

REBEL WITH A CAUSE: ISHIHARA SHINTARŌ, A CASE STUDY OF A
JAPANESE NATIONALIST

By

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Abstract

This paper explores the formation of national identity through selected works of Ishihara Shintarō, a politician and writer. Ishihara's narrative of identity, as seen in his works, reflects the Japanese nation's quest for a clear and unbroken narrative of identity. As both a disseminator and consumer of nationalist ideology, Ishihara reflects the theoretical, historical, and cultural bases of Japanese nationalism. By situating Ishihara's conception of national identity within the broader contexts of nationalism in general and Japanese nationalism in particular, the reader will come to see how Ishihara actively reinterprets and reaffirms Japanese traditions and myths and will gain a fuller appreciation of the reactive nature of national identity formation.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
It's a small world after all; nationalism in a shrinking world.....	1
Ishihara Shintarō: A Brief Biography	3
II. Nation, Identity, and Myth: A theoretical basis of nationalism.....	9
Nation.....	9
Nationalism.....	11
Identity.....	11
Myth	13
III. Contextualizing Ishihara's Nationalism.....	20
Highlights in Japanese national identity formation.....	20
Another Other, the West	21
Resurrecting the past for the present.....	22
Modernity.....	24
Postwar Identity	26
Globalization	30
IV. Oeuvre, Seminal Works	35
Season of the Sun (太陽の季節)	37
The Punishment Room (処刑の部屋)	40
The Yacht and the Boy (ヨットと少年).....	42
The interplay of anomie and violence	44
V. Reconstructing the House of the Rising Sun	47
The Japan That Can Say 'No'	48
Nihon yo 「日本よ」	54
VI. Conclusions: The Sun Also Sets, Ishihara in his twilight	65
Bibliography	67
Appendix A	72
Appendix B.....	76
Appendix C	80
Appendix D.....	84
Appendix E.....	88
Appendix F.....	92

I. Introduction

It's a small world after all; nationalism in a shrinking world

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, and technology makes possible the compression of the world in terms of time and space, the increased contact between different peoples facilitates the development of national identity and nationalism. This increase in contact and interdependence between nations provides other cultures with which nations differentiate and compare themselves. The question of national identity, “Who are we?” is often defined in relation to the Other, but in a globalized world, this question becomes even more complex, as the question of identity becomes “Who are we in relation to the rest of the world?”¹

Ishihara Shintarō, the former governor of Tokyo, is an exemplary figure of this phenomenon. He is often labeled an ultra-nationalist by the media for the nationalistic sentiments he espouses. Many of his statements have been deemed problematic because of their provocative nature, however, if one is able to look beyond some of Ishihara’s oft-offensive remarks, one can see that he is attempting to answer the question of who the Japanese people were, are, and ought to be relative to the rest of the world. Although one could argue that Ishihara’s definition of Japanese identity is particular to him, his popularity is evidence that some of his nationalistic sentiments resonate with, at least, some of the Japanese people.

This paper offers a case study of a Japanese nationalist, or a Japanese version of a much larger process--a global phenomenon. The choice of Ishihara was an obvious one.

¹ The Other is a concept developed by Edward Said and explains how identity is derived through exclusion. This concept and its relationship to the formation of national identity is further explicated in the following chapter. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Random House, 1994).

His former governance over one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and his popularity in Japan--as a novelist, director, screenwriter, adventure/travel writer, wartime journalist, etc. places him in a highly influential position as both a politician and celebrity. In understanding his views on Japanese national identity, one can understand a distinctly Japanese reaction to pressure on the global stage. This research project seeks to illuminate how historic and contemporary events and global processes have affected Ishihara Shintarō's specific brand of nationalism, and how he aids in the maintenance, construction, and reconstruction of Japanese national identity.

There are three periods in recent history that have engendered surges in Japanese nationalism: World War II, Japan's economic preeminence of the 1980s and 90s, and finally the last decade of increased globalization coupled with Japan's waning power as an economic power holder. Ishihara's works reflect these up-ticks in identity reassertion. He seems sensitive to the times and his writings appear to reflect the sentiments of the larger national consciousness. Two of his seminal works coincide with the first two periods mentioned above: *Taiyo no Kisetsu*, written about a decade after the end of the war and *The Japan That Can Say 'No'* in 1989. In both, Ishihara concerns himself with the identity of the Japanese people. Although most recently there is no work in particular that stands out, Ishihara has voiced his opinions concerning the Japanese identity in a monthly column, "Nihon yo," or "Japan Wake up!" in the conservative *Sankei Shinbun* since 2002, and various other media including his officially sanctioned website, *Sensenfukoku*, translated as proclamation of war.

The purpose of this paper is not to refute Ishihara's deserved title of nationalist or ultra-nationalist, but to situate his conception of national identity within the broader

contexts of nationalism and Japanese nationalism. The analysis is an attempt to string together the narratives of the Japanese nation and Ishihara Shintarō, a Japanese nationalist, by exploring the theoretical, historical, and cultural bases of Ishihara's nationalism as expressed in his writing. In the process, Ishihara's individual quest for identity will be aligned with the nation's quest for identity at the collective level.

First, a brief overview of Ishihara's political and artistic career follows this introduction. The second section offers a discussion of the theoretical basis of nation, national identity, nationalism, and the myth that serves as the foundational narrative of Japanese identity. After laying out theoretical underpinnings, the third section offers highlights of Japanese national identity formation from the 8th century to today in order to further contextualize and understand Ishihara's particular interpretation of Japanese national identity. The fourth and fifth sections cover highlights in Ishihara's oeuvre that pertain directly to Japanese nationalism and national identity, and provide an analysis of Ishihara's works in regards to his conception of Japan, the nation and its people. These two sections further explicate the social milieu influencing Ishihara's worldview, including developments in the historical, social, economic, and psychological environment of the immediate postwar to today, and also align Ishihara's life, career, and writings with popular Japanese nationalistic sentiments. The final section offers brief concluding remarks on Ishihara's place in the discourse of Japanese nationalism.

Ishihara Shintarō: A Brief Biography

Ishihara Shintarō was born on September 30, 1932 in Kobe. In 1944, his family moved to Zushi for his father's business as a shipping magnate. He attended junior high school at Kanagawa Shonan Chugaku, a prestigious naval academy prep school. While

many children his age were sent to factories to help with the war effort, Ishihara was able to not only continue his education, but also study English, which was prohibited throughout the rest of Japan.² The main objective of the junior high administration was to train students to become elite marine officers. However, at the end of the war the administration quickly aligned itself with the Occupation policies and began to promote principles of democracy and train students to become government officials.³ After entering high school, Ishihara became increasingly dissatisfied and disillusioned by the change in rhetoric, and feigning illness, dropped out. During his year as a dropout, he studied “surrealism, symbolism, poetry, and went to see plays, the opera, and movies, and because he loved French literature, he studied French.”⁴

He returned to school after a year, and graduated from Shonan High School in 1952. That same year, his father died of a stroke, and saddled with the familial responsibility of being the oldest son he decided to enter Hitotsubashi Daigaku in Tokyo to become a certified public accountant. While at college, Ishihara began to write for the university paper, and published his first story, “The Ashen-colored classroom” (灰色の教室), based on his younger brother’s anecdotes.⁵ Emboldened by a critic’s favorable review, Ishihara decided to quit accounting and pursue writing.

Ishihara initially gained notoriety in the late 1950s when his first novel, *Season of the Sun* (太陽の季節), won the prestigious and highly coveted Akutagawa prize awarded

² Shintarō Ishihara, *Undercurrents*, Translated by Wayne P. Lammers (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2005), 159.

³ Shintarō Ishihara, *Sensenfukoku: Ishihara Shintarō’s official website*, Accessed April 1, 2013. <http://www.sensenfukoku.net/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

to young up-and-coming writers.⁶ He again based the novel on his brother's experiences, and finished writing it in two days.⁷ Ishihara entered the limelight with his first foray into novel writing, and has continued to remain in the public light. With the award, and the subsequent publicity, he went on to make a film version of the novella, in which he and his brother acted.

The popularity and success of the novel and film launched and fixed Ishihara and his younger brother, Yūjiro, as popular icons in Japan. The two quickly became the center of the Taiyōzoku (太陽族), or Sun Tribe, revered by the disaffected Japanese youth of the postwar period. Thenceforth, a new Japanese fad was born, and the Ishihara brothers were the center. The Sun Tribe was identified by the Ishihara brothers' signature style of Hawaiian shirts and the Shintarōgari.⁸ In fact, Ishihara's younger brother went on to become a famous actor and singer and was often called the "Japanese James Dean." Ishihara's novel portrayal of postwar youth "captured the sentiment of the Japanese who wanted to break with the postwar era."⁹

With his newfound prestige and popularity, Ishihara went on to write screenplays and direct films. He is credited with influencing the Nouvelle Vague, New Wave, movement in French film led by the director Francois Truffaut, with whom Ishihara later

⁶ The Akutagawa prize was named in honor of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, the Japanese writer who wrote *Rashōmon* and other famous stories.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Taiyōzoku was a youth centered cult, or fad, whose members were identified by their Hawaiian shirts, Shintarō haircuts, a trendy naval haircut associated with the affluent yacht culture, and a devil-may-care attitude.

⁹ Ibid.

collaborated and codirected the film *Love at Twenty (L'amour à vingt ans)*.¹⁰ Today, he continues to produce, write, and direct films and documentaries. Even during his governorship he continued to write screenplays and produce films, including the 2009 anime *Space Battleship Yamato Resurrection (宇宙戦艦ヤマト 復活篇)* and *For Those We Love (俺は、君のためにこそ死ににいく)*, a 2007 film based on a restaurant owner's recollections of the WWII suicide bombers.¹¹

In 1966, when he was 34, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* asked him to go to Vietnam to report on the Viet Kong's request for a 48-hour truce. While in Saigon, he had conversations with Vietnamese intellectuals, and he was startled by their complete and extreme apathy towards their own country. When he returned to Japan, he was hospitalized with hepatitis, and while recovering he received a letter from fellow writer, Yukio Mishima, who empathized with his situation and advised him to take the reprieve as an opportunity to "ponder the world."¹² He began to think of the similarities between the Vietnamese intellectuals and the Japanese intellectuals' political attitudes. He came to the conclusion that the democratic institution that was imposed upon Japan in the postwar period would ruin his ancestral Japan. With this belief, he decided he could not remain an intellectual who sat idly by and became determined to participate in politics.

In 1968, Ishihara ran as a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) candidate and became a member of the Sangiin, House of Councilors, with a record 3 million vote, thus jump-starting his political career for the next half century, and as Ishihara stated best, a

¹⁰ David Sheff, "Playboy interview: Ishihara Shintarō," *Playboy* 37, no. 10 (October 1990): 76. The film was a collaboration between five countries, including France, Italy, Japan, Poland, and West Germany.

¹¹ The official translation is *For those we love*, or *I Go to Die for You*. Or the title also could be translated as *I go to die for the emperor (君)*.

¹² Shintarō Ishihara, *Sensenfukoku: Ishihara Shintarō's official website*

“politician of the sun was born.”¹³ In 1972, he ran for and was elected to the House of Representatives, where he initially served as an official for the Ministry Department of the Environment and later became Minister of Transport. In 1975, Ishihara ran for Governor of Tokyo, but was unsuccessful. In 1995, the day after he received an award recognizing his 25-year tenure in the Diet, Ishihara announced his retirement and became a judge for the Akutagawa literary prize. In his retirement announcement, he said, “I am guilty for people feeling mistrust and contempt towards the present government” and apologized for his impotence and lack of power to affect the nation, which is akin to “a huge ship that is beginning to sink.”¹⁴ However, he did not stay away for long and in 1999, he re-entered politics with a successful run for the governorship of Tokyo with the slogan “I will change Japan from Tokyo.”¹⁵ He was reelected to the governorship in 2003 with over 3 million votes and over 70% of Tokyoites voting. He continued to be reelected two more times in 2007 and 2011.¹⁶

Ishihara Shintarō resigned from his fourth and final term as governor of Tokyo in October 2012. He resigned in order to run for Parliament for his newly formed party, the Sunrise Party of Japan (太陽の党).¹⁷ Ishihara announced the party “is merely a channel to form a coalition.”¹⁸ Keeping his word, only a few days later the Sunrise Party merged with the Japan Restoration Party (日本維新の会) and Ishihara became co-leader.

Ishihara ran a successful campaign and was elected to the Diet’s Lower House in the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ This fairly innocuous sounding party name in Japanese recalls the Japanese prewar and war era rhetoric.

¹⁸ Mizuho Aoki. “Ishihara, Hiranuma unveil new party.” *Japan Times online*, Accessed April 16, 2013. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp>

December 2012 election. The party's platform included the writing establishment of a new Constitution, beefing up Japan's defense capabilities, and fundamental reform of fiscal management and tax systems to make them more transparent.”¹⁹ In his retirement announcement he said that this effort will be his last service for his country (最後のご奉公).

¹⁹ Ibid.

II. Nation, Identity, and Myth: A theoretical basis of nationalism

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for situating Ishihara's specific nationalistic sentiments within the broader boundaries of nationalism in general and the narrower confines of Japanese nationalism. First, a cursory explanation of the concepts of nation and nationalism and the development of national identity is crucial, as they create and inform the foundation from which the subsequent analysis of Japanese nationalism proceeds.²⁰ Finally, this chapter provides an interpretation of the Japanese myths in the *Kojiki* that serve as the foundational narrative of shared culture and history that informs the collective Japanese identity.

Nation

A nation is defined as a group of people “*united by shared cultural features (myths, values, etc.) and the belief in the right to territorial self-determination.*”²¹ As this paper attempts to show, Ishihara has devoted his literary, artistic, and political career to the Japanese nation, so consequently the discussion of Japanese nationalism begins with his conception of the nation. In *The Voice of Asia*, Ishihara traces the origin of the term nation to the Roman Empire, when sons of elites from across the realm were sent to study at the University of Bologna.

There [s]tudents...organized associations, called *natio*, of people from the same hometown or region...a home away from home, a place where they could relax and fraternize with their own kind...speak their native tongue with

²⁰ Although nationalism, national identity, and national consciousness are separate terms, they are treated synonymously in most of the literature. National identity, and the specific cultural and ethnic traits that are selected and shared in the national consciousness, inform nationalism, or nationalistic sentiments, and so for the purposes of this paper these terms will also be used interchangeably.

²¹ Lowell W. Barrington, “‘Nation’ and ‘Nationalism’: The misuse of the key concepts in political science.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, no. 4 (Dec 1997): 712 -713. Italicized in original.

friends...Youth from far-flung domains cherished being part of that great imperium, yet the transcendent affinity of birthplace and shared assumptions about life brought them together in *natio*.²²

Nation is “derived from the Latin *natio*, meaning birth, race, or people.”²³ There are several important facets worth explicating in Ishihara’s conception of the nation. Firstly, at the core, the *natio*, he refers to is an association, a collective of people. Also, as Ishihara suggests, the definition of nation must include two important criteria, a cultural feature and a homeland. Ishihara’s description of the nation suggests that members of a nation are unified by an “affinity of birthplace.” However, according to Lowell Barrington, it is not just the birthplace that is significant to the definition of nation, it is that the members believe the homeland to be theirs, and that they have the right to control it, and are unified by this sense of purpose.²⁴ The “shared assumptions about life” he refers to is the culture, or the customs, values, and myths that the individuals share with each other, the unifying traits that bind them in their collective identity. Ishihara’s *natio* fits well with the above definition of nation; he emphasizes both shared culture and homeland.

The “transcendent affinity” Ishihara refers to coincides nicely with Benedict Andersen’s concept of the nation as an “imagined community.” The nation “is an imagined political community --- and imagined as both inherently limited and

²² Mahathir Mohamad and Shintarō Ishihara, *The Voice of Asia* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1995), 23. Also in Shintarō Ishihara, “Things we must recover,” *Sankei Shinbun*, January 6, 2003, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original title in Japanese, 「取り戻すべきもの」. See full translation in Appendix A.

²³ Mohamad and Ishihara, 23.

²⁴ Barrington, “Nation and Nationalism,” 712 -713.

sovereign.”²⁵ Imagined because members may never meet each other, but “each lives the image of their communion,”²⁶ meaning one always has a sense of this collective, national community or shared brotherhood. Ishihara’s definition reflects this idea that the nation arouses a profound attachment. The next section delves a bit further into this idea of attachment, answering the question of how the Japanese identity is derived from nation, and consequently how one develops such an affinity for the nation.

Nationalism

Where a nation is a collective of people with a shared culture and homeland, nationalism is the process that unites the beliefs and the activities of the nationalists, or “*the pursuit – through argument or other activity—of a set of rights for the self-defined members of the nation, including, at a minimum, territorial autonomy or sovereignty.*”²⁷ Nationalism defines the territorial boundaries the nation has a right to control, and the membership boundaries of the “group that deserves the territorial control and that is entitled to the supreme loyalty of other members of the collective.”²⁸ All nationalisms share these two characteristics. The following section aims at explicating the creation of the membership boundaries and how these inform national identity.

Identity

Defining the membership criteria for the group involves a number of processes. Nations begin to emphasize their own particular cultural traditions and history through a selective process. The use of particular, or specific, traits and characteristics to define a

²⁵ Benedict Arnold, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 6.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Barrington, “Nation and Nationalism,” 714.

²⁸ Ibid.

group is known as essentialism. Essentialism is crucial in creating nationalist identities. By defining itself through their particular historical and cultural characteristics, the group can create a common consciousness around which they can rally and form a cultural identity. A nation's collective identity is formed through this process of cultural differentiation.²⁹

The selective process does not occur in a void, the term cultural *differentiation* implies that national identities are given form in a relative context. It is a relational process, where binaries are formed. To binate is to create two components, to create dualities. The formation of identity through binaries is central to the creation of national identity and forms the foundation of nationalism. According to Edward Said, the Self is defined less by what one is and more by what one is not through the process of "Othering."³⁰ This dividing practice is dependent on the "idea that one's identity is based on negating or excluding something," or someone.³¹ Identities operate through exclusion, through the construction of marginalized subjects.

This marginalization, or exclusion of foreigners and others, is crucial to the self-identity of any nation. These processes of cultural differentiation, including creating binaries, othering, and essentialism, succeed in creating the boundaries that define the nation, the *we* and the *they*, an *us* versus *them*. The key binary of Japan is Japan vs. the foreigner.³² This reactionary impulse to define Japan via foreigners is evidenced through

²⁹ Masamichi Sasaki, "Globalization and national identity in Japan," *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, no. 13 (Nov 2004): 74.

³⁰ Chris Burgess, "Maintaining identities: discourses of homogeneity in a rapidly globalizing Japan," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2004): 4, accessed October 28, 2006. <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/Burgess.html>

³¹ Burgess, "Maintaining identities," 4.

³² Ibid.

the development of Japanese nationalism, the topic of the following chapter, and is also the motivating drive behind Ishihara's compulsion to define and assert Japanese national identity, the subject of the fourth and fifth chapters.

Myth

An important aspect of identity formation is the selection process of choosing the meaningful cultural traditions, histories, and myths from which the people of a nation draw meaning and a sense of unity, or as Ishihara would say, a "transcendent affinity." The resultant nationalism, or identity formation, is a process resulting from hundreds of years of creation and contestation. This process is the creation of a "collective consciousness," because it suggests an original set of archetypes common to all members of a group, and out of which they formulate meanings, contexts, and patterns within the group."³³ These are the "shared assumptions" Ishihara recognizes as the norms of the collective. The formation of national identity is also attributed to the process of remembering past traditions as determined by the needs of the present.³⁴ This next section explores the *Kojiki*, which contains the Japanese creation myth. Since its completion, the *Kojiki* has served as the foundational narrative for Japanese national identity.³⁵

³³ Chicago School of Media Theory, "Collective Conscious," University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, 2013, Accessed March 2013.

<http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/collective-consciousness/>

³⁴ Arvind N. Das, "The end of geography: nationalism in the era of globalization," in *Nations under siege: globalization and nationalism in Asia*, ed. Roy Starrs (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 139.

³⁵ It is important to note that it is the 18th century scholar Motoori Norinaga's interpretations of *Kojiki* that have influenced the Japanese concept of identity. This is explored further in the following chapter.

The Japanese collective identity formed early, and was engendered by the ancient Japanese text, the *Kojiki*. The *Kojiki* has been revisited throughout history to serve the purpose of rallying the Japanese. It was originally compiled in order to establish the imperial line of the Yamato clan, just one clan among many vying for territorial control in early Japanese history, “as the sole legitimate authority in Japan.”³⁶ The *Kojiki* as an ancient text retains its influence as a repository of ancient myths and legends of the beginnings of the Japanese people and nation. In fact,

[i]t is the court’s statement about the origins of the imperial clan and the leading families and the beginnings of Japan as a nation; and it is, at the same time a compilation of myths, historical and pseudo-historical narratives and legends, songs, anecdotes, folk etymologies, and genealogies.³⁷

The “history” was a conscious effort on the part of the ruling elite to define the membership boundaries of the Japanese people and the territorial boundaries of Japan. It is the first documented nationalist expression of the Japanese. The *Kojiki* as a mythology was reactionary in nature. Before it was compiled, the Japanese were experiencing great flux/change and increasing foreign influence. By the time the *Kojiki* was completed in 712 CE, at the beginning of the Nara Period, the Japanese had undergone a period of wholesale adoption of Chinese institutions.

The Japanese were coming out of three centuries of conscious borrowing from the continent. Things borrowed included writing systems, religion- in the form of Buddhism, and government philosophies (i.e. Confucianism) and other institutions. This borrowing of Chinese culture was led by the prince regent Shotoku who reigned in the 6th century.

³⁶ Walter Edwards, “In pursuit of Himiko: Postwar archaeology and the location of Yamatai.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 59.

³⁷ Donald L. Philippi trans., *Kojiki* (Japan: University of Tokyo Press, 1968, 2002), 3.

He is the one credited with changing the position of emperor to tennō, or heavenly sovereign, and giving Japan the name Nippon, the “Land of the Rising Sun.”³⁸ This great borrowing in effect supplanted native matrilineal clans with the “culture of patriarchy-Confucian hierarchy, sexual inequality, male lineage.”³⁹ Shotoku’s legacy was “to give Japan the means to know itself by way of others.”⁴⁰ By the 8th century, the Japanese elite had thoroughly incorporated many foreign ideologies and practices into their lives, and the *Kojiki* is a reflection of their reconciling their borrowing into a firmly articulated Japanese identity. It was also around this time that the term Shinto was coined; until the introduction of a foreign religion, the Japanese had been satisfied without having to name their native practices.

As noted above, the text was “the contemporary court’s attempt at an authoritative historical statement about its own origins.”⁴¹ In fact, the first mention of the Japanese islands and inhabitants can be traced back to a 3rd century Chinese dynastic history, the *History of the Kingdom of Wei*. This first account of Japan and the Japanese included “general descriptions of the land, economy, and social customs of Wa,” which was further characterized as warring chiefdoms but with a centralized system of taxation.⁴² This passage that refers to the culture and location of the Yamato is known as the *Wajinden* in Japan.⁴³ Centuries after Japan was mentioned in the Chinese history, the Japanese, aware of the cultural greatness of the Middle Kingdom, undertook the writing of their own “historical” document.

³⁸ Patrick Smith, *Japan: A reinterpretation* (New York: Random House, 1997), 189.

³⁹ Smith, *Japan*, 189.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Japan*, 190.

⁴¹ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 4.

⁴² Edwards, “In Pursuit of Himiko,” 53-54.

⁴³ Ibid.

The *Kojiki* is an exemplar of the myth as a foundational narrative for national identity. The first passage relates the mythical and sacred origins of the self-contained homeland, the Japanese islands, as creations of the kami, or gods. The cosmogony sequence and the establishment of the islands and people of Japan as created by the deities imbue the nation and its people with a transcendent quality, thereby establishing an affinity between the people and the nation through myth. Within the narrative, the intellectual and political elite of the nation, i.e., the Yamato ruling power, negotiated and set the territorial and membership boundaries of Japan.

At the onset of the myth, there was a conspicuous lack of other lands beyond that of the Japanese islands. This can be interpreted as a direct snub to the continent, especially the Chinese, of whom the Japanese were acutely and self-consciously aware. This self-conscious drive to set themselves apart from the continent was one of the driving forces behind the compilation. The *Kojiki* exemplifies the practice of othering inherent in formulating identity, i.e., creating the division between Japan and foreigners.

The divine origin of the emperor and nation as the people of the sun is established in the narrative with the benevolent sun goddess Amaterasu. Amaterasu is a direct descendant of Izanagi, the male deity of the male-female pair who created the Japanese islands. Later, Izanagi entrusts the ruling of the Japanese islands to Amaterasu by handing down to her his magatama beads; these are later handed down to her descendants who were the first human rulers of the Japanese islands, thus establishing a direct sacred and authoritative link between the gods and the unbroken line of emperors of Japan. Ishihara often invokes the image of the sun, and the fourth and fifth sections provide specific examples of how he summons the mythic past in his works.

The *Kojiki* is also filled with references to Japanese customs and cultural traditions; it is a repository of religious rituals and rites of propriety. By establishing the rituals and behaviors of the kami and humans, the *Kojiki* establishes a sense of community for the Japanese. Both the kami and humans are members of the community, i.e., Japanese community, and mutually support each other within a hierarchical organization based on principles of reciprocity and cooperation. These principles are included in the *Kojiki*'s cyclic rituals and festivals, and provide a sense of longevity, security, and structure to Japanese identity, and inform the Japanese impulse to revisit this myth over the centuries. The ritualization of behaviors emphasizes the importance Japanese place on process, and the individual impulse to rely on predictable framed behavior.

The membership boundaries of the Japanese community are further established within the narrative through the inclusion of purification rituals. Within the *Kojiki*, the purification rituals relating to cleanliness, in particular, help to contribute to the sense of Japanese identity and community by establishing Shinto ritual in everyday Japanese practice, i.e. the Japanese practice of bathing. Amaterasu, the sun goddess herself, was spawned by Izanagi's ritual purification and cleansing after exiting Yomi, the polluted Land of the Dead- a polluted land outside the boundaries of the self-defined, and self-contained, Japanese islands. In this episode, the emphasis on cleanliness and purity through bathing functions as a boundary-marking mechanism.

The Japanese cultural tradition, or concept, of uchi and soto reflects the inside/outside differentiation that helps to create a sense of community for the Japanese.⁴⁴ The uchi-soto distinction refers to the demarcation between sacred and profane, insider and outsider, self and others.⁴⁵ The stories within the *Kojiki* clearly establish who is a member of the uchi, and the boundary markings and boundary maintenance mechanisms, i.e. purification rituals, of soto. The self-conscious drive to define their identity in relation to the continent can be explained by the inclusion of these rites and rituals, as these traditions carried out by kami and humans alike aid in the creation, maintenance, and perpetuation of the Japanese identity.

Yamato and Amaterasu have been continually revived in Japan's narrative of identity. The significance of the symbol of Yamato in the Japanese consciousness cannot be understated. Yamato was "literally a reference to the Japanese mountains, where heaven and earth divided."⁴⁶ Yamato also refers to the imperial line/institution, but also conjures images of a region of Japan founded by the mythical first emperor, the epicenter or cradle of Japanese civilization, thus recalling pre-modern Japan associated with Shinto and the mythological beginning. Yamato has also been evoked in discussions of the ethnic homogeneity and racial purity of the Japanese.⁴⁷ Later this image of Japan was revived during WWII with *Yamato*, the largest Japanese battleship.⁴⁸ Amaterasu, the

⁴⁴ Akira Yamamoto, "Unhappy spirits" (lecture for Japanese Ghosts and Demons, University of Kansas, Edwards Campus, Overland Park, Kansas, September 12, 2006).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Smith, *Japan*, 188.

⁴⁷ Michael Baskett, "Resurgent Nationalism" (lecture for Contemporary Japanese Film, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas March 7, 2007).

⁴⁸ The sister ship to the *Yamato* was named *Musashi*, also a revival of myth of sorts as the name recalls the legendary samurai sword master Miyamoto Musashi. Ibid.

symbol of the sun, has been recalled by Japanese nationalists and as Chapter 4 and 5 will show, Ishihara often refers to the sun as a symbol of national identity.

The process of nationalism has been equated with the “propagation of mythologies.”⁴⁹ The *Kojiki* is an exemplar of this phenomenon. The myth of a divine emperor and people of the sun has been exhumed throughout the centuries to reaffirm the Japanese identity and give the Japanese people a sense of history, affinity, and purpose. This also is a process of selecting or constructing the stories to tell and retell. However, it would be misleading to focus on the fabricated nature of the myths that a nation retells, because it is the sense of community that the nation draws from the myths that is important. As Ernest Gellner states, “nationalism engenders nations.”⁵⁰ Nations need the continuity that shared culture, traditions, and myths can perpetuate. Ishihara would certainly agree with the following quote, “We need our myths, our shadows give us depth.”⁵¹ The *Kojiki* myth helps to create the “transcendent” quality of Ishihara’s conception of the nation. The next section provides an overview of Japanese nationalism, demonstrating the power of myth as a basis of identification and the process of defining national identity through othering, or exclusionary practices.

⁴⁹ Gavan McCormack, “New tunes for an old song: nationalism and identity in post Cold War Japan,” in *Nations under siege: globalization and nationalism in Asia*, ed. Roy Starrs (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 137-167.

⁵⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (US: Cornell University Press, 1983), 55.

⁵¹ BBC, *Luther*, season 2, episode 2.

III. Contextualizing Ishihara's Nationalism Highlights in Japanese national identity formation

This section provides an overview of Japanese nationalism and the historical events and processes that stimulated the Japanese to assert and reassert Japanese identity. A historical event or process engenders nationalism, or acts as a catalyst; it is a driving force or stimulus, speeding along the process of identity formation, but is not actually the process itself. The catalytic agent for identity formation differs depending on time and place. As noted previously, contact with others is fuel for nationalistic sentiment. The processes such as modernity, industrialization, colonization, and globalization fuel nationalistic sentiments by creating an urgency to define national identity in the presence of an Other.

As noted in the previous section's discussion of the *Kojiki*, early in Japanese history, the Japanese began to consciously construct an identity as they increasingly came into contact with the peoples of the Asian continent, namely the Koreans and Chinese. Later, during the 13th century of the Kamakura period, the Japanese were faced with a new Other as the Mongolian empire stretched across the Eurasian continent and encroached on the Japanese islands.⁵² It was at this time that one of Japan's "earliest super-patriots," Nichiren, a Buddhist priest who established the Nichiren Sect, promoted a combination of Buddhism and militant ethnocentrism and advocated for the salvation of the Japanese islands from foreign invaders.⁵³

⁵² This period occurs after the Heian period, 794 CE to 1185 CE, which witnessed many native cultural developments, especially in literature with the invention of a "native" Japanese syllabary, Hiragana.

⁵³ Mikiso Hane, *Premodern Japan: A historical survey* (Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, United Kingdom: Westview Press, 1991), 77-78.

Combining Buddhism and Shinto, Nichiren considered himself the savior of Japan, a unique land, and believed that national security should be of the utmost importance to all Buddhists.⁵⁴ Interestingly, Nichiren promoted a foreign religion, Buddhism, as the means of salvation for Japan, but by this time Buddhism had been fully incorporated, or “Japanized,” into the Japanese consciousness. He demonized other sects by claiming that the epidemics, famines, and natural calamities were caused by the “prevalence of false religions.”⁵⁵ Similarly, in 2011, Ishihara echoed this sentiment when he stated that the tsunami, which devastated the Japanese islands, tipping off a nuclear disaster, was the kami’s divine punishment, washing away the false idols with which the Japanese had been consumed, i.e., greed and materialism.

Another Other, the West

The first encounter with a Western Other was Portugal during the 16th century. The West brought with it firearms and Christianity. Christianity in particular was eventually seen as threatening to usurp the authority of the Tokugawa Shogun, the military and political head of state, and disrupt the sacred ties between the Japanese people and the land through the introduction of a foreign and transcendent authority located outside the Japanese islands. This identity contest with the West ended in bloodshed and a reining in of “Japan.”⁵⁶

Nationalistic ideologies began to further develop again in the 18th and 19th centuries, and today form the basis of Japanese discourse on national identity.⁵⁷ During the Tokugawa period, Western Learning, i.e. Dutch Learning, spawned Kokugaku.

⁵⁴ Hane, *Premodern Japan*, 78.

⁵⁵ Hane, *Premodern Japan*, 77.

⁵⁶ Hane, *Premodern Japan*, 123.

⁵⁷ Burgess, “Maintaining identities,” 5.

Kokugaku, also known as Nativism or National Learning, is recognized as an intellectual school of thought that formulated new theories about Japanese literature, history, and culture, and “is regarded further as an important source of the new nationalism that contributed to the fall of the Tokugawa Bakufu and, beyond that, to the development of a Shinto-based state ideology in the course of the Meiji period.”⁵⁸

Resurrecting the past for the present

During the Edo period, Motoori Norinaga, a preeminent Kokugaku scholar, motivated by nativism and nostalgia, investigated Japanese literature in order to release the Japanese from the grip of the Chinese aesthetic, which had again firmly taken hold of the Japanese consciousness over the course of the Tokugawa period in the form of the “rigid, Confucian ethic of [the] warrior society.”⁵⁹ In his critique of Confucianism as “blind faith in reason,”⁶⁰ he argued that the Japanese have an ability to experience the natural world directly.⁶¹ Motoori identified this Japanese aesthetic as *mono no aware*, or the pathos of things. He identified the *Kojiki* and *The Tale of Genji* as repositories of this distinctive Japanese ability to acknowledge “the movements of the heart and mind

⁵⁸ Mark Teeuwen, “Poetry, sake, and acrimony: Arakida Hisaoyu and the Kokugaku Movement,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 295.

⁵⁹ Jun’ichi Isomae, “Reappropriating the Japanese myths: Mootori Norinaga and the creation myths of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, no. 1-2 (2000): 23.

⁶⁰ Isomae, “Reappropriating the Japanese myths,” 24.

⁶¹ Richard Hooker, Japan glossary, University of Massachusetts Boston, accessed April 10, 2013. www.faculty.umb.edu

without suppressing them.”⁶² Motoori believed that the *Kojiki* revealed an authentic and innate yamato gokoro, or Japanese mind, unfettered by alien, i.e. Chinese, influence.⁶³

In his *Kojikiden*, an annotated translation of the *Kojiki*, Motoori identified the “mythological basis for the emperor’s status as sole sovereign of the realm.”⁶⁴ He did this by using the myth to establish the genealogical link between the imperial house and the creator deities. He argued that the true sovereigns of Japan were the line of emperors continuing back to the mythological/sacred origins (explicated earlier in the *Kojiki* discussion) and not the militarist government that controlled Japan. Motoori was motivated to use the *Kojiki* as a

myth-history to legitimize an attitude of selflessness, that is, a Way that supports order... he espoused the imperial system only as a way to expound the unselfishness of the Japanese people, the emperor system as an apparatus of selflessness.⁶⁵

Motoori Norinaga’s interpretations of the *Kojiki* continue to serve as the basis for all subsequent interpretations of Japanese identity. He successfully united the celestial origins of the imperial line and the divine origins of the Japanese land with the identity of the Japanese. When the Japanese revisit their foundational myth to reassert their identity, it is Motoori’s interpretation or understanding of the myth that they recall.

During the latter part of the 19th century, the Japanese discussion on national identity acquired a “new Other, the West, and a new urgency”⁶⁶ with the arrival of

⁶² Isomae, “Reappropriating the Japanese myths,” 21.

⁶³ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Kokugaku,” (April 17, 2007), accessed April 20, 2013). <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kokugaku-school/> (accessed April 20, 2013). Yamato gokoro is also often translated as Yamato damashii.

⁶⁴ Isomae, “Reappropriating the Japanese myths,” 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Burgess, “Maintaining Identities,” 5.

Commodore Matthew Perry at Edo and the signing of the Convention of Kanagawa in 1854. This opening of Japan, by Western, i.e. American, force marked the beginning of Japan's modern imperial state and a renewed vigor in trying to define Japanese identity in relation to the West. After the restoration and symbolic return of the Meiji emperor as the sovereign of Japan in 1868, a new Constitution, based on German models, was not set forth until 1889.⁶⁷ In order to develop a sense of nation among the Japanese, the intellectuals and politicians promoted the tennōsei (天皇制) ideology, or emperor system ideology. Tennōsei promoted the idea that Japan was the land of the gods and the Japanese are a unique people who live as a family under the benevolent guide of a divine emperor, and promoted the imperial symbol of the nation and empire and a civil morality of loyalty and patriotism.⁶⁸ It is important to note that at this time the emperor, although restored as the sovereign of Japan, continued to be depoliticized and was associated with national progress and national unity.⁶⁹

Modernity

Although contact with foreigners underlies the drive for self-definition, the process of modernity also engenders the quest for national identity.⁷⁰ The development of Japanese nationalism is intricately tied to modernity. Modernity supplants the preeminence of agricultural modes of production and religious ways of understanding the world with industrialization, rationalism, and secularism. For many, this leaves an

⁶⁷ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in Late Meiji Japan* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 17.

⁶⁸ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 3-5.

⁶⁹ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 102-156.

⁷⁰ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 135.

existential, meaningless void.⁷¹ Nationalism fills this void by supplying the individual with an identity and society with a common, unifying consciousness.

The Russo-Japanese war became a watershed moment, “a benchmark against which the present was to be measured.”⁷² It became the moment before and after the institutions accompanying modernization and industrialism had taken hold within Japan. As the Japanese transitioned from a pre-industrial to an industrial economy, the increasingly complex social organization and specialization necessary for the functioning of industrial society required a “homogenous” and “cooperative workforce and polity.”⁷³ In order for the socially diverse people of Japan to work together, the social and political elite recognized that there must be a unifying force, or a national consciousness, that is politically consolidated in the nation-state. The newly formed Japanese nation had to also ensure the dissemination and continuance of the national identity.

However, the constitution and the monarch alone were not deemed sufficient to cultivate a sense of nation, so the social and political elite quickly shifted their focus to education. During the Meiji period a National Ministry of Education and Department of Education were established, and part of their mission was to establish a curriculum that promoted Japanese nationalism.⁷⁴ In 1890, the emperor signed the Rescript on Education, and it focused on the moral education that promoted the emperor as a symbolic head, or patriarchal figurehead of the nation, as well a civil/public morality centered on Confucian

⁷¹ Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 104.

⁷² Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 158.

⁷³ Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 104.

⁷⁴ Lynne Parmenter, “Constructing national identity in a changing world: perspectives in Japanese education,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20, no. 4 (December 1999): 454.

virtues of loyalty and filial piety. The Rescript also promoted the concept of kokutai (国体), literally the national body, which was used as an ideology to unite the nation under the emperor.⁷⁵ Although the term kokutai is no longer used in the discourse of Japanese identity, “the myth, or the ideology, of Japan as a racially and culturally homogenous country has continued to be a dominant discourse of Japaneseness.”⁷⁶

Postwar Identity

After the Japanese were defeated in WWII, the Occupation forces under General McArthur ushered in a new era and constitution. The now famous radio announcement of Japan’s unconditional surrender was the first time the Japanese citizens heard the voice of the emperor. As he denounced his sacred origins, the emperor stripped the Japanese of their sacred and mythical ties to the nation. Subsequently, discussions of Japanese identity were subdued in the immediate postwar era.

In the 1950s, Japan’s involvement in the Korean War helped to bolster the economy and aided in the postwar recovery. As the yen began to appreciate, national pride began to rekindle. In the 1960s, the newfound economic prosperity began to shift the dimensions of Japanese national identity, and by the 1970s and 80s, Japan’s economic ascendancy led to a surge in nationalism. As the Japanese gained confidence in their newfound economic strength in the global economy, publications on Japanese nationalism began to rise. Today, the overall discourse of Japanese nationalism has been identified as *Nihonjinron*, or literally “theories of the Japanese.”⁷⁷ This discourse

⁷⁵ Mika Ko, “The break up of the national body: Cosmetic multiculturalism and films of Takashi Miike,” *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 2, no. 1 (2005): 35.

⁷⁶ Ko, “The break up of the national body,” 36.

⁷⁷ Yoshio Sugimoto, “Making sense of *Nihonjinron*,” *Thesis Eleven* 57, no. 1 (May 1999): 81.

maintains that the Japanese have a common nationality, ethnicity, and culture and are these terms are used synonymously.⁷⁸ This genre explores and advances the distinctiveness of the Japanese. Japan's economic development and international business success were attributed to distinctive cultural traits rooted in pre-industrial Japan. More specifically, the central tenets of *Nihonjinron* are: Japanese society is uniquely unique, and group orientation is the dominant cultural pattern that shapes behavior.⁷⁹

These discussions of Japanese national identity resembled prewar iterations of national identity, but lacked two components: mention of the emperor and state-involvement.⁸⁰ Although the state was not the forerunner in directly promoting an official national identity, the dissemination was still directed by the political and intellectual elites who systematically instilled Japanese nationalist ideology into the people through the educational system, administrative regulations, and mass media, including books, magazines, newspapers, TV, public lectures, and college courses.⁸¹ In the 1990s, after the bursting of the economic bubble and the continued recession, “interest in *Nihonjinron* subsided somewhat.”⁸²

Today, nationalism continues to be promoted in the public schools. Following a brief interruption during the Occupation after World War II, the curriculum continues to focus on many of the same tenets that were established during the Meiji period. The current curriculum maintains that in order for Japanese youth to “develop self-awareness as a person” they must not only have knowledge, but respect for the national culture and

⁷⁸ Sugimoto, “Making sense of *Nihonjinron*,” 82.

⁷⁹ Burgess, “Maintaining Identities,” 6.

⁸⁰ Burgess, “Maintaining Identities,” 5.

⁸¹ Burgess, “Maintaining Identities,” 6.

⁸² Burgess, “Maintaining Identities,” 7.

traditions, and more generally must develop the “basics of Japanese ways of seeing and thinking.”⁸³ An internationalization movement in Japan has also become a part of educational reform in Japan. However, far from what the term alludes to, an implied embrace of multiculturalism perhaps, Japanese internationalization fosters nationalism.⁸⁴ The “call for internationalization” is the call to “contribute” the particularly Japanese consciousness to the international community.⁸⁵ The movement to internationalize education reaffirms Japanese nationalism by disseminating Japanese “values, goals, social practices, and social relations.”⁸⁶

The legacy of the postwar continues to resurface in Japan’s quest for national identity. For decades after the war, the economic miracle functioned as a surrogate for political power; economic prosperity alone served as the basis of self-identification.⁸⁷ More recently, the goals of Japan’s new nationalisms are establishing an identity independent of U.S. interests and overcoming “the pain of cultural disinheritance.”⁸⁸

With its U.S. imposed constitution, and its forever-symbolic emperor, postwar Japan was reconstituted as an improper nation-state, one not fully empowered to enact the prerogatives of the nation statehood.⁸⁹

The policies of the U.S. occupation after the war created a situation in which the Japanese were forced to disavow their immediate past and look towards the US as a model for their

⁸³ Parmenter, “Constructing national identity,” 455.

⁸⁴ Roy Starrs, editor, “Introduction.” In *Nations under siege: globalization and nationalism in Asia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), xxi.

⁸⁵ Mark Linicome, “Nationalism, internationalization, and the dilemma of educational reform in Japan,” *Comparative Education Review* 37, no. 2 (May 1993): 127.

⁸⁶ Linicome, “Nationalism, internationalization,” 125.

⁸⁷ Marilyn Ivy. “Revenge and recapitulation in recessionary Japan,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (2000): 819-840.

⁸⁸ John Nathan, *Japan Unbound: A Volatile Nation’s Quest for Pride and Purpose* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 13, 233.

⁸⁹ Ivy, “Revenge and recapitulation,” 819.

society. Since the postwar period, the Japanese have looked towards the West, and more specifically the West's image of Japan, to form their own national identity. Today, then, the Japanese crisis of identity stems from their disconnectedness to their past and their inclination to look "outside themselves for the source of authenticity."⁹⁰

It is precisely this problem of cultural disinheritance that motivated a group of university professors to form the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform in 1996.⁹¹ The Society's aim is to amend the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education in order to cultivate an attitude that respects tradition and culture by creating a textbook that "straightens the 'masochistic slant'" of the history textbooks.⁹² This perspective, according to the Society, stems from defeat in WWII and the ensuing U.S. Occupation, but "also from the prewar Comintern line on Japan as an absolutist, evil empire. Caught between the Soviets and the Americans, communism and liberalism, Japan has been sadistically positioned as the sole bearer of war guilt, deprived of its history, and barred from its future."⁹³ As noted above, the current curriculum continues to aim at instilling Japanese identity. However, the Society does not believe it sufficient to inculcate a strong sense of nation and pride in the Japanese. The Society's mission statement reads:

History textbooks in current use not only make absolutely no contribution to the formation of a national identity, but also serve to obstruct the formation of that identity.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Nathan, *Japan Unbound*, 10.

⁹¹ Nathan, *Japan Unbound*, 139.

⁹² Ivy, "Revenge and recapitulation," 821.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Nathan, *Japan Unbound*, 139.

Globalization

Today nationalistic sentiments, particularly those of the collective nature of Japanese society, ethnic homogeneity, and the strength of cultural traditions, are being reasserted in the face of globalization. Globalization goes beyond the economic sphere of trade, and can be further characterized as the “movement of people, goods and services and information across the globe, each characterized by scope, intensity and velocity.”⁹⁵ As societies interconnect, and connections between people across the globe become faster and more closely linked,⁹⁶ reciprocal cultural change occurs. This cultural change is evidenced in the reassertion of nationalism. This process creates access to other cultural identities that “leads to an accentuation of what is distinctive and idiosyncratic, further fragmenting social life.”⁹⁷ This in turn necessitates the reconstitution and continual maintenance of the “pattern of values, symbols, memories, and myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identification of individuals with that particular heritage.”⁹⁸ The stresses incurred by globalization conflict with and stress tradition, individuals, and nation-states and lead to the reaffirmation of tradition, ethnicity and nationality.⁹⁹

Globalization in the form of increased migration to Japan has forced the Japanese to reassess their claims of a homogenous national identity.¹⁰⁰ Japanese ideas of “uniqueness” are changing as they are faced with the prospect of a multicultural Japan, which threatens the very notion of Japanese identity, and forces the Japanese to reassert

⁹⁵ Quoted in Sasaki, “Globalization and national identity in Japan,” 71.

⁹⁶ Sasaki, “Globalization and national identity in Japan,” 71.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Sasaki, “Globalization and national identity in Japan,” 75.

⁹⁹ Sasaki, “Globalization and national identity in Japan,” 71.

¹⁰⁰ Burgess, “Maintaining identities,” 2-4.

past myths and traditions. The possibility of a multi-cultural Japan has prompted an upsurge of xenophobic sentiments and nationalism in the face of globalization.¹⁰¹ The economic troubles of Japan further exacerbate how the Japanese view themselves in the global world, leading to a “negative psychology and pessimistic outlook.”¹⁰² International politics, war, global migration and environmental crises have also been rallying points for nationalistic sentiments and movements.¹⁰³

Nationalism among Japanese in the face of globalization has taken many forms and is strengthened by popular culture in Japan, i.e., nationalist *manga* and the Internet. These aspects of popular culture are fundamental to understanding nationalistic sentiments because of their popularity and wide appeal among the Japanese, particularly the youth. Many of the nationalistic sentiments are gaining currency among the youth who are unsure of their future in the globalizing world.

Japanese nationalism is marked by negative views of neighbors, especially among the youth,¹⁰⁴ and highlights the reactive nature of nationalism. With the growing perception that China and Korea are threatening a peaceful relationship, Japanese are drawn to nationalist sentiments that focus on the perceived threat. These sentiments are expressed in popular Japanese comic books, or *manga*. “Detest Korea Boom” is one such comic, where the author uses Japanese college students to express Japanese nationalism

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Tomiko Yoda, “Roadmap to millennial Japan,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 633.

¹⁰³ Sharon Hayashi and Anne McKnight. “Good-bye Kitty, hello war: the tactics of spectacle and new youth movements in urban Japan.” *Positions* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 87-113. Also in Sasaki, “Globalization and national identity in Japan,” 71.

¹⁰⁴ Hironori Sasada, “Youth and nationalism in Japan,” *SAIS Review* 26, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2006): 111.

and frustrations with their Asian neighbors.¹⁰⁵ Another comic book focuses on the economic relationship between China and Japan, and the author offers this question to the readers, who are primarily youth, “Do we want to be China’s slave?”¹⁰⁶ The sentiments in these comic books highlight the anxiety, uncertainty, and angst of the Japanese over their economic future and the position of Japan in the globalized world. While these manga succeed in fostering nationalism, some also have an informative quality. The Japan Defense Agency publishes a manga that it uses to circulate its messages in a more easily understandable, simplified format. Manga also are used as forums for alternatives to mainstream media. Many of these manga also contain essays by conservative scholars in between the chapters.¹⁰⁷

Some of the manga are attempts to recreate a Japanese identity, aiming at Japanese perceptions of WWII. Kobayashi Yoshinori, author of the notoriously ultra-nationalistic manga *Sensoron*, or *Theory of War*, began his career writing and illustrating manga after graduating from Fukuoka University in Kyushu in 1975.¹⁰⁸ In 1998, Kobayashi completed the 380-page *Sensoron*. The manga instantly became a bestseller, expanding the usual manga-reading audience to include older Japanese adults in their sixties and seventies.¹⁰⁹ He published a 500-page sequel three years later that also hit the bestseller list.

In *Sensoron*, Kobayashi idealizes the kamikaze pilots as “selfless patriots,” and portrays the Japanese government leaders as weak and violated by the villainous Western

¹⁰⁵ Kenta Tanimichi, “The youthful face of Japanese nationalism,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong) 168, no. 10 (November 2005): 33.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Sasada, “Youth and Nationalism,” 118-119.

¹⁰⁸ Nathan, *Japan Unbound*, 124.

¹⁰⁹ Nathan, *Japan Unbound*, 129.

powers.¹¹⁰ He promotes the “view that Japan fought a war of justice, aiming to liberate Asia from Western, i.e., “white” imperialism, and that today’s Japanese, who denigrate the war heroes as war criminals, are a product of U.S. brainwashing since the occupation.”¹¹¹ His manga includes appeals for a return to Japanese militarism and collectivism, and a critique of consumerist individualism.¹¹² His attempt to inculcate pride, not by reverting to the mythological past, but by reinventing recent Japanese history, specifically aimed at the youth of Japan, drew the attention of the history textbook revisionists, and he became an honorary member of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform.¹¹³

The Internet is also seen as a source fueling nationalism. The Internet has provided a forum for nationalists, particularly radical-nationalists, to discuss and disseminate ideas looked down upon by mainstream media. Ni-channeru, or Channel 2, is the most visited Internet bulletin board in Japan, with over seven million monthly visits.¹¹⁴ The majority of users are young adults and youth, and their political stance tends to be nationalistic and conservative.¹¹⁵ The content of the forum centers on criticism of pacifist policies and friendly relations towards countries seen as threatening to Japan, especially China and North and South Korea.¹¹⁶ The anonymous character of the Internet allows the Japanese to reveal un-censored views of nationalism.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Rumi Sakamoto, “Will you go to war? Or will you stop being Japanese?” Nationalism and history in Kobayashi Yoshinori’s *Sensoron*,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, posted at *Japan Focus* on January 14, 2008.

¹¹² Mark Driscoll, “Kobayashi Yoshinori is dead: Imperial War/Sick Liberal Peace/Neoliberal Class War,” *Mechademia* 4 (2009): 290-303.

¹¹³ Ivy, “Revenge and recapitulation,” 825.

¹¹⁴ Tanimichi, “The youthful face,” 35.

¹¹⁵ Sasada, “Youth and Nationalism,” 119.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Parenthetically, Ishihara started his own official website because “there is hardly any information on the internet about Ishihara Shintarō.”¹¹⁷ Perhaps, sensitive to the times Ishihara anticipated that many turn to the net in search of a firm articulation of Japanese identity.

The formation of the Japanese national collective identity is a multidimensional system of relations and representations and is a continual and constant process of re-imagining identity. Regardless of whether the Japanese formulated their identity in relation to the Asian continent, or vis-à-vis the West, it is clear that Japanese nationalism has been reformulated in reaction to specific events and processes. The subsequent chapters fit Ishihara into this continuum of Japanese nationalism and show how through his life and works, Ishihara mirrors the multi-faceted process of identity formation and the continual quest to define the membership boundaries of the Japanese.

¹¹⁷ Ishihara, *Sensenfukoku*.

IV. Oeuvre, Seminal Works

Season of the Sun, The Punishment Room, and The Yacht and the Boy

This section looks at three of Ishihara's earliest works in the collection titled *Season of Violence* through the lens of nationalism and attempts to situate these novellas in the continuum of his ever-increasingly nationalistic writings. It would be a mistake to claim that the themes in his very earliest work express intentionally nationalistic sentiments, or, even that they were the germinal stages of Ishihara's now fully realized nationalism. However, it is possible to state, quite positively, that Ishihara was concerned with identity issues, not just of post-adolescent self-identity, but also of a larger, collective identity of the Japanese in the postwar era. The themes identified in Ishihara's early works may be unintentional on Ishihara's part, but are still relevant because of their prevalence. This reading of *Season of Violence* extends the field by looking at Ishihara's novellas beyond their portrayal of violence, and the consequent reactions toward it, to a broader commentary on the aspects of national identity that are not readily apparent in the stories.

There is a sense of anomie¹¹⁸ that is pervasive in Ishihara's early writing. The youthful main characters in his stories seem to be trying to construct a personal system of values as a response to the disappearance of the old values in the postwar period. These youth also engage in a number of hedonistic and deviant behaviors, such as indiscriminate acts of violence and sexual aggression. By employing an extrinsic approach to literary analysis, this section seeks to elucidate the themes of post war

¹¹⁸ Anomie is a sociological concept, developed by Emile Durkheim, referring to a condition of social instability and alienation resulting from normlessness, or the lack of identifiable societal norms that govern behavior. Anomie, according to Durkheim, results in deviant behavior, because the norms that usually result in predictable behavior are lacking or absent.

anomie and violence in three of Ishihara's early novellas published together in the late 1950's: "Season of the Sun,"¹¹⁹ "The Punishment Room," and "The Yacht and the Boy."

First, before an analysis of the stories commences, it is necessary to add to the earlier discussion of Japanese nationalism and the social milieu that influenced Ishihara and his writing, and, also, to contextualize his novellas within postwar literature.

Ishihara's novellas, or short stories, represent a profound shift in postwar literature.

Ishihara's stories center on youth, mainly university students, and a hitherto

undocumented extravagant, untraditional, and hedonistic lifestyle in the postwar period.

The majority of novels during this period depicted the strains of the postwar period on the physical landscape of Japan and its societal institutions. The novels also shared themes of devastation, isolation, and trauma in the psyches of the Japanese people. Although these themes are not overt in Ishihara's stories, it is still possible to read into them a sense of desolation and loneliness in the characters who were coming of age during the war and immediate postwar period.

At an impressionable age, and in an unprecedented short amount of time, the adolescents in Japan, including Ishihara, experienced a dramatic change in the political and societal institutions that served as the foundation of their nation. A heavily militarized Japan, under a divine emperor, had crumbled, along with the patriarchal national body, or *kokutai*, the ideology on which the structure of society and the relationships of the citizens were based. These were destroyed by the United States Occupation force, which physically devastated the Japanese landscape and actively

¹¹⁹ The English translators chose to translate *Taiyō no Kisetsu* as *Season of Violence*. To avoid confusion the compilation of the three novellas will be referred to as *Season of Violence* and the novella "Taiyō no Kisetsu" will be referred to as "Season of the Sun."

imposed a democracy that changed the ideological landscape. All of these events succeeded in uprooting the traditional values, or social mores, on which society had been founded. The English-language translators of *Season of Violence* note these paradigmatic shifts and their effect on Ishihara and his writing: “Ishihara’s stories of Japanese who were born in the ashes of war and defeat and raised in the fast-moving world of the postwar boom are stark accounts of a period when the values of the past have been discarded for misguided materialism and pleasure-seeking.”¹²⁰

Season of the Sun (太陽の季節)

This analysis begins with a brief discussion of the themes of anomie and violence in “Season of the Sun,” the first of the three novellas included in *Season of Violence*. “Season of the Sun” is the story of Tatsuya, a university student and aspiring amateur boxer. He and his fellows display a proclivity for aggressive behavior. With these characters, Ishihara portrays a very different lifestyle of postwar college students. Tatsuya and his friends frequent bars and enjoy the company of prostitutes. There is nearly never a mention of schoolwork, something usually associated with the diligent college students during this time period. Instead, the characters seem to be focused on a more materialistic form of existence.

There was no element of self-sacrifice in their relationships, but instead a carefully balanced system of debit and credit...in a sense, there were certain standards which had to be adhered to and which served as a basis for their special morality.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Shintarō Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, trans. John G. Mills, Toshie Takahama, and Ken Tremayne (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc, 1966), book jacket/dustcover.

¹²¹ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 27.

This quote illustrates two points: first, that there is a calculated, materialistic relationship between the characters, and secondly, that there is indeed a new type of morality being constructed by Tatsuya and his cohorts. In the absence of the moral code that had once defined the values and character of the Japanese identity, the youth in this novella focus on an experiential form of existence, a tangible existence outside of tradition. This also illustrates the age of materialism that was being ushered in during the 1950s and early 60s. This new mode of existence based on the promotion of a consumer culture supplanted traditions of thrift and self-sacrifice that were emphasized during the war. The societal expectation of this new superficial existence is evidenced in the Japanese government's promotion of conspicuous amounts of consumption.¹²² "In the confusion of modern life...emotions, and love in particular, came to be looked at from a materialistic point of view."¹²³ With very little tradition to hold on to, Tatsuya and his cohorts are trying to make sense out of this anomic situation and developing their own constructs of meaning.

The second theme is that of violence. Tatsuya is drawn to boxing, and "the action of hitting out at nothing... as if driven by some mysterious force."¹²⁴ However, it is not that he is really "hitting out at nothing"; his anger and violence seems to be aimed at the old ways and customs of his parents. His revolt against former traditional modes, or codes, of propriety, or proper conduct, and his rebellion against his father can be read as one such reaction of youth in the late 1950s. Although when interacting with his father on a train Tatsuya is the ideal image of a dutiful son, when they begin to converse, the

¹²² There is an interesting mention of "plastic-surgery specials" referring to some girls that Tatsuya and his friends meet, in Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 22.

¹²³ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 26-27.

¹²⁴ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 14.

strain in their relationship becomes apparent. Tatsuya is envious and resentful of his father's first class seat on the train, and expresses his wish to also have the same pass.¹²⁵ This angers his father, who scoffs at Tatsuya's feelings of entitlement and his wish to revel in material comfort even though he is still just a "college student." Tatsuya's father bristles at his son's lack of values; values based on wartime austerity and delayed gratification. The generation gap becomes obvious. The new generation that Tatsuya represents is irreverent and revolting against traditional rules of propriety. His revolt against traditions is a type of aggressive or violent behavior.

While there is no outright violence or aggression towards foreigners in this novella, one can read into Tatsuya's aggression an anxiety stemming from the postwar situation. At the beginning, there is a reference to how foreigners, i.e., Americans, are competitive and individualistic in playing basketball.

Tatsuya had once seen foreigners bamboozle a Japanese team in an international match by various tricks and feints. He had applauded vigorously, but when he tried the same tactics himself, his side accused him of grandstanding.¹²⁶

Tatsuya recognizes the shrewdness of the "foreigners" and applauds their aggressive behavior. He even emulates them, much to the disdain of his teammates. While subtle, this brief passage is telling. Ishihara's choice of words in describing the foreigners' behavior, and the consequent reaction of Tatsuya's Japanese teammates, gives the reader a clue as to how some Japanese may have viewed the intrusion of American influence on their culture, and undoubtedly how Ishihara interpreted western influence.

¹²⁵ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 29.

¹²⁶ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 13-14.

The title itself, “Season of the Sun,” evokes the image of Japan as the nation and people of the sun. The title seems to be recalling a time in which, prior to defeat in the war, Japan had a pervasive moral code that guided the behavior of the citizens. Ishihara is possibly recalling this traditional image of the sun, with a hint of irony, in order to emphasize the disappearance of the sun as a compass to guide the behavior of the citizens of the nation. This title also conjures the mesmerizingly and dazzlingly bright lifestyle embodied by the youth in the shiny new age of consumerism.

The Punishment Room (処刑の部屋)

“The Punishment Room,” the second story included in *Season of Violence*, develops the same themes as the previous story, and it too, portrays an unconventional and therefore groundbreaking portrayal of the studious college student. Set in the bars, nightclubs, and alleyways of Tokyo, the story follows Katsumi, a university student who, like Tatsuya, has a penchant for violence. He is a fighter and a provocateur. Katsumi and his companions party and fight, and, as in “Season of Violence,” there is very little mention of schoolwork.

The theme of anomie is present in this story, as seen in the opening quotation, “They talk about resistance, responsibilities, and morality. Why should I care? What others think never bothers me! Doing only what I want- That’s all I can do!”¹²⁷ However, in this story, the theme of violence and aggression towards Americans is much more overt than in the previous story. Katsumi fondly recalls an evening when he and his friend Ryoji beat up a couple of American GIs who had hit a Japanese hostess in a nightclub.

¹²⁷ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 61.

One Christmas, when they were in the third year of high school...Ryoji and Katsumi... asked the band to play “Jingle Bells,” and the two triumphant students, in time to the music, started to dance over the two soldiers sprawled together on the floor. The rest of the customers, who were all drunk, began to clap in rhythm.¹²⁸

The most interesting part of this quotation is the reaction of the onlookers. At face value, these youths are prone to indiscriminate violence, and so their aggression is not really that surprising, but Ishihara chooses to make the targets American GIs, and thus the reaction- the applause- of the other Japanese customers can be read as their reveling in this forbidden act of suppressed resentment towards the foreign occupier. The bravado and confidence of Katsumi, his friend, and the onlookers can be read as a reaction against defeat in the war, and thus, they are compensating for that defeat through an act of aggression. Interestingly, Ishihara recounts a similar incident in the *Japan That Can Say 'No,'* in which he experienced pride when he stoically continued on his way from school after being struck in the face with ice by a “swaggering” American GI.¹²⁹ Unable to retaliate in life, he exacted revenge on the “new rulers” in written form.¹³⁰

Conversely, Western, specifically American, influences are mentioned on practically every page. Katsumi’s drink of choice is an American whiskey. He and his friends and acquaintances smoke cigarettes, evoking the image of the ultimate disaffected, cool sex symbol James Dean, who was revered, at the time, by young Japanese and Americans alike. The characters even make a reference to “Scarface,” the famous American gangster Al Capone. So, returning to the theme of anomie, the reader

¹²⁸ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 69.

¹²⁹ Ishihara, Shintarō and Frank Baldwin translator. *The Japan that can say 'no': Why Japan will be first among equals*. New York: Touchstone, 1992. p 79-80

¹³⁰ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 79.

recognizes the deeply felt ambivalence of the Japanese towards the American influence in their lives.

The Yacht and the Boy (ヨットと少年)

“The Yacht and the Boy” is the final installment in *Season of the Sun*. While it is easy to identify common themes in all three novellas, this final story is quite different from the others. “The Yacht and the Boy” is about a young boy, Markie, who is a junior high school student. He lost his mother at a young age, and his father, although alive, has little to do with his son. The boy lives near Tokyo in a coastal town, and works at the harbor where he is employed by an American couple, the Higgins. Unlike Tatsuya and Katsumi who had large groups of friends, Markie is a loner and has only one friend he is close to. He, like the protagonists of the other stories, is inclined towards acts of aggression. In order to reach his goal of owning a yacht, Markie engages in indiscriminate acts of bullying and violence.

Although these characters share some similarities, it is Markie’s feelings of loneliness and abandonment that stand out. The “Yacht and the Boy” opens with the lines of a French poem:

*Solitude, reef, and starry veil
To whatever’s worthy of knowing
The white anxiety of our sail.¹³¹*

This poem sets the stage for the loneliness, abandonment, and anxiety felt by the protagonist. Much of the story is set on the sea, and the sea evokes these feelings in Markie.

¹³¹ “Solitude, récif, étoile/ A n’importe ce qui valut/ Le blanc souci de notre toile.” These are the last lines of the poem “Toast” by Mallarmé- an influential French poet and critic from the mid to late 19th century, who inspired both the Dadaist and Surrealist movements. The original French is included in the English translation. Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 111.

The boy had felt a strange rapture possess him as he gazed across the surface of the sea and up at the vast starlit sky. From that time on he was troubled by a sense of loneliness and desire swirling within him but which he could not fully comprehend.¹³²

Through the story, the reader is confronted with the profound loneliness of the main character, and it becomes apparent that he is drawn to the sea because it reflects his inner void.

The reader also comes to understand that there is a breakdown of the traditional family structure that had defined the nation in the war era. There is no strong patriarch in Markie's life. His father is a listless drunk and unemployed in the postwar era. The character of his father stands as a symbol for the high unemployment rates experienced by the citizens of Japan. He can also be a symbol of the absent national patriarch in the American restructuring of Japanese society. While the father is present, he, like the emperor, has been relegated to the background of the national scene and plays no real role in the life of his son, or, in the case of the emperor, the lives of the Japanese citizens in the postwar period. The only strong patriarch in the story is the American Mr. Higgins.

Mr. Higgins, a wealthy yacht owner, is a symbol of the American Occupation in Japan, and Markie's ambivalence towards him can be read as the conflicting attitudes of the Japanese towards the Occupation's influence on their lives. Mr. Higgins is a proud, amiable, yet serious man. Markie looks to him as a role model, just as many Japanese at the time were looking to America as a gauge and guide for their progress and behavior. In fact, the name Markie, the name the character identifies himself with, was given to him by Mr. Higgins. However, Markie also feels some exhilaration, but mainly indignation,

¹³² Ibid.

at the sex act he witnesses Mr. and Mrs. Higgins engage in. The author ponders the meaning of this experience for the boy: “it might have been indignation towards unseen brutality that had been tormenting the boy, assaulting him with a sharp and thrilling blow.”¹³³ While in the story this quote refers to how the experience affected Markie’s sexual impulses, one can postulate that through Markie, Ishihara is exploring the deeply felt ambivalence of the Japanese towards the far-reaching effects of the American influence imposed on them.

Where Mr. Higgins is a stand in for the American Occupation (or possibly he is even a specific reference to General Douglas MacArthur, recalling the image of the tall, proud General juxtaposed with the small, timid Emperor), Mrs. Higgins is a symbol of the enticing American culture that is flooding Japan. Markie develops a fondness and attraction for her. She embodied the ideal woman, attracting him with both her kindness and prettiness. In the postwar period, American movies, which had been previously banned by the Japanese government, were distributed widely throughout Japan. These movies brought with them a glimpse of the ideal American way of life, one of beauty and luxury that was enticing to the Japanese for the escape they offered from the depravation and ugliness of war.

The interplay of anomie and violence

The violence in these stories is a reflection of the inability of the Japanese to reconcile the conflicting attitudes towards the ever-increasing presence of the foreign influence in their lives. The aggression and brutality of the characters is an outlet to express this anxiety, which stems from the impact of the social upheaval on the youth of

¹³³ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 12.

the nation. Ishihara portrays a classic anomic condition. Japan is a society without a moral compass to guide it. The very ideas that society had been founded on were nullified with the defeat in the war. Because of this, the youth in revolt seek out a wild, self-gratifying, pleasure-seeking, hedonistic lifestyle.

The youth are revolting against their parents' traditions as well as the moral and material depravations of the war. The strict, and lofty, moral code that had guided their behavior led them and the country to ruin, and so, the youth seem to be obsessed with a more concrete, or material, form of existence. Their actions and consequently their emotions are governed by impulsive actions that seem to mainly aim at revolt and destruction. It is an experiential form of existence as expressed in the Gutai art movement born in the same period. The Gutai movement focused on how the destruction of materials revealed the qualities inherent within.¹³⁴ Tatsuya, Ryoji, and Markie embody this way of life. They are thrilled by violence and destruction. The youth of the period exemplify the tensions between the two worlds, that of the old and a new modernity.

Postwar Japan has been called a country that lost its moral code when it lost the war. The whole postwar world had its share of living for today and not caring about tomorrow, but Japan's utter defeat and rejection of the past may explain the extremity of this attitude among Tatsuya and his fellows.¹³⁵

By the late 1950s, there was growing confidence among the Japanese. The economy was starting to take off with the involvement in the Korean War and its concomitant boosting of manufacturing and production. The early 1960s saw the birth of liberal, radical student movements as a backlash against foreign intervention in Japanese policy.

¹³⁴ This website includes the Gutai art movement's manifesto written by the founder.
<http://outsiderjapan.pbworks.com/w/page/9758378/Gutai-Bijutsu-Kyokai>

¹³⁵ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 9.

Ishihara aptly captures this mood in his stories. The violence and aggression can also be read as an opportunity to display the bravery, courage, or pluck of the Japanese who otherwise were powerless in the face of the continued presence of Americans during the Occupation period. The themes of anomie and violence are an expression of frustration towards the Other, foreign (i.e., American) powers.

Ishihara is successful in documenting a particular mood in a particular moment in history. His earliest stories are “important as social documents,” because they serve as a commentary on the paradigmatic shifts occurring in Japan in the late 1950s and early 60s.¹³⁶ His later writings follow this same thread, and can also be seen as taking a negative stance against the postwar status quo of passively accepting American influence. The stories in *Season of Violence* share the same themes, “forming a trilogy of sex, violence, senseless brutality, and revolt against old laws of decency.”¹³⁷ The “wild, willful, and seemingly amoral youth”¹³⁸ of the stories are not an endorsement of the culture and society at the time, but serve to chronicle a profound societal shift when Japanese notions of national identity based on militarism were uprooted when they were defeated in the war.

As we will explore in the following chapter, it is evident how much Ishihara’s worldview was shaped by the social and historical constellations in the immediate postwar era. Although it is difficult to apply the nationalist label to Ishihara at the beginning of his career, it is not difficult to ascertain the tremendous impact on him of the American Occupation in the postwar period. The atmosphere of defeat, as short-lived as

¹³⁶ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 7.

¹³⁷ Ishihara, *Season of Violence*, 9.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

it may have been, had lasting effects on Ishihara's psyche and his subsequent formulation of national identity.

V. Reconstructing the House of the Rising Sun

The Japan That Can Say 'NO' and Nihon yo

The following works and essays are quite different from Ishihara's earlier works. While those characters held a certain ambivalence towards Japan and an unclear and undefined identity in the postwar period, the Japanese identity that Ishihara advocates in the following selected works is far from ambiguous. Ishihara's conception of Japan is one that is grounded in the discourse that has dominated the discussion of Japanese identity for centuries; his conception of Japan is mired in myth. In the following works, Ishihara clearly tries to define both the territorial and membership boundaries of the nation. Ishihara is a prime example of one seeking out a narrative of identity and a need to experience continuity. The individual impulse to have a clear and concise narrative of identity is related to a nation's collective impulse to formulate a narrative of identity.¹³⁹

The Japan That Can Say 'No' and his editorial columns in *Sankei Shinbun* are often reactionary. They are spawned by an event- usually political in nature, and so again the reader can understand his attempts to define who the Japanese are in relation to Others. His essays reflect the Japanese in-group/out-group mentality and other features of Japanese identity and the boundary-marking mechanisms of nationalism. A truly thorough analysis of the spectrum of Ishihara's nationalistic tenets/sentiments would require volumes; Ishihara is boisterous, verbose, and prolific. The objective herein is to highlight some of the statements he makes about Japanese identity and align them with the dominant discourse of Japanese nationalism as outlined in chapters 2 and 3.

¹³⁹ Arnold, *Imagined Communities*, 204-205.

The Japan That Can Say ‘No’

In 1989, Ishihara coauthored *The Japan That Can Say ‘No’* with then Sony chair, Akio Morita. In it Ishihara called for a new and revised Japan-U.S. relationship, where Japan would be an equal and independent partner. Because of Japan’s technological strength, Ishihara argued, the Japanese should exert their particular sensibilities and ideas in their foreign relations. In Japan, the book became an instant best seller, selling over one million copies. The American Congress immediately and illegally translated a copy because it was thought to be a national threat. In 1991, Ishihara published an official translation in English, citing the particularly bad translation and omissions in the copy in the Congressional Record. The piracy was led, according to Ishihara, by the Pentagon’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and precluded an open and frank dialogue between the Japan and U.S.¹⁴⁰ Ishihara claimed that the mistakes and omitted parts “made meaningful discussion...impossible.”¹⁴¹ Notably, Akio Morita “declined to participate” in the official English translation.¹⁴²

The cover of the pirated American congressional version is a clear indication of the American view of the Japanese at that time. The cover features the rising sun looming over a map of the United States covered by the American flag with a large “For Sale” sign sticking out.¹⁴³ As noted in Chapter 3, the 1980s was a time of Japanese

¹⁴⁰ Shintarō Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no’: Why Japan will be first among equals*, trans. Frank Baldwin (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1991), 12.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Akio Morita and Shintarō Ishihara, *The Japan that can say “no”- as excerpted from the Congressional Record* (Washington, D.C.: The Jefferson Educational Foundation, 1990).

economic preeminence. There were many Japanese corporate buyouts of American institutions, and talks of more.¹⁴⁴ At the time of the English release, Ishihara did an interview with *Playboy* magazine. The cover introduced the interview as “straight talk from Japan’s number-one America basher, Shintarō Ishihara.”¹⁴⁵ The American cover of the pirated copy clearly depicts the uneasiness and fear of the Americans at the presence of Japan, Inc. in their midst. In fact, Ishihara tackles this topic in the book; he claims that the recent “Japan bashing” in the U.S. is due to racial prejudice: “Caucasians are prejudiced against Orientals.”¹⁴⁶ The cover of the pirated copy is a manifestation of the American anxiety of the Other, i.e. Japanese presence.

There is one specific passage in the *Japan That Can Say ‘No,’* that could be perceived as a direct threat to the U.S. In a hypothetical situation, Ishihara raises the issue that Japan could upset the global military balance by selling its semiconductor technology to the Soviets. Although the Cold War tensions were beginning to dissipate by this time, the idea would have undoubtedly been alarming to the Pentagon. However, Ishihara’s inflammatory remarks are just that. He is calling, rather, for the U.S. and the world to recognize Japanese superiority in the technological realm, and for the appropriate respect to an equal partner that should come with that strength. Recent surges in nationalism are due to the structural deficiencies in Japan after the Cold War.¹⁴⁷ The economic system that contributed to Japan’s economic success, namely industry and

¹⁴⁴ These buyouts included Sony buying Rockefeller Center, the Pebble Beach acquisition, and talk of buying national parks.

¹⁴⁵ Sheff, “Playboy interview,” front cover.

¹⁴⁶ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no,’* 27.

¹⁴⁷ Yoda, “Roadmap to millennial Japan,” 633. Also in Tsuneo Akaha, “Three faces of Japan: nationalist, regionalist, and globalist futures,” in *Globalism, regionalism, and nationalism: Asia in search of its role in the twenty-first century*, ed. Yoshinobu Yamamoto, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publisher Inc., 1999), 171-198.

bureaucracy, are now seen as deficient and contributing to Japan's stagnant economy. These problems are exacerbated by the demands placed on Japan in the globalizing world. Ishihara echoes this complaint in the *Japan That Can Say 'No'*. He partially blames the Japanese themselves for being tethered to the postwar period that has held the Japanese back from a properly articulated national identity. Ishihara identifies the Occupation as beginning a new saga in the nation's quest for a firm grip on its identity. This process has never ceased and continues with Ishihara.

Although there are passages where Ishihara criticizes Americans, much of the criticism included in the essays is directed at the Japanese. He worries that Japan is becoming a nation of ET's, "that charming visitor from outer space with an oversized head and spindly arms and legs."¹⁴⁸ The trend is alarming to Ishihara, because although advanced technology is Japan's "trump card," "all brain and no brawn cannot be good for the country."¹⁴⁹ Ishihara is specifically referring to Article 9 of the constitution, which bans the use of force as a method of settling international disputes.¹⁵⁰ He claims that Japan's armed forces were "constituted according to an inappropriate Pentagon strategic design" in order to suit United States' interests.¹⁵¹ These comments, although made in 1989, make sense in light of his recent retirement as governor to pursue a new, or at the very least amended, constitution. Ishihara believes that the Japanese should have the might to defend their territorial right to the Japanese islands, and today believes that his last service to the nation is to work diligently to protect Japan's territorial boundaries.

¹⁴⁸ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 19.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Matthew Penney and Bryce Wakefield, "Right Angles: Examining accounts of Japanese neo-nationalism," *Pacific Affairs* 81, no. 4 (Winter 2008/2009): 539.

¹⁵¹ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 54-55.

He calls for his countrymen to achieve a fresh consciousness through recognizing “Japan’s new standing in the proper historical perspective.” Undoubtedly he is referring to taking a critical stance toward the status imposed on Japan throughout the postwar and Cold War eras. He notes that other nations have also gone through “profound transformations,” citing the de-Stalinization of Soviet troops, Mao’s Cultural Revolution, and American perceptions of their government after Vietnam. He accuses the Japanese themselves for harboring a postwar mentality. Japan’s “preeminence in technology must help us achieve a new consciousness without traumatic convulsions,” and Ishihara concludes, almost as an admonition to the Japanese, “Fresh perceptions are a sine qua non of a genuinely mature society.”¹⁵²

In order for Japan to join the “global community,” according to Ishihara, the Japanese must have self-confidence as a nation and re-evaluate their “outsider mentality.”¹⁵³ Their global positioning hinges on the understanding that all iterations and reiterations of Japanese identity have been trapped within the confines of defeat, Occupation, and Western modes of thinking. However, he states that the hegemony of modern civilization created by the West is coming to an end, and that this “epochal change” is evidenced by “technology, manufacturing, and economic power” gradually shifting to the East.¹⁵⁴ The end of European modernism, which has overshadowed other, i.e. Eastern, value systems, opens up new possibilities for fresh interpretations and new paradigms.

¹⁵² Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no,’* 25.

¹⁵³ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no,’* 61-62.

¹⁵⁴ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no,’* 29.

Ishihara attempts to wrest identity out of a Western image and design. Ishihara recognizes that the Japanese draw their identity from the very stereotypes and binaries that informed the West's colonizing mission to enlighten the East.¹⁵⁵ The identity of the West emerged from the language and characterizations used to differentiate it from the East. The Orientalist discourse, as Edward Said coined it, established the West as adult-like, rational and knowing, and the East, consequently as the opposite: childlike, mystical, and ignorant.¹⁵⁶ The Western image of Japan is one that is rooted in the essentialist qualities that inform Western identity as superior, and the sole purveyor of rationality and knowledge to irrational peoples. Although one cannot say that Japan was colonized, this underlying motive can be seen in Commodore Perry's "opening of Japan" and even in the post WWII Occupation policies bent on instilling democracy in Japan.

Ishihara appeals to the Japanese to be self-assured but not arrogant in what they have to offer to the world. Ishihara says it is important for the Japanese to say "no" to the Americans, because it is "part of the bargaining process of equals,"¹⁵⁷ and because after all, the "U.S. is not the whole-world for Japan; after WWII it was, but no longer."¹⁵⁸ In *The Japan That Can Say 'No,'* Ishihara clearly identifies the U.S. as Japan's Other, but appeals to the Japanese to redefine their identity according to Eastern, i.e., Japanese, modes of thinking.

In *The Japan That Can Say 'No,'* Ishihara outlines his belief that Japan should increasingly align itself with other economically booming East Asian nations, including

¹⁵⁵ Gandhi, *Postcolonial theory*, 109.

¹⁵⁶ Gandhi, *Postcolonial theory*, 107. See also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1994).

¹⁵⁷ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 48.

¹⁵⁸ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 50.

South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.¹⁵⁹ He notes that it is not a coincidence that these countries were all under Japanese control during WWII, and that their current success is partly due to Japan's contribution. In fact, it is precisely this view of Japan as a liberator that serves as a barrier to the trilateral relationships between China, Korea, and Japan, the East Asian power-holders.¹⁶⁰

As Japan increasingly identifies itself with Asia, it is confronted with more and more calls for recognition of, as well as reparations for the atrocities it committed as a colonizer during the Sino-Japanese War. However, because the Occupation did not force Emperor Hirohito to abdicate the throne, it succeeded in absolving the emperor, and consequently the Japanese, from taking responsibility for the war.¹⁶¹ The Occupation policies effectively made history “deniable.”¹⁶² Ishihara exemplifies this “persistent refusal of Japanese leaders to acknowledge the past.”¹⁶³ “Japan behaved badly during the conflict and soul-searching is in order,” Ishihara admits, “but in some ways we were a beneficial influence.”¹⁶⁴ Ishihara's view of Japan as liberator of the East is a defensive stance against the view of Japan as aggressor, a perspective that developed as Japan became more economically powerful and began to venture back into Asia for investment.¹⁶⁵ It is telling that in 1995s *The Voice of Asia*, Ishihara collaborated with

¹⁵⁹ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 61.

¹⁶⁰ Takao Shibata, “Japan-China relations: The abnormal state of affairs,” (Chancellor's lecture, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas, Lawrence Fall 2007.)

¹⁶¹ Smith, *Japan*, 230.

¹⁶² Smith, *Japan*, 213.

¹⁶³ Smith, *Japan*, 230.

¹⁶⁴ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say 'no,'* 61.

¹⁶⁵ Michio Nakajima, “The changing and contending perspectives on WWII,” (lecture for University of Kansas, Lawrence August 2010). Nakajima identifies the three competing perspectives on the war as Japan as victim, aggressor, and liberator.

then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, and not the leaders of China and Korea.

The Japan That Can Say 'No' was written as the 1980s economic miracle was beginning to show strains. Ishihara aptly captures the anxiety of the Japanese, when faith in the economic institutions was starting to crumble and the emptiness of pursuing profit for profit's sake revealed the ephemeral nature of the Japanese bubble economy. Japanese economic supremacy was actually waning when Ishihara wrote this collection of essays, and his hubris must be understood and evaluated from within this context. Ishihara's call for Japanese assertiveness, rooted in its technological knowhow, on the global stage stemmed from the anxiety that its economic supremacy would soon crumble. His attempts at the reaffirmation of Japanese identity accentuate the slippery nature of founding the nation's identity on economic success and reinforce the reactionary nature of his nationalism.

Nihon yo 「日本よ」

Defining identity vis-à-vis the Other

Since 2002, Ishihara has been writing a monthly column, *Nihon yo*,¹⁶⁶ for the conservative Japanese newspaper, *Sankei Shinbun*. In these essays, which have also been compiled into several monographs, Ishihara espouses various ideas about Japan and the Japanese. Topics range from hot button nationalistic topics such as the ownership of the Senkaku Islands, Yasukuni Jinja, and Japan vis-à-vis the West and other Eastern nations, to seemingly less antagonistic topics such as Japanese sensibilities. These essays echo many of the ideas and themes that have appeared in his works throughout his entire

¹⁶⁶ Translation in English is “Japan Wake up!”

career in that they can all be read as efforts to recreate the boundaries of national territory and national membership. It is apparent that Ishihara is attempting to articulate the Japanese identity in this ever-increasingly multi-dimensional world, where managing identity enters every facet of existence from the physical to the digital worlds.

In one *Nihon yo* article Ishihara relates a formative event in his past. The essay itself, titled “Regarding various historical facts,”¹⁶⁷ deals with Ishihara’s views on enshrining war criminals at Yasukuni Shrine. He believes that there should be no problem with enshrining those who took responsibility for atrocities i.e. those who committed seppuku. He also questions the legitimacy of the tribunal with accusations that some statements were intentionally not translated and that others were stricken from the record—statements that pertained to atrocities committed by both Allied and Axis forces alike. Parenthetically, he refers to the Nanking Massacre as a “fabrication.”¹⁶⁸ However, it is not the ultra-nationalist hot button topic of Yasukuni and Nanking that is of particular interest to this analysis. These are merely rallying topics used by many nationalists and ultra-nationalists, and are often the focus of articles and discussions of Ishihara. Rather it is a brief aside that Ishihara shares in this essay about his personal experience, or taiken (体験) of the war that is significant to his conception of national identity. He relates the following:

In Junior High, my father insisted on getting tickets to the War Tribunal. I went twice to listen with a university student friend. I did not understand the details of the trial, but I clearly remember the humiliation I was forced

¹⁶⁷ Shintarō Ishihara, “Regarding various historical facts,” *Sankei Shinbun*, September 5, 2005, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original Japanese title is 「歴史に関する」.

¹⁶⁸ Sheff, “Playboy interview,” 63.

to feel when an MP made me take off my geta¹⁶⁹ because of the noise they made, and I was forced to climb the stairs barefooted.

Although this brief episode is not the primary focus of the essay, it is quite revealing as a formative event of Ishihara's life and identity as both an individual human being and as a Japanese citizen. His feelings of humiliation and the weakness he felt in the presence of the American soldier are echoed throughout the essay when he frequently refers to the Japanese as weak, and how other countries, recognizing their weakness, prey on the Japanese. It is not surprising that as an adolescent Ishihara felt this way. Developmental theorists note that adolescence is a time of heightened awareness of differences and identity formation, as well as of a budding recognition of ethnic identity and affiliation.¹⁷⁰

The effect of the war and postwar period on Ishihara's personal narrative of identity cannot be understated. In "The weakening of human beings,"¹⁷¹ Ishihara attributes the moral decay of the Japanese to conditions that have controlled Japan's existence since its defeat in WWII. These conditions include:

the peace spanning an unprecedented amount of time in the world since WWII; the problem of our nation's reliance on self-defense being based on a dependence on U.S.-Japan relations; and, also, an irresponsibility brought about by individualism and the materialism born of the idleness that peace has cultivated.

According to Ishihara, it is the fetishism, or idolatry of material commodities, luxury, and ease that damage and destroy the basic human relationships of the family and the

¹⁶⁹ Geta are traditional Japanese wooden sandals.

¹⁷⁰ Kathleen Stassen Berger, *Invitation to the lifespan* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2010), 348, 409.

¹⁷¹ Shintarō Ishihara, "The weakening of human beings," *Sankei Shinbun*, July 3, 2006, accessed September 11, 2009 through "Nihon yo" back numbers on Ishihara's official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original Japanese title is 「人間の弱劣化」. See full translation in Appendix B.

disciplined Japanese spirit. This echoes his refrain in *The Japan That Can Say 'No.'* Again, he attributes Japan's current problems to the disastrous effect of the postwar constitution.¹⁷²

In “Westerner’s Trickery”¹⁷³ he echoes these same sentiments, but more vehemently. He criticizes the European Union, especially France, for expounding a doctrine of humanitarianism and peace, while covertly selling its weapons to other nations, and for its support of American interests in Iraq. He says that these dangerous contradictions are detrimental to Japan’s security, and that although the Cold War is over for many, the Japanese are continually threatened by the existence of North Korea and China encroaching on Japan’s rightful territory. According to Ishihara, the Japanese must be able to determine their own fate and resolve these issues on their own terms without the influence of Others, i.e. the West.

In the essay titled “In the past emissaries to China, Now illegal immigrants to Japan,”¹⁷⁴ Ishihara expresses his views on illegal foreigners in Japan. In the first half of this essay, Ishihara decries the crimes committed by illegal Chinese immigrants and overstayers, who live in the cheap residential Ikebukuro district of Tokyo. He is surprised that many of the shops that cater to these people sell things like tools to break into homes

¹⁷² See Appendix F for a full translation of Ishihara’s Kokkaron- principles of the Nation.

¹⁷³ Shintarō Ishihara, “Westerner’s Trickery,” *Sankei Shinbun*, April 4, 2005, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original Japanese title is 「西歐人のずるさ」. See full translation in Appendix C.

¹⁷⁴ Shintarō Ishihara, “In the past emissaries to China, Now illegal immigrants to Japan,” *Sankei Shinbun*, August, 4 2003, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original Japanese title is 「昔遣唐使、今不法入国者」.

for the purpose of theft. He writes that some of these illegal Chinese aliens commit all types of crimes ranging from petty theft and grand larceny to kidnapping and ransoming of their own fellow countrymen (illegal Chinese immigrants who cannot report the crimes for fear of being deported). He aims criticism at the Chinese government for allowing stolen Japanese items to be sold in their country and for ignoring intellectual property rights and not apologizing. However, he also criticizes his own government for not taking care of the problem. He even complains about Japanese businesses that exploit illegal immigrants for cheap labor. Ishihara's xenophobic statements are a reflection of the Japanese anxiety of increased foreigners in Japan, a result in part of increased globalization, as noted in chapter 3.

Ishihara becomes a bit more philosophical later on in the essay and ponders the effect of modernity on society, the state of human existence, and the differences between cultures. Ishihara says that at one point in history, it was the Japanese who looked to China to learn from their advanced culture. However, when the Japanese sent emissaries to China they sent along with them products to pay the Chinese for their cultural and ideological lessons. The Chinese do not do this now. He recognizes that the Japanese are not a homogenous race and that over history they have intermingled with people from many countries throughout East Asia, so he is not calling for the closing of Japan, but rather for policies that will fix the problem of illegal immigration and overstaying. Interestingly, however, he does say that because the Japanese are a mixed race they are a superiorly talented people. He ends the essay by emphasizing the need for implementing aggressive policies that will help to renew Japan's prosperity.

In this essay, it becomes clear how Ishihara defines the Japanese identity by portraying foreigners as deviant. The Chinese “Other” within Japan’s borders is evidence of the practice of self-definition through exclusion. While this and the previous essays succeed in defining Japanese identity in relation to the Other, the following essays focus on the cultural traditions that succeed in succinctly defining the membership boundaries that contribute to the “transcendent affinity” of the nation.

Reviving myth

In “Emperor as Priest King,” Ishihara explains his interpretation of what the emperor means to the Japanese citizenry, the *kokumin*. He maintains that the identity of the Japanese is intricately tied to the symbol of the emperor, which is the embodiment of Japanese culture, and thus he revives the myth of divine origin. He argues that there is no existing modern example of the emperor as figurehead, head priest, Shinto priest king anywhere other than in Japan, and so there is no way to evaluate or understand this concept from a Western perspective. Defining it using foreign and modern philosophy traps the discussion of Japanese identity in Western logic, and inhibits the Japanese from truly understanding the meaning of the emperor to the nation. Western treatises on nationalism claim that the nation replaced religion as a signpost for identity.¹⁷⁵ Ishihara’s conception of identity incorporates both the sacred and the nation, thus offering an interesting Japanese conception of nationalism, outside of Western paradigms. Ishihara is trying to spur the Japanese into thinking, feeling, and acting for themselves, and as he does this, he revives the myth of the people of the sun.

¹⁷⁵ See Benedict Arnold’s *Imagined Communities* and Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*.

The first article of the postwar constitution defines the nature of the emperor as a “symbol (象徴) of the country of Japan and the symbol for the citizens.” According to Ishihara, the article is purposefully vague as to what this symbol means to the Japanese. To Ishihara, the emperor is the supreme officiator of Shinto, and regardless of detractors who say Shinto is not a religion, he says “Shinto is a symbolic means that expresses a uniquely Japanese sensibility and heart.”¹⁷⁶ This sensibility exemplified in Shinto, according to Ishihara, is rooted in shamanism which recognizes the spirituality or divine nature of all creation, and was created by the ancient people of Japan who regarded nature with appreciation, respect, fear, and awe. He claims that Shinto is a valuation system that embodies the superior sensibilities of the Japanese and goes beyond religion; it is the “effective self-expression of the tribe.”¹⁷⁷

Ishihara goes on to recognize that it was the political elite that promoted the emperor as “god incarnate,” and other manipulations of the emperor throughout the centuries. The one constant was that Japanese sensibility was symbolized in Shinto and that the emperor was the supreme priest and guarantor of that sensibility. He appeals to the Japanese to understand the symbol of the emperor from a Japanese perspective and to unite their identity as Japanese to this “symbol.”

In “How to transmit values,” Ishihara tackles the problem of disseminating values to younger generations. He calls for pride in Japan and Japanese traditions, by recalling *Chushingura*, an eighteenth-century Bunraku puppet play, and the values of the samurai exhibited therein. The popularity of *Chushingura* is due, according to Ishihara, to the

¹⁷⁶ Shintarō Ishihara, “Emperor as Priest King,” *Sankei Shinbun*, February 6, 2006, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html>

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

values that transcended the Bakufu's authority at the time. These values were the "importance of loyalty, beauty of self-sacrifice, trust between human beings in carrying out their pledges, and last of all the sense of responsibility that unites them all." The samurai have been identified as the "purveyors of Japanese spirit across the centuries."¹⁷⁸ Although the samurai were deeply influenced by Confucianism, they were also "fierce nationalists nostalgic for old Yamato... they transcended everything they took from the Chinese...they Japanized it. Their Confucianism became the complex web of duties and obligations known as *giri* and *on*. Their Buddhism was Zen."¹⁷⁹ The ronin, or masterless samurai, in *Chushingura* exhibit an exaggerated spirit of the samurai in their "obsessive self-denial" that "obscures their emotions and character."¹⁸⁰ According to Ishihara, it is these transcendent values, as embodied by the samurai, that are necessary at this time of "extreme maturation (modernity) of society, which has resulted in human alienation." He is trying to define the values for new generations, which he describes as corpulent, self-absorbed, egotistic, and impulsive: "they have lost the correct conscience and the ability to control their whims and desires."¹⁸¹

These youth are experiencing the anomie, or normlessness, Ishihara experienced in the postwar period. Recognizing the loss of a moral compass to guide the amoral listless youth in this new era, Ishihara recalls the values of the samurai, in itself a mythic creation, to re-tether the Japanese identity to tradition. However, he recognizes these

¹⁷⁸ Smith, *Japan*, 190.

¹⁷⁹ Smith, *Japan*, 191.

¹⁸⁰ Smith, *Japan*, 192.

¹⁸¹ Shintarō Ishihara, "How to transmit values," *Sankei Shinbun*, January 3, 2005, accessed September 11, 2009 through "Nihon yo" back numbers on Ishihara's official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original title in Japanese, 「価値をいかにして伝達するか」. See Appendix D for full translation.

problems as endemic, citing the hedonism in the adults today as well as the problems of the compulsory education system as barriers to instilling the values of selflessness, loyalty, and steadfastness--characteristics attributed to the samurai. He ends by offering a solution to the problems he identifies: children while in junior or high school should volunteer in fire-fighting, police work, or nursing homes “to develop a sense of responsibility that accompanies serving others.”¹⁸²

In “Japanese Sensibilities,”¹⁸³ Ishihara expounds further on the Japanese people tying their identity to their pride in the cultural products that display their “unique” sensibilities. In this article he offers concrete ways in which to transmit Japanese cultural identity to not just the Japanese, but the world at large. He laments the fact that there are no stores dedicated to internationally renowned Japanese designers in the airports, an international exhibition hall of sorts. He calls for the Japanese to have confidence in their traditions, and cites examples of Western painters influenced by Japanese ukiyo-e painters, and Westerners’ love of sushi. He goes on to say that confidence is not enough, the Japanese should be more self-assured and actively promote their culture abroad. The beauty of Japanese sensibilities, according to Ishihara, stems from the ability of the Japanese to turn their energy inward when confronted with the foreign, a result of the “accident of geography [which] made us adept at refining, embellishing, and improving.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Ishihara, “How to transmit values.”

¹⁸³ Shintarō Ishihara, “Japanese sensibilities,” *Sankei Shinbun*, March 7, 2005, accessed September 11, 2009 through “Nihon yo” back numbers on Ishihara’s official website, <http://sensenfukoku.net/mailmagazine/magazine.html> The original title in Japanese, 「日本人の感性」. See full translation in Appendix E.

¹⁸⁴ Ishihara, *The Japan that can say ‘no,’* 57.

It is not hard to ascertain the reasons for Ishihara's popularity. In a time of uncertainty and constant change Ishihara recalls a simpler, direct, clear answer to the question of who the Japanese were, are, and ought to be. Ishihara's clear sense of Japanese national identity reflects the Japanese identity exhibited in Kawabata Yasunori's 1968 Nobel Prize acceptance speech "Japan the Beautiful, and Myself." Kawabata identifies the Japanese sensibilities, found in the traditions of Zen Buddhism and poetry, as repositories of Japanese identity.¹⁸⁵ Both these iterations of identity, Kawabata's and Ishihara's, stand in stark contrast to Oe Kenzaburo's conception of identity in his Nobel prize acceptance speech, "Japan, the ambiguous and myself."

For a point of reference, Oe Kenzaburo's interpretation of identity is the polar opposite of Ishihara's formulation of identity. Oe recognizes that Japan's postwar identity is stuck between two poles of ambiguity (*aimaisa* 曖昧さ).¹⁸⁶ Perhaps Oe is referring to one pole, Ishihara's pole, of an unalloyed, unadulterated image of mythological Japan—unambiguous in its claims of an "original" yet constructed identity, and contrasting it to the opposite pole that he, Oe represents. Oe's statement of identity, Japan, and the world is unsure and vague. Oe explains his impetus to express himself in novels as his survival mechanism for coping with the continual hardship and suffering wrought by the "different realms of life - in my family, in my relationship to Japanese society and in my way of living at large in the latter half of the twentieth century." "The fundamental style of my writing," he goes on, "has been to start from my personal matters and then to link it up with society, the state and the world." Interestingly, Oe's

¹⁸⁵ Yasunori Kawabata, "Japan, the beautiful, and myself," trans. E.G. Seidensticker (Japan: Kodansha, 1968).

¹⁸⁶ Kenzaburo Oe, "Japan, the Ambiguous, and myself," Nobel Lecture (December 7, 1994). nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1994/oe-lecture.html

impetus to write is mirrored in Ishihara's reactionary musings; however, the results are drastically different interpretations of who the Japanese are in relation to the rest of the world.

The most noteworthy thing is, quite possibly, not Ishihara's nationalistic views and statements, but that he has continued to be re-elected four times to the governorship of one of the largest metropolitan cities in the world. He has been elected so often because his ideas resonate with a vast number of Japanese, or more specifically, Tokyoites, and his works continue to be consumed by Japanese readers. The appeal must go beyond a historic, nostalgic fondness for him and his brother. For it cannot just be the post WWII generation that votes for him. His popularity reaches far beyond those who had first-hand memories and/or experiences of the war to younger people of the voting public. Perhaps his popularity stems from the fact that these people are searching for a clearly articulated identity in a sea of vastly divergent views.

VI. Conclusions: The Sun Also Sets, Ishihara in his twilight

Out of the postwar ambiguity Ishihara found his identity within the mythological origins of Japan. In his twilight years, it seems Ishihara senses an urgency about articulating a definite identity in relation to the nation. His conception of national identity rooted in tradition and myth is a prescription for the anomic, or value empty society he sees today. Through the above analysis it is apparent that he has been compelled to tie his own personal narrative of identity to the lengthy narrative of Japanese identity. As a self-proclaimed “politician of the sun,” Ishihara has attempted to resurrect the symbol of the sun as the hallmark of Japanese identity, in order to experience continuity with his tribe.

In propagating the myth of a unified, homogenous society, Ishihara aims at consecrating the foundations of Japanese identity. And while he directly challenges the national government, he does not challenge the dominant ideology of Japanese identity. In fact, one can see how he is just one voice among many who have tried to articulate a clear Japanese national identity throughout the continuum of Japanese nationalism. Ishihara, as a nationalist, is not reinventing the wheel, or saying anything particularly new or fantastic. Ishihara as a nationalist is actively reinterpreting and reaffirming traditions. Just as the works of other nationalists, Ishihara’s works retaliate against perceived threats to self-certainty and coincide with the waves of nationalism, the ebb and flow of national pride. Ishihara’s work is filled with social commentary/criticism both nationalistic and nostalgic for old Japan.

“Who are we?” “Compared to whom?” “What have we lost?” Ishihara answers these questions and succeeds in defining Japanese identity through negation, through polarizing identity. It is this process of polarization, or binary creation, that has been the

basis of identity for centuries, or perhaps millennia. He calls for his kokumin to join him in this identity and fight against ambiguity and to assert this identity against Others, America and the East. He connects identity to sacred origins in order to rally the Japanese people to a sense of pride and purpose by invoking the past. My hope is that this cursory introduction to Ishihara will help us to understand Ishihara and his vision of Japan's past, present, and future and more broadly to understand his particular brand of Japanese nationalism.

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Appendix A

Things we must recover/regain. *Sankei Shinbun*. January 6, 2003.

Last year, through two events, we were able to have invaluable experiences for the first time since our defeat in the war. Through these experiences, the citizens were awakened to the idea that they are members of the nation. One of the events that brought this about was the opening of the World Soccer Cup match held in Japan, which electrified the entire world. The other incident [that aroused the nation] was the disclosure of the abduction and slaughter that befell as many as 100 of our fellow countrymen, carried out by our wicked and grotesque neighbor, North Korea.

Unlike soccer, baseball requires all sorts of equipment, and therefore it is restricted to a small number of countries that can hold this type of sporting event. Because soccer requires only that you kick a ball and send it flying on a rough field or on a sandy beach, it arouses the basic human instinct of using one's legs; even the spectators become excited and can't take their eyes away [from the game].

What we were able to enjoy within that competition between nations is probably the ecstasy of the violent outburst regarding nation and race, which we consciously and unconsciously carry around with us. No one can deny this indescribably exciting pleasure.

The etymology of the word nation comes from the ancient Italian *nazione*. *Nazione* refers to when, within the one-time flourishing Roman Empire, the students selected from various territories of the Roman Empire gathered for learning at the University of Bologna. When they gathered with only their colleagues/friends they gave up their common Latin in favor of chatting in their respective native tongue. *Nazione* was the name used to refer to the union of people, from a specific locale, who were able

to confirm their traditions, practices, and customs revived for the first time as a result of that gathering. However magnificent and mighty the Roman Empire, there is no question that it was not able to homogenize the individuality of all the peoples under its reign.

Similar to the same type of arousal/awakening that the World Cup bestowed upon us, the disclosure of the North Korean abduction incident, the painfulness of the cruel fate that our fellow countrymen suffered at their hands also aroused a strong sympathy that surpassed pity. With this event, it was revealed that we cannot dismiss it as someone else's problem; it was compassion. The basis for this compassion is an indefinable feeling of solidarity, a feeling that we belong to a nation and an ethnic group, to which those people also belong. It is a strong feeling of solidarity that surpasses what can be expressed in a chart or diagram. As the origination of "nazione" testifies, what cultivates this feeling is none other than a commonality of sentiments and emotions that is naturally bestowed upon us by our long-shared history and culture.

After observing the state of our fellow countrymen after barely being recovered from the terrible fate of being left unprotected at the hands of the North Koreans, I felt a strong sense that their awakening from the delusion of their violent brainwashing received over there and the recovery of their natural judgment as humans was not thanks to the belated management of our government, but instead was due to none other than the warm welcome of the people in their native land and especially their families.

I especially received a strong impression from Mr. Tooru Haisuke, the spokesman for the five people returning and the oldest brother of the Haisuke couple. It was none other than Mr. Tooru Haisuke, who took the position of "keyman" for the children that were left behind and took their well-being and future to heart and decided their fate. It

was Mr. Hasuike who took the lead, not the Prime Minister who manipulates the Foreign Ministry with his extremely composed and proper words or Abe Shinzō, Cabinet Secretary, or Nakayama Sanyo.

Towards the end of the year, the five returnees became ready to remove the Kim Il Sung badges from their lapels. For them, this action of denouncing the badges meant the abandoning of the political views forced on them unilaterally during their abduction; but we cannot begin to understand what a heavy and dangerous decision this was for them, because it put lives in the balance. These five people were denied the self-will of free human beings while forced into a crazy, disordered, and cruel life, all the while being distraught and frantic about the safety and well-being of the children and spouses they were forced to leave behind.

So it is not difficult to imagine how tearful and violent the conversations of the Haisuke brothers became. It must have been a choice that provoked heavy doubt and dangerous suspicions about the wisdom of what they were doing, because their children's lives hung in the balance, given that the reaction of their native country, vis-à-vis them, had verged upon laziness and inaction until then.

So, what removed those dreadful badges from their chests was the persuasion of their blood relatives to reignite their belief in the nation that they belonged to. Who other than the blood relatives could persuade them to entrust their futures to the credibility of the nation. And, so, behind the words of older brother Mr. Tooru Haisuke, who represents the state of mind of the victims, is the idea that it has come to the crucial stage where in order to reinvigorate belief in the nation we must collectively be angered and saddened by the destiny of the victims, our fellow compatriots, who were forced into this

severe misfortune. This is a fervent wish that cannot be contained in such a simple word as “expectation.”

The government that represents the nation we call Japan and the people we call Japanese must give all of their effort to fulfill this request. First, above all else, [the government] must do it’s best in coming up with a complete and flawless method of recovering the children that were left behind. And so for that purpose, we, all of the nation’s people, with our voices unified behind the government, must, for the sake of the honor of our nation, actualize the fulfillment of our responsibility. This duty must be carried out as this year’s number one task. If the government can’t live up to that, what else could we as a people possibly hope for?

Appendix B

The weakening of human beings. *Sankei Shinbun*. July 3, 2006.

When you look at the scandalous events occurring recently in Japanese society, you cannot help but feel that they have something in common. That commonality has been produced by the effect of the various fundamental conditions that have controlled Japan for the sake of the nation's existence ever since our defeat 60 years ago.

Those conditions include: the peace spanning an unprecedented length of time in the world since WWII; the problem of our nation's relying on U.S.-Japan relations for its self-defense; and, also, an irresponsibility brought about by individualism and the materialism born of the idleness that peace has cultivated. These conditions are damaging and destroying even the basic human relationships of the family.

One instance of this proof comes to my mind. I am not the type of person who thinks it is nice to have a pet as a hobby, but, nevertheless, during the recent "pet boom" when I saw people walking with their dogs, I couldn't help but feel that rather than people leading their dogs, these people had entrusted something precious to the dogs and they themselves were being led by the dogs instead. I suddenly felt that these people are a pathetic excuse for humanity.

In a society where families are ruined, what kind of solidarity can exist?

It seems we can but say that as a result, these types of various fundamental changes, that did not exist in Japanese society of the past, have changed people into weak and inferior beings, compared to the people of the past.

Needless to say, peace is desirable and there is no one who would not desire it, but we must bear in mind that a peace that is easily obtained without effort or thought, an

idle peace, can create a poisonous atmosphere. But is it not just like the lines thrown out in the last scene of Carol Reed's masterpiece, "The Third Man?"

The ethologist¹⁸⁷ Conrad Lorenz points out that according to his brain stem theory on the survival of higher animals, animals that have not experienced hard times when young will not have endurance. Or, in other words, animals that lack endurance will undergo natural selection and be eliminated before they mature, and human beings will have an unhappy time. This may not be restricted to just individuals; it may also be the same for the whole society and the entire race.

Today, thoughtless, heinous incidents of every imaginable kind seem like signs of a pandemic inundating Japanese society. For example, there is the self-defensiveness of the money-game winners who aggressively justify themselves when confronted, or just collapse when the illegality of their one-sided logic is exposed. And every time, society gets whip-lashed, or thrown back and forth, in the narrow space between feelings of envy and celebration and betrayal and disappointment.

A man, even though he had a family and children, in order to relieve his depression after being fired due to his own fault, threw another person's child to its death from a high-rise apartment. Although society was shocked by the insubstantiality of his motive, in reality, this criminal's basic weakness as a human being has become a daily occurrence (an ordinary, mundane thing 茶飯).

Because a man could not do anything about his own life and wanted to be killed by others, he burst into an elementary school to indiscriminately kill a group of students. The judge amazingly responded to his wish and immediately gave him capital

¹⁸⁷ethology- study of animal behavior, a sub-topic of zoology, developed by Lorenz

punishment. Another instance are the young people who are unable to commit suicide by themselves and go on the internet at the last moment to call out and meet other likeminded people. Without giving each other their names, they simply lock themselves in their own rooms and surround themselves with charcoal briquettes and poison themselves to death. All these people are, in fact, just the same type of human beings who have deteriorated into weak people.

In this greatest quake-prone country in the world where big earthquakes occur as a matter of course, there are unscrupulous specialists, who just for the sake of money, cheat on new high-rises, which are supposed to be earthquake proof. The president of the Bank of Japan, who holds the highest responsibility of finance, when grilled by the Diet, confessed that “it was for the sake of money.” These authority figures are extremely slovenly as human beings, who forget and make light of the responsibilities of their positions without any sort of remorse. As both professionals and authority figures, they are none other than weak, inferior human beings who cling to their own positions in society and never think about the solidarity of human beings.

And so, if we, the nation’s people, know the danger and dreadfulness of entrusting our respective fates to those kinds of people, our society has come to the point where once again, we must re-evaluate what is going on around us.

These people are by no means intellectually inferior humans. That is why the nation has bestowed upon them certain qualifications and authority and expects something of them. And when those in the high positions who commit errors try to defend themselves with their characteristic logic, one can but say that they have lost their

sense of responsibility and the compassion as human beings that those positions should create to begin with.

If you inquire about the source of that loss, it is none other than the fetishism of idolizing material things in place of spirit that the long peace has brought about. That is, nothing but the loss of one's true self.

Now, I am reminded of an anecdote from during the war. At the height of the war's harsh trials there was a propaganda poster to stave off individual desires. It said, "Luxury is the enemy!" Someone mischievously added a character so it read, "Luxury is fantastic!"

There rarely exist humans who are not comfortable with luxury and ease. However, there are systems for our human solidarity that do not permit this luxury, but, yet, knowing this, we depart from those laws for the sake of gratifying our weak selves. It seems that the survival of our country hangs on whether or not we are able to suppress the flood of human beings who have departed from these laws for the sake of fulfilling their weak selves.

Appendix C

Westerner's Trickery. *Sankei Shinbun*, April 4, 2005.

Among the world's recent problems, there is nothing more discomfoting than the news that the EU has begun to think of lifting the system of trade embargoes on exporting weapons to China that has existed for some time. Even though it is referred to as the EU, it only consists of a limited number of countries, foremost among them France; but how on earth does this conform with their always expounding on their doctrine of humanitarianism and peace? It is extremely contradictory talk.

If they are truly embracing these intentions, the EU's criticism of America's stance towards Iraq does not hold water. It is only for the reckless pursuit of economic gain that the EU is ignoring China's doctrine of supremacy, backed up by a steady build up of military strength. The EU is blinded by the sheer size of the continually expanding economy of China, which continues to expand with all of its dangerous contradictions, and as a result the instability of political and military affairs in East Asia can invite chaos, and if handled unskillfully, would engulf the entire world.

The extent to which a self-righteous Communist government has practiced inhumane violence in the past is clear when one looks at what the Soviets did under the Cold War order to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. This egotism is also evident in the Chinese Communist government's annexation of Tibet with their overwhelming display of military power. It has maintained a dictatorship while being supported by military power that conducts a nearly insane expansion, and it continues to carry out attempts to gain total control over Japanese, Philippine, and Vietnamese maritime domains.

The Cold War that took place mostly on the stage of Europe has ended, but for East Asian countries, the existence of the terrorist nation North Korea, which already possesses atomic weaponry, and its Chinese backers actually causes tensions greater than those of the Cold War era. Although there is this degree of tension, the EU is talking about Europe's intention to lift the weapons embargo against this Chinese instigator. At this moment when the world has shrunk in time and space, we cannot excuse it by saying that it is a lack of awareness.

There are also countries whose secret intention is clearly to profit themselves regardless of what happens to others even though that peril will extend to themselves. France, for example, sent their President during the time of conflict in the Middle East to expound upon peace, but soon after had the audacity to send their Prime Minister to try and sell French manufactured weapons.

I have written about this before, but at this stage in the upper realms*¹⁸⁸ of China's industrial economy there is no capacity to conceive of the new development of manufactured goods, not to mention that the capacity for developing new technical skills for that purpose doesn't even exist. What they do have in the middle realm [of production], is merely the capacity to mass produce with cheap labor under inhuman conditions, which does not even allow labor unions. Incidentally, at the lower reaches [of distribution], there is not even the capacity to circulate publicity for their own country's products in the worldwide market. Nothing other than proof of that is China buying IBM

¹⁸⁸ (上流、中流、下流 interpreted as the three levels of the industrial economy-development, production, and distribution)

computers, which are no longer in demand in America. (There IBMs are viewed as fourth and fifth rate products).

In short, China, which depended on its supply of weapons from the former Soviet Union, does not have the capacity on its own to develop weapons that can surpass the power and efficiency of the weapons they maintain at the present. The EU is probably anticipating this and gauging the market for new weapons, but this is an outright betrayal of its own doctrine which it is repeatedly asserting. If there is a country that will go so far as to do this, it should be debated within the EU itself before the EU criticizes America or Japan, in order to preserve the credibility of the EU as a whole. If the EU proceeds without this debate, the world cannot help but have strong doubts about the existence of the EU itself.

Moreover, China has not hesitated recently to produce the “Anti-Secession Law” that sanctions the exercise of military strength in order to obstruct Taiwan’s independence. Are we not all too familiar with the dreadfulness of this kind of political self-righteousness backed by military power in Europe’s past, when Hitler carried out his forced annexation of Austria with the same ethnic justification?

The lengths to which the Communist party will carry out its despotic rule for the sake of its self-preservation, can be seen in Communist China’s recent history. In his twilight years, Mao Tse-tung in an effort to retain his own authority did not flinch in killing 20,000,000 fellow compatriots by instigating in innocent youth the lunacy of what became known as the Cultural Revolution. Around that time, the French president, Pompidou visited China for negotiation talks, and in his diary he writes about his recollection of being dumbfounded by a conversation with Mao. “Are you planning on

developing Intercontinental Ballistic missiles and waging a war with America? Because if you were to do that, tens of millions of your countrymen will die.” Mao’s exaggerated answer, “If it came to war, I would not refuse. The number of dead is not something to fuss about. We have too many people in our country as it is.”

If the EU lifts the anti-China weapons exportation embargo from Europe, and if the country called Japan were to be indirectly abandoned, it might become the case that Japan cannot help but seriously think of developing its own powerful weaponry. And so, naturally, that would result in the maintenance of state of the art weaponry, and one of the number one effective methods of guaranteeing security would probably be to export said weapons. Formerly, Miki Takeo, the Prime Minister [1974-76] who was strangely popular for his wild idealism, once prohibited the exportation of weapons to any kind of country. It was a silly undertaking that could have damaged the nation’s security. This might become a golden opportunity to eradicate this type of delusion.

We ought to be able to resolve to carve out our own destiny, even without Europe teaching us anew this world’s principle of “Heaven only helps those who help themselves.”

Appendix D

How to transmit values. *Sankei Shinbun*. January 3, 2005.

At the end of last year, I enjoyed the annual custom of viewing *Chushingura* on TV, and I shed my usual tears. All of the stories that were performed that are dear to our hearts, such as the “The local feudal lord,” the one in which Ōishi Kuranosuke and 遙泉院 have their last exchange, or the real Ōishi of Hakone meets the man impersonating him (Itaken Sanai), were most likely made up after the Ako rōshi (masterless samurai) raided the Kira estate, but no matter, in those days, the fictional stories showed that people were definitely filled with empathy for the event.

The sympathy was more likely a manifestation of the general populace’s expression of strong emotions that convey the most basic human values; values that transcended the impromptu farcical moral views like the “Law of human compassion” that the Bakufu/Shogunate devised to control the citizenry. As for the values that transcended the Bakufu’s authority and sanction, they were the importance of loyalty, the beauty of self-sacrifice, trust between human beings in carrying out their pledges, and last of all the sense of responsibility that unites all of them. Because of these things, *Chushingura* never ceases to move.

And, so, in order for human reciprocity to continue to exist in a society, human relationships must center on the indispensable upright values displayed in *Chushingura* that transcend the values of the era and the state of human society. However, if one looks at the various aspects of Japanese society today, one gets the strong feeling that these values have been lost. For those who think that these values should still be observed and preserved, then, this cannot be simply a matter of regret.

It is essential that we accurately understand what is at the root of the unprecedented number of abnormal crimes, such as recurrent child killing, parricide, infanticide, and group suicide. These crimes must be caused by the development of the extreme maturation (modernity) of society that has resulted in human alienation, in other words humans have become essentially weak.

I feel as if there has been no generation that is as corpulent as humans are today. What I mean by that is people have become self-absorbed, or in other words, egotistic. They have become egotistic, therefore their actions have become impulsive and they have lost the correct conscience and the ability to control their whims and desires.

I was once again shocked by the warping of the sense of basic values found in the results of the youth in the compulsory education system, which was taken in order to revise Tokyo's "Youth Healthy Education Ordinance." For instance, in the shopping districts where youths' frequent shoplifting has caused the bankruptcy of stores, there were girls, habitual shoplifters, who coolly rationalized that they could not stop and it was not their fault because they were enticed by the existence of the shops. The inundation of sexual acts, performed by children who have not even finished the minimum of compulsory education and lack any basic knowledge have led to an increase in AIDS. Among all of the developed countries, it is only Japan that is allowing this to happen.

For them, there is no sense in their consciousness that love and emotions are essential conditions of sexual activity with the opposite sex. Far from friendship, it is just the action of seizing others in a sexual act in order to become close to them. And some girls see selling themselves as the easiest method to satisfy their material desires. It is

clear these girls have no hesitation or shame towards their society, family or even themselves. Desire itself is a justification for their acts.

In addition, one outcome of the advancement of modernity/civilization relates to abortions. Because modern medical technology has progressed and replaced other procedures, it has become exceedingly easy and safe to have abortions within only two weeks of conception, they can vacuum out an embryo without hazard to the mother, and her body goes back to being a blank slate. In this kind of society, where the fear of pregnancy has been eradicated and the ease of having sex has accelerated and expanded, the result has ironically been an increase in impotency among young males.

This kind of phenomenon is without doubt one of the perversions of modernity. We are in a situation where people on the extreme left wing take advantage of it to preach a proactive homogenization of young males and females under the term, “gender free.”

I know that there are many human desires and impulses, but the problem depends on to what degree [these are pursued]. I think, recently, in Japanese society, the source of all these incidents is the phenomenon of individual’s excessive corpulence caused by something coming undone. That bears close resemblance to the people you see on the news in TV and magazines who cannot stop eating junk food, knowing that it is bad for their body, and go beyond being unsightly to the point where it is dangerous and become so big they cannot even go for a walk.

We have come to a point in these deplorable times where we must seriously think about how we are to transmit fundamental human values to the children of the next generation.

But now even the places where those values are supposed to be taught have started to disintegrate. The schools, which were a place for the compulsory education system, are being destroyed by the laziness and insanity of the Ministry of Education's basic errors with systems like "education with breathing space," or pressure-free education. The students and parents corrupted by the compulsory education curriculum condemn the strictness of the teachers with heart who harshly reject the new curriculum.

On the one hand, it is the home and not the schools that are supposed to discipline and educate. These days, young parents, who before becoming parents, have already become self-centered individuals and have given up the responsibility of teaching their children the basic value system. This is why some of these parents have no scruples and kill their own children.

So I feel that at the end of compulsory education in junior high, or maybe high school, we should devise a system in which students volunteer for about a half a year in fire-fighting, police work, or nursing homes in order to force them to experience and develop the sense of responsibility that accompanies serving others.

Appendix E

Japanese sensibilities. *Sankei Shinbun*. March 7, 2005.

Haneda has completed a new terminal building, and in Nagoya, too, the new international airport celebrated its first birthday. However, as I glanced at the lines of resplendent shops inside, I thought it was strange to see many stores dealing in international brand goods, but there were no stores with internationally renowned Japanese brands.

The existing Narita and Kansai airports are the same, but why is it that those places do not carry internationally renowned Japanese brands. For example, why is it that brands like Miyake Issei, Kawakubo Rei's *Comme de Garçon*, and Youji Yamamoto are never lined up there. Although foreigners make a fuss over these brands appearing in foreign markets, why is it that in the Japanese international airports which are like international exhibition halls, Japanese original designs are not given the opportunity to appeal to the public. It is very hard for me to comprehend this.

In countries like Norway, the taxes on native designed furniture and merchandise are reduced 10% or more, but in this country we do not have any consideration for our domestically produced merchandise that have earned international recognition. Not only apparel designs, but designs in all areas display the sensibilities of the nation's people, and those things are the indices of the cultural standard of the respective nation.

For great artists, this provides the opportunity to see unknown countries' artistic works and see unfamiliar displays of sensibilities, receiving them as new stimuli. Furthermore, it connects and transmits new craftworks throughout the world. At one time, Japanese ukiyo-e painters, excelling beyond Western perspective landscape

painting, made a huge impact on France's Impressionist painters. Sensibility has no national borders.

I had the same type of experience a long time ago when France produced an omnibus of short films, "Love at Twenty," on which 5 countries collaborated. I was the Japanese director and had an opportunity to meet the producer Francois Truffaut. He confessed that in the past when he saw one of Japan's contemporary films it influenced him, and he came up with the idea of the so-called "Nouvelle Vague" (New Wave) movement. After listening closely, I realized that it was "Crazed Fruit," my original screenplay that debuted the director Nakahira Kō, and starred my brother Yūjiro and Tsugawa Masahiko. It is not my own self-flattery or conceit, but I thought that my work was one of the representative masterpieces of that generation. It was one of my greatest pleasures to later be endorsed by the Nouvelle Vague Master Truffaut.

The country that began with the imitation of things and was able to achieve its fervent wish to catch up with and surpass the West still cannot anchor in its own society an appreciation of its sensibilities. Japanese modern education does not even incorporate sensibility training. Consequently, the appreciation of products is really thin. However, you cannot say that Japanese design is relatively inferior. In short, if you look at just one example Riken's experimental plane that broke world records before the war, or the unbeatable Zero fighter planes during WWII they would not have been able to make such excellent models if they hadn't had efficient and well-thought-out designs.

The executive government cannot directly cultivate superior sensibility, but if they were to understand the cultural utility of design, they would be able to assist in its development. To sum up, it is a matter of how the statesmen will act on this awareness.

I get angry at the Japanese statesmen's lack of understanding and insensitivity towards design as a cultural emblem. For example, Japan's genius that conceived of TRON, a technology organization system, was hindered by the Cabinet Minister in charge of MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) when they tried to introduce the system to America, the number one land of consumption in the world. Luckily, this know-how/skill has been revived by Toyota, which was intent on improving engine management, and this system also goes hand in hand with the spread of cell phones. But it is none other than Japan's executive institution that forsook this advancement, and I think there are no other countries where this is even possible.

Design is the conception of new products.

Anyhow, it is not that the Japanese have no self-confidence in their own sensibilities, but why is it that there are so few Japanese who assertively explain and sell the products that demonstrate their sensibilities? In short, even if sushi has now spread throughout the world as a healthy food, the discoverers were Americans, and it was not the Japanese who went ashore on America to advertise it.

In an anecdote, Peter Mayle, the Englishman who introduced the charm of the province of Provence, France, said that when he later came to Japan he was impressed by the elegance and depth of Japanese food and particularly admired steamed matsutake mushrooms, and he regretted having come to Japan so late. We cannot dismiss what he is saying, even though I have heard that the British have the taste buds of a cow. It is probably rare to find Japanese that do not like steamed custard. Having said that, I have never heard any Japanese actively recommending it to foreigners.

When France's renowned chef Alain Chapel came to Japan he praised Oyster fry, a unique Japanese food, and he included it on the menu of his own restaurant. Cooking could be said to be a design that displays the keen sensibilities of the Japanese, but again there are too few Japanese who are actively recommending it to foreigners. At one time, (the French author) André Malraux, said that the Japanese are the only race that can solidify eternity in a moment. But without being told by other people, we must have a little more confidence in our standard of sensibilities.

From this year with the inauguration of the new plan for the Tokyo Metropolitan University, industry and university must collaborate and dig up new talent to birth a complex organization like the type of design in the influential "Bauhaus Movement" created by the Germans. While collaborating with new contemporary art centers like "Wonder Site," which is more famous in foreign countries than in Japan, we must strive to break new ground with powerful and broad designs. I hope that this will arise from a collaboration of diverse fields that have both interest and sympathy.

Appendix F

Kokkaron: Principles of the Nation

Principles of patriotism:

1. The purpose of history education is to cherish the country's customs and cultures, and learn from the good and bad of our ancestors and to think how to use the good parts of the past in the future.
2. Japan is the only country in which when Japanese start talking about the nation other Japanese become defensive and label you a nationalist.
3. A man who is not troubled by a sense of mortality is merely a man who does not feel responsible to fight with his life for those he loves.

What it means to be a Japanese:

1. Sometimes when I see the Japanese flag in my heart, I experience this mysterious surge of energy.
2. For those of us who were spared from going to the warfront, but nevertheless were educated during the war, we have harbored hostility, or you can even say that sometimes the feeling of hostility comes back.
3. Whenever the Japanese talk about the land they occupied in foreign countries, they talk about the damages of the war. Despite the fire damages of war, the Japanese should not deny what the Japanese have done for their government.
4. Japan is not as small a country as the Japanese think. Of course, if we express the sentiment of a big country naturally we will be disliked; but if Japan does not have a firm/resolute attitude as a Japan of this world, it cannot join the world powers.
5. Japan still has incomparable power.

The bad legacy of McArthur's constitution:

1. If you read the constitution, it is senseless to litigate against the government. But I feel it is first necessary to amend the constitution regarding individual rights.
2. The feeling of expectation that something will happen in the future or someone else is somehow going to do something; that is not an expectation but a stupid relinquishing of one's responsibility.
3. Some people say that it will take the next 10 years to amend the constitution, but can we be that lax?
4. In the background of this extreme and rampant individualism, there is a very strong motive called human rights.

The straying of postwar democracy:

1. We have come to a point where we have to change the things that were imposed upon us after the war. It is time for us to reexamine them from an original point of view and recreate them with our own hands.
2. If the self-preserving politicians are lazy, I would like you to think of it as your own duty as a Japanese citizen to protect our nation.
3. It is time to reexamine various aspects that only we mistakenly believe to be absolute.