

Imperial Imaginations: Constructing Japanese History and Memory in the Age of Empire

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Abstract

In the wake of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan dramatically changed from a feudal society into a modern nation-state. Japan, however, did not complete the nation-building process until well after the end of the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Instead, Japanese officials in the Taisho and Showa Eras (1912-1916 and 1917-1945, respectively) continued to build on and repurpose Japanese and Western systems, practices, and ideologies, in an attempt to construct a Japanese collective identity and memory. Building on previous studies in national identity construction, the present thesis focuses on the evolution and transformation of competing national narratives during Japan's imperial period (1868-1945) and emphasizes the role of educational practices including and beyond formal schooling.

日本語で

1868年の明治維新を機に、日本は封建社会から近代国家へと劇的な変化を遂げた。しかしながら、日本は明治（1868-1912）の終わりから数十年後まで、その国家構築のプロセスを完了することはなかった。代わりに、大正と昭和の日本政府（それぞれ1912-1916と1917-1945）は日本人としての記憶と集団的アイデンティティの確立を試みるために、日本と西洋のシステム、実践、イデオロギーを構築し、転用することを続けた。国家アイデンティティ確立に関するこれまでの研究に基づいて、本論文は日本の帝国時代における競合する国家の物語の進化と変容に焦点を当て、公共教育を含むあるいは、それを越えた教育実践の役割を強調するものである。

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¹A note on images and sources: The Coronavirus Pandemic exacerbated the difficulty of collecting sources. I have cited them with as much specificity as possible. Any errors are my own.

Introduction: Writing Identity With History

On November 1, 2015, Higashimachi Elementary School Vice Principal Junichi Miyajima published “Passing the Baton of History ~Celebrating the School’s Opening~”—a special section of his school’s newsletter. “Passing the Baton” offered readers a progressive, linear, and unbroken narrative history of Higashimachi Elementary School from its establishment in 1913 until its 102nd anniversary. According to Junichi, “[T]he students had a lively school life. It is said that they excelled in sports, winning awards in swimming and track and field tournaments.”¹ Junichi focused on highlighting the successes of Higashimachi Elementary School’s alumni. This commemoration elicited pride among Higashimachi’s contemporary community. Junichi continued, “They [the students] overcame the difficulties of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the Pacific War, and formed a bond with a sister school in Korea, thus beginning the era of international understanding through cooperation....”² By emphasizing his school community’s perseverance through extraordinary traumas and their establishment of an international program with a Korean school, Junichi’s newsletter (notably written in English) served as an instrument in the construction of a common history for school affiliates. As Junichi wrote, “Fast forward to the present, the *unbroken* [emphasis mine] history of the school shows the legacy that has been left by the previous generations. From the enthusiasm for various sporting events like the ‘Jump Rope Competition,’ to the rich

¹Junichi Miyajima, “Passing the Baton of History ~Celebrating the School’s Opening ~.” In Yoji Hatano’s *Higashimachi Elementary School, School Newsletter* no. 565. November 1, 2015. Accessed April 1, 2020. https://higashimachi-es.minato-ky.ed.jp/?action=common_download_main&upload_id=626, 2.

²Junichi Miyajima, “Passing the Baton of History, 2.

international atmosphere, and the School Families [*sic.*] which continue to this day.”³ Vice Principle Junichi’s narrative served a particular purpose. It presented a common perception of history for Higashimachi Elementary School and, thus, offered a carefully constructed historical collective memory.

In the study of collective memory, Japan’s imperial nation, or what historian Sayaka Chatani calls, Japan’s “Nation-Empire,” fits well within the category “memory-nation.”⁴ According to sociologist Jefferey Olick, a memory-nation, “relied on national historical narratives to provide continuity through identity.”⁵ These narratives were often the result of intentional designs used to facilitate the development of a nation. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community.”⁶ Simply put, nation-states were constructions based on some shared understanding of history. Often, these national identities were shared and remembered through the commemoration, celebration, memorial, and teaching of past events. As Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger explain, these traditions were often the product of national inventions.⁷ Indeed, the memorialization of traumatic events, the commemoration of past peoples, and the celebration of national holidays, are often the product of intentional planning, construction, and dissemination. Yet, the construction of a nation-state’s history required more than

³Junichi Miyajima, “Passing the Baton of History, 2.

⁴See Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁵Jeffery Olick (ed.), *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 2.

⁶Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

⁷Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

the dissemination of contrived ceremonies. It also required historical amnesia. As historian Takeshi Fujitani notes, “History had somehow produced a forgetting of history, to the extent that recent fabrications had quickly passed into the subconsciousness area of the seemingly natural and self-evident.”⁸ As a nation constructed history replaced earlier notions of the past through direct manipulation, a collective understanding of history dispersed across the populace and developed into shared national identities. Memory-nations, therefore, connected peoples through a collective memory of a reconstructed past.

Historians of Japan often focus studies of memory on the period immediately following the end of the Second World War.⁹ The physical and psychological devastation wrought on Japan facilitated the development of competing and conjoining collective traumatic memories. Some researchers have presented Japan’s “national forgetfulness” of its war atrocities, while others have highlighted efforts to reshape, reconnect, and understand the horrors of war.¹⁰ Several studies have also examined the development of a national consciousness beginning during the transition between the Edo Period 江戸時代 (c. 1600-1868) and Meiji Period 明治時代 (1868-1912). As they point out, constructed histories were not formulated from nothing. As historian Carol Gluck writes, for example, “Ideologies of the sort

⁸Takeshi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 3.

⁹See, for example, Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006)

¹⁰See Fredrick Dickinson, “Biohazard: Unit 731 in Postwar Japanese Politics of National ‘Forgetfulness,’ *The Asia Pacific Journal* vol. 5. No. 10 (2007): 1-19. <https://apjif.org/-Frederick-R-Dickinson/2543/article.html>

imperial Japan produced were neither created ex nihilo nor adopted ready-made.”¹¹ Before Japan’s dramatic government and societal transformations in the Meiji Period, for example, collective understandings of history did not extend far beyond local or regional perceptions of the past. However, existing local traditions and beliefs were often incorporated into Japan’s nation and empire-building projects. Historian Takeshi Fujitani has written about the process of Japanese nation-building via the construction and popularization of public ceremonies and holidays. Some of these traditions were invented, while others were taken and modified from existing local and regional practices.¹² In both cases, government-directed efforts to build a Japanese nation-state formulated an unbroken connection between the constructed and reconstructed realities.

Building on these, and other, previous studies, the present thesis focuses on the evolution and transformation of competing national narratives during Japan’s imperial period (1868-1945). During this time, Japanese government officials concentrated their efforts on constructing Japanese historical memories, which would serve as a basis for a national identity. In a fashion similar to Vice Principle Junichi’s school newsletter, government officials attempted to facilitate the development of a collective consciousness among the Japanese people—a shared historical identity for Japan’s ever-evolving national empire.

School curricula and other educational experiences offered citizens powerful settings where competing visions of Japan constructed, solidified, and reconstructed

¹¹Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4.

¹²Takeshi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*.

popular notions of what it meant to look, act, and be Japanese. Reforms sought to balance Japanese identity, while also incorporating Western ideas. The prescribed government curricula offered citizens with visions of what it meant to be Japanese. Spanning three distinct, Japanese historical periods—the Meiji Era, the Taisho Era, and the Showa Era, government officials, intellectuals, and members of Japanese society sought to create an identity, that incorporated Western ideas, yet also remained distinctly “Japanese.” The continuing interaction between competing ideologies further evolved as Japan’s growing empire grew to include Korea, Taiwan, and Japan’s other imperial colonies. Chapter 1 examines the scope and impact of the Meiji Restoration and the subsequent state-building projects of the late 1800s. Chapter 2 then looks at the continuity and changes in Japanese society during the Taisho Period 大正時代 (1912-1926) and Showa Period 昭和時代 (1926-1945), which were characterized by periods of profound transformation. Finally, an epilogue reviews the major arguments provided in each of the chapters.

Chapter 1. What's Past is Memory

The processes of state-building in the nineteenth century drastically transformed Japan, as it grappled with increasing intrusions from the West. During the Meiji Restoration 明治維新 of 1868, for instance, Meiji leaders overthrew the Tokugawa Shogunate 徳川幕府 of the Edo Period 江戸時代 (1603-1867) and initiated a series of reforms that attempted to fuse Western and Japanese ideologies and systems. During the subsequent Meiji Period 明治時代 (1868-1912), for example, the Japanese government developed a large standing army, drafted and implemented a Western-style constitution, and actively engaged in national identity construction using a newly developed national education system. Official school curricula and physical school buildings offered powerful modals in which competing visions of Japan solidified popularizing ideas of what it meant to look, act, and be Japanese. Reformers hoped to construct a Japanese national identity that incorporated Western ideas and methods in an effort to challenge the Western world. The continuing interaction between competing ideologies further shaped a modern Japanese identity focused on morality, race, and society. While Japan's education system would eventually help instill a sense of Japaneseness among the populace, competing visions of Japan's future contributed to and constrained the nation-building process. As such, the national education system became a conglomerate of competing Japanese and Western practices working in conjunction to propel Japan into the world stage.¹

¹Any study of national identity and nationalism should include Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). For general

Before the Meiji Restoration, collective notions of identity did not extend far past the local or regional levels. Within villages and other local domains, Confucian, Buddhist, and Neo-Confucian ideologies influenced education systems. Edo schools catered to the elite classes, who required knowledge of Confucian and Buddhist texts as a “prerequisite for leadership.”² However, beginning in the Meiji Period, intellectuals began to differentiate between Chinese learning and *Kokugaku* (most often translated as National Learning).³ As William Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann point out, the “fissure between Chinese and Japanese

histories of the Meiji Restoration, see Mark Ravina’s *To Stand With The Nations of the World: Japan’s Meiji Restoration in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Kindle. Studies on modernization and westernization of Japan include, Takeshi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: CA: University of California Press, 1998); Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myth’s: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); and S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003);. Good references on the development of Japanese language, identity, and education, see Edward R. Beauchamp, *Windows on Japanese Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995); Yeounsuk Lee and Maki Haruno Hubbard, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); Mark E. Lincicome, *Principle, Praxis, and the Politics of Educational Reform in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995); Masako Shibata, “Controlling National Identity and Shaping the Role of Education: The Vision of State Formation in Meiji Japan and the German *Kaiserreich*” in *History of Education* vol. 3 no. 1 (2004), and David Blake Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), “Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation” Special Issue, *Journal of Japanese Education* vol. 3 no. 5. (2002) <http://www.flinders.edu.au/education/iej>. For a general study of Japanese history see, Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mark Ravina, *Understanding Japan: A Cultural History Course Guide Book* (Washington DC: The Great Courses, 2015); and Elise Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2002). For collections of essays, writings, and opinions, see WM Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (eds.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition, 1600-2000* volume 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); William Reynolds Braisted (trans.) *Meiroku Zasshi: Journal of the Japanese Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); and Motoyama Yukihiko, *Proliferating Talent: Essays on Politics, Thought, and Education in the Meiji Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

²Edward R. Beauchamp, *Windows on Japanese Education*, 8-25; and Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), “Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation, 8-10.

³Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (eds.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition, 1600-2000* volume 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 482.

studies” could have resulted from a variety of factors including Japan’s Edo-period closure from foreign contact, except for limited contact with the Dutch and Chinese.⁴

Writings of several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars revealed immense interest in *Kokugaku*. In a 1728 petition to the Shogun, prominent National Learning Scholar 国学者 Kado no Azumamaro wrote, “Prostrate, I here make my humble request: that I be given a quiet tract of land in Kyoto where I can open a school for studies of the imperial land.”⁵ Kado hoped to instruct pupils in *Kokugaku*, rather than Chinese studies. He continued:

However, they [early schools] taught Chinese history and the Chinese classics in these schools, even in those for the imperial family. Offerings were made to the spirit of Confucius. Alas, how ignorant the Confucian scholars were of the past, not knowing a single thing about the imperial Japanese learning. How painful, the stupidity of later scholars—who cannot bewail the destruction of the ancient learning? This is why foreign teachings have prevailed, and we encounter them in street conversations and corner gossip.⁶

Kado’s request highlighted early attempts to construct a Japanese schooling system focused on promoting learning related to National learning. The eighteenth-century National Learning debates paralleled the Japanese-Western studies debates of the Meiji Period. In fact, during the Meiji Period, government officials navigated complex debates focused on developing a full-fledged national identity that carefully balanced foreign and Japanese ideologies. As Japan evolved to combat the influence

⁴Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (eds.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, 482.

⁵Kado no Azumamaro, “Petition for the Establishment of a School of National Learning” in William de Bary et al. (eds.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 488.

⁶Kado no Azumamaro, “Petition for the Establishment of a School of National Learning,” 488.

of the West, government officials engaged in similar debates in all sectors, including in interactions with Europe and the United States.

Aizawa Seishisai, a Confucian scholar and tutor to the Tokugawa family, also wrote about growing calls for political organization against the Western encroachment. In 1825, Aizawa's *Shinron* 新論 (*New Thesis*) explicitly defined the West as a political and cultural other. Aizawa wrote:

But some dimwits argue, 'The warriors of our Divine Realm have been peerless throughout the world since antiquity. The barbarians are puny runts; there is no cause for alarm.' True, the fighting men of our Divine Realm are brave and skilled in warfare, and our customs reinforce this [native martial spirit].⁷

Aizawa's comparison between Japanese warriors and the "puny runt" barbarians is a stark contrast. Furthermore, the allusion to a "native martial spirit" and to a realm that has existed since "antiquity" demonstrated early stirrings of national sentiment, a type of proto-nationalism. *Shinron*, moreover, highlighted pre-Meiji calls for anti-Western political movements. According to Aizawa:

The bakufu once made it plain to Russia that Japanese law requires us to destroy on sight any barbarian ship approaching our coasts. But now the English regularly appear and anchor off our shores, and we do not lift a finger to drive them away....Will the barbarians have any respect for our laws after they hear about this? The English come and go as they please, draw maps and sketch our terrain, disrupt our inter-island transport system, and win over our commoners with their occult religion and the lure of profit....But our temporizing, gloss-it-over officials reply, "The foreigners are just fishermen and merchants doing nothing out of the

⁷Aizawa Seishisai, "*Shinron*" as cited in "*Excerpts from Shinron (New Thesis): The Barbarian's Nature*" *Asia For Educators Primary Source Document with Questions DBQ*, Accessed May 10, 2020. http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/aizawa_seishisai_shinron.pdf.

ordinary; there is no cause for alarm." What simpletons!⁸

Critical towards the Tokugawa Shogunate, Aizawa claimed that the Western barbarians were a threat to the Japanese nation. His warning that the English will "sketch our terrain" illustrates a growing perception of national sovereignty within the context of the Western international system.⁹ Aizawa's *Shinron*, therefore, highlighted Edo Period shifts in self-perceptions of the Japanese people.

During the Meiji reforms, government officials hoped to attain equal status with the Western Powers (e.g., Great Britain). To demonstrate Japanese modernity and to learn from the West, the Japanese government sent ambassadors and other officials on a tour of the Western World. This tour became known as the Iwakura Mission. During the Iwakura Mission, Itō Hirobumi, a Meiji official, in his speech to American and European officials provided an example of Japanese attempts to match Western powers. He declared:

By reading, hearing and by observation in foreign lands, our people have acquired a general knowledge of constitutions, habits and manners as they exist, in most foreign countries. Foreign customs are now generally understood throughout Japan. Today it is the earnest wish of both our government and people, to strive for the highest points of civilization enjoyed by more enlightened countries. Looking to this end, we have adopted their military, naval, scientific and educational institutions, and knowledge has flowed to us freely in the wake of foreign commerce. Although our improvement has been rapid in material civilization, the

⁸Seishisai, "*Shinron*."

⁹Seishisai, "*Shinron*."

mental improvement of our people has been far greater.¹⁰

Itō highlighted that Japan had learned from Western powers, arguing that Japanese society under the Meiji regime had advanced to match Western powers, such as the United States. Notably, Itō referred to Japan's adoption of Western educational institutions. Indeed, as Mark Ravina points out, Itō had, in an earlier speech, explained to his audience that Japan's success was due to Western intervention. Itō claimed that Japan remained an isolated land before the arrival of Commodore Perry and his fleet of Black Ships.¹¹ His declaration framed Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Japan as a force that compelled Japan to reform its government. As Ravina points out, however, Itō's speech is not an entirely accurate representation of Japanese foreign relations. Instead, Ravina argues for Japanese history to be classified into distinct phases of isolation and contact.¹² The Tokugawa Shogunate may have limited foreign contact, but earlier periods of Japanese history were characterized by foreign contact, trade, and influence. Early Japanese society, after all, heavily benefited from Chinese and Korean influences. In each period of contact, Japan adopted foreign practices, modified them, and incorporated them. Mark Ravina's argument classifies this balancing act under two principles: (1) radical nostalgia and (2) cosmopolitan chauvinism.¹³

¹⁰Itō Hirobumi, "Speech at San Francisco," (December 14, 1871) found in Yunesuko Higashi Ajia Bunka Kenkyū Sentā (Tokyo, Japan). *The Meiji Japan Through Contemporary Sources*. Tokyo [1969-, 1969. <http://www1.udel.edu/History-old/figal/Hist370/text/er/iwakura.pdf>

¹¹Mark Ravina, *Understanding Japan: A Cultural History Course Guide Book* (Washington DC: The Great Courses, 2015), 3-5.

¹²Mark Ravina, *Understanding Japan: A Cultural History Course Guide Book* (Washington DC: The Great Courses, 2015), 3-5.

¹³Mark Ravina, *To Stand With The Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) Introduction and chap 1. Kindle.

While Edo schools served as centers for proto-nationalistic fervor, Meiji officials realized that Japan needed a more standardized schooling system if their dreams of national construction were to come to fruition. According to historian Masako Shibata, “Meiji Japan broke with what could be termed the Tokugawa *ancien régime*. The new notions of Japanese identity were abruptly invented in the national crisis [of Western Imperialism]. Thus, in education, the Tokugawa legacy was reshaped in terms of the vision of a modern Japan...”¹⁴ Indeed, Japanese ideology quickly adopted invented traditions and practices that were based on European and American systems.

Between the 1860s and 1880s, Meiji Japan engaged in a series of programs and reforms meant to balance Japanese and Western principles within the context of nation-building. Among them, the “Civilization and Enlightenment,” reforms demonstrate government focus on elevating Japan to world power status. In his *Encouragement of Learning* 学問のすすめ, renowned scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi wrote:

Japan must be filled with the spirit of independence if we are to defend her against foreign threats. Every citizen must take the responsibility of the nation upon himself, regardless of personal status or prestige. Both the learned and the ignorant, the blind and those who have sight, must fulfill their obligations as citizens of the country. Englishmen should consider England to be their native soil; we Japanese should consider Japan to be ours.¹⁵

¹⁴Masako Shibata, “Controlling National Identity and Shaping the Role of Education: The Vision of State Formation in Meiji Japan and the German *Kaiserreich*” in *History of Education* vol. 3 no. 1 (2004), 75-76.

¹⁵Yukichi Fukuzawa, *An Encouragement of Learning*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 22. Accessed May 4, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Fukuzawa, a nationalist who promoted Western-style reforms, supported the idea of the nation and believed that Japan needed to develop into a nation-state in order to compete with the powers of the West. Fukuzawa continued:

Each citizen has a double role. The first is to be subordinate to the government with the mentality of a guest. The second is to join together with the other citizens of the nation to form a company, as it were, that is called the nation, to enact and implement the laws of the nation.¹⁶

Fukuzawa's *Encouragement of Learning*, therefore, promoted a Western idea of nation—an idea grounded in the social theories of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes—and transcended the local and regional focuses that had characterized pre-Meiji Japan. Meiji officials, hoping to instill national values among the Japanese populace, engaged with scholars, such as Fukuzawa, in order to design a national schooling system.

The Meiji government, specifically, instituted a policy called *Gakusei* 学制 (literally, school system) that focused on implementing a modern system of education. They adapted the local and regional schools to fit within this context and aimed to introduce a European or Westernized system of public education into Japan.¹⁷ According to scholar Satoshi Yamamura, “Universal mass education was considered a necessary social measure to fill the gap leading up to the successful introduction of modern methods of warfare. The Meiji oligarchy could neither wait for nor allow the spontaneous growth of local-oriented school systems that were

¹⁶Yukichi Fukuzawa, *An Encouragement of Learning*, 51.

¹⁷Edward R. Beauchamp, *Windows on Japanese Education*, 8-25; and David Blake Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), “Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation,” 8-10.

connected with local peculiarities of peoples' lives and were rather independent of the central government's intention."¹⁸ Even as Meiji leaders implemented a Western-style education, however, resurgent Confucian ethics were also incorporated into the system.¹⁹ Indeed, in 1890, Meiji officials passed "The Imperial Rescript on Education" (Image 1.1) as an anchor in between competing ideologies and visions of the nation.²⁰ The Rescript read:

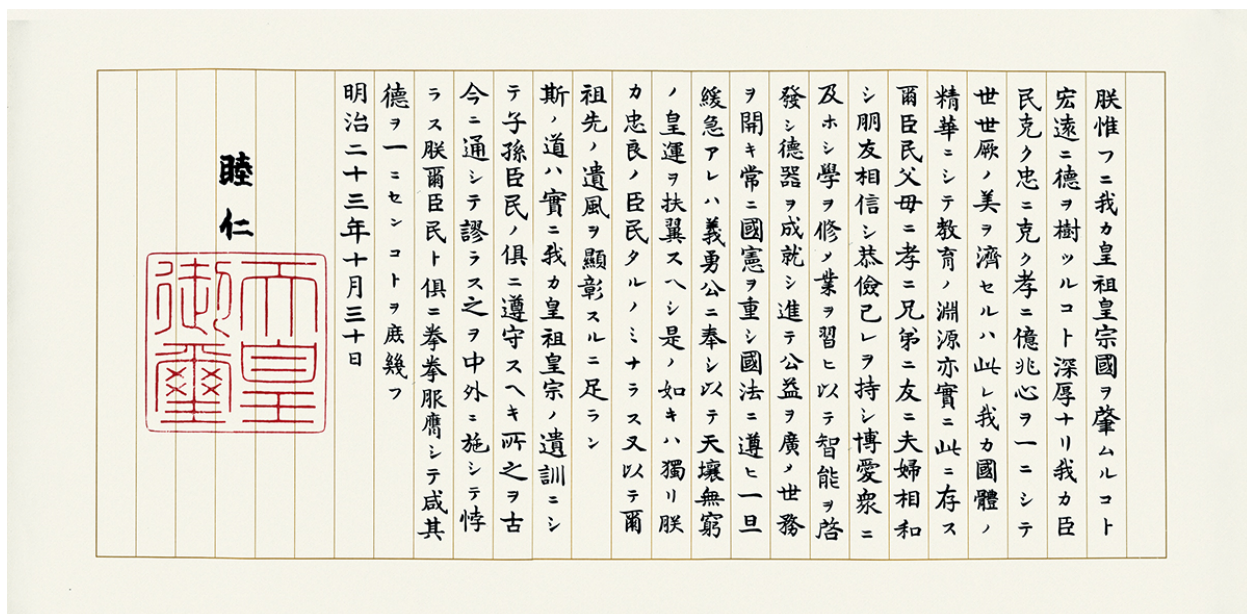


Image 1.1: "The Imperial Rescript on Education" (Summarizing Translation Follows)

Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein lies the source of Our [sic.] education....advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain

¹⁸David Blake Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), "Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation," 8-9.

¹⁹David Blake Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), "Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation," 8-9.

²⁰Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 84-85 and 146-156.

the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with
heaven and earth.²¹

This Rescript, an October 30, 1890 letter from the Meiji Emperor to the people of Japan, highlighted the importance of a national education system in spreading a collective identity to the Japanese people. Furthermore, it emphasized the significance of drawing connections between an ancient past and the development of the Japanese empire. Notably, the emperor's focus on the interplay between Confucian ideologies (filial piety) and Western systems (the constitution) demonstrated radical nostalgia and cosmopolitan chauvinism. As Yamamura puts it, "The Meiji powers-that-be realized [*sic.*] that a certain standard of intelligence of the masses was required in a modern state, and that a nation-state could not satisfy its imperialistic drives if the people remained ignorant and passive to the goals of the state."²² Meiji officials used Western ideologies to fashion an idea of a Japanese nation that became based on a constructed shared Japanese history.²³

Meiji officials organized *Gakusei* along Western and Confucian ideological lines. According to the earlier "The Fundamental Code of Education (1871)," for example:

It is only by building up his character, developing his mind, and cultivating his talents that man may make his way in the world, employ his wealth wisely, make his businesses prosper, and thus attain the goal of life. But man cannot build up his characters, develop his mind, or cultivate his talents without education—That is the

²¹"The Imperial Rescript on Education:" [government document] 1890. <https://www.meijiingu.or.jp/about/3-4.php/>. Standard translation borrowed from "'The Imperial Rescript on Education" [Official Document]," in Children and Youth in History, Item #136, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/items/show/136> (accessed May 13, 2020). Annotated by Brian Platt

²²David Blake Willis and Satoshi Yamamura, (eds.), "Japanese Education In Transition: 2001 Radical Perspectives on Cultural and Political Transformation, 8-9.

²³Mark Ravina, *To Stand With The Nations of the World*, Introduction and chap 1. Kindle

reason for the establishment of schools. Language, writing, and arithmetic, to begin with, are daily necessities in military affairs, government, agriculture, trade arts, law, politics, astronomy, and medicine; there is not, in short, a single phase of human activity which is not based on learning. Only by striving in the line of his natural aptitude can man prosper in his undertakings, accumulate wealth, and succeed in life.²⁴

The Fundamental Code's focus on a love of learning and Western subjects of study highlight the balanced approach of the Meiji regime. Furthermore, the emphasis on the individual's character, minds, and talents served as the basis for identity-construction throughout Japan's imperial period.

Historians Takeshi Fujitani and Carol Gluck have written extensively on the scale and scope of how Meiji leaders painstakingly constructed a nation-building program. In *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, Fujitani argues, Meiji officials began a large-scale process by constructing national ceremonies, practices, and rituals. It was in this period, for instance, that Shinto became Japan's "national religion" through the construction or repurposing of rituals, ceremonies, and practices.²⁵ Fujitani, furthermore, highlights key insights into the physical transformation of Japanese schooling and its impact on national perceptions. According to Fujitani, Japanese schools started displaying portraits of the emperor within schoolhouse buildings in an attempt to construct national sentimentalities and to instill a sense of loyalty to the nation.²⁶ In fact, these Meiji

²⁴"Preamble to the Fundamental Code of Education, 1872 [Government Document]," in *Children and Youth in History*, Item #129, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/items/show/129> (accessed May 7, 2020). Annotated by Brian Platt

²⁵Takeshi Fujitani. *Splendid Monarchy*, 1-28.

²⁶Takeshi Fujitani. *Splendid Monarchy*, 166-168.

officials sent these images with “The Imperial Rescript on Education” in 1890. Meiji leaders believed it was necessary to make direct connections between the imperial family and the common people. They believed that doing so would help foster a sense of connection between the people and the emperor, therefore, making connections between the people and the state:



Image 1.2: The Imperial Portraits

The imperial portraits (Image 1.2) were used to show the people an image of the emperor to make the imperial line tangible.²⁷ Requiring portraits of the Japanese emperor in schools also helped to foster the development of a national identity, as they facilitated perceptions of national subjects under the rule of the Meiji Emperor. As Fujitani described, the imperial gaze served to instill “a kind of

²⁷Takeshi Fujitani. *Splendid Monarchy*, 166-168; and Images borrowed from “Imperial Portraits,” Samurai. Accessed April 28, 2019. https://wiki.samurai-archives.com/index.php?/title=imperial_portraits.

ocular domination in modern Japan.”²⁸ Fujitani’s Foucauldian Panoptical analysis demonstrated that Meiji leaders worked to create an imperial presence that would influence the Meiji subjects’ thoughts and actions. Image 1.2 also illustrates increasing Westernization in Japan. In the portrait on the left, the emperor appears in traditional Japanese imperial clothing, while on the right, the same emperor sits in a Westernesque style. The Western-styled portrait demonstrated Japan’s commitment to aligning Japan to Western paradigms while remaining Japanese.

In *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Carol Gluck also emphasizes the central role of the emperor in the construction of Japan’s national consciousness. She writes, “In the 1870s, both the formulation of direct imperial rule and the presentation of the emperor in ‘manifest ubiquity’ promoted national unity against the obtrusions of the feudal past.”²⁹ As with Fujitani’s analysis, Gluck effectively demonstrates the emperor’s role as a national symbol. For example, she cites Mori Arinori in his characterization of the emperor. According to Gluck, Mori emphasized the importance of the emperor in the process of patriotic indoctrination.³⁰ In 1891, the Japanese government issued the “Regulations for Elementary School Ceremonies on Festivals and Holidays.” This imperial decree required students to pay homage to the imperial portraits, to sing the national anthem, and to attend patriotic speeches by school officials and local leaders. Indeed, as school-aged children were indoctrinated into the Japanese nation, their

²⁸Takeshi Fujitani. *Splendid Monarchy*, 25.

²⁹Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 76.

³⁰Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 85.

parents (and society as a whole) were also being trained as subjects of the monarchy.

As historian Takeshi Fujitani shows, the use of schools accompanied the implementation of ritual construction. Furthermore, national holidays, monuments, and traditions were fashioned out of local and historic rituals. When they established Shinto as Japan's national religion, for example, government officials utilized official ceremonies (e.g., marriage services) to show legitimacy.³¹ By employing ancient rites and practices into official and national ceremonies, the Meiji government was clearly engaging in radical nostalgia. Furthermore, the use of Western ceremonies within Japanese institutions linked Japan and the Western world through cosmopolitan chauvinism.³²

In 1870, Meiji leaders initiated educational reforms of the Chidōkan, a school from the Tokugawa Era.³³ They abolished all courses and directed students to study on their own. Later, they implemented a curriculum that included courses in writing, arithmetic, reading, Confucian classics, history, and Western studies. Further changes resulted in the development of a series of types of courses. Two of the three courses focused on Imperial and Chinese studies (*kōkangaku* 交換学) and the other focused on Western studies. Finally, the common people were allowed to enroll in the schools.³⁴ The courses of study offered illustrated a commitment to both Japanese and Western-focused ideas, while the entry of commoners into the

³¹Takeshi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 1-28; 116-121.

³²Mark Ravina, *To Stand With the Nations of the World*, Introduction and chap 1. Kindle.

³³Motoyama Yukihiro, *Proliferating Talent: Essays on Politics, Thought, and Education in the Meiji Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 160-180.

³⁴Motoyama Yukihiro, *Proliferating Talent*, 160-180.

school meant that the entire, school-aged populace would have access to a national education system focused on teaching Japaneseness.

Indeed, According to Motoyama Yukihiro's *Proliferating Talent: Essays on Politics, Thought, and Education in the Meiji Era*, the curricular objective of "Chidōkan was to 'foster talent for the nation and maintain social morals.' The school's aim was to train the future elite of both domain and nation, but it offered everyone in the domain... the opportunity to obtain that elite education."³⁵ The clear focus on fostering talent and morals for the nation shows that Meiji leaders explicitly designed school curriculums to foster some sense of identity.

To produce a shared identity, Meiji leaders knew that Japan needed a national language. Therefore, in simultaneously with their greater educational reforms, Meiji leaders debated and prescribed recommendations for a national language (*kokugo* 国語). Before the Meiji Restoration, for example, the concept of *kokugo* did not exist. Only after intentional efforts to standardize the Japanese language did a modern, national language appear. During the Meiji Period, elites debated Japan's national language and the importance of non-native languages. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson described the significant importance of language in the development of a national identity.³⁶ The use of what Anderson calls print culture can spread language of a particular type to the populace, making it possible to instill a common language, which people can then, in turn, read a common national narrative. In Meiji

³⁵Motoyama Yukihiro, *Proliferating Talent*, 163-164.

³⁶Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 40-50.

Japan, the construction of a national language served as the foundation of shared identity within this Andersonian schema. Scholars Yeounsuk Lee and Maki Harano built on Anderson's frameworks and declared:

Anderson defines a “nation” not as a visible institution but as an imagined political community. Then linguistic identity, or the identity of a linguistic community, is as much a product of the imagination as is “national” identity: each member of the linguistic community believes that every member, even those whom they have never met or spoken with, speaks one and the same language. Such a sense of coownership of a language transcending experience is obviously a product of history, just as is a political community. It is when these two communities— that is, a political community called a “nation” and a linguistic community sharing the same “language”—are interlocked in the imagination that a clear image of what is called “a national language” is created.³⁷

Language identity is, therefore, central to the development of a shared national consciousness. Before the Meiji Period, a national, Japanese language did not exist. Only during the Meiji Period, did a national language begin to develop.³⁸ Yet, even within the scope of the Meiji Restoration and the subsequent reform movements, the development of a national language was a topic of debate among Meiji elites. It took time to develop a fully coherent lingual identity in Japan, as it had in other developing nations divided by internal geographic isolation and community separation (e.g., Italy and Greece).

Mori Arinori proposed adopting English as an important commercial language. He believed doing so was critical to the continued development of Japan

³⁷Yeounsuk Lee and Maki Haruno Hubbard, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 1-3.

³⁸What is meant by language, here, is the development of a standard, national language. Before this period, there were, of course, Japanese speakers, but the language had only been standardized for the nation-building project that began in the Meiji Period.

within the Western-centered modern world context.³⁹ In an 1872 letter to Professor William D. Whitney at Yale University, Mori Arinori discussed the importance of adopting English to cope with Japan's growing place among the commercial nations:

The necessity for [adopting English] arises mainly out of the fact that Japan is a commercial nation; and also that, if we do not adopt a language like that of the [*sic.*] English, which is quite predominant in Asia, as well as elsewhere in the commercial world, the progress of Japanese civilization is evidently impossible.⁴⁰

This excerpt is important for several reasons. First, Mori's claim that Japan is a commercial nation shows that the Japanese nation-state was continuing to place itself into the ranks of the western powers. Second, adopting English as a language in Japan represented a growing connection between Meiji Japan and the rest of the world. As they had done with their education system, Meiji officials were looking towards the West (e.g., America and Europe) as a model in their efforts to modernize. Finally, the use of the phrase, "the progress of Japanese civilization is evidently impossible," evokes westernization as progress. This letter can also be read as similar to Itō Hirobumi's 1871 speech to American officials. Like Hirobumi, Mori Arinori was characterizing Japanese progress within the scope and paradigm of Western intrusion. Mori claimed that without the adoption of English (or another language like it), the Japanese nation would not ascend to the ranks of the other modern nation-states.

³⁹Mori letter to Whitney, May 21, 2872. "Princeton University Guest Oriental Library East Asia Collections." 森有禮全集 / 大久保利謙編. Mori Arinori zenshū / Ōkubo Toshiaki hen., 3. <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/3164534>

⁴⁰Mori letter to Whitney, 310-305.

As demonstrated by Lee and Hubbard, Mori Arinori's letter, and other writings, were the subject of scorn among other Japanese elites. They wrote, "These writings never gained any support and became the target of criticism by scholars after his time: they either laughed at his proposal as an absurdity or attacked it as an outrageous opinion. However, these attacks and ridicule did not necessarily reflect an accurate understanding of Mori's assertions..."⁴¹ Indeed, other scholars and elites believe Arinori was advocating for the abolition or abandonment of the Japanese language. However, as Lee and Hubbard showed, this was not exactly the case.⁴²

In 1872, the imperial decree on education also ordered both boys and girls to attend school for at least three years. Though it would take time for each locality to adhere to the imperial decision, the implications of this decree were enormous. In the same year, an all girls' school, Takebashi, opened in Tokyo. Among the students, one girl, Aoki Koto, wrote, in English:

When I arrived in Tokio [*sic.*] I thought the cities of here are much dirtier, more than my province's and I was very glad that I met my father and he told me "you must begin to learn and study..." and I answered him "Yes, I want to do so and I wish to learn English language [*sic.*]..."⁴³

Aoki's desire to learn English illustrated a want among the populace to learn foreign studies. This desire, and the adoption and standardization of *Kokugo*, demonstrated that Japan was fully engaged in the process of nation-building. Furthermore, the development of Japan's national identity in this period

⁴¹Yeounsuk Lee and Maki Haruno Hubbard, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, 7-9.

⁴²Yeounsuk Lee and Maki Haruno Hubbard, *The Ideology of Kokugo*, 7-13.

⁴³Aoki Koto, "Aoki Koto, June 20, 1874" [class essay] in James Huffman, *Modern Japan: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 70.

ignited Japanese imperial ambition from the late 1860s until the fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945.

In the 1890s, Meiji government-directed education policies worked to incorporate ideas of national identity among all ethnic groups under Meiji control, including the Ainu and those inhabiting the Ryukyus (Okinawa). Teachers across Japan utilized government policy initiatives. Some agreed with government curricula, while others opposed it. In both cases, as national control grew, teachers utilized government curricula within the contexts of their own teaching methodologies. For example, in Hokkaido and Okinawa, there was a wide-ranging reaction to *kokugo*.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the use of these curricula, in conjunction with other repurposed and government-structured constructs, the Japanese nation evolved into a multi-ethnic empire with a converging set of national identities.

⁴⁴Annette Skovsted Hansen, "Practicing Kokugo: Teachers in Hokkaido and Okinawa Classrooms, 1895-1904" *The Journal of Japanese Studies* vol. 40 no. 2. (2014). Accessed May 10, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2014.0082>

Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 further expanded imperial physical space, thus requiring additional identity-construction efforts. In Japan, the annexation of Korea preceded widespread pomp and circumstance in celebration of Japan's acquisition. Furthermore, the Japanese government, early on, characterized Korean perceptions of Japanese invasion as popular affairs:



Image 1.3: "Shufu no tomo" [Women's Magazine]

Image 1.3 presents a scene from women's magazine "Shufu no tomo" 「主婦の友」, ("Housewife's Friend") characterized Koreans as excited and welcoming toward the Japanese liberators. Government propaganda spread throughout the Japanese nation and assisted in Meiji officials' efforts to build a national consciousness.⁴⁵ In demonstrating Korean desires for Japanese control, the

⁴⁵Image as presented in Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 110-112 (middle images).

Meiji government situated the Japanese as superior to their newly acquired Korean subjects. To grow this identity, however, the Meiji government realized that their nation required more formal indoctrination programs.

The Meiji government-directed process of nation-building required the development of a national school system that would indoctrinate the populace into the Japanese national identity. To support this endeavor, the Meiji government engaged in historical and ritual construction, which defined modern-day Japanese traditions and practices as ancient in origin. Using Mark Ravina's concepts of radical nostalgia and cosmopolitan chauvinism, it becomes clear the Meiji regime partook in complex and nuanced national identity construction by blending Japanese historical practices and beliefs and Western systems of thought. As the Japanese nation-state developed into a modern power, the first non-Western nation to do so in the eyes of Europeans and Americans, the Japanese government set out to build an empire in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. By the time the Japanese Empire had expanded into Taiwan (1895), Manchuria (1932), and other areas of the Pacific, intentional curricular design of the education system in Japan and its colonies, helped to foster and solidify Japan's national consciousness, which became a complex and nuanced consciousness based on Japanese and Western paradigms. The schooling systems of the Meiji Period offered government officials physical settings in which they could work to fashion a Japanese identity. With the popularization of a national language, Meiji officials

advanced their national building projects. By the 1890s, Japan's nation-building process had initiated stirrings of nationalism, or patriotism.

Spurred by imperial efforts to construct national systems (e.g., The Imperial Rescript on Education), Meiji subjects engaged with one another within the context of the nation-state. In 1890, Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo gave a speech to the Japanese Diet. In that speech, Yamagata declared, "There are two indispensable elements in the field of foreign policy: the armed forces first and education second. If the Japanese people are not imbued with patriotic spirit, the nation cannot be strong. Patriotism can be instilled only through education."⁴⁶ The Prime Minister's speech emphasized the importance of education on the development of a patriotic Japanese nation. With schooling at the center of Meiji efforts to instill patriotic fervor among the Japanese people, the Meiji government could prepare the complementary plans to its nation-building project: Japan's empire-building project.

⁴⁶Yamagata Aritomo, "1890 Speech to Japanese Diet" in James Huffman, *Modern Japan: A History Through Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 87.

Chapter 2. Re-constructing and Repurposing Memories in Taisho and Showa

In July 1912, the Meiji Emperor died, ending the Meiji Era and providing a shared cultural moment for the continued formation of a collective identity. As historian Elise Tipton notes, “[The emperor’s] death symbolized the end of an era of great accomplishments, putting Japan well on the way to ‘a rich country, strong army’.”¹ Indeed, Japan had effectively modernized into a nation-empire, extending to colonies in Taiwan, Korea, and elsewhere in Asia. Just as significant, however, were the hundreds of thousands of Japanese subjects who attended the emperor’s funeral procession. Their collective grief and participation highlighted the overall success of the Meiji government’s national-identity construction programs. In the succeeding Taisho Era 大賞時代 (1912-1916) and later Showa Era 昭和時代 (1916-1945) government authorities worked to maintain a national identity, expanding and rewriting educational programs to solidify a Japanese collective consciousness. As in the Meiji Era, these programs repurposed and invented traditions to instill a sense of nationalism among the people.²

¹Elise Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 92.

²For more information on Modern Japanese History, see Elise Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*; Information focused on geographic identities can be found in, David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

For information related to the Japanese Empire, see Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018); Fredrick R. Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of New Japan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); and Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). For more information on Japan’s Information related to education and identity-construction can be found in, Peter Cave, ‘Learning and Study in Elementary Education, 1900-1945’, in *Childhood, Education and Youth in Modern Japan* [<http://www.japanese-childhood.manchester.ac.uk/en/topics-2/elementary-education/studies/>, accessed May 10, 2020]; Peter Cave “Story, Song, and Ceremony: Shaping Dispositions in Japanese Elementary Schools during Taisho and Early Showa.” *Japan Forum* 28, no. 1 (March 2016): 9–31; Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua, “Boy Meets World: The Worldview of *Shōnen kurabu* in the 1930s” *Japan Forum* vol. 21 no. 8 2016, 95; Hyunjung Han, “Adventure Stories and Geographical Imagination in Japanese

Imperial construction of the Japanese Empire required physical and psychological indoctrination. To showcase imperial borders, government officials utilized official prints:

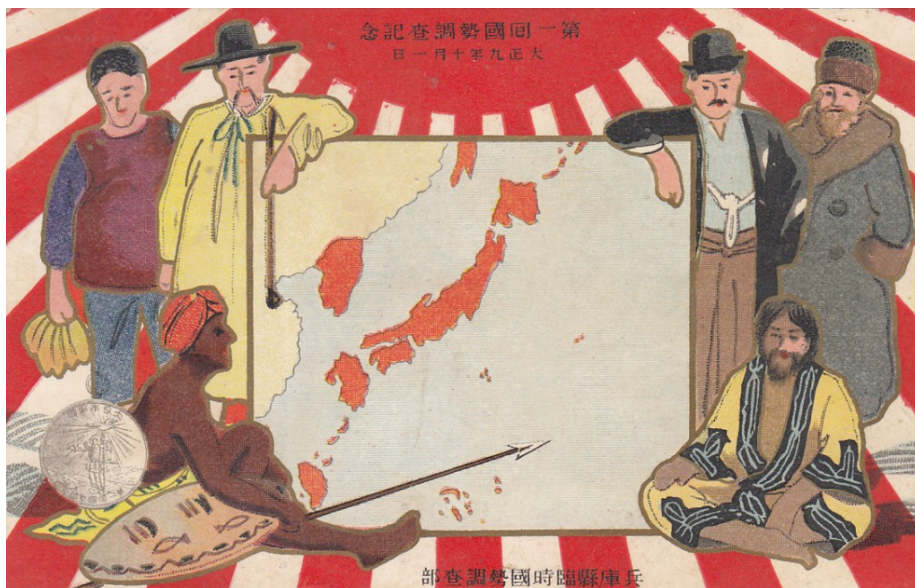


Image 2.1: Postcard Commemorating the First National Census, c. 1920s

This 1920s postcard (Image 2.1), for example, illustrated the entirety of the Japanese empire both cartographically and through an amalgam of imperial subjects nestled around the map. Clearly of different international origins, these imperial subjects represented the multi-national and multi-ethnic aspect of the empire

and Korean Children's Magazines" in Peter Cave (trans.) *Japan Forum* vol. 21 no. 8 2016., 100; Irina Holca, "Insularity and Imperialism: The Borders of the World in the Japanese and Taiwanese *Kokugo* Readers During the Taisho Era." *Japan Forum* 28 no. 16. (2016): 38-39. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2015.1077879>; Mark Lincicome, *Imperial Subjects as Global Citizens: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Education in Modern Japan* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 81-114; L. Halliday Piel, "The School Diary in Wartime Japan: Morale and Self-Discipline" *Modern Asian Studies* 53 no. 4 (2019): 1004-1037. doi:10.1017/S0026749X17000439; Joseph S.K. Wah, "The Imperialized Japanese Language Education in Colonial Taiwan and the Manchu State." *Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Paper Series* (2014): 9-10. https://harvard-yenching.org/sites/harvard-yenching.org/files/featurefiles/Joseph%20Siu%20Kam%20Wah_The%20Imperialized%20Japanese%20Language%20Education%20in%20Colonial%20Taiwan%20and%20the%20Manchu%20State.pdf.

(including Korea), commemorating the First National Census of 1930.³ By highlighting the multi-ethnic and physical reach of the empire, the postcard also demonstrated the physicality of Japanese imperial territories and of imperial subjects. From the Japanese metropole, or *naichi* 内地 (mainland), to the peripheries of the empire, called *gaichi* 外地, government directives organized identity-construction projects to incorporate the acquired subjects more directly into the Japanese Empire.

Between the Meiji Era 明治時代 and Shōwa Era 昭和時代, government-directed programs did not immediately produce a shared identity. Instead, competing visions of Japaneseness dispersed throughout the population. Government-directed reforms used both Western and Japanese ideology to define a modern Japanese identity in an attempt to mold Japanese self-perceptions and to spread an imperial identity across the Japanese nation and empire. According to historian Sayaka Chatani, Meiji officials believed that imperialism was a natural extension of nationalism and that the empire was a “powerful version of the nation-state.”⁴ Japanese bureaucrats often promoted assimilation policies that were meant to assimilate colonial peoples into the Japanese “Yamato race.”⁵ As Chatani notes, for example, “Japanese teachers in the countryside, whether in Japan or its colonies, made every effort to instill national consciousness by teaching children the ‘correct’

³“First National Census” from Paul D. Barclay, “Postcards as Primary Sources for Research on the Japanese Empire,” *East Asia Image Collection Blog*, Lafayette College, April, 24, 2015. <https://sites.lafayette.edu/eastasia/2015/04/24/postcards-as-primary-sources-for-research-on-the-japanese-empire/>.

⁴Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 4.

⁵Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire*, 4-13.

Japanese language and preaching to them about the ancient lineage and glory of the emperor.”⁶ Indeed, Japanese schooling models were implemented across the empire in order to teach proper Japanese morality and manners. The ways in which a “Japanese” identity manifested, however, differed among each of the colonies.

In the Japanese *naichi*, schools exposed Japanese children to national myths, histories, morals, and even a national language. Each of these components helped define a shared Japanese past and through these, and other government efforts, helped to spread the constructed Japanese identity. Meiji government-approved textbooks provided the basic foundations from which school officials could construct more nuanced curricula and educational experiences. In “Story, Song, and Ceremony: Shaping Dispositions in Japanese Elementary Schools During Taisho and Early Showa,” anthropologist Peter Cave demonstrates that the Japanese education system spent considerable time and effort in an attempt to nationalize the Japanese populace. Cave effectively shows, for example, that *gakugeikai* 学芸会 (school performances) offered students opportunities to act out the content from popular school textbooks. This, in turn, helped students personalize their lessons while giving them the opportunity to share them with the larger population.⁷ Participation in *gakugeikai*, thus, served as a ritualistic practice that assisted in the dissemination of Japanese identity.⁸

⁶Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire*, 8.

⁷Peter Cave “Story, Song, and Ceremony: Shaping Dispositions in Japanese Elementary Schools during Taisho and Early Showa.” *Japan Forum* 28, no. 1 (March 2016): 9–31.

⁸Peter Cave “Story, Song, and Ceremony,” 9–31.

Individuals, both in the populace at large and in the government sector, had to reconcile differences in localized and national identities. Cave's focus on the effectiveness of government-directed efforts revealed that Japanese nationalization faced challenges from within localities. His use of school textbooks, oral histories, and memoirs illustrated that children, while learning proper "Japaneseness," did not do so without their own personal interpretations and cultural products.⁹ Perhaps Cave's greatest contribution to scholarship on school-based identity-building in Japan was his focus on the progressive structure of Japanese education. The term progressive, in Cave's usage, referred to educational methodology best practices—specifically, he mentions that Japanese school systems in the Taisho and early Showa periods evolved on progressive trajectories by incorporating the need for "artistic sensibility and being."¹⁰ Nonetheless, no matter the pedagogical effectiveness of these methodologies, they were used entirely to construct common pasts, memories, and, therefore, identities among the Japanese people.

In the *naichi*, Japanese schoolchildren acted out scenes from national myths, learned their national history, and studied language, mathematics, and arts. The government also published school textbooks, which were divided into three types: (1) reading, (2) writing, and (3) composition¹¹. Of these, the Japanese reading textbooks became central in the formation of a Japanese identity. Anthropologist Peter Cave writes, "The Japanese readers [reading-focused textbooks] were perhaps

⁹Peter Cave "Story, Song, and Ceremony," 9–31.

¹⁰Peter Cave "Story, Song, and Ceremony," 25.

¹¹Peter Cave, 'Learning and Study in Elementary Education, 1900-1945', in *Childhood, Education and Youth in Modern Japan* [<http://www.japanese-childhood.manchester.ac.uk/en/topics-2/elementary-education/studies/>, accessed May 10, 2020].

the most important of all school textbooks, containing a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional texts that were designed to broaden children's knowledge, as well as inculcate morality and patriotism."¹² Japanese patriotism and morality focused on teaching students how to act Japanese. For example, textbooks, songs, and plays revered the heroes of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). In one example, provided by Peter Cave, students engaged in reverence of General Nogi Maresuke, who was a commander of the Japanese army that laid siege to Port Arthur.¹³ General Maresuke and others, such as Commander Hirose Takeo, were memorialized and deified in popular school songs. Commander Hirose's song, *Hirose chūsa* 廣瀬中佐, offered students patriotic images of sacrifice and commitment to the empire:

The sound of roaring cannons, flying shells.
 Upon the deck awash with wild waves,
 Piercing the darkness, the commander's cry.
 'Sugino, where are you, Sugino?'
 Three times the ship he searches up and down,
 He calls, no answer; searches, not a sign.
 Remorselessly they sink amid the waves,
 Enemy shells now thick and fast around.
 At last the commander moves into the boat,
 A shell comes flying, suddenly he's gone,
 Though by Port Arthur deep the bitterness,
 Hirose's heroic martial fame lives on.¹⁴

This short piece taught students that sacrifice to the empire was noble, and that through such heroic sacrifices, a person's memory would live on as part of the empire's patriotic historic memories. This is similar to national histories in the United States, where children are taught patriotic songs of past heroes. Take for

¹²Peter Cave, 'Learning and Study in Elementary Education, 1900-1945.'

¹³Peter Cave "Story, Song, and Ceremony," 15.

¹⁴*Hirose chūsa* "Commander Chūsa's Song" [song lyrics] as cited in Peter Cave "Story, Song, and Ceremony," 15-17.

example, the following excerpts from the 1831 “America, My Country Tis of Thee” by Samuel Francis Smith:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!

Our fathers' God to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King!¹⁵

As with “America, My Country Tis of Thee,” *Hirose chūsa* memorialized the heroic actions taken by the patriotic participants of the Sino-Japanese War with the expressed purpose of instilling a particular vision of the past.

As historian Fredrick Dickinson observes, “Just as these nineteenth-century innovations were critical in the transformation from a feudal state to a modern nation-state, the education initiatives of the Hara administration [Prime Minister from 1918-1921] were pivotal in moving Japan from nineteenth-century monarchy to a twentieth-century mass society.”¹⁶ Indeed, Taisho Era educational reforms helped to continue Meiji policies that helped to develop into a national

¹⁵Samuel Francis Smith, “America, My Country Tis of Thee” [song lyrics]. *Wikipedia*, last modified October 19, 2019, [http://www0.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/My_country_%27tis_of_thee_\(Traditional\)](http://www0.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/My_country_%27tis_of_thee_(Traditional))

¹⁶Fredrick R. Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of New Japan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 48.

consciousness. Moreover, these reforms were directed towards the development of a moral, Japanese character across the empire.

During the Taisho and Showa Periods, the Japanese government sought to incorporate its growing territory into its imperial project. As part of their integration procedures, the Japanese government built Japanese schools in their new territories to bring civilization to the native populations. Images 2.2 through 2.5 (below), taken from a 1921 Fox News story called, “Wildmen of Formosa,” for example, illustrate Japanese attempts to bring their form of civilization to the *gaichi* of the empire. Notably, “Wildmen of Formosa” served to highlight Japan’s civilizing mission in Taiwan to Western audiences:



Image 2.2



Image 2.3



Image 2.4



Image 2.5

Image 2.2 and 2.3 show the transition between a native, and uncivilized Formosan (Taiwanese) subject of the Japanese Empire, to a Japanese-perceived civilized subject (note the Western, and therefore, Imperial Era Japanese look). Images 2.4

and 2.5 more closely relate to Japanese schooling efforts. Both images depict native Taiwanese in traditional Japanese clothing, while they are engaged in nineteenth and twentieth-century Japanese schooling procedures.¹⁷ In the *gaichi*, Japanese subjects were introduced to Japanese forms of identity through the implementation and use of these Japanese educational practices. School textbooks, like the *kokumin tokumon* 国民徳門 (national readers) used between 1913 and 1923, helped to instill a complementary identity in the *gaichi* that was notably different from the identity in the *naichi*.

In “Insularity and Imperialism: The Borders of the World in the Japanese and Taiwanese *Kokugo* Readers During the Taisho Era,” Irina Holca demonstrates that the mainland and peripheral Japanese identities constructed during the Imperial Period were purposefully designed along similar, but not identical, lines. According to Holca, the national readers found in Taiwan differed from the *kokugo tokuhon* 国語読本 (national language readers) found in the Japanese mainland. These varying visions of identity were conceived to make their respective readers into national subjects. In mainland Japan, readers were inducted into a Japanese identity that saw itself as the pinnacle of civilization, while the outer lying territories—such as Taiwan—were subjected to lesser forms of that identity. As Holca points out:

The assimilation policies...permitted intermarriage between Japanese and Taiwanese, and also allowed Taiwanese to hold office in the administration of the island, but, at the same time, in their attempt to

¹⁷Fox News, “Wild Men of Formosa--outtakes” Fox News. December 1921, <https://mirc.sc.edu/islandora/object/usc%3A53190>

‘civilise’ an ‘uncivilised’ [*sic.*] society, they considered Taiwan inferior....¹⁸

Indeed, Japan’s self-perceptions had shifted greatly since the Meiji Restoration. While before the Meiji Restoration, East Asian international order centered on China’s prominence, Japan’s ascendancy in East Asia and its victory over China convinced the Japanese that they had replaced China as the center of the world.¹⁹ This new self-perception of Japanese power drove territorial educational efforts and despite their civilizing mission, Japan, as Holca writes, “[C]onsidered Taiwan inferior, and bestowed only so much knowledge upon the Taiwanese as was necessary to make them loyal ‘subjects’, without running the risk of their revolting against their ‘masters’.”²⁰ Holca’s analysis compares the Taiwanese and Japanese versions of these readers and identified several differences between the two texts. While these changes included small cosmetic changes (e.g., the use of a *sakura* blossom on the Japanese version and a tropical flower in the Taiwanese version), it also included significant content changes that reflected the differences in the prescribed identities. In the same manner found in Images 2.4 and 2.5, Japanese imperial government officials focused on indoctrinating the Taiwanese people into the Japanese Empire, which would allow them to build a diversified, multiethnic empire under Japanese rule. Indeed, according to historian Joseph Siu Kam Wah:

As Japan was getting ambitious in transforming Taiwan into a base to expand to the South, the Taiwan government-general began to establish a large variety of educational and propaganda organizations

¹⁸Irina Holca, “Insularity and Imperialism: The Borders of the World in the Japanese and Taiwanese *Kokugo* Readers During the Taisho Era.” *Japan Forum* 28 no. 16. (2016): 38-39.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2015.1077879>

¹⁹For more on the international histories of East Asia see Warren J. Cohen, *East Asia at the Center*

²⁰Irina Holca, “Insularity and Imperialism, 32-73.

like Schools for Popularizing the National (Japanese) Language (*kokugo fukyūkai*), the National (Japanese) Language Training Schools (*kokugo kōshūjo*), Youngsters' Associations (*seinen dan*) and Citizenship Training Schools (*kōmin kōshūjo*) to promote the Japanese language and the “Spirit of Imperial Empire” (*kōkoku seishin*) so as to accelerate the assimilation of the Taiwanese in the 1930s.²¹

School books like the *kokumin tokumon* purposefully taught lessons, through Japanese, that helped to prescribe a Japanese identity on the native population. As cited in Holca’s article, one excerpt from the *kokumin tokumon* (Image 2.6) illustrates a Taiwanese child meeting their Japanese teacher outside of the school.²²



Image 2.6

²¹Joseph S.K. Wah, “The Imperialized Japanese Language Education in Colonial Taiwan and the Manchu State.” *Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Paper Series* (2014): 9-10. <https://harvard-yenching.org/sites/harvard-yenching.org/files/featurefiles/Joseph%20Siu%20Kam%20Wah%20The%20Imperialized%20Japanese%20Language%20Education%20in%20Colonial%20Taiwan%20and%20the%20Manchu%20State.pdf>

²²Irina Holca, “Insularity and Imperialism,” 32-50.

Image 2.6 highlighted the implementation of Japanese-styled education during the imperial period.²³ Taiwanese students were forced to wear Japanese school uniforms and to learn Japanese *kokugo*. By introducing and inculcating Japanese customs in the *gaichi* schools, Japanese government officials were attempting to indoctrinate local populations into the Japanese empire.

By the Shōwa Era (1926-1989), the Japanese government had mobilized all forms of media and schooling to propel ideas of national identity and to instill pride in the Japanese Empire. The *Kokutai no hongii*, for example, illustrated Shōwa officials' ideas of an evolutionary trajectory of Japan after the Meiji Era. According to the text:

Our country is established with the emperor, who is a descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami, as its center, as our ancestors as well as we ourselves constantly have been held in the emperor the fountainhead of her life and activities. For this reason, to serve the emperor and to receive the emperor's great august will as our own is the rationale of making our historical "life" live in the present; and on this is based the morality of the people.²⁴

Here, the direct connection between Japan's ancient past and modern future is, again, evident. The *Kokutai* propagated the idea that Japan's imperial lineage was directly connected to the inception of Japan (from the origin myths of Amaterasu, Izanami, and Izanagi in the *Kojiki* 古事記 and elsewhere). Furthermore, it promoted

²³ Image 6 changed to include hiragana and Kanji reads: 「私の名前はリン仁といひます。年はいくすですか。はちです。何年生ですか。」 Translation: Rin: "My name is Rin Ajin. How old are you?" Response: I am eight years old. Rin: "What year in school are you?..." This style of learning in Japanese reading textbooks helped teach standard Japanese to Japan's imperial subjects. Image 2.6 is analyzed in Holca (see. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2015.1077879>).

²⁴"Kokutai no hongii" (Fundamentals of our National Polity) 1937. *Asia For Educators Primary Source Document with Questions DBQ*, Accessed May 10, 2020. 3-4. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/kokutai.pdf>

an idea of Japanese “morality” which traced back along that same lineage. This morality complex became a powerful tool of indoctrination in Japanese schools. Peter Cave’s article demonstrated that song, ritual, and ceremony played an important role in indoctrinating young Japanese to these ideas. Mark Ravina’s cosmopolitan chauvinism and radical nostalgia are also apparent in this section of the text.²⁵ The lineage of the emperor calls back to Ancient Japan, while the following excerpt shows the modernization of Japan along a Western paradigm:

Loyalty means to revere the emperor as [our] and to follow him implicitly. By implicit obedience is meant casting ourselves aside and serving the emperor intently. To walk this Way of loyalty is the sole Way in which we subjects may “live” and the fountainhead of all energy. Hence, offering our lives for the sake of the emperor does not mean so-called self-sacrifice but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the *people of a state* (emphasis mine).²⁶

The *Kokutai* is clear in its intent to define Japan as a state—a nation-state—made up of Japanese subjects that are obliged to do the emperor’s bidding. This rhetoric served to convince the populace and military personnel to sacrifice their lives in the name of the emperor.

²⁵Mark Ravina’s *To Stand With The Nations of the World: Japan’s Meiji Restoration in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Introduction and chap. 1. Kindle.

²⁶“Kokutai no hongii,” 4.

During the Pacific War (1931-1945), Japan continued to expand its imperial borders and spread its ideology throughout the empire. In *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, historian John Dower highlights the importance of imperial indoctrination in producing a national sentiment. As cited in *War Without Mercy*, the Japanese and American governments utilized media propaganda to indoctrinate the populace.²⁷ Image 2.7, titled “People of the Southern Region,” highlighted Japanese self-perceptions of racial superiority, which had driven their desire for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere:²⁸



Image 2.7: “People of the Southern Region”

The image shows an Indonesian native shaking the hand of a Japanese official, which represented Japan’s superiority over the Indonesian. According to John Dower, the

²⁷John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 180-200.

²⁸Image presented in, Chor Boon Goh, “Learning History Through Political Cartoons,” *Teaching and Learning* vol. 9 no. 1., 62. accessed May 10, 2020.

<https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/1829/1/TL-9-1-60.pdf>

hand shake represented a patriarchal figure—God-like—shaking the hand of those below him.²⁹ In the background, a European imperialist can be seen fleeing the area. The image revealed several self-perceptions of Japanese superiority. First, the Japanese saw themselves as the protectors of East Asia. By showing the Dutch fleeing, the Japanese were noting that they were the true harbingers of civilization to the rest of Asia. They envisioned themselves as the saviors bringing the light to replace the darkness of Western imperialists.³⁰ Another feature of the image is the skin-tone of the Japanese official. Notice how it is lighter than the South Asian native—a sign of racial pureness or cleanliness. Indeed, the Japanese Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere noted that the Japanese “Yamato” race should and would be the center of civilization, both in the East and abroad. As Dower notes, “The ‘southern person,’ obviously a manual laborer, is half-naked and implicitly half-civilized. Not only is his inferior ‘proper place’ as a race, nation, and culture absolutely clear, but also is his subordinate role in the division of labor within the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.”³¹ Nonetheless, the significance of Japan’s multi-ethnic empire, despite racial categorization, worked to instill a shared perception against their enemies in the Western world:

²⁹John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 200.

³⁰John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 200.

³¹John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 200.



Image 2.8 “India! Now is the Time to Rise!!”³²

Image 2.8. shows a political cartoon from *The Osaka Puck*, a Japanese newspaper, as it called out for India to rebel against its British occupiers. The image depicted John Bull, a symbol of the British Empire, atop its subjugated people in India. Coming from the East, the Japanese march ahead with their imperial sword with the Japanese flag declaring, “Greater East Asian Holy War.”³³ As Dower notes, the Japanese bayonet represented Japanese purity against the demonic British.³⁴ The

³² The Japanese in this image is read from left to right. It reads, “India! Now is the Time to Rise!!” The よ (yo) character represents an exclamatory grammar structure, hence the translation of “India!” as opposed to “India.”; Image presented in, Chor Boon Goh, “Learning History Through Political Cartoons,” *Teaching and Learning* vol. 9 no. 1., 63. accessed May 10, 2020. <https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/1829/1/TL-9-1-60.pdf>

³³For example, the writing on the Japanese flag probably reads (in hiragana) だいにっぽんせいせん “or (in Kanji-Hiragana) “大日本聖戰,” meaning Greater East Asian Holy War.

³⁴John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 196.

Japanese utilized similar imagery across East Asia to instill a common sense of identity (via a common enemy) across their growing empire.

For Japanese imperial visions to become reality, however, government officials needed to further construct collective memories. This led to specific government programs, which were designed to transform the *gaichi* into a more coherently uniform culture of empire. Both spatially and metaphysically, Japanese collective identities needed some form of relation between the metaphysics of collective identities and the physical realm of imperial territories. In *Social Justice and the City* geographer David Harvey conceptualizes this dichotomy with an extension of sorts to C. Wright Mills' "sociological imagination." According to Harvey, "It is useful to contrast with this 'sociological imagination' the rather more diffuse quality which I have called 'spatial consciousness' or the 'geographical imagination.' This imagination enables the individual to recognize the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate the spaces he sees around him, and to recognize how transactions between individuals and organizations are affected by the space that separates them."³⁵ While Harvey is directly concerned with these themes in the conceptualization and actualization of cities, as historian Hyunjung Han has explained, the "geographical imagination" also extends to the more general concepts of self-identity within group and national settings. As Han writes, "This broader type of geographical imagination enables individuals, social groups, and even nations to situate themselves in the world and contributes to their sense of

³⁵David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 22-28.

identity.”³⁶ Within this context, the development of the Japanese Empire required similar geographical identity indoctrination. To elicit sentiments of the empire as one political unit, this 1930 commemorative postcard (Image 2.9) placed the Japanese *naichi* at the approximate center of the empire with all its territories and acquisitions highlighted in matching colors:

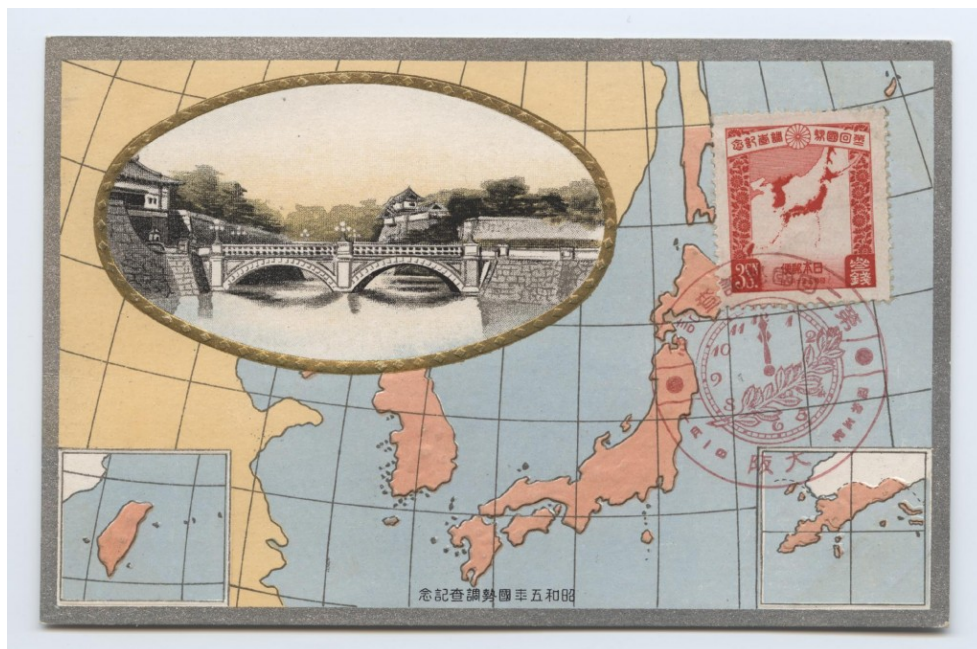


Image 2.9

The picture set over China served a dual purpose.³⁷ First, it incorporated further physical representations of Japaneseness by depicting Japanese architecture and progress. Second, the in-lay served to physically obscure China, furthering the emphasis on Japan’s centrality. With this process of unification, came more indoctrination. Historian Sayaka Chatani writes, “The *kōminka* policies implemented

³⁶Hyunjung Han, “Adventure Stories and Geographical Imagination in Japanese and Korean Children’s Magazines” in Peter Cave (trans.) *Japan Forum* vol. 21 no. 8 2016., 100.

³⁷“Commemorative Postcard” from Paul D. Barclay, “Postcards as Primary Sources for Research on the Japanese Empire,” *East Asia Image Collection Blog*, Lafayette College, April, 24, 2015. <https://sites.lafayette.edu/eastasia/2015/04/24/postcards-as-primary-sources-for-research-on-the-japanese-empire/>.

in Taiwan and Korea between 1875-1945, often translated as ‘imperialization’ or ‘imperial subjectification’ policy, sought to achieve racial and ethnic reprogramming, or ‘Japanization.’³⁸ These efforts were continuations of identity-construction processes of the late Meiji and Taisho Eras. In each of Japan’s colonies, efforts were underway in an attempt to instill a sense of “nationness”—in this case “empireness”—aligned with Japanese ideology and within a Japanese space.³⁹

The development of shared space took place as physical geographic representations (as above) or within literary modes. Hyunjung Han’s analysis, for example, examines Harvey’s geographical imagination within the context of adventure stories. According to Han, “Adventure stories are one of the main literary genres that are used to tell children of unknown or imaginary spaces and places....They are stories that involve exciting and dangerous events in situations removed from the everyday.”⁴⁰ Adventure stories of the Japanese Empire were no different in this respect. Korean and Japanese writers of the imperial era engaged in the construction of geographic, and therefore, collective identities. As Han explained, individual motivations resulted in stories with different settings and intended audiences. For Korean writers concerned with Korean identity, these stories often served as an alternative to the imperial gaze, while for Japanese writers, they served to solidify Japan’s imperial identities.⁴¹

³⁸Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire*, 6.

³⁹Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire*, 6 and 79-80.

⁴⁰Hyunjung Han, “Adventure Stories and Geographical Imagination,” 100.

⁴¹Hyunjung Han, “Adventure Stories and Geographical Imagination,” 116-117.

According to Historian Prasenjit Duara, for example, “Manchukuo appears as a place of paradoxes, where it becomes difficult to disentangle imperialism from nationalism, modernity from tradition, frontier from heartland, and ideals of transcendence from ideologies of boundedness.”⁴² Indeed, Manchukuo was, at once, a puppet state and as an experiment in nation-building. It served as a physical space in which the Japanese elites could construct empire. According to Duara, this perceived obligation stemmed from self-perceived notions of Pan-Asianism, a common culture shared by East Asian societies. Even within the territory of what is now called Japan, the Japanese slowly encroached on the frontier, incorporating and displacing the indigenous peoples in the process. Duara argues that Manchukuo served as an experiential site for Japanese imperial authorities to engage in nation-building and modernization along Japanese paradigms.

The establishment and construction of a Japanese identity in the metropole and among the colonies continued well beyond the late Taisho and early Showa Eras. In Japan’s wartime schools, for example, lessons centered on national supremacy and Japanese superiority. As described by L. Halliday Piel, in “The School Diary in Wartime Japan: Morale and Self-Discipline,” Japan’s wartime education system evolved to facilitate the complete indoctrination of Japanese citizens into the war effort. Teachers utilized an older, progressive education method, the *seikatsu tsuzurikata* (daily life writing), to develop a student’s disposition and consciousness. As was true throughout the Imperial Period, schools cultivated an idea of Japanese

⁴²Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 1.

morality and inscribed the Japanese moral code on the young population. During the Taisho and Early Showa Eras, students learned morality and Japaneseness from textbooks, song, and play, and these continued throughout the war. As cited in Piel, students were taught to discuss their feelings and emotions in an effort to instill a Japanese morality.⁴³ According to historian Mark Lincicome, the aggressive expansionist agenda characteristic of the Showa wartime period did not break completely with, as Fredrick Dickinson has described, the internationalization-focused Taisho and early Showa periods. To characterize this phenomenon, Lincicome coined the phrase “Japanese Imperial Internationalism”—the title of his third chapter.⁴⁴

Japanese national, and indeed imperial, memory construction extended far beyond traditional school curricula. Across the empire, popular publications and other print media instilled a sense of identity among readers. As was the case with school textbooks and other educational resources, these sectors of print culture worked to shape perceptions of self and nation-empire and, therefore, helped to construct a common identity. Historian Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua, for example, previously demonstrated the power of non-school print culture through an analysis of *Shōnen kurabu* 少年倶楽部—a “Boy’s Club” monthly magazine. According to Chua, children’s magazines often interwove complex narratives that depicted cultural (or national) others in both positive and negative ways. Chua writes,

⁴³L. Halliday Piel, “The School Diary in Wartime Japan: Morale and Self-Discipline” *Modern Asian Studies* 53 no. 4 (2019): 1004-1037. doi:10.1017/S0026749X17000439

⁴⁴Mark Lincicome, *Imperial Subjects as Global Citizens: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Education in Modern Japan* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 81-114.

“Various characteristics were introduced to show either their evil features or their [Chinese] incompetence and cowardice. Fu Manchu moustaches suggested their sinister untrustworthiness....However, representation of all Chinese as enemies was incompatible with designs for peaceful cooperation between ethnic groups in East Asia under Japanese leadership (or domination).”⁴⁵ Indeed, Japanese plans for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere led to direct changes in these children’s magazines. Typically, as Chua, notes, these changes often showed colonized peoples as “weak resisters and enlightened ‘good citizens’ who would accept Japanese rule.”⁴⁶ As Chua explains, racial stereotyping and typecasting extended beyond the physical boundaries of the Japanese Empire. Chua writes, “[The] black stereotype flourished in the pages of *Shōnen kurabu*. Through this representation, it was possible to reinforce a Japanese identity as a part of advanced “white civilization”.⁴⁷ The Japanese, therefore, used these magazines as physical sites in which to parse out racial divisions within the Japanese empire.⁴⁸

In Kenzaburō Ōe’s “Prize Stock,” a short story about the clash of two cultures written after the war, Japanese children came into contact with an African-American soldier whose plane has crashed near their village. From this short story, Japanese perceptions of racial others, as Chua described, become strikingly clear. The children were fascinated by the man’s physical appearance, and those living in the

⁴⁵Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua, “Boy Meets World: The Worldview of *Shōnen kurabu* in the 1930s” *Japan Forum* vol. 21 no. 8 2016, 95.

⁴⁶Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua, “Boy Meets World,” 95.

⁴⁷Karl Ian Uy Cheng Chua, “Boy Meets World,” 94.

⁴⁸Chua’s reference serves to connect racial hierarchies in the Japanese Empire with those in the western world, for example the United States.

village decided to treat him as an animal. The narrator and his elders discussed their plans for their captured enemy:

‘What are you going to do with him?’ ‘Until we know what the town thinks, rear him.’ ‘Rear him? Like an animal? ‘He’s the same as an animal,’ my father said gravely. ‘He stinks like an ox....’ We were going to rear the black soldier. I hugged myself with both arms, I wanted to throw off my clothes and shout—we were going to rear the black soldier, like an animal!⁴⁹

The narrator and his family’s decision to treat the soldier like an animal showcased the result of Japanese imperial indoctrination and the subsequent Japanese wartime racial mindset. They saw non-Asians, and especially non-Japanese, as something lesser than themselves. Furthermore, “Prize Stock’s” title conveys the perception of the Japanese characters. The Japanese considered their captured enemy to be their prized stock—their prized *animal*. Japanese schooling and educational indoctrination instilled ideas of racial superiority, and led to Japan’s brutal treatment of their enemies across the warfront. From Japanese schooling, Japanese children grew to consider themselves better than other racial groups, so much so that they began to dehumanize their enemies.

Mark Ravina’s frameworks of radical nostalgia and cosmopolitan chauvinism provided an excellent unit of analysis in which to explore Imperial Japan’s efforts to develop a nation of Japanese citizens with Japanese morals and values.⁵⁰

Furthermore, taken in conjunction with David Harvey’s geographical imagination, Japanese identity construction begins to unfold into a complex web of government-

⁴⁹Kenzaburō Ōe, “Prize Stock” in Nathan, John (trans.) *Teach Us To Outgrow Our Madness* (New York: Grove Inc, 1969), 126-127.

⁵⁰Mark Ravina’s *To Stand With The Nations of the World*. Introduction and chap 1. Kindle.

directed efforts to indoctrinate a citizenry of subjects.⁵¹ To accomplish this goal, Japanese officials and school administrators constructed national curricula that taught Japanese morality and a shared consciousness. These methods were, overall, productive in producing a collective identity. As the imperial period progressed, the Japanese people became convinced of their racial superiority and destiny to unify Asia under the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. While they wanted to liberate East Asian people from Western imperialism, their racial theories placed even other East Asians in subordinate positions, thus, leaving them susceptible to Japan's dreams of imperial design. By the end of the war, Japan's imperial dreams had been crushed by their defeat against the United States. In the aftermath, the Japanese government immediately re-constructed their histories to highlight Japanese strength and to erase, as much as possible, the transgressions of their wartime past. The resulting textbook controversies and conflicts between Japan, China, and Korea over wartime atrocities have continued into the present, resulting in sustained tensions in East Asia.

⁵¹David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, 22-28.

Epilogue. "Passing the Baton"

Government policies that set out to construct a national identity began in the Meiji Period, but did not immediately instill a shared historical memory for the people of Japan and, later, its colonies. The fruits of government-directed projects took decades to emerge and resulted from a complex web of intermingling identities among politicians, scholars, the common people, and, later, colonial subjects.

Nevertheless, the continued standardization of government policies facilitated the indoctrination of the Japanese people. Widespread support for Japan's victories in the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-1895, and beliefs in Japan's ascension over China on the world stage represented perceptions of an ethnic Japanese superiority. Over time, the Japanese people began to believe they were superior to other Asians and the Western barbarians.

Japanese educational systems and practices, beyond formal schooling, furthered the national empire-building process both in the *naichi* and the *gaichi*. On the mainland, Meiji Era schools grew and evolved throughout the imperial period. School curricula focused on teaching a common Japanese language and morality. In the Taisho and Showa Eras, Japanese morality grew to include a superiority complex over non-Japanese ideologies.

The results of Japan's nation-building, and indeed empire-building, project were perhaps best realized in the 2600th-anniversary celebration of the Japanese Empire's founding. At the height of the Fifteen Year War, in 1940, Japanese citizen-subjects celebrated the founding of their empire with a great deal of pomp and circumstance. As historian Kenneth Ruoff demonstrated in *Imperial Japan at its*

Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary, Japanese imperial subjects (Japanese and non-Japanese) participated in the anniversary's festivities. Across the country, department stores, shrines, and school prepared for the 2600th anniversary of Japanese unbroken imperial lineage.¹ The anniversary celebrations, too, served as reinforcement of Japanese cultural superiority.

According to the Japanese, the anniversary could be traced back to an exact date: February 11, 660 BC. As Ruoff noted, this predated both Western and Chinese contact with Japan, and, therefore, highlighted Japan's unique and ancient history.²

By the 1940s, Japanese school students and their parents had been participating in government-constructed and repurposed rituals for about eight decades. For example, three generations were required to and experienced required memorization of the Imperial Rescript on Education (See Chapter 1).³ By that time, several generations had progressed through the national school system. This meant that students were often receiving national indoctrination at school in a similar way their parents had. This only served to strengthen national perceptions and the solidification of a shared consciousness and history.

In the peripheries of empire, Japanese schooling systems, too, focused on "Japanifying" local populations. Over time, Japanese leaders hoped to establish a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, where the Japanese served as the protector-leaders of all East Asia. Though the Japanese believed in their racial

¹Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

²Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith*, 3.

³Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith*, 3.

superiority over all Asians, Japanese officials succeeded in their overall efforts to indoctrinate their colonial subjects into their empire. As Sayaka Chatani notes, “[Many] testimonies in both Taiwan and Korea give evidence of the widespread desire among youth to become volunteer soldiers.”⁴ Japan’s goal to assimilate (*dōka* 同化) their colonial subjects into the empire required full scale indoctrination approached.⁵ Similar to the image depicted in Chapter 1 (Image 1.3), Image 3.1 demonstrated how Japanese propaganda continued to depict colonization in a symbiotic light:



Image 3.1

⁴Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 2.

⁵Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire*, 1-2.

This February 1940 image depicts children from Japan, China, and Manchukuo as friends and comrades. In the background, several other children, representing other Japanese imperial possessions, cheer for continued friendship between the nations of empire.⁶ Within the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, all people of Asian heritage were to coexist in prosperity under Japanese rule.

To incorporate peoples of the *gaichi* more fully into the empire, local offices, youth groups, and the like worked in conjunction with schools to create a whole-society approach in the national empire-construction project. This mass mobilization of youth further indoctrinated the populace and strengthened the empire's growing mass society. By the outbreak of World War II, Japanese citizen-subjects engaged in volunteer and compulsory activities to support the war effort.

As historian Simon Partner discussed:

In August 1937, the government launched a 'National Spiritual Mobilization Campaign,' which continued under varied auspices throughout the war years. This campaign was primarily concerned with bringing the many independent patriotic organizations already in existence in Japan under a single umbrella, and providing guidance from the center.⁷

Programs to support the war efforts were continually expanded as the war required more and more capital. Partner, importantly, noted that Japanese subjects sometimes volunteered out of loyalty to the nation, while in other cases, they did so

⁶Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith*, 110-111 (middle images).; Image as presented in Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 110-112 (middle images).

⁷ Ryuta Itaguchi, "*Higashi Ajia no kioku no ba' ni mukete: Chosen-shi kara no shiten*" 「<東アジアの記憶の場>に向けて—朝鮮史からの視点」 *Journal of Historical Studies / Rekishigaku Kenkyu* 「歴史学研究」. Jun2010, Issue 867, 57-67. Translated by Andrew Mills.

out of coercion or necessity. However, acts of loyalty or desperation did not necessarily reflect a failure of Japanese national-building processes. Conflicting, and often opposing, national identities can exist within the same geographic realm.

Using Mark Ravina’s frameworks of radical nostalgia and cosmopolitan chauvinism, David Harvey’s geographical imagination, and Foucault’s panopticon as a form of power and control, the Japanese imperial period emerges as a complex machine of moving parts—some in conjunction, others in opposition—that government officials, intellectuals, elites, and even individuals used for their own purposes.

In 2010, Itaguchi Ryuta published “*Higashi Ajia no kioku no ba*” ni mukete: *Chosen-shi kara no shiten* 「<東アジアの記憶の場>に向けて—朝鮮史からの視点」, an article focused on discussing the legacy of memories of the Asian Pacific War from a Korean perspective. The article, which can be translated as “East Asian Memory Field – Perspectives from Korea” appeared in The Historical Science Society of Japan’s *Rekishi gaku kenkyū* 歴史学研究 (Journal of Historical Studies). Itaguchi’s analysis of memory fields in Japan critically dissects Pierre Nora’s “*Lieux de memoire*”—sites of memory—by highlighting Nora’s neglect of colonial narratives within the frameworks of collective historical memories. Instead, Itaguchi offers a transnational approach to *Lieux de memoire*, which takes power dynamics between

metropole and colony and conflicting memories of the past into play.⁸ According to

Itaguchi:

Fifty years after the war, Japan had a heated debate over history, while in South Korea programs in “past liquidation” expanded. The investigations progressed rapidly...The symbolic nature of the historical retrial was the speaking out of victims such as the ‘comfort women.’Various groups, such as the *Tsukurukai* were also born out of such movements. This all led to a “memory conflict” across borders. Such a reality demanded an explanation of ‘a place in the memory in East Asia.’⁹

Higuchi’s “memory conflict” illustrated the many challenges to Postwar memory across East Asia.

After World War II, a ruined Japan sat under the watchful gaze of an American-led, Allied occupation force. Left decimated by firebombing and the use of two nuclear bombs, Japan needed physical reconstruction. So too, did the Japanese people. As the result of government-led memory projects, the Japanese subjects had been developing an identity since the 1800s. Conflicting visions and memories flourished, but by the 1930s

⁸Ryuta Itaguchi, “*Higashi Ajia no kioku no ba’ ni mukete: Chosen-shi kara no shiten*” 「＜東アジアの記憶の場＞に向けて－朝鮮史からの視点」 abstract. *Journal of Historical Studies / Rekishigaku Kenkyu* 「歴史学研究」. Jun2010, Issue 867, 57-67.

⁹Translated from: 「戦後 50 年」を前後して日本では歴史をめぐって議論が沸騰し、また民主化後の韓国において 1990 年代後半以降、「過去清算」に関わる諸事業が急速に展開し、台湾でも 2.28 事件等をめぐる真相究明が急速に進んだ。そうした歴史の再審に関わって象徴的だったのは、日本軍「慰安婦」制度の被害者が声を上げはじめたことであった。沈黙を破って語られはじめたことばが契機となって、政府の歴史をめぐる取り組みや、歴史教科書のような公式的な記憶の領域をも揺り動かした。「つくる会」をはじめとする諸団体もそうした動きに対する反動として生まれてきたものである。そこから、「記憶の抗争」とでもいうべき状況が国境も越えて生まれた 38)。こうした現実が、〈東アジアの記憶の場〉の検討を要請したのである。Ryuta Itaguchi, “*Higashi Ajia no kioku no ba’ ni mukete: Chosen-shi kara no shiten*” 「＜東アジアの記憶の場＞に向けて－朝鮮史からの視点」 *Journal of Historical Studies/Rekishigaku Kenkyu* 「歴史学研究」. Jun2010, Issue 867, 57-67. Translated by Andrew Mills.

and 1940s, the Japanese people were convinced of their racial superiority. When Japan surrendered in August 1945, their collective perceptions proved wrong. Therefore, in the immediate wake of the war, the Japanese people struggled forward while trying to redefine their collective identity. Under the Allied Occupation and the newly instituted government, the Japanese people created a new collective consciousness dedicated to international peace. As Carol Gluck writes, “Middle school boys were instantaneously transformed from patriotic ‘military youth’ to enthusiastic ‘democratic youth....’¹⁰ The atrocities committed in the name of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and the Great Japanese Empire were pushed aside to emphasize more positive histories, similar to the history described by Vice Principal Junichi.

¹⁰Carol Gluck, “The ‘End’ of the Postwar: Japan at the turn of the Millennium” in Jeffery Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 292.

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