru bungakuron* [Essai sur les Light Novels], Tōkyō: NTT Shuppan, 2008, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 174–175.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 185–186.

<sup>7</sup> Rares sont les chercheurs français à s'être penchés sur le sujet. Parmi ceux les ayant mentionnés: Anne Bayard-Sakai et Maxime Rovere (dir.), 'La littérature japonaise', dossier spécial, *Le Magazine Littéraire*, n° 517, mars 2012, p. 57; Cécile Sakai, 'Une page se tourne: la littérature japonaise aujourd'hui' in *NRF*, 'Du Japon', Philippe Forest (dir.), Paris: Gallimard, n° 599–600, mars 2012, p. 238.



comprendre les tenants et les aboutissants, de façon à établir ainsi un premier bilan de ce phénomène japonais en France. Pour ce faire, nous évoquerons les relations franco-japonaises dans le domaine littéraire afin de déterminer les particularités de l'environnement dans lequel sont introduits les light novels. Dans un second temps, nous discuterons de leurs caractéristiques originales, puis de leurs adaptations en France, en nous focalisant sur la traduction de *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu* de Tanigawa Nagaru<sup>8</sup>. Comme nous le montrerons, son étude révèle, à bien des égards, les difficultés, mécanismes et enjeux d'un transfert d'éléments littéraires exogènes au XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Nous nous emploierons enfin à illustrer combien l'introduction des light novels en France est un véritable défi, dans un pays doté d'une littérature érigée en institution<sup>9</sup>, en nous appuyant sur le précédent de l'importation des mangas, et la tradition française de traduction.

### La France, terre d'accueil pour le domaine littéraire japonais?

Depuis la signature du Traité d'amitié et de commerce du 9 octobre 1858, les relations franco-japonaises dans le domaine littéraire ont été émaillées de nombreux cas d'influences mutuelles, de « tentations » communes, pour reprendre le terme de Michaël Ferrier, que l'on retrouvera chez des auteurs aussi divers que Pierre Loti, Nagai Kafū, Mori Arimasa, Dazai Osamu, Paul Claudel, Georges Perec, ou bien encore, de nos jours, Philippe Forest et Horie Toshiyuki<sup>10</sup>. Au cours du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, cela s'est soldé bien souvent par un rapport textuel entre des auteurs singuliers, tel le fameux essai de Marguerite Yourcenar sur Mishima Yukio<sup>11</sup>, ne touchant au demeurant qu'un public de connaisseurs relativement limité en France. Mais depuis les années 80,

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<sup>8</sup> Tanigawa Nagaru, *La mélancolie de Haruhi Suzumiya*, Vol. I, Paris: Hachette, 2009 ; *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu* [La Mélancolie de Suzumiya Haruhi], Vol. 1–11, Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 2003–2011.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Dubois, *L'institution de la littérature: introduction à une sociologie*, Paris: Fernand Nathan ; Bruxelles, Éditions Labor, Coll. « Dossiers media », 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Michaël Ferrier (dir.), *La tentation de la France, la tentation du Japon: regards croisés*, Arles: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2003 ; Michaël Ferrier, *Japon: la barrière des rencontres*, Nantes: Éditions Cécile Defaut, 2009 ; Katō Shūichi *Histoire de la littérature japonaise, Volume III – L'époque moderne*, Paris: Fayard, Coll. Intertextes, 1986 ; Chris Reyns-Chikuma, *Images du Japon en France et Ailleurs – Entre Japonisme et Multiculturalisme*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Marguerite Yourcenar, *Mishima ou la vision du vide*, in *Essais et Mémoires*, Paris: Gallimard, Coll. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1991, pp. 195–272.

l'augmentation exponentielle des traductions d'ouvrages japonais dans l'Hexagone a considérablement renforcé la circulation et la réception de la littérature de l'archipel<sup>12</sup>. Après une « première vague » avant-guerre, puis une « seconde » dans les années 60 autour des « trois grands auteurs canoniques de la littérature japonaise moderne [...], Kawabata, Mishima et Tanizaki<sup>13</sup> », la troisième génération de traducteurs français et l'audace de la maison d'édition de Philippe Picquier ont entraîné une déferlante d'importations, caractérisée par une grande variété de genre, une liberté sans précédent de traduire « de tout », de retraduire même, et ce, avec une vitesse de publication décuplée<sup>14</sup>. Le catalogue des œuvres nippones en France s'est alors considérablement étoffé, présentant aux côtés des écrivains classiques la jeunesse contemporaine et les bestsellers, de Wataya Risa à Hirano Keiichirō, en passant par Murakami Haruki. En 1993, déjà, le nombre de romans originaires du Japon et traduits sur l'année (1,6 %) se rapprochait sensiblement de ceux hispanophones (3,4 %) <sup>15</sup>. Selon Anne Bayard-Sakai, traductrice et chercheuse française, l'une des raisons de cet engouement serait le changement de nature des lecteurs lié à la globalisation : ces derniers ne peuvent plus être restreints ou ciblés uniquement comme des « lecteurs de littérature japonaise<sup>16</sup> ».

Au sein de cette troisième vague, il est nécessaire de considérer l'impact important sur le lectorat français provenant de l'influence et du succès du manga sur la jeunesse du pays de Victor Hugo. Suite à, et épaulée par la diffusion des séries d'animations japonaises dans deux programmes télévisés, *RécréA2* (1978–1988) et le *Club Dorothée* (1987–1997), la traduction des mangas a gagné, graduellement, une

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<sup>12</sup> Georges Gottlieb, 'Jalons pour une histoire des traductions françaises du roman japonais moderne au XXe siècle' in *France-Asie. Un siècle d'échanges littéraires*, Muriel Détrie (éd.), Paris : Librairie-Éditeur You Feng, 2001, pp. 69–91 ; Corinne Quentin (mod.), 'Les coulisses de la traduction', Table Ronde avec Anne Bayard-Sakai et al. in *La tentation de la France, la tentation du Japon : regards croisés*, Michaël Ferrier (dir.), Arles : Éditions Philippe Picquier, pp. 204–205 ; Sakai, 'Une page se tourne...', pp. 233–243.

<sup>13</sup> Propos d'Anne Bayard-Sakai in Quentin (mod.), 'Les coulisses de la traduction...', pp. 204–205.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem ; Maxime Rovere, 'Philippe Picquier, le chercheur d'or', entretien avec Philippe Picquier, *Le Magazine Littéraire*, n° 517, mars 2012, pp. 86–87.

<sup>15</sup> Gottlieb, 'Jalons pour une histoire...', p. 90.

<sup>16</sup> Propos d'Anne Bayard-Sakai in Quentin (mod.), 'Les coulisses de la traduction...', p. 211.

place centrale dans les librairies françaises<sup>17</sup>. Leur boom commercial au début du XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècle a propulsé la France, aux côtés de l'Italie, au rang de premier marché d'exportation pour la bandedessinée japonaise. Le chercheur Jean-Marie Bouissou en révèle l'étendue: en 2008, les mangas ont atteint près de 37 % des ventes du 9<sup>ème</sup> Art dans l'Hexagone<sup>18</sup>. S'ils concernaient la jeunesse italienne à l'origine, les propos du sociologue Marco Pellittericonviennent tout autant au contexte français, lorsque celui-ci concluait que les productions culturelles japonaises « ont contribué à développer l'émerveillement et la sensibilité culturelle et émotionnelle d'au moins deux générations d'enfants » en France<sup>19</sup>. En conséquence, l'abondance de nouvelles images entraîne un déplacement et une transformation des stéréotypes sur l'archipel auprès du public français, bousculant jusqu'à la création littéraire locale<sup>20</sup>. Cela se traduit notamment par le passage de la vision orientaliste et archaïque – tel le fantasme érotique de la femme obéissante véhiculé depuis *Madame Chrysanthème* de Pierre Loti (1887)<sup>21</sup>, – aux clichés de la société contemporaine, avec ses travailleurs alcoolisés, robotiques ou sexuellement dépravés<sup>22</sup>, nourris par les écrits récents tel *Stupeur et Tremblements* d'Amélie Nothomb (1999)<sup>23</sup>. Indéniablement, l'exotisme n'en est pas moins présent. Quoiqu'il en soit, en raison de sa popularité phénoménale en France, le manga participe pleinement à l'enthousiasme actuel pour le domaine littéraire

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<sup>17</sup> Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Manga, Histoire et univers de la bande dessinée japonaise* [Nouvelle édition mise à jour et corrigée], Arles: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 11 et 140.

<sup>19</sup> Marco Pellitteri, 'Mass Trans-Culture from East to West, and Back', *The Japanese Journal of Animation Studies*, Vol. 5, Issue 1A (6), printemps 2004, pp. 19–26. Ma traduction. Or indications contraires, les traductions sont de mon fait.

<sup>20</sup> Michaël Ferrier, 'La tentation du Japon chez les écrivains français' in *La tentation de la France, la tentation du Japon: regards croisés*, Michaël Ferrier (dir.), Arles: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2003, pp. 49–53.

<sup>21</sup> Ōkubo Takaki, 'Loti ou l'exotisme trahi' in *La tentation de la France, la tentation du Japon: regards croisés*, Michaël Ferrier (dir.), Arles: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2003, pp. 59–70.

<sup>22</sup> Ferrier, 'La tentation du Japon chez les écrivains français'..., p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> Fujimoto De Chavanès Edwige, 'Furansu ni okerunihongendai bungaku – Akutagawa Ryūnosuke kara Yves Simon made' [La réception de la littérature japonaise contemporaine en France – d'Akutagawa Ryūnosuke à Yves Simon] in *Ibunkarikai no shiza: sekaikara mita nihon, nihonkara mita sekai* [Image and Reality: How the World Sees Japan, How Japanesees the World], Kojima Takayuki et Komatsu Shinjirō (éds.), Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2003, p. 271.

japonais – au sens le plus large – et est devenu l'avant-garde transculturelle des exportations nipponnes dans l'Hexagone, aux côtés des bestsellers, tel le romancier Murakami Haruki. Notons, par ailleurs, que la bandedessinée de l'archipel peut tout autant s'enorgueillir de favoriser et populariser la lecture des écrivains classiques auprès du jeune public français – ainsi, *Botchan*, de Natsume Sōseki, fut introduit via une version manga réalisée par Taniguchi Jirō et Sekikawa Natsuo<sup>24</sup>.

De toutes les œuvres japonaises traduites récemment, la quasi-absence de *light novels* suscite l'étonnement. Puisque le lectorat et le marché des livres de l'Hexagone s'avèrent être favorablement réceptifs aux mangas et à un certain nombre d'écrivains, nous pouvons nous interroger de droit sur la ou les raisons des difficultés rencontrées par ces séries romanesques atypiques. Si nous trouvons la trace des premières tentatives d'introduction à la fin des années 90<sup>25</sup>, les éditeurs français pionniers ont eu toutes les peines du monde à imposer les *light novels* dans les rayons des libraires jusqu'à la seconde vague de traductions menées par Ofelbe. En 2013, on ne comptait encore que seulement une vingtaine de titres parvenus en France, et une étude plus minutieuse de ces derniers révèle bien vite l'illusion d'une telle estimation. Le nombre de *light novels* en France n'est qu'une goutte d'eau dans l'océan au miroir de la production nipponne, et un regard dans un des guides et hit-parades japonais suffit pour se rendre compte de notre retard colossal<sup>26</sup>. Outre que certaines publications ne soient, en réalité, que des novellisations de mangas populaires, d'autres doivent être considérées comme des *one shots*, et non des séries (*Le chevalier d'Éon*, *Love & Destroy*...) <sup>27</sup>. Toutefois, ce sont les interruptions de traductions qui sont remarquablement étonnantes. Entre autres : *Guin Saga*, écrite par Kurimoto Kaoru et forte de 130 volumes, a été arrêtée dès le cinquième tome, en 2007 ; *Les Chroniques d'Arslân* de Yoshiki Tanaka, mises en hiatus après le premier ; celles de Mori Hiroshi, *The skycrawlers*, et de Yumemakura Baku, *L'épée de l'empereur*, avant

<sup>24</sup> Taniguchi Jirō et Sekikawa Natsuo, *Au temps de botchan* [Botchan no jidai], Paris: Le Seuil, 2002–2006.

<sup>25</sup> Mizuno Ryō, *Chroniques de la Guerre de Lodoss: La dame de Falis*, Paris: Delcourt, 1996 ; Katsura Masakazu, *Zetman*, Paris: Ed. Tonkam, 1997 ; Tomita Sukehiro, Katsura Masakazu, *Le roman de Video Girl*, Paris: Ed. Tonkam, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Enomoto Aki, *Raito noberusaiyō! Bukkugaido-shōnenkei*, [Les meilleurs *light novels* ! Guide des séries shōnen], Tōkyō: NTT Shuppan, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Hamazaki Tatsuya et Katsura Masakazu, *Love & Destroy*, Paris: Ed. Tonkam, 2006 ; Ubukata Tō, *Le chevalier d'Éon*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy/Kaze, 2008.

leurs troisièmes<sup>28</sup>. Plus surprenant encore, la série à succès international de Tanigawa Nagaru, *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu*, n'eut le temps de voir paraître que son premier volume, en 2009, avant d'être irrémédiablement mise de côté par son éditeur, Hachette. Les rares séries arrivées à terme font office d'exceptions: la publication de 2007 à 2010 de l'œuvre de Ono Fuyumi, *Les Douze Royaumes*, la reprise par Calmann-Lévy/Kazedes *Chroniques de la Guerre de Lodoss* de Mizuno Ryō, et *Library Wars* de Arikawa Hiro – malgré un hiatus de près de cinq ans<sup>29</sup>. À première vue, le bilan de cette première vague de traductions de light novels paraît plus que mitigé.

### Le light novel, du Japon à la France

Afin de mieux appréhender les tenants et aboutissants de l'apparente instabilité dégagée par la première vague de traductions en France, il est nécessaire de retourner à la définition même de l'objet problématique, le light novel. Son nom, évoquant une certaine facilité de lecture et son format de poche (A6), s'est répandu et imposé sur l'internet des années 2000, sans véritable description préalable<sup>30</sup>. Il tire son origine d'une succession de jalons importants et d'hybridations, de l'histoire de la littérature jeunesse locale<sup>31</sup> aux traductions des grandes œuvres étrangères de *fantasy* – le romancier irlandais Clive Staples Lewis en 1966, l'anglais John Ronald Reuel Tolkien en 1972, l'américaine Ursula Kroeber Le Guin en 1976<sup>32</sup>. L'élément déclencheur de l'apparition

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<sup>28</sup> Kurimoto Kaoru, *Guin Saga*, Vols. 1–5, [Publication interrompue], Paris: Fleuve noir, 2006–2007 ; Yoshiki Tanaka, *Les Chroniques d'Arslân*, Vol. 1, [Publication interrompue], Paris: Calmann-Lévy/Kaze, 2008 ; Mori Hiroshi, *The Sky Crawlers*, Vols. 1–2 [Publication interrompue], Grenoble: Glénat, 2010–2011 ; Yumemakura Baku, *L'épée de l'empereur*, Vols. 1–2, [Publication interrompue], Grenoble: Glénat, 2010–2011.

<sup>29</sup> Ono Fuyumi, *Les Douze Royaumes*, Vols. 1–12, Toulouse: Ed. Milan, 2007–2010 ; Mizuno Ryō, *Chroniques de la Guerre de Lodoss*, Vols. 1–4, Paris: Calmann-Lévy/Kaze, 2006–2009 ; Arikawa Hiro, *Library Wars*, Vols. 1–4, Glénat, 2010–2016.

<sup>30</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], pp. 20–23.

<sup>31</sup> Ōhashi Takayuki, *Raito noberukaramitashōjō/ shōnenshōsetsushi: gendainihon no monogatari bunka wo minaosu tame ni* [The History of Entertainment for Young Adulthoods and the Consideration about Characters: Rethink about Modern Japanese Culture of Studies], Tōkyō: Kasama Shoin, 2014. La datation des origines des light novels prête à débat, et l'étude d'Ōhashi remet en question la théorie actuelle de premières traces dans les années 70.

<sup>32</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], p. 14.

des *proto-light novels*<sup>33</sup> fut l'immense succès de la fantasy médiévale dans les années 80-90, dû à la création de jeux japonais se réappropriant cet imaginaire (*Dragon Quest*, *Final Fantasy*...), inspirant alors quantité de récits romanesques et marquant un tournant dans l'imagination de l'archipel<sup>34</sup>. Lesséries populaires issues de cette vague, telles les *Chroniques de la Guerre de Lodoss* (1988) et *Slayers* de Kanzaki Hajime (1990), ont donné corps à ce nouveau style de roman. La multiplication des labels d'éditeurs et la diversification des genres, afin de satisfaire un lectorat grandissant, ont finalement entraîné le véritable boom du light novel dans les années 2000. Ce marché attractif et conséquent<sup>35</sup> s'est alors inscrit, au même titre que le manga, dans la stratégie commerciale du *média-mix* japonais, consistant en la production de formes médiatiques dérivées d'une œuvre, de la bande dessinée au roman, en passant par les jeux vidéo, l'animation ou encore la musique<sup>36</sup>. Leurs fréquentes interactions avec ces différentes sphères de créations culturelles les distinguent d'une écriture romanesque classique et montrent, selon Anne Bayard-Sakai, « à quel point la littérature japonaise est réceptive à la transformation », tant pour « le monde éditorial que pour les auteurs et le lectorat »<sup>37</sup>.

Majoritairement présentées comme des séries romanesques, les lights novels possèdent un certain nombre de caractéristiques propres, communes et plus complexes qu'il n'y paraît<sup>38</sup> : un rythme de lecture facilitée et un vocabulaire propice aux adolescents et jeunes adultes, une focalisation sur les dialogues et des paragraphes courts, la présence d'illustrations internes de style manga, et une tendance à mettre en avant

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 20–21. Enomoto utilise l'expression *raitonoberutekina mono*, que nous traduisons ici par *proto-light novels*, afin de désigner les lights novels précédant l'apparition du terme générique dans les années 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 18–20.

<sup>35</sup> En 2007, il s'élevait à 91 milliards de yens et a vu la parution de 260 nouveaux volumes, au rythme de 21 par mois (ibid., p. 172).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 185–186.

<sup>37</sup> Bayard-Sakai et Rovere (dir.), 'La littérature japonaise...', p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> Parmi les études dédiées aux caractéristiques des lights novels, nous pouvons mentionner celles d'Enomoto (*Raitonoberu...*) et d'Ōhashi, (*Raitonoberukara*) ; Maynard Senko K., *Raitonoberuhyōgenron: kaiwa, sōzō, asobi no discourse no kōsatsu* [Fluid Orality in the Discourse of Japanese Popular Culture], Tōkyō: Meijishoin, 2012 ; Ichianagi Hirotaka et Kume Yoriko (éds), *Raitonoberukenkyūjōsetsu* [Introduction à la Recherche sur les Light Novels], Tōkyō: Seikyūsha, 4ème édition, 2013 ; Ichianagi Hirotaka et Kume Yoriko (éds), *Raitonoberustudies* [Light Novels Studies], Tōkyō: Seikyūsha, 2013 ; Tōkyō: Kasama Shoin, 2014.

les personnages et leurs émotions au détriment de l'histoire ou d'une recherche stylistique. Ils s'inscrivent pleinement dans ce que la chercheuse allemande Jaqueline Berndt nomme le *mangaesque*, défini comme suit:

« It points to collaborative creativity, codification and mediation, an aesthetic emphasis on fantasy rather than realism and impacts rather than messages, further, an astonishingly precise depiction of emotions and intimate relationships, often at the expense of allegorical and metaphorical thinking<sup>39</sup> ».

Cherchant à faciliter l'identification aux personnages, le light novel se confère un véritable rôle d'ouvrage de divertissement. Mais si bon nombre de ces séries se contentent de suivre les conventions de cette catégorie, cela n'empêche en rien certains choix originaux selon les auteurs. Ainsi, *Library Wars*, dont l'écrivain a ouvertement réclamé l'appartenance à ce style, a été publiée sous format relié et sans illustrations internes, permettant de toucher un lectorat plus large, plus adulte<sup>40</sup>. Et son contenu n'en est pas moins singulier et complexe: cette série romanesque s'inscrit dans le *placere et docere* aristotélicien et entraîne son lectorat dans une dystopie au statut d'héritière de *Fahrenheit 451*<sup>41</sup>. De nos jours, la variété des genres et des variables propres aux séries fait, de l'élaboration d'une définition générale correspondant à l'ensemble des créations une véritable gageure. Enomoto en vient donc à invoquer comme le « plus petit dénominateur commun » le public visé – collégiens et lycéens –, quand bien même il reconnaît que les light novels évoluent avec leurs lecteurs, suggérant qu'il touche dorénavant aussi les étudiants et les jeunes adultes<sup>42</sup>.

À l'évidence, le trio manga-animation-light novel pourrait sembler être une opportunité commerciale intéressante dans un pays comme la France, les deux premiers éléments de ce triptyque étant déjà bien

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<sup>39</sup> Jaqueline Berndt, 'Facing the Nuclear Issue in a "Mangaesque" Way. The *Barefoot Gen* Anime', *Cinergie*, n° 2, 2012, pp. 158–159; <http://www.cinergie.it/?p=1840> (accès 29.06.2016).

<sup>40</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], p. 54.

<sup>41</sup> Maxime Danesin, *La Censure, de Fahrenheit 451 à Library Wars*, Mémoire de Master II en Lettres Modernes, [unpublished], Tours: Université François-Rabelais, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], pp. 9–50 ; Bayard-Sakai et Rovere (dir.), 'La littérature japonaise...', p. 57.

accueillis<sup>43</sup>. Néanmoins, malgré la présence d'une forte communauté de fans de culture populaire japonaise, les échecs de traductions répétés démontrent que le marché français est resté fragile jusqu'aux premières sorties des titres licenciés par Ofelbe, en mars 2015. Parmi les maisons d'édition qui ont pris le risque d'introduire ce genre de romans dans l'Hexagone, certaines proposaient déjà un catalogue de mangas (Tonkam, Glénat...): elles n'étaient donc pas à leur coup d'essai en la matière de traductions de productions culturelles nippones. L'une d'entre elles, Hachette, a mené une stratégie commerciale qui s'avère être particulièrement révélatrice des difficultés rencontrées par la première vague de traductions. Suite à la tentative ratée de la publication de *Trinity Blood* de Yoshida Sunao<sup>44</sup>, arrêtée après deux volumes traduits sur douze, cet éditeur français a décidé d'importer dans sa collection jeunesse la série populaire *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsude* Tanigawa Nagaru et illustrée par Itō Noiji. À l'origine, celle-ci possède onze volumes, publiés au Japon par Kadokawa Shoten de 2003 à 2011. Adaptée à la fois sous formats d'animation (2006) et de manga (2004) selon les codes du média-mix<sup>45</sup>, forte d'une communauté francophone de fans déjà établie<sup>46</sup>, cette série était, en toute logique, censée représenter une valeur sûre de réussite commerciale dans l'Hexagone. Toutefois, la publication a été arrêtée dès la sortie du premier volume, en raison de ses faibles ventes<sup>47</sup>. Mais, à bien des égards, les raisons de cet échec retentissant ne se limitent pas à un manque de lecteurs.

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<sup>43</sup> Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Manga, Histoire...*, pp. 11 et 140 ; Marco Pellitteri, *The Dragon and the Dazzle, Models, Strategies, and Identities of Japanese Imagination – A European Perspective*, Latina: Tunué, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Yoshida Sunao, *Trinity Blood*, Vols 1–2 [Publication interrompue], Paris: Hachette, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Kawasaki Takuto et Iikura Yoshiyuki, 'Raito noberu wa tajiūsakuhinsekai no yume wo miruka?' [Les personnages de light novels rêvent-ils d'un monde d'ouvrages multiples?] in *Raitonoberukenkyūjosetsu* [Introduction à la Recherche sur les Light Novels], Ichinyanagi Hirotsuka et Kume Yoriko (éds), Tōkyō: Seikyūsha, 2013, pp. 27–30.

<sup>46</sup> L'existence d'une communauté francophone de fans est établie depuis au moins 2007, via la création du site [internetwww.haruhi.fr](http://internetwww.haruhi.fr), c'est-à-dire seulement un an après l'adaptation animée au Japon de *Suzumiya Haruhi* (2006), et avant l'acquisition française de la licence de la version animée par Kazé (2008) et des traductions du manga et du light novel (2009). Une association loi 1901, intitulée « Brigade SOS Francophone », était d'ailleurs créée quelques mois avant la sortie de ces deux derniers médias. Brigade SOS Francophone, 'Historique': <http://www.brigade-sos.fr/qui-sommes-nous/historique/> (accès 31.08.2016).

<sup>47</sup> Au contraire, sa traduction américaine, débütée en 2009 par Little, Brown Books for Young Readers – qui appartient au groupe Hachette – est allée jusqu'à son terme (2013).



### Le cas symbolique de *Suzumiya Haruhi*

Précisons que la terminologie de « light novel » n'a été utilisée officiellement par les éditeurs français qu'à partir de la seconde vague de traductions, soit plus de cinq ans après l'arrivée sur le marché de *Suzumiya Haruhi*. En 2009, seules les communautés de fans connaissaient ce terme grâce à la circulation des informations sur internet. Les light novels publiés en France l'ont été dans des collections jeunesse, positionnés sur les étagères des libraires destinées aux jeunes adolescents et, soulignons-le, séparés des sections dédiées aux mangas. C'est-à-dire qu'ils ont été considérés moins comme des séries romanesques mangaesques, aux fortes interactions avec la culture populaire japonaise, que comme de simples romanes jeunesse lambdas. Dans une interview pour un des sites principaux de fans de *Suzumiya Haruhi*, Cécile Térouanne, directrice éditoriale de la collection jeunesse chez Hachette, affirme ainsi qu'ils avaient choisi intentionnellement de cibler les adolescents de plus de 12 ans, sans pour autant viser les lycéens<sup>48</sup>. Mais la distribution de ces romans parmi les sections juvéniles, qui plus est aux côtés d'ouvrages sans lien direct avec la culture populaire japonaise, tend à naturellement aliéner les lecteurs plus âgés, notamment les membres de la communauté de fans qui attendaient depuis plusieurs années sa traduction officielle en France. L'absence de prise en compte, au niveau éditorial, de l'écart temporel entre sa réception au Japon, sur internet, puis en France, dénote le choix de privilégier un public-cible nouveau, au détriment des fans de la première heure. La séparation effective, physique, entre les light novels traduits en France et les mangas, est indéniablement volontaire et stratégique. Sceptique « sur le fait que le lecteur de manga viendra chez le roman », Cécile Térouanne insiste dans son interview sur l'absence « de démonstration que le lectorat du manga soit le même que le lectorat du roman »<sup>49</sup>. Cette déclaration surprenante tend à ignorer les tenants et les aboutissants de la stratégie commerciale du média-mix au Japon, et la théorie du philosophe japonais Azuma Hiroki sur la « consommation des

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<sup>48</sup> Cécile Térouanne, Nautawi (Interviewer), 'L'interview avec l'éditeur': [http://yuki.haruhi.fr/index.php/L%27interview\\_avec\\_l%27%C3%A9diteur](http://yuki.haruhi.fr/index.php/L%27interview_avec_l%27%C3%A9diteur) (accès 29.06.2016). Le site en question, sous format wiki, est régi par le portail francophone sur SuzumiyaHaruhi (<http://haruhi.fr>).

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

bases de données » par les otakus et centrée sur les personnages considérés comme des « éléments d'attraction<sup>50</sup> ».

« Les individus qui ressentent une attirance pour un personnage particulier collectionnent tous les produits en rapport avec ce personnage. Du point de vue des producteurs, ce qui décidera du succès ou de l'échec d'un projet ne sera par la qualité du support (manga, dessiné animé ou jeu) dans lequel apparaît ce personnage: ce sera la faculté du dessin ou des mises en scène du personnage à faire naître cette attente, cette attraction, chez le consommateur<sup>51</sup> ».

Or, l'influence de l'écriture mangaesque sur cette catégorie de romans contemporains est avérée par Azuma<sup>52</sup>. Quant à la série *Suzumiya Haruhi*, celle-ci est considérée comme un parangon des réussites stratégiques du média-mix<sup>53</sup>. La position éditoriale de Hachette, c'est-à-dire la séparation entre le lectorat du roman et celui du manga – et donc *in fine* de la sphère des fans de la culture populaire japonaise – condamnait inévitablement l'éclosion, en France, du triptyque manga-animation-light novels tel que les japonais l'avait mise en place.

Dans son interview, Cécile Téroouanne ajoute:

« Je pense qu'on ne peut pas du tout se baser sur ce que font les japonais. Je pense que pour un éditeur de manga, ça a du sens de prendre en compte ce qui se fait au Japon. Mais pour un éditeur de romans, on est vraiment dans un laboratoire, on est un peu pionnier, il y a quelque chose à créer, il y a un public à trouver<sup>54</sup> ».

En effet, Hachette a, en publiant *Suzumiya Haruhi*, tenté une expérience: toucher un lectorat nouveau, plus important, au prix d'une diminution nette de la part du livre issue de la culture populaire japonaise. Le titre fut transformé en *Haruhi fait sa crise*, la raison invoquée par le groupe éditorial étant que le terme de « mélancolie » (*yūutsu*) est « anti-vendeur », voir « anti-flirt » et reviendrait donc à « fusill[er] le livre à l'avance<sup>55</sup> ». Ce choix allait à l'encontre de la traduction de la version manga, *La mélancolie de Haruhi*, chez l'éditeur

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<sup>50</sup> Azuma Hiroki, *Génération Otaku, les enfants de la postmodernité*, Paris: Hachette, 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 90–95.

<sup>53</sup> Kawasaki Takuto et Ikura Yoshiyuki, 'Raitonoberu...', pp. 27–30.

<sup>54</sup> Téroouanne, 'L'interview avec l'éditeur...', n.p.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem.

français Pika<sup>56</sup>, alors prévu au 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 2009, c'est-à-dire un mois avant la date de sortie officielle du roman (19 août). Et ce, malgré une collaboration étroite lors de la campagne promotionnelle des deux médiums<sup>57</sup>. Cécile Térouanne justifie cette différence du fait que ses confrères de Pika touchent « un public déjà informé avec tout un “buzz” autour de ça <sup>58</sup> ». Réalisées par ItōNoiji, les illustrations mangaesques intercalées dans le roman furent supprimées et la couverture originale « réinterprétée » selon l'édition américaine<sup>59</sup>. Le personnage principal, emblème de la série, est alors passé d'une représentation au premier plan à une vague silhouette noire, perdue au milieu d'un arrière-plan neutre rouge vif. La phase de républication révèle que si Cécile Térouanne a fait part de son étonnement vis-à-vis de ce choix graphique et qu'une version conforme à la couverture japonaise était en préparation, le choix de l'éditeur s'est tout de même porté sur la seconde, plus amène de déconnecter l'ouvrage de son aspect mangaesque<sup>60</sup>. En conséquence, malgré la qualité de la traduction de Guillaume Didier, il ne serait pas exagéré de constater que Hachette a, presque, éradiqué du livre ses caractéristiques paratextuelles propres aux light novels et le rattachant à la sphère de la culture populaire japonaise. Si une négociation entre Hachette et la communauté de fans a permis un retour au titre original de la série<sup>61</sup>, l'échec commercial n'a pas pu être évité. Dans un format 135x200, l'ouvrage, au prix de 14 euros – plus de deux fois l'équivalent en yen –, ne parvint à charmer le lectorat visé, et la traduction fut arrêtée.

Serait-ce imputable à la communauté de fans qui, déçue des modifications du contenu japonais, n'aurait pas assez acheté<sup>62</sup>? Aux lecteurs français et ses attentes ? Ou bien la faute réside-t-elle dans les

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<sup>56</sup> Tanigawa Nagaru et Tsunago Gaku, *La mélancolie de Haruhi Suzumiya*, Vols. 1–15 [En cours], Boulogne: Pika édition, 2009–2015 ; *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu* [La Mélancolie de Suzumiya Haruhi], Vols. 1–20, Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 2006–2013. Il s'agit de la seconde adaptation en manga, la première datant de 2004 par Mizuno Makoto.

<sup>57</sup> Térouanne, 'L'interview avec l'éditeur...', n.p.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem. L'édition américaine propose deux couvertures, la première réinterprétée, l'autre conforme à l'originale.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem ; Kabu (Champ de Navet), 'Hachette suspend le roman Haruhi Suzumiya', 2010: <http://champdenavet.free.fr/index.php?post/2010/02/11/Hachette-suspend-le-roman-Haruhi-Suzumiya> (accès 29.06.2016).

<sup>61</sup> Kabu (Champ de Navet), 'Hachette suspend...', n.p.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem. L'auteur de l'article révèle un conflit interne entre les « fans » sur la situation.

choix éditoriaux de Hachette qui, rappelons-le, a osé s'inscrire parmi les rares pionniers français à prendre le risque d'introduire les light novels ? S'il nous paraît vain et contraire à notre rôle de mettre au pilori les uns ou les autres, il n'empêche que la stratégie visant à adapter l'objet exogène au marché national, au prix d'une dénaturalisation, et cibler un lectorat différent et inexpérimenté, sans s'appuyer sur la base existante, a été contre-productive, allant à l'encontre des avantages conférés par le média-mix japonais, une des clefs de voûte de la culture populaire contemporaine de l'archipel. L'introduction des light novels comme des romans jeunesse lambdas, séparés des sphères de manga et d'animation, l'absence de la terminologie adéquate, les hésitations entre un titre « vendeur » et l'original, au risque de perdre la cohérence avec les autres médiums, toutes ces expérimentations ont, à l'évidence, précipité l'échec de l'œuvre de Tanigawa Nagarusur le marché français. Quant à la suppression des illustrations mangaesques et au changement radical de couverture couplé à la minimalisation du personnage de Suzumiya Haruhi, cela est revenu à saboter la puissance commerciale d'éléments reconnus pour attirer l'attention et créer de fortes réactions émotionnelles entre les lecteurs et les protagonistes<sup>63</sup>. Surtout, ces modifications freinent l'imaginaire du lectorat français, et dans le cas précis de *Suzumiya Haruhi*, l'extension de ses connaissances visuelles et culturelles du quotidien scolaire japonais. En somme, ces choix éditoriaux ont pour conséquence une altération importante de la réception, en France, de cet ouvrage, de la culture populaire japonaise contemporaine et de ses productions. Et ce faisant, le lectorat français se retrouve enfermé dans un cadre national, les empêchant, de fait, de participer au partage et à la circulation d'une œuvre dans un réseau culturel global.

### **Quid du précédent avec les mangas ?**

Indéniablement, le cas de *Suzumiya Haruhi* en France soulève des interrogations sur les méthodes d'importations d'éléments exogènes dans nos librairies. L'auteur et l'illustrateur étaient-ils au courant de tels changements ? Peut-on considérer qu'il s'agissait là de décisions stratégiques irrespectueuses envers leurs autorités, étant donné qu'elles ont affecté le contenu de l'ouvrage, son appartenance à la catégorie des light novels, en un mot, son originalité ? Les difficultés rencontrées et

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<sup>63</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], pp. 75–76.

les choix éditoriaux sont-ils spécifiques à la réception française ? Si nous nous penchons sur de possibles précédents, l'arrivée des mangas en France, dans les années 90, éclaire singulièrement la gestion de la première vague de traductions des light novels. Dans son ouvrage de référence, *Manga, Histoire et univers de la bande dessinée japonaise*, l'historien Jean-Marie Bouissou rappelle les réactions violentes et brutales qui se firent entendre face à la popularité de ces créations auprès de la jeunesse française :

« Les amoureux du Japon traditionnel y voyaient un furoncle hideux qui défigurait le beau pays de leurs rêves. Ségolène Royal en tête, des personnalités dénonçaient la dangerosité des séries nippones et du manga, censés véhiculer de mauvaises idées que les adolescents n'auraient jamais eues sans leur influence néfaste<sup>64</sup> ».

Aux condamnations pour atteinte grave à la morale et aux incompréhensions des « parents et éducateurs », le *Monde diplomatique* ajoutait, en 1996, la publication d'une diatribe au vitriol de Pascal Lardellier<sup>65</sup>. Appelant à une véritable résistance, ce dernier désignait alors les mangas comme un danger pour la société, une attaque contre le « patrimoine culturel européen » et un risque colossal pour l'avenir de la bande dessinée française<sup>66</sup>. Ainsi, les critiques françaises<sup>67</sup> mêlaient intérêts nationaux, défense d'une certaine morale et éducation, et le problème sous-jacent d'une remise en question, par les mangas et les animés, de la vision encore dominante à l'époque d'un Japon fantasmé et stéréotypé, mélange d'un japonisme à la *Madame Chrysanthème* de Pierre Loti et la perception de Roland Barthes dans *l'Empire des signes*. En parallèle des réactions épidermiques de certains critiques déclinologues, Bouissou souligne un point essentiel sur les stratégies éditoriales, véritable écho à l'introduction des light novels. Lors de la traduction du manga *Akira*, en 1990, « afin de ne pas brusquer les lecteurs, [l'éditeur français] Glénat avait colorisé et retourné les planches [du manga] pour que la lecture se fasse de gauche à droite<sup>68</sup> ».

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<sup>64</sup> Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Manga, Histoire...*, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> Pascal Lardellier, 'Ce que nous disent les mangas', *Le Monde diplomatique*, décembre 1996, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>67</sup> Sur les critiques et les polémiques lors de la réception des mangas et des animés en France, voir aussi: Marco Pellitteri, *The Dragon and the Dazzle...*, pp. 341–355.

<sup>68</sup> Jean-Marie Bouissou, *Manga, Histoire...*, p. 11.

Ce système d'édition « à la française<sup>69</sup> », synonyme d'adaptation aux codes occidentaux au prix d'une dé-japonisation partielle de l'ouvrage, devait baisser les risques de rejets par le lectorat et les censeurs s'occupant des publications jeunesse. D'autant plus qu'il y avait un public à trouver dans les librairies – malgré l'influence des séries d'animations à la télévision. C'était, à l'époque, une stratégie prudente pour des pionniers et devint, de fait, l'attitude dominante pour les six années suivant la publication d'*Akira*: Bouissou recense qu'à cette date, « à peine une vingtaine de séries étaient traduites ou en cours de traduction, toutes éditées » de cette manière<sup>70</sup>.

Si l'on s'appuie sur l'expérience des mangas en France, la façon dont le groupe Hachette a géré l'affaire *Suzumiya Haruhi* ne paraît plus surprenante. L'importation sur le marché français de productions culturelles étrangères, qui plus est capables de concurrencer celles endogènes, a pu sembler suffisamment risquée pour que les éditeurs de la première vague de traductions de light novels redoublent de précautions et altèrent les contenus originaux. Ces maisons d'édition possédant aussi des collections de manga, elles n'étaient ni inexpérimentées dans le domaine de la culture populaire japonaise, ni ignorantes de l'histoire de sa réception. En chat échaudé, Hachette a donc tenté l'expérimentation; elle ne fut pas la seule. Calmann-Lévy/Kaze a modifié l'intégralité de la couverture du roman *Le chevalier d'Éon*, passant d'une représentation mangaesque des personnages à une couverture noire au décor à motif végétal. De même, les éditions Milan ont remplacé celle du roman *Les Gardiens de l'esprit sacré* de Uehashi Nahoko<sup>71</sup>, premier et seul volume traduit de la série *Moribito Shirizu*, par une illustration de Thomas Ehretsmann, dessinateur et auteur de bande dessinée. À l'opposé de la légèreté inhérente aux effets de pinceau de l'originale, la réinterprétation française dénote, avec son arrière-plan stéréotypé, les kimonos et les traits bien trop réalistes des deux personnages, un orientalisme criant et une utilisation commerciale de l'exotisme toujours d'actualité au XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècle. En 2010, le groupe Glénat, pourtant fort d'une longue expérience dans le domaine des mangas, s'est lancé dans la danse en traduisant notamment la série populaire *Library Wars* de Arikawa Hiro, composée

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem. Il est important de noter que l'adaptation du sens de lecture n'est, toutefois, pas spécifique au marché français, relevant plutôt d'une attitude occidentale de domestication.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>71</sup> Uehashi Nahoko, *Les Gardiens de l'esprit sacré*, Toulouse: Éd. Milan, 2011.

de quatre volumes et véritable succès du média-mix au Japon. L'éditeur publie le manga la même année, les deux premiers tomes sortant quelques mois avant le roman. Mais, tout comme pour ses prédécesseurs, un simple détour dans les rayons des libraires suffisait pour voir les light novels annoncés comme des romans jeunesse et séparés de leur contrepartie dessinée. Preuve des difficultés rencontrées, la publication a été mise en hiatus après le troisième volume, en 2011. À la perte de l'effet du média-mix, s'est ajoutée une absence criante de communications avec les lecteurs, Glénat annonçant puis repoussant continuellement la sortie du quatrième tome sans raison apparente ni réponse aux interrogations du lectorat visible jusqu'au site internet de l'éditeur. Ce n'est que récemment, en mars 2016, que *Library Wars* a vu la parution de son dernier volume, un geste commercial on ne peut plus opportun puisqu'il s'inscrit à l'aube du second mouvement de traductions de light novels, porté par Ofelbe.

### **Des difficultés inhérentes au domaine littéraire français ?**

Pourtant, ces difficultés d'implantations sont-elles réellement le seul fait d'une faible vente ou de choix éditoriaux à l'encontre du média-mix ? Ne peut-on voir en filigrane des problèmes inhérents au marché français ? L'un des éléments clefs pour répondre à cela pourrait se trouver du côté de la classification des light novels sous le terme de *paralittérature* dans l'Hexagone, *id est*, selon le *Dictionnaire Culturel en langue française*, « l'ensemble des productions textuelles sans finalité utilitaire et que la société ne considère pas comme de la "littérature" valorisée en tant qu'objet esthétique reconnu<sup>72</sup> ». Une définition on ne peut plus vague qui, si l'on en croit le chercheur Marc Angenot, est à l'image d'un grave problème dans les études littéraires: le rejet d'une immense majorité de son objet de recherche « naturel » en raison de critères peu clairs ou arbitraires<sup>73</sup>. La notion de « littérature » étant, elle-même, confuse, variant selon la géographie, la culture et l'époque<sup>74</sup>, il est bien difficile d'ériger la définition susmentionnée en vérité universelle ou nationale intemporelle. D'autant plus que le

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<sup>72</sup> Nous faisons référence ici au concept tel qu'il est défini dans le *Dictionnaire Culturel en langue française*, Alain Rey (dir.), Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2005.

<sup>73</sup> Marc Angenot, *Les dehors de la littérature: du roman populaire à la science-fiction*, Paris: H. Champion, Coll. Unichamp-essentiel, 2013, pp. 7–8.

<sup>74</sup> William Marx, *L'Adieu à la littérature. Histoire d'une dévalorisation, XVII<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, Coll. Paradoxe, 2005, pp. 14–16.

critique japonais Azuma considère que les light novels se dégagent de l'antagonisme traditionnel entre grande littérature et littérature populaire:

« Les romans Otaku actuels n'appartiennent plus aux catégories "littérature pure" ou "de distraction" mais fonctionnent selon des principes plus proches des dessins animés, des jeux électroniques ou de l'illustration, et sont consommés sur un marché très voisin de ces productions<sup>75</sup> ».

La position médiane des light novels participe à l'effacement progressif de la frontière entre ces deux classifications érigées par les académiciens et les cercles littéraires à une époque où la littérature populaire marquée plus une « réalité sociale » qu'une « étiquette littéraire<sup>76</sup> ». Et en tant que littérature de masse vendue à des millions d'exemplaires, ces romans japonais sont exposés aux préjugés habituels, tel « le lieu commun qui consiste à penser que la qualité d'un livre est inversement proportionnelle à son succès<sup>77</sup> ». Quant à les discréditer dans leur ensemble – comme ce fut le cas dans le passé pour les mangas – cela reviendrait à nier toute complexité et singularité à une variété romanesque entière. Cela serait aller bien vite en besogne et une preuve de méconnaissance de titres consacrés pour leurs originalités, au nombre desquels nous pouvons retrouver *Library Wars*, qui a obtenu le Seiun Award 2008, équivalent japonais du prix Hugo aux États-Unis<sup>78</sup>, ou bien encore *Spice & Wolf* de Hasekura Isuna<sup>79</sup>, light novel d'auteur selon Enomoto<sup>80</sup> et récit mêlant économie et fantasy dans un simulacre de monde médiéval européen.

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<sup>75</sup> Azuma, *Génération Otaku...*, p. 94.

<sup>76</sup> Cécile Sakai, *Histoire de la littérature populaire japonaise: faits et perspectives (1900-1980)*, Paris: l'Harmattan, 1987, pp. 14–15.

<sup>77</sup> Dominique Viart et Bruno Vercier, *La littérature française au présent. Héritage, modernité, mutations*, avec la collaboration de Franck Evrard, [2<sup>ème</sup> édition augmentée], Paris: Bordas, 2008, p. 12.

<sup>78</sup> Créé en 1953 et décerné annuellement lors de la *World Science Fiction Convention* aux États-Unis, le prix Hugo est considéré comme le plus prestigieux pour les œuvres anglophones. Quant au prix Seiun, celui-ci est attribué depuis 1970 aux auteurs de science-fiction lors de la Convention Japonaise de Science-fiction (*Nihon SF Takai*). Sa particularité est que, contrairement à son homologue américain, le Seiun Award possède aussi deux catégories étrangères (roman et histoire courte).

<sup>79</sup> Hasekura Isuna, *Spice & Wolf*, Vols. 1–17, Tōkyō: ASCII MEDIA WORKS Inc., Dengeki Bunko, 2006–2011.

<sup>80</sup> Enomoto, *Raitonoberubungakuron...* [Essai sur les Light Novels], pp. 166–168.



Au-delà des débats d'étiquetages, ces séries romanesques aux codes mangaesques et multi-genres font indéniablement partie du domaine littéraire au sens large, et marquent la tendance contemporaine de la littérature japonaise de faire de la dimension ludique un élément central<sup>81</sup>. Et la vision occidentale et moderne de l'autorité littéraire, entendue comme combinaison du triptyque originalité-esthétique-éthique<sup>82</sup>, peine à s'accorder à la nature postmoderne et mangaesque de light novels simplifiés dans un média-mix défiant à la fois la notion d'auteur et la distinction entre œuvre originale et simulacres<sup>83</sup>.

« Le résultat est qu'à présent, ce n'est plus l'histoire qui donne naissance à des personnages mais les personnages qui donnent naissance à l'histoire à travers divers jeux, objets, etc. Dans ce contexte ce n'est plus la qualité du récit qui prime mais la force d'attraction des personnages<sup>84</sup> ».

En résultent une création culturelle et une forme narrative aux antipodes de la doxa moderne et autotélique de la littérature qui a dominé le domaine des lettres au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle en France. Voilà la recherche du beau et le mythe de l'auteur destitués au profit des protagonistes, des émotions et du « réalisme des mangas et des dessins animés<sup>85</sup> ». Cela a de quoi donner du fuel aux thèses déclinologiques qui condamnent ouvertement les mutations de la littérature au second millénaire<sup>86</sup>. Au regard d'une France qui revendique la paternité de la modernité<sup>87</sup>, d'un pays dont « la littérature joue un rôle capital dans la conscience [qu'il] prend [de lui-même] et de sa civilisation<sup>88</sup> », d'une terre où la littérature canonique est institutionnalisée au détriment du reste, « exclu du champ de la légitimité<sup>89</sup> », il est alors peu dire qu'y introduire la catégorie des light novels représente un défi conséquent et

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<sup>81</sup> Sakai, 'Une page se tourne...', pp. 237–238.

<sup>82</sup> Hélène Maurel-Indart, *Du plagiat*, Paris: Gallimard, Coll. « Folio Essais », pp. 377–379.

<sup>83</sup> Azuma, *Génération Otaku...*, pp. 100–101.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>86</sup> Dominique Viart, 'Les menaces de Cassandre et le présent de la littérature: arguments et enjeux des discours de la fin' in *Fins de la littérature. Tome I: Esthétiques et discours de la fin*, Dominique Viart et Laurent Demanze (dir.), Paris: Armand Colin, Coll. Recherches, 2012, pp. 9–33.

<sup>87</sup> Marc Gontard, *Écrire la crise...*, pp. 9 et 18–19.

<sup>88</sup> Propos d'Ernst Robert Curtius, cités in William Marx, *La Haine de la littérature*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2015, pp. 160–161.

<sup>89</sup> Jacques Dubois, *L'institution de la littérature...*, p. 129.

risqué pour tout éditeur. Si la critique ne sait pas encore prononcée ouvertement sur cette nouvelle « intrusion » japonaise dans les librairies de l'Hexagone, le passif de l'institution littéraire française vis-à-vis de la littérature populaire et de l'importation de la littérature étrangère prêtent à penser que la traduction des light novels ne pouvait se faire sans accroc. Référons-nous aux propos d'Anne Bayard-Sakai lors d'une table ronde intitulée « Les coulisses de la traduction », où elle souligne que la France est « fondamentalement peu demandeuse [de flux culturels] » :

« Elle exporte et diffuse – c'est une activité économique comme une autre –, mais elle est, du point de vue culturel, peu demandeuse. Si elle importe de la littérature, c'est en quelque sorte malgré elle, alors que le flux dans l'autre sens ne sera pas forcément considéré de la même manière. Il y a là une sorte de déséquilibre : [...], et cela traduit quelque chose qu'en d'autres temps on aurait peut-être appelé une forme "d'impérialisme culturel"<sup>90</sup> ».

Et le traducteur japonais, Nishinaga Yoshinari, de corroborer ses propos, peu après :

« La tradition française, c'est qu'il importe peu de faire une infidélité [dans la traduction], si elle est élégante. On n'a pas besoin d'être entièrement fidèle à l'œuvre, il faut que l'ouvrage soit réussi en français, et c'est une forme "d'impérialisme culturel" [...] »<sup>91</sup>.

Des auteurs reconnus, comme Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, ont subi cette tradition française<sup>92</sup>. Ainsi, un des ouvrages de ce dernier, *Kagi*, vit sa première traduction, en 1963, paraître dans la collection Folio sous le titre de *La Confession impudique*, donnant une tournure érotique inattendue à son paratexte<sup>93</sup>. En 1998, pour une retraduction publiée dans le deuxième tome de la Pléiade Tanizaki, Anne Bayard-Sakai se chargeait de lui « redonne[r] son nom, [...] *La Clef* »<sup>94</sup>. Mais c'était sans compter sur une énième édition de la collection Folio qui additionna au nouveau titre l'ancienne traduction, placée en sous-titre et couplée à une photographie « impudique » et « exotique » sans rapport

<sup>90</sup> Quentin (mod.), 'Les coulisses de la traduction...', p. 208.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>92</sup> Oura Yasusuke, 'Midaranakokuhaku – Nichifutsuhonyakujijō no ichidanmen' [La Confession impudique – Un échantillon de la situation des traductions franco-japonaises], in *Nichifutsukōkan no kindai: bungaku, bijutsu, ongaku = Modernité des empathies franco-japonaises: littérature, art, musique*, Usami Hitoshi (éd.), Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2006, pp. 97–100.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>94</sup> Quentin (mod.), 'Les coulisses de la traduction...', p. 204.

direct avec le contenu du roman<sup>95</sup>. Une fois encore, le paratexte de l'œuvre s'est retrouvé considérablement altéré. À ce propos, ironisant sur le fait que pareille adaptation n'est non pas du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle mais bien de 2003, le chercheur japonais OuraYasusuke concluait en rappelant qu'à l'ère de la globalisation, l'exotisme, comme atout commercial, continue de subsister<sup>96</sup>. Cela n'est pas sans faire écho à la tentative de modification du titre original de *Suzumiya Haruhi* ou la réinterprétation de la couverture du roman *Les Gardiens de l'esprit sacré*.

*In fine*, les conséquences de notre tradition de traduction et réception sont tout à fait évidentes à la fois dans le système d'édition des mangas « à la française » dans les années 90 et, lors de la première vague de lights novels, à travers l'éradication de certains éléments synonymes de leurs appartenances à la culture populaire japonaise (paratexte, illustrations mangesques...).

## Conclusion

Si nous devons tirer un bilan de la première vague de traductions des lights novels en France, allant de la fin des années 90 à la création d'Ofelbe, celui-ci serait bien mitigé. Malgré l'engouement pour la littérature et culture populaire japonaise dans l'Hexagone, nous avons là une peinture assez représentative des difficultés rencontrées par ces séries romanesques en France. À la décharge des éditeurs-pionniers, le contexte français est loin d'être une promenade de santé puisque l'opposition entre populaire et canonique reste un sujet sensible et arbitraire dans le domaine littéraire, et l'introduction de créations exogènes concurrençant celles endogènes ouvre la porte aux vives critiques des déclinologues et des discours aux tendances orientalistes. Mais il est indéniable de constater la contre-productivité d'une stratégie commerciale visant à conquérir un lectorat nouveau en dé-catégorisant les light novels, en supprimant un pan mangasque de l'œuvre originale, tout en ne profitant pas des avantages inhérents au média-mix et à l'existence d'une base forte de lecteurs de manga. Nous regretterons toutefois que ces énièmes cas d'adaptations au marché local ne se départissent pas d'une utilisation de l'exotisme comme atout commercial et d'une certaine tradition « d'impérialisme culturel » allant

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<sup>95</sup> Oura Yasusuke, 'Midarana kokuhaku...' [La Confession impudique...], p. 100.

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem.

à l'encontre du respect littéraire dû à l'ouvrage traduit. Cela donne à s'interroger sur l'éthique à avoir dans les domaines de la traduction et de l'édition en France, à l'heure de la globalisation. Si le traducteur est traître malgré lui, jusqu'à quel point l'éditeur et la culture réceptive peuvent-ils l'être ?

En somme, la première vague de traductions a été exactement à l'image des propos de Cécile Téroüanne: une expérimentation. Et sa plus grande réussite reste d'avoir ouvert la voie à la création d'une maison d'édition spécialisée, Ofelbe, véritable pionnier en la matière, et la sortie en mars 2015 de deux poids lourds chez les light novels, *Spice & Wolf* de Hasekura Isuna et *Sword Art Online* de Kawahara Reki<sup>97</sup>. Tout un symbole de cette seconde phase de publications: la jeune maison d'édition française a adopté les principes du média-mix japonais en choisissant des œuvres populaires publiées aussi en manga chez leur partenaire, l'éditeur Ototo, afin de toucher les lectorats des deux médiums. Autre stratégie, bien accueillie par la communauté de fans et les critiques: la publication de deux tomes en un seul volume, sans suppression des illustrations et couvertures originales, pour un prix de 19,90 euros – limitant le coût pour des lecteurs adolescents. L'altération est ainsi minime, quand bien même le format final s'éloigne de l'intérêt des *bunkobons* japonais, ces petits livres en A6 à prix réduit et facilement transportable. Les éditions Ofelbe montrent une véritable prise de conscience des enseignements de la première vague de traductions en France – et à l'étranger<sup>98</sup>. En deux ans d'existence, ils ont déjà lancé trois séries renommées, les deux sus-citées et *Log Horizon* de Tōno Mamare<sup>99</sup>, acquis et annoncé trois licences supplémentaires à paraître prochainement. Deux d'entre elles, *Dan Machi, la légende des Familias* et *Durarara !!* sortiront dans une nouvelle collection, baptisée « light novel », moins focalisée sur la fantasy, et vouée à mettre en avant la diversité des genres de ce pan de la culture populaire japonaise.

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<sup>97</sup> Hasekura Isuna, *Spice & Wolf*, Vol. 1, illust. Ayakura Jū, Chennevières-sur-Marne: Ofelbe, 2015 ; Kawahara Reki, *Sword Art Online*, Vol. I, illust. Abec, Chennevières-sur-Marne: Ofelbe, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Il est notable que la traduction américaine de *Spice & Wolf* chez Yen Press avait proposé un premier volume avec une couverture représentant une version réaliste du personnage principal. Face aux plaintes de la communauté de fans, l'éditeur a finalement opté pour deux versions, une altérée et une originale, comme pour le cas de Suzumiya Haruhi.

<sup>99</sup> Tōno Mamare, *Log Horizon*, Vol. I, illust. Hara Kazuhiro, Chennevières-sur-Marne: Ofelbe, 2015.

Au contraire de ses prédécesseurs, l'éditeur français a réussi à conquérir et fidéliser un lectorat, dernière pièce jusqu'alors manquante pour proclamer l'aube des light novels en France. La réussite commerciale est au rendez-vous: les ventes touchent un public plus large que les lecteurs de manga et ont dépassé les 10 000 exemplaires<sup>100</sup>. Il aura fallu, pour cela, la prise de risques, les échecs et les expérimentations des pionniers de la première vague. Dorénavant, les questions d'une ouverture du marché demeurent. Doit-on s'attendre, à l'image du boom des mangas au début du XXI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, à la création d'autres maisons d'édition spécialisées dans l'Hexagone ? À un respect plus constant de la stratégie du média-mix, tout comme des caractéristiques originales et exogènes de ces œuvres ? Ces prochaines années seront cruciales et participeront peut-être, à force d'influence, au développement de créations mangaesques dans le domaine romanesque français.

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<sup>100</sup> Louis-Baptiste Huchez, Direct Matin (Interv.), 'Les light novels japonais à la conquête de la France', *Direct Matin*, 23 mars 2016: <http://www.directmatin.fr/livres/2016-03-23/les-light-novels-japonais-la-conquete-de-la-france-725708> (accès: 29.06.2016).



## Reconstructing Tradition. The Debate on “Invented Tradition” in the Japanese Modernization

### Abstract

Several scholarly works on Japan explain the specific phenomena of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese modernization in terms of Japanese tradition and culture. Against this, another trend (based on mainly postmodern theory) denies the validity of these explanations, citing the theory of “invented tradition”. This paper tries to add some thoughts to this debate, examining the concept of tradition in Japanese modernization. The second part of the article tries to demonstrate the utilization (“reconstruction” – by Eisenstadt) of tradition with a specific moment of the Japanese modernization: the founding of the modern state in 1868.

**Key words:** Japanese modernization, invented tradition, ideological foundations of the Meiji Restoration, Edo-period *kokugaku*.

### The question of tradition

In the Meiji period (1868–1912) a nation state with modern institutions was created during a course of modernization of the country technically, industrially, politically, socially and institutionally. It followed the European developmental pattern, but was built on the basis of Japanese cultural traditions had been made in the Edo period.<sup>1</sup> During the Edo/Tokugawa period (1600–1868) Japan remained relatively isolated from the world, so Japanese culture developed internally with very little outside influence. The central question of research for a long time was that what made Japan capable of becoming a modern industrialized country and a modern state, and if – and to what extent –

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<sup>1</sup> See: Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion. The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan*, New York and London: Free Press, 1985; Nakane Chie and Ōishi Shinzaburō (eds.), *Tokugawa Japan. The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990.

such modernization was made possible by the different aspects of Japanese “traditional” culture or “premodern” (pre-Meiji) society. The Edo/Tokugawa period is called “early modern” now, and regarded as the antecedents of modern Japan. The pluralistic socio-political structure, the growing marketization of the economy, the development of protoindustrial enterprises, the strong cohesion of family units and their openness to penetration by the wider society, and the like constitute important factors in the successful modernization of Japan.<sup>2</sup> Actually, the foundation for future economic, social and political development was laid in this period. The establishment of a national market with money economy, increasing urbanization, an improved communications system, the impoverishment of the samurai class and the enrichment of the merchants, the rise of a new artistic and literary culture appropriate to town dwellers, increasing fervour of religious nationalism focusing on the person of the emperor – these are some of the enormous social and cultural changes going on in the period, many of them directly leading to the Restoration of 1868 and the new Japan that rose thereafter.<sup>3</sup> Intellectual development also paved the way for the formation of new ideological and political concepts.

Against a tendency in many scholarly works on Japan to explain specific phenomena in terms of Japanese tradition and culture, “institutionalists” of various persuasions have totally denied the validity of such explanations.<sup>4</sup> This latter tendency (on basically postmodern theoretical grounds) in the secondary literature of the past decades on modern Japanese development produced works that took many features of modern Japanese culture having been regarded “traditionally Japanese” to be “invented traditions” of an era of building a modern nation and national consciousness as a part of modernization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> This approach denies the role of the Japanese cultural

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<sup>2</sup> Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative Review*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion...*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>4</sup> Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization...*, p. 311.

<sup>5</sup> Mainly exposed by Stephen Vlastos in his essay and other essays in the book he edited: Stephen Vlastos, ‘Tradition. Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History’ in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, Stephen Vlastos (ed.), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 1–18. Other (less intense, thus more conforming) examples: W. Dean Kinzley, *Industrial Harmony in Modern Japan: The Invention of a Tradition*, London: Routledge, 1991; Ichikawa Midori, *Invented Tradition*



traditions in the modernization process and in the life of contemporary Japan. They do not accept the view developed in the last decades among historians and social scientists of Japanese studies that cultural heritage, traditional values and practises predated Japan's modernization and contributed to its success.<sup>6</sup> This modernist approach tends to deny the role of the Japanese traditions in the success of modernization,<sup>7</sup> rejecting the views of Japan specialists who ascribed Japan's successful modernization to the utility of its premodern values and institutions, and refusing the assumption that "traditions" were direct cultural legacies. They emphasize the process of the "invention of tradition". The secondary literature is now rich in volumes and essays on the Japanese invention of tradition, and, fortunately, also in reviews and criticism on these works.<sup>8</sup>

According to the modernist interpretation, nations are "imagined communities" which became possible on a mass scale only relatively recently when individuals living in a region came to be able to construct a collective and unified image of themselves through the printed word (the age of capitalism).<sup>9</sup> These "imagined communities" are established through common stories, myths, and the shared experience of life. However, all these factors imply that without some sense of a common culture, shared values, and similar traits the modern nation-state could not exist.<sup>10</sup> This "national character" is sometimes referred to as "myth",

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*in Shinto: A New Construction of the Emperor as a God of the State*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion...*, pp. 11–12; Robert Bellah, *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003, pp. 1–62. See also: Michio Morishima, *Why Has Japan Succeeded? Western Technology and the Japanese Ethos*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 4–15; Shichihei Yamamoto, *The Spirit of Japanese Capitalism and Selected Essays*, Lanham: Madison Books, 1992, pp. 1–22.

<sup>7</sup> Vlastos, 'Tradition...', p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Reviews on *Mirror of Modernity*: Kerry Smith, *Social History*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 2000, pp. 119–121; David R. Ambaras, H-Japan (September, 1999), H-Net Reviews: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3406> (accessed 26.05.2016); Ann Waswo, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 54, No. 1, pp. 133–135; F. G. Notehelfer, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1999, pp. 432–438.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991, pp. 6–7, 224; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions' in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1–14.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Burgess, 'The "Illusion" of Homogeneous Japan and National Character: Discourse as a Tool to Transcend the "Myth" vs. "Reality" Binary', *The Asia-Pacific*

according to the view that a nation is socially constructed and ultimately imagined by the people who perceive themselves to be part of that group. Hobsbawm describes this process of social construction as the “invention of tradition”, which is very important in the emergence of the modern nation-state.<sup>11</sup> He and other modernists argue that many cultural practices, customs, and values which were thought to be old are actually of quite recent origin.

It is *importantto note*, however, that “invented traditions” are never completely invented; rather, they almost always need to resonate with the inherited experiences and memories of ordinary people if they are to be accepted and internalised.<sup>12</sup> The modernist interpretation of “invention of tradition” can be misleading, as this process does not mean introducing false or completely unknown things. Almost all the critics and even most of the authors of essays emphasizing the “inventedness” acknowledge that invented traditions are not merely inventions. As “traditions do not of course spring up ex nihilo; genealogies, if not origins, can be found”,<sup>13</sup> the question of the origins and history of these “invented traditions” cannot be neglected. This is especially relevant to the case of Japan, because its modernization was linked to not only the global issues but also to the Japanese historical context. Examining the issue of “invention of tradition” without the determining ecological, historical and cultural factors can result serious misinterpretations. In case of Japan, its non-European context of the modernizing experience is relevant to understanding its framing of the past. It was crucial to “the Japanese defining/maintaining a sense of identity during the acutely Eurocentric late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries”.<sup>14</sup>

The modern nation-states naturally rely on the construction of a coherent set of common traits that make them possible to function as “imagined communities”,<sup>15</sup> so the invention of traditions can be regarded as the normal consequences of modernization and nation-

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*Journal*, Vol. 8, Issue 9, No. 1, 2010: <http://japanfocus.org/-chris-burgess/3310> (accessed 26.05.2016.)

<sup>11</sup> Hobsbawm, ‘Inventing Traditions...’, pp. 1–14.

<sup>12</sup> Notehelfer, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, p. 436.

<sup>13</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Afterword. Revisiting the Tradition/Modernity Binary’ in Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity...*, p. 288.

<sup>14</sup> Waswo, *Monumenta...*, pp. 133–135.

<sup>15</sup> Burgess, ‘The “Illusion” of Homogeneous Japan...’.

building.<sup>16</sup> The importance of the relationship between the “invented tradition” and the collective experiences and memories (or even unconscious) of the community is often emphasized in different works.<sup>17</sup> The use of history in order to construct and legitimate a sense of a commonly shared culture is a similar pattern observed in different countries, as the historic past provides a wide selection of “value orientations and symbolic representations which can be selected, interpreted and used for the revival, revision and invention of modernized traditions”.<sup>18</sup> Even Vlastos writes in his introductory essay: “I am not suggesting that the historical past played no role in the formation of modern Japanese identity. (...) The point, rather, is that cultural traditions are ‘chosen’, not inherited”.<sup>19</sup> Stating that traditions are “chosen” implies that their origin can be found in the cultural heritage, which can mean that cultural heritage (tradition?) does have a decisive role in forming national identity and in modernization. The term “invented traditions” means rather selecting, choosing, reinforcing, stressing, emphasizing or institutionalizing some of the existing or old traditions, than really inventing new ones.

The important role of the premodern cultural traditions in the modern era can be demonstrated with the case of the greatest cultural and social – and (re)invented in modernity – tradition of East Asia: Confucianism and its role in modernity, which is unavoidable concerning any issues of Japanese and East Asian modernization and “invented tradition” topics.<sup>20</sup> A lot of scholars argued that Japanese Confucianism was the functional equivalent of the Protestant ethic in the formation of Japanese capitalism.<sup>21</sup> The formation and existence of another (that is, different from Western) type of “non-individualistic version of capitalist modernity” with the characteristics of a network capitalism, supported by family virtues and group solidarity based on the Confucian values of collective solidarity and discipline has been stressed in East Asia. The “specific Asian cultural patterns” are said to influence and

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<sup>16</sup> Klaus-Georg Riegel, ‘Inventing Asian traditions’, *Development and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1, June 2000, pp. 75–96.

<sup>17</sup> Notehelfer, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, p. 433.

<sup>18</sup> Riegel, ‘Inventing Asian traditions...’, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Vlastos, ‘Tradition...’, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Riegel, ‘Inventing Asian traditions...’, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion...*; Bellah, *Imagining Japan...*; Michio Morishima, *Why Has Japan Succeeded?...*; Shichihei Yamamoto, *The Spirit of Japanese Capitalism*.

decisively direct the processes of modernization in East Asia.<sup>22</sup> This clearly shows the importance of the cultural dimensions of the modernization process, for which the Japanese development can be seen to provide an instructive example. With the invention of the slogan “*wakonyōsai*”, Japan could modernize its technological civilization while “accomplished successfully a presumed continuity of its cultural tradition”. This question is important especially for non-Western countries, as these cultures and societies face the “dilemma of changing their cultural directives and horizons without losing their identities”.<sup>23</sup>

We can agree on that “invented traditions” are never completely invented, but contain elements of the common experiences of the community, parts of old cultural heritage, in some cases forgotten – but once may have been existing – tales and literary forms and language parts. The national identity is constructed in more or less the same way in different societies or nation-states; however, the material which was used to construct a sense of national identity is different, of course. The Japanese discourse on national identity is not unique but the historical materials it draws on and the national culture it helps to (re)create are unique.<sup>24</sup> Creating a nation state with strong nationalism in Japan followed the European developmental pattern, but the basement (Japanese cultural traditions) on which it was built had been made in the Edo period: a cultural movement called *kokugaku*<sup>25</sup> can be seen as a key factor of the reconstruction of tradition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Kokugaku*: early modern “reconstruction of tradition”**

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<sup>22</sup> Riegel, ‘Inventing Asian traditions...’, p. 76.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> Burgess, ‘The Illusion...’.

<sup>25</sup> New works on *kokugaku*: See: Harry D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988; Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1990; Peter Flueckiger, *Imagining Harmony: Poetry, Empathy, and Community in Mid-Tokugawa Confucianism and Nativism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011; Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism*, Harvard University Asia Center, 2005; Mark Teeuwen, ‘Kokugaku vs. Nativism’, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2006, pp. 227–242; Susan L. Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; Michael Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period Japan. The Modern Transformation of National Learning and the Formation of Scholarly Societies*, Leiden, Boston: Global Oriental, 2012.

Edo-period *kokugaku* focused on Japanese classics, on exploring, studying and reviving (or even inventing) ancient Japanese language, literature, myths, history and also political ideology. As an academic discipline, it relied on philology as its methodological tool to bring out the ethos of Japanese tradition freed from foreign ideas and thoughts. They drew upon ancient Japanese poetry to show the “true emotion” of Japan, so “National learning” favoured philological research into the early Japanese classics. They tried to re-establish Japanese culture before the influx of foreign thought and behaviour, so they turned primarily to *Shintō*, the earliest poets in Japan (*Man'yōshū*), and the inventors of Japanese culture in the Heian court.

The most important scholars included Keichū<sup>26</sup> (1640–1701), who did philological study of Japanese classics and interpretative study of classical language and of *Man'yōshū*. Kada no Azumamaro<sup>27</sup> (1669–1736) is famous for his theological studies of ancient teachings and faiths: *Shintō* studies, and also for his studies on ancient court and military practices, and for an interpretative study of classics, too. Kamo no Mabuchi<sup>28</sup> (1697–1769) pursued interpretative study of *waka* poetry and of classical language, of *Man'yōshū* and studied ancient morality as well (*kōkokushugi*).<sup>29</sup> Motoori Norinaga<sup>30</sup> (1730–1801) had philological studies and literary criticism of *Genjimonogatari*; also studied ancient morality centred on *Kojiki*; made research on *Shintō* and the ancient Japanese language.

Over the course of the Edo period the aim of *kokugaku* studies shifted from the scholarly and philological study of ancient texts to the quest for a unique native ethos and spiritual identity, free of Buddhist and other foreign traits and identified more or less with *Shintō*. It displayed a discourse that aimed at restoring the classical world of ancient Japan.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had political and religious implications as well.<sup>31</sup> Motoori Norinaga<sup>32</sup> made linguistic claims about

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<sup>26</sup> Burns, *Before the Nation...*, pp. 49–52; Nosco, *Remembering Paradise...*, pp. 49–67.

<sup>27</sup> Nosco, *Remembering Paradise...*, pp. 71–97.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100–155.

<sup>29</sup> Flueckiger, *Imagining Harmony...*, p. 155.

<sup>30</sup> Byron H. Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*, Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1982, pp. 144–147; Bary Wm. Theodore de, Tsunoda Ryusaku and Keene Donald (eds.), *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 15–35.

<sup>31</sup> Flueckiger, *Imagining Harmony...*, p. 173.

the “difference” of ancient Japanese into the foundation of a theory of Japanese cultural identity, uniqueness and superiority. He defined the contours of a new theory of Japanese history, culture, and subject-ness,<sup>33</sup> seeing the emperor as occupying a special position in relation to the gods, language and rites. His work, *Kojikiden* transformed Japanese conceptions of their own history and culture and made the *Kojiki* a central work in the Japanese cultural canon. He initiated new strategies that determined the new *kokugaku* discourse that appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, highlighted language as the primary “bearer of identity and difference”, focused on the “origin and nature of cultural difference”, and created new political vocabulary focused on the emperor. These strategies enabled a new vision of Japan.<sup>34</sup>

Hirata Atsutane<sup>35</sup> (1776–1843) studied *Shintō* mainly for political purposes, dealt with the doctrine of national character, and studied ancient history and morality also. He took his scholarship “original teaching” (*honkyō* – the term appeared in the preface to *Kojiki* in 712), the original tradition of Japanese antiquity, which was closely related to *Shintō* traditions in the Edo period. His school became connected to political aims and movements, too, with emphasizing “*kannagara no michi*”, “the Way as it is with the *Kamis*”, which meant the ancient way of the Japanese life “as it was in the Age of Gods”.<sup>36</sup> Hirata’s teachings with the terms and ideas of “*kannagara no michi*” and “*honkyō*” were definitely different from the philological studies of the earlier *kokugaku* scholars, and offered ideological basis for political movements, too. Actually, the *kokugaku* scholars “made” *Shintō* by distinguishing the cult of kami “as a separate, autonomous entity existing apart from another distinct entity called Buddhism”.<sup>37</sup> Hirata was also important as

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<sup>32</sup> See several chapters in Burns, *Before the Nation...*, especially pp. 68–101; Nosco, *Remembering Paradise...*, pp. 160–203.

<sup>33</sup> Helen Hardacre: ‘Creating State Shintō: The Great Promulgation Campaign and the New Religions’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1986, pp. 29–63, 36. See also: Burns, *Before the Nation...*, pp. 220–223.

<sup>34</sup> Burns, *Before the Nation...*, pp. 220–223.

<sup>35</sup> Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen...*, pp. 199–204.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Wachutka, *Restorative and Innovative Elements in Early Meiji Religious and Educational Politic*: [http://www.desk.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/download/es\\_9\\_Wachutka.pdf](http://www.desk.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/download/es_9_Wachutka.pdf) (accessed 26.05.2016), pp. 189–190.

<sup>37</sup> Hardacre: ‘Creating State Shintō...’, p. 32.

a systematiser and propagandist, too, and through him and his disciples the ideas of *kokugaku* became widespread in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup>

The findings of *kokugaku*s cholars inspired a popular movement for the restoration of a Japanese “golden age”, paved the way for the return of imperial rule, as politically called for the overthrow of the *shōgunate* and restoration for direct rule by the divinely-descended emperor. The thoughts of *kokugaku* influenced the *Sonnōjōi*<sup>39</sup> philosophy and movement: the slogan *sonnō* (revere the emperor) typified the new emphasis on the emperor and the term *kokutai*<sup>40</sup> (“national unity”) expressed the new concept of the state. So, the political implications of the *kokugaku* doctrine were the establishment of a strong centralized monarchy toward which every Japanese owed absolute allegiance and the destruction of the *shōgunate* or any other power which stood between sovereign and people.<sup>41</sup> Among others, it led to the eventual collapse of the Tokugawa in 1868 and the subsequent Meiji restoration, and the building of a strong nation state.

What Meiji scholars employed as traditions were actually revivals of the *kokugaku* tenets, which were not entirely inventions, as they contained elements of old cultural heritage. The Meiji elite used *kokugaku* conceptions of Japan to construct a modern nationalism that was not simply derived from Western models and was not purely instrumental, but made good use of premodern and culturalist conceptions of community.<sup>42</sup> *Kokugaku* thinking influenced Meiji government policies in relation to *Shintō*, state *Shintō* and the ideology of *kokutai*.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Helen Hardacre: *Shintō and the State, 1868–1988*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> The term first appeared in Aizawa Seishisai’s work: *Shinron*, in 1825. W. G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, pp. 50–53, Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 126, Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 100–135.

<sup>40</sup> Marius B. Jansen, ‘Meiji Ishin: The Political Context’ in *Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution*, Nagai Michio and Miguel Urrutia (eds.), Tokyo: United Nations University, 1985, pp. 5–6; Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning...*, pp. 123–135.

<sup>41</sup> Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion...*, p. 102.

<sup>42</sup> Burgess, ‘The Illusion...’. For the thesis that modern Asian varieties of nationalism were not simply borrowed from the West but made good use of premodern and culturalist concepts see: Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

<sup>43</sup> Hardacre, *Shintō and the State...*, pp. 42–58.

### Meiji restoration: modernization with tradition

Let us see now just one example of this “modernization with tradition” in the process of the founding of the modern state. The later *kokugaku* writers played an important role in *Bakumatsu* and early Meiji religious life, exerting a powerful influence upon *Shintō* priesthood and upon the formation of government policy. Although early *kokugaku* was not inherently *Shintō*, by *Bakumatsu* it had become so.<sup>44</sup> The *Mitogaku*<sup>45</sup> (the Edo-period centre for Confucian scholarship) also dealt with the history of ancient Japan, and by the time of the early 19<sup>th</sup> they got connected to *kokugaku* thinkers and theories, developed their ideas centred around the emperor, and thus greatly contributed to the formation of the *sonnōjōi* (“rever the emperor, expel the barbarians”) slogan and movement, and the concept of *kokutai* as well. The writings and teachings of the most important *kokugaku* scholars – Motoori Norinaga, Hirata Atsutane, and the significant *Mitogaku* scholar, Aizawa Seishisai – became known in wide circles in the country.<sup>46</sup> The copies of their works circulated in the cities and in the countryside as well, among samurais, city dwellers and local elites in the countryside, too; it can be assumed that these works were read by “all the men who carried out the Meiji Revolution in 1868”.<sup>47</sup> The Hirata’s disciples came from all backgrounds, shrine priests, merchants, and wealthy peasants alike, and his books were sold in their thousands.<sup>48</sup>

*Kokugaku* scholars had direct personal ties to the Restoration leaders. Iwakura Tomomi (one of the most powerful courtiers and politicians of the early Meiji government) had a group of advisors consisted mainly of leading *kokugaku* scholars (Hirata Kanetane, Yano Harumichi, Gonda Naosuke, Iida Takesato).<sup>49</sup> He was also connected to Ōkuni Takamasa

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<sup>44</sup> Hardacre, ‘Creating State Shintō...’, p. 35.

<sup>45</sup> Mito school: Herschel Webb, ‘The Development of an Orthodox Attitude Toward the Imperial Constitution in the Nineteenth Century’ in *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*, Marius B. Jansen (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965, pp. 167–192; Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan...*, pp. 50–53; Jansen, ‘Meiji Ishin...’, pp. 3–20; Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning...*, pp. 51–58.

<sup>46</sup> Burns, *Before the Nation...*, p. 69; John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p. 64.

<sup>47</sup> Burns, *Before the Nation...*, p. 69; Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto...*, p. 64.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>49</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 13.



and his disciple, Tamamatsu Misao, who elaborated the idea of the legacy of Emperor Jimmu (though this theory was also supported by Yano Harumichi, too).<sup>50</sup> Iwakura strongly supported the scheme of receiving the legacy of emperor Jimmu against other “competing narratives” (like Godaigo’s *Kemmu* restoration), which clearly shows the effect of his *kokugaku* background and education.

Several *kokugakusha* later became officials holding ministerial posts in the new Meiji government.<sup>51</sup> Ōkuni Takamasa (himself an admirer of Motoori Norinaga and disciple of Hirata Atsutane, at the same time closely related to Aizawa Seishisai) and his disciple Fukuba Bisei were the most influential *kokugaku* scholars regarding the construction of the Meiji restoration.<sup>52</sup> They contributed to the construction of an ideological system about the emperor’s descent from the Sun-goddess, which was to legitimize the imperial restoration, basing it on Jimmu *tennō*’s ancient establishment of the Japanese empire.<sup>53</sup>

In December, 1867, a group of young samurai activists had an imperial rescript issued in the court announcing the abolishment of the *shōgunate* and calling for a “restoration of direct imperial rule” as it was established in the time of the ancient emperor Jimmu.<sup>54</sup> In January 1868, *Satsuma* and *Chōshū* samurais with young court nobles established a new imperial government, which meant that all the people of Japan got under direct imperial rule, governed by imperial decrees.<sup>55</sup> The first pronouncement issued by the new Meiji government – the Grand Order on the Restoration of Imperial Rule – stated explicitly, with regard to the basis of the restoration that “everything is based on Jimmu’s establishment”, which was clearly a result of the strong *kokugaku* influence on early Meiji politics.<sup>56</sup> The ideology of the imperial myth aimed at legitimizing the imperial rule and the new regime (and also the coup that brought it into being) originated from the writings and theories on *Shintō* and the interpretation of ancient Japanese history and myths of Motoori Norinaga and Aizawa Seishisai. It had a simple but convincing narrative about the Sun-goddess’ establishing the imperial house in

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto...*, p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto...*, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>56</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 11.

mythical time, sending her grandson, Ninigi to earth to rule Japan, whose descendant, Jimmu became the first emperor of Japan. It implied of course that the emperors of the unbroken line of the Japanese imperial family were direct descendants of the Sun-goddess Amaterasu.<sup>57</sup> The basic principle was that the unbroken line of the divine imperial family preserved the unity of the Japanese state and religion during history.<sup>58</sup>

The term “*Fukko Shintō*” – first used officially in April 1868 in a document of the Office of Divinity, stating that “the religion of our Imperial country is to be declared as *Fukko Shintō*” – appeared as the spiritual basement of this concept.<sup>59</sup> It seemed the revival of an ancient Japanese belief-system, though it was mainly based on the ideology and tenets of the Hirata school of *kokugaku*.<sup>60</sup> Ōkuni Takamasa and Fukuba Bisei, the main proponents of modern Shintō, were also influenced by Aizawa Seishisai’s view on imperial ritual, which included the notion of the shrines as the sites for state rites.<sup>61</sup> As a consequence of this theory, shrines were freed from the control of the so far leading *Shintō* priest families and were placed under state authority. The edicts of 1868 (written mainly by Ōkuni Takamasa and Fukuba Bisei) ordered all shrine priests under the authority of the newly resurrected ancient institution, the *Jingikan*,<sup>62</sup> which was to be in nominal charge of all shrines.<sup>63</sup> Also shrines were separated from Buddhism, and all Buddhist influence was expelled from the shrines. *Shintō* and Buddhism was separated.<sup>64</sup> The new *Shintō* emphasized the role and significance of the emperor as the sole focus of national unity, and shrines were seen as places partly to propagate this function and partly to worship the emperor. Actually, shrines functioned as a form of ancestor worship, and “by honouring the ancestors of the nation, a community was created that celebrated a shared past”.<sup>65</sup> The shrines became important symbols of the divine ascendance of the emperors, the unique cultural heritage of Japan as the “Land of the Gods”, and that the imperial system was

<sup>57</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*..., p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Earhart, *Japanese Religion*..., p. 152.

<sup>59</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period*..., p. XI.

<sup>60</sup> Wachutka, *Restorative and Innovative Elements*..., p. 189.

<sup>61</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*..., p. 64.

<sup>62</sup> Hardacre, *Shintō and the State*..., p. 17–18.

<sup>63</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*..., p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Yoshiro Tamura, *Japanese Buddhism: A Cultural History*, Tokyo: Kosei, 2000, pp. 156–158; Hardacre, *Shintō and the State*..., p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*..., p. 22.

legitimized by the *kamis*.<sup>66</sup> The centre of this new shrine system was Ise, the shrine of the imperial ancestor and Sun-goddess Amaterasu. New cult centres linked to *Ise* were built around the country, performing worship on the newly appointed festivals of Emperor Jimmu.<sup>67</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that the *kokugaku* scholars played an important role in the formation of the Japanese state and in the concept of a national identity in the early Meiji period. Nonetheless, their significance seemed to fade or even disappear after the first years of the Restoration, as in the 1870s the process of “Westernization” became more and more emphasized in not just economic, but also social, political, educational and even cultural aspects. It may seem that at the Restoration, the new Meiji leadership merely used figures such as Hirata Kanetane, together with his popular *Fukko Shintō*, to legitimize the creation of an imperial ideology supporting their programme of institutional change for the new nation-state, and this idea seems to be supported by the fact that a lot of *kokugaku* scholars were involved in the central government for only a few years.<sup>68</sup> However, their importance can be seen not only in the first measures, as their conception of the imperial system as a unity of worship and rule, *saisei-itchi*, remained the framework of the imperial state until 1945. The new regime of the Meiji state was based on the principle that “rites and government are one”, that the Emperor, as a *Shintō* high priest, performs state rituals (*sai*) while simultaneously overseeing the government (*sei*) as a political sovereign so the imperial office is thus defined by the unity (*itchi*) of these two functions – as it used to be in the ancient times, during the *Ritsuryō* system, which was seen as an ideal form of the imperial rule in Japan.<sup>69</sup> The restoration of direct imperial rule, ritual and politics, which had long been separated under the feudal *shōgunal* system, united again these two functions in one figure: the Emperor. This characteristic feature of the modern Emperor-system state:

“...Was its creation and gradual formation as a ‘state that unites ritual and politics’, rarely met in other nation-states? Its consolidation as

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<sup>66</sup> Conrad Totman, *A History of Japan*, London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005, pp. 407–408.

<sup>67</sup> Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto...*, p. 64; Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

well as its creation and formation cannot be told without acknowledging the national-learning scholars”.<sup>70</sup>

### Reconstructed tradition in Meiji Japan

The aim of this paper was to look at the “reconstruction of tradition” at the time of the Restoration, but it is indispensable to look, even very briefly, further into the later developments regarding *kokugaku* of the Meiji period. The topic of *Shintō*, state *Shintō* and its “creation” is closely related to the idea of “reconstructing tradition”, but even the brief overview of this process would far exceed the limits of this paper (even without mentioning the ongoing, sometimes sharp debates about it).<sup>71</sup> Thus, we can have a look at the works of Meiji period *kokugaku* scholars and their perception of that time. In his excellent book Michael Wachutka examines and analyses Meiji period *kokugaku*, demonstrates the importance of *kokugaku* influence in the Meiji Restoration, in “creating” *Shintō*, in forming the ideology of the new state.<sup>72</sup> He also proves that the dichotomy existing between *kokugaku* and modernity must be considered incorrect.<sup>73</sup> *Kokugaku* did not “disappear” in Meiji Japan; rather, it counterbalanced the excessive drive towards the Westernization of society, ideology and political life in the process of nation-building and the formation of a new modern identity. The early years of Meiji saw the rapid and abundant importation of Western cultures into Japan, which, in fact, stimulated the people to reflect and reconsider their own national culture and the revival of the *kokugaku* movements.<sup>74</sup> From the 1880s onward, there was a growing tendency to

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem. Here he cites Sakamoto Koremaru, *Kokka Shintōtaisei no seiritsu to tenkai*, Tokyo: Kobunda, 1993, p. iii.

<sup>71</sup> Hardacre, *Shintō and the State...*; Sakamoto, *Kokka Shintō...*; some of the newest works: Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto...*; Trent E. Maxey, *The “Greatest Problem”: Religion and State Formation in Meiji Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014; Jun’ichi Isomae, *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan: Religion, State, and Shintō*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014; Jun’ichi Isomae, *Japanese Mythology. Hermeneutics on Scripture*, London: Equinox, 2010; Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012; John Breen and Mark Teeuwen (eds.), *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, New York: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>72</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, pp. 9–13.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. XI.

<sup>74</sup> Uchino Goro, ‘Early Modern Kokugaku (National Learning) and the New Kokugaku: Their Growth and Significance’ in *Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asian Countries: Proceedings of Kokugakuin University Centennial Symposium*, Institute for

“rediscover” and/or “preserve” Japanese tradition and values. The most important documents reflecting the “ideology” or it may be better to say, the identity of Meiji Japan around 1890 all show a distinctive Japanese character, going back to *Mito* Confucianism and the *kokugaku* ancestral tradition of the unbroken and divine imperial line. The Constitution (1889), the Imperial Rescript of Education (1890), the Elementary School ordinance (1889), and the Imperial Household Law (1889) were all partly drafted by Inoue Kowashi, a prominent Meiji statesman with strong *kokugaku* educational background, who combined Confucian and *kokugaku* traditions, saying that “the national classics are the father, Confucianism is the teacher” for the nation, and thus both were essential to the governance of the nation. The initial phase of the Rescript of Education contained the phrase “our imperial ancestors from Amaterasu and Jimmu through the unbroken line of historical emperors”, the Rescript promulgating the Constitution and the Imperial Household Law made the same reference.<sup>75</sup> The Rescript on Education placed the imperial ancestors into the centre of attention again. Inoue Kowashi called the *Shintō* rites as “the foundation of the nation” and the “source of custom”.<sup>76</sup> The main function of the tradition of the *kokugaku* still living in late Meiji, too, was to counterbalance the excessive drive towards the Westernization of society, ideology and political life in the process of nation-building and the formation of a new modern identity.

Several other *kokugaku* scholars of the Meiji period (Konakamura Kiyonori, Iida Takesato, Kimura Masakoto, Kurokawa Mayori<sup>77</sup>) transformed *kokugaku* from a politico-religious movement to an academic discipline focused on Japanese matters. They played important roles in higher education, in the founding of Japanese studies and research in Japanese history, literature, grammar, language reforms, philosophy, and ethnography.

## Conclusion

The special process of “reconstructing tradition”, with the role of early modern *kokugaku* in this development, may be one of the crucial

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Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1983: <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/uchino.html> (accessed 12.06.2012).

<sup>75</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths. Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 123 and 139.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>77</sup> Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period...*, p. 10.

factors explaining the distinct characteristics of Japanese modernity originating from the Japanese cultural traditions and historical experience and distinguishing it from the Western and also from other non-Western entities confronted with the Western program of rapid modernization. Though the conception of the national community was greatly influenced by Western notions of nationalism, it was formulated in the ideology of the Meiji period in ways different from those of the Western nation-states.<sup>78</sup> As described in this paper, Japanese intellectuals drawing on early modern scholarly research known as *kokugaku* played an important role into designing Japan as a modern nation-state mainly according to the slogan *wakonyōsai*, which referred to the juxtaposition of Japanese “roots” (that is, its spirituality, its values and its beliefs) and Western technology and knowledge. The Japanese nation was defined as a unique type of collectivity in primordial sacral-natural terms building on the basic conceptions of the *kokutai* as developed by the nativistic schools of the Tokugawa period, which is a distinctive mode of “reconstruction of tradition”.<sup>79</sup> The Meiji elites claimed to restore an ancient imperial system, however, in fact they combined the different components of the emperor symbols developed in Japanese history from the ancient role of the emperor in a new way.<sup>80</sup> The centration around the emperor and its symbolical connection with the *Shintō* version of the creation of Japan appears as an important link between the abstract world of the *kokugaku* as practiced in the Edo period and further historical developments (including such as the *kokka-shintō*, the expansionist war politics, as well as the astonishing post-war recovery). This Meiji-period Japanese pattern of economic, political, and cultural modernity was the result of a distinct cultural program closely related to some of the basic features of the Japanese historical experience, which – similarly to various Eastern European and Asian societies – developed as a continual response to the threatening military, economic, and technological superiority of the West, with its cultural and ideological program.<sup>81</sup> With “reconstructing tradition”, Japan could accomplish modernization while seemingly preserving its traditions, thus could solve the dilemma of almost every non-Western country: changing its cultural horizon without losing its identity.

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<sup>78</sup> Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization...*, p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

## Reassessing the Premises of the Western Musical Acculturation in Far-East Asia

### Abstract

The penetration of Western European culture at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all over the world and especially in the Far Eastern realm was and still is an interesting topic for debates, comprising a large area, from accurate historical and sociological research until the most fanatical Europhobic scribbles. One of the most significant fields where this process is unfolding is musical culture. It is well-known that Western music was quickly and enthusiastically assimilated in the every-day life of Japanese and Koreans. Starting from the fruitful co-habitation between Western musical culture and Japanese musical tradition, the present essay proposes a discussion on the forms of cultural contamination and also aims at identifying some possible pre-existent features that might or might not facilitate the interpenetration of two distinct musical cultures.

**Key words:** acculturation, cultured/popular music, tradition, musical map, common features, inter-cultural studies

### Introduction

Undeniably, Japan and Korea are major contributors to music of European provenance, even if the special cultural brotherhood promoted by the “Enlightened Rule” occurred less than 150 years ago. For a large majority of Japanese and Korean people, European music naturally belongs to their own culture. Interest for Western art and culture had remained even in the post-Meiji epochs, when European values received no more official encouragement. “As far as taste in Classical art music is concerned, it already seems true to say that there is no great difference between Europe and Japan”.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in Taishō and early Shōwa epochs, when the official policy became nationalist and reluctant to Western influences, the majority of the urban population “transferred the interest

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<sup>1</sup> Watanabe Mamoru, ‘Why do the Japanese like European Music?’, *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1982, pp. 657–665.

for the European values at the individual level of the cultural identity”.<sup>2</sup> During this time, the Japanese “had ready access to inexpensive works of virtually all the major works of European philosophy”,<sup>3</sup> hundreds of Japanese went to study in the West and the learning of Western music became part of the average education of children. “Japan, however, had an ingredient Europe lacked. In Japan, the conflict between modern and traditional was also a conflict between alien and Japanese [...]. Accordingly, conservatism was argued not only in terms of political antiquarianism, but also in those of “national essence” and cultural purity”.<sup>4</sup> We think that this assertion needs to be treated with caution at least for two reasons. Firstly, not the whole of Europe “lacked the ingredient” that equated modernity with foreignness. Eastern European lands dealt with a similar process during their explosive Westernization, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, the confrontation between alien (modern) and autochthonous (traditional) can be seen as a “conflict” only from a conservative perception. We must admit that a significant part of those societies in transformation, especially the youth, might have been attracted by the perspectives of renewal and insertion into the international life.

The quality and the perennality of this intercultural twinning definitely demands more investigation concerning the traditional social structure and cultural behaviour of the host locations, as well as the resumption of numerous issues related to the typology of cultural encounters. Slipping through the multitude of definitions, debates and comments concerning issue of cultural contamination(s), many being nothing but primitive anti-European stereotypes, we will try to point-out a few broad-based taxonomic groups: colonization, acculturation, inter-culturation, enculturation, together with their subsequent mixed forms.

### **Cultural colonization**

It is the most categorical form coming from the outside, meant to impose a new culture and aiming at radically removing the vernacular one. Generally, this kind of cultural transfer follows a military conquest. The colonizers aim not just to obtain a thoroughly informed apprentice,

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<sup>2</sup> Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 548.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 550.

<sup>4</sup> William Gerald Beasley (ed.), *Modern Japan: Aspects of History, Literature and Society*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975, p. 18.



but to forge a completely transformed “new man”. Probably the most successful example of cultural replacement could be illustrated by the Islamic invasion of Northern Africa in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries. At that time, the former cultural diversity of several millenary civilizations was thrown out and replaced by an exemplary uniformity of religion, language, clothing, crafts, inter-human relationships, leisure, art and the list goes on.

Human history offers countless attempts at colonization, like Christian missions in the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries or, closer to our time, the dictatorships of all kinds in Europe, Asia and Latin America during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Remarkably, none of these dictatorships succeeded to produce a fundamental or lasting cultural change. In spite of reprisals, the conquered society always kept their ancient traditions and beliefs alive underground. Moreover, the conquerors were sooner or later forced to make concessions; to adapt new rituals or ceremonies to local specifics and to allow a more or less controlled display of the vernacular ethnicities. Attempts to shatter a tradition by force did not produce a lasting effect, at least in Europe. The cultural history of Eastern Europe is rich in instances when a harsh interdiction led mostly to the opposite result: strengthening of the persecuted tradition, whilst rather milder forms of oppression encompassed a greater power of destruction. There are even cases, not numerous yet significant, when the colonized country was the one who imposed culture, religion, or life style on its conquerors, as was the case of Ancient Greece (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC after the Romans’ victory) and of Medieval China (in the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD after the Mongol conquest). We meet here one more astonishing similarity between these two remote cultural centres.

### **Acculturation<sup>5</sup>**

A brief definition of this term, identifies a learning process of a foreign culture, including the adoption of values as cultural behaviour. Acculturation requires dominance – if not exclusivity – of an environment. Besides the sheer appeal of certain cultural forms, persuasion and influence techniques may also be presumed to be part of this development.

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<sup>5</sup> We rephrased in a concise manner the average definitions that can be found in any dictionary.

### Enculturation

Is defined as a conditioning process whereby people, mostly children, but also adults, achieve competence in their own culture. The process is comprised of two sources of learning: a guided education and the informal contamination drawn from surrounding contexts. Values, appropriate behaviours, taboos, aspirations etc., are both consciously and unconsciously transmitted.<sup>6</sup> Generally, the issues of informal contamination are pointed out in every discussion on enculturation, but tend to be rather disregarded in the case of acculturation processes.

Two particular combined cases also deserve mention: the first, on the border between colonization and acculturation, refers to USSR politics following post Second World War sovietisation, which aimed to radically change the social and cultural behaviour of Eastern Europe's citizens. A second, less severe one, refers to the recent awkward attempts of the European Union to impose a new value system concerning religion, family, nation, culture etc., including specific guidance for everyday life. Both these endeavours, which try to modify the fundamental core of local cultural tradition, had and still have relatively poor success, plausibly because they lack any spiritual basis, which is replaced by a set of theoretical directives. At the same time, the moulding of the "new man", either *homo sovieticus* or new EU-ropean, implies – to a large extent – enculturation as well, because it was (is) consistently backed by local institutions: political authorities, schools and media. When an important segment of the respective society takes part in its own process of change, it is problematic to consider it as just colonization or just acculturation.<sup>7</sup>

### Inter-culturation

Refers to a form of reciprocal cultural influence unguided and naturally developed in time. A salient example is the musical inter-culturalism spread by landless fiddler-bands in Eastern Europe (Moldavia, Ukraine, Southern Poland and Northern Transylvania) between the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> until the first quarter of the last century. These landless fiddlers, Gypsies and Jews (*klezmerim*) played

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<sup>6</sup> Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc. 2010, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> We believe that even if it might be tempting to develop a further discussion on the power spheres, education or social evolution, free from any ideological restriction, such a topic goes far beyond the framework of this paper.

for any ethnic community and in any kind of festivity; taking in and spreading multiple influences.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they succeeded in permeating those cultural frontiers, which until then, had been confined to their own isolated structures. The Gypsy fiddlers and the *klezmorim* were the principal pathfinders of two important waves of acculturation that occurred in the Romanian Principalities and in the Northern side of the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first, of smaller size and duration, came from Turkey and Greece and the second was the great Western European acculturation, which took place at about the same time all over the world, including Far Eastern countries as well.

An Asian example of reciprocal intercultural exchange could be found in the Yayoi period when, according to archaeological artefacts, Japan and Korea shared the same cultural realm<sup>9</sup>. The musical culture in the first decades A.D. displays more evidence about this closeness. One, so far rather unchallenged argument, relies on the wide use of musical instruments of Chinese provenance. It is well known that Chinese culture plays a decisive role for both countries. Therefore, it is no wonder that a Chinese pattern influenced the manufacturing of several musical devices too. Yet the fact that both in Japan and Korea the same kind of instruments took root, and that these instruments played analogous roles in both countries, might be seen as a reasonable hint for a similar cultural demand. For instance, in spite of several differences between the Japanese *biwa* and the Korean *bipa*, both originated from an old Chinese instrument – *pipa*, both have similar timbre, both require similar playing techniques and both were used in similar circumstanced context, namely in spiritual music. In the same way, the Japanese *koto* corresponds to the Korean *gayageum*, both originating from the Chinese *zheng* and both being employed in Court ceremonials.

During the centuries to come, the Japanese-Korean cultural brotherhood faded and split into two distinct spiritual entities. The clear-cut cultural division between high and popular culture has been kept in both cultures until present times. In Korea, high culture, comprising rituals, religion and art of the Chinese tradition, was promoted and

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<sup>8</sup> Gaspar Veronica, 'Musical Culture of Minorities in the Romanian Music: Dynamics, Evolution, Role and Interaction in the Surrounding Areas' in *Musical Romania and the Neighbouring Cultures, Eastern European Studies in Musicology*, Vol. 2, Maciej Gołąb (ed.), Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, pp. 175–176.

<sup>9</sup> Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 4.

taught in institutions under aristocratic or intellectual authorities, while the popular tradition (beliefs, superstitions, rituals, habits, music etc.) continued to survive independently in Shamanism, in spite of official discouragements. In Japan, the popular traditions concerning art, craft and music developed freely, but the spiritual sphere (beliefs, rituals, superstition, representation of life and death etc.) known as *Shinto* was systematized and included in an organized entity, under the direct control of the authorities. Buddhism and Shintoism have shaped an unwonted form of twinning in Japanese spirituality. Anyone can observe that in Japan the majority of the Buddhist temples (*bussatsu*) have their own *Shinto* shrines (*jinja*), which undertake the role of protection of the sacred space. They are adjacent to each other, without contamination, symbolizing the traditional two fold facets of the Japanese spirituality.

The Shamanistic rituals in Korea have preserved more than one of the *Shinto* beliefs. Additionally, one of the denominations of the Shamanic ritual is *shindo* (신도). But the “Way of Gods” influence goes even farther; one can find parts of the *shindo* rituals even in territories beyond the Urals, in several habitats. They are discernible in obscure forms of pagan spirituality in some Eastern European rural areas, as more or less concealed superstitions, particularly auxiliaries for funeral and healing rituals, not to mention a significant presence in myths and fairy tales. For instance, the Shamanistic rituals for death (*ssikkum-gut*), have similarities with some occult practices more or less tolerated by the Christian Church in Eastern Romania and Moldova. The ethnomusicologists discovered more than one similarity between Romanian melodies and the music of some *ssikkum-gut*.<sup>10</sup> The collection of *ssikkum-gut* songs is truly amazing for connoisseurs of Romanian old strata folk music, not only for their important similarities in the melodic profile, but especially for the numerous “small melodic figures, repeated exactly or sequentially”,<sup>11</sup> which play the same role in the musical structure of both cultures. The first study signaling remarkably similar tunes in astonishingly remote locations belongs to Béla Bartók (1910–1912), who built on the hypothesis of a “musical map”, different from

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<sup>10</sup> Veronica Gaspar, ‘Béla Bartók and the Romanian Musical Culture: Intercultural and Intra-Cultural Perspective’ in *Literature, Discourse and Multicultural Dialogue II*, Târgu-Mureș: “Petru Maior” University Press, 2014, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Park Mikyung, *Music and Shamanism in Korea: A Study of Selected ssikkum-gut Rituals for the Dead*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California Press, 1985, p. 215.

the geographical one. “A same melodic type can be found in the Ukraine, Persia, Iraq and Romanian Principalities”.<sup>12</sup> Bartók also discovered quasi-identical tunes linking Hungarian old musical stratum to remote locations in Central Siberia. Nevertheless, such a spread pleads for a primordial cultural unity across the whole of Eurasia, rather than for a form of extended inter-culturalism.

We can easily admit that the cultural twinning of any kind is favoured by the pre-existence of common elements. One can often observe inexplicable correspondences in several art forms or customs, which are considerably distant from each other. These coincidences – while there is no clear reason to classify them otherwise – could be noted in various folk traditions, mostly related to basic human circumstances: death, birth, diseases etc. It should be stated that such similarities refer to the non-elaborated, orally transmitted art forms and folk traditions, assuming that the specific differences loom along with highly structured cultural forms that are stabilized by writing and transmitted through teaching and not through direct contamination.

The scholar Ury Eppstein wrote a thorough study about the acceptance/rejection of Japanese music by the Europeans. He identifies four categories of European visitors throughout the last half-millennium: 1) “those expressed by persons nothing whatsoever to do with Japanese music, 2) those who became scholars of diverse aspects of Japan but not of its music, 3) musicologists and 4) composers”.<sup>13</sup> The first two categories vehemently rejected the Japanese musical style, trying hard not to seem rude. The musicologists’ appreciation was somewhat more nuanced. The benevolent opinions came from the most recent visitors, namely the composers, who were favourable and even interested to study Japanese traditional music. European composers came in contact with Japanese music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when most important European musicians were already open to foreign cultural forms, even neglecting their own academic tradition.<sup>14</sup> We believe that interest or rejection might also be influenced by the commenters’ epoch, taking into account

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<sup>12</sup> Béla Bartók, *Notes on the Folk Songs*, Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1956, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Ury Eppstein, ‘From Torture to Fascination: Changing Western Attitudes to Japanese Music’ in *Japan Forum* 19 (2), London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 191–192.

<sup>14</sup> Constantin Brăiloiu, *Widening of Musical Sensibility Facing Folk and Non-Western Music in Works II*, Emilia Comişel (ed.), Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1969, p. 236.

that cultural mentality plays a role at least as important as musical expertise does in forming such judgments.

At the same time, Ury Eppstein's study strengthens the premises of a theory which asserts that folk music facilitates cultural compatibility; implying that the elaborated<sup>15</sup> cultural forms of any kind, but especially music – are less easy to be understood by foreigners, principally by those outside said musical domain. The majority of Western non-musician guests who attended official ceremonies qualified Japanese cultured music as “a strange, bizarre, fantastic, atrocious, barbaric noise”, “unqualified and wilful discord”, “something between the squeal of a pig and the wail of a lost soul” etc.<sup>16</sup> Contact with Japanese folk music however, gave rise to different testimonies: “In our culture, the music of the knights usually sounds more pleasant than that of the low people; that of the Japanese knights is unendurable for us, and that of their sailors is pleasant for us” wrote the Portuguese missionary Luis Frois at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> Three centuries later, Lafcadio Hearn referred to Japanese folk music as having “a charm indisputable even for Western ears”.<sup>18</sup>

As for Japanese people's reaction towards the Western-style of music, the appreciations are more diverse. A few European observations admitted that it is possible for there to be a corresponding displeasure for foreign music coming from the Japanese as well: “...our music [...] is regarded by them with repugnance”, “I don't believe Japanese singing sounds to us as badly as ours does to them”.<sup>19</sup> But most of the comments refer to the inexplicable fascination of the Japanese with this new style, so distant from their own tradition. Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in late 16<sup>th</sup> century Japan noted, that they could not confirm their concern regarding a possible repulsion of the Japanese for European music. The favourable opening, a fascination with European style and musical instruments led to the conclusion that, paradoxically, it was not the new religion that triggered the acceptance of its implicit music, but the other way around. For these people, whose spirituality seemed to be

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<sup>15</sup> We would like to avoid using the customary term for cultured music that is „classical music”, because – actually – it has a different signification for musicians, denoting a particular style, which occurred in a clearly framed period.

<sup>16</sup> Eppstein, ‘From torture...’, pp. 197, 200 and 201.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193 and 197.

dominated by music,<sup>20</sup> this art was the principal enticement that aroused their interest for other aspects of European culture.

The Japanese demonstrated more openness towards foreign music than the Europeans did towards theirs, although it is plausible to suppose there were some reluctant reactions also. Thus it is possible, even if there is no written evidence about it, that the first Japanese audiences could find the European manner of combining sounds weird. Even though, their subsequent behaviour proved a significant affinity for Western music in both historical epochs, when they were confronted with it (16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century). It is no wonder that this music has come to dominate the audience's preferences. In recent statistics, "the concerts of traditional music are rare, accounting for about 7% of all concerts organized in Japan; it is played on only a tiny proportion of radio programmes; and there is little demand for recordings".<sup>21</sup>

How could such an affinity ever be explained? To play the role of *advocatus diaboli*, we can identify more than one feature that could hamper the penetration of European music wherever the tradition had no harmonic superposition, rhythmic regularity and temperate tuning. Nevertheless, we identified some compatible pre-existent features between these apparently remote styles, which suggest that Western European music is more compatible with Japanese music than it is with Middle-Eastern or even South-Eastern European musical structures.<sup>22</sup> We must also take into account a major characteristic of the Japanese people, which was- and still is- to be educated and learn about western music. Another reason comes from the intrinsic structure of European music, based on the natural resonance of sound. This peculiarity might probably be the most plausible argument for the power of its penetration, not just in Far-Eastern countries, but in many other locations, no matter the structure of the vernacular culture.

Eta Harich-Schneider brings into discussion another interesting fact. It seems that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the positive impact of European music was higher than during the first stage of the Meiji Era 18 three centuries later, at least when the first reaction is concerned.<sup>23</sup> Harich-Schneider's assertion (not yet contradicted by any document) thus raises the

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<sup>20</sup> Harich-Schneider, *A History...*, p. 548.

<sup>21</sup> Watanabe, 'Why do the Japanese like...', p. 659.

<sup>22</sup> Veronica Gaspar, 'History of a Cultural Conquest: The Piano in Japan', *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, No. 27, 2014, p. 87.

<sup>23</sup> Harich-Schneider, *A History...*, p. 546.

question, whether cultural timing might be relevant for a fruitful cultural meeting or not. Why was Western musical acculturation more accessible in the 16<sup>th</sup> century than in the 19<sup>th</sup>? The argument of three centuries of isolation under the Edo Era is not convincing, because there had been no European presence of any kind, before the arrival of the Jesuits. Of course, the difference due to three centuries standing between the two sociological inquiries, must not be neglected. Besides, the accuracy of information was superior in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even though the documentation is insufficient and comes from an unilateral source, the presumption that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century cultural shock was not as major as expected, might be plausible, especially confirmed by the subsequent assimilation.

One of the possible causes might be the type of 16<sup>th</sup> century European music, notably different compared to the 19<sup>th</sup>'s. Early European music had a different timbre, a different kind of melodic and – above all – it used non-tempered tunings, which means that broadly, the instrumental sonority was – to some extent – similar to Japanese music's. On the Japanese side, the dominant type of musical culture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the popular one: orally transmitted, more flexible and more inclined toward variation. The cultured music, which was already fixed in solid and perennial structures, was confined then to a thin layer of experts, and it was publicly shared just in ceremonials and official events. When the Tokugawa Shōgunate started campaigning for the destruction of Western influence, they paid a keen attention to music; nullifying harmonic instruments such as organs and harpsichords<sup>24</sup> and zealously promoting the “music of Gods”,<sup>25</sup> namely the genuine tradition, as it was kept in monasteries and ceremony schools. Thus after three centuries, the Europeans met a musical environment which had already undergone a thorough process of enculturation.

The fact that European acculturation was easier in an older epoch, although at that time the government had not been involved (as it was the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), led to the logical assertion that the premises of a favourable or unfavourable cultural meeting are related to the specific types of cultures involved in the encounter. There is a strong foundation to presume that a structured (cultured) form of art is less

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<sup>24</sup> Gaspar, ‘History of a Cultural Conquest...’, p. 93.

<sup>25</sup> Harich-Schneider, *A History...*, p. 490 and following.



inclined to change and that the predominance of popular structure for at least one of the subjects is conducive to a successful inter-cultural connection. The arrival of European musicians in Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century found a musical culture structured to a large extent; hence came the necessity of the involvement of the Meiji Era authorities and their subsequent educational policies during the acculturation process.

If we look at the musical world map of the beginning of the A.D. era, we perceive a demarcation line between North and South. The Southern part is the realm of strong, structured musical cultures: India, China and Greece. The musical culture of each of these countries was characterized by writing, school education and, especially, by a fundamentally analytical approach to all musical and symbolic parameters. Even if any music of that time was related to a fastidious system of significations, the Greek (and also the Chinese) musical culture still had some degree of autonomy, which might be seen as an indicative of a professional approach. For instance, the Chinese musical culture offered the first example of a “classical” (cultured) music, entirely forged by specialists. Daniélou convincingly demonstrates that their musical system (even the pentatonic one) assumed a school and not an adaptation of popular forms.<sup>26</sup> “The Chinese, as well as the Greeks had the belief that music is the perceptual representation of those imperceptible ratios, which are unifying the elements of the manifest world”<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, in the northern part of Eurasia the Scythians, Celts, Germanic or Siberian tribes as well as the Three Kingdoms Koreans and the Yayoi Japanese shared a similar musical culture-type, which was pre-eminently oral, synthetic, meant for direct communication and related to feasts and rituals. Among them, only the Celts and the Far-Eastern countries left more consistent information behind, especially because of the testimonies of Greek or Chinese sources.<sup>28</sup> Besides these testimonies, there remain just some few archaeological vestiges and some reminiscences in living songs, still persisting in isolated areas. The Far-Eastern part has retained much more of their ancient dowry, partly because of the Asiatic structure, more inclined towards preservation than change, unlike the Europeans. We could presume that the island-

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<sup>26</sup> Alain Daniélou, *Treaty of Comparative Musicology*, Paris: Hermann, 1959, pp. 69–70.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> Older or more recent works have tried to identify a comprehensive list of the first sources regarding the Celts (Markale 1993, Sawyers 2000) and the early historical periods in Japan (Harich-Schneider 1973, Henshall 1999).

structure of Japanese territory as well as the abstract “island” of cultural isolation self-created in Korea under the Silla Royalty, also played a role in this regard. However – above all – the specific differences between ethnic spiritualities notwithstanding (the northern part of Eurasia) stems from a common structure of tradition based on direct, living musical communication, which in all likelihood is favourably inclined towards both acculturation and inter-culturation.

A contemporary striking example of penetrating power of the oral type of music is given by the spread of Folk, Rock etc. genres all over the world, even in those areas where “classical” (cultured) genres made just a few followers. The episode of a fruitful meeting between two structured cultures, as it happened in the Far East a century and a half ago, remains a blessed exception – yet insufficiently clarified. Nevertheless, neither the official contribution, nor those basic common peculiarities of both Western and Japanese music we already pointed out, are sufficient to explain the depth and durability of assimilation in Japan and Korea, which is not comparable with any other acculturated locations. The traditional communication style, or the prevalence of the oral-folk music etc., are just preliminary arguments for a more consistent discussion about the most spectacular twining between musical cultures.

## Imaginary Nostalgia: The Poetics and Pragmatics of Escapism in Late Modernity as Represented by Satsuki & Mei’s House on the EXPO 2005 Site

### Abstract

The inclusion of a life-sized replica of the family house from the anime work *My Neighbor Totoro* (Studio Ghibli/Miyazaki Hayao, 1988) among the international pavilions on the EXPO 2005 site resulted in the creation of an absolute highlight-sightseeing attraction, running fully-booked months in advance during the EXPO; after the EXPO, the whole site eventually becoming a huge sanctuary for the preservation of nature with Mei & Satsuki’s House as a pilgrimage space in the center. Based on extensive fieldwork – over several years of interviews and participatory observation – as well as in-depth literature research, this presentation’s goal is to point out the intricate relation between nature, escapism and happiness as main parameters in the process of reconstructing the past. The past will be viewed here as a repository of emotional energy and socio-cultural role-models, beyond political and economic compulsions, transgressing the limits of time and space.

### Introduction

Since its foundation in 1985, Studio Ghibli has become the epitome of a successful enterprise, dealing with the production of cultural assets “made in Japan” and globally merchandising animation works, both aesthetically reflecting upon reality and ideologically tackling current issues such as: environmental pollution, social discrimination, coming of age, historical responsibility, the meaning and value of life and love as a complex emotional paradigm. The Studio Ghibli was founded by Takahata Isao (b. 1935) and Miyazaki Hayao (b. 1942), so-called “war’s children” who had created the New Japan.<sup>1</sup> Both of them had already

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<sup>1</sup> Helen McCarthy and Hayao Miyazaki, *Master of Japanese Animation*, Berkeley: Stone Bridge, 1999, p. 46.

gathered experience in the field of animation, which they then successfully employed creating their own animation studio, where they released animated works greatly impacting the audience – and with huge gains at the box-office. Taking into consideration the stress-ratio between aesthetic visions and consumerist compromises, during the last three decades Studio Ghibli developed into a symbol of cultural power, being regarded by specialists and fans alike as a living legend in times of upheaval and distraught:

“I think Studio Ghibli is [like] the Kremlin. The real one is long gone, but [its fake successor] is still sitting in the middle of the fields in Higashi Koganei. But in a sense, there is a reason for its existence [and] meaning, I think it plays a certain role [simply] by existing. Just like those steel-like athletes could not be produced other than in the communist countries, a certain kind of people cannot be produced [but] by the principals of the market economy”.<sup>2</sup>

Based on extensive fieldwork – over several years of interviews and participatory observation – as well as in-depth literary research, and taking into account Studio Ghibli’s aesthetic-ideological position within Japan’s Soft Power macro-endeavors, the goal of this paper is to underline some of the studio’s creative strategies. These strategies can be seen, for example, in the emotional ambivalence, dynamic reconsideration of history and artistic highlighting of spiral-like dialectics of cause and effect realized in the Japanese project of the life-sized replica of the family house from *My Neighbor Totoro* (*Tonari no totoro*, released in 1988, directed by Miyazaki Hayao) on the EXPO 2005 site, among other international and corporate pavilions. After an initial explanation elucidating the history of the relationship between these two artifacts – the anime movie’s family house and the EXPO 2005’s landmark – in the second part of my paper I will point out the intricate relation between nature, escapism and nostalgia as reflected by them respectively through the circumstances of their emergence and media impact. Thus, these three main elements – nature, escapism and nostalgia – appear as main parameters in the process of reconstructing the past as a repository of emotional energy and socio-cultural

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Ruh, *Stray Dog of Anime: The Films of Mamoru Oshii*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 17.

role-models, beyond economic-political compulsions, and transgressing limits of time and space. Following this train of thought, it becomes obvious that the “imaginary” and the dynamics of its interaction with the “symbolical” and the “real” plays a fundamental role in the creative re-evaluation of identity as an individual choice within the socio-cultural integration framework of late-modern Japan.<sup>3</sup> Socio-cultural integration is consequently conceptualized as a historic and geographical construction by which the revitalization of the past happens via cultural artifacts praising nature, human bonding and the afterworld. This in turn creates social cohesion and mutual acceptance among individuals living in late modernity.

As shown further below, the agency of subjects and objects replaces reality within the complex interplay of thoughts and emotions. During this interplay, animation works create a space which allows the credible comeback of mythology during the tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> century. This appears as a contradiction to the general tendency of the West, where the description of any phenomenon as “mythology” or “mythical” means to categorize it as “unreal” or “outdated” – an echo of Enlightenment and secularisation. However, in the wake of the new millennium and its unexpected challenges, the necessity to accept mythology and learn from its lessons, while additionally regarding mythological truths as guidelines and without discarding them as fantastic artifacts, becomes obvious. This might be a reason why mythology appears in anime works as a powerful alternative to contemporary chaos of thoughts and ideologically constructed reality.<sup>4</sup> Through selectivity and adjustment to ever-changing requirements of the market – anime plots and characters are highly stylized interpretations of the human world and body, and that their ethnic belonging is a question of perspective rather than of factual delimitation – anime as a genre and technique became a symbol of the “new mythology”, in which social actors accept self-sacrifice and honesty as a means to save the world. Rather than action movies, anime works possess the ability to fuse technology and art, deeply grasping the main problem of current times through: speedy changes of narrative tempo, permanently metamorphosing symbols and through highlighting

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<sup>3</sup> Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974, pp. 28–54.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Ellen Roberston, “‘Internationalisierung’ als Nostalgie im heutigen Japan’ in *Überwindung der Moderne? Japan am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1996, p. 179.

breaks as a basic display technique. As a result, the slippery structure of identity appears as a symptom and a metaphor for a world obsessed with upheavals and spectacular events as well as with flowing information, in a continuously evolving society.<sup>5</sup> This translation from ethics to aesthetics, from imagination to ideology, from message to medium facilitates the development of the Protean shape of the anime, best summed-up in three representational modi: apocalypse (the vision of the beginning and the end of the world), ritual (change and upheaval, death and renewal) and nostalgia (pain, loss and absence).<sup>6</sup>

Within these three representational modi, nostalgia is the one modus mainly employed in the re-creation of childhood space in *My Neighbor Totoro* and subsequently, mainly transported within the re-construction of Satsuki and Mei's House on the EXPO 2005 site. Originating in the Greek word *nostos* (meaning "to return home") and *algos* (meaning "painful circumstance"), in this era of liquid individualities, nostalgia refers to the dolorous longing for a prototypical home. This "home" is conceptualized, more often than not, as an invention of the self: "Can I be nostalgic for the Ganges, a place I have never been, or for the Crusades, a time when I have never lived"?<sup>7</sup> Thus, nostalgia means a sort of "love" to and "longing" for the origins. Starting with the plain nostalgia for a time when all things were better, more beautiful, healthier, happier, more civilized, more exciting, through reflexive nostalgia as complex sentimentalization of departed times, up until the interpretation of nostalgia as the analytical revival of the past; nostalgia leads to identity formation and consolidation.<sup>8</sup> Nostalgia is part of an infinite process of identity construction, preservation and implementation in the dialectical quest for continuity in the midst of discontinuous environments: "[Asian] villages living for generations in one place would be baffled by nostalgia. It is an affliction of traveling

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<sup>5</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture II: The Power of Identity*, Oxford and Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, p. 268.

<sup>6</sup> Susan J. Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, New York: Palgrave, 2005, pp. 23–38.

<sup>7</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday – A Sociology of Nostalgia*, London and New York: Macmillan Press, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of Vanishing – Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 27; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*, Armonk, New York and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1998, p. 131; Jennifer Ellen Robertson, *Native and Newcomer – Making and Remaking a Japanese City*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991, p. 17.

racers who don't like where they have arrived and have no taste for the next destination".<sup>9</sup>

The nostalgic wave during the 1970s and 1980s in Japan took the re-invented world of pre-modernity as a reference point, while in the West, the same phenomenon referred to the early modern times:<sup>10</sup> the agricultural communities in which full-time farmers pursued their work in pastoral bliss appeared as necessary ideological reserves for metropolitan Japan. The celebration of the imaginary *furusato* (homeland) created a blatant contrast to the practical *nôson* (farming village), in direct subsequence to the 1966 "my car era" that began in Japanese media:

Mass nostalgia reactions are most likely to occur in the wake of periods of severe cultural discontinuity, as happened following the profound upheavals of the 1960s. Nostalgia is also a conserving influence: it juxtaposes the uncertainties and anxieties of the present with presumed verities and comforts of the lived past, although it would be incorrect to assume that because it does so it always arrests or inhibits present purpose and action<sup>11</sup>.

The current usage of *furusato* means "homeland" or "hometown" referring to a familiar place where one was born and raised. The word can be written both in hiragana and in kanji characters, whereas in the second case, it can be read either *furusato* (Japanese reading) or *kokyô* (Chinese reading), with the peculiarity that the latter is more formal and more literary and the former rather colloquial.<sup>12</sup> *Furusato* is one of the most popular tropes and symbols employed by Japanese politicians, urban planners and mass media advisors. The ubiquity of *furusato* derives from a multiple context which highlights feelings of belonging and security. The juxtaposition of modernity's layers – mostly conceived and perceived as alienation and nostalgia – exists together with inter-generational differences, class interferences and dialect transgressions beyond regional borders. Thus, the intrinsic clashes between concurrent layers of modernity and their production modi

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<sup>9</sup> Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*..., p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Richie, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film – A Concise History with a Selective Guide to Videos and DVDs*, Tokyo, New York and London: Kodansha International, 2001, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*..., p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> Ivy, *Discourses of Vanishing*..., p. 103–108; Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*..., pp. 7–14.

grants the individual necessary energy to detach him or herself from the limitations of national culture through the past – and to surpass them.<sup>13</sup> The changing views of urban and rural lifestyles led initially to the re-writing of the *furusato* concept as a nostalgic vision of a disappearing past and of an unattainable future.

A further important element in the creation of the rural universe of childish bliss in *My Neighbor Totoro* was the emergence and dispersion of the cuteness aesthetics. By this, I mean the idealization of childhood corresponding to the neo-romantic tradition of a pure space of human existence, in which grown-ups may behave like children (so-called *burikko* or “fake children”). Thus, the *kawaii* ideology represents a collateral form of “Western” import to postwar-Japan.<sup>14</sup> In the West, early critique of the spiritual poverty of modern humans and of the modern society, developed through industrialization and urbanisation, which led to the romantic re-evaluation of pre-industrial society a reflex-generated movement. This might as well have glorified the “noble savage” living in “uncivilized worlds”, that is rural communities, which seemed to have remained in a kind of “civilisational childhood”. These were taken as examples against the corrupt and alienated powers of modern social forms and regarded as sources of simplicity and innocence – completely ignored were the miserable and harsh reality of those very rural communities.<sup>15</sup> Walt Disney’s cartoons and Charlie Chaplin’s movies created an aesthetic foundation for this urban nostalgia of a healthy village life – in this concern, it is important to note that Disney was highly popular in Japan, both before (until it was censored) and especially after WWII. In the same way that Disney’s cuteness cult alludes to a sentimental trip into the idealized – even more so: atemporal – past populated with happy animals and village characters from fairy tales, the Japanese cuteness cult, according to statements made by Japanese informants, corresponds to a sentimental trip into the idealized – similarly atemporal – childhood.<sup>16</sup> Disney romanticized

<sup>13</sup> Roberston, “‘Internationalisierung’ als Nostalgie im heutigen Japan...”, pp. 180–185.

<sup>14</sup> Yoshiko Shimada, ‘Afterword – Japanese Pop Culture and the Eradication of History’ in *Consuming Bodies: Sex and Contemporary Japanese Art*, London: Reaktion, pp. 186–191.

<sup>15</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p. 27; Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 128.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Allison, ‘Cuteness as Japan’s Millennial Product’ in *Pikachu’s Global Adventure – The Rise and Fall of Pokémon*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004, p. 34–49; Nicholas Bornoff, ‘Sex and Consumerism – The Japanese State of the Arts’ in



nature in comparison to culture and industrialized society. In opposition, the Japanese cuteness ideal romanticized childhood in its relation to adulthood, displayed as a dirty world of power, solitude, without any traces of value or satisfaction.

**From poetical art to pragmatic enterprise. Playful identities: Satsuki & Mei's House as an object of fantasy and desire**

The anime movie *My Neighbor Totoro* was released in 1988 by Studio Ghibli under Miyazaki Hayao's direction. Basically, the plot deals with the incipient stages of the relocation from city to rural area of a small family of four: a sickly mother, working father, Kusakabe Tatsuo, who is an university professor of archeology and two daughters, Satsuki- eight years old, and Mei- four years old. They move to the countryside in order to be closer to the hospital in which the children's mother is recovering from tuberculosis. The action takes place in Japan at the turn of the 1960s, and the house the family moves into, is anostalgic combination of a run-down old mansion and a comfortable a cottage, both in Japanese traditional style. Right from the beginning, this house plays a fundamental role in the gradual integration of the new arrivals within the simultaneously familiar and fantastic environment of rural life, composed both of friendly, helpful neighbors and of magical, kind creatures.

The release of *My Neighbor Totoro* marked the explosion of the so-called "Totoro-craze" in Japan. This "Totoro-craze" was visible in such socio-cultural phenomena as the enthusiastic re-consideration of nature and its – real or fictional – inhabitants, re-visitation of "heritage trees" (protectors and providers), the seeking of the simplicity of life within nature as an escape from an over-sophisticated urban environment, the respect for frugal, rural life and the discovery of happiness and the re-authentication of myths, legends and folkloric beliefs.

Aproximately 17 years later, in 2005 at the world exhibition in Aichi – in short: Aichi EXPO 2005 – an identical, life-sized replica of the family house from the anime movie *My Neighbor Totoro* was included among the international and corporate pavilions. More than previously

estimated, this inclusion resulted in the creation of an absolute highlight sightseeing attraction, running fully-booked months in advance and during the EXPO 2005. After the EXPO 2005, the whole site eventually became a huge sanctuary for the preservation of nature with Satsuki & Mei's House as a pilgrimage destination in the center. Ironically, housing projects and emerging shopping-malls increasingly suffocated and gradually eliminated the natural habitat around the memorial EXPO 2005 park, in blatant contrast to the EXPO's motto – "Nature's Wisdom" – and EXPO's mission, which gathered national and corporate pavilions expressing themes of ecological co-existence, harmony, renewable technology and nature's wonders. Still, Satsuki & Mei's House, as the life-sized replica from *My Neighbor Totoro* was named, continues to attract tourists and locals in tens of thousands every year, so that holidays and weekends are always fully booked weeks in advance, while working days run in average up to 97% capacity.

Satsuki & Mei's House on the EXPO 2005 site was initiated, designed and created by Miyazaki Gorô (b. 1967), a professional landscape architect and, most notably, the eldest son of the anime director Miyazaki Hayao. Before pursuing the Satsuki & Mei's House re-creation of the life-sized home replica from his father's anime *My Neighbor Totoro* on the EXPO 2005 site, Miyazaki Gorô was involved in the architectural design of the Ghibli Museum (Mitaka Forest Ghibli Museum).<sup>17</sup> The Ghibli Museum, which belongs to Studio Ghibli and is located in the Inokashira Park in Tokyo, was opened in October 2001, after several years of projects and preparations, with Miyazaki Gorô serving as director from 2001 to 2005.<sup>18</sup>

Satsuki & Mei's House belongs to the same project meant to expand the Ghibli enterprise in public perception, as it is a Ghibli Museum in itself as well, composed of three main exhibition areas besides a homey

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<sup>17</sup> Gorô Miyazaki, *Mitaka no mori Jiburi Bijutsukan zuroku* [The Image Book of Ghibli Museum in Mitaka Forest], Tokyo: Tokuma Foundation for Anime Culture, 2004, pp. 25–44.

<sup>18</sup> Parallel to his activity as an architect and landscaper, Miyazaki Gorô directed two anime movies, *Tales from Earthsea* (2006) and *From Up On Poppy-Hill* (2011), both released by Studio Ghibli. He additionally directed the TV anime series *Ronya, the Robber's Daughter* [*Sanzoku no musume Rônya* (26 episodes), based on the eponymous children's fantasy book by reputed Swedish author, Astrid Lindgren, first published in 1981, co-produced by Polygon Pictures and Studio Ghibli], aired from October 11, 2014 until March 28, 2015 on NHK BS Premium.

cinema and “The Principal” main hall. The Ghibli Museum recreates the atmosphere and settings of the Ghibli anime works in the smallest details, and it transfers their magical worlds into reality. The Museum also aims at familiarizing visitors with the real life of the animators’ universe, consisting of long and strenuous work hours. From this perspective, Satsuki & Mei’s House is rather a poetical emergence into the nostalgic world of childhood, as opposed to the quite technical and distanced space of the Ghibli Museum. Still, it is an extension of the Ghibli Museum with its cat-bus displayed in one of the secondary rooms – kids being allowed to play with/in it – and with its giant robot built on the roof of the Ghibli Museum, plucked directly from the steampunk universe of *Laputa: The Castle in The Sky*.

### **Poetic ideologies: escapism as socio-cultural adventure**

While envisioning and designing the life-sized version of the family house from *My Neighbor Totoro* as Satsuki & Mei’s House on the EXPO 2005 site, Miyazaki Gorô repeatedly underlined the fact that he was not only trying to reproduce an animation-released product into reality, but also trying to recreate a life-feeling, an existential mood of the late 1950s and early 1960s. These are the so-called “Showa thirties”, which are the epitome of nostalgia in present-day Japan with its all-encompassing, alienating strive for efficiency and progress in late modernity. There are several reasons why exactly this period of time – mid-1950s until mid-1960s – represents a nostalgic climax. Firstly, it begins a couple of years after the end of the American occupation (effective as of April 28, 1952); secondly, it ends before the so-called “golden decade” starting, from mid-1960s until mid-1970s, which marked the international acknowledgment of Japan as an economic superpower. Such events as the Tokyo Olympics (1964), Osaka EXPO/Osaka International Exhibition (1970) and the world premiere of *The Rose of Versailles* (1974, staged by the Takarazuka Revue Company) accompanied and highlighted this ascension, while negative occurrences such as the “Minamoto disease” (in Kumamoto prefecture, official recognized on September 26, 1968) and the first “oil crisis” (October 1973, provoked by the OAPC countries) played in the

background as negative effects of worldwide economic development and its impact on political and social structures.<sup>19</sup>

After the completion of Satsuki & Mei's House on the EXPO 2005 site, Miyazaki Gorô stated:

When I sit in the twilight-bliss in the living-room of the freshly finished "Satsuki & Mei's House", there is both the feeling of [directly] immersing into /immersing oneself in the movie, and the hallucination of being (again) in the house of my grand-parents, which has been demolished. Within the mysterious mood incorporating both nostalgia and freshness, I fantasize that, who knows, maybe the "pitch-black assistants" [*makkuro-kurosuke*] are observing me from the darkness.<sup>20</sup>

What Miyazaki Gorô strove to create, was an escape space by means of nostalgic reproduction as a main catalyst within nature. Thus, Satsuki & Mei's House is not only a real, life-sized copy of the movie artifact, but a space for encounters and initiation journeys, as experienced by Satsuki and Mei in the anime movie as well. It is a gate between universes, not only the human and the animal or verdant world, but also between reality and dream, the possible and the probable, necessity and desire. The broken bucket and the archaic water well become tools enabling the rediscovery of one's childhood – more often than not experienced as merely the product of a merchandized interaction between what Julia Kristeva has called, "the imaginary chaos and the symbolical order preparing the self for the confrontation with the real".<sup>21</sup> Thus, until the visitor reaches Satsuki & Mei's House, they are guided through an artificially created labyrinth of increasingly intimate landscapes reproducing the primordial encounter between an innocent child and wild nature. These landscapes include Japanese and Alpine

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<sup>19</sup> Joy Hendry, *The Orient Strikes Back – A Global View of Cultural Display*, Oxford and New York: Berg Press, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> 夕暮れ時、完成した「サツキとメイの家」の茶の間に座っていると、映画の中にいるようでもあり、今はなくなってしまった祖父母の家にいるようにも錯覚します。懐かしさと新鮮さが同居する不思議な気分で、もしかするとマッククロスケ（真っ黒黒助）が暗がりからこちらを見ているのではないかと空想してみました”– Gorô Miyazaki, *Satsuki to Mei no ie no tsukurikata* [The Construction Method of Satsuki & Mei's House], Tokyo: Studio Ghibli/Tokuma Press, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Kristeva, *La révolution...*, pp. 44–57 and 73–79.

scenery, leading towards a generous pond, which reflects the house in the distance.<sup>22</sup>

Inside the house, a familiar atmosphere is created by the impression that its inhabitants have just left and are about to return. Naturally the shelves are filled with clothes in accordance with the season, there is an assortment of food available in the kitchen and the towels in the bathroom might as well have been used during the common evening family-bath ritual (as visualized in the anime movie, which led in an initial phase to heated debates in the West as to age restriction). As spotted from mostly middle-aged visitors’ conversations, entering Satsuki & Mei’s House is equal to a physical return to their own childhood, with metal lunch-boxes and cotton-underwear, often accompanied by tearful remembrances of one’s own school-days and teenage habits. Conversely, younger visitors, aged 25 to 35, proceed with exploring the places where totoros might hide and with playing detective in finding out the degree to which the building on the EXPO 2005 site replicates its animated original. Teenage visitors often sit around bored or play on portable video-games, unable to follow their parents’ enthusiasm focused on what a high-school boy called “a bunch of old, smelly clothes” (though the clothes in the 1950s-fashion aligning in the shelves are not smelly!). Smaller children simply prefer to imitate the characters featured in the movie – and thus to reproduce their imaginary universe, while copiously entertaining their parents (mostly in their 30s). Satsuki & Mei’s House thus turns into a space of recollection and self-discovery in the midst of a collective consciousness seldom expressed so clearly and spontaneously.

Modernization and urbanization (1950s, 1960s, 1970s)		Idealization of the countryside (1970s, 1980s, 1990s)	
Towards homogeneity of culture: urbanization, modernization		Rediscovery of cultural and regional differences: idealization of the countryside	
Urban	Rural	Rural	Urban

<sup>22</sup> A bus ride is possible as well, as most of the visitors would prefer, but for those choosing to take the less known path from the former West-Entrance, the initiation trip towards Satsuki & Mei’s House is worth the 20-to-25-minutes-walk.

Developed	Backward	Nature	Culture
Prosperity	Poverty	Heart <i>kokoro</i>	Materialism
Sophisticated	Rustic	<i>Furusato</i>	City, unfamiliar
The succeeded	The failed	Human living	Crowded, polluted
Science	Superstition	Sacred	Secular
Rationality	Irrationality	Communal spirit	Individualism, capitalism
Civilization	Ignorance	Authenticity	Alien
Modernity	Tradition	Tradition	Modernity
Westernness	Japaneseness	Japaneseness	Westernness

(Author's creation based on Moon)<sup>23</sup>

From this perspective, Satsuki & Mei's House is a predecessor of the society of the future which holds the essence of *furusato* as a valid answer to such questions as "What is homeland? A place? Relationship? Possession? Emotion?". However, there are no universal answers related to *furusato* as represented by Satsuki & Mei's House: e.g., a real home, neighborhood or childhood's memories. The evocation of *furusato* in case of Satsuki & Mei's House appears as *furusato-zukuri* (the creation of homeland, the construction of homeland) in an ongoing political project to create common memories as means of social reproduction, while the longing for the past and the dissatisfaction with the present are used to create an imagined-remembered community of abundance and emotional warmth in/for the future.<sup>24</sup> As displayed by Satsuki & Mei's House, the *furusato-zukuri* is supposed to integrate current activities and interpretations of past conditions within the construction process of an authentic preview of the future. Provided that human spirituality is

<sup>23</sup> Okpyo Moon, 'The countryside reinvented for urban tourists – Rural transformation in the Japanese mura-okoshi movement' in *Japan at Play: The Ludic and the Logic of Power*, Joy Hendry and Massimo Raveri (eds.), London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 231f.; Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan...*, p. 241.

<sup>24</sup> Roberston, "Internationalisierung" als Nostalgie im heutigen Japan', p. 186.

a combination of geniality and naivety; of utopian daydreaming and prodigious spontaneity, which are limited, unified and sterilized in the process of growing-up, Satsuki & Mei's House emerges as an oasis of calmness and security, full of nostalgias and mysteries. It enables the adult spirit to momentarily escape the contradictions, disenchantments and insecurities of the current disturbed world and to immerse itself in a universe of friendly, warm, sincere emotional exchanges and bonding.

### **Pragmatic aesthetics: the political and economic implications of escapism**

During the production process of anime TV series such as *Heidi, the Girl of the Alps*, *Lupin the Third*, *3,000 Miles in Search of Mother* or *Red-Haired Anne (Anne of Green Gables)*, both Miyazaki and Takahata acknowledged the fact that their ideal to create high-quality animation works, reflecting human existence with its joys and losses within the limited framework of the television industry, both in terms of financial and temporal availability, would forever stay a mere dream<sup>25</sup>. The foundation of Studio Ghibli made their dream come true, so that they could regard every anime work as an entity in itself. Following the establishment of the studio, their task would ultimately be to keep the balance between commercial success and personal aesthetic values according to their motto: "Make a movie; if it was successful at the box-office, make the next movie; if it fails, that's the end".<sup>26</sup> The production of good anime works was the most important task, the extension of the production site was regarded as a byproduct. Indeed, by developing high-value anime works with a general-human message, financial success became a natural side-effect. In spite of the fact that both Miyazaki and Takahata repeatedly highlighted the idea that Japanese audiences were their main target, with a specifically Japanese message to bring over to that very Japanese audience – even though several of their anime works were inspired by non-Japanese sources – in time, anime works released by Studio Ghibli became international blockbusters.

However, it would be a cheap generalization to regard Studio Ghibli as a cultural paradise living on the production of cultural assets. The last

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<sup>25</sup> Isao Takahata 'Erosu no hibana' ['An Explosion of Eros'] in *Departure Points 1979–1996*, Miyazaki Hayao (ed.), Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1996, p. 578.

<sup>26</sup> Maria Grajdian, *Das japanische Anime: Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Annäherung*, Sibiu: Lucian Blaga University Press, 2008, p. 82.

few works especially (since *Howl's Moving Castle*) illustrate the danger of high expectations and lurking artistic narcissism (combined with increasing tendencies of cultural nationalism). Rather, Studio Ghibli is a further manifestation of late-modern mythologies.<sup>27</sup> As an efficiently working duo in spite of fundamentally different personalities, Takahata and Miyazaki works revived passion, love and force in their anime, while obeying the consumers' wishes and expectations without giving up on their own ideals reminiscent of late 1960s ideology. As outposts of the so-called "new globalization of Japanese animation",<sup>28</sup> Studio Ghibli is still regarded as an antithesis to Disney. East-West dichotomy oversees is senseless however, because Japanese animation is by far not a monolithic entity as is Disney, but a dynamic conglomerate which stays unpredictable in its diversity and plurality – similarly to Japanese culture and society.

Thus, beyond being a cultural artifact released by means of the animated medium, Satsuki & Mei's House becomes a tool to create and transmit feelings of longing and, paradoxically, belonging. Social affiliation is transcended as emotional belonging, translated, in turn, into happiness as a chance to re-visit one's own childhood with the eyes and the experience of the mature mind. Nostalgia is an "invented emotion" which allows for the transfer of significance in historical terms, which leads, again, to socio-cultural sustainability as a result of conscious choices, on the basis of everyday events and accumulated life experience. As social actors, such as Pierre Bourdieu put it, it enables the growth into responsible, self-aware citizens. More than being a plain touristic highlight, Satsuki & Mei's House becomes a space where the childish imaginary/imagination confronts the mature symbolic and recreates the real as a site of responsible, self-aware happiness.

This draws on the informal appearance of the Studio Ghibli as a building and enterprise nurturing a co-existence with nature among equal humans from its *anpo*<sup>29</sup> ideology. Miyazaki re-created the

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<sup>27</sup> Jan Condry, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2013, p. 24; Patrick Drazen, *A Gathering of Spirits: Japan's Ghost Story Tradition: From Folklore and Kabuki to Anime and Manga*, Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011, p. 98.

<sup>28</sup> Shana Heinrich, 'Take a Ride on the Catbus' in *Wide Eyed Wonder: Anime & Philosophy*, Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin (eds.), Chicago and La Salle: Open Court Press, 2010, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> The *anpo* movement was a student movement in Japan, comparable to the western 1968 movement, and opposing the renewal of the *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security*



idealized memory of a serene world in which the classical principles of “competitive undertaking” were replaced by those of “peaceful togetherness” – principles taken from an archaic nature able to regenerate and live on eternally.

Continuing and expanding Studio Ghibli’s ideology and aesthetics of a pacifist world respecting the value of human life, Satsuki & Mei’s House proves that “imagined nostalgia” is a basic element in the comprehension process of its own popularity. More than the anime movie, Satsuki & Mei’s House is in itself an active visualization of an imaginary past, which was never experienced as such and which leads to the real, practical configuration of the desired object through the gradual processing of emotions. On a more abstract level, it is the “maternal”, semiotic subversion of the “paternal”, symbolical order. This symbolical order conducts within a highly intertextual context of extremely stylized imageries to the ideal of an impossible femininity.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Satsuki & Mei’s House appears as “nostalgia for the present” in its display and location, as there is an active attempt to construct childhood, nature and femininity as a cute adventure within a spatial and temporal framework where it could have never possibly existed.<sup>31</sup> As a consequence of this process, the past turns into a place of imagined communities and impossible identities: “The past is now not a land to return to in a simple politics of memory. It has become a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios”.<sup>32</sup>

The ideologized representation of distance, painted in temporally and spatially nostalgic colors, leads to the emergence of grotesque representations of the self and of the other. Especially the cute feminine self emerges as a never-to-be-attained entity which nurtures the mechanism of nostalgia infinitely through its symbolical absence within

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*between the United States and Japan* 日本国とアメリカ合衆国との間の相互協力及び安全保障条約 *Nippon-koku to Amerika-gasshūkoku to no Aida no sōgo kyōryoku oyobi anzen hoshō jōyaku* (also known as *Anpo jōyaku* 安保条約 or just *Anpo* 安保), first signed in 1952 in San Francisco, then amended in 1960 in Washington and extended in 1970, in spite of the protests.

<sup>30</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble – Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 88; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter – On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 41; Kristeva, *La révolution...*, p. 476.

<sup>31</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large – Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis and London: Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

the male discourse. This mechanism is practically displayed through the euphoric contemplation of the future and through the emotional compilation of scenarios to access reality through the nostalgic endeavor.

The “imagined nostalgia” and the illusory remembrance are crystallized in this process as eternal sources of aesthetic longing. The ideal of *furusato*, as displayed by Satsuki & Mei’s House and by its anime version, reminds us of the intellectual nostalgia present in Charles Baudelaire’s poem *Je n’ai pas oublié* from the cycle *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857-1868) and his consciously constructed ideal of the homeland. However, the *furusato-zukuri* (homeland construction) and the imagination of primordiality as represented by the “Totoro phenomenon”, underlie a complex dialectics and re-semantization process:<sup>33</sup> a specific version of the self is created, composed both of an experienced past, of historicity, materiality and warm intimacy, and threatened, at the same time, by feelings of fear, virtual homelessness loss of orientation and loneliness.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, Satsuki & Mei’s House represents romantic, idealized, “post-nostalgic” forms of love and belonging – and emerges as a powerful instrument in the redirection of quotidian nostalgias:

[R]omantic fiction is surely popular because it [...] restores the childhood world of sexual relations and suppresses criticisms of the inadequacy of men, the suffocation of the family, or the damage inflicted by patriarchal power. Yet it simultaneously manages to avoid the guilt and fear which might come from that childhood world. Sexuality is defined firmly as the father’s responsibility, and fear of suffocation is overcome because women achieve a sort of power in romantic fiction. Romantic fiction promises a secure world, promises that there will be safety with dependence, that there will be power with subordination.<sup>35</sup>

It is a complex illusionary process based on visual representations within which contradictory feelings of imaginary nostalgia, of a never-

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<sup>33</sup> Roberston, ‘Internationalisierung als Nostalgie im heutigen Japan’, p. 181.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>35</sup> John Storey, *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture – Theories and Methods*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996, p. 47.

experienced past and of an impossible future are accumulated.<sup>36</sup> Various forms of sublimation and repression of an alienating present are generated, propagated and implemented within the playful concatenation of images and sounds, of real memories and virtual thoughts, of familiar ideals and distant ideologies.

Ultimately, Satsuki & Mei's House effuses that form of nostalgia, which originates in the identification with an apparently forgotten past-providing the feminine ideal as a spatial-temporal "forgotten self". Desires of virtual visualizations of this "forgotten self" are implemented within an intertextual, carnival-like framework.<sup>37</sup> Through the nostalgic display of gendered memories, social control and, on a more collective level, strategies of cultural imperialism, Satsuki & Mei's House re-creates a space of "national erotics" on the EXPO 2005 site, envisioning it as repeatedly individual nostalgias. This ideologically displayed "erotics of remembrance" produces human characters who, in turn, lead to new forms of control and categorization, of self-perception and self-representation.

### **Conclusion: dialectic subjects and the necessity of nostalgia**

The great epic of cuteness, *My Neighbor Totoro*, reveals childhood and naivety as important initiation phases on the way to adulthood. The totoros, whose names are conjured up due to Mei's unclear pronunciation of the word for Northern "trolls", are a combination of an owl, cat and tanuki (Japanese raccoon-dog); from the latter, they also borrow their magical abilities. Generally speaking, their anatomy corresponds to the appearance of cute characters: they are asexual, round, mammalian, with big heads and huge eyes, which become even larger when they are surprised or scared. They are unable to speak, to run, to express themselves or to defend themselves, possessing round bellies and very small, thick arms and legs as well as minuscule mouths – which, however, in case of necessity, appear suddenly out of nowhere.<sup>38</sup> Later on, the totoros prove to be beings from a magical world, in which flying busses in the shape of cats (the popular "cat-bus"

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<sup>36</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large...*, p. 65–77; Andy Benet, *Cultures of Popular Music*, Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001, p. 153; Michel Foucault: *L'archéologie du savoir*, Paris: Gallimard, 1969, p. 462.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. pp. 77 and 111–117; Kristeva, *Le texte du roman*, Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1970, p. 156.

<sup>38</sup> Kinsella, 'Cuties in Japan...', p. 248.

or *neko-basu* in original in Japanese and famous as such) – invisible for grown-ups’ eyes, but greatly helpful for children in need; in which giant trees can grow from seeds within one night; in which the fear of a small child that its mother might die, can melt the real and the fantastic world into one harmonious universe.<sup>39</sup> For Satsuki and Mei, whose mother lies ill in the hospital and whose father is absent during the day, the totoros are guides into the world of grown-ups, companions on the journey from children’s uncertainty into the aware existence of being an individual personality. Thus, the totoros show the children a way around the classical image of necessity to repress oneself and to sacrifice oneself under the pressure of community or society, and lead them on the path to the discovery of unknown treasures and joys. The family house is, in the anime movie, a space of mythical encounters between nature and culture, between past and present; where the future is being molded, and humans can live in harmony with the universe. The quotidian life is enhanced by additional miracles, so that going to school, solving household chores, listening to one’s tutors, are as normal as immersing into the dream and playing with a broken bucket. Cuteness becomes the pre-condition of a pure world which does not disappear when adulthood is attained, but which goes fully on into adulthood. Insecurity, clumsiness, confusion are as much parts of the emotional dimension of grown-ups as a healthy dose of self-confidence and a happy smile.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, *My Neighbor Totoro* is a hymn to that part of the self, which may not die within the process of growing-up, in the Japanese modern society as well as in the world at-large, but begs to be kept alive within the adult spirit. It longs for the ability to watch one’s life with honesty, love, innocence, courage and confidence, simultaneously with the capacity to stay true to oneself and to others in a world continuously on the move.

A direct extension of its original animated version, Satsuki & Mei’s House on the EXPO 2005 site, fills the emotional space between honest remembrance and imagined nostalgia. Thus, on one hand, Satsuki & Mei’s House presents the childhood’s “family house” as a space of socio-cultural encounters: fictional creatures living in the forest, neighbors in the village and the familiar landscape including the well

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<sup>39</sup> Julien R. Fielding, *Discovering World Religions at 24 Frames per Second*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008, pp. 18–19.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Drzen, *Anime Explosion – The What? Why? and Wow! of Japanese Animation*, Berkeley: Stone Bridge, 2003, p. 184.

and the bucket are a healthy return to the safe world of *furusato*, mediated by water and grounded by ancestral trees. On the other hand, Satsuki & Mei's House re-creates the childhood's "family house" as a space of economic-political development, transmitting a sense of protection and security in times of upheaval and transformations. Finally, Satsuki & Mei's House reminds us of the necessity to construct the childhood's house as a center of self-discovery, of learning and education, where the imaginary is a tool leading to symbolic and real dimensions of adulthood. Thus, Satsuki & Mei's House re-writes post modernity as a unifying sign and paradoxical "pre-future" where the dissolved form and the nonsensical contents are not perceived as liberation, but as a version of *ennui* which both mystifies nostalgia and induces escapism as a generalized *mal de siècle*. While nostalgia and escapism are basic assets of "emotional precariousness" in times of confusion and distraught, they might as well be romantically painted ideologies: unreachable, impossible love turns into a life goal, because happiness and a fulfilled existence are boring within the dynamic framework of a consumption society.<sup>41</sup> Nostalgic remembrance – even when only imagined – moves the soul, not the vivid, fresh presence of love. The given simulation takes the upper-hand, and nostalgia is merely a phantasmic, periodic rehabilitation of all lost references.

As symbolically represented by Satsuki & Mei's House, escapism is a combination of nature, religion and the mythical world, leading altogether to the creation of an imaginary nostalgia for an imagined past. It is the reflex-like emotional movement of a world having been modernized too fast, which had jumped from a medieval pre-modernity directly into post-modernity, ignoring most phases of a healthy modernization (passed-through by most Western nations, nowadays categorized as "highly industrialized, postmodern societies"). Realism proves to be merely an emotional artifact. In the Japanese classical visual arts such as *emaki-mono* or *ukiyo-e*, which are continued by anime and manga, as well as in the classical stage arts such as Nô, Kabuki or Bunraku, realism refers to plot, characters and the handling of

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<sup>41</sup> Maria Grajdian, 'The Precarious Self: Love, Melancholia and the Eradication of Adolescence in Makoto Shinkai's Anime Works' in *Imagining the Lost Generation: Representations of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture*, Roman Rosenbaum and Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt (eds.), London and New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 122; Castells, *The Information Age...*, p. 284.

these parameters.<sup>42</sup> The realistic plot is enhanced by the dramatic processing; the quotidian reality and the prevalent worldliness are rescued by a new form of warm humanism. Thus, the representation of social limitations and the tragic conflict between obligations and emotions (*giri-ninjô*), between outside and inside (*soto-uchi*) transforms the historical, generally valid human model into a contemporary human drama. Additionally, it transforms historical characters into normal human beings, driven by feelings and passions. The plot moves away from the general, political, philosophical, historical field of classical art into the practical domain of the realistic display of everyday-life: the abandonment of an idealized correction of reality shifts towards the acceptance of reality as such – and towards its realistic representation.<sup>43</sup> The great characters of human types, abstractly represented as striving for transcendence, are highly individualized, being replaced by realistic characters. This is the process of artistically stylizing ideals of the real individual possessing an extremely conflictual personality with their increasingly symbolical function. The transcendent emotions are sublimed into human feelings, including hopelessness and lack of orientation, with seldom rays of joy and fulfillment of the dreams. New forms of (self-) perception are developed. The inner ambivalence – the tragic conflict between social obligations and personal feelings, between economic power and social contempt in premodern visual and theatrical entertainment genres – anticipates the post-Meiji subject and the modern highlighting of the uniqueness of every individual, caught in a complex network of diachronic and synchronic relationships.<sup>44</sup> Following this train of thought, the form-based structure of any modern entertainment genre in Japan, from *enka* until anime and TV shows, is reminiscent of the *kata*-oriented design of Japanese pre-modern arts and literature:

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<sup>42</sup> Isao Takahata, *Jûniseiki no animêshon: Kokuhô emakimono ni miru eigateki, animeteki naru mono* [Animation from the 12th Century: Movie and Anime-Like Things to Be Seen in the Picture Scrolls Categorized as National Treasures], Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten/Studio Ghibli, 1999, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Shimada, 'Afterword...' p. 189f.

<sup>44</sup> Hidetoshi Katô, 'Japanese Popular Culture Reconsidered' in *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*, Richard Gid Powers and Hidetoshi Katô (eds.), Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1989, pp. 309–310; Mark Schilling, *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Popular Culture*, New York and Tôkyô: Weatherhill, 1997, p. 78; Christine R. Yano, *Tears of Longing – Nostalgia and The Nation in Japanese Popular Song*, London and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 35.

predictability as a nostalgic reaction to intense changes in the background of Japan's frantic industrialization since 1868.

The hybrid realities of today's Japan – multiple border transgressions and transnational exchange in the field of commerce, aesthetics, ideology and science/research – are assimilated within hegemonic discourses on cultural purity and homogeneity as well as in nostalgic reference to premodernity. The most disturbing is the attempt to culturally re-configure the fears of modernity through rationalizing technologies, individualizing practices and totalizing apparatuses. This reminds of Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, which is based on the argument of radical otherness that cannot be acknowledged until a constructive, not so much direct dialog as liberating clash, between different discourses occurs<sup>45</sup>. This discursive dialogism – a permanent interaction of meanings: the word, the discourse, the language or the culture, all subjected to a dialogical process as an alternative to the time of their relativization and liquefaction – is vividly included within the romantic communication attempts between visitors and the fantastic world represented by Satsuki & Mei's House along with its fictional inhabitants.

Furthermore, the identity dialectics in Satsuki & Mei's House prove that reproductive nostalgia and historical escapism cannot completely annihilate the coveted longings of those Japanese citizens touring the EXPO 2005 site, hoping to find an apparently lost past again.<sup>46</sup> This is, once more, a reminder of the fact that, though intensively pursued by Japanese politicians and strategists during the Meiji period, not only technologies and institutions of Western capitalism were imported, but also centuries of aesthetic theories, literary forms and social representation modi within a record timeframe. Thus, not only railway technology, but also Enlightenment ideology, not only financial capital, but also Renaissance worldview, not only Prussian militarism, but also British humor were taken over and adapted to the realities of mid-1800 Japan. Innumerable phenomena of intrusion and resistance, of seduction and assimilation occurred within the unbalanced power spectrum

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<sup>45</sup> Kristeva, *Le texte...*, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Ivy, *Discourses of Vanishing...*, p. 69; Okpyo Moon, 'The countryside reinvented for urban tourists – Rural transformation in the Japanese mura-okoshi movement' in *Japan at Play: The Ludic and the Logic of Power*, Joy Hendry and Massimo Raveri (eds.), London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 231f; Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan...*, p. 28.

between Japan and the West.<sup>47</sup> Still, the really profound meaning of the era directly following the Meiji Restoration can be found in the construction of a modern nation-state with the simultaneous transgression of the dynamic worlds of representation and thought within the existing indigenous system. This, eventually, resulted in the veritably subversive activation of the semiotic constellation of pre-Meiji-Japan. From this perspective, Satsuki & Mei's House, raised on the EXPO 2005 site is not a modifying repetition of the family house in the anime movie *My Neighbor Totoro*. In its circular quotability, it does not utilize the argument of tradition until its very exhaustion as self-confirmation and self-validation. Instead, it appears as the postmodern reflection of the fact that power, freedom and justice, as principles, can help create a more human world – maybe “less” perfect, but warm and peaceful in its playful familiarity with childhood memories and emotions.

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<sup>47</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity – Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 172–187.



## 5. Appendix – Author's pictures



1. General picture of Satsuki & Mei's House



2. Front picture of Satsuki & Mei's House



3. Side picture of Satsuki & Mei's House



4. The well and the bucket



5. Playing Mei by a Japanese girl

## Japanese Local Community as Socio-Structural Resource for Ecological Lifestyle

### Abstract

The Fukushima nuclear disaster re-placed in more severe way on the agenda of Japanese society the question of the re-evaluation of an ecological consumption and lifestyle. This article studies the specific features and the development of the environmentally minded lifestyle in Japanese local communities; the enterprising social actors who help disseminate it and spread its values; and the particular way of implementation of well-established global practices in local Japanese conditions. The purpose of the text is, in proceeding from the concept of ecological lifestyle, to determine the local community as vital socio-structural resource for promotion of ecological consumption in Japan.

**Key words:** local community, lifestyle, *teikei*, consumer co-operatives, urban farming.

### Local community as important socio-structural resource of Japanese society

According to famous Japanese author and illustrator Taro Gomi:

“While the twentieth century was an age of nations, the twenty-first century is an age of regions and local people”.<sup>1</sup>

I am following the idea that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the century of local communities, for the activity of the enterprising social actors of those communities is the fundament of civil society. In postmodern society local people have at their disposal much greater and more varied possibilities for choosing a lifestyle for themselves, their family, and for the neighborhood they live in.

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<sup>1</sup> Taro Gomi, ‘Interview with Mr. Taro Gomi’, *The Japan Foundation Newsletter*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2006, p. 3: [https://www.jpff.go.jp/j/publish/periodic/jfn/pdf/jfn31\\_4.pdf](https://www.jpff.go.jp/j/publish/periodic/jfn/pdf/jfn31_4.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

As early as the 1960s, Japan was among the developed countries in which ecological lifestyle became a focus of public attention. Its popularity and spread were the result of the activity of civil society, of the structures and activities of local communities and their enterprising social actors, as well as of measures taken by state institutions.<sup>2</sup> Japan has a developed and functioning policy for environmental protection and functioning laws for the application of that policy. But despite the achieved results, many problems still exist, provoking the criticism and protests of civic movements.

The natural disasters and the ensuing nuclear crisis in Japan after March 11, 2011 tragedy, have re-placed on the agenda of developed and developing countries alike the issue of nuclear power plant safety, but likewise the more general question of the value of an ecological lifestyle. The country's tragic experience with the atom bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the popularity and importance of the ecological lifestyle, are circumstances that make the March 11, 2011 nuclear accident tragedy even harder to explain and come to terms with. This is a country that has undergone the nightmare of atomic bombing and is particularly sensitive in its mentality and culture to the risks of nuclear energy, yet obtains one third of its electricity precisely from nuclear power stations. To make matters worse, one fifth of the earthquakes taking place in the world occur on its territory, and are often followed by tsunami waves posing the question about high level of ecological risks concerning the country. In Japan earthquakes are part of daily life but until Fukushima nuclear disaster the risk of technological development, in particular the social processes of perceiving, of viewing and making sense of risk were in the periphery of social debate about Japan's future.

“The causes of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station not only include technical failures and systematic and administrative failures, but also a set of factors that can be termed societal failures”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Maya Keliyan, *Stil na jivot na lokalnata obshtnost: Savremenna Yaponiya* [Local Community Life Style: Contemporary Japan], Varna: Alex Print, 2010, pp. 94–95.

<sup>3</sup> Mindy Kay Bricker (ed.), *The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station Disaster: Investigating the Myth and Reality by the Independent Investigation Commission on the Fukushima Nuclear Accident*, London and New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 51.



The development of technology, of the IT sector in particular, has given rise to the dangerously illusory idea that nature and man-made technology are under control, and that what has not taken place during the past centuries will not take place in the future. In a number of countries, among them Japan, a serious additional cause for the extent of damages coming from the destructive power of nature, is human error. The latter is often linked with economic interests, and with corrupt practices tying political elites to economic structures: data indicating this connection were presented and discussed after the Fukushima nuclear incident.

I am following the belief that the **social structures of Japanese society create, maintain, and stimulate considerable social resources** for dealing with socio-economic difficulties. These resources have been used multiple times in Japanese history and **local community** is one of them. It is also significant collective enterprising social actor for promotion and dissemination of values and practices of ecological lifestyle.

This paper studies the specific features and the development of the environmentally minded lifestyle in Japanese local communities; the enterprising social actors who help disseminate it and spread its values; and the particular way of implementation of well-established global practices in local Japanese conditions. The purpose of the text is, in proceeding from the concept of ecological lifestyle to determine the local community as **vital socio-structural resource** for promotion of ecological consumption in Japan.

### **Local community and its lifestyle in postmodern society**

The **approach** applied to the lifestyle of local communities lies within the research field of **social stratification**. In this study I proceed from the traditions of the classical names in this problem field, such as Weber and Veblen, as well as on the work of Bourdieu, Featherstone, and Jameson, on authors such as Savage, Butler, Longhurst, Sobel, Zablocki, Kanter, Chaney, and others. Local community is a form of coexistence, a form of co-affiliation of individuals living in a network of social relationships; it has a specific social structure; its members perform socially significant activities within a clearly defined territory that they inhabit. What is important here are not so much the physical and geographic characteristics of that territory, but the **nature and quality of the social relationships** that define the local community. The

**boundaries** of the community, both **real** and **symbolic**, are especially important, for they serve to **mark the membership and affiliation** of the individuals included in it. The term “community”, as likewise “local community”, may be descriptive or it could refer to values and norms.

Japanese society has a **developed community culture**, which has been preserved over the centuries and continues to perform an important role and function even now, in postmodern society. In Japan there are certainly **strong social bonds** between individuals within the framework of the group to which they belong, between the communities and society at large. Japan is a **communitarian society**,<sup>4</sup> in which **social responsibility and duty** towards the group and the community are of paramount importance, despite the intense current of individualism that comes through Western influence. In fact, this trend is not only a result of foreign influence but also of the impact upon society and its structures of modernization, industrialization, urbanization, mass culture, post-modernization, and the social transformations all of these provoke.

I am arguing that, despite the close proximity between the concepts of **lifestyle** and **way of life**, the two are **not synonymous**. Unlike “way of life”, “lifestyle” emphasizes the **activeness of the agent** and the **choices** he/she makes among the various options at his/her disposal. Lifestyle is a characteristic and distinctive way of life. Since social-group formations are active in their lifestyle and can choose it, lifestyle is a significant indicator of their status. In modern societies it is a result of their activity; through it they delimit themselves from some social-structure formations and draw closer to others. The way of life, unlike lifestyle, is **determined by the social-group status** of individuals and groups, and is a **result** of that status.<sup>5</sup>

It is assumed that **lifestyle of the local community** is an integral unity of specific, typical and distinctive activities carried out by the social actors (individual and collective) and structures of that community, activities carried out apart from paid labor (i.e. on a voluntary basis); some of these activities may be freely chosen (preferred), others may be pursued out of necessity (i.e. obligatory), still others may be initiated by its members and their organizations; it

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<sup>4</sup> In the sense of the use of the term “communitarian” by Etzioni, see Amitai Etzioni, *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, New York: Roman and Littlefield, 1998, p. xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Keliyan, *Stil na jivot...*, pp. 22–24.



includes the evaluations, attitudes and satisfaction derived from all these activities. Lifestyle also plays a **structure-determining role** with respect to the **local community**: ever since the emergence of postmodern society, not only individuals but the organizations and communities formed by individuals have enjoyed much greater freedom and have a growing possibility to choose their lifestyle; in turn, that lifestyle defines their position in the social structure of society.

Lifestyle acquires the characteristics describe above at a definite stage of social-historical development, more precisely, in postmodern society which distinctive features are presented in the works of authors C. Wright Mills,<sup>6</sup> Baudrillard,<sup>7</sup> Lyotard,<sup>8</sup> Jameson,<sup>9</sup> Featherstone<sup>10</sup> and others. Postmodern society is based on a **new type of social structuring**, in which lifestyle plays an important and decisive role, and **local communities** have an increasingly important presence and role in public life in general.

Ulrich Beck established the issue of **risk**<sup>11</sup> as a central to postmodern society (in his own terminology – late and “reflexive” modernity). The health and environmental concerns are particular dimensions of risk society stemming from the widespread use of chemical, pesticides, and by the danger of radioactive contamination, like after Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident.

“By risk I mean above all radioactivity, which completely evades human perceptive abilities, but also toxins and pollutants in the air, the water and food-staff, together with the accompanying short- and long-term effects on plants, animals and people”.<sup>12</sup>

Post-modernization poses significant challenges for local communities, but does not bring them to loss of identity and provides them with new means and possibilities for dealing with their problems.

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<sup>6</sup> See: Charles Wright Mills, *White Collar*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.

<sup>7</sup> See: Jean Baudrillard, *La Société de Consommation*, Paris: Gallimard, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> See: Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

<sup>9</sup> See: Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> See: Mike Featherstone, ‘Perspective on Consumer Culture’, *Sociology*, Vol. 24, 1990, pp. 5–22.

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Toward a New Modernity*, London: Sage, 1992, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> Beck, *Risk Society*..., p. 22.

For instance, the development of technologies, especially information and communication technologies, which are making our societies increasingly global, can simultaneously be used as means for preserving local specificities, consolidating and even popularizing the local lifestyle beyond the boundaries of the community, thus effectuating a sort of “globalization of the local”. But how and how much the local communities will inscribe themselves in the postmodern environment and **cope with the challenges** of that environment will depend on the **social structures** of the concrete society.

Apart from the formal, institutionalized, and legally established structure, the Japanese local community also creates a **functioning network of informal structures**, which build up, maintain, and develop certain types of **relationships** between members. The informal structures express the “moral rules” of the community, which the members are required to observe. These rules are an informal “institutionalization” of its principles, its tradition, which, due to the symbiosis of the value aspect and the “semi-institutional” aspect, are passed on through the centuries and, today, acquire a modern meaning.<sup>13</sup> The informal structure of the local community, established in Japanese tradition and functioning today, is called *chōnaikai* (町内会) which literally means “neighborhood association”. In some regions it is known as *jichikai* (自治会), a designation that emphasizes autonomy, unlike the official administrative institutions established through law. In villages these structures are known as *shizenon* (自然村), i.e. a spontaneous/voluntarily hamlet’s community. In 2013 there are about 300 000 such neighborhood associations in Japan.<sup>14</sup>

Such informal structures have been formed in settlements of all sizes, ranging from villages to megapolises;<sup>15</sup> they are led by an informal council, headed by *kuchō san* (区長さん), or “community leader”. The latter, as well as the other members of the informal council, work on a volunteer basis, without pay, and are elected by the local households for a mandate of 4 years. The informal structures, councils,

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<sup>13</sup> Keliyan, *Stil na jivot...*, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> Robert J. Pekkanen, Yutaka Tsujinaka and Hidehiro Yamamoto, *Neighborhood Associations and Local Governance in Japan*, London: Routledge, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> The difference between these structures as they exist in small settlements and in megapolises lies in the ways of participation in their activities and in their functions for the life of the settlement.

leaders, and their activity have for many centuries served as a resource for mobilizing not only the local communities, but Japanese society in general; parallels may be drawn between their “spirit of enterprise” and the Protestant ethic.

The recognized **importance and popularity of an environmentally oriented lifestyle** started growing in the developed Western societies as well as in Japan in the 1960s and has continued to grow. The questions regarding the quality of life, the re-evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of a highly urbanized lifestyle, social and environmental risks, and the value set on food safety and reliability became important. Since then, the ecological products and a clean environment have gradually come to be perceived as part of a positional consumption and lifestyle, and in this process has become increasingly important the role of the expanding and increasingly stable middle strata.<sup>16</sup> **Positional consumption** is generally associated with that of rare and valued goods, of products of limited availability, which hence directly mark the specific dimensions of social inequality in different societies.<sup>17</sup> What is attainable for some social groups and strata proves inaccessible for others. Positional goods<sup>18</sup> are those products and services that are prestigious due to their limited supply; they may represent a material or social “rarity”, being of a limited availability that is often artificially maintained. Their positional quality is “socially sanctioned and legitimated”.<sup>19</sup>

Gradually social progress transforms goods, products, and services that were once generally accessible into positional ones. On the basis of this conception regarding positional goods and consumption, I am coming to the notion of “positional lifestyle”. The latter is a socially observable symbol of social group status: in this notion social group formations are distinguished in a socially significant way from others due to the corresponding distinctive, characteristic, and typical consumption and leisure patterns, oriented to rare and highly valued products and services. This lifestyle is characteristic above all of the

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<sup>16</sup> Maya Keliyan, *Yaponiya i Bulgaria: Modeli na razsloenoto potreblenie* [Japan and Bulgaria: Stratified Consumption Patterns], Sofia: Valentin Trajanov, 2008, pp. 32–33.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Hirsh, *Social Limits to Growth*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> William Leiss, ‘The Icons of the Market-Place’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1983, pp. 10–21.

<sup>19</sup> Mike Featherstone, ‘Lifestyle and Consumer Culture’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 4, 1987 p. 62.

high strata, which have at their disposal the necessary resources for maintaining it.

But in Japan, gradually, thanks to the enterprise and initiative demonstrated by various active social groups and local communities, some products and services like organic food that were previously considered to be positional commodities became accessible to wider social strata.<sup>20</sup> What is the **role** of Japanese **local community** for the **transformation** of organic food to product, accessible and affordable to wider social groups?

### **Teikei, local community and ecological lifestyle**

With the expansion of mass production and mass consumption, artificial fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides came to be increasingly used in agriculture. Villages and agriculture departed more and more from their natural characteristics, and mass consumers had to forget the taste of natural foods. Organic products and clean environment came to be prestigious commodities that only the highest strata could afford (apart from the producers themselves and their families). As a result of this, and in reaction to these processes, **community supported agriculture** has developed in the last five decades and more within some of the developed postmodern societies of Western Europe, as well as in Japan. This term denotes the practice by which **farmers provide organic agricultural products**, such as vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs, meat, **directly** to the consumers, without the mediation of the market. In Japanese the term for this is *teikei* (提携), which emerged in the beginning of the 1960s, almost simultaneously with its beginnings in Western Europe. Its appearance was connected to the growing popularity of organic products, a trend that was a response to growing urbanization, to the covering of agricultural lands with buildings, and to the use of artificial fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides for intensifying agrarian production. The movement in Western Europe was initiated by groups of cooperating consumers and farmers in Switzerland and what was then West Germany. They set up joint capital in order to support the

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<sup>20</sup> Maya Keliyan, *Consumption Patterns and Middle Strata: Bulgaria and Japan*. PECOB (Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe), Bologna: University of Bologna Press, 2012, pp. 132–133: <http://www.pecob.eu/Consumption-patterns-middle-strata-Bulgaria-Japan> (accessed 29.05.2016).

producers who were developing the so-called biodynamic agriculture, i.e. organic crop production and animal breeding.

In Japan this movement arose independently of its West European counterpart, but it was engendered by the same causes and involved the same values. In 1965 a group of Japanese mothers, concerned about the quality of the products going into their children's and family's food, organized the first *teikei* groups for obtaining ecological fresh milk.<sup>21</sup> In 1971 the Japan Organic Agriculture Association (JOAA) was created. As defined in its documents, *teikei* is

“[...] an idea to create an alternative distribution system, not depending on the conventional market [...] The Japanese organic agriculture movement started with this ‘teikei’ system”.<sup>22</sup>

It is a system for food provision in which producers and consumers interact. Both sides take part voluntarily with their labor, their financial resources; they often invest joint capital in order to facilitate activities. The movement was a result of self-initiative and self-organization of producers and consumers: it was created without the participation and control of the state and of state institutions; it was also outside existing commercial organizations and consumer co-operatives. In its conception, character, and effectuation, *teikei* is a new philosophy of consumption, but also of lifestyle, both for the producers and for the consumers.

One of the characteristics of modern consumer society is its formalized relations between traders and clients. These relations go beyond the borderline of personal contacts, and trust is shifted from the individual to the institution that he/she represents. In postmodern societies, however, we observe a return to informal contacts, to mutual trust between seller and client, and civic organizations provide good conditions for this to happen. High civic activity and inclusion in the activities of local communities are typical for the Japanese lifestyle.

According to a representative survey of leisure time conducted by the Japan Statistics Bureau in 2006, 26% of Japanese take part daily in voluntary activities. Volunteers most often take part in activities for

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<sup>21</sup> Similar organizations, influenced by the already existing European and Japanese ones, were created in USA, but only two decades later, in 1984.

<sup>22</sup> Japan Organic Agriculture Association: <http://www.joaa.net/english/teikei.htm#ch3-1> (accessed 29.05.2016).

assisting local communities; 14% of Japanese are active daily in their neighborhood.<sup>23</sup> The high degree of civic activeness and inclusion in the life of local communities is a solid basis for the creation and development of independent consumer associations like *teikei*.

*Teikei* is a new social-economic model for food production and consumption: through it, consumers and producers unite efforts in order to protect their common interests more effectively. Farmers stand a greater chance of surviving, because they have constant clients and are incited to grow ecological produce. Consumers feel sure about the quality of the foods, and informal relations of mutual trust and cooperation exist between them and the farmers. *Teikei* is also connected with a new lifestyle based on ecological values, enterprise, cooperation, trust, and civic activeness.

The experience and traditions of above mentioned **informal structures of Japanese local communities facilitated the creation** of other, different organizations, which rely on voluntary participation and the labor of its members: such are the *teikei* groups. Thus traditional structures have **contributed to the development** of postmodern ones and are an important aspect of postmodern lifestyle.

The producers of ecological agricultural products play a decisive role in this movement. They are called “new farmers”, and I was able to study them in the course of five empirical sociological surveys<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Statistical Handbook of Japan for 2009*, Tokyo: Statistical Research and Training Institute at Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, Statistics Bureau, 2010, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup> These surveys were done in the framework of the programs of the Sociology Department of Kyoto University. The first of them was conducted from October 1994 to March 1995 and dealt with “*Contemporary Japanese Village: Economic Activity, Social Stratification, and Value System*”. The fieldwork took place in three villages of Shiga Prefecture, in a village near to Nagoya, and in a village in the Tamba region of Hyogo Prefecture. The number of interviewed persons was 30. The surveyed were farmers, heads of village communities, leaders of informal and official structures; leaders of Japanese agricultural co-operatives at local level, at village level, and at prefecture level. In the second survey, conducted from July 1997 to January 1998, “*The Role of Village Communities in Contemporary Japanese Agriculture*”, 20 people were interviewed, including farmers and leaders of two rural communities within the territory of Ōe, a small city in the northern part of Kyoto Prefecture, as well as local administrators of the municipality and the management of the agricultural co-operative. The third survey – “*Local Initiatives and Lifestyle of Japanese Municipalities*” was conducted in 2004–2005 in Mie Prefecture and what were then the municipalities of Kumano, Owase, and Kiwa. About 30 people were interviewed, including farmers, leaders of rural communities and local administrators. Fourth survey was conducted in the area of Kumano city during

conducted in Japanese villages in the period 1994–2013. For the new farmers, this mode of farming is more a means for practical fulfillment of their ideas about a lifestyle in harmony with nature, than something done out of respect for family traditions. They are occupied full-time in agriculture<sup>25</sup> and do organic agriculture. With regard to their form of occupation and the values and lifestyle they share, they differ entirely from the “traditional farmers”, those who use artificial fertilizers and chemicals.

Interviews showed considerable differences existing between the attitudes of farmers who do organic agriculture and the others with regard to the ecological aspect of agricultural produce. “Traditional farmers” are also of the opinion that polluting the produce with nitrates, herbicides, and pesticides is one of the gravest problems of Japanese agriculture; but they believe this is an **inevitable evil**, because modern production cannot get by without chemicals. Some respondents were even convinced that to refuse to use such means would be tantamount to turning one’s back on progress and the achievements of modern civilization, would mean reverting to the times of hard drudgery in the rice fields, low yields, and a primitive rural life.

The number of “new farmers” is small, but slowly growing; the respondents are mostly young people, but one of the serious problems facing *teikei* is the aging of farmers, engaged in it. Their political views are connected with those of various ecological organizations; recently the influence of new farmers has been growing, especially among young and highly educated new middle strata representatives. They take an active part in NGO activities, while the development of IT enable them to create and maintain virtual communities with their consumer clients and with colleagues from the country, and even with some researchers who are studying their experience. All the interviewed “new farmers” believed that organic agriculture was not simply a way of agricultural production but a social movement with a philosophy of its own. The

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2012–2013 with 21 respondents on the topic of “*Local Communities in Kumano: Local Initiatives, Traditions and Protection from Natural Disasters*” and fifth survey was on “*City farming in Kyoto: Case Studies in Ichijoji and Kamigamo*” during which 18 people (local farmers and residents) were interviewed. In all surveys, the information was gathered using 5 different questionnaires, according to the particular features of the respondents; and the *case study* method was used. The results are not representative, but they do contain useful information that permits drawing conclusions about the problems and development of Japanese villages and agriculture.

<sup>25</sup> They do not work in any other sector of the economy.

*teikei* groups are not only a center of ecological consumption but also connected with a lifestyle oriented to harmony between society and nature in postmodern Japanese society. The surveyed farmers indicated the importance to them not only of ecological food production and the preservation of nature, but also of upholding and disseminating the ideas, values, and specific lifestyle related to these. These farmers organize consumer groups with clients of their produce, maintaining close and immediate contacts with these groups: they are facilitated in this by IT. In addition to rational market relations, there are also relationships of cooperation, mutual help, and emotional links between the farmers and the consumers. The consumer group usually consists of residents of large cities who buy ecological food directly from the producers. In order to achieve successful economic activity and normal reproduction of these farms, a consumer group should consist of about 50 people. Attaining cost effectiveness of these farms usually requires the combining of vegetable growing with raising poultry. For all the interviewed farmers in this category, the practice of organic agriculture was a source of pride and self-esteem. They are people with a higher education, and some of them were born in cities and were not of a farmer family background. Their orientation to organic agriculture and involvement in *teikei* has been aided by civil society structures and some NGOs. In turning to organic agriculture, they have been motivated above all by their ecological ideas and views, for in itself organic farming does not give them economic advantages over the traditional farmers, those who use chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilizers, etc. The “new farmers” are concentrated in regions near the megapolises, in the more developed industrial rural regions, and not in the traditional and conservative rural communities, where it would be hard for them to find adherents and consumers for their produce. These farmers and the *teikei* groups linked to them contribute to the growing popularity of the ecological lifestyle.

In some cases spontaneous organizations of producers and consumers are created and maintained with the **direct support of the informal village councils** mentioned above. For instance in the village of Hyogo Prefecture, in the Tamba region, at the initiative of the *kuchō san*, the building of a closed-down factory was refurbished into a workshop for pickle production.<sup>26</sup> The workers here are pensioners,

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<sup>26</sup> This village was visited during the fieldwork in February 1995.



who apply local recipes and use organic vegetables that they grow on their farms. They are in constant contact with groups of producers in Kobe, who are regular clients for their produce.

In other cases *teikei* can rely on the help of supporting local administrators, as in Kumano municipality, Mie Prefecture. One of the active *teikei* members is a local farmer producing organic tomatoes for clients in the big cities in three neighboring prefectures (Mie, Wakayama and Nara); these customers are organized in consumer groups. An enterprising local administrator uses his personal contacts to organize consumer groups that buy up ecological production from pensioner farmers; he does this on a voluntary basis and entirely apart from his professional duties. These pensioner farmers themselves do not have the resources, skills, experience, and contacts needed to create such a group (the new farmers do have all these). But, as the respondent shared with the interviewer:

“They are increasingly active as producers, and their efforts are worth supporting, especially as they grow tasty fruits and vegetables, the kind that city dwellers cannot find in stores”.

Basing on the above mentioned surveys’ results we can assume that the civic **activeness of producers, consumers, enterprising social actors, and informal structures of rural communities**, has proven a **significant factor** in the formation of an ecological lifestyle in Japan. In the words of the same local administrator:

“If it weren’t for *teikei*, consumers in the bigger cities, and not only them, would long since have forgotten the taste of real, natural food”.

Because there was a growing demand for organic products provided straight from the producer, and since the share of still active pensioners able to produce them was also growing, the respondent planned to leave his work in the municipality and devote himself entirely to organizing *teikei*. The popularity and expansion of this movement requires more than volunteers: it needs special experts, professionals, and managers. Its leaders, both the formal paid workers within its structures and the volunteers helping informally in its activity, are mostly representatives of the middle strata. They have the necessary education, training, and experience for organizing and managing it; they also have the needed civic initiative and spirit of enterprise, the lifestyle in which post-materialistic values are of decisive importance.

After radioactive contamination caused by disaster in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, bio-products, through *teikei*, provide consumers with reliable food that is safe from radioactive contamination. But the farmers in the prefectures affected by radiation, who were previously part of these groups, are now losing their businesses and the clients with whom they had developed relations of trust and support over many years. Their clients can no longer support their farming activity, and these producers are not only losing their livelihoods but also the possibility for following their philosophy of life connected with environmental values and a lifestyle in harmony with nature.

### **Consumer co-operatives: access of various social groups to an ecological lifestyle**

Consumer co-operatives play an important role in Japanese society and in the latter's ecological lifestyle. Local community structures are actively involved in their customer groups. Consumer co-operatives have a long tradition: their predecessors date back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; first co-operative shops modeling the Rochdale Pioneer's Society were set up in Tokyo and Osaka in 1879. The structures of the best known among them, Co-op Kobe, were created in early 1920s.<sup>27</sup> In 1948 the Consumers' Livelihood Co-operative Society Law was enacted; the Japan Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU)<sup>28</sup> was established in 1951; the Revised Co-op Law was enforced in 2008,<sup>29</sup> but various forms of co-operatives are basically regulated by different laws and by-laws. By the end of 2014 they numbered 571, encompassing 27,8 million members, which amounts to about 22% of the country's population.<sup>30</sup> The members of community based retail consumer

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<sup>27</sup> In 1921, the pioneer of Japanese co-operative movement – Toyohiko Kagawa established Kobe Consumer Co-operative and Nada Consumer Co-operative (later they were merged and became Co-op Kobe) in Kobe.

<sup>28</sup> This organization is federation of consumer co-operatives in Japan at national level. All its member co-operatives operate their businesses independently of each other and currently JCCU represents 571 co-operative societies.

<sup>29</sup> Japanese Consumer Co-operatives: <http://jccu.coop/eng/aboutus/history.php> (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>30</sup> *The Coop 2014 – Facts and Figures*, Tokyo: JCCU, 2015, p. 3: <http://jccu.coop/eng/public/index.php> (accessed 29.05.2016).

co-operatives<sup>31</sup> are 74% of all co-operative members with annual turnover of 3 365 billion yen for the same fiscal year. The biggest community based co-operatives are Co-op Mirai (operating at Chiba prefecture, Saitama prefecture and Tokyo metropolis) with 3 156 million members and turnover of 370 211 million yen, followed by Co-op Sapporo with 1 543 million members and turnover of 268 259 million yen and Co-op Kobe with 1 677 members and turnover of 243 807 million yen.<sup>32</sup>

“While in many other industrialized countries consumer co-operatives are struggling to survive and find a meaningful role, these organizations are thriving in Japan”.<sup>33</sup>

Since the 1960s, consumer co-operatives in Japan have grown in popularity, for society has become increasingly mindful of the quality of foods and of consumer rights, which, in co-operatives, are much better ensured against the vicissitudes of the market. On the one hand, they have a large potential to influence community lifestyle, and on the other hand, they rely on local communities’ informal structures and on their initiative local actors. The trade practices of consumer co-operatives are periodically updated in order to withstand the competition of market and to preserve the trust of clients. In order to keep the old customers and attract new ones, these co-operatives offer commodities of tested and proven quality, and relations of mutual trust have grown between the sellers and buyers.

Although the co-operatives exist as structures at central, prefecture, and local level, the various kinds of co-operatives are closely interwoven in the life of groups and **communities**, especially **local** ones. They represent a significant part of Japanese trade, are actively present in all trade spheres, offer all imaginable products and services, as well as conveniences and facilitations for their members. As a rule, membership requires participation through capital contribution, which is usually a small sum; in some cases membership fees are also paid. The

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<sup>31</sup> Community based retail co-operatives serve local residents through home delivery, store and catalog sales.

<sup>32</sup> *The Coop 2014 – Facts and Figures...*, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Gruber, ‘The consumer co-op in Japan: building democratic alternatives to state-led capitalism’ in *Consumption: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*, Daniel Miller (ed.), Vol. 2, London and New York: Routledge, 2001/1999, p. 308.

co-operatives apply many modern forms, such as: catalogue trade, regular reductions, periodical sales, home delivery on demand, even when clients are absent from home,<sup>34</sup> as well as other facilitations for consumers.

In **local communities**, **groups** of five to seven households are usually formed; these are called *han*.<sup>35</sup> They encompass co-operative members who take turns in preparing special lists of the weekly products each household will need. The goods are delivered, as a rule, once a week, and every six months the co-operative sends to its members' lists of all the products they have ordered in the preceding period. Customers' orders arrive in the co-operative one week in advance, so that the distribution centers might prepare to deliver perishable foods and the latter might not remain long in warehouses or refrigerators. *Han* groups purchase **collectively** and their members discuss such important lifestyle problems as food safety, health issues, children's education, and quality of life.<sup>36</sup>

Original concern of local community based *han* groups are food safety and environmental issues which are "articulated through a collective impact on production, distribution, and consumption of food products".<sup>37</sup>

As a rule these groups are connected with local community informal structures and infrastructures; they are an integral part of *chōnaikai* and usually they use *chōnaikaikan* (町内会館) or *jichikaikan* (自治会館) –

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<sup>34</sup> In the backyards of one-family homes and in between-floor spaces of residential buildings there are small storage spaces with refrigerators in which suppliers leave the ordered goods. Orders are made by telephone, Internet, and, very often recently, by mobile phones. This way of ordering saves time and facilitates employed women in particular, but is popular among housewives as well.

<sup>35</sup> Japanese Consumer Co-operatives: <http://jccu.coop/eng/business/home.php> (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>36</sup> During recent years individual home delivery services raised in popularity but they have not reached the volume of collective purchases: for the year 2014 the sales of the former are 1 120 billion yen compare to the 1 697 billion yen for the later – *The Coop 2014 – Facts and Figures...*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Ann Hoyt, 'Consumer ownership in Capitalist Economies: Applications of Theory to Consumer Cooperation' in *Co-operatives and Local Development: Theory and Applications for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Christopher D. Merret and Norman Walzer (eds.), Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004, p. 279.

the neighborhood association club for their gatherings as a “logistic center” where they receive and distribute ordered purchases.<sup>38</sup>

In general, women are active members of the consumer groups formed around the consumer co-operatives and/or around the organization structures of agriculture **supported by local communities**. This fact is understandable, for most women are housekeepers, and theirs is the main responsibility to care for the consumption of family members.

Another typical example of civic activity of mothers and women is their participation in the Consumer’s Co-operative Union, called *Seikatsu Club* (生活クラブ) in Japanese this means “lifestyle club”.<sup>39</sup> This union includes 32 co-operatives on the territory of 21 prefectures and has a total of about 349 110 members for 2014, organized in approximately 100 000 *han* groups. Most of its members are women, active in their local communities’ structures. The total value of supplied consumer materials for the same fiscal year is 81, 82 billion yen.<sup>40</sup>

The Union was created in 1965 and, similarly to the *teikei* that was developing at the same time, it initially provided its members with fresh milk produced without chemicals and at low purchase prices. This co-operative has a strong environmental orientation, and strives to strengthen clients’ trust in the purity of offered products; it is well-known for its large-scale environment protection activities. *Seikatsu Club* has been conducting regular campaigns for providing more information to consumers regarding the harmfulness of genetically modified products. Among co-operative priorities are delivery of bio-products: eggs, meat, vegetables and fruits, as well as supplying regular information on the quality and origin of the goods offered to its members.

Intense competition on the Japanese market not only stimulates consumer co-operatives but also incites merchants to apply new practices for guarding their position on the market. In early 1970s, the

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<sup>38</sup> Activities of such groups were studied during 2012–2013 in the framework of the “*City farming in Kyoto: Case Studies in Ichijoji and Kamigamo*” research, as well as during 2015–2016 in local community in Katsurakazaka, Kyoto.

<sup>39</sup> Seikatsu Club Consumers’ Co-operative Union:  
[http://www.seikatsuclub.coop/about/rengo\\_about\\_e.html](http://www.seikatsuclub.coop/about/rengo_about_e.html) (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>40</sup> *Think and Act Data Book*, Tokyo: Seikatsu Club Consumers’ Co-operative Union, 2015, p. 12: [http://seikatsuclub.coop/about/pdf/web-SCAnnualReport2015\\_English.pdf](http://seikatsuclub.coop/about/pdf/web-SCAnnualReport2015_English.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

above-mentioned JCCU in order to provide safe and secure food production to its customers developed a specific type of community supported agriculture, called Co-op *Sanchoku*. Its basic philosophy, principles and practice are similar to these of above described *teikei*, but former relies not only on local community, but also on organizational structures of co-op.

The consumer co-operatives and their structures, as part of its social contribution to the local communities, take part in volunteer activity for helping people who have suffered from different kind of disasters. After Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster JCCU launched “Co-op Action Campaign” on the reconstruction assistance of the affected areas and supporting victims. They deepened ties and expended network with the local community and strengthened its participation in the community development. According to JCCU data over 640 million yen is expected to be raised in the “Life support fund-raising” till the first half of 2015 and 58 000 of its members participated in the volunteer activities during 2015 in the affected areas.<sup>41</sup> During the peak time of voluntary activities in 2011 the number of volunteers was around 970 000. Co-operatives support the sales of agricultural products from the stricken areas and carry on the children recreation project. They also initiate activities connected to providing better information about radioactive contamination of foods, the air, the water, and the soil, and about the wider use of renewable energy sources for the production of electricity. For example, *Seikatsu Club* has continued to carry out through testing of residual radioactivity in food immediately after the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident.<sup>42</sup> Facing up the public anxiety and multiple risks concerning radioactive contamination, the co-op set autonomous safety standards based on the data accumulated in the tests.

JCCU also assisted disaster stricken area after massive earthquake close to Kumamoto, the island of Kyushu on April 14 and 16, 2016. Co-operative staff of 41 people was dispatched to assist the local people and large amount of supplies were sent as donations to the victims.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> JCCUNews, 3 March 2016, p. 1: [http://jccu.coop/eng/jccunews/pdf/201603\\_jccunews.pdf](http://jccu.coop/eng/jccunews/pdf/201603_jccunews.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>42</sup> Since the accident till the end of 2015 the co-op conducted 83 849 tests *Think and Act Data Book...*, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> JCCUNews, 4 March 2016, p. 1, [http://jccu.coop/eng/jccunews/pdf/201604\\_jccunews.pdf](http://jccu.coop/eng/jccunews/pdf/201604_jccunews.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

### Urban farming

Japanese society is highly urbanized, but along with the typical trends of a postmodern society, certain social phenomena can be observed in it that, at first glance, seems incompatible with post-modernity. For example in Kyoto,<sup>44</sup> alongside the symbols of postmodern urban culture and environment, such as smart restaurants, fashionable boutiques, hotels and recreation complexes, expensive residential buildings, one can see paddy rice fields and plots of land planted with vegetables.<sup>45</sup> These are the result of urban farming – *toshi nōgyō* (都市農業) which, though not a widespread practice, is visibly present as an “exotic” social phenomenon amidst the postmodern urban environment all over Japan.

According to the Census of Agriculture and Forestry, conducted in 2010 by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), in fiscal year 2010 there were 636 000 urban farm households, accounting for a quarter of Japan’s total farm households, cultivating 658 000 hectares or 14% of the nations’ total cultivated land. The average size of urban plots is about two third of average rural farm land; urban farms produce mainly vegetables and rice, and commercial urban farms with annual sales at 7 million yen or more produce mainly vegetables (open field or grown in facilities like greenhouses, etc.).<sup>46</sup> The results from “Survey on Consciousness/Intentions about Sustainable Use of Food, Agriculture, Rural Area and Fisheries Resources”, realized in May 2011 by MAFF show that more than three quarters of respondents consider urban farming successful in supplying fresh and safe farms products, and about two third of questioned Japanese think urban farming is providing healing green spaces. According to the data from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government survey from 2009 on “Agriculture in Tokyo”, more than half of Tokyo residents (56%) are willing to experience urban farming, younger people are more willing to do so (about two third for those in their 20s and 30s, compared to 54% for people in their 50s and

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<sup>44</sup> I mention Kyoto because my research on city farming was conducted in two suburban local communities in the old capital.

<sup>45</sup> Like in Northern part of Kyoto around Kitayama street or on the North-East around Shirakawa street.

<sup>46</sup> *FY2011 Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan*, Tokyo: MAFF, 2012, p. 27: [http://www.maff.go.jp/j/wpaper/w\\_maff/h23/pdf/e\\_all.pdf](http://www.maff.go.jp/j/wpaper/w_maff/h23/pdf/e_all.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

46% for respondents over 60 years old).<sup>47</sup> The quoted data confirm that urban farming is **beneficial** for the local community and society, because it is a source of fresh and safe products, cultivated with less chemicals; it educates urban residents and raises their awareness about the importance of agriculture and food safety. Urban farming is playing **multifunctional role in local communities**: except its basic function of reliable food supply, it also offers disaster prevention space at emergency and peaceful green space. Through agricultural experience urban residents seek health improvement and better quality of life closed to the nature.<sup>48</sup>

According to Kunio Tsubota “the less urban agriculture remains, the more urban residents appreciate it. Municipalities offer more assistance to urban agriculture, appreciating its multiple functions and externalities”.<sup>49</sup>

The cases described below were observed in the period 1994–2013. Some of these farms have been decreasing with each year: farmland is changing its purpose and giving place to parking lots, some of which later become residential buildings. But despite this understandable transformation, most of the farms observed by the author in 1994 were still functioning and unchanged nineteen years later, in 2013.<sup>50</sup>

Considering that agricultural labor is generally not prestigious or attractive to many people,<sup>51</sup> especially to the younger generations, it is hard to explain the “city farmer” phenomenon in Japanese cities, especially in the old capital Kyoto, known for its “sophisticated”, elegant way of life. The **causes** of this trend, of course, are numerous

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<sup>47</sup> *FY2010 Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan*, Tokyo: MAFF, 2011, p. 43, [http://www.maff.go.jp/e/annual\\_report/2010/pdf/e\\_3.pdf](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/annual_report/2010/pdf/e_3.pdf) (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>48</sup> *FY2014 Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan*, Tokyo: MAFF, 2015, p. 23: <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/pdf/fy2014.pdf> (accessed 29.05.2016).

<sup>49</sup> Kunio Tsubota, *Urban Agriculture in Asia: Lessons from Japanese Experience*, p. 14: [http://www.agnet.org/htmlarea\\_file/activities/20110719103448/paper-997674935.pdf](http://www.agnet.org/htmlarea_file/activities/20110719103448/paper-997674935.pdf) (accessed 26.05.2016).

<sup>50</sup> I visited these farms again during 2015 and 2016, just to observe their activities without conducting special research.

<sup>51</sup> The interviewed urban farmers shared their disappointment with the fact that some of the townsfolk ignore the farm labor, looking down on farming as the work of the three Ks – in Japanese *kiken* – 危険 (dangerous), *kitanai* – きたない (dirty) and *kitsui* – きつい (hard).



and varied. Most generally they can be grouped into **financial-legal, economic, socio-cultural, and value-normative causes**.

The **financial-legal** causes are related to the tax laws currently in effect, which stipulate that the taxes put on land used for agricultural purposes in the regions around Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya are much lower than those on land used for other purposes, such as parking lots, residential buildings, commercial buildings, offices, etc.<sup>52</sup> According to the law passed in 1991, when land in such an area is worked for agriculture, thus benefiting from lower land taxes, it can be used as such and retain its status for at least 30 years.<sup>53</sup>

Urban farming is a source of **revenues**; these may be in kind or in cash and are the main **economic cause** for this trend. Such urban farming provides fresh, tasty and safety products for consumption by family and friends, and, in less frequent cases, for sale on the market.

The interest of consumers in the produce of urban farms among certain strata of the Japanese cities is directly connected with the **values of, demand for, and norms of, a healthy lifestyle**. Some housewives have preferred to buy vegetables **directly from neighbors** who grow them on their urban plots. Most of these crops are grown with environment friendly technologies, for city farmers are oriented to farming with less chemicals, pesticides, and herbicides.

For some owners of farmland in the big cities, agriculture is a **hobby** that makes their leisure time more meaningful.

Within urban farming there are **subsistence-oriented farms** and **market-oriented farms**. The vegetables produced in urban farms in Kyoto are called *kyōyasai* (京野菜), meaning “Kyoto vegetables”. They are considered particularly tasty and suitable as ingredients in local dishes – the Kyoto cuisine is renowned as the most sophisticated

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<sup>52</sup> The government policy toward urban agriculture and especially concerning urban farm land taxation has been controversial and ambiguous during decades after high economic growth. Farm land in urban areas was divided into urbanization promotion area and urbanization control area and taxes depend on the category of land, as well as urbanization promotion area and urbanization control area and taxes depend on the category of land, as well as on region, etc.

<sup>53</sup> On April 22, 2015 was promulgated new Japan’s Urban Farming Promotion Basic Act (都市農業振興基本法案). The new Act obligates national and local governments to promote urban farming: [http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_gian.nsf/html/gian/honbun/houan/g18902005.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_gian.nsf/html/gian/honbun/houan/g18902005.htm) (accessed 29.05.2016), in Japanese.

culinary tradition in Japan. Northern part of Kyoto, especially Kamigamo is well-known for such kind of production.

During field work on urban agriculture in Kyoto 2012–2013, I studied two urban farms, one in Ichijoji (North-East part of Kyoto) and the other in Kamigamo area. The farm in Ichijoji was run by middle aged couple and this in Kamigamo – by extended family with two generations living and working together. In both farms they grow rice, various vegetables, like cabbage, lettuce, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, onion, eggplants, zucchini, also fruits like strawberry, etc. Farm in Kamigamo was well-known for its *suguki* pickle.<sup>54</sup> Ichijoji farmer's wife every morning delivered ordered fresh vegetables to the neighbors. Kamigamo farmers also sold some products in neighborhood but their main customers were supermarkets and traditional restaurants.

In some cases residents of a **local community** cultivate plots jointly, because these households shared common lands in the past and this practice has been preserved to this day. In these cases, urban farming serves as a mean for **consolidating community spirit**, which in cities, especially big ones, has generally lost the importance and strength it once had there or still has in villages. The community works the whole farm plot, and each family cares for a certain portion designated by a sign with the inscribed name of the family. Such plots are usually used for vegetables and fruits, for instance eggplants, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, crops that are easily divided into sections and need less space to supply the needs of a family. Urban farming gives city dwellers, including **children**, the possibility of becoming familiar with traditional agricultural practices. They can observe the yearly cycle of rice and vegetable growing by merely looking out their windows or walking in the streets by the plot. Some schools in suburban areas also develop such kind of farming practices, for example like secondary school in Katsura, Kyoto. Students groups cultivate traditional local vegetables typical for the area; some of them are used for preparing school meals; others are sold to local residents even to the local shops. They also regularly walk the streets in the neighborhood inviting locals to buy vegetables directly from their cart. Tradition of street sales of

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<sup>54</sup> Every suburban farm in Kamigamo keep in deep secret its special receipt for preparing *suguki* establishing something like a “brand product”.

urban farming products still exists in Kyoto, although it is practiced to a lesser degree than years ago.<sup>55</sup>

On the one hand, urban farming uses various **resources of the local community**: land, informal structures and organizations, irrigation channels, etc. All this local resources make city agriculture's existence possible. On the other hand, **urban agriculture is valuable resource for local community**, providing reliable food, green space and possibility for ecological lifestyle. The produce of this farming is used in the ritual of **gifts exchange** between neighbors, a practice that is important for **maintaining mutual relations** between the families of the local community, and strengthens the **feeling of belonging** to that community.

### **Ecological values and civic activeness of local community**

In concluding this article it is worth to emphasize that the nuclear accident in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has its global impact: it is shaping how nuclear energy is perceived globally. Something more, it is shaping the way ecological lifestyle is re-concerned in Japan and in the world. The activities of civil society, local communities, and enterprising social-group actors in Japan, the examined characteristics and traditions of the ecological lifestyle, strengthen the conviction that Japanese society does have the necessary social-structure resources, experience, and determination to deal with the challenges and difficulties it is undergoing. Basing on the conducted analysis we can assume that local community is vital socio-structural resource for promotion of ecological consumption in Japan.

The devastation of March 11, 2011 brought about, albeit in a tragic way, a clear awareness of the importance of the ecological lifestyle for the quality of life in general. In the global world of today it has become urgent and unavoidable to rethink the predominance of economic and political priorities over the ecological ones on which our existence ultimately depends. Analyzing local people activities we discover that initiatives and organization of citizens from different social groups and strata are an important resource for achieving this vitally important task of contemporary societies.

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<sup>55</sup> Farmer's wife from above mentioned urban family farm in Kamigamo sometimes also was selling vegetables in this way, on the streets of North and Western part of Kyoto where this form of trade is permitted by Kyoto municipality.

We can generalize that with its environmental initiatives, the local community has asserted itself as an important locus, resource and **center of an ecological lifestyle**. Through this function and role it plays, it determines to a great degree the face of postmodern Japanese society. An important, distinctive trait of contemporary Japan is the enterprising lifestyle of its local communities, with their enterprising actors who use the resources of tradition for achieving socially significant postmodern goals, like ecological consumption and lifestyle of its local communities, with their enterprising actors who use the resources of tradition for achieving socially significant postmodern goals, like ecological consumption and lifestyle.

## Rhetorical Devices in Old Japanese Verse: Structural Analysis and Semantics

### Abstract

Some literary techniques constitute rhetorical devices that are considered to be unique to the history of Japanese verse. Nevertheless, some English translations of Japanese texts lose connotation such *techniques*, and few studies of this phenomenon have been written in languages other than Japanese. This study applies the insights of two approaches, i.e. morphological and semantic analysis and a hermeneutics interpretation. The result is twofold. It offers a detailed linguistic analysis, providing many insights into the interpretation of these expressions; and accommodates the hermeneutical explanation given by M. Heidegger, showing the very core of *makura-kotoba*. First of all, I will give a brief review of previous scholarship on the matter, followed by structural and semantic analyses. Finally, I will attempt to use definitions of hermeneutics to speak about rhetorical devices of Old Japanese verse. Translations of Old Japanese songs with glossing and morphemic analyses will be given in the Appendix.

**Key words:** *makura-kotoba* (pillow words), Old Japanese language, *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki*, *Man'yōshū*, hermeneutics, structural analysis.

### Introduction

Classical Japanese verse includes various poetic devices, some of which are considered uniquely Japanese. Among these are pillow words (枕詞 *makura-kotoba*), preface words (序詞 *jo-kotoba*) and pivot words (掛詞 *kakekotoba*). Discussing metaphor, metonymy and images in connection with these literary devices is common practice. “The *makura-kotoba* is also a matter of imagery, one of the most important constant elements of Japanese poetry. It may perhaps seem illogical to include imagery – a technique of all poets – among those constants which give Japanese poetry its unique quality, but of course by imagery

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we mean the characteristic and differing nature or use of imagery”.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, *makura-kotoba* (MK) are considered to be the most specific and complex phenomenon in Japanese poetics. They are commonly defined as constant epithets, but the definition does not encapsulate all of the characteristics of this difficult stylistic phenomenon. Moreover, certain constant epithets are not considered to be MK, as they exist outside the definitional bounds of the term. Since ancient times, these combinations have existed in Japanese language, under several names, including *kanji* (冠辞) and *makura-kotoba* (枕詞). The former can be translated as “a word crowning subsequent words”, the latter as “a word serving as a pillow for subsequent words”. In both definitions the key phrase is “subsequent words”. However, in modern language only *makura-kotoba* is used. Tsuchihashi Yutaka wrote that: “while thinking about the important role of MK in Old Japanese songs, one can hardly disagree that without studying MK’s essential nature, the study of Japanese classical literature loses one of its important points”.<sup>2</sup> MK act in various and complex forms. A common practice is to define them as constant epithets, but this does not encapsulate/encompass all of the characteristics of this stylistic device. Moreover, not all constant epithets constitute MK; some exist outside the bounds of the term. There are indeed some constant epithets among MK, such as 久堅乃 (*pisakata nō*, “sun radiant”) referring to the sky and 阿之比奇能 (*ashipiki nō*, “leg-cramping”) as well as phrases that play the role of constant beginnings, such as 神風乃 (*kamukaNse nō*, “of the divine wind” referring to Ise), or constant comparisons, such as 白浪之 (*shiranami nō*, “white waves (splash)”). MK reflect the interconnection with working tools, elements of rite culture and everyday life. In this way, 阿平夜奈義 (*awoyanaNki*, “green willow”) constitutes a MK for wreaths, which were commonly made from willow trees.

Evidently, MK can provide a rather concise picture of nature and everyday life, thus functioning as a comparison or constant epithet. In written records from various ages, this technique has been utilized in different ways until it transformed into a stylistic device of sound reduplication without any meaning.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Brower and Earl Miner, ‘Formative elements in the Japanese poetic tradition’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 16 (14), p. 511.

<sup>2</sup> Yutaka Tsuchihashi, 古代歌謡全注釈古事記編 [Full Comments on Ancient Songs. *Kojiki*], Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1976, p. 377.

While our study takes a novel approach, generations of Japanese scholars have already studied this particular poetic device of waka. There are numerous studies of MK in Japan dating back several centuries, including that by Motoori Norinaga<sup>3</sup> (1730–1801) and Kamo no Mabuchi<sup>4</sup> (1697–1769). Also noteworthy is Kamochi Masazumi's (1791–1858) *Old Commentaries on the Man'yôshû*,<sup>5</sup> Fukui Kyûzô's (1867–1951) *Comments and Research on makura-kotoba*<sup>6</sup> and Satake Akihiro's (1927–2008) *Excerpts from the Manyôshû*<sup>7</sup> which provide insights into the study of color perception in Old Japanese language and also Old Japanese (OJ) MK. Other prominent twentieth century scholars of MK include Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953) and Tsuchihashi Yutaka (1909–1998). Literary journals have also dedicated entire issues to this topic, as MK have been the object of etymological, literary or mathematical analysis and have been regarded as a unique rhetorical device of ancient Japanese verse. The traditional approach to studying them has been to create categories of MK in different anthologies and then quantifying results to explain stylistic changes. A shortcoming of this quantitative approach is the lack of agreement among scholars as to what precisely MK constitute. This article examines the complexities of MK by treating OJ and MK as both a rhetorical device and an object for linguistic analysis.

In this context, OJ songs are understood to be the songs of *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* (collectively referred to as “KiKi”). The MK used in KiKi songs are enumerated in Table 1. Since there is a discrepancy in the number of songs in modern editions of these two works, here I employ the songs specified in the *Nihon koten bungaku zenshu* [A Complete Collection of Japanese Classical Literature] from the Shōgakukan

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<sup>3</sup> See: Motoori Norinaga, 宣長本居全集 [Full Collection of Motoori Norinaga], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> See: Kamo no Mabuchi, 賀茂真淵全集 [Full Collection of Kamo no Mabuchi], Vol. 5, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> See: Kamochi Masazumi, 万葉集古義 [Old Commentaries on the Man'yôshû], Kōchi: Kōchiken Bunkiyōkyōkai, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> See: Fukui Kyuzō, 枕詞の研究と釈義 [Research and Comments on Pillow-Words], Tokyo: Fuji Shobō, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> See: Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [The Extracts from Man'yôshû], Tokyo: Iwanami publ., 2000.

publishing company, with an attachment of Ogihara Asao's commentary on the *Kojiki* text.<sup>8</sup>

*Table 1. List of MK, Author's elaboration, based on research by Kondo Nobuyoshi «Makura-kotobaron».*<sup>9</sup>

Source	Song number	MK	Base word
NSK	62, 63	akyiNtu sima	yamatō
NSK	24	asa simwo-nō	myi-key
KJK	3	asa pyi-nō	wem-yi-sakaye
KJK/NSK	78/69	asi pyikiy-nō	Yama
NSK	43	aNtusa yumyi	ma-yumyi
KJK/NSK	83, 84/71	ama Ntam-u	Karu
KJK	28	ara tama-nō	tōsi, tuki
KJK	100	ari kyinu-nō	myi-pye-
KJK	3, 5	awa yukyi-nō	waka ya-ru mune
KJK/NSK	58/54, 95	awo ni yō-si	Nara
NSK	68	isana tōri	Umyi
KJK	2	i-sitap-u ya	ama-pas-e Ntukap-yi
KJK/NSK	9/7	isukupasi	kuNtira
NSK	94	isu nō kami	pur-u
NSK	83	ina musirwo	Kappa
NSK	45	ipa kuNtasu	kasikwo-ku
NSK	16, 17	uma sakey	Myiwa
KJK/NSK	4, 8/5	okyi-tu tōri	muna-myi-ru
KJK/NSK	53/48	ositer-u	Nanipa
KJK	110	op[o] uwo yō-si	Maguro
KJK/NSK	43/35	ka-Nkupasi	Pana-tatiNpana
KJK	75	kaNkyirwo-piy-nō	Paru
KJK/NSK	13/8, 76	kamu kaNse-nō	Ise
KJK	60	kyimwo mukap-u	Kōkōrō

<sup>8</sup> Ogihara Asao and Konosu Hayao (eds.), 古事記上代歌謡-日本古典文学全集 [Kojiki. Old Japanese Songs. A Complete Collection of the Japanese Classical Literature], Vol. 1, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> Kondo Nobuyoshi, 枕詞論 [An Issue on Pillow-Words], Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1990, p. 31.



KJK	52	kurwo-N-saya-nō	masaNtu-kwo
NSK	92	kōtō Nkamyi-ni	kyiwir-u
NSK	94	kōmo makura	Takapasi
KJK/NSK	89, 90/77, 97	kōmōr-i-ku-nō	patuse-nō yama
NSK	65	sasaNkane-nō	Kumo
NSK	104	sasutakey-nō	Kyimyī
KJK	24	sanesasi	saNkamu
KJK	2	sanwo-tu tōri	kyiNkyisi
NSK	96	sisikusirwo	Umai
NSK	104	sinater-u	Katawoka yama
KJK/NSK	14/12	sima-tu tōri	u-kap-yi
KJK	71,97	swora-myi-t-u	Yamatō
KJK	28, 72,102	taka pyikar-u	pyi-nō myi-kwo
KJK	67, 68	taka-yuk-u ya	paya-Npusa
KJK	3, 5	taku-N-tunwo-nō	sirwo-kyi
KJK/NSK	14, 12	tata namey-te	Inasa
KJK	30	tata naNtuk-u	awo-kakī
KJK/NSK	31, 91/23	tatamyi-kōmō	peyNkuri
KJK/NSK	71/28, 29, 62	tamakyipar-u	Uti
KJK/NSK	41/34	ti-pa-nō	kaNtu-nwo-wo
KJK/NSK	51/42, 43	tipaya pyitō	uNti
KJK	50	tipa yaNp-uru	uNti
KJK/ NSK	61, 63 / 53, 54, 57, 58	tuNkyinepuya	Yamasirō
NSK	56, 97	tunwo sapa p-u	Ipa
NSK	94	tuma Nkōmor-u	Wosapo
KJK	87	natu-kusa-nō	apyine-nō pama
KJK/NSK	2/96	nipa-tu tōri	Kakye
KJK/NSK	38/29	nipwo-N-tōri-nō	Apumy
KJK	3	nuye-kusa-nō	Mye
NSK	96	nu-tu tōri	kyiNkyisi

KJK/NSK	3,4/81	nuNpa-tama-nö	yö/kurwo
KJK/NSK	69, 70/61	pasi-tate-nö	kurapasi-yama
NSK	67	panaNkupasi	Sakura
NSK	94, 96	parupyi	kasuNka
KJK/NSK	27/59	pyisakata-nö	Amey
KJK/NSK	86/70	puna-amar-i	kapyer-i
KJK/NSK	100/96	ma-kiy sak-u	Pyi
NSK	103	ma swoNka yö -nö	swoNka
NSK	126	myiyesinwo nö	Yesinwo
NSK	45	myikasipo	Parima
KJK/NSK	42, 43/35	myi-tu-N-kuri-nö	Naka
KJK/NSK	44/36	myiNtu-tamaru	Ikey
KJK/NSK	10, 11, 12/ 9, 13, 14	myitu-mytu-si	Kumey
NSK	44	myina sököpu	Omyi
KJK/NSK	103/95	myi-na sösök-u	Omyi
KJK	42	myipwo-N-töri-nö	kaNduk-yi
NSK	94	monö sapa ni	Opoyakey
KJK	102	mwomwo-sikiy-nö	opö-myiya
NSK	53	momotaraNsu	yaswoNpa
KJK/NSK	42, 111/85	mwomwo-Ntutap- u	tunuNka
KJK/NSK	1, 23 /1, 20	ya kumwo tat-u	iNtumwo
KJK/NSK	28, 97, 98, 104/ 63, 76, 97, 102	yasumyis-isi	wa-Nka opö-kyimyi
KJK	88	yama-taNtu-nö	mukapey
KJK	4, 5	waka-kusa nö	Tuma
KJK/NSK	58/54	wo Ntate	Yamatö

MK expressions in this study are to be analyzed in linguistic or philological contexts. Such analysis will show why certain phrases are problematic, striking or unusual. Linguistics examines ordinary language, while literature is written in extraordinary language, however the examination of this extraordinary language, by means of a systematic approach to linguistics, can lead to new insights into MK in poetry that cannot be achieved by other means. The purpose of this study is not to compare different definitions, nor present a new universal

definition of OJ MK. It aims to present material for understanding the meaning and logic behind the usage of MK, so that it may then be applied to the study of unique Japanese literary devices. The main point, is that OJ MK should be studied from both sides, literarily and linguistically, in order to make clear the structure, meaning and pragmatic aspects of MK.

### **Structural analysis, translation and semantics**

Modern Japanese language is not phonologically the same as the Old Japanese in which the poems we discuss were written. Following Alexander Vovin's study of OJ grammar, I utilize the Yale romanization system to represent the orthography of OJ texts. Though there are several exceptions, for example usage of *ō* instead of underlined *o* or rendering prenasalized voiced stops and fricatives not as *b*, *d*, *g* and *z*, but as *Np*, *Nt*, *Nk* and *Ns* what is specified by Vovin.<sup>10</sup> The romanization of KJK and NSK specified in this article, has not been published elsewhere. This is a collective work, done by students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa under the supervision of Alexander Vovin (the author of this approach). I received romanization materials in 2008 from the author and used them in my own research. Since there were several misreadings and mistakes, it was necessary to improve the list. This publication is the first one for the KJK and NSK, which uses this system of romanization. I would like to thank Prof. Alexander Vovin for materials and advice granted to my research. Though this particular study does not deal with phonetical issues, in many cases such a detailed approach is important for morphemic analysis, which helps to avoid misreadings and misinterpretations of OJ lexemes as for example, in *nuNpatama*, where the aforementioned approach helps to avoid the misreading of *nuNpa* as *numa* – swamp. I will not delve into the intricacies of comprehensive studies on OJ grammar and OJ phonetic reconstruction, as these have been conducted by Alexander Vovin<sup>11</sup> and Bjarke Frellesvig<sup>12</sup> (2010) as well as Mark H. Miyake.<sup>13</sup> All translations

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Vovin, *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Western Old Japanese: Part 1. Phonology, Script, Lexicon and Nominals*, UK: Global Oriental, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> See: ibidem; Alexander Vovin, *Man'yōshū. Book 15. A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary*, UK: Global Oriental, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Bjarke Frellesvig, *A History of Japanese Language*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

within this study were carried out by the author-unless otherwise indicated. This was not due to a lack of excellent existing translations, but in attempt to show the functioning of each word in the poem. Occasionally this resulted in unusual English syntax, however the order of the images required for structural analysis have been maintained. The classical commentary of Tsuchihashi Yutaka in his authoritative work *Kodai kayô zenchûshaku* (1976) will be used as final authority in the interpretation<sup>14</sup> Neither this study's structural analysis, nor analysis of OJ MK interpretation, were made previously. Someone may argue that a word-to-word translation sounds different than what one can expect from ancient verse. I answer that such a translation is necessary for linguistic analyses, which in turn, is vital for understanding the nuances of interpretation.

According to Anna Gluskina, who wrote about possible phonetical connections KJK 77 阿志比紀能 *Asipyikiy-nō*, serves as a MK for “mountain”, a place named Yamato and – in later sources – for the noun *yamai* (illness).<sup>15</sup> Omodaka in JDB speaks about the theory of vowel comparison, which shows that the original meaning of the expression was forgotten by the time of the MYS compilation.<sup>16</sup> In total, *Asipyikiy-nō* figures in the MYS only 111 times. The classical interpretation gives us the meaning of “*как*” – a stretched mountain root, but recent linguistic research shows that in this case, we do not have the usage of kana signs, but the use of logograms or quasi-semantemes, which could be very incorrect phonetically. Thus the classical interpretation of cramping legs during mountain climbing, used for example by Pierson, is incorrect. The only etymologically possible one can found here – WOJ *piku* – “low”. Of course, this variant is also not ideal, but it seems to be the most common.

### KJK 3

<sup>13</sup> Mark H. Miyake, *Old Japanese: A Phonetic Reconstruction*, London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> See: Yutaka Tsuchihashi 古代歌謡全注釈古事記編 [Full Comments on Ancient Songs. Kojiki], Tokyo: Kadogawa Shoten, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Anna E. Gluskina, *K izucheniye drevnego stilya yaponskoy poezii. Zametki o makura-kotoba* [About Ancient Style of Japanese Verse. Notes of Makura-Kotoba], Moskva: Narody Azii I Afriki, 1967, p 101.

<sup>16</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen*. [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese], Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1967, p. 22.

奴婆多麻能 *nuNpa-tama-nō* like gem-black

Table 2. Frequency of usage of specific MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Night/night moon/night fog/night dream	KJK 3 MYS 2-169; 2-194; 2-199; 3-302; 3-392; 4-525; 4-619; 4-639; 4-702; 4-723; 4-781; 5-807; 6-925; 6-982; 7-1077; 7-1081; 7-1101; 8-1646; 9-1706; 9-1712; 10-2008; 10-2035; 10-2076; 11-2389; 11-2569; 11-2589; 11-2673; 12-2849; 12-2931; 12-2956; 12-2962; 12-3007; 12-3108; 13-3269; 13-3270; 13-3297; 13-3280; 13-3281; 13-3313; 13-3312; 15-3598; 15-3647; 15-3651; 15-3671; 15-3721; 15-3732; 15-3769; 15-3738; 17-3955; 17-3980; 17-3988; 18-4072; 18-4101; 19-4166; 20-4455; 20-4489;	57
Hair	MYS 2-89; 4-573; 7-1116; 7-1241; 9-1800; 11-2456; 11-2532; 11-2610; 11-2631; 12-2890; 13-3274; 13-3329; 16-3805; 17-3962; 19-4160; 20-4331;	16

Beloved	MYS 11-2564; 15-3712;	2
Other	KJK 5 NSK 81 MYS 9-1798; 10-2139, 12-2878; 13-3303; 16- 3844; 17-3938;	8

Overall *nuNpa-tama-nō*, appears 83 times in the texts of KJK, NSK and MYS accompanied by a restricted group of basic words.

In classical works, this expression meaning “jade-gem night” is considered a metaphorical expression of the KiKi songs. Some studies interpret the expression as *ubatama* or even *numatama*, the latter being connected etymologically with *numa*, a noun meaning “swamp”. Taking that aspect into account, (the word consideration appears two times in one paragraph) researchers found connections with an Ainu word of the same meaning (*mena*) or the Korean *nop*. EDAL also affirms this point of view, but these theories are difficult to prove through linguistic analysis. If we read this combination taking the romanization of OJ in linguistics literature into consideration and later use Yale romanization, we get the following reading: *nuNpa-tama-nō ywo*.

OJ *nuNpa-tama* is applied to pitch-black phenomena and objects such as night and hair. Joining color meaning to nouns that do not have such is a traditional metaphoric device in Japanese literature. For example, Akihiro Satake describes connections between words, color images and perceptions of color in OJ in his *Man'yōshū nukigaki*,<sup>17</sup> contending that the wide usage of this device in OJ literature can be explained by the limited number of color-naming nouns as well as the desire to express particular color shades. Returning to the expression in question, when referring to words serving as a base in this collocation (hair, night, dream, etc.), scholars came to the conclusion that *nuNpa* is the equivalent of “black”. Since this word is exclusively used in combination with the noun *tama* (gem), the combination is considered to be a general name for all dark black gems – a plausible explanation. If we examine the gems of the Kofun, Asuka, and Nara periods found in the Yamato area, we notice that there are various kinds used for necklaces, earrings, and clothing embellishments. One of the most common gems of the time was jade otherwise known as jadeite.

<sup>17</sup> Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [Excerptions from *Man'yōshū*], p. 118.

Pic. 1 Nihon no bijutsu, № 371, 1997, p. 4



Regarding the meaning of *nuNpa-tama*, there are two common explanations for this expression, somewhat opaque since the original meaning of *nuNpa* is unknown. It resembles a *tatpurusha* compound or dependent determinative compound, i.e., a compound XY meaning a type of Y which is related to X in a way corresponding to one of the grammatical cases of X. However if it does not bear any resemblance, the resulting outcome would be *nuNpa-Ntama*, yet, this is not the case. This rules out such terms as “black lily” or “black”, but leaves open the possibility for an interpretation of *nuNpa* as some specific form of jadeite.

KJK 50

知波夜 *ti paya-(N-puru)* crushing a thousand rocks

Table 3. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author’s Elaboration<sup>18</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>18</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on Bjarke Frellesvig, Stephen Wright Horn, Kerri L. Russell and Peter Sells, *The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese*: <http://vsarpj.orinst.ox.ac.uk/corpus/ojcorpus.html#Kojiki> (accessed 28.10.2013).

Udji	KJK 51 NSK-42, 43 MYS 13-3236, 3240	5
Deity	2-0101 3-0404, 4-0558, 0619 11-2416, 2660, 2662, 2663 16-3811 17-4011 20-4465	11
Human	2-0199	1
Cane cape	7-1230	1

The above mentioned expression is a permanent epithet for the divine. We may comment it in two ways: *ti-[i]pa yaNpur-u*, which means here “crushing a thousand rocks” and *ti paya-N-puru*, “strength, fast-DV (INF), swing-ATTR, swinging with a fast strength”.<sup>19</sup> Out of sixteen examples of *tipayaNpuru* in the *Man'yōshū*, eight according to semantographic rules are spelled as “crushing thousand rocks” (千磐破).<sup>20</sup>

#### KJK 30

多多那豆久 *tata-naNtuk-u* very high

*Table 4. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>21</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>19</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen*. [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 455.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Vovin, *Man'yōshū. Book 20. A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary*, UK: Global Oriental, 2013, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....



Blue fence	KJK 30 MYS 6-0923;	2
Me	MYS 12-3187;	1
Soft	MYS 2-0194	1

In total, this expression is used in the first sources around four times.

The analyzed MK was used for various descriptions, where *tata-na* meant high and *Ntuk-u* to do — the whole phrase meaning very high when referring to fences or mountains. The sense combined with other basic words is opaque and probably can be considered as just a marker of superlative degree.

KJK 57

都芸泥布夜 *tuNkyinepuya*

Table 5. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

Source: Author's Elaboration<sup>22</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Yamasirō/Ya masirō road	KJK 57 MYS 13-3314	2

The preliminary expression is considered to be a MK for a place named Yamashiro, but the etymology and meaning are not transparent. Classic interpretations allow us to presuppose that the expression meaning is connected to mountain peaks, but Omodaka also shares an opinion that *tuNkyinepuya* is a plant named *chloranthus serratus*.<sup>23</sup> According to Martin, it is possible to interpret the expression as *tuNkyi* “be the next”, “be successful”. The additional phrase *ne* can mean “mountain”, *puya* (?) and since it is quite enigmatic, should be subjected to further research.

<sup>22</sup> The author's elaboration is based on: ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.) *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 463.

KJK 75

迦芸漏肥能 *kaNkyirwo-piy-nō* like shimmering sun*Table 6. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS**Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>24</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Spring	KJK 75 MYS 6-1047; 10-1835;	3
Wasteland	MYS 2-0210;	1
Heart	MYS 9-1804;	1
Return	MYS 1-0048	1

*KaNkyirwo-piy-nō* translates into the permanent epithet like the shimmering sun. Omodaka in JDB says that this MK is a derivative verb *kaNkyirwopiy*, which could be understood as: “to wobble” especially when one is speaking about air blasts in a damp atmosphere.<sup>25</sup> As an MK the image includes a cloudy, wobble of air from under that which is damp – this serves as an attributive for spring in many cases.

KJK1 夜久毛多都 *ya kumwo tat-u* Many clouds arise*Table 7. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS**Source: Author's elaboration*<sup>26</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
iNtumwo	KJ-1, 23 NS-1, 20 MYS-0430	5

<sup>24</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

<sup>25</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.) *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 179.

<sup>26</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

The *ya kumwo tat-u* collocation is used in songs No.1 and 23 of KJK, 1 and 20 of NSK, and 0430 of MYS and means “many clouds arise”. This word expression I suppose that in this particular case collocation or word expression is more appropriate. is used as an MK for the name of Izumo, featured in a famous song dedicated to the deity Susanoo after his descent to the human world, his subjugation of the dragon, and his marriage to Kushipina Ntapime, daughter of an earthly deity. Both *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* present the poem in context of Susanoo’s settling down with his new bride in the newly constructed palace in Suga province, Izumo. The standard translation of this poem refers to the contextualized meanings of mythical accounts:

Oh, the many-fenced palace  
 In Izumo of the rising clouds!  
 To live therein with my spouse,  
 I build a many-fenced palace.  
 Oh, that many-fenced palace!<sup>27</sup>

Following the explanation by Keichû in the *Kokin yozai shô*, Motoori Norinaga noticed that this expression, which literally means eight clouds, does not mean a numerical layer of clouds – *not eightfold* – but rather describes a large number of layers.<sup>28</sup> Motoori Norinaga also wrote about the etymological meaning of the lexeme “eight” (*yatsu*), which is considered to derive from *iya* 弥 meaning “many, numberless”.<sup>29</sup> Little if any is written in published translations or commentaries about the fact that this song is a bridal one. Moreover, traditionally it is considered that *ya* (eight) may just mean many, as mentioned earlier, however most linguists miss the important fact that the number eight is the sum of Chinese character numbers three (female number) and five (male number), which should provoke to socio-cultural exploration.<sup>30</sup> M. Marra and most translators interpret in such a way that stresses the point on the beauty of Izumo, which cannot

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<sup>27</sup> *Kojiki*, Donald L. Philippi (transl. with an introduction and notes), Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968, 7<sup>th</sup> paperback reprint, 1995, p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Marra, *Essays on Japan: Between Aesthetics and Literature*, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010, p. 382.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Vovin, *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Western Old Japanese: Part 1. Phonology, Script, Lexicon and Nominals*, UK: Global Oriental, 2007, p. 360.

be linguistically reconstructed. The analysis of the MK gives meaning to the whole song.

KJK 82

阿麻陀牟 *ama-Ntam-u* the sky flying

*Table 8. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>31</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Karu	KJK 82	1
Ama-töb-u ya for Karu	MYS 2-0207; 4-0543; 5-0876; 8-1520; 10- 2238; 11-2656; 15- 3676.	7

To summarize, this expression is used eight times with an alternative reading of *ama-töb-u ya* and is a MK, used to attribute summer birds. It is also used as a homophone for the land of Karu. As for the meaning of this particular MK it is considered to be “the sky”, “flying”, where *ama* represents the sky (N – genitive marker), and *tam-u* /*tama-u* supposedly corresponds with the word “give”. The phrase was not found in the MYS, but there, one with similar meaning – albeit different spelling – already figures: *ama-töb-u ya* whose motive of sky and flight is quite apparent.

KJK 29

阿良多麻能登斯 *ara-tama-nö tösi* the year of new gems

*Table 9. Frequency of usage of these MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's elaboration*<sup>32</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Year	KJK 29 MYS 3-443, 3-460, 4- 587, 4-590, 5-881, 10- 2089, 10-2140, 11-2385,	26

<sup>31</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....

<sup>32</sup> The author's elaboration is based on: Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....

	11-2410, 11-2534, 12-2891, 12-2935, 12-2956, 12-3207, 13-3258, 15-3775, 17-3978, 17-3979, 18-4113, 18-4116, 19-4156, 19-4244, 19-4248, 20-4408, 20-4490.	
Month	4-638, 8-1620, 10-2092, 10-2205, 13-3324, 13-3329, 15-3683, 15-3691, 20-4331	9
Other	11-2530, 14-3353	2

*Ara-tama-nō tōsi* is considered to be a permanent epithet for the words *tōsi* (year) and *tuki* (moon). Its composition is quite simple and translates to the year of new gems.

Thus far, unfortunately scholars have not reached a consensus about the grammatical structure of the compound *aratama*. For example, Tsuchihashi Yutaka and JDB analyze *aratama* as *ara-tama*, while Alexander Vovin reads it as *arata-ma- arata* meaning “new” and *ma* “interval”.<sup>33</sup> Here I use the classical version given in JDB, which interprets *ara* as “new, uncut” and *tama* as “gem”.<sup>34</sup> Regardless of the grammatical structure we can see homophones, which become the condition of figurative meaning as a year of new gems conveys the coming of new, better times.

NSK 68

異舎讎等利 *Isana tor-i* the whale?

*Table 10. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>35</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
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<sup>33</sup> Vovin, *Man'yōshū*..., p. 133.

<sup>34</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....

Sea	NSK 68 MYS 2-0131, 0138, 0153; 0220; 3-0366; 6- 1062; 13-3335, 3336, 3339; 16-3852;	11
Seashore	MYS 6-0931;	1

The above mentioned MK for lexemes is connected with marine terminology, where *isana* is a noun that means “whale”, *tör-* a verb infinitive meaning “take” and “i” – according to some researchers, being connected to Old Ryukyuan nouns. In WOJ however this prefix is used only with verbs. Additionally, there exists a constant word alluding to the term “sacred”, “taboo”,<sup>36</sup> as well as defective pronouns (*Sa*) meaning “be that way”, “be very”, words like *Na* meaning food: “fish” or “vegetables”, that in turn could be associated with the phrase “whale”.

#### NSK 83

伊儼武斯盧 *ina-musirwo* rice straw mat

*Table 11. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>37</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
River	NSK 83 MYS 8-1520;	2
Me	MYS 11-2643	1

*Ina-musirwo* is a MK for the noun *kappa* (river), where *ina* means rice field and *musirwo* – straw mat. Classical and non-canonical interpretations treat this collocation as words constructing a „rice straw mat”, as seen in ex. the MYS, scroll No. 8 and 11.

#### NSK 104

斯那堤流 *sinater-u* (something) very high

*Table 12. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's Elaboration*<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Vovin, *A Descriptive...*, p. 569.

<sup>37</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Mountain	NSK 104	1
River	MYS 9-1742	1

*Sinater-u* represents the names of rivers and mountains. From a classical view point, which is expressed also in JDB, this expression is an attributive of the noun signaling “side” – the side most probably lightened up by the sun. As it is however, scholars have not given clear and transparent semantics of this combination. In the MK dictionary it is stated that this particular MK means something very high.<sup>39</sup>

#### KJK51

阿豆佐由美麻由美 *aNtusa yumyi mayumyi* catalpa bow, true bow

*Table 13. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS*

*Source: Author's elaboration*<sup>40</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Sound	2-0098, 7-1279,	2
Pull	2-0207, 2-0217, 10-1930,	3
Arrowhead	9-1738, 11-2638, 11-2640, 12-2985, 12-2988, 12-3149	6
Approach	14-3489, 3490	1

In the “List of the Nation’s Rare Treasures” an entry about bows refers to the existence of “one hundred bows” (御弓壹佰張, *oyumiippakucho*) and “bows of different colors” (別色御弓參張,

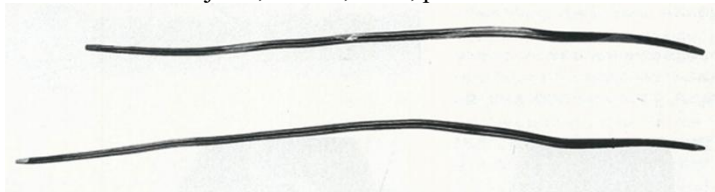
<sup>38</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on: *ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> Pak B., *Dictionary of Man'yōshū makura-kotoba* 萬葉集枕詞辞典, Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1990, p. 187.

<sup>40</sup> The author’s elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus*....

*betsuirooyumisancho*), 84 of which are made of catalpa,<sup>41</sup> 3 of which to this very day remain in the Shōsōin Treasure House (see Picture 2).

Pic. 2. *Nihon no bijutsu*, № 523, 2009, p. 25



The collocation is used with such basic words as “to be; string; sound; draw near, etc”, furthermore another word, *azusa* refers to the large catalpa tree of the *Bignoniaceae* family.<sup>42</sup> As we can see from the table, the most frequent base word is “arrowhead” and in JDB’s opinion, the basic word, the verb *haru* (to pull is treated as a homophone of the noun *haru* – spring, *aNtusa yumyi* additionally being connected in some cases with the verb *yoru* (be caused by),<sup>43</sup> which according to Japanese literary history, was connected with the pulling of a string or with making a sound with an arrow. Extensive research on catalpa bows can be found in a book that goes by the same name, written by Carmen Blacker.<sup>44</sup> Hyakutome Yumiko in her article on MK featuring the word *yumi* also analyzed the usage of these expressions in KiKi songs and MYS, simultaneously enumerating the functions and possible semantics of the expressions in OJ.<sup>45</sup>

#### KJK 58

阿衰迹余志 *awo-ni-yosi* (the land) of the blue/green clay

Table 14. Frequency of usage of this MK in KJK, NSK and MYS

<sup>41</sup> *Nihon no bijutsu*, No. 523, 2009, Tokyo: Gyosei, p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Omodaka Hisataka et al. (eds.), *Jidai betsu kokugo dai jiten. Jyodaihen* [A Large Dictionary of the National Language by Periods. Old Japanese]..., p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>44</sup> See: Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow. A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, UK: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1989.

<sup>45</sup> Hyakutome Emiko, 「弓」における枕詞のレトリック// 文化東北大学大学院文学研究科 [Rhetorics of Makura-Kotoba with “Bow” Images], *Proceedings of Faculty of Letters University of Tohoku*, Vol. 68, No. 3/4, 2005, pp. 281–295.



Source: Author's elaboration<sup>46</sup>

Base word	Song number	Frequency of usage
Nara	1-0017; 0029; 0079; 0080 3-0328; 5-0806; 0808 6-0992; 1046 7-1215; 8-1638; 10-1906; 13-3236; 3237 15-3602; 3612; 3728 17-3957; 3973; 3978; 3919; 4008 18-4107; 19-4223; 4245; 4266	26

*Awo-ni yō-si Nara* means Nara of the blue (green) clay.

Akihiro Satake in his study *Man'yōshū nukigaki*, describes the connections between words, color images and colors perception within the old Japanese language. He contends that wide application of this device in OJ literature can be explained by the limited number of color-naming nouns and a desire to express particular color shades.<sup>47</sup> More importantly, the collocation *awo-ni yoshi* functions as a permanent epithet referring to the old capital – Nara. *Awo* normally refers to the color “blue” or “azure” and in limited cases, can also be understood as “green”. In the aforementioned case, it is difficult to ascertain whether it refers to green or blue soil and the same can be applied to *awoyama* from the first Kojiki songs, which denotes green or blue mountains.

### Conclusions to part I

As indicated by the above data, structural analysis is vital for proper morphemic division, which in turn can give us relevant semantics of certain lexemes. In regards to the MK expressions previously analyzed, the meaning of these epithets often is not derived from the meaning of

<sup>46</sup> The author's elaboration is based on Frellesvig et al., *The Oxford Corpus...*

<sup>47</sup> Satake Akihiro, 萬葉集抜書 [The Extracts from Man'yōshū], p. 116.

the lexemes comprised within the collocations, as exemplified in 阿之比奇能 (*ashipiki nö*, “leg-cramping”) for mountains. As stated earlier, the classical interpretation is incorrect. The only possible etymology, differs from what is declared in the interpretations, in some instances, even the semantics cannot offer a full understanding of why certain phrases were used in the texts of the songs – for instance in the analysis of the *tuNkyinepuya* collocation. We may only hypothesize and make guesses, while researchers cannot say for sure what one expression or the other means. For these reasons – the ambiguity and, as a result, misreading of MK functions, has resulted in translators avoiding the interpretation of those rhetorical devices, which seem to be meaningless, unconnected to song context and thus considered difficult to interpret. Due to the recent trend in linguistics connecting semantics with hermeneutics, I shall now attempt to explain the core of the MK in question from a hermeneutical approach. It is hermeneutics that explain aspects of interpretation, their differentiation from original text semantics and explain the reasons behind them. For that reason, I will try to analyze MK functions in terms of philological hermeneutics in the second part of this study. Abbreviations, sources and bibliographical notes will also follow.

## It's Complicated: United States, Aung San Suu Kyi and U.S.-Burma Relations

### Abstract

Until 2011 Aung San Suu Kyi has been the point of reference for U.S. policy towards Burma/Myanmar. Her struggle with Burmese military junta has attracted a widespread attention and a global affection for her. As a result, Suu Kyi enjoyed an unquestioned support from subsequent U.S. president administrations. This, however, has changed in 2011 when Suu Kyi was politically sacrificed by the U.S. pivot to Asia. Nevertheless, she faced it bravely and did not give in; just changed her tactics from confrontation to cooperation with the post-military regime. That gave her a stunning electoral victory in 2015 and power from behind-the-scenes in Myanmar. Suu Kyi's relations with Washington have remained cordial, yet complicated ever since.

### Introduction

This article deals with bilateral relations between Burma/Myanmar<sup>1</sup> and United States of America from the perspective of political science, particularly focusing on the role of individuals in politics.

Although writing on individuals in politics is not popular within academic circles<sup>2</sup> – Burma and Aung San Suu Kyi are different here out of two reasons. First, Burma is not a democratic country with the check and balances system; thus the importance of individuals increases here (let alone given the personalized concept of politics in Burmese political tradition).<sup>3</sup> Second, Aung San Suu Kyi's position within Burmese

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<sup>1</sup> I find the distinction between Burma and Myanmar quite artificial and I will use both of them – “Burma” when referred to pre-1989 period and Myanmar when after 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Keohane, ‘Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond’ in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, Robert O. Keohane (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> David Steinberg, *Burma/Myanmar. What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 53; David Steinberg, *Burma. The State in Myanmar*,

political system is absolutely unique thanks to two facts. She is the daughter of Burma's independence hero, Aung San and thus possesses "moral capital";<sup>4</sup> and throughout her long and full of sacrifices career she proved that she is a significant politician on her own. This has all elevated her to the position above ordinary politicians in Burma.<sup>5</sup>

As for U.S.-Burma relations they are naturally asymmetric. This asymmetry, however, does not necessarily mean that the more powerful dominate less powerful. There are different types of asymmetry. In case of US-Burma relation, two asymmetries apply: "distracted asymmetry" (both sides have other more important relationships to worry about) and "normalized asymmetry" (when the relationship is not harmonious but both sides are confident of fulfilling their basic interests and expectations of mutual benefits).<sup>6</sup> Throughout period written in this article US – Burma relations have moved from "distracted asymmetry" to "normalized asymmetry".

Burma has historically been of little interest to the United States. Before WW II for the United States, Burma was a British preserve.<sup>7</sup> Only once Burma Road was constructed did Burma became known to the US public.<sup>8</sup> After the war Burma was not included in Franklin

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Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2000, pp. 39–51; Gustaaf Houtman, *Mental Culture in Burmese Crisis Politics: Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy*, Tokyo 1999, pp. 214–215.

<sup>4</sup> John Kane, *The Politics of Moral Capital*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 147–171.

<sup>5</sup> Visits to Burma/Myanmar, 2010-2016; see also my biography of Aung San Suu Kyi: Michał Lubina, *Pani Birmy. Biografia polityczna Aung San Suu Kyi* [Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. A Political Biography], Warszawa: PWN, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Brantly Womack, 'Asymmetry and Systemic Misperception: China, Vietnam and Cambodia', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 2003; Maung Aung Myoe, *In the Name of Pauk-Phaw. Myanmar's China Policy Since 1948*, Singapore 2011, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Tim McLaughlin, *Creeping Tigers, Intelligent Elephants and Befriending Communists: Memoirs of Visits by Three Former US Presidents in Sanctions to Success*, Myanmar Times Special Report, 2012, p. 3; David Steinberg, 'Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese Relationship and Its Vicissitudes' in *Short of the Goal, U.S. Policy and Poorly Performing States*, Nancy Birdsall, Milan Vaishnav and Robert L. Ayres (eds.), Washington D.C.: Brookings, 2006, p. 223.

<sup>8</sup> Andre Selth, 'Burma And Superpower Rivalries in the Asia-Pacific', *US Naval War College Review*, Vol. 55, No. 2, spring 2002, p. 44; Lisa Brooten, 'The Feminization of Democracy under Siege: The Media, "the Lady" of Burma, and U.S. Foreign Policy', *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2005, p. 138.

Delano Roosevelt's anti-colonial agenda.<sup>9</sup> With Harry Truman's ascending to power American anti-imperialism moderated even more and Burma was considered to be better left in the British sphere of influence.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after independence Burma chose to conduct a neutral foreign policy.<sup>11</sup> In 1950 US aid program was granted to Burma and marked the first step in US-Burma cooperation.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, cold war consideration prevented strengthening of Washington-Rangoon ties which made Rangoon stop the U.S. aid program.<sup>13</sup> The bilateral contacts, however, were not cut and US assistance program (mainly foodstuff) was restarted in 1956.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, both sides kept distance.<sup>15</sup>

After military coup d'état in 1962 Burma retreated even farther from the international system.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Burma's neutrality played off for every major power, including USA.<sup>17</sup> Ne Win ended U.S. assistance program and signed border agreement with China; on the other hand, he paid state visit to the U.S. in 1966<sup>18</sup> during which informally United States had provided him military training<sup>19</sup>. That came right in time given Burma's deterioration of relations with China.<sup>20</sup> U.S. – Burma cooperation intensified in the 1970s when Washington started military assistance to Burma to stem the Communist tide.<sup>21</sup> U.S. – Burma

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<sup>9</sup> Robert H. Taylor, 'Bilateral relations: then and now' in *Sanctions to Success...* p. 9; David Steinberg, *Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese...*, p. 223.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony J. Stockwell, 'Southeast Asia in War and Peace: The End of European Colonial Empires' in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Nicolas Tarling (ed.), Vol. 2, Part 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> William C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy: A Study in Neutralism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

<sup>12</sup> Steinberg, *Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese...*, p. 223.

<sup>13</sup> Selth, *Burma And Superpower Rivalries...*, pp. 45–46.

<sup>14</sup> Steinberg, *Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese...*, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps. A Personal History of Burma*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007, p. 270.

<sup>16</sup> Selth, *Burma And Superpower Rivalries...*, p. 46

<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar*, Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2009, p. 346.

<sup>18</sup> Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps...*, p. 302.

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, 'Bilateral relations...', p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Smith, *Burma. Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, London, Dhaka and Bangkok: Zed Books, 1999, pp. 248–258.

<sup>21</sup> Bertil Lintner, *Burma in Revolt. Opium and Insurgency Since 1948*, Chiang Mai: Silksworm Books, 1999, p. 315; Steinberg, *Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese...*, p. 224.

relations improved to such extent that in 1978 Burma requested restart of U.S. assistance; the program lasted until 1988.<sup>22</sup> Despite that Burma had remained marginal for the USA.

### **Overshadowed by “the Lady”**

The year 1988 was a turning point in Burma. Mass demonstrations toppled the government during summer of 1988. The military reacted with slaughters of demonstrators, another coup d'état on 18<sup>th</sup> September, repression and establishment with the new junta, the SLORC.<sup>23</sup> To improve their image they announced general elections. During the campaign a new star emerged: Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of independence hero, Aung San.<sup>24</sup> This forced army to lock Suu Kyi in the house arrest, prosecute her supporters and nullify the victorious for Suu Kyi's party, NLD, elections of 1990. The army continued to govern without legitimacy. Suu Kyi, locked under house for 15 years (1989–2010, with intervals), hoped to force the generals to make concessions: she appealed to the West for economic sanction. Her voice was heard because the world has changed. In the West the political agenda towards such peripheral states as Burma had transformed from security to human rights.

Aung San Suu Kyi herself played another, distinct role in shaping this new Western policy towards Myanmar. Unfairly convicted for her ideas, with dramatic family tragedy, she became enormously popular in the West.<sup>25</sup> Suu Kyi herself became “a glocal – both global and local – icon”,<sup>26</sup> a “saint who was above criticism”.<sup>27</sup> For her stance and proclaimed ideas she received a deluge of awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Suu Kyi dominated the picture to such an extent

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<sup>22</sup> Lintner, *Burma in Revolt*..., p. 315.

<sup>23</sup> More on 1988 revolution, see: Bertil Lintner, *Outrage. Burma's Struggle for Democracy*, Bangkok: White Lotus, 1990, pp. 70–140.

<sup>24</sup> Her popularity and her ideas can be traced in the collection of her text and speeches, Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom From Fear and Other Writings*, London: Penguín Books 1991, pp. 167–227.

<sup>25</sup> Justin Wintle, *Perfect Hostage. Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma and the Generals*, London: Arrow Books, 2007, p. 330.

<sup>26</sup> Hans-Bernd Zöllner, *The Beast and the Beauty. The History of the Conflict between the Military and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar, 1988-2011, Set in a Global Context*, Berlin: Regio Spectra, 2012, pp. 277–359 and 281–282.

<sup>27</sup> Bertil Lintner, *Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's Struggle for Democracy*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2011, p. 78.

that even when the junta achieved authentic (and rare) successes, like the cease-fire agreements with the ethnic minority guerillas, the West never acknowledged them.<sup>28</sup> Being skilful politician Suu Kyi new how to use this priceless card of foreign backing. She called for help and appealed for no more foreign investments, tourism boycott and even cancelling humanitarian assistance.<sup>29</sup> Her voice was heard very loudly in the West. Since USA and other Western countries had little interests in Myanmar, support for Suu Kyi portrayed in moral colors prevailed.<sup>30</sup>

That is why sanctions started being introduced against Myanmar. Since 1997 new investments in Burma were prohibited,<sup>31</sup> including the assistance from World Bank and other Washington-controlled global financial institutions and aid agencies, imports of textiles and gems into the USA were halted, activities of most financial transactions into Myanmar were restricted,<sup>32</sup> personal sanctions introduced and freezing of bank account implemented.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, since mid 1990s due to successful PR campaigns of lobbyist groups calling for Burma boycott, many private companies pulled out of the country. This was all an “asphyxiation approach” to Burmese government: calling for essential isolation of the regime unless changes are forthcoming.<sup>34</sup>

The regime, however, withstood the pressure thanks to trade with Asian neighbors, huge offshore natural gas fields and the “hermit” nature of this regime.<sup>35</sup> That is why the sanctions “were only strong enough to weaken the country, not strong enough to remove the

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<sup>28</sup> Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps*..., p. 332.

<sup>29</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi and Alan Clements, *The Voice of Hope. Conversations with Alan Clements*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997, p. 218; Levy Adrian, ‘Portrait. Aung San Suu Kyi’, *Prospect Magazine*, No. 65, July 2001, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> David Steinberg, *Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese*..., p. 225.

<sup>31</sup> 1997 Executive Order 13047 of May 20, Executive Order 13047 – Prohibiting New Investment in Burma: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/13047.pdf> (accessed 10.06.2016); Sanctions Against Burma, Treasury of State: <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/burma.txt> (accessed 10.06.2016).

<sup>32</sup> *Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003*, Public Law 108–61, 28.06.2003, U.S. Department of the Treasury: [http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/bfda\\_2003.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/bfda_2003.pdf) (accessed 10.06.2016)

<sup>33</sup> *Sanctions Against*....

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in: Steinberg, *Burma*..., p. 244.

<sup>35</sup> Thant Myint-U, *The River of Lost Footsteps*..., p. 342.

leaders”.<sup>36</sup> However, the pressure from pro-democracy activists and supporters of Aung San Suu Kyi was so enormous that it forced the Western politicians to maintain the policy of sanctions. Sometimes it was useful for them in their domestic policies, too.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, in 2000s U.S. policy towards Burma underwent modification. During Clinton administration Burma was consistently linked with the concept of human rights, but since Bush took office, the emphasis has shifted, and “Burma has been linked with the figure of Aung San Suu Kyi”.<sup>38</sup> Years 2003–2009 saw the peak of pro-Suu Kyi activities in the West supporting her.<sup>39</sup> For Aung San Suu Kyi it meant one thing. Thanks to above mentioned lucky combination of geopolitical and ideological factors, media’s popularity and personal skills Suu Kyi herself became a dimension in Western countries’ foreign policies. Unfortunately for her, in 2011 the changed geopolitical situation has forced United States to abandon this policy.

### **Aung San Suu Kyi: the first victim of U.S. pivot to Asia**

Barack Obama’s presidency marked the important shift in U.S. Burma policy. Faced by China’s rise, Washington started understanding the geopolitical importance of Myanmar which translated itself into major policy shift. Instead of isolating the military regime, Washington started engagement policy.

Obama’s reorientation to Asia-Pacific was done for good economic and strategic reasons.<sup>40</sup> With these in mind, “Burma has emerged as the frontline of the Obama administration’s ‘pivot’ towards Asia, or, in plain language, the U.S.’ China containment policy”.<sup>41</sup> Myanmar has an important place in this concept. With its priceless geographical location,

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<sup>36</sup> Evan Osnos, ‘The Burmese Spring’, *The New Yorker*, 6 August 2012: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/08/06/the-burmese-spring> (accessed 17.06.2016); more about the impact of sanctions on ordinary people’s lives: Michael W. Charney, *A History of Modern Burma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 186.

<sup>37</sup> Breton, *The Feminization of Democracy...*, p. 139.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>39</sup> See for example: *Burma: It Can’t Wait* / U.S. Campaign for Burma.

<sup>40</sup> Taylor, ‘Bilateral relations...’, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> Bertil Lintner, ‘Burma, North Korea Stay Brothers in Arms’, *Asia Times Online*, 5 September 2013: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/SEA-01-050913.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-01-050913.html) (accessed 17.06.2016).



Myanmar closes US “necklet on Chinese string of pearls”.<sup>42</sup> This explains why Myanmar quickly moved from a non-important place in US political agenda to a key one. And why the Burmese generals became important for Washington again.

One, however, “need two to tango”.<sup>43</sup> The Burmese generals changed as well – little noticed by outside the Myanmar military underwent a generation change;<sup>44</sup> new, better educated army technocrats removed the battle hardened commanders, “war fighters”,<sup>45</sup> while nominally civilian government (consistent, however, of former generals) took office in March 2011. In a way the generals were forced to do reforms: “when Laos overtakes you in per-capita G.D.P., it’s time to rethink your basic national strategy”.<sup>46</sup> But Myanmar’s economic plight was insufficient explanation for their actions, since the army has enjoyed a privileged position anyway. More important was growing dependence on China which steadily colonized Burma economically and even socially (mass migration).<sup>47</sup> After little known to the outside world behind-the-scene strategy considerations and power struggles within the junta’s inner circle, the ruling generals decided that enough China is enough and to balance its influence, they needed reforms, domestic change<sup>48</sup> and better relations with the West to regain the traditional neutral foreign policy.<sup>49</sup> U.S. pivot to Asia gave them the chance and

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<sup>42</sup> Bogdan Góralczyk, *Amerykański „naszyjnik” wokół Chin – USA zwiększają obecność w Azji* [US necklet on China. The Americans increase their presence in Asia], 7 May 2014, WP.pl: <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1329,title,Amerykanski-naszyjnik-wokol-Chin-USA-zwiekszaja-obecnosc-w-Azji,wid,16584874,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=117350> (accessed 17.06.2016). “String of pearls” is a popular name of Chinese bases and ports on the raw materials supply line from Africa to China via Indian Ocean; Beijing has been building them in order to have an insurance should relations with the USA deteriorate. Without Myanmar this “string of pearls” is incomplete.

<sup>43</sup> I derived this phrase from one of the reviews and I am grateful for the anonymous reviewer for it as well as for pointing me the fact of junta’s own “pivot”.

<sup>44</sup> Zöllner, *The Beast and the Beauty...*, p. 469.

<sup>45</sup> Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies. War and State Building in Burma*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in: Evan Osnos, The Burmese Spring, *The New Yorker*, 6 August 2012: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/08/06/the-burmese-spring> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>47</sup> Steinberg, *Burma...*, p. 234.

<sup>48</sup> About junta’s inner circle consideration, see more: Renaud Egreteau and Larry Jagan, *Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma. Understanding the Foreign Relations of the Burmese Praetorian State*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> David Steinberg and Hongwei Fan, *Modern China-Myanmar Relations...*, p. 364.

they used it. Thus, at the same time when US was pivoting to Asia, Burmese junta, made its own pivot – against China. Thus, “China factor” was crucial on calculations on both sides.<sup>50</sup>

The results of U.S.-Burmese generals mutual re-engagement have been outstanding. Lifting of sanctions, appointment of an ambassador, massive grants, assistance and loans from Washington-controlled organizations such as World Bank or Asian Development Bank, large investments from Western companies and diplomatic activity, these all proved the intensifying ties between USA and Myanmar. As for Obama’s Administration, it proclaimed U.S. Burma policy a big success<sup>51</sup> and was generally right: the country reformed itself and started developing rapidly, and – what was most importantly from Washington’s perspective – liberated itself from Chinese control.

It was Aung San Suu Kyi, however, who paid the price of the changed geopolitical environment. The “China factor” for Burmese domestic scene meant one thing for Suu Kyi: her foes – the generals – had just started to struck deals with her patrons – the Americans. Unsurprisingly, her position greatly diminished. In a way, she was the first political victim of the “US pivot to Asia”. As one influential commentator put it: “Obama administration changed the policy of sanctions and begun to initiate a policy of fuller engagement with the junta in the dual beliefs that that the strategy of isolating Burma had been unsuccessful and that the dialogue could convince the generals to change their ways (...) the US consider Suu Kyi robust enough to fight for democracy without their constant support”.<sup>52</sup> Suu Kyi opposed in vain Obama’s visit to Burma and equally futilely warned against the “reckless optimism”;<sup>53</sup> she was “forced to review her own cautious

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<sup>50</sup> The last phrase is taken from the review; the reviewer is right that “without generals’ decision to reform, the U.S. just could do nothing *vis-a-vis* Myanmar, even within its ‘pivot’”.

<sup>51</sup> *Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony*, The White House, 28 May 2014: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>52</sup> Aung Zaw, *The Face of Resistance. Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma’s Fight for Freedom*, Bangkok: Mekong Press, 2012, pp. 104–137.

<sup>53</sup> Evan Osnos, ‘The Burmese Spring’, *The New Yorker*, 6 August 2012: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/08/06/the-burmese-spring> (accessed 17.06.2016).

position on engagement and sanctions”.<sup>54</sup> Suu Kyi herself revealed in a meeting with party cadres that “she had come to realize the United States was prioritizing stability over democratization”, and she now “believed the US would prefer to see the USDP (the military ruling party) remain in power until at least 2020”.<sup>55</sup> Washington comforted her gestures. She received Congressional Golden Medal in 2013, an emotional speech from Senator Joseph McCain<sup>56</sup> and Barack Obama’s hug and moral support.<sup>57</sup>

What is worth mentioning, however, is Suu Kyi’s attitude towards USA all along. She did not accuse Washington of betrayal and did not complain in public that the Obama Administration had put her under the bus, effectively ruining her hopes to remove generals from power. Even in the closed meetings with foreign policymaker she limited herself to calls for caution and warnings against reckless belief in the general.<sup>58</sup> No public complaints or moral condemnation: nothing. On the contrary, officially Suu Kyi has thanked USA for its support<sup>59</sup> and accepted praises from Obama and others – she was maximizing her options for the future. Being a classy politician Suu Kyi behaved as a skilful stateswoman who knows that being sacrificed by stronger partner is the inevitable part of playing politics. And that if one is in the position of junior partner one cannot allow oneself to complain and have the luxury of being morally right. That would be not only futile but also counterproductive.

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<sup>54</sup> Aung Zaw, *The Face of Resistance...*, p. 137.

<sup>55</sup> Wai Yan Hpone, ‘The Lady’s Predicament’, *The Irrawaddy*, 31 March 2015: <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2015/04/06/the-irrawaddy-the-ladys-predicament-wai-yan-hpone/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>56</sup> ‘In Emotional Tribute, Sen. John McCain Tells Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi She Taught Him ‘A Thing or Two about Courage’, *Courier-Journal*, 19 September 2012: <http://blogs.courier-journal.com/politics/2012/09/19/in-emotional-tribute-sen-john-mccain-tells-burmas-aung-san-suu-kyi-she-taught-him-a-thing-or-two-about-courage/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>57</sup> *Remarks by President Obama and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma in Joint Press Conference*, 14 November 2014, The White House: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/14/remarks-president-obama-and-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-burma-joint-press-confe> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>58</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi’s visit to Poland and her meetings in Polish Parliament (Sejm, Senate), personal attendance.

<sup>59</sup> *Remarks by President Obama and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi...*

### **“No hope without endeavor”**

Being a determined and stubborn politician Suu Kyi did not give in. Loyal to her own words “no hope without endeavor”<sup>60</sup> she decided to fight on and “never allow the military to marginalize her”.<sup>61</sup> For Suu Kyi, however, the revise of U.S. policy meant an uneasy choice: keep her “moral icon” position, respected but politically irrelevant, or playing a risky game on (post)generals’ terms without foreign backing. Being a real politician she chose the latter.

After twenty years of struggle, Suu Kyi yielded and accepted the inevitable: army’s dominance. She agreed to function within rules determined by the regime: changed her tactics from confrontation to cooperation and tried to convince generals to her person (the army has formalized its dominance over political sphere in Myanmar by implementing a constitution that guarantees the military forces three key ministers in any government, budgetary autonomy for the army, legal possibility for staging coup anytime and ¼ of all parliamentary seats – a minority that blocks any amendments to the constitution).<sup>62</sup> By doing so Suu Kyi compromised a lot: accepted donations from army cronies,<sup>63</sup> publicly proclaimed “love” for the army,<sup>64</sup> participated in military parades and did not backed social fight for the land grabbed by the military.<sup>65</sup> She sat pat during the offensive against the Kachins<sup>66</sup> and did not say a word in support of the Rohingyas.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi, *Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought Acceptance Speech*, 22 October 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Personal conversation with Aung San Suu Kyi, Naypyidaw, 5 February 2015.

<sup>62</sup> *Constitution of the Union of Myanmar (2008)*, Burma Online Library: [http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs5/Myanmar\\_Constitution-2008-en.pdf](http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs5/Myanmar_Constitution-2008-en.pdf) (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>63</sup> Simon Montlake, ‘Myanmar Democracy Icon Suu Kyi Taps ‘Crony’ Capitalists for Charity Fund’s, *Forbes*, 16 January 2013: <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>64</sup> Jonathan Owen, ‘Why Suu Kyi Still Loves Burma’s Army’, *The Independent*, 27 January 2013: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/why-suu-kyi-still-loves-burmas-army-8468363.html> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>65</sup> Aung Zaw, ‘The Letpadaung Saga and the End of an Era’, *The Irrawaddy*, 14 March 2013: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/29405> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>66</sup> Hanna Hindstrom, ‘Kachin Rebels Refuse to Invite Suu Kyi to Mediate Peace Process’, *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 14 February 2013: <https://www.dvb.no/news/kachin-rebels-refuse-to-invite-suu-kyi-to-mediate-peace-process/26397> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>67</sup> For the latter she was heavily criticized in the West. Human rights activists that passionately supported her for two decades still cannot get over this kind of attitude, accusing her of betrayal, e.g. Tim Robertson, ‘Aung San Suu Kyi: Colluding with

Unfortunately, this all did not convince the ruling military. The generals contrary to initial promises did not change the constitution and did not allow Suu Kyi to become president. Suu Kyi however, did not give up. She considered all her compromises a “relatively trivial matters that can be addressed once she and her party are in power”.<sup>68</sup> That is why she put all her cards on the parliamentary elections in November 2015. It was a risky and brave decision given the fact that she was steadily losing her support and her victory was not sure, and that she had no guarantee that the generals would not falsify or nullify the elections. Moreover, by taking part in the partly-free elections she accepted that the military sets rules in political sphere and army's position remains dominant. Finally, given the 25% reserved to the military Suu Kyi must have scored 66% of the voters to get majority and balance army's structural dominance. That was a poker game: in the worst case Suu Kyi might have ended up without anything – neither power nor domestic and international prestige which she had sacrificed by dealing with the regime. She put all her cards on the elections.

That proved to be the right decision. Suu Kyi's NLD won overwhelmingly by scoring 78% of the voters and gaining absolute majority. After winning the elections Suu Kyi made the next necessary step – on a series on behind-the-scene talks with top military commanders persuaded the regime to give back the power in return for economic benefits and – probably – security guarantees for military apparatus, including the regime leaders and their property.<sup>69</sup> By securing military safe landing and – after 27 years of political struggle being finally recognized by the military commanders<sup>70</sup> – Suu Kyi bore the fruits of her victory and made it possible for Myanmar to move forward. After having nominated herself at the position of “state counselor” as

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Tyranny', *The Diplomat*, 12 November 2014: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/aung-san-suu-kyi-colluding-with-tyranny/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>68</sup> Wai Yan Hpone, 'The Lady's Predicament', *The Irrawaddy*, 31 March 2015: <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2015/04/06/the-irrawaddy-the-ladys-predicament-wai-yan-hpone/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>69</sup> Aung Zaw, 'Than Shwe-Suu Kyi Meet Intensifies Intrigue During Testing Transition', *The Irrawaddy*, 5 December 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.com/from-the-irrawaddy-archive-burma/from-the-archive-than-shwe-suu-kyi-meet-intensifies-intrigue-during-testing-transition.html> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>70</sup> 'Army to rebrand itself as new political reality sets in', *The Irrawaddy*, 16 May 2016: <http://www.irrawaddy.com/commentary/army-to-rebrand-itself-as-new-political-reality-sets-in.html> (accessed 17.06.2016).

well as two ministerial positions, including foreign minister, Suu Kyi is in charge of Myanmar now and she is responsible for Myanmar's foreign policy.<sup>71</sup>

### **A complicated relationship**

A conventional approach would predict that Myanmar under the role of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi would naturally lean towards democratic countries of the free world and make a full-embracing turn to the West. The more thorough view, however, shows that the reality on the ground is much more complicated, as are Suu Kyi's relations with the United States.

To start with, the political reality forces Suu Kyi as a national leader to conduct balancing policy instead of bandwagoning to the West. She must take into account economic reality which is that China and other Asian partners are Myanmar's most important partners. Particularly China matters here.<sup>72</sup> Beijing is the most important economic partner, which given the fact that Suu Kyi's government prioritizes economic development,<sup>73</sup> must play decisive role. Moreover, China is informally supporting some anti-governmental guerillas; China may use them against Myanmar government should it moves too close to the West.<sup>74</sup> Suu Kyi is aware of that<sup>75</sup> and her first actions (her first meeting was with Chinese foreign minister) prove that. There are even some who interpret these actions as a beginning of Suu Kyi-China rapprochement. According to this argument domestic circumstances (good relations between Myanmar military and United States) may force Suu Kyi to lean towards China to balance it – "Myanmar's complex political

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<sup>71</sup> Naturally, the government of Myanmar is formally headed by President HtinKyaw, a former Suu Kyi's staff member but nobody, including HtinKyaw hides the fact that it is Suu Kyi who is in charge of the country.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in: Bi Shihong, 'Suu Kyi's vision shapes Myanmar foreign policy', *Global Times*, 26 April 2016: <http://www.burmanet.org/news/2016/04/26/global-times-suu-kyi-vision-shapes-myanmar-foreign-policy-bi-shihong/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>73</sup> 'High mountains, distant emperors', *The Economist*, 23 April 2016: <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21697287-aung-san-suu-kyi-extends-wary-welcome-china-tries-regain-lost-influence-high-mountains> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>74</sup> Yun Sun, 'Has China Lost Myanmar?', *Foreign Policy*, 15 January 2013: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/15/has-china-lost-myanmar/> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in: Yola Verbruggen, 'NLD to look West, but not ignore its tough neighbours', *Myanmar Times*, 22 April 2016: <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/19911-nld-to-look-west-but-not-ignore-its-tough-neighbours.html> (accessed 17.06.2016).

dynamics, may produce surprises as Suu Kyi and the Tatmadaw reverse roles in addressing the imbalances in their relations with Beijing and Washington, respectively".<sup>76</sup> This argument claims that given the good Tamtadaw-U.S. relations China bet on Suu Kyi instead of supporting the generals. That would indeed be an interesting phenomenon to see Beijing supporting Nobel Peace Prize winner against United States! Although nothing is impossible in politics and ideology usually plays secondary role here, this scenario is unlikely given the domestic dislike for Chinese in Burma.

More likely, however, is that Suu Kyi would maintain the balancing policy of her predecessors (let alone that neutral policy had been the hallmark of her father's generation that she claims to follow). Suu Kyi was left with a comfortable international position and there is no reason to undermine it by moving to close to the West. Suu Kyi will rather try to maneuver herself more room strategic room when dealing with United States, China, Japan, India, Korea and ASEAN.<sup>77</sup> She has already praised Burma's "non-aligned" principle and insisting that her party will maintain "friendly relations with all countries".<sup>78</sup> Burma-watchers see that: Gregory Polin from Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies says that under Suu Kyi "Myanmar will balance its foreign policy, but it will not do so between 'east' and 'west'; it will do so between a plethora of different countries (...) I expect we will see a serious effort to balance Myanmar's relations between China, India, Japan, the rest of Southeast Asia, and the West".<sup>79</sup> Therefore, from the point of view of international position of Myanmar there is no reason for Suu Kyi to abandon the balancing policy and bandwagon to the West.

Another reason that makes a pro-Western turn unlikely is the personality of Suu Kyi. She is and has always been a politician, not a moral icon.<sup>80</sup> It was the West that made her a moral icon (Suu Kyi being

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<sup>76</sup> K. Yhome, 'Why Aung San Suu Kyi will not abandon China for the US', *The Wire*, 12 April 2016: <http://thewire.in/27629/myanmars-new-government-foreign-policy-challenges-and-options> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in: ibidem

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in: Verbruggen, *NLD to look West...*

<sup>80</sup> Personal conversation with Aung San Suu Kyi, Naypyidaw, 5 February 2015.

a politician used it to her purposes brilliantly),<sup>81</sup> but she is not as pro-Western as most of the world though before. Since entering Burmese politics in 1988 she wanted to re-establish democracy and protect the human rights in Burma but these serve for her as tools only. Suu Kyi's rationale in politics and her life-long dream has been to fulfill her father's dream of restoring Burma's greatness.<sup>82</sup> That makes Suu Kyi firstly a Burmese nationalist, and only secondly a cosmopolitan and global citizen attached to democracy. Asian analysts see that clearly: "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is also a nationalist. She supports the development of Myanmar, not Western nations," says Tang Xiaoyang from Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy in Beijing.<sup>83</sup> Suu Kyi's attachment to democracy has its limits and these are Burmese national interests (and her own interests).<sup>84</sup> That is why despite widespread Western criticism she kept silent on Rohingya issue – otherwise she would seriously risk undermining her own position at home and weakening Myanmar's international profile.

The Rohingya issue is what may distance Suu Kyi from the United States clearly. The million-like group of Muslim people that calls themselves Rohingya is a thorny issue in Burma;<sup>85</sup> resentment against

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<sup>81</sup> See for example her interviews with Alan Clements, which can be used as a textbook for other non-Western politicians on how to play on Western emotions, Aung San Suu Kyi and Alan Clements, *The Voice of Hope*....

<sup>82</sup> At her first major speech at Shwedagon pagoda in 1988 she already declared that: 'Speech to a Mass Rally at the Shwedagon Pagoda' in Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom*..., pp. 192–199.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in: Verbruggen, *NLD to look West*....

<sup>84</sup> Probably the best illustration of her understanding of democracy comes from this speech from 1999: "It is very important for our members to be extra loyal... According to democratic principles, everyone has the right to have their own beliefs, to think independently and to have freedom of expression. But if one acts disloyally in exercising those rights, one is a renegade, a traitor", *Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Speech on 27-5-1999*, Online Burma/Myanmar Library: <http://www.burmalibrary.org/reg.burma/archives/199906/msg00285.html> (accessed 10.03.15).

<sup>85</sup> More about Rohingya, see from two different perspectives: Robert H. Taylor, 'Refighting Old Battles, Compounding Misconceptions: The Politics of Ethnicity in Myanmar Today', *ISEAS Perspective*, December 2015: [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2015\\_12.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2015_12.pdf) (accessed 17.06.2016); International Crisis Group (ICG), *Myanmar Conflict Alert: Preventing communal bloodshed and building better relations*, 12 June 2012: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/alerts/2012/myanmar-alert.aspx> (accessed 17.06.2016).



this minority unites all political actors in Burma, most notable the society and the army which gains support and restores its national credibility for its strong stance against Rohingya. Although persecution of the Rohingya from the perspective of Burma concerns marginal groups in the deep province, due to the Western media attention it has become the most well-known issue of that country, globally famous and wrongly compared to the threat of genocide.<sup>86</sup> That is why Suu Kyi domestically has little reason to support Rohingya (that would undermine her popularity) but her silence undermines her international profile. Should Suu Kyi not handle Rohingya issue in accordance with Western civil rights expectations – and it is unlikely that she would – “it may invite criticism from the international community; this will embolden those in the US who want the continuation of sanctions on Myanmar and may become a source of tension between the NLD administration and Washington”.<sup>87</sup>

These all mentioned arguments give a clue to the future relations between Suu Kyi's led Myanmar and the United States. Although it public both sides may present the bright vision of bilateral relations, with a lot of grandiose words about democracy, human rights and civil society etc., in reality their relationship might be much more complicated. Myanmar has no reason to become a US vassal state and will try to keep its balance between China and United States. Washington on its turn will be forced by its ideological background (human rights groups) to raise the issue of Rohingya which, given the domestic landscape that makes it difficult for Suu Kyi to resolve this issue, would be the source of tensions between United States and Suu Kyi's government. That is why U.S.-Burma relations will not be as smooth as people who would look at it through democratic lenses would expect it to be.

## Conclusion

U.S.-Burma relations have never been most important to both sides. Burma became widely recognized in the USA thanks to Aung San Suu Kyi's charisma and her struggle with the military regime. The mistake many did in the West and in the USA in particular, was to consider her

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<sup>86</sup> *Al Jazeera Investigates – Genocide Agenda*, 26 October 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrQRYrpp2cI> (accessed 17.06.2016).

<sup>87</sup> Yhome, *Why Aung San Suu Kyi will not abandon....*

a democracy icon, whereas Suu Kyi has been a politician all along. Due to lack of important interests US Burma policy had been combined with the person of Suu Kyi – she herself became a dimension in American foreign policy towards Myanmar. In 2011, however, out of strategic reasons Myanmar became important again so U.S. policy makers sacrificed Suu Kyi for winning over the generals and liberating them from Chinese economic and political domination. Being a responsible politician Suu Kyi did not blame Obama administration openly, but instead she fought on and was able to win the general elections in 2015 and convince the generals to accept her leadership. Now, when she in charge of Myanmar's government she will probably try to keep the equilibrium in Burmese foreign policy and balance USA and China's influences. Her approach to the United States, although cordial, is not without strings, the most important one being the thorny issue of Rohingya that is to blame for the general disappointment towards Suu Kyi in the West. This all makes U.S.-Burma relationship a complicated one.

Nevertheless, despite complications, Myanmar-U.S. lack serious contradictory interests and seems to be stable in the nearest future. That is why this relationship falls into theoretical category of a “normalized asymmetry”<sup>88</sup> a situation when the relationship is not harmonious but both sides are confident of fulfilling their basic interests and expectations of mutual benefits.

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<sup>88</sup> Womack, *Asymmetry and Systemic Misperception...*, p. 5.

## Difficult Beginnings: The Problem Concerning the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Japan after World War II<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the process leading to the reestablishment of official relations between Poland and Japan after War World II. The authoress intends to present this process on the basis of unknown and unpublished primary sources, in Japanese and in Polish. There has been no research on this topic, despite the fact it is important also in its regional and global role, in the context of processes taking place in Europe, Asia and around the world. Bilateral relations between Poland and Japan were broken off on 11 December 1941, after Japan engaged in Asia-Pacific war. After the war, the Iron Curtain was falling deeper between East and West, the division between the two camps was becoming vivid. Post-war Poland found itself in the zone of Eastern influence, totally dependent on the USSR. This dependence naturally included Polish foreign policy also towards Japan. Greater possibilities for negotiations appeared after the death of Stalin (1953) and from that point the talks on reestablishing diplomatic relations were intensified.

### Introduction

The history of official relations between Poland and Japan extends over a period of nearly one hundred years. It started on 6 March 1919, when the government of Japan recognized independent Poland after World War I.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the entire interwar era our countries

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<sup>2</sup> The Ambassador of Japan in Paris, Matsui Yoshikazu, passed this decision to the Chairman of the Polish National Committee, Roman Dmowski, on 22 March hence this date is considered official by the Polish side. See: *Komitet Narodowy Polski – Paryż* [Polish National Committee – Paris], pp. 31–35, The Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw; *Taishō hachinen sangatsu muika no kakugi kettei* [Cabinet Decision, 6 March 1919] in 1.4.3.17 *Ōshū sensō kankei Pōrando mondai ikken* [Problem of Poland Concerning the War in Europe], Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; hereafter as GGS); More information on Polish-Japanese relations in: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-*

maintained friendly relations, although due to geopolitical conditions they did not keep especially intense contact. However, what was seen as important was primarily related to military and espionage cooperation. The last of which was of special interest to Japan as they did appreciate the abilities of the Polish intelligence officers. Moreover, Poland was a great strategic spot to gather intelligence, from both the East – USSR, and the West – Germany. When World War II started on 1 September 1939, Japan proclaimed itself neutral and kept friendly relations with Poland nearly to the end of 1941. Against their ally Germany, with whom Japan signed the Axis alliance agreeing to create new order in Europe, Japan kept allowing the Polish embassy in Tokyo to officially operate. Japan's attitude changed a year later, due to German pressure, since by that time, after starting the offensive against the USSR, Germany already occupied the whole of Poland and wanted it to disappear from the map of the world. Japan, already getting ready for an offensive against Allied forces, on 4 October 1941, took back its recognition of the ambassador of Poland, closed Polish outpost in Tokyo and officially closed Japan's embassy in Warsaw (which had practically been non-operational since the end of 1939). Bilateral relations were officially broken off on 11 December, three days after Japan engaged in operations in the Pacific. Even though the espionage cooperation was still ongoing, Poland, just as its allies, Great Britain and the USA, declared war on Japan.

### **The Iron Curtain – two camps after the war**

Eventually the Japanese offensives in Asia-Pacific Region ended in defeat and on 15 August 1945 the unconditional surrender of the Japanese was received, after having been prepared during the Potsdam Conference (17 July–2 August 1945) by the President of the United States, Harry Truman (1884–1972), Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (1874–1965; succeeded by Clement Attlee, 1883–1967) and the leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin (1874–1953).<sup>3</sup> On

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*japońskich 1904–1945* [History of Polish-Japanese Relations 1904–1945], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2009 (the first edition of the book: Warszawa: Bellona, 1996); the same book in Japanese as: *Nihon Pōrando kankeishi*, Tōkyō: Sairyūsha, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> 'Potsdam declaration' in *Zbiór dokumentów* [Collection of Documents], The Polish Institute of International Affairs (hereafter as ZdPISM), 1951, No. 9–10, Doc. 129, pp. 1540–1544. Representatives of the United States and Great Britain signed the Potsdam Declaration with the concurrence of the representative of China, Jiang Jieshi. The

2 September the representatives of Japan signed the capitulation act. The occupation by Allied forces, practically by American forces under General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), as a Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan, began. From the beginning, he attempted to bar Moscow from decisions concerning Japanese issues (although as the capitulation conditions dictated, the USSR was granted the South Sakhalin and four islands referred to as part of Kuril Islands by Russia, and as Northern Territory by Japan) to avoid a situation similar to the one that took place in Europe after the war; to avoid clear influence zones of opposite political systems.

The division between the two camps – capitalist and communist/socialist was becoming more and more vivid, the Iron Curtain was falling deeper between East and West, with additional hindrances due to the fight for influence zones in Europe and Asia. As an outcome of war and the crossing of the Red Army into the territories of Central and Eastern Europe, countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria found themselves under Soviet influence. In China the civil war ended with the victory of communist forces and on 1 October 1949, their leader, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). His opponent, Jiang Jieshi (1887–1975), the leader of the Kuomintang, took refuge on Taiwan where, supported by the United States, the Republic of China was established. Also, on the Korean Peninsula, two influence zones were created in 1948 – the land to the south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel north was established as the pro-American Republic of Korea while that to the north – the pro-Soviet Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In June 1950 the forces of DPRK engaged in war against the south – war that created millions of victims and ended only in the confirmation of the existing territorial division. This war, however, gained an international meaning, since Koreans from the north were supported by so called Chinese volunteers, and the south had support of the Americans operating as official United Nations forces. The situation was similar in Vietnam, divided into those supported by the French and

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signature of Stalin would be considered a breach of the law since the USSR was not officially at war with Japan and still had to abide by the neutrality treaty. The Russians joined the war on 8 August 1945. On the occupation of Japan and postwar situation see e.g.: Nakamura Takafusa, *Shōwashi* [History of Shōwa], Vol. 2, 1945–89, Tōkyō: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 2012, pp. 483–582.

the West – South Vietnam, and those having the backing of the USSR and the PRC – North Vietnam. Communists also had strong influence in Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Indonesia. The divisions in Asia were becoming deeper, the further consequence of which was an arms race, all the more intense after the successful test of Soviet nuclear weapons (September 1949).

This situation naturally had an influence on Washington's policies towards Tokyo. After the first years of deep reforms dealing with democratization, demilitarization and decentralization, introduced intensely since the beginning of the occupation, in 1949 the so called Reverse Course was introduced – Japan was supposed to gradually assume the role of the ally of America and due to its geographical location become the anti-communist beachhead during the intensifying Cold War. Washington increased economic aid for Japan, followed by the intensification of investments aimed at rebuilding the Japanese economy, and after the outbreak of war in Korea – concentrated on the Japanese defensive potential.

### **Cold War: Poland and Japan (1947–1951)**

Post-war Poland, according to decisions made by the heads of government of the United States, The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union during the Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945),<sup>4</sup> found itself in the zone of Eastern influence, totally dependent on the USSR. This dependence naturally also included our foreign policy, also towards Japan. Generally speaking, same as the USSR, Poland was against any quick signing of peace treaties with countries defeated during the war because of the necessity of taking into consideration the interests of the victors, including reparations. The documents show though, that the representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) did see the necessity to consider the stance of Poland in regard to its relations with Japan. On 12 April 1947, the head of the Eastern Division, Janusz Makarczyk (1901–1960), was writing to Tadeusz Chromecki (1904–1956?), the vice-director of the Political Department:

I do not find the exceptional stressing of the state of war between Poland and Japan advisable; it seems doubtful to me that we would have a significant vote in the case of a peace treaty with Japan or that we would have legal claim to demand reparations. In such a case we should

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<sup>4</sup> See: ZdPISM 1951, No. 9–10, Doc. 128, pp. 1537–1539.

reassess the way of our representation in Japan, especially that Belgium, who was in a comparable political situation to us, has its consulate in Tokyo. [...]

To gain a proper insight into the course of important political events in the whole Far East and to be able to have a due understanding of possible economic profits that Poland could gain from the new situation in Japan, the Polish government should have its own independent observation post in Tokyo.<sup>5</sup>

In the margin of the document, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zygmunt Modzelewski (1900–1954), wrote however that he considered the project of establishing the post premature.

In the next months of 1947, as the documents from the Archives of Polish MOFA reveal, Makarczyk kept informing his superiors about the situation in Japan, about the role of the United States in its restoration, and the preparations of the main Allied countries to sign the peace treaty. On 2 June he was explaining that Great Britain was going towards a solution where instead of the representatives of four or five powers, there would be representatives from eleven countries that had fought against Japan taking part in the negotiations, initiating “an attempt to dominate Russia”.<sup>6</sup> He also characterized briefly the new, and according to him, “centrist” cabinet, lead by socialist Christian, Katayama Tetsu (1887–1978) from 27 May.<sup>7</sup>

On 10 March, Makarczyk, concerning the issue of MacArthur’s policies with regard to demilitarizing Japan, stated that the same policies were strongly connected to those with Russia. “America is not pushing towards the complete demilitarization of Japan, considering Japan a future vassal-ally in case of a possible duel with the USSR”. Then in September he was writing about Japan’s importance for the United States’ economic interests, which was supposedly troubling to the Eastern Bloc.<sup>8</sup> At this point it should be mentioned that at more or less the same time, the autumn of 1947, the MOFA and the Ministry of

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<sup>5</sup> “Dept. Polityczny, Wyd. Wschodni, *Japonia 08. Org. stosunków dyplomatycznych (...), 1947*” [Political Department, Eastern Division, Japan 08. Organization of diplomatic relations /.../, 1947], collection 6, file 1535, bundle 97, pp. 1–2, The Central Archives of Modern Records (hereafter as AAN), Warsaw.

<sup>6</sup> Political Department, Eastern Division, *Japan 2421. Political notes, 1947*, collection 6, file 1536, bundle 97, p. 1, AAN.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 9–10.

Commerce and Trade in Warsaw were considering the possibility of establishing trade relations with Japan. With this proposition in mind, the Polish authorities were approached in the spring that year by the American embassy in Warsaw and the Chamber of Commerce in Osaka.<sup>9</sup> Although some of Polish officials were interested in this exchange, especially imports from Japan, an official agreement on the subject was never reached.

### **San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951)**

Both the intensification of the Cold War and implementation of the Reverse Course in relation to Japan stepped up the speed at which the peace treaty was worked on. In the new international situation it became increasingly important that the security system in this region of Asia had to be protection not only against the rebirth of Japanese militarism, but first and foremost against the expansion of communism. Connected to all this was the contingency of keeping American army bases on Japanese territory (mainly on Okinawa) after the occupation. Keeping the bases after reaching peace was even proposed by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1878–1967).<sup>10</sup>

After the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula, efforts on signing the treaty again picked up speed. On 26 October 1950, John Foster Dulles (1888–1959), plenipotentiary of the Department of State regarding this issue (Secretary of State from 1953), handed Jakub Malik (1906–1980), representative of the USSR to the United Nations, the memorandum containing the conditions of the Treaty of Peace.<sup>11</sup> Moscow rejected them in the middle of the following year, deciding that separate talks with Washington were not advisable. In this case the Americans started to consider the possibility of finalizing the occupation of Japan without the participation of the countries from the Eastern Bloc.

The San Francisco Peace Conference took place from 4 to 8 September 1951. Fifty-two countries were invited to participate. The

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<sup>9</sup> Political Department, Eastern Division, Japan 25. Republic of Poland's economic relations. Propositions of establishing trade relations with Japan, 1947, collection 6, file 1537, bundle 97, pp. 1–8, AAN.

<sup>10</sup> Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Katarzyna Starecka, *Japonia* [Japan], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2004, pp. 218–219. On San Francisco Conference see also: Nakamura Takafusa, pp. 562–582.

<sup>11</sup> Wojciech Materski and Waldemar Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [History of Polish Diplomacy], Vol. 6, 1944/1945–1989, Warszawa: PISM, 2010, p. 421.



countries omitted were the PRC and Taiwan, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Mongolian People's Republic. Moreover, countries that did not take part were India, Yugoslavia and Burma. On 8 September the Treaty of Peace with Japan<sup>12</sup> was signed by 49 countries – the only countries present that did not sign the treaty were the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia. During the conference issues of territorial disputes involving territories occupied until 1945 by Japan were resolved. Tokyo was obliged to pay retributions but only to the extent that they would not endanger Japan's economic recovery.<sup>13</sup> It was also pointed out that Japan, as a sovereign country, had the right to defend itself, and due to its disarmament, had the right to sign treaties concerning collective security. It was then announced that even though the occupation forces had to withdraw from the Japanese Islands within a period of 90 days, there existed a possibility for a foreign military presence on Japanese soil under the clear and explicit request of the Japanese authorities. On 8 September Japan and the USA signed a Security Treaty in which they agreed among other things, that the USA would place its ground, air and naval military forces on and around Japanese territory.<sup>14</sup>

Let us get back to the issue of Poland's attitude towards the Treaty of Peace. As is common knowledge, Poland, the same as Czechoslovakia, was fully dependent on the USSR in its foreign policies. The invitation to the San Francisco Peace Conference was handed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanisław Skrzyszewski (1901–1978), by Ambassador

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<sup>12</sup> Treaty of Peace with Japan in:

<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20136/volume-136-I-1832-English.pdf> (accessed 12.10.2015).

<sup>13</sup> Japan recognized the independence of Korea, abandoned the claim to Taiwan, Penghu Islands, Kuril Islands and a part of Sakhalin. *Traktat pokoju z Japonią* [Treaty of Peace with Japan] see also: Ludwik Gelberg (ed.), *Prawo międzynarodowe i historia dyplomatyczna. Wybór dokumentów* [International Law and History of Diplomacy. (Selection of Documents)], Vol. 1, Warszawa: PWN, 1954, pp. 455–465.

<sup>14</sup> *Security Treaty Between Japan and the United States of America*, Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo: <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19510908.T2E.html> (accessed 12.10. 2015); See also: *Traktat o bezpieczeństwie między USA a Japonią* [Security Treaty between the USA and Japan] in *Prawo międzynarodowe...*, Gelberg (ed.), Vol. 1, pp. 466–467. Those forces were only to be used to keep peace in the region and to secure Japan from an outside attack. It was also stated that Japan would not grant permission to set military bases on its territory to any other country without consent of the USA.

of the USA in Warsaw Joseph Flack (1894–1955), on 20 July.<sup>15</sup> It was rejected since the document did not include important fragments regarding the Treaty. The invitation was finally approved by the end of August. The Polish delegation consisted of: Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Stefan Wierbłowski (1904–1977), Ambassador of Poland in Washington, Józef Winiewicz (1905–1984) and Director of the Department of Treaty Issues of the MOFA, Manfred Lachs (1914–1993).

Wierbłowski spoke three times during the conference. His first and second address – on 5 September – were concerning the procedure itself.<sup>16</sup> The text of the treaty was decided on in advance and sent to the participants, so they did not have any possibility of participating in negotiating its contents. Wierbłowski demanded the creation of a statutory committee since without it, according to him, the San Francisco meeting was not a conference of sovereign countries. The third address – on 7 September – was Wierbłowski's complete support of the stance of the USSR.<sup>17</sup> He talked about not keeping the resolutions from Yalta and Potsdam on the issue of peace in the Far East and territorial issues. He also called the exploit of not inviting the PRC to the conference “a shameless act of lawlessness”.

Finally on 8 September the delegation of the People's Republic of Poland refused to sign the Treaty. During the press conference on the same day Wierbłowski concluded that Poland could not agree to the form of the Treaty of Peace others had accepted in San Francisco<sup>18</sup>. In an interview for the Polish Press Agency he added that this treaty had gone far towards creating new sources of tension in Asia and contributed to “rebuilding a defeated militarism in the service of American imperialism”.<sup>19</sup>

### **Improvement of Polish-Japanese relations (1953–1956)**

The next years did not bring vivid changes in Polish policies towards Japan, although many politicians talked about Japan in positive terms, acknowledging that there were no specific points of conflict between our

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<sup>15</sup> Materski and Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Vol. 6, p. 421.

<sup>16</sup> ZdPISM 1951, No. 9/10, Doc. 151 i 154, pp. 1806–1811 and 1827–1837.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Doc. 157, pp. 1936–1948.

<sup>18</sup> ZdPISM 1951, No. 9/10, Doc. 159, pp. 1969–1971.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Doc. 160, pp. 1972–1979.

countries.<sup>20</sup> Greater possibilities for negotiations appeared after the death of Stalin in 1953, since Moscow also alleviated its attitude towards Japan. From that point on the talks on reestablishing diplomatic relations were intensified, which Poland observed with great interest. But ending the state of war between Poland and Japan on the grounds of a peace treaty was still impossible both for political and legislative reasons. In Article 26 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty it was stated that a bilateral treaty of peace concluded by Japan could only be possible on the same or substantially the same conditions as provided by the treaty of 1951. It was also stated, that “this obligation on the part of Japan will expire three years after the first coming into force of the present Treaty”.<sup>21</sup>

The next diplomatic documents regarding relations with Japan appear in 1954. In the Polish MOFA it was believed that even though signing the treaty with Japan was still difficult in the given situation, there was a possibility for reestablishing diplomatic relations without officially finalizing the state of war. It was what happened for example with Italy and Finland – Poland had kept relations with those countries before the treaties of peace were signed.<sup>22</sup> The second Minister from the Japanese embassy in Paris, Takahashi, was talking about this issue with Klos, the Press Attaché of the embassy of Poland. Within the Polish MOFA it was decided that the case was too substantial and a minister should replace the attaché for example. In the end of a note with no author from 4 April 1954 there was an important passage: “The government of the People’s Republic of Poland, given a proposal on the part of Japan, is ready to exchange outposts through establishing embassies in the capitols of both countries”.<sup>23</sup>

Negotiations considering this issue were ongoing until February 1957. On 22 April the Polish MOFA was granted Moscow’s approval for such operations – the Ambassador of the USSR in Warsaw, Nikołaj Michajłow (1906–1982), told the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Skrzyszewski, that he did not see any obstacles in undertaking

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<sup>20</sup> Materski and Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Vol. 6, p. 423.

<sup>21</sup> See: <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19510908.T1E.html>; Cf.: *Prawo międzynarodowe...*, p. 465.

<sup>22</sup> Department V, Division III, *Japan 08. Establishing diplomatic relations with Japan, 1954–1957*, collection 12, file 367, bundle 15, p. 1, AAN.

<sup>23</sup> Department V, Division III, *Japan 08. Establishing diplomatic relations with Japan, 1954–1957*, collection 12, file 367, bundle 15, p. 1, AAN.

negotiations with Japan, but he did suggest that the wording of the document should leave the issue of the peace treaty open-ended. He also expressed his support for signing commercial agreements between the People's Republic of Poland and Japan.<sup>24</sup>

The case continued for the next few months. From May 1954 talks in Paris were conducted, according to the suggestion of the Polish MOFA, by Chargé d'Affairs Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918–1980). It was still stressed though that the agreement on reestablishing bilateral relations would not solve the contentious issues between the two countries, specifically the Polish attitude towards the Treaty of San Francisco. The Director of the Department of Treaty Issues of the MOFA, Lachs, maintained the above-mentioned opinion, that even though it was most advisable to establish relations with Japan, signing the peace treaty was still impossible for legislative reasons.<sup>25</sup>

The bilateral talks were continued in 1955 and 1956 in Warsaw, Paris, Stockholm and New York. The Polish optimistic attitude concerning the issue of establishing official relations with Japan is reflected in the correspondence of Nishimura Kumao (1899–1980), the Japanese Ambassador in Paris, which was addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shigemitsu Mamoru (1887–1957).<sup>26</sup> In the note dated 21 January 1955, he writes that Stanisław Gajewski (1912–1995), Polish Ambassador to France, received a note from the Japanese government considering this issue and that according to him, establishing bilateral relations was possible. More significantly, the issue of regulating relations on the Tokyo – Moscow line is here of no consequence and should not influence the relations of the Warsaw – Moscow line.<sup>27</sup> He went on to confirm the Polish attitude towards the Treaty of San Francisco. Further, Minister Nishimura wrote that regardless of establishing diplomatic relations, the Polish side also considered it necessary to sign trade and cultural agreements. The content of the agreement on reestablishing bilateral relations was to be jointly

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 4–8.

<sup>26</sup> *Pōrando to no kokkō kaifuku ni kansuru ken* [Case of Reestablishing Diplomatic Relations with Poland] in A\*1.3.3.5-1 *Nihon Pōrandokan gaikō kankei zasshū. Kokkō kaifuku kōshō kankei* [Various Documents Regarding Diplomacy between Japan and Poland. Negotiations Regarding Reestablishing National Relations], Part 1, pp. 15–35, GGS.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 33–35.

formulated with consent of the governments of both countries and jointly proclaimed. He announced that the project of the agreement discussed in Paris would be presented for further acceptance.<sup>28</sup> Ambassador Gajewski stressed that the Polish people continue to harbor friendly feelings towards Japan. In one of the successive notes on various topics to Minister Shigemitsu, from 10 June 1955, Ambassador Nishimura in Paris described his talk with Ambassador Stanisław Gajewski on the subject of the attitude of communist countries towards various European problems, which was important information for Japan.<sup>29</sup>

In the context of Polish-Japanese relations, the address by the President of the Council of Ministers, Józef Cyrankiewicz (1911–1989), that took place in the Sejm, Polish Parliament on 16 March 1955, did bare importance.<sup>30</sup> Speaking on the subject of Polish foreign policy he acknowledged that the normalization of relations with Japan was necessary. The change in the USSR's attitude towards Japan at this time was favorable. Negotiations were ongoing between both countries from June to September 1955, and in the beginning of the year 1956. The agreement however was not signed for a lack of accordance as far as the issue pertaining to the rights to four islands – Habomai, Shikotan, Etorofu and Kunashiri, was concerned. After the war the USSR was vested with rights to the islands, Japan did not consent. Neither in Yalta, nor in San Francisco was the exact extent of the Kuril Islands clearly specified and in Tokyo the islands in question, referred to as Northern Territory, were considered the rightful territory of Japan. For this reason, signing the peace treaty was still out of the question. Finally though, on 19 October 1956 in Moscow, after long and intractable negotiations, both parties setting apart the normalization of relations from the peace treaty signed a joint declaration on finalizing the state of war and the reestablishment of diplomatic relations.<sup>31</sup>

It can be said that since the year 1955 the issue of regulating Polish-Japanese relations, although still dependent on Moscow's policies, picked up steam. The gradual build up of cooperation between Poland

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<sup>28</sup> Project of the agreement see: *ibid.*, pp. 38–40.

<sup>29</sup> *Ōshū shomondai ni taisuru kyōsan'en no tachiba ni tsuki Pōrando taishi no danwa* [Talk with Polish Ambassador Concerning the Stance of the Communist Bloc towards Various European Issues], A'1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 68–73, GGS.

<sup>30</sup> Full text of the exposé in: *Trybuna Ludu* [People's Tribune], 17 March 1955, pp. 3–5.

<sup>31</sup> *ZdPISM* 1956, No. 10, Doc. 308, pp. 1584–1591.

and Japan became visible. For example in the period from 22 to 25 September 1955, upon the invitation issued by the Sejm (lower house of parliament of the PRP) and the Polish Inter-parliamentary Group, a delegation of Japanese members of the parliament visited Poland for the first time. The leader of the delegation, Nomizo Masaru (1898–1978), during a press conference in Warsaw also stressed the need for normalization of mutual relations.<sup>32</sup>

In the same year, at the University of Warsaw, upon the initiative of an outstanding japanologist, prof. Wiesław Kotański (1915–2005), the Japanese Studies Section was founded appending the Department of Chinese Studies.<sup>33</sup> A Polish delegation took part in the International Conference to Ban Nuclear Weapons organized in Hiroshima. The visit of a delegation of the Committee of International Communications of the Japanese Labor Union of Construction and Lumber Workers in May 1956 launched future contact between Polish and Japanese unionists. On 28 September 1956, The Japan-Poland Society (*Nihon Pōrando Kyōkai*) was founded in Tokyo.<sup>34</sup> Its inauguration took place in the Japanese Parliament building and was attended by Mori Motojirō (1907–1999), Nomizo Masaru, Sakō Itoko, a wife of Shūichi (1887–1949), the first and the last before the World War II Ambassador of Japan to Poland, Hara Chieko (1914–2001), the first Japanese pianist who took part in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw (1937); all of whom had contact with Poland and had visited Poland before or after the war. The main organizer of the society was Mori Motojirō, a member of the higher house of parliament and a correspondent of the *Dōmei* Press Agency in Poland before the war, who took upon himself the duties of the secretary general until elections for the office of the president took place.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, p. 425.

<sup>33</sup> Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Katarzyna Starecka, *Kalendarium kontaktów polsko-japońskich* [Timeline of Polish-Japanese Contacts], *Japonica*, No. 12, 2000, p. 224. See also: *Pōrando Nihon kankei nenpyō* [Timeline of Polish-Japanese Contacts] in *Shōpan – Pōrando – Nihon; Chopin – Polska – Japonia* [Chopin – Poland – Japan], Tōkyō: Toppan Printing Co., Ltd., 1999, pp. 237–238.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Mori Motojirō to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in *Department V Division III, Japan 568. Note on the foundation of The Japan-Poland Society 1956*, collection 12, file 364, bundle 15, pp. 1–2, AAN.

<sup>35</sup> The Society was disbanded in 1961 then revived in 1975 thanks to Mori's efforts. Documents from the collection of Mori Mariko.

### **The restoration of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan**

Diplomatic talks between the representatives of Poland and Japan were led with greater intensity in the year of 1956. These talks were not limited to Warsaw and Tokyo. During March in Stockholm the Japanese envoy Ōe Akira talked to the PRP envoy Koszutski expressing the belief that the relations would soon be established.<sup>36</sup> The Japanese Ambassador in The Hague, Okamoto Suemasa (1892–1967), who visited Poland accompanied by his wife and the attaché of the embassy, Yatabe Atsuhiko (1929–), in the period from 1 to 4 May 1956, in order to sign The Hague Protocol to the Warsaw Convention on International Carriage by Air, shared this opinion. During a meeting at the MOFA, as well as during his prior talk with the PRP envoy in The Hague, Tadeusz Findziński (1911–1987), the Ambassador claimed that soon after regulating the relations with the USSR, it would be possible to establish relations between Poland and Japan.<sup>37</sup> He also stated that “we did not have any disputes, we were friends and we can still be friends in the future”.<sup>38</sup> The Ambassador visited the Auschwitz concentration camp and on this occasion alluded to the camps in USSR territory that still held Japanese prisoners. He inquired whether the Polish side could influence its Eastern neighbor to regulate this problem as soon as possible.

The issue of Japanese relations with Eastern European countries in the years 1939–1956, including the possibility of reestablishing official diplomatic contacts, is presented by the Department of Europe and United States of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in documents of 5 and 22 June 1956.<sup>39</sup> Poland is discussed here first and in most detail, before Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania and Yugoslavia, which could mean that Japan wanted to reestablish the relations with Poland promptly in view of very good pre-war contacts.

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<sup>36</sup> Note from 24 October 1956 in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 7, AAN.

<sup>37</sup> *Department V Division III, Japonia 074. Wizyta w Polsce japońskiego Ambasadora w Hadze S. Okamoto* [Japan 074. Visit to Poland of the Japanese Ambassador to Hague, S. Okamoto], collection 12, file 362, bundle 15, pp. 1–7, AAN.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Waga kuni to Tōō shokoku to no kankei* [Our Country's Relations with Eastern European Countries] and *Tōō shokoku to no kokkō kaifuku mondai ni kansuru keii* [Details Concerning the Issue of Reestablishing National Relations with Eastern European Countries] in: A'1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 81–94, GGS.

Ultimately the negotiations were underway presumably until the end of May 1956 in New York, and the role of the negotiator on the Japanese side concerning the case of reestablishing relations with Poland fell to the first Japanese Ambassador to the UN, Kase Toshikazu (1903–2004).<sup>40</sup> According to Polish documents from 5 and 12 October, he proposed beginning such talks to Jerzy Michałowski (1909–1993), PRP Ambassador to the UN.<sup>41</sup> He referred to the arrangements of the Japanese representative in Paris and Ambassador Gajewski, where it was decided, that there was no need to wait for signing the peace treaty between Japan and the USSR. On 18 October Michałowski received official instructions from his authorities reaffirming what was already written about two years before: essentially stating that Poland was ready to establish diplomatic relations, the declarations of termination of the state of war were to be exchanged without deciding the issue of the peace treaty, diplomatic representatives from the rank of ambassadors were to be exchanged and trade relations established.

Kase was writing in detail about his talks with Michałowski in his addresses to Minister Shigemitsu (1896–1987; in December 1956 he was succeeded by Kishi Nobusuke), stressing among other entries the positive attitude of the Polish representative.<sup>42</sup> He also reported on the course of talks with representatives from other countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary.<sup>43</sup> Description of all the documents from the Diplomatic Archives of the MOFA in Tokyo is far exceeding the frame of this article but it should be pointed out that many of those documents were issued in December 1956, which shows the developing drive to finalize the talks and sign the official agreement.<sup>44</sup> By the end of that month the first drafts of an agreement with Poland emerged, addressed at first to Japanese Chargé d'affaires in Paris, Matsui Akira, who most likely discussed them with the PRP Ambassador.<sup>45</sup> From January 1957 Ambassador Kase was additionally forwarding the notes on this topic, addressed already to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs,

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<sup>40</sup> Note from 24.10.1956 in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 7, AAN.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>42</sup> For example see note from 22 October 1956, *Pōrando no kokkō kaifuku mōshiire no ken* [Case of Proposal of Reestablishing National Relations with Poland] in A'1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 95–97, GGS.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 118–119 and 120.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–128.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128–139.



Kishi Nobusuke.<sup>46</sup> In the beginning of February he informed the minister in detail about amendments that were applied with mutual consent to the official version of the agreement – in French.<sup>47</sup>

A confidential note to the PRP Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marian Naszkowski (1912–1996), issued by the director of Department V, Edward Śluczański, in the beginning of 1957 (precise date unknown) clarified that the point of dispute was Article 4 of the agreement, whose wording according to the Japanese side was supposed to be:

“The People’s Republic of Poland and Japan mutually waive all claims of the representative State and its organizations and nationals against the other State and its organizations and nationals arising out of the war between the two countries”.<sup>48</sup>

At first the Polish side, most of all the Ministry of Finance, was against including this clause, but finally, on 8 February, Naszkowski, after receiving the acceptance of the MOFA, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, sent an address with the full text of the agreement between the PRP and Japan (containing the above article) asking for the approbation of the President of the Council of Ministers, Józef Cyrankiewicz.<sup>49</sup>

Finally on 8 February 1957 in New York, the Japanese Ambassador to the UN, Kase Toshikazu, and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and also President of the Polish delegation to the XI session of the UN General Assembly, Józef Winiewicz (1905–1984), having authorization from their superiors, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Kishi Nobusuke and Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz,<sup>50</sup> signed the *Agreement Relating to the Restoration of Normal Relations Between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan* [*Nihonkoku to Pōrando Jinmin Kyōwakoku to no aida no kokkō kaifuku ni kansuru kyōtei*].<sup>51</sup>

The joint announcement of 9 February stated:

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 144–150, 167–170, 177–182 and 190–194.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 220–227.

<sup>48</sup> A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 80.

<sup>49</sup> „Departament V Wydział III, Japonia 08....”, pp. 18–20, AAN.

<sup>50</sup> A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 291 and 302, GGS.

<sup>51</sup> Japanese version in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, pp. 19–22; English version pp. 79–81, GGS; Polish version in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08....*, pp. 19–20, AAN.

“The restoration of normal relations between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan has been a pending problem of the two countries. The governments of both countries prompted by a desire to settle this question without further delay, instructed Ambassador Jerzy Michalowski of Poland and Ambassador Toshikazu Kase of Japan, both permanent representatives to the United Nations respectively to hold talks to this effect. As a result of their negotiations complete agreement has been reached between the two Governments and the Agreement relative to the Restoration of Normal Relations between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan was signed today, 8 February 1957, by Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef Winiewicz on behalf of Poland and Ambassador Kase on behalf of Japan”.

Upon the coming into effect of thos Agreement, Poland and Japan will terminate the state of war, reestablish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors between them. The two nations will thus resume their traditional relationship of amity and friendliness. This will redound not only to the well-being of both peoples but to the promotion of world peace through easing international tensions.<sup>52</sup>

The exchange of ratification documents took place on 18 May 1957 in the building of the MOFA in Warsaw<sup>53</sup>. The Polish side was represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rapacki (1909–1970), and the Japanese side by the Ambassador Extraordinary at Large, Sonoda Sunao (1913–1984).<sup>54</sup> Minister Rapacki expressed the belief that the Agreement marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Poland-Japan relations, in which political, economical and cultural relations would prosper. Ambassador Sonoda made statements including:

“Our countries were connected in the past by ties of cordial friendship that were broken during World War II bringing great harm to both nations [...] Our nation and government [...] are convinced

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<sup>52</sup> See: *Press Office, Embassy of the Polish People’s Republic, „Press Release”* in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 79, GGS; Japanese version in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, p. 289, GGS; Polish version in *Trybuna Ludu*, 09 February 1957, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> About the course of preparations see various documents in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, pp. 17–66, GGS.

<sup>54</sup> *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 23, AAN.

that our friendship will tighten in the best interests of Japan and Poland”.

After the ratification Sonoda was received by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party, Władysław Gomułka (1905–1982), and the Prime Minister, Józef Cyrankiewicz. The same day Sonoda in his address to Minister Kishi reported that the ratification of the Agreement went as planned. He also informed his superior about the meeting with Gomułka and the Prime Minister.<sup>55</sup>

### Conclusion

Soon after the Agreement was signed, both parties embarked on the preparations necessary in order to open their diplomatic posts in Tokyo and Warsaw as well as selecting candidates for their ambassadors. Polish documents show that those works were already started on 9 February 1957.<sup>56</sup> Finally, the first Ambassadors became Tadeusz Żebrowski (from November 1957) and Ōta Saburō (from January 1958). The official relations between two countries began. But the still ongoing Cold War did not help to facilitate this development, the political and diplomatic relations were not so easy and did develop very slowly. Fortunately, owing to the mutual sympathy between the two nations, which has existed since the beginning of the twentieth century, cultural, academic and economic cooperation has been developing steadily.

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<sup>55</sup> A' 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 71, GGS.

<sup>56</sup> Note for Minister Naszkowski, Director of Department V Śluczański in *Department V Division III, Japan 091. Organizational and human resource matters of the planned embassy of the PRP in Tokyo*, 1957, p. 23, AAN.



## The Late-Qing Illustrated *Shujing* from the Sinology Library in Moscow<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The article deals with the 1905 lithographic illustrated edition of *Shujing tu shuo* (*The Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary*), kept in Moscow. This edition of the ancient Confucian Classics is rather special, since it was designed as a comic book implementing principles of “explanation through pictures”. The canonical Ancient Chinese text is available in the book but is hardly simplified for an unprepared reader. The comments explain the engraved line drawings following and representing separate portions of the canonical text. Being the last official Qing edition of *Shujing*, it was destined to become a popular version of the Confucian classic.

**Key words:** *Shujing*, *Shangshu*, Confucian classic, book illustration, Qing dynasty.

### Introduction

Several years ago, when preparing for publication of the Russian translation of the Chinese classic *The Esteemed Book* (*Shangshu*), also known as the *The Book of Historical Documents* (*Shujing*), I found two copies of the 1905 late-Qing lithographic edition of *Shujing tu shuo* (*The Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary*).<sup>2</sup> These books have been preserved by the Sinology Department of the Institute for Scientific Information on Social Sciences at the Russian Academy of Sciences located in another academic institution also in Moscow – The Institute for Far Eastern Studies. The Department is popularly known as The Sinology Library. Some illustrations from this specific edition were subsequently included in a book with the Russian

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<sup>1</sup> The research was granted a financial support by The Russian Foundation for Humanities (research project No.15-34-01301).

<sup>2</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo* [The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary], 16 Vols., in 2 casings. S. I., 1905.

translation of *Shangshu* along with a brief description of the Qing edition, although not without some inaccuracies.<sup>3</sup>

The 1905 illustrated *Shujing* occupies a special position in the traditional Chinese canonical studies (*jing, xue*). Moreover, not so many of its copies survived in China and around the world. The two books in the Sinology Library in Moscow are valuable Chinese book-printing artefacts and are a good chance for the study of book illustrations in China.

The Moscow copies of *Shujing tu shuo* hold conventional book set features. Both consist of 50 *juans* (scrolls) in 16 brochures (*ce*) kept in two book casings (*tao*). The brochures are provided with paper jackets of a yellow colour (which was probably originally close to lemon). The book casings are covered with yellow (now rather brownish) tussore. The page dimension (half of a printed paper sheet) is 32x21.5 cm. The Imprint frame dimension is 16x23.8 cm. Each page is ruled out into 10 columns respectively with up to 22 standard sized Chinese characters. The Chinese-made paper is thin.

Printing is executed by lithography technique. The sheet is bi-fold (folded into halves in the middle), with the clean side of the sheet facing inwards and the brochures are stitched over the free edges of the folded sheets (creased edge facing outside). The illustration usually takes one page of the sheet (i.e. it does not pass over the fold of the sheet). In most cases, the printing paint is black, however, there are several pages (sheets) in chapters 2-1 and 6-0 containing maps of the Twelve and Nine Ancient Regions; on those, the outlines of geographic items are printed in red, and geographic names are in black. In these cases, the illustration occupies the whole sheet and is located on both sides of the bi-fold.

There is an inscription “Guangxu 31<sup>st</sup> year” on the top of the side running title (along the fold) showing the year of the printing. The middle part of the running title is occupied by the title of the book “*Qin ding shu jing tu shuo*” and the number of *juan*. Still lower after an extended blank there is the sheet number inside the *juan*.

The condition of the books is good. The Moscow book sets look identical to the other known imprints of this book. A representative

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<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Mihaylovich Mayorov (trans., ed., comment., afterword), Lidiya Vladimirovna Stezhenskaya (ed., afterword) and Chtimaya Kniga, *Drevnekitayskie teksty i perevod* [The Esteemed Book: Ancient Chinese Texts and Translation], Moskva: IDV RAN, 2014. Vide List of illustrations on pp. 1093–1103.

sample of this edition can be seen on the website of Academia Sinica, Taiwan.<sup>4</sup>

Since the 2nd century BC, *Shujing* had been an integral part of Confucian learning and education for more than two thousand years. The fact that its illustrated official edition saw the light of day precisely in 1905, when the national examination system based on the Neo-Confucian doctrine, was abolished, raises a number of questions for a researcher. The idea promoted by some Chinese bibliographers, that the weakened Qing political regime of Manchu nobility allegedly tried to resist reforms and to maintain its ideological influence, by means of this publication is hardly acceptable.<sup>5</sup> It is quite enough to look through the list of the eight major participants who prepared the future illustrations' synopses and text interpretations. Here we see Sun Jianai (1827–1909), the “great dignitary” (minister) of education at that time; Zhang Baixi (1847–1907) – “Father of the Chinese University” and main contributor to the new educational system in China; Zhang Hengjia (1847–1911) – first president of the Capital (Beijing) University; as well as other five high-ranking officials of the Qing government, who were all adherents of the “new policies” faction (see *Zhiming (Designations)* section in the beginning of the first brochure).<sup>6</sup> Out of these eight men, only Rong Qing (1859–1917) was an ethnic Mongol, and the rest were all Han Chinese.

According to the memorial by Sun Jianai and others, the work on the book began in 1903. However, a year before that, the throne had been presented with the first draft of the education system reform. Additionally, the final version of the educational regulations of the Qing Empire had already been published in 1904. Both the project and the final version of the regulations were drawn up by Zhang Baixi, Sun Jianai and the others. Thus, it is much more reasonable to believe that the illustrated *Shujing* is a reformist book.

This is also evident from the memorials of the editors directed to Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu. These memorials are included in the book as a sort of preface (sections: *Biao wen*

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<sup>4</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo* [The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary]: [http://ebook.teldap.tw/ebook\\_detail.jsp?id=52](http://ebook.teldap.tw/ebook_detail.jsp?id=52) (accessed on August 9, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo* [The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary], Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Zhiming* [Designations], p. 1a.

(*Memorials*), *Zou zhe* (*Reports*), *Tiao li* (*Regulations*)). Here we find the objective of “studying [Confucian] canons for [practical] application” – a popular slogan of the “New Policies” movement.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the book fits well into the program of Confucian canonical literature teaching as part of the new educational system. The main emphasis on illustrations (there are more than 570 of them in the book) in learning content; the simple style of interpretations and explanations, understandable even to “women and children”; and at last, the distribution of the book among all provincial schools – all these suggest that the book was meant to be used in primary and secondary levels of the new education system. In compliance with the same educational system, teaching hours for Confucian classics in the higher school were to be considerably reduced.

*Shujing* remained the only book from the Confucian canon which was prepared by the Qing government as a popular illustrated edition. This happened in spite of the fact that, as the editors pointed out, there already was quite a custom of illustrating *The Book of Changes* (*Yijing*) and the three canons of Ritual (*Liji*, *Zhouli*, *Yili*).<sup>8</sup> It is clear that the importance of its content dictated the choice of this particular classic, rather than technical or other reasons. The nature of *The Book of Historical Documents* had always been an important issue in/to the Chinese “canonical studies” (*jing xue*). Actually, the question precisely why this classic was chosen for publication in such a form remains an unresolved problem in modern historical scholarship.

The main issue is whether *Shujing* should be considered as a book reflecting a rather narrowly understood, but quite real political history of the country, or rather as an exposé of an ancient political doctrine, still not fully shaped and relayed in a certain way, later modified by Confucians and only indirectly related to history.

The Qing official *jing xue* belonged to mainstream Cai Chen (1167–1230/1232) commentary of the Neo-Confucian tradition, which, in turn, was based on the approach of Zhu Xi (1130–1200). The founder of Neo-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. *Tiao li* [Regulations], pp. 2b and 3a. The New Policies were reforms in various spheres of Late-Qing government, undertaken after the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 and carried on roughly until 1908, the year of Dowager Empress Cixi's death.

<sup>8</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Biao wen* [Memorials], p. 2a; *Zou zhe* [Reports], p. 1a. Various diagrams, tables and images of ancient artefacts are meant. Traditional illustrated editions of these canons, due to understandable reasons, did not have narrative illustrations.



Confucianism proposed taking into account – first and foremost – a conceptual fidelity of *Shujing* to the teachings, and left the issues of textual authenticity and the book's related historicity for the future. *The Book of Historical Documents* in the teachings of this school represented the true “Way of a Sovereign”.<sup>9</sup>

The official Qing teachings fully shared this approach. In the second half of the XVIII century, the new Manchurian version of *Shujing* did not transcribe its title, but gave an interpretation of its meaning, rendered as *Dasan-i nomun*, i.e. the book (*nomun*) of a sovereign government, public administration or government (*dasan*).<sup>10</sup> However, when discussing the first chapter, the commentators of the 1905 illustrated *Shujing* called this book “the first Chinese history since the ancient times”, and the “unity of the Way” of the ancient rulers is only mentioned in the explanation of the first section *Yu shu* (*Yu Writings*) and is provided by purely historiographic grounds.<sup>11</sup>

The relation of the *Shujing tu shuo* canonical text interpretation to the previous *jing xue* tradition should be the subject of a separate study. Hopefully, it will show both the common grounds of modernity and tradition in studies and presentations of *Shujing* to the reader as well as the disruption of this tradition. In their prefacing memorials, the Qing

<sup>9</sup> Mayorov and Stezhenskaya, *Chtimaya kniga...*, pp. 965–974.

<sup>10</sup> For further elaborations on this, see: Nikita Yakovlevich Bichurin (transl.), Vladimir Mihaylovich Mayorov, Mariya Aleksandrovna Smirnova and Lidiya Vladimirovna Stezhenskaya (transcrib.), V. M. Mayorov (ed.), “*Drevnyaya kitayskaya istoriya*” N. Ya. Bichurina [The Ancient Chinese History (translated by) N. Ya. Bichurin], Moskva: IDV RAN, 2015, p. 521. The Russian Academician V. P. Vasiliev (1818–1900) used Manchurian translations as an argument in his judgement on the content of *Shujing*. For more detail, see: Vasilii Pavlovich Vasiliev, *Ocherk istorii kitayskoy literatury. Pereizdanie na russkom i kitayskom yazykah* [Review of Chinese Literature History: Reprint in the Russian and Chinese Languages], Sankt- Peterburg: Institut Konfuciya v SpbGU, 2013, p. 168. A. M. Karapetyants does not consider *Shujing* a historical source. In his opinion, the canonical character of *Shangshu* in the Confucian school was seen as «the system of reality reflection, its classification by specific language means, and not as a simply historical document”. In this sense, it stood close to *Yijing* [The Book of Changes], which was seen by the Confucians as “the list of standard situations”. See: Artemiy Mihaylovich Karapetyants, ‘Formirovanie sistemy kanonov v Kitae’ [‘Canons’ System Forming in China’] in *Etnicheskaya istoria narodov Vostochnoy i Yugo-Vostochnoy Azii v drevnosti i srednie veka* [Ethnic History of the East and South-East Asia Peoples in Antiquity and Middle Ages], Mihail Vasilievich Kryukov and Mihail Viktorovich Sofronov (eds.), Moskva: Nauka, Glavnaya Redaktsiya Vostochnoy Literatury, 1981, pp. 240–241 and 245.

<sup>11</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, juan (scroll) 1, p. 1a.

compilers stated their absolute devotion towards the official tradition. The 1730 official Chinese edition of *The Book of Historical Documents with comments and their continuation in the collection of interpretations* (*Shujing zhuan shuo hui zuan*) was called the “highest authority”.<sup>12</sup> However, a close acquaintance not only with the interpretations, but also with the canon texts proves that in practice, this requirement was not always fulfilled. A stretch of the canonical text is missing in the text of the second chapter *Yao dian* (*Yao’s Statutes*).<sup>13</sup> Unlike the official Chinese examination version of *Shujing zhuan shuo hui zuan*, but in compliance with the popular Chinese and official Manchurian-Chinese examination versions,<sup>14</sup> the first paragraph of Chapter 37–14 *Kang gao* (*Address to Kang*) a total of 48 characters is missing, but unlike those editions it is not inserted in the beginning of Chapter 41–18 *Luo gao* (*Declaration on Luo*).<sup>15</sup> We believe that the situation concerning the interpretations (*shuo*) in this edition will not prove to be better. At least part of the explanations in the first chapter *Yao dian*, containing “six simple interpretations” and 20 illustrations which “served as a model for the whole book”, are very sloppy. Explanations regarding the Chinese calendar and astronomy are given with such omissions that their meaning can be restored only by referring to the original writings they had been borrowed from.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of all the diligence the editors declared in the prefacing memorials, their comments could hardly be understood by “the uneducated and minors”. They are written in classical Chinese (*wen yan*). Many explanations contain quotations or paraphrases from the works of ancient and medieval authors, and the reader could hardly understand them without knowledge of their original context. It is obvious that the interpretations within the book should be read with a lecturer. This requirement is also stated by the compilers of *Shujing tu shuo*.<sup>17</sup> The Brief explanations after each subsequent passage of the canonical text, describing individual characters were meant for the schoolteachers, so that they “would not come to confusion and would

<sup>12</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Zou zhe* [Reports], p. 3a.

<sup>13</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, juan (scroll) 2, p. 39b.

<sup>14</sup> For more discussion on these editions see: Bichurin, *Drevnyaya kitayskaya istoriya...*, p. 513–518.

<sup>15</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 11, juan 29, p. 3a; Vol. 13, juan 33, p. 4b.

<sup>16</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, juan 1, p. 16a.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, *Tiao li* (*Regulations*), p. 2b–3a.

not [incline towards] non-canonical interpretation”.<sup>18</sup> In this capacity, the illustrated *Shujing* continued the tradition of this classic’s popular educational editions, started under the Ming dynasty as early as the 1670s.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that the haste in preparing the edition affected the quality of the text, but it was not the only reason. The concept of the new edition was different. The text occupied a subordinate position in it. The book applied “explaining through image” as its main method.<sup>20</sup> The compilers hoped that the “common understanding [of a passage] would result in immediate visual impressions” just as “a drawn illustration has an effect of the coverage of all at once with a single glance”.<sup>21</sup> The memorials informed of the 570 illustrations, but as our own calculations show, the Moscow copies have 591 illustrations each (chapter illustration lists show in total 586 pictures).<sup>22</sup> Some illustrations were added during the cutting and printing of the book. Illustrations stand at the beginning of each chapter and the reader first sees a lithographic image of a line drawing. After one or several full-page illustrations (*tu*) he or she sees the text of a passage from the canon, then follow brief notes on some characters mentioned in this passage, and after that comes the text of the commentary (*shuo*). Our contemporaries may think that the explanation-*shuo* simply explains the illustration-*tu*. The compilers also foresaw the function of “illustration explanation” for the commentary-*shuo*,<sup>23</sup> but according to the original draft, their relations ought to be somewhat different. They were supposed to supplement each other: “reality” (*shi*, i.e. events, things, people etc.) was to be represented in illustrations, and “imagination” (literally: emptiness,

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<sup>18</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Tiao li* [Regulations], p. 1b.

<sup>19</sup> See further details of these editions in *Chimaya, Drevnekitayskie teksty...*, p. 987–989; Bichurin, *Drevnyaya kitayskaya istoriya...*, pp. 513 and 517–518.

<sup>20</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Tiao li* [Regulations], p. 1a.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1a–1b.

<sup>22</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Zong mu* [General Contents], p. 1a–4b.

<sup>23</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Tiao li* [Regulations], p. 1b.

*xu*),<sup>24</sup> implied in “speeches” (*yan*), was to be explained in the textual commentaries (*shuo*).<sup>25</sup>

Descriptive, anecdotal pictures, presenting some events or situations constitute the main body of the illustrations in *Shujing tu shuo*. It is easy to anticipate that they very often show ancient rulers with their advisers and subordinates, but also display multiple images representing the daily life of common people and so on. All persons are depicted on a background of some particular setting: the palace quarters, cities, countryside or natural landscapes. Owing to this variety *Shujing tu shuo* can be used (and is actually used) for illustrations of present-day and other scholarly works on Chinese history by Chinese and foreign authors. For instance, brick laying and other themed illustrations have been borrowed by Joseph Needham for his renowned *Science and Civilisation in China*.<sup>26</sup>

The illustrations are drawn in line drawing technique without shading. Two artists by the name of Zhan created the drawings for this edition. As a rule, auction catalogues with *Shu jing tu shuo* descriptions call them “renowned” or “well-known” artists, but in fact, nothing is known of their other works. In the list containing the names of participants (*Zhi ming* Section), one of them is introduced as a student of the National School (*jian sheng* 監生) Zhan Xiulin (詹秀林), and the other is a man without social estate registration (*jun xiu* 俊秀) named Zhan Bukui (詹步魁).<sup>27</sup> It is also believed that the artists were hired in Southern China, although the memorials in the preface only mention *nan sheng* (南省), as to where or from where the artists had been hired.<sup>28</sup> *Nan sheng* indeed can mean “southern provinces”, but in an elevated style expression, it can also mean government and, even more specifically, the *Li bu* (Ritual Collegium), in whose competence

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<sup>24</sup> For a little different interpretation of these terms see: Tatiana Igorevna Vinogradova, *Mir kak “predstavlenie”*: *Kitayskaya literaturnaya illyustratsiya* [Universe as “Imagination”: Chinese Literature Illustration], Sankt-Peterburg: Biblioteka Akademii Nauk, Al'faret, 2012, pp. 178–179.

<sup>25</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Zou zhe* [Reports], p. 1b; *Tiao li* [Regulations], p. 1b–2a.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 4, *Physics and Physical Technology*, Part 3, *Civil Engineering and Nautics*, Cambridge: University Press, 1971, pp. 41, 44, 83 and 233.

<sup>27</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, *Zhi ming*, p. 2a.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, *Zou zhe* [Reports], pp. 1b and 3b; *Tiao li* [Regulations], p. 3a.

education matters had been assigned. In addition, there is a passage in the memorial which directly speaks about hiring an artist “in the capital city” (of Beijing).<sup>29</sup>

The sequence of anecdotal drawings used to relay Confucian classics, is the novelty that singles out *Shujing tu shuo* from the main body of the traditional illustrated Confucian classics. Illustrations in the form of charts, tables, maps, as well as images of ancient material objects had already been used in the past. *Shujing tu shuo* does have them too, but the principal idea of “narrative illustration”<sup>30</sup> brings the type of this edition close to comic books. These illustrations grant us the possibility of opening a new research field for Confucian *Shujing* studies, using many-figure compositional image and series analysis. As we know, this point of view present attributes, and many other details which are significant for a common understanding of traditional Chinese picture content. The original synopsis, written by editors for the artists perusal, could provide good base for such research.<sup>31</sup> An additional search for these materials in PRC and Taiwan archives will be required.

The lithography used for *Shujing tu shuo*, was a relatively new method of printing in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. Usually, books in China were produced by wood block printing. Lithography was first used during the Qing empire in 1876 under Western influence. Due to this fact, there are some assumptions that *Shujing tu shuo* was printed not in Beijing, but in Shanghai where better technical conditions were available. However, we have not found any reliable information about the place of its printing. At the same time, it is well known that the imperial printing shop Wuyingdian in Beijing used lithography.

Xu Fu, Zhang Baixi, Lu Runxiang and Zheng Yuan dwelt on the principles of the *Shujing tu shuo* compilation in their final memorial. At the end of the text, they specified that the expenses for editorial preparation, printing, and distribution of books among schools would be covered by a budget assigned for national schools expenditures.<sup>32</sup> That might mean that the new illustrated *Shujing* was not meant for sale, and

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<sup>29</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, Zou zhe [Reports], p. 3b.

<sup>30</sup> Narrative illustration is a conventional term in Western fine arts studies designating one of the categories of traditional Chinese painting, see: Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Vol. 1, Zou zhe [Reports], p. 3b.

<sup>32</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo*, Tiao li [Regulations], p. 3a.

its circulation outside the school system was rather limited. A small number of the books which have survived to our times seems also to confirm this hypothesis. However, one of the Moscow copies, which was probably bought in a book store in China, holds a stamp print in red, stating: “*mei bu jing ping zu yin ba liang*” (each set 8 pure capital taels) on the verso of the blank sheet between the paper cover and the body of the first brochure (a sort of fly title but without title inscription) carrying stock number K-18207 –<sup>33</sup> this tells us the price of a 16-brochure newly illustrated *Shujing* set in two book casings, which was rather pricey. For sake of reference, we should probably mention that the annual salary of the sixth rank official (somewhere in the middle of official hierarchy) in Qing China was about 45 taels, which means that the official would have had to spend a bit more than his two-month salary to buy the book. The present-day auction price of the original copies of the book can amount to tens of thousands of US dollars.

The history of the illustrated *Shujing* did not end in 1905. In China, in recent years, the interest in this particular edition and principle material presentation has been growing significantly. In 1968 a three-volume facsimile reprint of *Shujing tu shuo* was issued in Taiwan. Judging solely by its physical dimensions, the size of the images in it was slightly decreased.<sup>34</sup> As part of a book series, another facsimile reprint was issued in Hefei in 2002.<sup>35</sup> The exact copy of the Qing edition, created in the style of the original, but not following the colour choice of original brochure covers and book casings, was published in Tianjin in 2007.<sup>36</sup> The less intense black colouring of the text and illustrations proves that an available imprint of the old book was used, but not the original lithographic plates, which, we suppose, could not have survived until today. These are, to say as much, benchmarks of *Shujing tu shuo* bibliographical history in the last and current centuries.

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<sup>33</sup> The same print inscription is available on the copy kept by Academia Sinica in Taiwan. The other copy in Moscow does not have it.

<sup>34</sup> *Qin ding Shujing tu shuo* [The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary], 3 Vols., Taipei: Wenhai, 1968.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo’ [‘The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary’] in *Zhongguo Qingdai gongting banhua* [Chinese Qing Dynasty Printed Pictures from the Palace Collection], Vol. 40, Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 2002.

<sup>36</sup> *Qin ding Shu jing tu shuo: 50 juan* [The Highly Approved Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary in 50 Juans], 16 Vols., in 2 casings, Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2007.

The trend to use the Qing edition to make up new popular versions of *Shu jing* (for which the contemporary Chinese compilers invariably prefer *Shangshu* (*The Esteemed Book*) title) is also quite remarkable. The earliest 2001 Shanghai edition was in fact nothing else but an abridged version of the *Shujing tu shuo*.<sup>37</sup> Some illustrations, belonging to the non-aneccdotal or non-narrative type, were excluded from the book. The publication of this abridged version was justified thanks to the historical source material and aesthetic value of the Qing original. The extensive editing of the original material required the changing of the book title, which is why it became *The Esteemed Book with Visual Explanations*. The term “visual explanation” (*tu jie*) was of very good use for the subsequent popular editions. *Shangshu* and *Li ji* (*The Notes on Ritual classic*) bound together and with these “explanations” saw the light of day in 2008.<sup>38</sup> *Shangshu* was only represented by the “modern script” (*jin wen*) chapters, which is why the number of illustrations borrowed from *Shujing tu shuo* decreased considerably. On the other hand, the *Tu jie Shangshu*, issued in 2016<sup>39</sup> not only includes all chapters of both versions of the canon, but also the *Preface to Shangshu* (*Shangshu xu*) by Kong Yingda (574–648). The explanations to illustrations were written anew by present-day scholars and the chapters of the “ancient script” (*gu wen*) version were supplied with the note *wei* – forged. The topical collection of *Shangshu* materials was published in 2014 in Beijing, “with illustrations and comments” (*tu zhuan*). The collection was devoted to the political doctrine of ancient Chinese rulers, as reflected in its title – *The main methods of government according to The Esteemed Book*.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the material was arranged according to specific topics and does not follow *Shangshu* chapters and the book includes 358 illustrations, with the majority being borrowed from the last Qing official *Shujing*.

*The Book of Historical Documents with Illustrations and Commentary* was published 111 years ago, when China was standing on

<sup>37</sup> *Shangshu tu jie* [The Esteemed Book with Illustrations and Commentary], Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> *Tu jie Shangshu – Li ji* [The Esteemed Book and The Notes on Ritual with Illustrations and Commentary], Shenyang: Wanjuan chubangongsi, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> *Tu jie Shangshu* [The Esteemed Book with Illustrations and Commentary], Chong Xian (transl.), Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Zhou Dianfu (ed.), *Shangshu zhi yao* [The Main Methods of Government According to The Esteemed Book], Beijing shidai huawen shuju, 2014.

the threshold of Modernity. This edition in a very peculiar way, embodied both features of the departing and incoming epochs. This assures its value for Chinese studies in various fields. Our primary objective for the nearest future should be to find out how and when this rare edition happened to reach Russia to become such a valuable item in the depository of the Sinology Library in Moscow.



## Girls on a Mission – Photographs of Japanese Girls in Late Nineteenth Century America: The Example of the Iwakura Mission (1871)<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This article presents the changing image of Japanese women during the late nineteenth century in both Japan and America. It focuses on two photographs of the five girls who accompanied the Iwakura Mission to America in 1871 showing how the Japanese government encouraged a Westernised image of Japanese women for political reasons. However, I demonstrate that, despite the role the girls played in bringing a “modern” vision of Japanese women to America, exotic representations could not be erased so easily. Ten years after the images were taken, the Japanese government itself modified its position and reverted to more traditional discourses.

**Key words:** Japan, Iwakura mission, representation of women, national identity, Tsuda Umeko

*“There is a live Yankee element in the Oriental mind”*  
In the *Georgetown Courier*, 27 June 1874

### Introduction: two photographs of young Japanese women

The young Tsuda Umeko and her four travel companions were photographed twice respectively, in 1871 and 1872, once before leaving Japan with the Iwakura Mission and once when they were settled in Chicago. This article focuses on two photographs of the five girls who accompanied the Iwakura Mission to America in 1871, to show how the Japanese government encouraged a Westernized image of Japanese women for political reasons. Therefore, the aim of this article is to underline how the presence of the girls from the Iwakura mission in America contributed to creating a new representation of Japanese girls as “modern” and “civilized” women, which was more in agreement with

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Jamie Tokuno for her careful reading and comments to this article.

the national image of modernisation that Japan was seeking to establish in the 1870s.

The inspiration behind this article owes much to Barbara Rose's book on Tsuda Umeko, one of the five young girls who accompanied the Iwakura mission, *Tsuda Umeko and Women's Education in Japan*.<sup>2</sup> In her book, Rose inserted two photographs of the five Japanese girls sent to America alongside various photographs of the Tsuda family, the Lanman couple who welcomed Tsuda Umeko in their home during her ten-year stay in America, and Tsuda herself.<sup>3</sup> The two images are purposefully presented chronologically, together on the same page. The first one was taken prior to the girls' visit to the Empress before their departure from Japan in December 1871. The second one was taken in America with outfits they bought there. Presented together, those two images show an immediate opposition, and can be categorized as representations of "traditional" and "modern". However, this dichotomist definition, so often considered in analysis of Japanese society and history, is over-simplistic in this case. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period in which the contemporary concepts of "tradition" and "modernity" were being defined.<sup>4</sup> Certain aspects that contemporary observers now qualify as "tradition" were then considered an innovation.<sup>5</sup> The terms "Japanese" and "Western" already seem more appropriate to frame those images. But in 1871, the frontier between the two cultures was becoming increasingly blurred as Japan was quickly adopting the West as the norm to follow and the ideal to reach in terms of knowledge, but without abandoning the Japanese spirit.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the first wave of *Japonisme* spread through the West, popularising Japanese items: "Popular writers alerted readers to the newest modes in dress and interior décor, including Japanese goods among the desirable must-haves for the rising urban classes. Japan had become trendy".<sup>7</sup> It

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<sup>2</sup> See: Barbara Rose, *Tsuda Umeko and Women's Education in Japan*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Nakada Yuki from the Tsuda College for allowing me to reproduce here the two photographs.

<sup>4</sup> For a more general definition of the concept of tradition see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Sand in, *At Home*... p. 192, gives the example of the Japanese home.

<sup>6</sup> One of the Meiji government's slogan resume well this concept: 'Japanese spirit, Western Skills' (*Wakon Yōsai*).

<sup>7</sup> Chris Reyns-Chikuma, *Images du Japon en France et ailleurs- Entre japonisme et multiculturalisme*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005; Helen Burnham, 'Introduction - The Allure

then became apparent that the two photographs were not to be considered in terms of opposition, but in terms of choice of representation. They are not antithetic, when considered in the larger socio-political frame of the time.

That leaves the question of the gaze. How to look at those photographs? From the American point of view, or from the Japanese one? The pictures were taken in different countries and it is doubtful that the first image was available in America. The parallel is then meaningful not for the contemporary of the Iwakura mission, but for the ulterior viewer. In this article, I attempt to consider the reception of the photographs by both audiences. However, I define both images as produced in Japan. This categorization might not seem obvious for the second image, which was taken in America, presumably by an American photographer. Nonetheless, this photograph illustrates the will of the Japanese government to produce a modern, Westernized image of the nation and its people.

### **Methodology: photographs as representation**

Any analysis of photographic images needs to address the materiality of the photograph (its historical status) as well as the subject it represents through the application of visual analysis tools: both cultural (that is physical codes indexed in photographs through the mimetic ability of photography, e.g., body posture, garments, facial expression, etc.) and photographic conventions (e.g., frame, lighting, composition, viewing point, depth of field, scale, etc.). John Berger has highlighted the importance of indexical capacity of the photograph: “the language in which photography deals is the language of events. All its references are external to itself”.<sup>8</sup> Images cannot then be considered merely for their artistic conventions and need of being placed within the contexts of production and/or consumption. Stuart Hall further affirms that:

“Representation can only be properly analysed in relation to the actual concrete forms which meaning assumes, in the concrete practices of signifying, ‘reading’, and interpretation; and these require analysis of the actual

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of Japan’ in *Looking East – Western Artists and the Allure of Japan*, Helen Burnham (ed.), Boston: MFA Publication and Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 2014, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> John Berger, *Understanding a Photograph*, London: Penguin Books, 1967, p. 20.

signs, symbols, figures, images, narratives, words and sounds – the material forms – in which symbolic meaning is circulated”.<sup>9</sup>

In this article I consider photography as a “representational system”.<sup>10</sup> The term “representation” refers to “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture”.<sup>11</sup> Hall’s concept of representations is linked with national identity and regulation,<sup>12</sup> two ideas central to this article. Indeed, what is at stake with the Iwakura mission is the definition of Japanese identity as modern and – through the presence of the five girls – the inclusion of womanhood in the creation of a modern national identity.

I complement the visual imagery with a newspaper article from the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1872 issue of the *New York Times*. This will enable me to consider the American audience’s perception of those girls, and analyse how the mental imagery corresponded to the visual imagery. Hence, because the commentaries of the time were mainly expressed in terms of gender, abstracting the age of the protagonists, it seemed irrelevant to treat this article within the framework of childhood. So I focus instead on the image of the woman.

### **Modernity and the issue of Japan’s self-representation**

The year 1868 was a pivotal time in Japanese history. The Meiji Restoration (1868–1912) represented the “opening” (*haikoku*) to the world and Japan’s turning away from “tradition” and towards modernity. Although contemporary historians have re-evaluated the radicalism of this shift, it remains a symbolical period of change in which Japan had to (re)construct a national identity within the industrialised world.<sup>13</sup> In this period of imperialism, Western powers

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<sup>9</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘The Work of Representation’ in *Representation – Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall (ed.), London: Sage; The Open University, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1–5

<sup>13</sup> Marius Jansen, ‘Japan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century’ in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Hall John (ed.), Vol. 5, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988–1999, pp. 50–115 and ‘Rangaku and Westernization’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1984, p. 541–553 as well as C. R. Boxer, ‘When the Twain First Met: Europeans Conceptions and Misconceptions of Japan, 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1984,

readily applied the colonial gaze with which they regarded other Asian countries to Japan's culture and society.<sup>14</sup> However Japan, due to its particular situation as a non-colonised country, was able to refuse the image and the categorization that was projected upon her. The Meiji Government worked towards the creation of a different, Japan-produced image and diffused this self-representation for primarily economic reasons. For the government to be able to renegotiate the Unequal Treaties signed with the Western nations, the Japanese had to show they were "civilized", in other words, that they followed Western concepts of behaviour and well-being.<sup>15</sup> The Meiji government encouraged the adoption of Western customs and the acquisition of Western knowledge with the slogan "Enlightenment and Civilisation" (*Bunmei Kaika*).<sup>16</sup>

One of the many aspects adopted by the Japanese was Western-style domesticity (*katei*). Jordan Sand analyses how the new domesticity was expressed in terms of architecture, nomenclature and social organization.<sup>17</sup> In these three aspects, Western-style domesticity brought genderization of the living space, along with a new discourse on womanhood and family. The organization and rules of this new space and family order were disseminated by intellectuals and professionals to wives and mothers who became the new guardians of the home.<sup>18</sup> New domestic manuals invaded the print market with their imported foreign knowledge. Jordan Sand mentions how those handbooks instructed

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pp. 531–540, are only a few researches that show how the 'isolation' of Japan was relative and that relationships existed between Japan and the West prior to the Meiji Restoration-through Dutch merchants.

<sup>14</sup> For a consideration of colonial photography in terms of spectacle, see Jane Lydon, 'Behold the Tears: Photography as Colonial Witness', *History of Photography*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2010, pp. 234–250.

<sup>15</sup> The Unequal Treaties refer to commercial treaties signed by Western powers with Japan and other Asian countries. The treaties were signed with the United States in 1854, followed by England the same year and then France, Russia and the Netherlands in 1858. For more detail on the Unequal Treaties in Japan see, Michael Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> This slogan was launched by the Ministry of Education in 1871, the same year as the Iwakura Mission departed from Japan. Pierre-François Souyri, *Nouvelle Histoire du Japon*, Paris: Perrin, 2010, pp. 456–457.

<sup>17</sup> Jordan Sand, 'At Home in the Meiji Period: Inventing Japanese Domesticity' in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, Steven Vlastos (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 191–207.

<sup>18</sup> Jones Mark, *Children as Treasures: Childhood and the Middle Class in Early Twentieth Century Japan*, Harvard: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010, p. 85.

women in all the details of domestic life.<sup>19</sup> However, a few years earlier, Fukuzawa Yukichi, an intellectual devoted to the spread of Western knowledge in Japan, wrote about his trip to America in 1859,

“I did not care to study scientific or technological subjects while on this journey, because I could study them as well from books after I returned home. But I felt that I had to learn the more common matters of daily life directly from the people, because Europeans would not describe them in books as being too obvious. Yet to us those common matters were the most difficult to comprehend”.<sup>20</sup>

In a few decades, those “common matters” had been made available for the benefit of Japanese women in particular, and Japanese society in general. One of the reasons for this change in the availability of Western practical knowledge can be found in the Meiji government’s scheme of sending students abroad.

Following the tradition of sending missions abroad, students were sent to be instructed in Western ways. To overcome the issues of accessing the gendered space of the home and learning about the role the woman has in it, the government sent five young girls who were to be educated in America. They were part of the Iwakura mission (1871–1873), which went to America and Europe headed by Iwakura Tomomi, the then Minister of the Right.<sup>21</sup> They were the first Japanese girls to be

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<sup>19</sup> ‘Institute a conversation or [tea] gathering at home every evening for an hour or two after supper, bring the family together, and console one another with mutual love and kindness after the day’s labors. Tell one another amusing anecdotes of things you have seen and heard during the day, tell old tales of educational value, or read light and interesting passages from a newspaper or magazine; gaze at the baby’s endearing face and smile together, or listen to the innocent voices of the children recounting the subjects they studied or the moral lessons they learned at school.’ (1894), quoted in Sand, *At Home...*, p. 195.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Hirakawa Sukehiro, ‘Japan’s Turn to the West’ in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Hall John (ed.), Vol. 5, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988–1999, p. 461.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed account of the Iwakura mission, see Ian Nish (ed.), *The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe – A New Assessment*, Richmond: Japan Library, 1998; Kume Kunitake (ed.), *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–1873: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary’s Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe*, Matudo: Japan Documents, 2002.

officially sent abroad by the government. Even though this mission was early in the Meiji period, it was already preceded by visual imagery representing the Japanese woman as a cultural Other,<sup>22</sup> as I will later show.

### **Japanese girls in America: women's education for the good of the country**

The Iwakura mission was sent by the Meiji government first to America in 1871 before going to Europe in 1872. It followed a tradition of diplomatic missions starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> century with emissaries sent to China by the Imperial Court and was further developed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Bakufu government (1192–1868) and – illegally – by the feudal lords.<sup>23</sup> Those missions responded to a growing need felt by the Japanese intellectuals to experience firsthand the new knowledge they had been discovering through books. Dutch Studies (*Rangaku*) emerged late in the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), however during the last decades it began to develop rapidly.<sup>24</sup> Examples of scholars who attempted to illegally leave Japan to experience life abroad can be found as early as the Tokugawa period. All those intellectuals had the same will to acquire new knowledge that could be put to the service of their country or lord. With the fall of the Bakufu government, the double representation of Japan, by the official government on one side and the lords of the domains of Satsuma and Chōshū on the other, ended. Three years after the Restoration of 1868, the new government renewed this practice through a single, national voice.

The Iwakura mission was the first mission sent by the Meiji government. Its official goal was to renegotiate the Unequal Treaties signed in 1858.<sup>25</sup> However, the main and somewhat unofficial aim of the mission was the observation of the practices of the West. Both goals were linked. If Japan wanted to suppress the Unequal Treaties and be considered a “first rank” nation, it had to adopt the “civilized” manners and rules of the West. The mission – with forty-eight members and sixty

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<sup>22</sup> I refer to Edward Said's concept of the Other as a subject to continuous interpretation. Edward Said, *Orientalism – Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London: Penguin Books, 1978.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed account of precedent missions during the Tokugawa period (1903–1867), see: Sukehiro, 'Japan's Turn...'.  
<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 432–498.

<sup>25</sup> See: Nish, *The Iwakura Mission...*

students, among them five women – left Japan for nearly two years, one more year than was initially planned. My interest in this specific mission lies in the presence of the five young girls, among them the famous Tsuda Umeko, who upon her return to Japan in 1900 funded the Tsuda College for Women in Tokyo. Tsuda was seven years old at the time she was sent to America to pursue a Western education.

Nowadays, Tsuda's young age for such a mission might surprise, even shock. Let us note that it was not Tsuda but her older sister's candidature that had been put forward. However, after the refusal by her sister, Tsuda took her place in order to re-establish the status that her family had lost with the Meiji Restoration. All five girls are from families affiliated with the former Tokugawa government, and their mission was as much a personal one to restore the family status as a national one.<sup>26</sup>

Of the five women who participated in the Iwakura mission, the story of Tsuda Umeko remains the most widely known because of the English-language diaries she wrote during her stay in America and her later involvement in the promotion of women's education in Japan. The other girls who accompanied her were: Nagai Shigeko (aged 10), Yamakawa Sutematsu (12), Ueda Teiko (16) and Yoshimasu Ryōko (16). Tsuda was the one who stayed the longest away from Japan, coming back more than ten years later, and was unable to adapt to her own country. She had become a stateless person, or rather, as Rose seems to suggest, outdated by the new developments in Japan.<sup>27</sup> Upon her return, Tsuda was not given the role her mission had prepared her for.

The girls' mission was not dissimilar to the more general aim of the Iwakura mission: learning Western habits. The initiative of sending them to America was inscribed in the rising consciousness of the need for women's education as part of the modernization of Japan.<sup>28</sup> The Emperor Meiji, commenting upon the need to educate Japanese women as part of a larger vision of society, stated:

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 12; Sukehiro, "Japan's Turn...", p. 463.

<sup>27</sup> The Meiji government faced a wave of political rebellions, which led to a period of conservatism, criticising the influence of the West and women's education. For more details, see Rose, *Tsuda Umeko...*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 11.



“We lack superior institutions for high female culture. Our women should not be ignorant of those great principles on which the happiness of daily life frequently depends. How important the education of mothers, on whom future generations almost wholly rely for the early cultivation of those intellectual tastes which an enlightened system of training is designed to develop”.<sup>29</sup>

Tsuda and the other four girls' involvement in their mission resulted from a Confucian sense of duty toward their parents and family name. However, the girls' submission can be seen not only as respect for family traditions, but also as the premise for the implication of individuals in the future of the nation that characterizes the Meiji period<sup>30</sup>. Tsuda and her companions can be considered the pioneers of what Mark Jones, in his study of modern childhood since 1890, calls: the “little citizen” (*shōkokumin*).<sup>31</sup> The essence of the “little citizen”, conceptualized as an altruistic, educated and moral person, can be found in the 1890 Imperial Rescript for Education. But it turned out that the patriotic mission was shaped more around the cultivation of future “good wives, wise mothers” of said “little citizens”, than shaping the girls into little citizen's themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Discerning whether Tsuda and her compatriots became successful good wives, wise mothers through this mission is not however the main goal of this article.<sup>33</sup> What I will consider here is the role they played in the larger scope of the Iwakura mission: changing the perception Westerners had of the Japanese and building an image of a modern and “civilized” Japan.

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<sup>29</sup> J. E. Thomas, *Modern Japan – A Social History since 1868*, London: Longman, 1996, p. 193–194.

<sup>30</sup> In 1882, Tsuda has interiorized the mission that was assigned to her: ‘I feel I must be of use, not because I know much, but because I am a *Japanese* woman with an *education*’ in Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> See Jones, *Children as Treasures*..., p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> In 1902 the Minister of Education, Kikuchi Dairoku affirmed ‘In our country, the women’s job is to marry and become a good wife, wise mother’ quoted in Jones, *Children as Treasures*..., p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> See Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., for a full account on the experience of the five girls, and especially Tsuda, in America as well as her ulterior involvement in women’s education in Japan.

### Japanese women and the Western craving for exoticism

After the isolation of Japan ended with the Tokugawa period, Japan had to face economic exchange based on unequal relations, from its forced “opening” to international trade up to the Unequal Treaties and the extraterritoriality law. Japan was confronted by Western imperialism, their relations and the way they were perceived being not unlike that of a colonised country. In the dichotomist nineteenth-century Western conceptualisation of the world, nations were either the colonised or the colonisers and societies “primitive” or “civilized”. Forced by Commodore Perry to take place in this binary perception of the world, Japan refused the first and immediate status of a “second-rate” nation. Rudyard Kipling already noted the ambiguity of Japan within the Western categorization of the world: “The Japanese isn’t a native, he isn’t a sahib either”.<sup>34</sup> Swanson qualified Japan’s relation to the West as “colonialism of the mind” applied through the “imperial gaze”, defined as the perception of a foreign reality through a Western perspective.<sup>35</sup>

The “imperial gaze” creates a double tendency. First, it condemns as “uncivilized” those habits and behaviours uncharacteristic of the West. Second, it articulates those “uncivilized” aspects as native “traditions”, which are consumed to satisfy a craving for exoticism. The image of Japan is thus at the same time declaimed and promulgated. However, in contrast to other colonised countries, Japan’s ambiguous status in the coloniser/colonised dichotomy allowed for self-representation, which would manifest as counter-imagery to Western-produced and Western-consumed exoticism. The multiple missions sent by the Japanese government were part of this policy of re-creation of a Japanese image in the West. I speak of re-creation rather than creation because of the pre-Meiji period image of Japan based on exported arts and crafts, numerous travel accounts Westerners brought back from Japan and fictions built upon available information.

Toshio Watanabe and Oliver Impey identify the 1860s as a decade in which the West discovered Japanese Art. Prior to that period, porcelain and lacquer were the main products of exportation from Japan but, as

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<sup>34</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling’s Japan: Collected Writings*, Hugh Cortazzi and George Webb (eds.), London: Athlone, 1988, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> Darren Swanson, ‘Them and Us: Perceptions of the Japanese Among the Foreign Community – Race Theory and Race Relations in Post-Extraterritorial Japan’, *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1., 2012, n.p.

Watanabe points out, were often confused with Chinese or Indian art.<sup>36</sup> From the 1860s a craving for woodblock prints (*ukiyo-e*) swept through Europe and especially Paris. It came to constitute a larger movement of cultural importation that Lehmann calls “Old Japonisme” – as opposed to the “New Japonisme” of the post-war period. Japonisme developed mostly through *ukiyo-e* which captured the imagination of the Western audience. Japan was portrayed as a “pre-industrial paradise”, whose sense of beauty, nature and aesthetic was seen as the antithesis of economic and militaristic Western society.<sup>37</sup> Rudyard Kipling brings back a peaceful image from Japan: “A tea-girl in faun colored crepe under a cherry tree all blossom. Behind her, green pines, two babies, and a hog-backed bridge spanning a bottle green river running over blue boulders”.<sup>38</sup> The more specific representation of the Japanese woman was, however, less romantic. If the *ukiyo-e* contributed to the recognition of a Japanese sensibility and artistic capacity, it also firmly fixes in Western minds the image of the courtesan, which widely populated the “floating world” of woodblock prints along with the image of actors and landscapes, becoming one of the main themes of art. This image came to be juxtaposed with that of the Japanese woman.<sup>39</sup> This visual imagery was extended by fictional texts that became popular successes, like Pierre Loti’s *Madame Chrysanthème*. Lehmann even affirms that this positive image of Japanese women contributed to the favourable treatment of Japan by Western nations.<sup>40</sup>

Women and young girls were also represented in photography. Since the early 1860s, photographers such as Baron Raimund von Stillfried and Felice Beato settled in Japan and opened photography studios where they sold albums to foreign tourists as well as the Japanese upper class. Two trends can be distinguished, depending on for whom they were intended, both by their exterior appearance and by the photographs they

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<sup>36</sup> Toshio Watanabe, ‘The Western Image of Japanese Art in the Late Edo Period’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1984, pp. 667–684; Oliver Impey, ‘Japanese Export Art of the Edo Period and its Influence on European Art’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1984, pp. 685–697.

<sup>37</sup> Jean-Pierre Lehmann, ‘Old and New Japonisme: The Tokugawa Legacy and Modern European Images of Japan’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1984, p. 762.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan- From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850–1905*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1978, p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> See: Jean-Pierre Lehmann, ‘Mutual Images’ in *Japan and Western Europe: Conflict and Cooperation*, Loukas Tsoukalis and Maureen While (eds.), London: Pinter, 1982.

<sup>40</sup> Lehmann, ‘Mutual Images’..., p. 46.

contained.<sup>41</sup> The albums for Westerners were composed of emblematic views and sites the tourist might have visited, as well as “customs and costumes” photographs.<sup>42</sup> It is the latter images that created an imagery of the exotic Other. In 1871, when the Iwakura mission arrived in Chicago, the five girls were preceded by this double imagery of the exotic and sensual “Other”.

### Traditional Japanese girls?

In Rose’s perspective, the set opposition of the two images is not meaningless. Her research focuses on intercultural exchange in the creation of Japan’s domestic ideal from the specific biographical angle of Tsuda’s life. The Iwakura mission is Rose’s starting point because it represents a life-changing event for Tsuda, the one that will determine her future involvement in the public sphere. The two images represent this shift; they show the “before” and “after” of a life-changing event. In the scope of my article, they reveal a change in a nation’s self-representation.



Pic. 1: The five girls before their audience with the empress, December 1871 .

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<sup>41</sup> Anne Wilkes Tucker, ‘Introduction’ in *The History of Japanese Photography*, Anne Wilkes Tucker (ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

The difference in clothing from one image to the other is the most striking feature. Perfect daughters of samurai, they await an audience with Empress Haruko, who will impress upon the girls the importance of their mission for the good of the country. This photograph viewed through foreign eyes is a manifestation of “Japaneseness”, with the girls’ beautiful kimono, their carefully arranged hair, and hands on their laps as expected from Japanese women. However, even in this image taken in December 1871, the traditional Japan is a myth and aspects of Meiji modernity and Westernization have slipped into the photograph. First, the girls are sitting on Western chairs. However, this is not an unusual prop in Japanese photography. Chairs had been used by Yokohama photographers for their portrait photographs in an attempt to copy European studios.<sup>43</sup> Second, the context in which this image was taken represents a social shift, as this was the first time the Empress had an audience with daughters of samurai.<sup>44</sup> Their non-aristocratic blood was not an impediment in meritocratic Meiji Japan, which promoted the concept of *risshinshusse* (rising in the world). Modern Japan constructed its modernity on capacities and not inheritance<sup>45</sup> as well as on the families that – all former followers of the Shogunate – volunteered their daughters in order to rise again in the new regime.<sup>46</sup>

### **Becoming “civilized” American women**

The arrival of the Iwakura mission did not go unnoticed; several articles mentioned the impressions left by the “Japanese Embassy”, as the American media named the mission. In a series of articles of the New York Times, one of them is of special interest: “Japanese Embassy – Gossips about the Young Ladies Accompanying Them – Impressions Made by the Men” was published on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1872. The article is as much a presentation of the girls as an exposition of Japanese culture and society. The unnamed author is well-informed on the current state of both Japan and of the Embassy itself, of their actions and

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<sup>43</sup> Claude Estèbe mentions an 1866 photograph of Ueno Hikoma depicting two women sitting in the tatami floor in front of two chairs. See: ‘Les Premiers Ateliers de Photographie Japonais, 1859–1872’, *Etudes Photographiques*, Vol. 19, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., p. 17

<sup>45</sup> The Meiji Restoration abolished the four class hereditary system to create a new meritocratic society. See Elise Tipton, *Modern Japan – A Social and Political History*, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 46; Jones, *Children as Treasures*..., p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., p. 12.

conversations both in public places like the California theatre and in the more reclusive space of their hotel. He is also able to refute the common misconception that the five girls were Japanese princesses and introduces them as “daughters of high, wealthy officials and members of the Japanese ‘upper ten’”.<sup>47</sup> The writer clearly states the role of the girls as part of the Embassy and gives a simplified and striking narration of the emergence of women’s education in Japan,

Mr. DE LONG told IWAKURA that the women of America were allowed (sic) to visit places of public amusement with their husbands, had almost as much freedom as the men, and, in order that this freedom might be appreciated, these women were educated. In America, women commanded more respect than in Japan, and was not the slave of her husband. It was good that women should be educated and respected. IWAKURA remembered Mr. DE LONG’s words, and the demolition of one tradition about females is due in a great measure to their joint efforts.<sup>48</sup>

This story acknowledges the efforts of two public figures – the American Minister De Long, and Iwakura Tomomi whose position in Japan was equivalent to that of Prime Minister – and emphasizes the good example America wanted to provide as acting tutor of Japan.

However, the writer recognizes the ambiguous status of Japan. He describes it as already conforming to some aspects of the Western ideal of civilisation, and hence on track to becoming a modernised country:

“The social position of the female sex among the Japanese appears to be more favorable than in most pagan countries. The daughters in a Japanese family receive an equal amount of parental care and attention with that bestowed on the male offspring. Nothing beyond the commonly prevalent pagan sentiment of the inferiority of the female operates to the disadvantage of women in the family circle. (...) Our Japanese lady visitors are good average representatives of ladies of the first class, and, of course are unmarried and disengaged. Their ladylike

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<sup>47</sup> Anonymous, ‘Japanese Embassy – Gossips about the Young Ladies Accompanying Them – Impressions Made by the Men’, *New York Times*, 20 February 1872: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B05E7D8113EEE34BC4851DFB4668389669FDE> (accessed 15.07.2016).

<sup>48</sup> Anonymous, ‘Japanese Embassy...’.

demeanor has won them a host of friends among the American women, who declare they are perfectly charming”.<sup>49</sup>

Even though the names of the five girls are mentioned in the newspaper article, they remain abstract and homogeneous incarnations of the Westernized Japanese woman. Their personality is briefly described as “vivacious yet self-reliant and dignified in manners” and nothing is said about their physical appearance.<sup>50</sup> According to Rose, the girls are still supposed to be wearing their kimonos due to Mrs. DeLong’s refusal to buy them Western outfits, in contrast to what was previously agreed in California, because of the sensation they caused when wearing their kimonos. The girls were paraded in them for two months.<sup>51</sup>

However, the second photograph in Rose’s book shows a different image. This photograph of the girls in Western clothing, could be one of any upper middle class American children, if it were not for their facial characteristics. They are wearing American garments and have replaced the complicated Japanese hair style with Western-style hats.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>51</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., p. 19.



Pic. 2 – The five girls in Chicago, America, 1872<sup>52</sup>

Despite the similar framing that focuses on the subjects, the girls have been directed into a different pose from the previous photograph. Their hands are arranged according to Western conventions, and two of them are standing, which is more reminiscent of a family photograph than of the more official-looking one taken before the audience with the Empress. In particular, the closeness between Tsuda and one of the other girls, probably Nagai Shigeko, in the right corner of the image evokes the intimacy of sisters.

There is a noticeable difference in dress between Tsuda and her slightly older companions. She is the only one wearing a light-colour hat and dress, which seem to be simpler than that of the other four girls'. This variation marks their age difference. While Tsuda is – according to

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<sup>52</sup> Image made available by Tsuda College Archives.



Western standards – still a child, her companions have entered womanhood. Tsuda's white dress is representative of the Victorian imagery of the "innocent child",<sup>53</sup> whose purity is symbolically exhibited through the dress codes.

The girls' clothing not only symbolises Westernisation, but also refers to the Industrial Age through dresses made of two materials emblematic of industrialisation: metal and fabric. For the Meiji government, this image represents proof of the mission's success. The girls have mastered some of the cultural aspects needed for the country to be recognised as a "first-rate", Westernized nation: clothing, social conventions and physical mannerisms. At least during the time the photograph was taken, they had disciplined their bodies to respond to the expectations of the American viewer. They (re)presented themselves as modern Japanese girls.

The photograph of the five girls in America can be read in two different ways. For the Japanese audience, it was a proof of the nation's modernization and hence equality of status – in terms of "civilization" – with Western powers. I argue that the second view also shares a teleological notion of progress and modernity. From the American point of view, the image is validated by the paternalistic and imperialist behaviour of the Western nations.<sup>54</sup> The initial counter-image works – and, we could argue, could only work – because it is inscribed within the Western system of beliefs and values. Thus, this representation of Japanese identity, and especially Japanese women's identity, within modernity was possible because the meaning was inscribed within a larger production and consumption of modernization discourses.

It is interesting to note that the second image was taken shortly after their arrival to America, when the girls were – and also their tutor Mori Arinori – still uncertain of what would become of them.<sup>55</sup> At the time the photograph was taken, the girls' knowledge of English and American culture was nearly the same as what they had possessed at the time the previous photograph was taken in Japan. The photograph, more than an achieved cultural reality, is a projection of the perfect "modern ladies" they could become.

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<sup>53</sup> Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence – The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

<sup>54</sup> See Michael Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism – The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko...*, p. 19.

### The girls' return to Japan

The two oldest girls, Yoshimasu Ryōko and Ueda Teiko, returned to Japan due to poor health and home sickness after spending just six months in Washington, where all five girls lived together with a governess.<sup>56</sup> The other three girls were then sent to live with host families. Tsuda developed a strong, affectionate bond with her host family, Charles and Adeline Lanman, who instead of sending her to boarding school as originally planned, kept her with them and registered her in a local school. During her ten-year stay Tsuda met regularly with the other two girls, Nagai Shigeko and Yamakawa Sutomatsu, who were enrolled in Vassar College, to discuss together their future in Japan. They wanted to contribute to Japan's modernisation by funding a school for girls based on the education they received in America.<sup>57</sup> However, soon after her return to Japan, Nagai got married, putting a halt to their original plans. Nonetheless, she continued to promote women's education in Japan, as did Yamakawa Sutomatsu, although their impact was less – or at least less researched and remembered – than that of Tsuda's actions.

Unable to adapt to her own country, and incapable of speaking fluent Japanese anymore, Tsuda struggled to find her goal in life. After growing up with high expectations for her future and believing in her capacity to improve Japanese women's role in society through education, she was faced with a conservative reaction against the West from the Meiji government and growing criticism of girls' education. In 1889, she returned to America to study at Bryn Mawr College. There, she campaigned for Japanese women's education, created a scholarship fund for Japanese girls to study abroad, and collaborated with Alice Bacon creating the book *Japanese Girls and Women*.<sup>58</sup> In 1900, back in Japan, she opened her school *Joshi Eigaku Juku* to train female middle school graduates to become teachers. At the opening ceremony in her speech to her students, she outlined her view on womanhood: "I ask you not in any way to make yourselves conspicuous or to seem forward, but be always gentle, submissive and courteous as have always been our women in the past".<sup>59</sup> She had indeed internalized the Western concepts of domesticity and soft femininity that she was sent out to learn. Her

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<sup>56</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*..., p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 129.

ideas on womanhood and the role of women in the nation was challenged in the 1910s by emerging forms of feminism, led by Raichō Hiratsuka, who challenged the confinement of women to the domestic circle. Joshi Eigaku Juku nonetheless prospered and was renamed *Tsuda Juku* after her death in 1929, becoming a women's university after the Second World War.

## Conclusion

If Tsuda felt that she had failed in the original mission that was bestowed upon her when she embarked with the Iwakura mission, she might find consolation in the fact that she and her companions brought to America a new image of Japanese women. Those “charming” girls represented a specific vision of their country – not only in the photograph but also through their prolonged presence in America. They symbolized the modern and Westernized Meiji Japan, the image that the government itself wanted to spread. This counter-image that emerged in the 1870s was first spread amongst the American intellectual elite by the Iwakura mission. We cannot however see clearly when- or even if- this Japanese-produced image of modern women had become the dominant imagery of Meiji Japan.<sup>60</sup> In 1909, a photograph like the one kept at the Museum of History and Industry of Seattle (MOHAI), represented ethnicities through “traditional” costumes.<sup>61</sup> In this photograph of children from various cultures, three Japanese girls dressed like *mikosan* symbolise Japan.<sup>62</sup> For Western audiences, the kimono of Japanese women was – and still is – an immediately recognisable symbol and as thus, it remains in both Western-produced and Western-aimed visual imagery of Japan. Indeed, Brian McVeigh defines the kimono as “a type of national identity uniform, especially for women”.<sup>63</sup> Concerns even arose from certain groups in the late nineteenth century to stop the increasing adoption of Western female outfits. A group of American women led by Mrs. Garfield and Mrs. Cleveland, the wives of former

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<sup>60</sup> As defined by Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

<sup>61</sup> The photograph *Children of Different Ethnicities – Alaska – Yukon – Pacific Exposition Seattle 1909* by Frank H. Nowell is available to view on the online archives of the MOHAI: <http://seattlehistory.org> (accessed on 06.09.2012).

<sup>62</sup> Young girls working in Shinto shrines as maidens or supplementary priestesses.

<sup>63</sup> Brian McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology: State, Schooling and Self-Presentation in Japan*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000, p. 105.

presidents, wrote a petition to Japanese women urging them, in the “interests” of Japan, not “to abandon what is beautiful and suitable in their national costume, and to waste money on foreign fashion”.<sup>64</sup>

Other voices arose from different groups, all concerned with the preservation of Japan as it first appeared to Western eyes in the mid-nineteenth century. Kipling claimed: “It would pay us to establish an international suzerainty over Japan: to take away any fear of invasion and annexation, and pay the country as much as it chose, on the condition that it simply sat still and went on making beautiful things while our learned men learned. It would pay us to put the whole empire in a glass case and mark it *Hors Concours*, ‘Exhibit A’”.<sup>65</sup> What Kipling voiced, was a wish to preserve Japan as a “lost paradise”, to stop industrial progress. Lehmann explains this tendency by defining the Meiji period as the first point of contact between Japan and the West: “images and the attitudes and stereotypes which they give rise to, tend to be formed at an early stage of encounter between two societies; in other words, initial impressions have a strong power of preservation. Following from this, it is clear that images rarely keep pace with reality”.<sup>66</sup> I would like to reconsider Lehmann’s initial postulate, defining the late nineteenth century not as the “early stage of encounter” but as the emergence of a popular consciousness of Japan, where Japan entered the Western imaginary on its own – not as part of the wider process of Orientalism.

Western powers did not manage to put Japan in a “glass case”, and the nation continued to industrialize and Westernize after the return of Tsuda Umeko. Nor were they able to fix the image of Japan, as representations are constantly changing and being reformulated by new exchange between cultures. However in its representation of Japan, the West kept the traces from their “first” encounter.<sup>67</sup> The post-Second World War period led to a revival of the nineteenth century imagery.<sup>68</sup> The older imagery was re-invented with the new reality of Japan. Lehmann highlights one of the more prominent symbols of Japan: the

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Lehmann, ‘Old and New Japonisme...’, p. 764.

<sup>65</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches- Letters of Travel*, London: MacMillan, 1909, p. 335.

<sup>66</sup> Lehmann, ‘Old and New Japonisme...’, p. 757.

<sup>67</sup> I consider with Lehmann, the Meiji period as a time of increased contacts and the development of a Western popular image of Japan.

<sup>68</sup> Lehmann, ‘Old and New Japonisme...’, p. 765.

samurai, whose image has gone through different phases of rejection and acceptance, and was revived through a body of works of fiction – literature and cinema – before being melded together with that of the salaryman.<sup>69</sup> In the imagery of womanhood, we can argue that it is the image of the geisha that has captured the attention of the twentieth century Western audience through a profusion of fictions.<sup>70</sup>

The presence of the five girls in the Iwakura mission is an often omitted historical fact. Alistair Swale, in his account of the American stay of the Iwakura mission, focuses on several records of the members, such as Mori Arinori or Kume Kunitake, but fails to mention the five girls' presence and role.<sup>71</sup> The works of Barbara Rose<sup>72</sup> and Shibahara Takeo<sup>73</sup> have defined Tsuda's experience abroad in the light of her later engagement with women's education. The names of the other girls tend to be forgotten, which might be explained by Tsuda's late-life accomplishment, her English-language diaries which have attracted Western scholars, as well as her young age and longer stay. All those points make Tsuda's life an enthralling narrative that captures, quite understandably, all the attention. Nonetheless, we should not limit the girls' participation in this state enterprise to the starting point of their interest in women's education. In this article, I highlighted the role of the Iwakura mission in the representation of Japanese culture and people, including Japanese women. It is my hope that this article is only the beginning of the reconsideration of these historical facts in light of considerations other than women's education, including – but not exclusively – representation studies.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 767–68. Lehmann refers to Kurosawa's movies, Mishima Yukio's novels and James Clavell's *Shōgun*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975.

<sup>70</sup> Among which we can quote but a few: *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden (London: Vintage, 1999), *Madame Sadayakko – The Geisha Who Seduced the West* by Lesley Downer (London: Review, 2003), *The Glass Geisha* by Susanna Quinn (London: Hodder, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> Alistair Swale, 'America 15 January–6 August 1872 – The First Stage in the Quest for Enlightenment' in *The Iwakura Mission in Europe and America – A New Assessment*, Ian Nish (ed.), Richmond: Japan Library, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Rose, *Tsuda Umeko*....

<sup>73</sup> Shibahara Takeo, 'Through Americanized Japanese Woman's Eyes – Tsuda Umeko and the Women's Movement in Japan in the 1910s', *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2010, pp. 225–234.



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Claudia Derichs and Mark R. Thompson (eds.), *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in Asia. Gender, Power and Pedigree*, Wien, Zürich, Berlin and Münster: Lit, 2013, 288 pp.**

The collection of articles, which are gathered in the book titled *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in Asia. Gender, Power and Pedigree* is a great source of information on gender issues written in English and edited by Claudia Derichs, Mark R. Thompson that was published by Lit Publishing House and released in 2013. It is an analysis of stateswomen in Asia, a continent which is generally thought as to be a place where the men are the ones who rule. There are few books issued in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the problem of women's participation in political life in Asia. *The Gender Face of Asian Politics* by Aazar Ayaz and Andrea Fleschenberg, or *Women and Politics in Thailand: Continuity and Change* by Kazuki Iwanaga can be the example of such publications. Nevertheless, the lately published book by Derichs and Thompson is an interesting approach to undertake the problem of both – political and dynastic female leaders.

The book is divided into nine articles. It also contains a foreword with acknowledgments, introduction by editors and concluding remarks. It is based on field research, which took place for 3 years. Authors aimed to analyse the shared patterns, differences in leadership styles and means of achieving power with the emphasis on Asia in a global context (p. 9).

In the first article is titled *The Pioneers: Durga Amma, The Only Man in the Cabinet* by Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam. This chapter presents the political biographies of Sirima Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka and Indira Gandhi of India. In the article we can find quite detailed biographies of both ladies, but certain emphasis is set on Gandhi's

evaluation of the government. The relations of India and the US in the context of the war with Pakistan are mentioned as well.

The *Benazir Bhutto: Her People's Sister? A Contextual Analysis of Female Islamic Governance* by Andrea Fleschenberg is the analysis of the issue of the first Muslim woman prime minister. The author claims that there is no systematic analysis of Benazir Bhutto's governance (p. 65), so such analysis was needed and the article fulfils this necessity. Even taking into consideration that one may find in the bookstores the newly published book titled *Getting Away with Murder: Benazir Bhutto's Assassination and the Politics of Pakistan* by Heraldo Muñoz, the chapter by Fleschenberg was definitely the first approach toward this problem. The author in her text provides useful data, such as the electoral performance of the PPP under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto (p. 72), which can give the reader a wider context than only the gender issue in politics. Her political biography and performance are also delivered. All data ends with the day of her murder which gives a good frame for the analysis.

Ricarda Gerlach is the author of the third and the sixth chapter. The first one is titled *Female Leadership and Duelling Dynasties in Bangladesh*. Two competing for power female politicians (and prime ministers) Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh were presented in this paper. In this chapter the complaints from the female organizations' side are undertaken, as the prime ministers mentioned did not pursue women's interests while in power (p. 141). It is an interesting approach, since some of the readers would like to gain more information regarding the situation of woman in the politics of Asia. Nevertheless, the political career of both ladies was also presented in this chapter. The second one – *'Mega' Expectations: Indonesia's Democratic Transition and First Female President* – treats about Megawati Sukarnoputri, who was elected president of Indonesia in 2001. In this text, Gerlach argues that Sukarnoputri became the president because of her soft-spokenness and lack of "originality" (p. 247). Her path to gain office is described in quite a detailed way. Islamic women's organizations' opinions regarding Sukarnoputri are mentioned as well. She is portrayed as a perfect oppositional politician and a good successor of her father.

*Presidentas and 'People Power' in the Philippines: Corazon C. Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo* is a paper written by Mark R. Thompson. He comes out with the statement that what distinguishes Philippine female leaders from South Asia's "leading ladies" is their



revolutionary route to power (p. 151). And from this theory he starts his comparison with the situation in other Asian countries. He raises the question of seeking “justice” by female leaders for their martyred husbands or fathers (p. 160). It is worthy to read this chapter, because of the wide knowledge from fields of politics and gender studies and many other examples apart from the main subject which can deepen the knowledge of the reader.

One of the best known female political leaders in Asia is Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi. Her political leadership via moral capital is the subject of the chapter by Andrea Fleschenberg. The author emphasizes that all the analysis of her career are based on the pro-democracy movement or written by international political activists, so it is difficult to gather information about her activity (p. 194). Therefore, the approach toward this problem is a great opportunity for the reader. A wide context of information is also a strong point of this paper. The article also consists of a biography of Aung San Suu Kyi. Her way of thinking is presented through her letters and essays. It also delivers up-to-date information about Aung San Suu Kyi’s current activity.

The Malaysian context of female political leadership is raised by Claudia Derichs. In the chapter titled *Reformasi and Repression: Wan Azizah Wan Ismail* the political biography of Wan Azizah is introduced. It is compared to other women’s lives introduced in the book. The cultural and ethical case was undertaken to show that in Malaysia the segregation of male and female space does not strike the observers’ eye as much as it does in other countries like Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran or some Arab countries (p. 298). Derichs showed how different was the situation of Wan Azizah from others in the region.

The first foreign minister and the Diet chairperson of the Committee on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as well as the Committee on Foreign Affairs – Makiko Tanaka is a politician who was in power until December 2012, described by Momoyo Hüstebek in the chapter *Populist or Reformer? Tanaka Makiko*. It is an interesting choice for this publication, since Tanaka was not a first place politician in the Japanese government, but was well known for being the daughter of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka. In my opinion it was a good selection of a female politician from Japan, a country which is still closed to the wide participation of women in politics, introducing a person from the leading politician’s family, who gained power in the

Japanese diet. Showing her in such a context, and presenting the polarized opinions about her makes this article worth reading.

The last woman presented in this publication is the ROK's president Park Geun-Hye. She is a democratically elected female politician in a country which is located on the 111<sup>st</sup> place of the The Global Gender Gap Index. She is also the daughter of ROK's president and military general Park Chung-Hee, which makes her situation similar to that of other females introduced in this publication. Special attention was paid to her popularity created by the Korean media and her being the daughter of a former president. During the preparation of the article by Momoyo Hüstebeck, Park was not the president of ROK. Therefore the choice of analyzing this person seemed to be a perfect one.

To conclude, the *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in Asia. Gender, Power and Pedigree* book is worth recommending, mainly because of its broad selection of female political leaders around Asia, and the authors enjoying respect among Asia specialists. All chapters refer to each other, which enables the reader to gain a broad knowledge on this interesting theme.

Olga Barbasiewicz

## REPORT

### **Memory in Poland of the Rescuers and the Rescued from the Holocaust. On the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Granting the Title of the Righteous Among The Nations to Sugihara Chiune, Japanese Consul in Lithuania**

#### Conference Report

On 11–12 June 2015 at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, an international conference entitled *Memory in Poland of the rescuers and the rescued from the Holocaust* was held. The event was organized by the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and University of Technology Sydney in the collaboration with the Inter-institute Unit for Migration Research of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (UKSW). The conference was arranged by Olga Barbasiewicz from the aforementioned Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, PAN and Aleksandra Hadzelek from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences from University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in Australia, with the co-operation of Barbara Dzien-Abraham from the United Kingdom. The event was organized under the auspices of the Embassy of Japan in Poland, which provided a meeting after the conference in Nożyk Synagogue and the Embassy of Israel in Poland as the patron of the conference. It was also held under honorary patronage of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, the Galicia Jewish Museum in Cracow, Center for Yiddish Culture of the Shalom Foundation in Warsaw, the prof. Moses Schorr Foundation in Warsaw, European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity, the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland and Institute of Middle and Far East Asia of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, and under media patronage of Miasteczko Poznań, Japonia online and Forum Żydów Polskich.

The conference was opened by Vice-Rector of UKSW, prof. Jerzy Cytowski and director of the Inter-institute Unit for Migration Research,

prof. Janusz Balicki. It was also supervised by prof. Andrew Jakubowicz, Aleksandra Hadzelek from UTS and Olga Barbasiewicz from the IMOC and PAN. The meeting languages were Polish and English. Simultaneous translation was provided.

It is worthy to note that the conference was dedicated in memory of Japanese Consul in Kaunas in Lithuania, Sugihara Chiune. In cooperation with Dutch Honorary Consul Jan Zwartendijk, he issued over 2,500 visas to Polish Jews who in 1939 found refuge in and around Vilnius. Thanks to these visas, up to 6,000 people escaped the Holocaust by crossing the Soviet Union and entering Japan, and from there resettling in other countries. For his actions, in 1985 Sugihara was awarded the title of Righteous Among The Nations.

The event was attended by twenty one speakers from eight countries, which allowed the participants to listen to over twenty different papers presented in a two day conference program.

As mentioned, renowned researchers from various countries and disciplines agreed to take part in this conference, such as: Rotem Kowner from Israel, Ewa Pałsz-Rutkowska from Poland, Chiharu Inaba from Japan, Andrew Jakubowicz from Australia, and also people like: Simonas Davidovicus, Director of Sugihara House in Kaunas in Lithuania, Mikhail Mitsel from Joint Distribution Committee in New York, former Ambassadors of Poland in Japan and Israel, including Maciej Kozłowski and Henryk Lipszyc as well as representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the Embassies of Japan and Israel in Poland.

The conference's main aim was to bring together scholars interested in public memory and commemorations of Sugihara's actions, and of similar rescue operations.

During the first and second day of the event several panels were organized under these topics:

Day one:

- Rescuing Jews in Japan and Asia
- Jews in Asia

Day two:

- Memory and commemorations of Sugihara and Zwartendijk in Poland and Lithuania
- The Righteous Among the Nations: Contemporary dilemmas and problems associated with the award.

- The perspective of the rescued: personal testimonies of people saved by The Righteous, and their descendants
- The rescuers and the rescued from the Holocaust. Activities of Polish Institutions

The first day started with keynote speeches, the first one by Rotem Kowner from Haifa in Israel, who dealt with *Reflections on the Righteous Among The Nations: Sugihara Chiune as a Case Study*. Next Chiharu Inaba from Nagoya, Japan presented her lecture titled *Japanese rescuers other than Sugihara in Vladivostok and in Kobe*, followed by a reading by Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska from Warsaw, Poland about *The rescued in Japan. The role of Polish Ambassador Tadeusz Romer*. Later, Mikhail Mitsel from New York, USA spoke about *JDC's Major Rescue Operations During WWII* and Teruji Suzuki from Kanagawa, Japan introduced the audience to his lecture entitled *Japanese government and military leaders measures toward Jews*. The second session was opened by Joanna Guzik from Cracow, Poland who spoke on *Japan's Policy toward Jews with the contribution of Andrew Jakubowicz from Sydney, Australia*, who next presented speech titled *Suspended between...: the Polish Jewish community of Shanghai 1941–1946*. Finally, Barbara Abraham from Oxford, UK and Shanghai, China explained *Jewish literary contribution to the cultural life of Polish community in Shanghai. Involvement of Stefan Gołąb and A. Swislocki in publication of Echo Szanghajskie and "Wiadomosci"* – the special supplement for the Polish refugees in China.

On the next day of the conference, Linas Venclauskas from Kaunas, Lithuania considered the issue of *Process of memorialization of Ch. Sugihara and J. Zwartendijk in Lithuania*. Simonas Strelcovas from Šiauliai, Lithuania presented his lecture entitled *Footprints of Sugihara and Zwartendijk in Lithuanian historiography*. The perspectives for future research followed by Aleksandra Hadzelek from Sydney, Australia, who dealt with *Silence or amnesia: the non-memory of Sugihara in Poland*. Consequently, the next speeches were given: Miriam David from Tel Aviv, Israel spoke on *The Righteous Among The Nations in the Jewish Tradition*; Jan Grosfeld from Warsaw, Poland considered the problem of *Instrumentalisation of the memory. The case of the 'Righteous Among The Nations'*. Jakub Greloff also from Warsaw, Poland talked about *Recent Issues in Polish Historiography of the Shoah, commemoration, public and scientific discourse* and Iryna Radchenko

from Dniepropetrovsk, Ukraine focused on *The Righteous Among The Nations: the problem of rescue in saviors' representations*. Additionally, Leora Tec from Tel Aviv, Israel mentioned *Krysia Bloch, Hela Bawnik, Nechama Tec – the labels of victim, survivor and rescuer*; Adam Raszewski from Warsaw, Poland presented his lecture entitled *Destroyed innocence. The experience of children of the Holocaust in terms of Bogdan Wojdowski and Joanna Iwaszkiewicz*; Anna Wencel and Kamila Czerkawska from Cracow, Poland considered the issue of *Working with Survivors and Witnesses – Educators' Perspective*. Finally, Tomasz Sudół from Warsaw, Poland explained the activity of *Komitet dla Upamiętnienia Polaków Ratujących Żydów (Committee for the Commemoration of Poles who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust)* and its collecting data activity of testimonies of Poles that rescued Jews in years 1939–1945 and his fellow Varsovien Klara Jackl presented the Project *'The Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History' by the Polin Museum*. At the end of this session, a documentary film entitled *Ocaleni (Rescued)*, by Joanna Krol and Karolina Dzieciolowska (English Subtitles) was presented by Joanna Krol, with her introduction.

Apart from theoretical analysis, an important part of the conference, which took place in Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw, were personal testimonies of people saved by Sugihara Chiune and their descendants. The speakers including: Nina Admoni from Israel, who was had been saved by Sugihara as well as the children of Erica Mitsidis from Greece and Andrew Jakubowicz from Australia. During the Synagogue meeting, the trailer of the movie about Sugihara Chiune entitled *Persona non grata* was also presented.

The main aim of the Conference was to gather researchers interested in the collective memory and annual memorialization of what Sugihara did for other people, as well as others concerned in the fate of those who were rescued from the Holocaust. Lots of participants took part in this project in order to promote a dialogue and a constructive discussion between the academics and a broader public.

Karina Zalewska

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2. Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 124.
3. Kareen Pfeifer, 'Is There an Islamic Economics?' in *Political Islam. Essays from Middle East Report*, Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977, p. 155.
4. Zygmunt Komorowski, *Kultury Afryki Czarnej* [Cultures of Black Africa], Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994, p. 89.
5. L. Dimond, 'Rethinking of Civil Society', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 4.
6. Tafsir of Ibn Kathir: <http://www.qtafsir.com> (accessed 20.11.2011).

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7. Pfeifer, Is There an Islamic..., p. 154.
8. Ibid., p. 186.
9. Ibidem.

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