MAKING JAPANESE HERITAGE

Edited by Christoph Brumann and Rupert Cox

Making Japanese Heritage

This book examines the making of Japanese heritage, investigating the ways in which particular objects, practices and institutions are ascribed public recognition and political significance. Through detailed ethnographic and historical case studies, it analyses the social, economic, and even global dimensions of cultural heritage. It shows how claims to heritage status in Japan stress different material qualities of objects, places and people – based upon their ages, originality and usage.

Following on an introduction that thoroughly assesses the field, the ethnographic and historiographic cases address such things as geisha; *nô* masks; the tea ceremony; urban architecture; automata; a utopian commune and the sites of Mitsubishi company history. They examine how their heritage value is made and re-made and show how the heritage industry adds values to existing assets such as sacredness, urban charm or architectural and ethnic distinctiveness.

Making Japanese Heritage questions the interpretation of heritage as an enduring expression of social relations, aesthetic values and authenticity which, once conferred, undergoes no subsequent change, and standard dismissals of heritage as merely a tool for enshrining the nation; supporting the powerful; fostering nostalgic escapism; or advancing capitalist exploitation.

This book is a rigorous assessment of how conceptions of Japanese heritage have been forged, and provides a wealth of evidence that calls for reconsidering established assumptions on the nature and social roles of heritage.

Christoph Brumann is a DFG Heisenberg Fellow at the University of Cologne, Germany. He has published widely on utopian communes in Japan and worldwide, gift-giving in Japan, the anthropological concept of culture, globalisation and urban anthropology.

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Japan Anthropology Workshop Series

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Series editor's preface

Making Japanese Heritage is one book in our series which should appeal to readers beyond the confines of Anthropology and Japanese Studies. The questions raised by the editors will be familiar in fields such as History, Cultural Studies, Arts and Museum Studies, as well as Anthropology, and in a variety of other national situations. Cox and Brumann have addressed many of the themes now common in these fields, but they have also pushed forward to illustrate a theoretical approach that has not been so thoroughly examined before. As they point out in an early part of the Introduction, the notion of 'intangible cultural heritage', now a phrase to be heard in many other parts of the world, was introduced to UNESCO from the Japanese experience, and here again, the Japanese experience offers a rich source of material for further analysis. While much work has been developed on the themes of 'inventing tradition', and of examining the use of heritage for political purposes, this book focuses in closely on the contemporary producers of those things and activities that are designated to constitute heritage, thus illustrating the importance of context in realising its continuing significance, both on the ground and at an ideological level.

The papers were first brought together at a long and fascinating Japanese Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) session of the conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies held in Warsaw in August 2003, and much work has been done on them in the interim period to bring this collection to fruition, ready for publication. The editors have arranged them into four Parts: the first offering a focus on the way that performance may stand for Japaneseness, in this case, in practising tea ceremony in Los Angeles, California; in the historical development of the way that geisha have come to epitomise Japan for outsiders; and in a form of painting that again only really became 'Japan-painting' when it was contrasted with outside forms. These chapters set the stage for further parts, and more illustration, of institutionalising of the heritage, of placing it within a broader context, and of ensuring its perpetuation in one form or another through time. Material culture that is examined here includes a range of examples, from buildings and landscapes through woven material, to masks and puppet heads, the last two examples now often transformed as objects diminished somewhat from their more

dynamic lives in performance. The final part, Part IV, looks at people and their ways of life as forms of heritage.

Again, this volume in the JAWS series illustrates the enormous value of the long-term research that anthropologists are able to carry out, unearthing aspects of a subject only revealed with time and patient participation. Some of the contributors are drawing on years of research in the same area, watching the work of their collaborators grow and flourish, changing with time, and responding to the various developing outside forces. Without such experience, their complex diachronic pictures would be mere snapshots of a momentary situation, offering little more than the passing view of a visiting tourist. Instead we can see at work the much more intriguing involvement of the real people at the heart of the production, presentation, and perpetuation of aspects of heritage that is known as Japanese. And as Japan has for long valued the involvement and skills of the artists and artisans of production in the objects and activities it prizes, so the in-depth approach of this book can offer something very special to the broader field of heritage and its making and management, way beyond Japan's shores.

Joy Hendry

Acknowledgments and technical note

The chapters of this book go back to the workshop "Making Heritage in Japan" which we convened on 28–29 August 2003 as part of the 11th triannual conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies in Warsaw, concurrent with the 14th meeting of the Japan Anthropology Workshop. We would like to thank Ron Carle, Leonor Leiria, Mark McGuire, Gregory Miller, Katharina Steinkellner, and Yohko Tsuji who greatly enriched the sessions with their papers even when for various reasons, they could not contribute to this volume. Heartfelt thanks also go to the series editor Joy Hendry for her support and to Peter Sowden, Ulrike Swientek, Susan Dunsmore, and Emma Davis at Routledge for their dedicated work on our manuscript. We are also grateful to the contributors for their considerable patience over what admittedly was a very long process of gestation.

We follow the Japanese name order where the family name precedes the given name. The transliteration of Japanese terms follows the modified Hepburn system. Circumflexes indicate long vowels except in the common place names Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto (unless these appear in composite terms). When not otherwise indicated, the illustrations are the photographies of the chapter's author.

Christoph Brumann and Rupert Cox
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Introduction

Rupert Cox and Christoph Brumann

The question of making heritage

This book addresses a conception of heritage as made, rather than found or given, which as such is significant in the Japanese context. The questions that it raises about our understanding of heritage in Japan, are also a global issue. The UNESCO 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' in 2003 involved close cooperation with Japan and, like several other UNESCO conventions and declarations that came before and have been formulated since, it drew directly on the Japanese experience. The idea of a universally applicable notion of 'intangible cultural heritage' that emerged from the processes of formulating these initiatives (Kawada and Hayashi-Denis 2004) attributes value to the process of creation and to the carriers of heritage. It emphasises the importance of the skill that is embodied in the actions of a designated craftsperson or performer (sometimes referred to in terms of the state-administered system as *ningen kokuhô*) and as such represents 'heritage' as a concept which is in opposition to the ideas of cultural knowledge as a 'thing' and of culture as property (Bauer 2005).

There is an apparent paradox that these designations of 'heritage' status as something that acquires this value through its making, nevertheless require a framework of objectification to identify who and what is intangible. It is a contradiction worked out pragmatically and expediently in terms of the political utility and enlightenment virtues of a formulation that enables Japan to promote an international cultural policy based 'in the belief, from Japanese experience, that it is important for each country to preserve its individual culture in the course of development' (Kawada and Hayashi-Denis 2004: 33). This concern for the identification of discrete individual cultures and their protection can be understood as a response to anxieties about globalisation and the perception of a loss or 'vanishing' (Ivy 1995) of what makes them unique and distinctive through the degenerative effects of fusion and hybridisation.

There is a question here about how those actively engaged in 'making heritage' deal with the contemporary homogenising forces of globalisation, what Michael Herzfeld has described in his ethnographic account of Greek artisan potters facing relentless competition from mass production methods, as 'the increasingly

homogeneous language of culture and ethics' which 'constitutes a global hierarchy of value … everywhere present but nowhere definable' (Herzfeld 2004: 2–3). One of the aims of this book is to define the meanings of 'heritage' as it is made 'Japanese' within this global hierarchy of value. This will show, as Herzfeld's study has done, how the local differences manifested through the practices of agents of reproduction may play into but also subvert these essentialising discourses.

In a country such as Japan where artisans who produce objects of heritage value are acclaimed as 'national living treasures', it is important to try and describe both the political dynamics and the expressions of agency by which such attributions are made. Such a description reveals what is particular about 'making Japanese heritage' as well as the operation and effects of national and international regimes of heritage value. These regimes are historically constructed and based on a 'peculiarly modern cultural configuration' connecting 'objectification' and 'possessive individualism' through the recognition that commodities are central to personal and collective identities (Handler 1987: 139). In this study we start from a perspective wherein the historical framework of the Japanese experience of modernity is important because the proprietorial debates about the identification and preservation of objects and spaces as Japanese heritage takes place through and by virtue of that framework.

Modernity and tradition

Japan is not the only country that is commonly described as being suspended, caught, or torn between tradition and modernity; no country outside the Western world escapes these clichés. Yet Japan stands apart as a country where distinctions between the ancient and the new are made consciously, and conscientiously. Both during the tremendous changes initiated by the new leadership after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and in the enthusiastic adoption of the former enemy's life-styles and values after the defeat in the Second World War, a multitude of new things and ideas arrived in a very short time, and this gave less opportunity for gradual and inconspicuous blending and rather let the old and the newly imported remain perceptually distinct. As a consequence, while globally distributed cultural forms are commonplace in Japan now and the country fully participates in the transnational 'flow' of objects and ideas (Appadurai 1996), the global in Japan remains categorically 'Western' – *yô*-, as in *yôfû* (Western style), *yôshoku* (Western food), *yôfuku* (Western clothing), etc. – while in an implicit but nonetheless pervasive move, signifiers of the traditional and the 'Japanese' (*wa*-) are being collapsed into each other. Ideas about these categories and the policies that are based on them for the promotion of heritage thus have a special significance, since the self-definition of the nation rests critically on them. It is the integrity of the nation *as* tradition that is therefore threatened by the playful borrowing and remaking of elements of the foreign and the native, the old and new. The

conservative attitudes and policies expressed on such mixings reflect the more general anxieties of the postmodern condition and have helped to foster the contemporary heritage boom.

It is thus the experience of modernity in Japan that creates the conditions for the making of heritage, through a self-consciousness of the changes that have been effected on the pieces of cultural life that are threatened by an assumption of constant progress. These aspects of the cultural environment are separated, reified and exhibited according to the aesthetic and political criteria for evaluating 'heritage'. It is these criteria that therefore change people's awareness of and relationship to this cultural landscape by defining those things not included within their standards as implicitly not of historical importance and not 'cultural' (Handler 1987). This selective embracing and valorising of the past are the reason why, in post-industrial societies, the concept of heritage has been treated in an affirmative and even devotional mode, and Japan is no exception – despite the post-war condemnation of many an established custom as 'feudalism' (*hôkenshugi*), inhibiting the desired transition to democracy.

There are powerful criticisms to be directed at 'heritage' when it is regarded as a political vehicle for national culture and as a commoditised form of de-politicised nostalgia masquerading as tradition. Raphael Samuel (1994) has argued against such simplified views and for an acknowledgement and understanding of the ways in which meanings at various levels – local, regional and national – are made; for it is through the means and processes of making rather than 'inventing' that heritage work acquires what Kirschenblatt-Gimblett calls an 'added value' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 63) and 'vitality' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 56). This is a key distinction we wish to stress in this book, seeking to avoid the deconstructive and often *de facto* position of approaching heritage, like tradition, as something simply made up to serve contemporary purposes which vary according to who does the inventing. This a deception that is highly charged for anthropologists who in working with post-colonial and post-conquest societies do not stand outside this invention and must acknowledge the political significance of essentialisms and objectifications as sometimes a necessary means, employed by these societies to counter their marginality and disenfranchisement. Anthropological definitions of culture and heritage may become a resource in these debates about authenticity and most of the contributors to this volume approach the subject of heritage essentially as anthropologists or at least through the prism of fieldwork; so to some degree there is no avoidance of complicity in the invention. Therefore in choosing to acknowledge both the culpability and the responsibility of an anthropological approach to heritage the perspective we offer here is informed by a notion that:

> Heritage is self-conscious tradition, what Fienup-Riordan (2000: 167) calls 'conscious culture', performed in old and new public contexts and asserted against historical experiences of loss … It responds to demands that

> originate both inside and outside indigenous [and also other kinds of] communities, mediating new powers and attachments: relations with the land, among local groups, with the state, and with transnational forces.
>
> (Clifford 2004: 5)

The idea of heritage as self-conscious tradition should not suggest either an ersatz fabrication or a narrowly conceived, politically motivated 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). It is a notion employed here in this study to draw attention to a critical awareness of the epistemological and political problems inherent in presenting heritage to the public, and to focus in on the local knowledge and practices attached to heritage by those actively involved in its making. This approach derives from an understanding that to discuss heritage at all is to return to the problems of tradition and invention (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995). It is also motivated by the desire that brought the contributors to this volume together, not to reproduce a deconstructive thesis, but to reveal the operations of agency and intentionality in Japanese heritage work.

Reflection on the value of tradition and the use of invention in Japan has a long history. When Basil Hall Chamberlain, one of the founding fathers of Japanese studies, wrote *The Invention of a New Religion* (Chamberlain 1912) almost a century ago, he not only employed the same term but also strikingly similar ideas as are found within the now famous collection *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The insight that the deliberate, selective adoption of aspects of the past can serve entirely contemporary political interests was also anticipated by others (Eisenstadt 1973; Williams 1977; Rothermund 1979), yet Hobsbawm and Ranger deserve credit for the most systematic treatment of this process and for the enduring oxymoron that helped to establish a paradigm. According to them, the main purpose of celebrating traditions is the urge to legitimate and elevate social collectivities such as nations, ethnic groups, or classes, against other such social units. For this goal, traditions and heritage are given an ancient, even timeless aura, even though they are often fairly recent and conscious creations. Their understanding of tradition is linked to a historical narrative of origins and distinguished from 'lived' and therefore authentic 'custom'. The role of narrative in the creation of an idea of tradition and a discourse about heritage is important for 'heritage as discourse implies on the one hand closure around a single legitimate narrative and on the other acceptance that more than one story can be told' (Rowlands 2002: 108). The paradigmatic story of heritage and tradition is the mythology of nationhood, analysed in another modern classic, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1983), published in the same year as *The Invention of Tradition*.

The conceptual focus of heritage has changed since the publication of these works, driven in part by the changes in values attributed to heritage. Age and the originality of authorship have been replaced or combined as criteria of authenticity with diverse, dissonant, and distinctively local values (Clark

2000: 104). Heritage is not separated out from its lived social context and preservation has been re-formulated as a human construction, part of 'a heritage of transience', rather than the maintenance of an enduring monument (Glendinning 2001: 15).

Therefore, authenticity can have several meanings for those involved in heritage work which as Bruner has demonstrated may include 'historical verisimilitude' – looking like what you expect it to be – and 'genuineness' – looking like it should be in substance (in Gable and Handler 1996: 575). A significant point at issue here is that 'authenticity is always defined in the present. It is not pastness or givenness that defines something as traditional. Rather, the latter is an arbitrary symbolic designation; an assigned meaning rather than an objective quality' (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 286). If 'authenticity' means anything here, it is 'authentically remade'.

Heritage becomes identifiable here as the purposeful designation of 'that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social' (Graham 2002: 2). A good example of the shift hinted at here, in attitudes towards heritage from something backward-looking and trapped in the past, to contemporary views that see it as a sustainable resource requiring responsible management, is in the arena of museums where Merriman has argued for greater public access and engagement (Merriman 1991). The emphasis here on the use and function of cultural heritage, in the present, aims to keep it dynamic and vital, and to accommodate the ways in which values 'may change as physical elements age, as meanings accumulate, and as uses evolve' (Avrami 2000: 19). This is one argument that this volume takes up, not because of the economic rationale behind this functional approach, but because it forces a recognition of the importance of context in realising the significance of use and the making and performing of heritage.

Performing Japaneseness through heritage

As an island nation on the periphery of Asia, Japan's commitment to modernisation involved an active and sustained series of borrowings, imitations and improvements on various social and cultural aspects of more 'civilised' or technologically advanced nations. Two edited volumes (Antoni 1997; Vlastos 1998b) have already examined how this gave rise to the 'invention' of appropriate national traditions and cultural heritage in Japan. The most obvious cases were the cult of the emperor and the elevation of Shintoism to an official state religion in the pre-war period. None of our contributions directly takes up these topics for other studies have already demonstrated how much effort was required to make a half-forgotten monarch the god-like father of the nation and a dominated creed a domineering one (Antoni 1992; 1998; Chamberlain 1912; Fujitani 1992; 1996; Gluck 1985; Lokowandt 1997). These inventive imaginaries of the nation are also evident in the canonisation processes of the high arts in Japan, such as in literature (Shirane and Suzuki 2000), architecture (Ehrentraut 1995; Inoue [1986] 1997; Reynolds 1998; 2001),

visual art (Guth 1993; 1996a; Weston 2004), theatre (Rath 2000), and the martial arts and *sumô* (Cox 2002; Inoue 1998a, 1998b; Thompson 1998). Moreover, it is present in the way specific rituals and items of material culture are charged with Japaneseness in everyday contexts, often in only half-conscious ways, as has been shown for the Shintoist wedding ceremony (Goldstein-Gidoni 2000; Ôbayashi 1997; Shida 1999), kimonos (Goldstein-Gidoni 2005), cuisine (Cwiertka 2005; 2006), and the popular *enka* song genre (Yano 2002). The invention perspective has also been applied to general psycho-social patterns and dispositions that are today seen as 'typically Japanese' – for instance in the *nihonjinron* treatises of Japanese uniqueness – but are, in fact, recent creations or retrospective fictions, such as the love of harmony (Itô 1998), the avoidance of legal process (Upham 1998), the company as ersatz family (Gordon 1998; Kinzley 1991; Noguchi 1990), or pre-modern vegetarianism (Vollmer 1997). All these studies give evidence of how a modern need for national self-identification and community – state-approved in some cases but arising spontaneously in others – informs the way the past is imagined into being.

Part I, 'Performing Japaneseness though Heritage', develops the perspective of these studies but also marks out a distinctive approach. The first two chapters show how the perception of Japaneseness in Japanese heritage can be a historically and situationally specific issue. In Chapter 1, Kristin Surak investigates the world of tea ceremony practitioners in Los Angeles. For them, the Japanese origin of this art form is not in question, and in public demonstrations to their American audiences they present the tea ceremony as the epitome of all Japanese arts. Japanese Americans also turn to tea in the hope of making themselves or their children more Japanese. Success is not easy or guaranteed in this demanding project, however, and they may come away from the experience with less self-assurance about their own identity. At issue here are the ways in which specific aspects of tea practice may have more to do with status than with ethnicity, so that the general respect accorded to tea teachers or the manner of wearing a kimono become indicators of rank and skill rather than Japanese identity. Surak concludes that just how Japanese a given piece of heritage is taken to be can depend a great deal on the situational and interactional specifics of the given activity.

In Chapter 2, Mariko Okada notes that the geisha of the famous Gion district of Kyoto are not just the passive recipients of much international attention; they actively conceive of themselves as ambassadors responsible for representing the nation to the outside world. While they display themselves and perform their skills as tradition today, they were, historically speaking, at the forefront of internationalisation in the early Meiji period. The group dances performed by geisha in the *Miyako odori* ('Capital dance') built on imported models. Okada's work also shows that early librettos fantasised about foreign countries, and tea was served, to seated, not kneeling spectators, running contrary to 'traditional' expectations. Moreover, the fact that performances and early motion pictures of geisha as well as a popular opera on the topic were favourably received in the United States and Europe boosted their image

at home. With the spread of Western clothes, music, and dance from the 1920s onwards, the embedding of the geisha in narratives of tradition developed apace but was completed only after the Pacific War.

In Chapter 3, Arunas Gelunas is occupied with a traditional art form that even carries the nation in its name, *nihonga* (Japanese painting). That appellation could originate only after *yôga* (Western painting) had reached Japan in the Meiji period, and while painting with mineral pigments on paper appeared old-fashioned to the Japanese of the time, Western observers saw *nihonga* as much more avant-garde than the use of Western techniques by Japanese painters which in their eyes was poor imitation only. Yet much as the *nihonga* category appears to offer itself for deconstruction, Gelunas' chapter probes whether it reflects real, substantive differences. Based on vivid observations from his own participation among professional practitioners in Japan, he presents theirs as a more integrated view in which artistic ideas, the craft aspect, and the social nexus the painters develop during the joint performance of preparatory tasks constitute a comprehensive experience.

Institutionalising Japanese heritage

As part of Japan's turn to modernity after 1868, the Tokyo National Museum was opened four years later, and a national law for the protection of old temples and shrines was passed in 1897, only 15 years after the British Ancient Monuments Protection Act (Larkham 1996: 37). The systematic investigation, classification, protection, and display of heritage in Japan thus have a long history, and there is a considerable literature analysing the institutionalisation of heritage in such fields as architecture (Carle 2002; Ehrentraut 1989; 1995; Siegenthaler 2003), material, performative, and ritual culture (Guichard-Anguis 2000; Guth 1996b; Hashimoto 1998a; Siegenthaler 1999; Thornbury 1994; 1997), archaeological sites (Edwards 2005), and museums (Sand 2001), often building on the invention thesis and the connection to the national self-imagination discussed above.

Three of our chapters deal with the administration and display of heritage in museums. In Chapter 4, Peter Siegenthaler explores the history of a very successful open-air museum in the historical city of Takayama where farm houses from all over the mountainous region have been assembled. This institution began through the efforts of Nagakura Saburô, who after winning great acclaim as a potter, turned to the preservation of the regional culture of his hometown area. While the houses in the museum, particularly those of the famous, steep-roofed *gasshô-zukuri* ('praying-hands style') structures raise the awareness of national tradition among the visitors, this was also the first Japanese open-air museum with a regional focus, responding to post-war ideals of democratisation and local autonomy and fostering local pride. Nagakura, who was interested in folklore, emphasised that the site should be a living museum, and the display and demonstration of peasant lifeways through material culture play a prominent role in its presentation today.

In Chapter 5, Rachel Payne discusses Japanese heritage in relation to a set of *nô* masks that became part of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum collection in 1884. They now form a collective exhibit, part of the general evolutionary narrative of this pioneering ethnographic museum, but have also been investigated by *nô* actors and historians from Japan. Payne reveals a number of contradictory viewpoints emerging from these interactions with the masks and their display. There is a high-art conservationist stance that prefers unadulterated originals and has little appreciation for the practical additions and alterations made by the actors who formerly used the masks, even though these repairs tell interesting stories themselves. Meanwhile, present-day *nô* actors are concerned about the museum display as such, as the masks were never meant to be looked at off-stage, without the costumes, wigs, music, and dance they were designed for.

In Chapter 6, Bart Gaens investigates the heritage sites where the corporate giant and global player Sumitomo with its more than 40 different companies displays its own history. He thereby makes a contribution to the underdeveloped analysis of corporate heritage (see also Nakamaki 1999). Gaens takes us to the Sumitomo family estate in Kyoto that is now used for employee and management gatherings, the copper mine in Shikoku which was instrumental in building the company's fortune and has now been converted into a theme park, the mountain on top of that mine with a mausoleum for the workers who died in service and, finally, two museums and a statue in front of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. These sites of remembrance reveal a carefully managed history that combines a firm insistence on established cultural forms to establish the legitimacy of the 'family line' (*ie*) with shifting, pragmatic responses. The latter emphasise the (historically obscure) business ideals of the founder family precisely at the moment when real power shifted to employed managers and stress ecological awareness while the violent labour struggles and environmental scandals of the past go unmentioned.

Japanese local heritage and the wider world

There is an interesting tendency for work on Japanese heritage, particularly by anthropologists, to concentrate on the little traditions rather than the great ones, and within this literature, rural folk culture has attracted most attention. The post-war population movement from the land to the cities has paradoxically fostered an attitude towards the countryside as the wellspring of the nation and the site of unalienated life and authentic Japaneseness. While the countryside may house the mysterious and uncanny (Ivy 1995), a pastoral mood prevails: 'Tourism, media, and advertising have waged a war on the urban present with destinations, dramas, and images of a bucolic and thatch-roofed past' (Law 1997: 216). The idea that Japanese social characteristics are that of a 'village society' (*mura shakai*) is popular not just in everyday discourse, it has also made substantial inroads into Japanese social science (Bestor 1990b: 46–8). Rice cultivation in particular has been used as an explanatory

device for Japanese social characteristics that is disproportionate to the actual historical significance of that crop (Amino 1996; Ohnuki-Tierney 1993). Political ideologies of *nôhonshugi*, a return to the presumed rural roots that often was coupled with criticism of capitalism and urbanisation, were important particularly before the First World War (Havens 1974; Vlastos 1998a). Major intellectual currents such as folklore studies (*minzokugaku*) founded by Yanagita Kunio (Harootunian 1998; Hashimoto 1998b; Ivy 1995) and Yanagi Sôetsu's folk art (*mingei*) movement (Brandt 2007; Kikuchi 2004; Moeran 1984; 1997) likewise were attempts by urbanites to locate a purer and more pristine Japan in the countryside. Much later, since the 1980s, a commercialised version of the same themes has arisen in the *furusato* (home village) movement and the related patterns of consumption and mass tourism (Creighton 1997; Ivy 1995; Knight 1994; Robertson 1991; 1998; Yano 1999).

Rural heritage is most often local heritage, and as Ben-Ari (1992) and also Siegenthaler (Chapter 4, this volume) show, it is precisely the specificity of the customs of a particular region or village that guarantees their authenticity as national tradition at the next higher level. Fieldwork-based village studies by anthropologists (Ben-Ari 1992; Carle 2002; Ehrentraut 1993; Kelly 1986; 1990; Martinez 1990; 2004; Moeran 1984; 1997; Moon 1989; Schnell 1999; 2005) have done most to show how this kind of heritage is 'made' and appropriated by intellectuals, preservation experts, tourists, and other (mostly urban) outsiders. What they also reveal, however, is a dialectical process in which the carriers of the heritage pursue their own agenda, carving out spaces of agency while they maintain necessary external appearances. Deliberately 'Orientalising' the countryside can make good economic sense, helping to sustain rural communities against the threats of aging and outmigration.

In Chapter 7, Jane Marie Law continues an earlier study of *ningyô jôruri* on Awaji island (Law 1997) during which she was told uncanny stories of how neglected puppets and the burial grounds of puppet heads (*kashira*) that had been disturbed, started to haunt the perpetrators and afflict them with disease. She realised that these stories were an important element in the general revitalisation of folk puppetry and that the biography of things must include the changing ways they are being imagined. In following these stories, she traces the production process and history of *kashira*, including the biographies of famous carvers. She then turns to the contexts in which the heads appear today, in museums that display their complex technology, as a ubiquitous visual emblem in the growing local tourism industry, in workshops for amateur carvers, and even in her own baggage when travelling with a borrowed head around Europe and the United States. Alongside all the commoditisation, nostalgia, and invention processes at issue here, she stresses the strong presence of a 'very uncomplicated devotion' of both professionals and amateurs that resists a simple reduction to social functions.

In Chapter 8, Amanda Stinchecum addresses another piece of material heritage that has become a regional symbol, the *minsaa*, a cotton sash dyed with indigo in a kind of *ikat* technology and wrapped around the waist. It is

produced and worn on Yaeyama, the southernmost island group of the Ryûkyû archipelago and a particularly remote corner on the periphery of the Japanese state. Women used to weave the sash as a gift of love, it is said. Usage by commoners is comparatively recent, but the sash has lost its former specificity as marker of status and is now widely regarded and displayed as an emblem of the islands. As in the case of the puppet heads on Awaji island, the traditional patterns are now reproduced in all kinds of new contexts. Stinchecum finds that along with other elements of local culture, the sash allows the inhabitants to hold their own not just against the Japanese state but against the regional centre, Okinawa, in a period when these draw closer because of emigration and modern communication.

The contributions of Brumann and Cox in Chapters 9 and 10 bring folk heritage and 'little' traditions back to the city. In urban spaces, it is often a link to the rural past, however fragile and hypothetical, that bolsters claims to historical depth and authenticity (Bestor 1990b; Robertson 1991; 1987), although in Edo/Tokyo, the former merchants' and craftspeople's quarter of Shitamachi has been romanticised as an unmistakably urban source of true Japaneseness in its own right (Bestor 1990a; 1992b; Gluck 1998; Sand 2001). Bestor has shown how in a different neighbourhood in Tokyo, tradition and heritage form a symbolic resource for the increasingly marginalised 'old' middle class of self-employed shopkeepers and small-scale family enterprises, bringing in a class aspect that is absent from most other studies of heritage in Japan (Bestor 1985; 1990b; 1992a; 1996).

Christoph Brumann moves the focus to the most 'traditional' city of Japan, the former imperial capital Kyoto, whose heritage policies he has also explored elsewhere (Brumann 2001; 2007). He describes how since around 1990, the traditional wooden town houses called *kyô-machiya* have been rediscovered and renovated into fashionable restaurants, shops, and domiciles. The preservation movement emphasises creative revitalisation rather than the 'freezing' of timeless emblems and is only weakly organised, for attempts to link the houses with collective identity are rare, and former class distinctions regarding the houses are on the decline. It is not just the association of tradition with the houses but also their tangible qualities that attract their admirers. Brumann concedes that it is the urban background and a relatively elite level of 'folk culture' that distinguish this case from other instances of revitalised traditions, but he still doubts whether heritage is always as politically conservative and obsessed with collectivities as is often suggested.

Rupert Cox's study in Chapter 10 is centred on the city of Kobe, known for its foreign and cosmopolitan associations, and on an object whose history is tied to the city's own but which has never received official heritage status. The object is a small 'mechanical doll' (*karakuri ningyô*) which imitates in hybrid fashion the appearance and actions of a Buddhist priest or a black sailor. It was made and sold by residents of Kobe and is known as the 'Kobe Doll' (*kobe ningyô*). The ambiguous status of the *kobe ningyô* is partly a consequence of its place within the history of the city's relations with national

and international agencies as its unsettling racial and otherworldly association exceeded the city council's boundaries of taste and political good sense. Cox argues that this ambivalence is also the result of the ontological confusion that the object expresses as it moves between categories of person and thing and through networks of meaning and effect. It is the affective, uncanny qualities of the object that make it an item of negative heritage valued by foreign collectors but ignored by Kobe city authorities for its dissonant, discordant character.

Perpetuating Japanese heritage

In the contributions so far, the 'making' of heritage has focused on objects and practices and implied that in their official designation they may enter a new regime of value where their original uses and meanings are either supplemented or even entirely replaced. The active *continuation* of practices and the use of materials is demonstrably important for the practitioners of the tea ceremony in Los Angeles, the puppet head carvers on Awaji island, and many of those who move into a Kyoto town house. The visible and tangible effects of these practices and materials are crucial to the perception of *living* heritage.

In the last two contributions, it is not the vitality of objects or practices *per se*, but of institutions that is at issue, and questions about which model from the past is ideally desirable recede behind the pragmatic problems of survival in the present. In Chapter 11, Masaki Matsubara writes from within the Rinzai sect of Japanese Buddhism, in which he himself has been trained as a priest, and to which he has significant family obligations. Successors to positions of responsibility are few and far between, and sect authorities have had to set up short-term courses and university programmes in order to retain those priests' sons and sons-in-law who cannot, or do not want, to subject themselves to the long years of meditation and hardship that used to be required to authenticate the status of successors. Matsubara describes how some effort and hope are being directed towards nunneries as a source of succession and at the same time, the wives and families of those priests who leave no male descendants are treated haphazardly, even as their livelihood depends on the temple.

In Chapter 12, Michael Shackleton uses his long-year acquaintance with the members of Shinkyô, a utopian commune and care institution, to reflect on its future prospects. Under the charismatic leadership of Ozaki Masutarô, a renegade missionary of the new religion Tenri-kyô, several families smashed their altars, broke with their small village in Nara prefecture, and started to pool their resources with the aim of beginning a new life. Emigration to Manchuria ended in failure but *tatami* production in the post-war period brought affluence and, with the acceptance of mentally handicapped adults as members, prestige. Dramatic though this history is, Shackleton notes that members do not have much interest in Shinkyô's past and produce little in terms of chronicles, monuments, or memorials. Behind this, he sees the deceased founder's

conscious strategy to integrate the institution into the wider society, re-embracing the village (albeit on Shinkyô's terms), and simply living fully in the present rather than revelling in past accomplishments. Continuity, this seems to suggest, can also derive from the *denial* of history.

* * *

Throughout this book the aim is to pay close attention to the qualitative detail that emerges through ethnographic fieldwork which we argue is an essential asset in the study of heritage. For it is empirical observation that may provide insights into the complex and sometimes contradictory *life* of heritage, made present in Japan, as elsewhere, through social relations and the active imaginary. This approach reveals that what we believe to know about heritage, particularly about its political, nostalgic, and commercial appropriations, does not exhaust its meanings in contemporary social life, for it can also involve creativity, resistance, intentionality; in a word, agency. This is true both for the well-studied kinds of heritage in Japan that have received attention in published works and for those that still await deeper inquiry. To name just a few of the subjects in this latter category: urban heritage (particularly outside Tokyo); the monuments of modern history (such as in Yoneyama 1999); the importation of Western (and other foreign) heritage, such as the system of nobility in the Meiji period (Lebra 1993) or the colonial-style façades that grace modern prefabricated houses; and what could be termed 'life-style heritage', that is the growing popularity of flea markets, nostalgically tinged *retoro* ('retro') styles, and the playful exploitation of history, e.g. in theme parks (Hendry 2000). Fieldwork in heritage institutions, particularly the Agency of Cultural Affairs (*Bunkachô*), would also be revealing. The presuppositions and operating frameworks of these institutions, such as the designation procedures for 'living national treasures' (*ningen kokuhô*) in the traditional arts and crafts (Siegenthaler 1999) or for 'folk cultural properties' (*jûyô minzoku bunkazai*) (Hashimoto 1998a; Thornbury 1994; 1997), have had a considerable influence on international heritage policies and raise important questions about policy and practice. Across all these fields, it is the local, active engagement with heritage and the past that has been analysed far less thoroughly than the ideological premises and commercial imperatives that direct interpretations of the collective and institutional level of heritage creation. By making a contribution to that self-conscious approach to heritage we hope that the study of Japanese heritage does not only itself have a past; we intend that it should also have a future.

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Part I

Performing Japaneseness through heritage

1 Making "Japanese" tea

Kristin Surak

Introduction

In a smallish room with screen paper doors and woven *tatami* mats as flooring, a woman in a kimono kneels in front of a boiling iron kettle preparing tea. Skillfully picking up and setting down items from the assortment of utensils arranged in an orderly manner around her, she places two measured scoops of powdered tea in a ceramic bowl. As she sets the delicately carved bamboo scoop down on the finely lacquered tea caddy and takes off the lid from the ceramic water container, the voice of the teacher sitting diagonally to her corrects her gesture, "Right hand." The student has been coming to tea lessons once a week for almost ten years, but sometimes finds it hard to concentrate when the three other students, sitting to her side and waiting to drink the tea, chat among themselves – particularly when it's an interesting story. She finishes whisking the tea to a frothy green consistency, artfully turns the bowl, and sets it out for the first "guest," who turns from the conversation back to the preparation scene and slides forward on her knees to retrieve the bowl, careful to keep her kimono from spreading apart indecorously. With a formal greeting, she politely bows to the second guest, bows to the student who made the tea, and raises the bowl to drink. What could be more Japanese?

Since Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) seminal book, revealing the invented origins of taken-for-granted traditions has become a mini growth industry in many of the social sciences. This chapter follows this well-trodden path but makes a shift in analytical approach, from a focus on top-down construction processes to a concentration on those emerging from the bottom upwards. More than exploring how particular practices and objects are intentionally constructed as a part of "heritage," my aim is to direct attention to the dynamics of how they become "Japanese" or their role in producing "Japaneseness." A comparison of tea ceremony[1] in Japan and the US is a productive means to delineate these processes. Not only do Japanese make tea, but, on occasion, tea makes its practitioners Japanese.

At first glance, "Japanese heritage" may seem to be a possession or trait of a particular ethnic group. Treating ethnic groups as entities possessing ethnic

attributes makes it possible to use traits such as heritage as indicators of their existence. This presupposition enables research on ethnicity or nationhood to employ combinations of religious practices, choice of dress, holiday celebrations, cuisine, and so forth – aspects of "heritage" – as indexes or measures of ethnic identity. Yet, such assumptions elide key questions concerning the production of ethnicity and putative groups. By viewing ethnic practices as a possession of ethnic groups maintained across time and taking this as the starting point of analysis, researchers leave unspecified the ways in which a practice becomes "ethnic" in the first place. Such starting points reproduce "substantialist" assumptions presupposing the very reification processes that ought to be analyzed (Brubaker 1996: 14). Rather than uncritically assuming *that* practices are ethnic, analysts should focus on how practices are *made* ethnic. By adopting this approach, ethnicity as well as heritage can be analyzed as a contingent accomplishment rather than an a-historical given and we can examine how ethnicity and heritage construction may interact – working together, working apart or working against each other.

One of the central functions of heritage in its practical application is to help define particular *groups* (Hobsbawm 1983: 9). Heritage claims, even when made by individuals, are always based on group membership, if only implicitly. Indeed, heritage helps to establish "groupness" by identifying members or legitimate claimants and constructing boundaries. Given the "group-work" heritage accomplishes, a key question to explore is *how* this occurs. In what ways does heritage help to construct group identity, define membership, and produce ethnicity?

In this chapter I sketch out some ways in which heritage and ethnicity construction may intersect in practice. I focus on the US to examine how tea can facilitate a sense of Japaneseness by outlining some relevant boundary dynamics in this multiethnic setting. In particular, I examine the role of tea in making and marking Japaneseness through explicit ethnic contrasts, forging commonalities within implicit ethnic boundaries, and providing a channel for non-ethnic work such as developing social status. I conclude by highlighting some similarities in the processes of making "Japanese" tea in Japan as well and stressing the importance of avoiding the temptation to see the world only through the lens of ethnic identity. Although a practice may in some contexts provide a way for accomplishing ethnicity, in other contexts it might not. Tea ceremony can be more or less "ethnic" depending on the situation and may not always express Japaneseness.

The argument presented here draws on ethnographic, historical, and interview data collected in the US and interprets these in light of similar ethnographic and interview material collated in Japan.[2] The US data focus on the Los Angeles metropolitan region, the area in the continental US with the longest history of institutionalized tea ceremony practice and the greatest number of participants. In the Urasenke school in Los Angeles, there are 30 active tea teachers, 300 dues-paying members of the official organization, and as many as 150 non-members trained in tea, mainly students of high school

and college tea classes or people who have suspended lessons. The next largest school of tea in Los Angeles, Omotesenke, has around six active teachers and less than 150 practitioners in total. In addition to participant observation of weekly tea lessons and informal and formal tea events from 2001 to 2003, I draw on numerous informal conversations and twelve formal interviews with a snowball selection of tea practitioners[3] living in greater Los Angeles.

Marking and making Japaneseness

The construction of ethnic boundaries involves both drawing lines of difference and filling in the spaces thus created. International migration is a common impetus producing or making salient such divisions and many people from Japan who come to the US experience heightened feelings of being Japanese. As they leave behind the social structures that support taking a national identify for granted, they also encounter a number of everyday situations in which Japaneseness becomes problematized and thus become more aware of ethnicity on a daily basis. In addition, the normative multiculturalism of the US, according to which everyone is expected to be a member of an ethnic group and possess a particular ethnic heritage, facilitates this intensified ethnic awareness. Accordingly, immigrants on occasion naturalize tea on ethnic grounds, for example, by seeing it as something easy for them to learn since tea purportedly fits intrinsically with their ethnic identity (Surak 2006). The disjuncture between the broader social context and the logic of the practice of tea may underlie the consciousness of this naturalization (Bourdieu 1977: 118; 1990: 147–148).

Tea in this context becomes a tool for *marking* Japanese boundaries – a process particularly visible in the prevalent use of tea demonstrations as a way to explicitly instruct others about Japanese culture. For example, at a demonstration held as a part of Nisei Week, a Los Angeles festival celebrating Japanese-American culture, an emcee narrated a performance of tea preparation. The "Japaneseness" of the situation was highlighted as she explained, "Tea ceremony includes all parts of Japanese culture. It includes flower arrangement or *ikebana*, calligraphy, Japanese cuisine, gardens, pottery, and architecture." She continued by instructing the audience in basic etiquette, "If you are invited to a tea ceremony in Japan, this is how you behave. First, the host enters and everybody bows … ." In this instance, tea ceremony is made into something distinctively ethnic through explicit links to Japan or items of Japanese culture. It is important to note that although similar narrated public performances occur in Japan, the explicit ethnic markers used in the descriptions occur with much less frequency.

Nonetheless, tea ceremony is not only used as a means to mark Japaneseness and to distinguish a boundary – it can also be used to *make* the identity of the Japanese inhabiting one side of the boundary. Tea is sometimes seen as a way for second- and third-generation Japanese-Americans to learn how to

be Japanese. One middle-aged woman, a resident of the US for over twenty years, spoke of her unease that her daughter was more American than Japanese, and therefore began sending her to tea lessons. As she told me:

> I'm Japanese. I'm somehow connected to Japan. And when I do tea, the feeling that I'm connected to Japan is the strongest. So, in that way, my children—[switching to English] *Japanese-American*? *American-Japanese*?—[switching back to Japanese] I don't want them to become Japanese-American ["*nikkeijin*"]. [They are] Japanese. If they do tea, they will be Japanese, I think.

She sees tea not only as a means to actualize her own Japanese identity but to instill one in her children as well. Through making and consuming tea, physically internalizing the beverage, she hopes they will incorporate – in a very corporeal sense – a solidly Japanese sense of self, an identity otherwise in question. Yet, the process she envisions does not necessarily unfold smoothly. Japanese-Americans sometimes straddle the ethnic boundary when they do tea. For example, I asked one Japanese-American woman if she felt more Japanese when doing tea. She said:

> There are moments when I do. And yet, there are moments when I feel a little bit awkward because the other people, the other Japanese folks, just seem more … It comes more naturally to them, it seems. And I think, "Oh well, *shôganai* [there's nothing one can do]. I'm a *sansei* [third-generation]. I guess I can't be one of them." I think I feel that more often. I feel more Japanese when I'm not among Japanese and I feel more American when I'm among Japanese.

While tea ceremony can be used to mark and make Japaneseness, such ethnicity construction is not necessarily an unproblematic endeavor (see Surak 2006).

Forging mutual ties

However, boundaries delineating ethnic distinctions may not necessarily be used to explicitly establish or enact ethnicity in manifest contrast to an ethnic other; they may simply establish commonalities. In such cases – unlike the making and marking of Japaneseness – an ethnic contrast remains implicit or even suppressed, if even relevant at all.

The creative processes of remembering and developing (and the concomitant processes of forgetting or omitting) shared memories can be influential in forging a sense of collective identity (Renan [1882] 1990; Löfgren 1989), and tea ceremony can provide a productive site for being Japanese through jointly recalling aspects of Japan. For instance, while in the waiting room at a New

Year's tea gathering held at a local temple, the eight elderly Japanese women (consisting of three separate groups of friends, not all initially acquainted) present began conversing about the difficulty of finding the temple. They entered a 10-minute dialogue comparing "driving in LA" to "driving in Japan" and remained on that theme until called to enter the tea room. Although seemingly trivial, all of the women had a store of experiences concerning driving in Japan they were able to draw upon, resuscitate, and share together. Of course, one does not have to be Japanese to have experiences and memories of driving in Japan, but the distinction between who possesses such memories and can participate easily in such an exchange generally maps along ethnic lines. The participants' common background as Japanese facilitated establishing connections between these strangers who were able to get to know each other, based on shared experiences in Japan. Here, tea ceremony provides a supportive context for such connections to be made. Whereas other forms of being "Japanese" are based on ideas of what Japanese *ought* to know, these acts of collective recollection are built on what Japanese tend to share, a process not necessarily accomplished through explicit distinction from other ethnic groups (Löfgren 1989).

Ethnic boundaries doing other work

Additionally, ethnic boundaries can do other work. The boundaries carved out by ethnic divisions can channel other forms of social distinction not overtly based on the specific ethnic markers attributed to the practice. In the case of tea, social class or status is a particularly salient example. Throughout its history tea has served as a means for participants to gain social status (Kato 2004). This holds true in the US as well as in Japan but with different social contours in the LA context. Predictably, the ability to lay claim to such forms of distinction are largely limited to Japanese people who maintain contacts with Japanese circles. A non-Japanese practitioner observed:

> Now, I look at the majority of the people who do study it here [and they] are Japanese. Ninety-nine point nine percent of the teachers are Japanese, born and raised in Japan. And so I get a sense that there's a … they get brownie points. Either internally or by being able to say "I study tea" they get brownie points [i.e. are seen positively].

Japanese practitioners, however, are usually quick to note that many, even most Japanese do not accord special status to people who learn tea ceremony, although they may modify their behavior when around Japanese who might know they are a tea teacher. One interviewee noted, referring to herself, that, "If people know, 'ahhh she is a tea teacher,' then I don't want to do something strange or go out shopping not looking proper or so on."

Social responses to meeting the tea teacher and practitioners are situationally specific with "brownie points" gained in cases such as meeting a fiancée's parents. One illuminating example arose in a conversation I had with an older teacher who had lived in the US for over thirty years and her middle-aged student who migrated about a decade ago. I asked the teacher if she received special treatment in everyday life because she was a tea teacher. She replied, "No, that doesn't happen. Not at all. But in Japan, sometimes there is (an admiring attitude expressed as) 'That person over there is a tea teacher.'"

"However," her student immediately countered, "*You're* like that, but for most teachers it's [a case of], 'Of course, I've been doing tea for decades.'" The teacher responded, "*I'm* different from most people." And the student politely protested "That's not really the case." "No, well, I wonder, well, probably in Japan [it is the case]," said the teacher finally. In this interaction, the discrepancy between the student's and teacher's impressions was likely the result of different reference points. The student's observation makes sense if the Japanese community provides the social context, whereas the teacher's comment that special status is not accorded holds true for the wider US context. In broad terms the status gained by teaching tea potentially has currency within Japan but not outside. This form of status—although not overtly ethnic *per se*—is available to those who preserve ties to Japan where such claims may be recognized, revealing one way in which status and ethnicity may be intertwined.

As in Japan, tea in the US is often regarded as archetypically "Japanese". With respect to constructing and constituting ethnic boundaries, tea ceremony, as—in the words of one informant—the "epitome of Japanese culture" becomes a convenient means to mark and display the boundaries of what is Japanese, an issue especially applicable within a multiethnic context. Furthermore, particularly for the second-generation, it provides an instrument for making Japaneseness by filling in the content relevant for such an identity. However, in stating this, it is important to consider that ethnically defined boundaries may not always overtly do the work of ethnicity construction. Operating more implicitly, they may simply be a means by which to establish commonalities, or they may also be employed to channel and maintain other forms of distinction, particularly social status.

Irrelevant ethnicity

There is a danger in any analysis of ethnic boundary processes, namely to see everything in an ethnic light. Although tea ceremony can be regarded as "Japanese" in national or ethnic terms, it is important to recognize that, whether in Japan, the US, or elsewhere, it is not always or continuously a site for expressing notions of "Japaneseness."[4] In many tea situations, an ethnically unmarked framing is employed as the default position rather than the

"Japanese" perspectives focused on here. Analysts, however, may overlook these distinctions. What might seem to be an ethnic difference to an outside observer may not always be interpreted and accomplished in that way by participants (and vice versa). The wearing of kimono in the context of tea ceremony is exemplary of this sort of variability.

The standard image of tea ceremony is of a woman in kimono performing *temae*, or the formal procedures for making tea. However, kimono are not essential for tea ceremony. According to official guidelines, one can perform tea in any sort of clothing. Although most people I spoke to followed the official line and described kimono as not necessary for doing tea, in practice, kimono are commonly worn to tea gatherings and some lessons. In part, this is a matter of convenience since the movements of tea are dictated by the form of the kimono and the way it molds the body. However, whether or not kimono are worn generally depends on the situation's degree of formality and the rank of the wearer within the tea world. For instance, a high-ranked tea teacher I observed at several tea gatherings wore kimono to both formal gatherings (*chaji*) as well as more informal gatherings (*chakai*) organized by the local branch of the official organization, *Tankôkai*, but did not wear kimono to a public demonstration held at city hall during a community event. Many beginners, who otherwise generally wear business-casual clothes to lessons or events, start wearing kimono in tea contexts when they attend their first formal gathering, usually the first lesson of the New Year. Even before World War II when kimono were commonplace, the kimono worn during tea were more formal than those worn in everyday life. One woman I spoke with, who began lessons before the war, recounted the opportunity to wear "full dress" kimono as a drawing point of tea lessons for her at that time.

Besides indicating formality, kimono also can mark rank. Older and more experienced practitioners tend to wear kimono more often. In one class I attended for over a year, the teacher always wore kimono. Among the students, the older ones with advanced ranks frequently wore kimono whereas the younger students with only a few years experience almost never wore them. However, there is more going on here than simply a generational decline in knowledge of how to put on a kimono. Once when a less-advanced middle-aged student wore kimono to a lesson, as she entered the room she explained herself as wearing it only because she wanted practice in putting it on. By making such an excuse, she re-established the hierarchical distinction marked by kimono, showing herself to be still a novice. She further attempted to lessen her status by saying that she was wearing "just" a polyester kimono. The older, more advanced woman she was talking to used the opportunity to elevate her own status by saying that she herself can only wear (much more expensive) silk kimono because polyester is too hot. Here, one should note that many experienced tea practitioners chose to wear polyester over silk, especially to lessons, since kimono can easily get dirty when doing tea and silk is particularly difficult to clean.

Highlighting displays of age or rank is not to suggest, however, that kimono are entirely free from associations with ethnic (or national) identity. Implying a gradation of the "Japaneseness" of kimono styles, one respondent in Japan said, "People who do [Japanese] dance ['*odori*'] or flower arrangement wear flamboyant or gorgeous [kimono], but those who do tea wear elegantly refined *Japanese-style* ones" (my italics). Or, in an example from LA, when a Japanese-American student wore kimono to a lesson and pulled her hair back, a Japanese fellow student upon seeing her exclaimed in Japanese (although they usually spoke in English with each other), "Tanaka Aiko-*san*![5] You look pretty!" Importantly, she chose to use Japanese and the Japanese name order (family name preceding given name) and add the honorific "-*san*," thereby explicitly applying a Japanese frame in light of her fellow student's particular kimono-clad appearance (a contrast with the casual clothes she usually wore). However, such indexing of "Japaneseness" inspired by kimono is a variable rather than constant feature of interactions in tea. More frequently, wearing kimono is not simply a way of "making Japanese-ness" but of displaying rank or formality. The key point is the variability in the degree to which kimono can be seen as Japanese.

Conclusion

Rather than regarding tea as *a priori* Japanese, it is more analytically useful to view it as a particularly productive site for establishing notions of Japaneseness. I have mapped several axes along which ethnicity operates in such processes, namely, making and marking ethnic differences, forging common ties without explicitly invoking ethnic divisions, and using ethnic boundaries to do other work.

Making tea Japanese and making Japaneseness through tea occur not only in the US, but in Japan as well with interesting parallels I can only briefly point towards here. Despite differences between multiethnic and national conceptions of Japaneseness in the US and Japan (Surak 2006), there are several similarities shared in both locales in the processes through which these ethnicized understandings are accomplished. To note a few: in Japan, learning tea to train the body and mold one's person into a "proper Japanese" reveals a similar dynamic to using tea to make Japanese-Americans more Japanese in the US. Likewise, demonstrations of tea to foreigners in both contexts exhibit analogous dynamics of marking what is Japanese. Furthermore, when Japanese in Japan imbibe in a bowl of tea while on tours of historical sites, they can implicitly invoke a national frame around their actions. Along the same lines, Japanese in the US may draw connections to Japan and forge mutual ties through a comparable process of implicit framing without explicitly foregrounding ethnic divisions. These similarities are perhaps indicative of some common dynamics in these sites of ethnicity production.

However, ethnicity is not a constant presence in tea. Although "Japanese" frames are available to tea practitioners, they do not continuously apply them

in their interactions, as illustrated by the example of kimono. Rather than employing a static notion of "Japanese heritage" and applying it in a totalising fashion, keeping a sensitivity to the variability of such understandings and the waxing and waning of their interactional significance can provide a more nuanced account of the construction of Japanese heritage in practice.

There are similar cautions to be applied to research on "Japanese heritage" or "ethnic practices" in general, for questions exploring such topics may risk over-determining the extent to which ethnic or national framings are really relevant. One way to avoid this dilemma is the approach I have chosen here – taking a practice as the unit of analysis. Such a move diverts attention from ethnicity as omnirelevant to examining the conditions by and through which it is made relevant or realized (Brubaker 2002; Eriksen 2002) – and facilitates the observation of variability in heritage construction.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 "Tea ceremony" is the somewhat misleading but commonly used English translation of the Japanese term *chadô* or *sadô* ("tea path" or "way of tea"). Most of the time practitioners in Japan and the US simply to refer to the practice as "tea" (or *ocha*), a term I will use throughout the chapter.
2 From 1999 to 2001, I attended weekly tea lessons on Awaji Island and participated in private formal and informal gatherings as well as the meetings and gatherings of the national organization *Tankôkai*. In addition, I observed lessons at six other sites in the Kansai area, joined in several local, regional, and national tea events, and completed 21 semi-structured interviews with tea participants.
3 The interviewees consisted of three men and nine women between the ages 20 to 65 who have been practicing tea for 4 to 40 years. Of these, six were born and raised in Japan, three were Americans of Japanese-descent, and three were Americans of non-Japanese descent. The interviews were conducted in either English or Japanese, depending on the preference of the interviewee.
4 In this section I draw on data from both Japan and the US.
5 This is a pseudonym.

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2 Before making heritage

Internationalisation of geisha in the Meiji period

Mariko Okada[1]

It is an apparent paradox that internationalism and respect for traditional culture are the distinguishing slogans in the recent debate over the recasting of education-related laws in Japan. For under the influence of 'key wordism' (Moeran 1989) the Japanese word *dentô* ('tradition') has become nothing more than trite political parlance that evokes nationalistic sentiments. However, the idea of being international and at the same time demonstrating an understanding of traditional culture has become the constant focus of attention in contemporary Japanese popular culture. For example, the young entertainer Katori Shingo has become popular for studying English on Asahi TV's weekly *Sma Station* show,[2] where viewers can witness his improvement in conversing in English every Saturday night. Moreover, the same TV show has started a feature called *Nippon o shirô!* (Let's Learn about Japan!), which shows the protagonist learning about Japanese history and traditional culture. The concepts of tradition and internationalism, usually considered to be opposed to each other, are shown at the same time and seem in fact to complement each other.

As far as contemporary usage of these two terms is concerned, Jennifer Robertson was accurate in stating that tradition and internationalisation are complementary (Robertson 1998: 128). People admire those who are internationally active, and at the same time show an understanding of traditional culture, which is to say that they present themselves as traditional. This tendency is also visible on the streets of the geisha quarter of contemporary Kyoto, discussed in this chapter, considering questions such as when this complementary relationship was constructed, and the nature of the connection between these two ideas. By exploring several attempts to popularise geisha in the Meiji period, I will present another aspect of this relationship, which is that internationalisation exploits traditionalism. In other words, I argue that traditionalism occurs or is even sought out after attaining international recognition.

Two catchwords in the geisha oath: internationalism and tradition

I start with a brief account of the geisha quarter of Gion, where I have conducted research for the last decade.[3] Gion is located in the eastern part of the city of Kyoto, in front of the Yasaka shrine, which used to be called Gion

shrine before the Meiji restoration. In the Middle Ages and the early modern period, Gion shrine had innumerable visitors. It is said that there used to be a lot of teahouses for visitors, where women worked to serve tea. Thus, Gion has a long history as a pleasure quarter, but it was not the main one at that time, because in Kyoto there was an officially authorised area called Shimabara. Only after the Meiji Restoration, Gion became the leading geisha quarter in Kyoto, and today, Gion is without doubt the best-known geisha district in Japan.

In this regard, Arthur Golden's 1997 best-selling novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, is a recent and high profile popular addition to the established reputation of the district in the English-language literature. Golden's novel was set in Gion, and following the film adaptation in 2005, many tourists visit it to see the 'real' geisha. The geisha of Gion are an attractive theme for novels and TV dramas in Japan as well as in foreign images and narratives. I have sometimes seen geisha being introduced in public as coming from the famous Gion district, even if this is not actually the case. It is a situation that confirms Gion as the leading geisha quarter in Japan, and the key to this success seems to be Gion's effort to keep pace with and link itself to the internationalisation of the city of Kyoto after the Meiji Restoration.

A notable example of this is the oath of the geisha of Gion, included in the Gion association's schedule book, published annually and distributed to all members of the community. The schedule book is the size of an identity card, and it is less than one centimetre thick. The schedule book is designed to be extremely portable, and one can fit it inside the breast pocket of a kimono. Every year's edition has a cover of a different colour, although the colours are always of a light hue. The front cover is marked with *tsunagi-dango* (rice dumplings on a skewer), the emblem of the Gion quarter.[4] The schedule book is called *dango-chô* (dumpling notebook) because of the emblem on the front. This book is meant for the geisha to record their two-year schedule, because they often have reservations booked a year in advance. The book also has a list of useful telephone numbers such as those of public offices, dance and music teachers, hairdressers, teahouses, bars, high-class restaurants, and so on.

The schedule book opens with the oath of the geisha of Gion. This oath is not only written in their notebooks for daily use but is to be read aloud by all geisha at the New Year ceremony, which takes place on January 7 of every year. The oath consists of five clauses, which are as follows:

1 We should always be beautiful, gentle and kind.
2 We are proud of the tradition of Gion and should try hard to develop our character and to acquire artistic skills.
3 We should be pure and not cause any indecency.
4 We should recognise the international status of Kyoto and try to expand our knowledge and broaden our horizons.
5 We should practice good manners and be loved by everyone.

The words 'tradition' and 'international' can be seen in the second and fourth clauses. The notion of tradition is directly connected to encouraging the

acquisition of artistic skills; which will be described in detail shortly. On the other hand, the concept of internationalism generates progressive and open-minded feelings. Interestingly, these two clauses of the oath are indicative of the spatial awareness of Kyoto city and its constitutive locales. Gion is described as traditional and Kyoto as international. In actuality, Gion is a part of Kyoto and Kyoto is usually described as an ancient and traditional city of Japan. Kyoto, like other districts that attempt to achieve an international reputation today, has acquired this bilateral character, in order to invigorate both the international and domestic tourism industries.

For whom does a geisha present/represent her artistic skills?

As a consequence of the distinctive architectural and performative features of Kyoto, the idea of being 'traditional' and 'international' seems to be more than just an idealistic or opportunistic slogan for the Gion district. Because it is the leading geisha quarter in Kyoto, a large number of foreign customers attend the banquets in Gion. Walking through the narrow streets of Gion, one can often see several foreign tourists, cameras in hand, looking for the chance to take a picture of the geisha of Gion. Such image-making operates at official levels as well and the geisha of Gion sometimes attend high profile parties such as receptions or international conferences. One can, for example, see a picture of Gion geisha with Charles, the Prince of Wales, in Mineko Iwasaki's (2002) autobiography, *Geisha of Gion*. Many foreign media also want to see geisha and seek an opportunity to take pictures of them. But why, how and when has Gion attracted such an imaginary fascination for so many foreign visitors?

To answer this question, it is necessary to ask, regarding geisha acquiring artistic skills, who their intended audience was that they were preparing so hard for. The geisha, along with Mt. Fuji, cherry blossoms, and the samurai, has been constructed as a powerful icon of a traditional Japan and is one of the most visible and oft repeated elements of Japanese cultural heritage. The excellent sales of *Memoirs of a Geisha* revealed that the geisha is an attractive symbol of Japan even today. In this novel, the geisha is described as a high-class prostitute or an obedient woman who did everything men asked of her. This persistent sexual image of the geisha has fascinated people ever since she came to the attention of the wider world.

However, here I wish to present another aspect of the geisha, that is their artistic aspect, distinct from the aestheticism of their Orientalist appeal (Okada 2003: 159–65). Geisha literally means 'art person', and usually requires a high level of proficiency in Japanese classical dance or Japanese classical music. The geisha is not a mere barmaid; she is a dancer or a musician at a banquet and is trained to perform onstage. The geisha is considered to be a geisha only because she has these particular artistic skills, and her knowledge of dance and music is restricted to only Japanese classical art forms. Most of the art forms in the geisha's repertoire were created in pre-war Japan, and the rest were

created afterwards but were similar to the pre-war style. That is why in Japanese high cultural circles of connoisseurship, the geisha is characterised as a performative symbol of cultural heritage, which expresses more than a static, staid and mythical image of traditional Japan.

Recognising the geisha as an active cultural performer means addressing the question of who she is performing for. Since she performs traditional Japanese art forms, her performance could be interpreted instrumentally, as directed towards those who have the requisite level of cultivation to properly appreciate the nuances and details of Japanese tradition. The mythical value of the traditional Japan that the geisha are re-presenting is an ideal that does not manifest itself existentially in the skill of the geisha but rather in the discourse and expectations surrounding their performance. Audiences at geisha performances are often mixed and consist of Japanese people as well as foreign tourists. There are differences in the manner and content of performance adopted for entertaining these various foreign and domestic audiences. To entertain a foreign audience, a performer tends to portray an exotic and mysterious Japan, while to their domestic audience they display a proud nostalgia for a traditional Japan.

During the modern period the district of Gion strove hard to attract foreign audiences and to acquire international fame. The geisha held performances in front of foreign audiences at the beginning of the Meiji period, and they were introduced abroad at the end of the nineteenth century. During this initial contact with a foreign audience, they did not represent traditional Japan; they were, on the contrary, rather progressive, for to be exposed to the outside world at all was in itself a very radical gesture in those days. The idea of the geisha being the carriers of tradition emerged only later; indeed, it appears that it was only after they had obtained a sufficiently good reputation in the world, that the value of tradition was constructed in order to maintain that reputation. Thus, the discourse associating the geisha as a traditional performer does not properly emerge until the 1920s. These images of geisha as tradition were presented to the world after World War II and therefore are fairly recent, and deliberately constructed.

Miyako Odori: progressive dance performance of the early Meiji period

The geisha's first contact with a foreign audience at a public performance occurred at an annual event called *Miyako Odori*, when the geisha of Gion perform their dance and music onstage. This event is open to the public and is held every April, in the cherry blossom season. Thus, it is known as 'Cherry Dance' in English. *Miyako Odori* was established in 1872, and the year 2003 witnessed the 131st *Miyako Odori*. Today, *Miyako Odori* has become a tradition that draws a great deal of interest to Kyoto. However, when it was established, it was not conceived as 'traditional' at all.

Miyako Odori was established after the Meiji restoration when the emperor moved to Tokyo from the ancient city of Kyoto. Following the emperor, the

aristocracy and artisans who earned their living through purveyance to the royal family also moved to Tokyo. The city of Kyoto began to lose its glamour and in order to stop this decline, the city government tried to strengthen efforts towards modernisation and developed industries such as textiles, tea and tourism. With the aim of popularising their products around the world, Kyoto held the Kyoto Exposition in 1872. Spectators came to see several shows, such as firework displays, *sumô*, *nô* theatre and dance performances by geisha including *Miyako Odori*. By the end of May 1872, when the Kyoto Exposition ended, it was judged a success. The list of the rankings of the event, called *Kyôto nigiwai mitate* ('ranking list according to popularity in Kyoto') was published in 1873 (Yoshida 1975: 125, Fig. 45), and, among the many performances and exhibitions, *Miyako Odori* received the highest esteem. *Miyako Odori* was thus established for the primary purpose of attracting domestic and foreign visitors.

It is important to appreciate what an enterprising initiative *Miyako Odori* was in the context of the times. The value of this novelty led *Miyako Odori*, and, therefore, Gion, to great popular acclaim. In terms of choreography, *Miyako Odori* was completely different from the usual Japanese stage dance performances of the time. The established pattern was such that one or two dancers appeared onstage and performed for a few minutes; after an interval, other dancers would appear to hold another performance. However, in the first *Miyako Odori*, 32 dancers in identical kimonos appeared on the stage and danced in the same manner. In this respect, it was similar to the Paris 'Can Can' dance and was very new and original, compared to Japanese stage performances of the time. How was *Miyako Odori* invented? It is believed that this innovation came about through a choreographer borrowing from and imitating a dance performance held near Ise shrine, which was, at that time, the most popular tourist spot in Japan. Ise, like Gion, also had a large pleasure quarter, and, because tourists were not well informed about the prostitutes in Ise, prostitutes had to display themselves to prospective buyers. To do so, prostitutes wore identical designed kimonos and danced in the same manner, side by side, allowing the buyer to select his favourite from among several prostitutes. As in Ise, the purpose of the *Miyako Odori* style of dance seems to have been primarily to display women to those who were not acquainted with them. However, while *Miyako Odori*, originated in the pleasure quarters of Kyoto, just like the dance form in Ise,[5] it is unclear if this display was driven by the customers' lack of acquaintance with prostitutes *per se*, or rather by a very modern form of visualisation, involving regimentation, synchronisation and uniformity.

No less innovative than the choreography was the script which even today changes every year with a respected *Miyako Odori* author writing anew, although always adhering to a formula of eight to nine acts describing famous Japanese tourist spots in different seasons. The title of the first *Miyako Odori* was *Miyako Odori Jûni-Chô* ('*Miyako Odori* Twelve Tones'). We know what the text is from newspapers of those days (Anonymous 1872:

4–5). In addition, a publication with the dramatis personae and the script of *Miyako Odori* is supposed to have been distributed so as to generate advance publicity (Tanaka 1963: 52). According to the script, the text was written by the Kyoto Councilor, Nagatani Nobuatsu. However, the *Miyako Odori no rekishi* ('History of Miyako Odori'), which seems to have been privately printed in 1955, states otherwise: that the author of the first *Miyako Odori* was actually a Kyoto newspaper journalist named Kaneko Shizue. The text was written according to convention in seven-and-five-syllable metre, but it contained several novel words. For example, the initial phrase includes the word *chikyû* ('the Earth') and another phrase contains the word *kotokunihito* ('foreigner'). Quoted below is the section in which names of continents and countries have been presented:

Fukumu egao ni ai motsu eda o	Holding a beautiful branch, with a smile
Kazashi narabete ajia yoki…	Neighbouring Eastern Asia…
Susumini susumu sake kigen	Getting drunk afresh
Yoiya yôshu ashimoto sae mo	Being shaky, abroad
Yoroyoromekishi Yôroppa	On one's legs, Europe
Soramo nodokaya ametsuchi no	The sky is serene
Amerika tamaru hare hiyori	Fine weather, America
Kumorinaki yo no hana sakari	Bloom in peace
Atatakeki hi ni afurika ya	Warm day, Africa
Kani niou naru hanafubuki	Smell of blossoms
Hitono yama nasu hakuran'e	Exposition crowded with people
Osuna osuna Ôsutoriya	Don't push, don't push, Austria
Izure mo osoroi uchisoroi	Every country joyous to be uniform

The script is like a word game and the names of continents and countries are derived by the sound of a preceding word. Despite its incoherence the script creates an international atmosphere, using names of several foreign places.

From the text alone, it is difficult to ascertain that the *Miyako Odori* was established for foreign as well as for domestic audiences, but from the structure of the theatre building, it is obvious that foreign visitors were among those expected. The first *Miyako Odori* was held at a small theatre near Gion and from the next year on, it was held at a new theatre in Gion called *Kaburenjô*. This theatre was specifically built to present *Miyako Odori* with two permanent *hanamichi* (meaning 'flower path' and referring to the bridges connecting the stage with the rear of the theatre) on both sides, because *Miyako Odori* dancers came out in rows from these side stages. A crucial, new feature was the seating arrangement for the audience. Most audience members had to sit on the floor, the familiar manner for watching *kabuki* and other kinds of theatre of the time, but at the back of the floor, there were a few Western-style chairs.

The private press publication of Matsuoka Hikoji, *Kyôto Meiji shinshi (New magazine from Kyoto in the Meiji period)* is illuminating regarding the appearance of *Miyako Odori* in the beginning:

> The space for the audience is flat and has no partition. A wall-to-wall carpet is laid on the floor. It is very luxurious. There are several chairs in the rear. Visits by foreigners and wealthy patrons are definitely expected.
>
> (Matsuoka 1877: 38–9)

In this publication, Matsuoka confessed that he himself could not afford to buy a ticket for a chair and sarcastically described government officials dressed in the Western style, sitting in those seats.

The publication *Hakuran shinpô* ('Exposition Courier') is also helpful in building a picture of the reception of *Miyako Odori*, which is reported upon in the fourth issue, published during the exposition in 1872.[6] In a special feature article titled *Miyako Odori ryakki* ('Abbreviation of *Miyako Odori*'), the reporter writes, 'Seeing the performance, all the foreign members of the audience are certain to be impressed as much as the domestic audience' (Anonymous 1872: 6).

Other additions reflecting the foreign influence are evident in the new style of the tea ceremony during *Miyako Odori*. In the traditional tea ceremony, people sat on the floor, but in the *Miyako Odori* tea ceremony, people could drink tea sitting on chairs, and those who made tea could also sit on chairs. This kind of tea ceremony was called *ryûreishiki.* It began in the early days of the Meiji period and seems to have been practised during the Kyoto Exposition, including *Miyako Odori* in 1873 (Kumakura 1980: 115–21). It is clear that the organisers of *Miyako Odori* kept in mind the fact that they were receiving foreign audiences.

From these examples of the early *Miyako Odori*, it is evident that *Miyako Odori*, along with the Kyoto Exposition itself, was designed in order to attract foreign visitors. The script for the event was written so as to be somewhat coquettish and therefore to appeal to the foreign audience and to those who wished to convey the impression that they were people acquainted with the world. Kyoto, then, through the construction of such events, seems to have tried to place itself deliberately in the context of internationalism. From the outset, *Miyako Odori* and Gion were directed by the sense of being international, and an understanding that pragmatically this was the way to survive during the rapid modernisation of the pleasure quarters.

Imagined *Miyako Odori* in Chicago

Another situation which challenged the distinction between tradition and internationalism arose in 1893, when the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago. On this occasion, several girls were introduced as apprentice geisha from Osaka and Kobe, at the Chicago Imperial Theater (Kurata 1994: 148–50). Only a few documents exist about this performance, but it is known that the producer Uenishi Keizô could not get permission to hold it in the public area of the exposition. It appears that it was a Japanese officer in Chicago who prohibited him from introducing the girls at the fair. A journalist with

the Osaka Mainichi newspaper explained that the reason for this was that their performances were considered to be disgraceful. Uenishi subsequently gave up the idea of participating in the exposition and rented a theatre in the city of Chicago, holding performances where the girls apparently danced to the tunes of popular songs such as *Manzai*, *Ataka*, *Sanbasô* and *Nunosarashi*. These songs are considered to be classical Japanese music today, but in the 1890s, they were just ordinary popular songs, neither traditional nor progressive.

There is no further information about Uenishi and his dance performances in the newspapers. However, three years after the Chicago exposition, an unexpected reunion of the girls' performance was held in Japan. This was brought about by the proto-cinematic 'kinetoscope', invented by Thomas Edison and imported to Japan from the United States. In November 1896, several films shot using kinetoscopes were shown in Kobe and Osaka, and the next year, in Tokyo (Tsukada 1980: 23–58). One of these kinetoscopes was introduced as *Kyoto Gion shinchi geiko san nin sarashinuno mai no zu* ('Picture of three geisha of Gion, Kyoto, dancing *Sarashinuno*') in news reports about the show. The title of the dance, *Sarashinuno*, is a reversal of the title given to the dance performed by the girls in Chicago in 1893, *Nunosarashi*. *Sarashi* means 'bleach' and *nuno* means 'cloth', so both *Nunosarashi* and *Sarashinuno* referred to the action of bleaching cloth. As titles of dances, *Nunosarashi* or *Sarashi* are more frequently used, but it is also considered reasonable and apt for *Sarashinuno* to indicate the same dance. The dance was choreographed to depict the nimble movements needed to wash cloth in the river during the bleaching process. Apart from the subject of the dance then, the dance itself seems to have been the same as that performed in Chicago, except that the girls were probably dancing for the kinetoscope in Edison's Black Maria studio.

When this film was introduced in Tokyo, another story began to circulate. A newspaper, *Jiji-shinpô*, reported that twenty Kyoto geisha had participated in the Chicago exposition and had performed the *Miyako Odori*. They had then danced the *Nunosarashi* especially for Thomas Edison's kinetoscope. There is no indication that it was geisha of Gion or Kyoto who had actually performed the *Miyako Odori* at the Chicago exposition, or that the geisha had even gone to Chicago.[7] It seems that the claim was made in order to support the popularisation of the kinetoscope. In actuality, the kinetoscope show did not last long. The Lumière Brothers had already invented the cinematographe in 1895 and the kinetoscope lost its allure very quickly. The name, *Miyako Odori*, must have helped publicise the kinetoscope show and lend credence to the assertions about its technological capabilities. It is interesting, then, thinking of this technology's capacity for dissemination, that the story appeared not in or around Kyoto but in Tokyo, which is 500 km away. This quintessentially modern ocular device and its attendant viewing practices created the possibility of attracting national and international publicity and can be linked to a desire in Japan to be recognised as a nation with attractive arts.

As a continuation of this technologically driven development, the motion picture in question can now be viewed on the Internet at the Library of Congress website.[8] The title is 'Imperial Japanese dance' and the site summarises it as follows: 'From Edison films catalog: A charming representation of The Mikado Dance by three beautiful Japanese ladies in full costume. Very effective when colored. 45 feet. 6.75'. However, on comparing it with *Danseuses Japonaises*, which was shot in 1897 by Lumières' camera operator, Constant Girel, I found the film to be very different from the geisha dance. Indeed, this difference was noted even at the time, for until it was sold to Japan, the motion picture of this strange dance had been known as the Mikado Dance in the United States, probably in reference to the Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta.

The appearance of the word 'geisha'

In the context of the introduction of geisha abroad, it is important to mention the opera, *The Geisha: A Story of a Tea House* about which, once again, Kurata Yoshihiro has presented in-depth information (Kurata 1994: 173–89). *The Geisha* had its first public performance at Daly's Theatre in London on 25 April 1896. Composed by Sydney Jones, with a libretto by Owen Hall (James Davis) and lyrics by Harry Greenbank, *The Geisha* ran for more than two years.

The first act, 'The Tea House of Ten Thousand Joys', is set in a teahouse in Nagasaki, Japan. A marquis named Imari loves a geisha called O Mimosa san and tries to take her as a concubine. However, on seeing her dallying with a man, he gets jealous and revokes the licence to run a teahouse. The owner of the teahouse has no alternative but to auction off the geisha who has been working at the teahouse. Marquis Imari intends to purchase O Mimosa San at the auction, but is outbid. This is because a French girl, Juliette, who is employed as an interpreter at the teahouse, wants to win Marquis Imari's favour and prevents him from purchasing O Mimosa San. In this complex farce, human trafficking is re-presented in a knowingly naive and humorous manner. The second act, 'A Chrysanthemum Fete in the Palace Gardens', features the garden party hosted by Marquis Imari. In this act, everything is resolved peacefully: Juliette succeeds in winning the affection of Marquis Imari, and O Mimosa San is finally united with Captain Katana, the man she loves.

The Geisha was performed in New York on 9 September 1896, and was extremely well received. However, stories of *The Geisha*'s splendid international success were unfavourably received in Japan. Okano Eitarô wrote in the *Hôchi* newspaper on 25 June 1897:

> The opera called *The Geisha* was created in order to satirise Japanese savageness on behalf of a certain faction that is against the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Japan.

He found the description of Japan malicious.

In 1900, at the Paris Exposition, four years after the first performance of *The Geisha*, Japanese geisha were present, placed decoratively in front of paintings of Japanese scenery in the panorama pavilion. They apparently danced for a while, but were basically employed as *tableau vivant*, located among and as one of the many showpieces showcasing Japanese life. These geisha were not from Kyoto but from Tokyo and, when they left Japan, it was not on agreeable terms. Domestic commentators felt apprehensive and uneasy about them being introduced in Paris, because they were geisha. It was a recurrence of the same reaction as had occurred in Chicago where they were also considered disgraceful and not sophisticated enough to be known and associated with 'Japan' in foreign countries. Despite all this concern around geisha, it appears that they nevertheless enjoyed popularity in Paris and, after the exposition, organised performances in several countries in Europe. The opera, *The Geisha*, must have acted as good pre-publicity for the arrival of the authentic geisha from Japan. In 1902, they returned to Tokyo and on this occasion, they were heartily welcomed home from their long trip to the West. The evidence is that after receiving comparatively good reviews from Europe, people gradually came to recognise the geisha as a symbol of what was beautiful about Japan.

Thus, around the year 1900, at the dawn of the modern period, motion pictures, opera and dance performances provided the means for geisha to be made visible to the West and through those modes of visibility associated with ideas of beauty in Japan. Prior to these developments, in the 1890s, the word 'geisha' was not so popular and it is quite hard to find occurrences of the word in newspapers in the West. The opera *The Geisha* and the arrival of genuine geisha from Japan seem to have been instrumental in helping the word 'geisha' take root in Western popular consciousness. Subsequently, for Japanese people, stories of these presentations opened their eyes to the possibility of the exoticism of Japanese women and Japanese entrepreneurs like Kurata could go on (in June 1901) to introduce a variety of items from geisha performances in Berlin. Kurata presented the following acts:

Asatsuma	(a historical dance)
Tsukuma	(a historical song)
Tsurukame	(a festal dance)
Ougi no mai	(a dramatic dance)
Gaisen odori	
Nasukabo	
Hanagatami	
Iriai	(a dance of spring)
Kappore odori	(a dance)
Herahera odori	(instrumental music)

<div align="right">(Kurata 1994: 193–4)</div>

Mixed together here are some popular songs of the period as well as some classical ones. For example, *Gaisen odori* appears to be a popular army song

known as *Michi wa Roppyaku-hachijû-ri,* which was published in 1891 under
the title, *Gaisen ka* ('Song for Triumphal Return') and became popular during
the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). In contrast, *Nasukabo* is a comical dance
that describes a quarrel between an eggplant and a pumpkin and has been pop-
ular since the end of the Edo period up to the Taishô period. Performances of
these items were not considered traditional but attracted popular attention.

Conclusion

The idea of tradition surrounding the geisha community came after the devel-
opments described above. During the 1920s, when Western-style clothes, dance
and music became popular, several pleasure quarters tried to incorporate
Western trends in their performances. About this, Ôshima Tokurô wrote with
more than a touch of regret and nostalgia of *Miyako Odori* as the only
performance that had not been Westernized:

> The gratifying thing is that *Miyako Odori* alone has avoided errors such
> as collaborating with a marching band or incorporating Western dance
> styles. It is disappointing that the abysmal taste of dances in Kyoto and
> Osaka is becoming increasingly widespread.
>
> Those who think they are being innovative by making dancers shake
> hands with the audience and including stupid dances like passing shows
> in American crummy bars, are a nuisance to both the dancers and the
> audience.
>
> I hope to enjoy relaxing with *Miyako Odori*, at the very least. Do not
> use ineffectual bluster while changing scenes and be discreet in a manner
> that is worthy of elegant, ancient capital. Leave clockwork mechanisms
> like birds flying from trees or the sudden appearance of gorgeous palaces,
> and adopt it as a motto that the *Miyako Odori* can only be seen in
> Kyoto.
>
> (Ôshima 1925: 15–18)

From these comments, it is clear that even *Miyako Odori* had eclectic moder-
nist associations, as typified by the remark about clockwork mechanisms and
remembering that Gion was perceived as the last bastion against westernisa-
tion. However, while remaining the home of *Miyako Odori*, and being neither
radically westernised nor strictly traditional, in 1937, Gion would give rise
to another westernised dance performance called *Yasaka Odori*. This was a
dance form introduced entirely by modern methods according to the pages of
the *Kyôto nichi-nichi shinbun* ('Kyoto Daily Newspaper') on 5 May 1937 and
paid scant attention to the conservative opinions of those who felt that the
geisha quarters should not have been westernised.

After World War II, the geisha quarters were more able and selective in
presenting their own version of traditional Japan. For after the devastation
caused by the war, Kyoto, among many of the Japanese cities looking to

restore their native industries, turned especially to tourism. Fortunately, many tourist spots were not damaged by the air raids and a well-known story claims Kyoto escaped attack because of its cultural property (Yoshida 1995: 201–23). As part of this post-war reconstruction in Kyoto, the geisha have become one of the protected cultural assets of the city. When *Miyako Odori* was held five years after the end of the war, the artistic context for its performance was retrospective, as evinced in productions of: *Tale of Genji, Tale of the Heike*, as well as *nô*, *kyôgen* and *kabuki* theatre. At this time, most of the scenes of *Miyako Odori* were chosen from the famous tourist spots around Kyoto, not from other parts of Japan. This was the cultural moment in which Gion and Kyoto unified more closely, and began to present themselves as more traditional and authentically Japanese. *Miyako Odori* was no longer a progressive performance; it aimed at a certain level, to quite instrumentally attract a sufficiently large audience with its beautiful Kyoto scenery and 'traditional' *Miyako Odori* dance style. Being conservative and traditional was the strategy needed to survive in post-war Japan, particularly in those circles where it is considered that the influence of the West is strong and Japan itself is losing its own national identity. The value of geisha as part of the cultural heritage of Kyoto and of Japan is therefore a carefully constructed and context-dependent phenomenon, responsive to historical circumstance, to the gaze of the West and to the technologies of modernity.

Notes

1 All translations from Japanese to English are my own.
2 TV Asahi's weekly show is called *Sma Station*, which is broadcast every Saturday from 23:00, and features multi-talented youth icon Katori Shingo.
3 Although 'geisha' is usually called *geiko* in Kyoto, I have used the word 'geisha' in order to discuss the constructed image of the geisha instead of women who work as *geiko* in Kyoto.
4 This emblem is commonly round in shape, but on the front cover of the schedule book, *tsunagi-dango* is straight, not round. The number of dumplings is eight.
5 In this context, I should mention *yûjo kabuki* or *onna kabuki*, kabuki performances by prostitutes (*yûjo*), from the beginning of the seventeenth century to 1629, which have been depicted in paintings of the same age. The paintings depict tens of performers onstage, in identical costumes and striking the same pose. However, *yûjo kabuki* performances ceased too long ago to be presented as a practical parallel to *Miyako Odori*.
6 The Kyoto Exposition opened on 10 March 1872, and *Miyako Odori* was first held on 13 March 1872. Both were closed by the end of May 1872. The fourth issue of *Hakuran Shinpô* (Exposition Courier) seems to have been published between 23 March and the end of April 1872, although there was no statement of the published date. The last news report published in the fourth issue was about the event held on 23 March. The issue also had an announcement of a thirty-day extension of the period of the exposition, up to the end of May.
7 Documentary Kobo's Video programme, *Kinema no Yoake* (Dawn of Cinema) explains that the girls in the kinetoscope film were stars on Broadway, but I could not find evidence of this.
8 Available at: www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edhome.html

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3   Making art in the Japanese way

Nihonga as process and symbolic action

Arunas Gelunas

They don't speak foreign languages, they do not mingle with the students from other departments, they adhere to what they believe are the traditional Japanese subjects for study and, if possible, to the traditional way of life. They are admired as 'very Japanese' by some, and are laughed at as too *dentôteki* ('traditional' or 'traditionalist') by the others. They are the teachers and the students of *nihonga* – Japanese-style painting.

  If you belong, as I have at one time, to the group of *nihonga* practitioners in one way or another, it is impossible, to avoid a question like 'What is *nihonga*?' or 'Is *nihonga* something like *ukiyoe* ("wood-block prints")'? These are questions posed not only by unenlightened foreigners but also by the Japanese themselves. The impression is that this tradition of art with a history of more than a century, dating back to the early Meiji period and with thousands of paintings to its name, still has to explain itself even on its native soil. Authoritative information on the subject of *nihonga* in sourcebooks such as *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Japan* describes this trend of art as emerging in opposition to *yôga*, 'Western-style painting' and in the face of a threat to national identity posed by the influx of Western art in the second half of the nineteenth century. From its very beginning in 1888, when the Tokyo School of Fine Arts was founded, the institutional and practical frameworks for instruction in painting in Japan were plagued by a basic paradox. In the West, the 'traditionalist school' of painting was regarded as an exemplar of the emerging avant-garde, while in Japan the 'Western school', itself derided at home as simple imitations of no value, was itself revered as avant-garde and anti-traditionalist (Karatani, in Marra 2001: 44–5). Japanese traditional art was 'discovered' and readily accepted by Western educators, such as Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) who claimed that 'values in Japanese art transcended those of the modern West' (ibid.: 43). As a result of this cross-fertilisation, the art of *nihonga*, especially its iconography, gradually came to be led and regulated by canons so similar to those that regulated Western painting that today their differences are mostly in terms of institutional arrangements. This is not however, to agree with Samuel C. Morse, that 'it cannot be long before the old, artificially maintained division between "Western" and "Japanese" [painting] will either wither away or be bypassed by younger generations'

(in Bowring and Kornicki 1993: 196). Rather, it points towards the deliberate support required by *nihonga* departments in Japanese art universities and the *nihonga* groups of artists to perpetuate an idea that their work distils the essence of Japanese art. This is a concept which is in itself artificial or at least a construction, as Karatani has argued (Karatani 2001: 44). Notwithstanding these deconstructive critiques, it is interesting to examine whether or not there is something substantially different in the practice of *nihonga* artists and whether the 'Japanese-picture' construct is actually capable of generating productive cultural phenomena and not only 'transplants of the surface' (Makino 1995: 117).

The aim of this chapter is to show how the school of *nihonga* is produced institutionally by superimposing features of the traditional paradigm of art-making onto a modern art form in order to 'naturalise' it into the Japanese context. It is based on my personal experience as a researcher at the *nihonga* department of the *Tôkyô Geijutsu Daigaku* (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music or *Geidai*) in 1995–97 and has in part been motivated by the conviction that the problem of assigning a distinctive 'feel' to Japanese culture (Bocking, in Carr and Mahalingham 2001: 711) is one worth returning to in thinking through the role of painting in the manufacturing of national identity and the incompatibility of imported styles and domestic sensibility (Makino 1995: 118). This conviction is vividly reflected by the public statements of practising artists on what is and what is not 'Japanese-style painting', by the exhibitions focusing on the indigenous elements in Japanese art and by the many hours of discussion I have had with *nihonga* artists and students, especially with the well-known Japanese-style painter Okamura Keizaburô whose own creative work is a good testimony to the meaningfulness of these problems. As my own position has oscillated between the critical gaze of an outside observer to empathic participation as a painter who is nearly an insider, I will treat my experience as a sort of fieldwork, though I was not at the time conscious of my activity as a specific kind of anthropology. This attempt to examine the domestic sensibilities of the Japanese art world is not therefore sympathetic to claims made for its impenetrable and unique character. Rather this chapter is intended as a contribution to critiques of the 'West' and of 'tradition' as they have been construed in Japanese modernity.

Therefore, I shall attempt to analyse *nihonga* not from the formal standpoint of its iconography, but will engage in phenomenological description. That is, instead of letting the images of *nihonga* 'speak for themselves' which takes for granted that what is available to be read constitutes meaning, I will try to treat *nihonga* as a social practice and a specific form of symbolic action. For this purpose it will be necessary to see it not only as a set of objects offered for the national or international art markets, but also as a set of practical processes with a rich variety of cultural elements that an object-centred and essentialising strategy leaves unexamined. The questions that direct this descriptive analysis are about the differences in the practice of

nihonga and oil painting and in what way – if any – can these be recognised by the outsider? This will lead to a more fundamental question: how are the challenges of Western modernity met by tradition-oriented contemporary Japanese artists?

Let me start with a comparative description of the creative process that characterise *nihonga* and *yôga* styles of painting. There are essential differences in tools and their usage, the stages of their learning processes, the resulting means of social performances, and the perceptive qualities required to appreciate the finished works of art.

A normative Western method of comparison between the two would probably ignore the stage of technical execution as merely a technical matter. An influential if not authoritative contemporary definition of technique in art can be found in a recent statement by well-known English artist Grayson Perry, a Turner Prize winner in 2003, who states that 'the essential distinction between art and craft is that art has an emphasis on feelings and ideas and the crafts have an emphasis on technique' and that 'the craft world has become a refuge for the less challenging artists' (Perry, 2005). In the terms of this perspective, meaningful comparisons are made solely between the objects already made, that is, between the pictures presented by the artist for the judgment of the viewer. By one measure such an approach appears fully justified, for sometimes it is only the 'final dot' of the artist which decides the quality of the piece and makes it 'art'. It would seem meaningless to attempt to compare something less than a finished object, for it is taken for granted that iconographical analysis relies upon a determination of meaning that can reach out towards a network of cultural and social meanings. My experience and argument are that this is not the case with *nihonga*. Practitioners agree that it is precisely around technique that the multilayered value of this art is structured. For them, it is not 'just a technique' and such a sharp division between the 'art' of *nihonga* and the process of creating *nihonga* is, in fact, very Western. In this respect it is interesting to note here that the Japanese word for 'art', *bijutsu*, was coined only in the beginning of Meiji when the concept of art was transplanted from the West. In this process, the handicrafts that used to play a very important role in Japanese traditional culture, were separated from 'high art' and delegated a lower position in the new hierarchy of value (Yamawaki 1995: 106).

Two elements in the creative process without which *nihonga* is virtually unrecognisable are *iwa enogu* and *washi*. The first term refers to the mineral pigment paint or simply various kinds of rock ground into powder and the second term refers to Japanese hand-made paper. The skilled combining of these is the technical core of *nihonga*. It is the rough character of the mineral pigment that creates the difference in the surface qualities between Japanese-style painting and oil painting. In contrast to oil painting, the surface of *nihonga* painting is always matte finish and comprises a more or less clearly discernible texture comparable to that of sandpaper. In some cases the grain is deliberately made very rough by the artist, and then it comes to look a lot

like the surface of a real rock. At the other extreme it bears a close resemblance to the surface texture of watercolours. Moving now from surface to means, how are tools applied in the hands of *nihonga* practitioners? The first method which is usually ignored by the 'insiders', the professionals, is to go and buy these tools in the big art-goods stores. The second and most widespread method is to buy these goods in small family-run stores specialising in *nihonga* tools only. The third method is to make them yourself. This latter method is the archetypal procedure and is part of the education of every *nihonga* painter. Therefore, I would like to start the description of the processual and social character of *nihonga* from this point.

It was called the *iwa enogu tsuki ken* – 'a trip for making a mineral pigment paint'. The group was formed by the professors, the assistants and the students of the *nihonga* department of the university. The destination was an art-studio in Fukushima prefecture affiliated to *Geidai*. It was there that the mineral pigment was to be produced from the various kinds of rocks gathered in the mountains around the area. Before we left, I was given a notice that the only and fundamental requirement was to cooperate with the other members of the group, as the success of the trip depended essentially on smooth teamwork. The work had to proceed in several pre-determined stages: from forming small subgroups, through composing the schedule of activities, to planning the most important part – the selection of rocks with regard to their color and softness, the methods of grinding them into powder, and, finally, the sifting of the powder through different sieves to sort out pigments of various coarseness. Everything was planned down to the minutest detail while still in Tokyo, and began as soon as we had arrived and deposited our backpacks in the rooms of the studio-house. Each team of three to five persons had a walkie-talkie so as not to lose contact during the 'expedition', and they spread into different directions as the character of surrounding rocks differed, allowing for a greater variety of pigments. Enjoying the scenery and expressing the amazement with it in a very emotional manner was as inseparable a part of the project as the careful selection of the stones themselves. My Japanese counterparts knew the names of each kind of rock we discovered and could immediately appreciate the quality of the pigment it was going to make and the natural beauty of the form of each stone, which they often found 'cute' (*kawaii*). When we returned at the appointed time, each team brought back an abundance of rocks of different colours. In the studio, big metal pestles were prepared for crushing and grinding the stones. Hard physical work began, and we took turns since it was not easy to keep on grinding for a long time. All the powder produced was filtered through sieves of different density by the female members of our group. Female students also prepared food for the tired gatherers and grinders in the kitchen of the studio-house. After all the stones had been crushed into powder of various colors and shades of colours and the pigment had been sorted out into small plastic bags indicating the name of the mineral and the number of the coarseness of the powder, we had our meals and sake. This was also the

time for remembering the successes and the failures of the day and making jokes about them and for listening to the stories told by the older professors concerning their similar experiences, the nuances of the selection of the rocks and making of the mineral pigments. The day ended with the bath, which in that house was designed with an exceptional view: the bath itself was made of wood and the room had sliding windows opening onto a panorama of the surrounding garden. The next morning began with all of us assembling in the biggest Japanese-style room of the house to summarise the accomplishments of our visit. Afterwards we shared *soba* noodles from a big bowl in the centre of the room, the professor and the teaching assistants expressed their delight with the trip and their gratitude to all participants.

It is instructive to examine the structure of the trip that emerges from the description, against the background of *yôga* ('Western oil-painting'). In oil painting paint normally comes in tubes or in cans but this does not mean that one cannot find factory-produced paint of an indisputably high quality. So why should artists apparently waste time in trying to produce it themselves? Is it not much better instead to concentrate on the artistic creation itself, which is the real work and cannot be reduced to technique? The abstraction and reification of the materials stress the discontinuity between 'a work of art' and its materiality, the stuff it is made of. This is related to a more general problem of Western individualism and the habits of abstract thinking that are intimately connected with it – first of all, the strong emphasis on the abstract concept of time. Its effect is to avoid trying to articulate meaningfully the entire network of people and processes that participate in *nihonga* and rather to ascribe value to the individual creator. There is also a tendency to pass over the entire path of dialectical emergence of the piece of art, sticking to its 'meaning' instead and thus transcending the passage of real time. This not to deny the recognition and status of the author in Japan, but along with this we find a much wider context and a sensitivity to the realm of social interaction. In summary, the pivotal points of the university visit are: the stress on the group rather than on the individual in the 'guild' formed of such individualistically oriented members, otherwise encouraged to orientate themselves individually as artists; the importance of (collective) physical work; the readiness to conduct every stage of the work slowly and meticulously; the meaningful structuring of the relationship between man and nature (mineral pigment being both a part of nature and a part of art); the procedures that saturate the hierarchically structured relationships and patterns of cooperation between different generations and sexes with meaning.

Iwa enogu tsuki ken is not the only, though perhaps it is the most impressive, example of how art materials can become a 'binding element' in the social practices of artists in contemporary Japan. Workshops on making pigments or paper are quite widespread among the various communities of *nihonga* artists and students. Moreover, every stage of preparation for painting with mineral pigments – constructing the board for mounting the paper, mounting and sizing the paper, applying mineral pigments and *ginpaku* or

kinpaku ('silver leaves' or 'gold leaves') – is carried out by the *nihonga* artist with a speed, mastery, and enjoyment difficult to imagine in the workshop of an oil painter. I would suggest that such technical attitudes and performances reveal something very essential in the '*nihonga* as Japan' paradigm of the practice and position of 'art' in a whole network of social activities. The positive values and personal enjoyment with which the *nihonga* artist is involved in the 'craft' part of the work are not something determined by pressures of modernisation or by pressures of any kind but emerge from historically constituted tendencies in Japanese culture.

In considering the importance of this 'processual' character of *nihonga* art production, there are clear implications for the kind of analysis required. If finished works lend themselves to reproduction and can be included in travelling exhibitions and thus directly appreciated, processes of their production remain important in their native Japanese context only and can hardly be replaced by description. Without direct participation and active involvement in them, it is impossible to understand the dialectical character of the works that result from them. Pointing to something that remains uncovered, 'behind' the work of art, may seem to be a device for mystification, but it is precisely this 'participation element' and the immersion in lived time that make sense in training and performance practices of Japanese arts. A useful parallel here with traditional genres of Japanese music can be drawn here, as David W. Hughes puts it:

> The overwhelming influence of Western music has created a dilemma for would-be composers in traditional genres: the 'natural' evolution of these genres has been pre-empted. It no longer seems possible, for example, to write a convincing new *nô* play without sounding either super-conservative or Westernized.
>
> (in Bowring and Kornicki 1993: 218)

Nihonga groups seem to be bound by canons similar to those of traditional music performers:

> [C]orrect appearance is aesthetically fundamental: it is not enough to produce a good sound from a drum, one must hold the sticks exactly as taught, pick them up correctly and so forth. Such subtle matters vary with one's 'school', and an appreciation of these differences is crucial for the connoisseur.
>
> (ibid.)

I will return to the problem raised here of originality and 'creating vs. performing' shortly.

In his article 'Intimacy: A General Orientation in Japanese Religious Values', Thomas Kasulis remarks with good reason that 'understanding goes beyond knowing' and that it necessarily includes *Einfühlung* and the ability

'to imagine at least for a fleeting moment what it is like to be Japanese' (Kasulis 1990: 413). He also proposes that at the core of Japanese culture lies what he calls 'intimacy' – 'something like to make known (*intimare*) to a close friend (*intimo*) what is innermost (*intima*)' (ibid.: 435). This term is productive for the purposes of this argument. The five structural aspects that I have pointed out in the description of *iwa enogu tsuki ken* can well be reinterpreted along the lines of 'intimacy': close, intimate, family-like ties within the group rather than being individualistic and self-absorbed; showing intimate (bodily) involvement with materials and tools rather than having a purely outwardly relationship (for instance, buying them in the big store vs. making them oneself; to be intimate with something requires time, attention and (repeated) praxis instead of quick acquaintance; intimacy between man and nature ('aesthetic pathos' – *mono no aware*) and the characteristic *chijimi* (in treating stones as 'small cute things') (Lebra and Lebra 1986: xiii).[1]

The acknowledgement of the craft aspect of Japanese art that I have argued for here allows us to discern historical connections with movements such as the radical *Mono-ha*, 'reversions to things Japanese' movement at the end of the 1970s (Endo, in Makino 1995: 117). *Mono-ha* is a contemporary art movement that started with the sculptural works by the artist Sekine Nobuo in 1968. Sekine's work featured a cylindrical hole in the earth and a pile of excavated dirt molded into a cylinder of the same volume. Largely influenced by the Taoist philosophy, *Mono-ha* artists sought the return to the primordial state of the world and attempted to get rid of the cultural concepts and labels. The group included artists such as Koshimizu Susumu and U-Fan Lee. The insistence of the *Mono-ha* ideologists on the need to see 'the world as it is, everything in its naked state, without attaching symbolic meanings that are human in origin and turning it into an object of human action' (U-Fan Lee, in Makino 1995: 118–19), thus denying creation and advocating presenting natural rocks and pieces of untreated wood and iron for the direct interaction of the viewers circumvents all the elements that the 'craft aspect' of *nihonga* added value for. From such a viewpoint, the entire network of teachers and craftsmen loses essential aspects of its functions and meanings.

The artist Okamura Keizaburô, with whom I have had numerous conversations regarding the identity of Japanese art, sees art in Japan as characteristically animistic, with Shinto gods (*kami*) living in every well-executed piece of painting, ceramics or metalware, just as they do in nature. It is mostly and first of all *a thing well done* which is a *conditio sine qua non* for a *kami* to take up abode in a painting. When I met him, Okamura himself was engaged in a serious search for the motives and the modes of expression that would be recognised as 'Japanese' while demonstrating contemporary sensibilities at the same time. His works are presented by the art critics (and, to a greater or lesser extent, conceived by the artist himself) as 'today's religious fantasies, based on Buddhism, but expressed with the aesthetics of folk culture' bearing an intention 'to restore the primordial religious awe to contemporary space and painting' (Haito 1995: 68). Okamura was very conscious

of his efforts to make use of the issues of local culture and national heritage and in this respect his case can be treated as somewhat exemplary. When visiting his studio, I have always had the feeling that there is something ritualistic in the way he approaches his creative work. Mysticism apart, there was something in his movements themselves that seemed to me difficult to compare with the ways that my Lithuanian and Western colleagues normally work. His movements were somehow more precise and better articulated, there was something more vividly expressive about them.

At this point I would like to present another description that will deal with one more point I want to make about *nihonga* as symbolic action. This is a description of *keiko*, the 'lessons' of *nihonga* art and techniques. These lessons always proceeded according to the same pattern, with the roles of the participants clearly articulated. Such a lesson is unthinkable without a 'guest star', a well-known 'teacher' (*sensei*) and specialist in a particular area, who is invited to lead the event. There are also local assistants who have some degree of competence in the fields of instruction but act only as 'supporting staff', and, finally, there are the students. I have participated in many such *keiko*, of which the lessons on applying gold leaves (*kinpaku*) and on applying a particular kind of *washi*, *hosokawa-shi*, for *urauchi* (forming a soft ground layer on the panel on which the *washi* for actual painting is mounted) were the most impressionistic.

The first characteristic to note is that most of the lessons are conducted without almost any verbal instruction. The class took place in one of the big studios of the university allowing quite a large number of students (twenty to thirty) to assemble to learn. They were seated in a half-circle around the 'stage' of several low tables with tools and materials amassed on them. Behind these tables was a much respected teacher of *kinpaku* techniques. After naming the necessary tools and materials, these were prepared by the young assistants of the *nihonga* department. They were quick to react to the needs of the teacher for each step had a clearly delimited beginning and end, every stage of work involved a strictly defined bodily posture and trajectory of movement. The silent murmuring of the teacher helped to structure different points and to name the specific objectives in the process to the students, who were taking notes. As the entire procedure was repeated at least three times, everyone had the possibility to observe and to memorise. *Kinpaku* – thin leaves of real gold – is expensive material and this occasion provided the entire ceremony with an atmosphere of increased importance: every mistake could be fatal, damaging the leaves irretrievably. After the initial stage of observation came the stage of repetition. The boldest and the most willing had the chance to 'replay' all the steps under the teacher's guidance. This was repeated twice. The lesson ended with a well-orchestrated thanking and farewell ritual.

The structure of this teaching/learning process is immediately reminiscent of the concept of *michi* or *dô*, which is well known as it is rooted in Sino-Japanese culture. *Dô* is associated with the concept of 'training by shaping

one's body into a form (*katachi*)' and with the cultural practices stemming from Zen Buddhism (Yuasa, in Cox 2003: 26). This concept usually appears in the context of traditional artistic practices, such as poetry, drama, tea ceremony or *kendô*. It is all the more significant that *nihonga*, essentially an art form to have emerged as an adaptive reaction to modern influences, has adopted the same patterns for its institutional transmission, although this occurs in the framework of a modern, public arts university as opposed to the traditional *iemoto* system based on private master–disciple relationships. It is, perhaps, due to the more practical than theoretical character of art studies that *nihonga* groups have adopted the features of *dô* practices. Nevertheless, theoretical lectures for *nihonga* students also have some features such as the 'trip for observing old [Japanese] art' (visiting old Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines of Nara and Kyoto) *kobijutsu ken*, carried out as a part of the degree curriculum and guided by art history experts and religious authorities, which bear many similarities to the *iwa enogu tsuki ken* described above.

Rupert Cox describes the way of training in Japanese [Zen] arts as follows: 'In kata, the repeated imitation of standardised patterns of movement are a physical and visual substantiation of a tradition, connecting the practitioner to aesthetic qualities, as well as to all the others, past and present, who also practice' (Cox 2003: 26). The social aspect of learning by imitation what the teacher does is accentuated here precisely because technique is regarded as much higher in importance than the 'idea', the conceptual part of the work. To observe and to imitate forms in such manner it is necessary to trust the tradition that has produced them. Needless to say, this is not the case with the experimental spirit in art, for experiment puts its trust in fast progress, the 'politics of novelties', and not in repetition and thus perpetuation of the traditional shapes or of the indigenous pattern 'as they appear', *ab origine, in illo tempore* (Eliade 1959: 70).

The above descriptions of the craft rituals of *nihonga* can be treated as a part of a more general tendency in contemporary Japan towards a 'growing interest … in materials as substances and not as media for expression' (Makino 1995: 119). This phenomenon owes much to the above-mentioned *Mono-ha* movement and has to do with a drive to get rid of a 'despotism of human meanings' and to return to what is imagined as the primordial unity of man and nature. This aspect of artistic creativity can be usefully interpreted in the context of the problematic of 'originality' (ibid.).

The concept of originality is usually considered to be alien to Japanese aesthetics (Moeran 1986: 74). A common dictionary interpretation of its meaning would be the 'ability to think or express oneself in an independent and individual manner' or as 'freshness and novelty' (Webster 1986: 1366) which are essential characteristics of the Western *kojinshugi* (individualism) conceived as the direct opposite to Japanese *kokoro* (heart, mind). However, the etymology of the word 'originality' locates its meaning closer to a 'Japanese perspective'. In Cicero and Apuleius, the Latin word for 'original' (*originalis*) is used in a sense of 'belonging or pertaining to the origin or

beginning of something' or 'a primary form or type from which varieties are derived' (ibid.). The usage of the term in the contemporary context leads us away from the concept of originality as a relation with the archetype or pattern and towards an understanding of its meaning as a 'journalistic novelty' (Steiner 1989). Steiner asserts all meaningful art is archaic in its connection to a primordial archetypal pattern, in its allowing us to feel the 'pulse of the origins'. Such a standpoint is close to the ideas of *Mono-ha*. Consider two quotations from the writings of its proponents:

> The world exists without our creating it. How then can I dare to attempt to create? All I can do is to be myself in the world that is itself, and show it in a striking way.
>
> (Sekine, in Makino 1995: 118)

> We need to learn to see the world as it is, everything in its naked state, without attaching symbolic meanings that are human in origin and turning it into an object of human action. Everything has been there since the [*sic*] time immemorial, and the world is already open to us. There is no way for us to create in any significant way in this world.
>
> (U-Fan Lee, in Makino 1995: 118–19)

There are clear intertextual resonance between the above statements and the passages from Eliade on 'the eternal return' to origins. To my mind, the important issue here is the essential difference that lies between the Western Judeo-Christian concept of creation 'out of nothing' and the Sino-Japanese idea of creation as 'shaping of primordial material'. That is to say that the difference lies between ideas of 'God the Creator' and the 'Divine Craftsman'. Needless to say, the Japanese follow the latter pattern – that of craftsmanship. For the Japanese, the hubris of such divine genius is hard to understand for at least two reasons: first, 'the world exists without our creating it' (thus the motive of nature is ever present in Japanese art[2]) and, second, the stance of the Divine Genius negates and ridicules the smooth functioning of the network of social interdependence. When examining the phenomenon of copying in Japanese architecture, Yamaguchi Masao observes that the eternal connection to origins in Japan is ensured not by the durability of the materials (as in the West), but by the permanence of the patterns – models, images, and forms. As he says, there exists in Japan 'the tendency to redundancy, copy, and repetition as related to the conservation of technologies, ideas, and styles' (Yamaguchi 2001). It is from this perspective that we can consider *nihonga* to emerge out of the application of the Japanese pattern of artistic practice to the imported Western ideas of art.

In this chapter, I have indicated how various technological and learning practices in *nihonga* allow a meaningful articulation of Japanese 'domestic sensibilities', such as the love of nature and context-sensitive social behavior. Against the background of *yôga* I have analysed the multi-layered structure of

the university trip of the *nihonga* department and the symbolic character of its technical workshop. Notwithstanding the diversity of the modes of expression articulated here it is difficult not to notice a common cultural practice of the imitation of forms (*kata*). It is probably easier to recognise this model in performing arts than in painting, but as soon as we approach *nihonga* primarily as a context-sensitive process (*koto*) and not simply as sets of pictures (*mono*), the *kata* aspect of *nihonga* inevitably comes to the fore (Raud 2002).

The concern of the present chapter has not been to consider how 'postmodern' and eclectic the Japanese art scene, like every other art scene in the world, is. Neither has it been to ask how consumerism and the streams of internationally available influences are apparently undermining Japanese tradition. My aim has been to describe *nihonga* as a contemporary – though, perhaps, marginal and 'sub-cultural' – Japanese art practice and to try to analyse its complicity and interconnectedness with the complex and subtle network of ideas about Japanese culture. My aim has been to try and reveal new aspects of the *nihonga* paintings that reach us mostly in the form of reproductions and to try to show them rather as a *stage* in a rich and multi-layered cultural practice different from our own whereby we see them not just as art objects, more or less similar to the ones we are capable of producing ourselves.

Notes

1 Cf. the passage in Suzuki: 'Perhaps one most egregiously Japanese characteristic is to take notice of the small things of nature and tenderly take care of them' (Suzuki 1994: 231). Also see the note on *chijimi* in Lebra and Lebra (1986), p. xiii.
2 Some 'statistical data' may be instructive here: from the eighty graduation pieces that were created by *nihonga* students (both B.A. and M.A.) in the years 1996–97 in Tôkyô *Geidai*, more than fifty dealt with the subject of nature and only a very insignificant proportion of them were dedicated to industrial or other motives. From these, only five works or so bear the strong mark of what could be called 'Western individualism'.

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Part II

Institutionalising Japanese heritage

4 Architecture, folklore studies, and cultural democracy

Nagakura Saburô and *Hida Minzoku-mura*

Peter Siegenthaler

Introduction

On 25 May 1959, Iwamoto Shinichirô, the incoming mayor of the city of Takayama, in northern Gifu prefecture, approached the local potter, painter, and folklorist Nagakura Saburô with a request.[1] Nagakura had been chosen by Iwamoto's predecessor to lead in the establishment of a folklore museum just outside the city center. Like the *Takayama Kyôdo-kan*, a local history and culture museum that had run deficits for all the six years of its administration, the folklore museum was to be administered from the city's education department. Iwamoto wanted to make sure that during his tenure the new museum would serve as a catalyst to draw tourism money to the city, rather than being a drain on its resources.

The official history of the folklore museum reports that Nagakura agreed to Iwamoto's request, promising to do all he could to run it at a profit—with the mayor's agreement that Nagakura would be able to re-invest some of those earnings toward the collection's continued expansion. *Hida Minzoku-kan* ("Hida Folklife Hall"), as the new museum was named, was set up in a restored house brought in from the nearby countryside. Attracting higher than expected numbers of visitors from its opening day in July 1959, by the end of its first decade the folklore museum was one of the pillars of the city's tourism industry.[2]

Between 1965 and the early 1970s, the museum was greatly expanded with the addition of nearly two dozen houses and other buildings relocated from sites around Gifu prefecture. Today it is the open-air architectural museum *Hida Minzoku-mura* ("Hida Folklore Village"), a collection of nearly fifty structures on two sites. The larger of the two parts, *Hida no Sato* ("Hida Village"), consists of more than three dozen buildings arrayed around an artificial pond, simulating a small hamlet made up of residences, a shrine, a festival stage, mill buildings, and outbuildings constructed in local architectural styles and brought to the site from throughout the region (Figure 4.1). By the early 1990s, visits to the museum topped 800,000 per year, and nearly one-third of all visitors to Takayama visited the open-air museum (Hida-Takayama Tenryô Sanbyaku-nen Kinen Jigyô Suishin Kyôgikai 1992: 191, 238).

The establishment and success of *Hida Minzoku-kan* and then *Hida Minzoku-mura* are clearly representative of a wave of growth in the Japanese domestic tourism industry as a whole during the 1960s and 1970s. The economic, social, and cultural trends that promoted the birth of the "new middle class," itself the social locus of what has been called a new "middlebrow culture" for the postwar era, worked to facilitate an increase in the numbers and quality of tourism-focused institutions nationwide, including local history museums, notable scenic places, and nature parks (Kelly 1986; 1993: 195). Seen in relation to the motivations of the heritage consumer, *Hida Minzoku-mura*'s success draws from the same increase in personal income, rediscovery of leisure travel, renewed interest in the exploration of national identity, and retreat from organized political activity that are broadly seen as characterizing Japan in the 1960s (see, for example, the essays in Gordon 1993).

Seen in relation to the activities of the heritage curator, the path of the Takayama open-air museum's development reflects the central dynamics of the heritage-making process in postwar Japan. Eyal Ben-Ari (1992: 216) argues that analysis of Japanese heritage making requires recognition of the juxtaposition and interconnection of two levels of analysis: the local and the national. An emphasis on the national reveals a fundamental pressure toward the centralization of power and homogenization of identity, but the local can either play a supporting role in the expression of national character or facilitate the assertion of particular local identities in opposition to a homogenized nationhood.

Figure 4.1 Looking across the pond at Hida no Sato in the summer of 2002.
Source: Photo by the author.

The establishment of open-air architectural museums and other mass-tourism heritage sites is commonly seen worldwide as an effort toward the production and re-production of what Marilyn Ivy (1995: 3) terms the "national-cultural imaginary," the ideological centerpoint that marks "the inextricable linkage of culture with the idea of the nation." The world's first open-air museum, Skansen, established in 1891, bringing together on one site farm buildings from throughout the Swedish countryside, explicitly links the articulation of national identity with the protection and display of structures from the past. The founder of Norway's counterpart to Skansen, the Maihaugan open-air museum, set the tone for later collectors when he observed in 1907 that in his assemblage of old houses and farming implements, "it is not only the single individual who is mirrored, but … the whole race, generation after generation" (M. Anders Sandvig, quoted in Bröchner 1912).

A prominent, nationwide tourist attraction, *Hida Minzoku-mura* has from its beginnings served in the articulation of national identity through the display of one of Japan's most recognizable styles of rural buildings, the *gasshô-zukuri* house. In setting the pattern for its assertion of national identity, *Hida Minzoku-mura*'s organizers drew on an established tradition of nation-centered folklore studies to articulate their new museum's mission. At the same time, however, while the Takayama museum's experiences fit neatly into a national agenda, the regional and local aspects of its articulation of identity are also fundamental to the role the museum plays in postwar cultural politics. "Culture," in postwar Japan, William Kelly (1993: 216) notes, " … has been an argument, not a consensus." Japan's postwar cultural development not only promoted a homogeneous middlebrow culture but also continued a tradition of difference, opposition, and dissent, producing a society by the 1960s whose structures of power were at once "co-optive, complicit, *and* contested" (emphasis added). Open-air museums such as *Hida Minzoku-mura* have contributed to the discussion concerning national culture while embodying and enacting local identities and cultural differences that are equally a part of the postwar era.

This study seeks to highlight these two aspects of *Hida Minzoku-mura*'s growth and success: its engagement with the formation of national identity and its role as a vehicle for the assertion of local autonomy. These two dynamics coalesce in the figure of Nagakura Saburô, the museum's manager, director, then honorary director from 1959 until his death in 1997. As a folklorist, Nagakura steered the Takayama museum's exhibits toward the presentation of local handicrafts and folkways as a means to define the national, giving lesser attention to the historical contextualization of the buildings themselves. In his role as a local cultural figure, Nagakura oversaw an institution that strengthened the power of local government in cultural matters. By highlighting these two, at times, contradictory trends, the story of Nagakura Saburô and *Hida Minzoku-mura* reveals some of the social and political mechanisms by which heritage was made in Japan in the first decades after 1945, while reflecting as well the particularities of the Takayama experience in those years.

Nagakura Saburô as potter, painter, and writer

The story of Nagakura's involvement with *Hida Minzoku-mura* begins in Japan's interwar period. Born in Takayama in November 1911, Nagakura was raised in the rich cultural environment of that city: surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells of morning street markets, the distinctive architecture of local sake brewers, and, best known to outsiders, the city's spring and fall festivals, in which tall *yatai* floats parade through the town.[3] Many of the notable festivals in contemporary Japan are either postwar revivals of previously discontinued events or are, like the November *Bunka–Bunsei* Festival in Nagano prefecture's Tsumago post-town, postwar fabrications, created to cater to a willing tourist audience. Takayama's festivals, in contrast, have had a continuous history for more than four centuries, and it was in this setting of cultural continuity that Nagakura grew up.

In May 1927, not yet 16 years old, Nagakura left school in mid-term and went to Seto, in Aichi prefecture, to take up an apprenticeship in ceramic production. Seto has had a pottery industry for more than a millennium; as early as the Kamakura period (1185–1382) it was recognized as home to one of the six great ceramic centers of Japan. At the end of the Meiji period (1868–1912), bolstered by the introduction of new technologies such as coal-fired kilns, the city's potteries turned to the mass production of ceramic goods. In the late Meiji period and continuing in the Taishô period (1912–26), Seto's nine hundred ceramic factories produced for the most part cheap manufactured goods, including tiles, chamber pots, insulators for electrical and industrial machinery, and novelty items (Board of Tourist Industry 1941: 402).

As early as the beginning of the Taishô period, however, mirroring the activities of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain and the United States, Seto also became a center for efforts by artisans to investigate and celebrate the original materials and techniques of the region's pottery traditions. In 1914, a group of potters that included the Seto native and later Living National Treasure Katô Hajime (1900–68) established the "Seto Society for Research in Design" (*Seto Zuan Kenkyû-kai*), and similar associations of craft-focused potters were founded in 1924 (the *Tôkin-kai*), 1929 (the *Tsuchi no Fûkei-sha*, later called the *Sakutô-kai*), and 1930 (the *Shuntô-kai*), before the government's preparations for war forced their combination in 1936 to form a single organization, the *Seto Tôgei Kyôkai* ("Seto Ceramics Association") (Seto-shi 2003).

During his time in Seto, Nagakura began to take an active interest in the study, protection, and promotion of cultural artifacts and practices. In the late 1920s, at the annual Tôshôgû Festival held in Nagoya in April, he first saw *yatai* festival floats different from those of Takayama. He remembers thinking about the same time that in cultural matters, "Provincial pride is the same as ignorance." As he recollected later, he thought at the time that "It is useless being a frog in a well; it is, I think, necessary for one to see many festivals, one should look out for the chance to see festivals in many places" (Nagakura

1981b: 3). During this period, Nagakura turned to the study of folklore, beginning an investigation of material folk culture that he would continue for the rest of his life.

Drafted into military service in 1942, Nagakura served first in the Imperial Ordnance section, before being conscripted in April 1945 into the Navy. Discharged in August 1945, he returned to Takayama, not yet 34 years old but, despite the wartime interruption, with over a decade of experience in the production of ceramics. Although the city's air-raid sirens had sounded twice earlier in the year to warn residents about large groups of American B-29 bombers flying up from the coast at Nagoya, his home city and its surrounding communities had largely been spared direct destruction from Allied bombs (Hida-Takayama Tenryô Sanbyaku-nen Kinen Jigyô Suishin Kyôgikai 1992: 65–6). Among the country's smaller cities, Takayama in 1945 was a stable, if somewhat remote, place to return to.

In Takayama, Nagakura soon began on his own to research a local pottery style called *Koito-yaki*, eventually excavating and restoring the ruins of a *Koito-yaki* kiln on the outskirts of the city. Beginning in the late 1940s, Nagakura lectured and wrote in Takayama on various aspects of folk culture, including *Koito* pottery, the *yatai* floats, and local farming tools. He gave one of his first public lectures, "On Hida Art Pottery" (*Hida no Bunka Tôgyô ni tsuite*), in June 1950 at the *Betsu-in*, the Takayama branch temple of *Higashi Hongan-ji*, the Kyoto headquarters of the Shin sect. Among his publications on local culture and folk tools in this period was his first book-length study of the Takayama floats, *Hida Matsuri no Yatai* ("Hida's Festival Floats"), released in April 1950.

Nagakura joined the advisory committee for the *Takayama Kyôdo-kan* at the time that museum was established in 1953 and remained on the committee for more than forty years. Prominent also among his official activities before and after the founding of *Hida Minzoku-kan* in 1959 was his involvement with the Takayama *yatai*: over the course of two decades, he took part in repainting the decorations on more than a dozen of the city's historic festival floats. Nagakura was long a mainstay of the regional arts community, at one time raising money toward the relocation of a building to the Takayama museum by convincing a local painter to donate one of his works for sale. As an artist, craftsman, and researcher, Nagakura was involved in many aspects of Takayama's postwar cultural life, but it is for his leadership of the open-air museum *Hida Minzoku-mura* that he is primarily known.[4]

Hida Minzoku-mura and the presentation of local identity

The open-air architectural museum—a group of buildings either preserved in their original locations, brought together from disparate origins, reconstructed from original drawings or plans, or created through some combination of the above—has been one of the dominant means worldwide for architectural preservation since the opening of Sweden's Skansen at the end of the

nineteenth century. In Japan, the first open-air architectural museum was the *Sankei-en*, a collection of buildings on the Yokohama estate of industrialist Hara Tomitarô (1868–1937) that was first opened to the public in 1906. By 1922, the *Sankei-en* was displaying eleven structures that represented various religious and secular architectural styles centering on the culture of the six-teenth century. Hara's primary interest as a collector of artworks was in the most refined of Japanese arts, including screen paintings, narrative hand-scrolls, hanging scrolls, bronzes, and objects associated with the tea ceremony, and many of the buildings in his collection are associated in one way or another with the primary figure of the unification period, Oda Nobunaga, or his successor, the tea-patron and warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi.[5]

Although its elite sensibilities contrast with the rurally based "folk" heri-tage encapsulated in Skansen, the *Sankei-en* shares with the Swedish and Norwegian museums a desire to sketch a portrait of the national culture through the gathering together of buildings drawn from across the nation. A similar intention is reflected in most of the leading open-air museums estab-lished in Japan before the 1970s.[6] The *Nihon Minka Shûraku Hakubutsukan* (opened outside of Osaka in April 1960), the *Hakubutsukan Meiji-mura* (opened near Nagoya in July 1962), and, closer to Tokyo, the *Kawasaki Shiritsu Nihon Minka-en* (opened officially on 1 April 1967, but building on the relocation of a folk house a full decade before that date) emulate the Skansen model in their wide geographical representation, attempting to contribute to the articulation of a national architectural identity by gathering buildings for display from locations nationwide (Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 1976).

In contrast, from the time of its establishment *Hida Minzoku-mura* has pre-sented a single region's folkways and folk-house styles, choosing representa-tion through synecdoche rather than pursuing a Skansen-style pastiche of the national identity. The cornerstone of the museum's emphasis on local customs is adherence to the methods and approaches of the dominant tradition in folklore studies in Japan, the *minzoku-gaku* movement headed by Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962). Yanagita's influence, at both the discursive and the practical levels, over the discussion of national identity was unmatched in the prewar period and continued after the end of the war. The many varied contexts in which his work has been cited in postwar writings to bolster argu-ments about Japanese national unity leads Ivy (1995: 63) to assert the "inevitability of citing Yanagita as originary author when the identity of Japan is at stake."

Between the 1920s and the 1945 defeat, Yanagita's rhetoric of Japanese "exceptionalism" increasingly came to serve the interests of the ultranationalist government (Kelly 1993: 193–4). Yanagita did not always assert the existence of a national, homogeneous identity in his writings. Over the course of the first decades of the twentieth century, however, he moved from research that "emphasized the diversity of social forms in rural Japan [and] tended to pre-sent each of these forms as having its own distinct historical lineage," to stu-dies in which increasingly "local differences, rather than being the products of

distinct local histories, were redefined as different evolutionary points along the single line of national history" (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 68, 72). Contributing to the folklore movement's attempts to find "an authentic, unchanging, and originary presence" at the heart of Japan was the central concept of Yanagita's prewar studies, the *jômin*, "an image of a timeless and eternal folk," who, while they "resided everywhere in Japan, … at the same time … existed nowhere" (Harootunian 1998: 144, 149; Hashimoto 1998: 138).

Yanagita's concept of the *jômin* and his focus on a single timeline of national history were discredited by their association with the militarists as Japan entered the postwar era, but the central dynamic of the local–national relationship described by prewar *minzoku-gaku* texts changed only slightly after the end of the war. In postwar writings, local customs continued to be used to represent a national cultural character. Where in the 1930s, however, each area's customs were placed alongside others to determine which best represented the nation's cultural essence, the use of the local to constitute the national in the postwar years reflects what Ben-Ari (1992: 212) terms the "uniqueness paradox." In the constitution of Japanese tradition, Ben-Ari argues, "by being 'unique' villages and neighborhoods are perceived as authentic, and by being authentic such places are recognized as representing the 'real' traditional way of life." In their recognizability, the cultural forms of the Hida region stand apart from all other Japanese folk traditions, but that same uniqueness reinforces the region's capacity to reflect an authentic Japanese cultural center.

The focus of the Takayama museum's architectural collection, the *gasshô* house was a culturally potent object on which to base the formation of the Hida region's identity. By virtue of its rarity, distinctive physical profile, and the respect it has been accorded by both Japanese and foreign architects and critics, *gasshô* has long been recognized as a quintessential Japanese folk-house form[7] (Figure 4.2). In the eyes of Japanese cultural authorities in the first decades of the postwar era, *gasshô*'s high valuation among scholars gave it the "gem-like" quality that the architectural historian Ôta Hirotarô suggests was the ideal promoted by the governing outlook of official preservation efforts at the time.[8] In the popular mind, *gasshô* was comfortably exotic, representative of an earlier period in common history but configured such that a visit to a *gasshô* house, like rural tourism in general, could be successfully "marketed to urban Japanese … partly as an exercise in nostalgia … partly as an 'exotic' experience akin to traveling abroad" (Hendry 2000: 147). *Gasshô*, more than any other architectural form, met the varied needs of a postwar society in search of what Ivy (1995: 63) terms the "perennial Japan that subsisted in the voices and practices of the 'folk.'"

National trends in heritage preservation facilitated the Takayama museum's focus on *gasshô* structures. As the Allied Occupation wound down to its conclusion after 1950, the cultural ministry, the *Monbushô*, announced that for the first time folk houses, *minka*, would be included in official efforts

Figure 4.2 The settlement of Ogimachi, a World Heritage site, is made up of several dozen *gasshô* structures.

toward the protection and study of important works of architecture. The headline on the December 1951 *Asahi Shinbun* article announcing the change highlights the prominence of the *gasshô* house, reading, "*Gasshô*-style, etc.: Folk houses also to become Important Cultural Properties" (*Asahi Shinbun* 1951). Ultimately, two of the first three *minka* designated by the ministry in 1956 as national cultural properties were in the *gasshô* style.

Threats to the *gasshô* also opened up opportunities for their inclusion in museum collections. Despite the high valuation placed upon them, in the early postwar years many *gasshô* structures were torn down to make way for new buildings, remodeled in ways that erased their historic importance, or simply abandoned. The 1950s was a decade of intensive dam building and road construction in the mountainous regions of Gifu and neighboring prefectures, and these construction projects threatened scores of *gasshô* and other folk houses. The Miboro Dam project, announced in 1952 and completed in 1961, promised the country's most massive dam up to that point, producing the region's largest artificial lake behind it and inundating part or all of six hamlets. A majority of the families displaced had been residing in houses built in the distinctive *gasshô-zukuri* style. One estimate suggests that in the century before 1994, 92 per cent of the estimated 1,800 *gasshô*-style houses in two Hida towns were abandoned or destroyed (Saitô and Inaba 1996: 56).[9]

In part as a response to those threats, the 1950s witnessed the opening of an era of "relocation preservation" (*ichiku hozon*), the protection of buildings

from the past through their removal to a site away from their original setting. Among open-air museums created through relocation preservation, the presence of a *gasshô* house became almost a requirement, and in the 1950s and 1960s they came to form the nucleus of several of the most prominent open-air museums in Japan, as well as being disassembled and moved throughout the country to serve as restaurants, museums, and craft shops (Shirakawa-gô Ogimachi Shûraku no Shizen Kankyô wo Mamoru-kai, 1991: 14–15, 17). In Yokohama's Sankei-en, for example, the only diversion from the museum's emphasis on elite structures comes in the form of the *gasshô* Yanohara house, installed in 1960 after having been removed from Iwase (Shôkawa-mura), at the southern end of the flooded area created by the Miboro dam. As the putative "capital" of the Hida region, Takayama was positioned to be closely associated with the region's most distinctive house form, and the organizers of the Takayama museum used the relocation of *gasshô* structures to the museum's advantage.

Hida Minzoku-mura **and the folklore movement**

The first structure selected to house the Takayama folklore museum was the Wakayama house, which was moved about 25 miles from the hamlet of Shimodaki, at the southern edge of the area inundated by the waters behind the Miboro Dam, to a site that had earlier been purchased by the city for a proposed tourist hotel. Although considered a hybrid structure in style, the Wakayama house displays many of the characteristics of the *gasshô*, including a steeply pitched thatch roof and monumental size (Figure 4.3).[10] For its new role as a folk materials center, the Wakayama house was fitted out in furnishings from the home of a city employee, as well as collections of sleds and other utensils used in farming life in the region that had been selected by Nagakura himself.

Although the principal in numerous applications to the *Monbushô* for collection development grants, in the assembling of *Hida Minzoku-mura*'s group of buildings, Nagakura appears to have been remarkably independent of the central cultural authorities in Tokyo. Nagakura served as the primary author of successful proposals for designation as Important Folk Cultural Materials of the contents of the Hida sled collection (designated 9 June 1960), a collection of Shôkawa instruments for silkworm raising (designated 15 May 1963), as well as a collection of tools used in the work of Hida mountain villages (designated 3 September 1975). In his role as the museum's director he oversaw applications for official recognition of the legal standing of the institutions themselves. The style and format of the open-air museum, however, continue to reflect the recently expressed opinion of a curator at the museum that "the basic concept for that area, the way of thinking about it, was in its foundation Nagakura Saburô's way of thinking."

On its opening day as *Hida Minzoku-kan* in 1959, the Wakayama house alone did not form an open-air museum, but it appears that Nagakura had

Figure 4.3 The first structure to host the Hida folklore museum, the Wakayama house, is now an integral part of the open-air museum.

such a facility in mind soon after the *minzoku-kan* opened to the public. According to the history of *Hida Minzoku-mura*, the idea of an open-air museum was suggested to Nagakura in September 1959 by Iwai Kyûjô, a member of the *Bunkazai Shingikai* (a predecessor to today's Agency for Cultural Affairs), who was in Takayama for an inspection of the festival floats. Visiting Nagakura at the *minzoku-kan*, Iwai reportedly asked, "Wouldn't you be able to gather here in this building a folk-culture collection for Japan like Sweden's Skansen folklore museum?"[11] The collection grew slowly at first—a townhouse was moved out from Takayama in 1965 and a storehouse (*kura*) from the surrounding countryside in 1968—but as early as the mid-1960s, Nagakura was in negotiation with various city officials concerning expansion onto a separate site to house a more ambitious open-air museum.

While as director he successfully expanded the museum to include many more buildings, Nagakura was never himself in spirit or in practice an architectural historian. Throughout his tenure with the museum, his concern

remained with the artifacts and implements that filled the structures rather than on the buildings themselves. Among his many publications, none offers a concerted discussion of architectural history or style. Rather, his major book-length works and most of his several dozen published articles are concerned with the *yatai* festival floats, locally used tools and other implements, or ceramics.[12]

It might be said that Nagakura shared with Yanagi Sôetsu (1889–1961), one of the pioneers in the study of material culture in Japan, a viewpoint that, in the words of architectural historian Itô Teiji, "regarded the *minka* [as] no more than a container for folk art" (Itô and Futagawa 1983: 8). In fact, as containers, the buildings in *Hida Minzoku-mura* seem to have been remarkably undervalued. The Takayama museum diverged sharply from the fundamentals of fire prevention and protection of artifacts that were the standards of Japanese historic preservation at the time. Desiring to create at *Hida Minzoku-mura* a "living museum" (*ikita hakubutsukan*), for example, Nagakura instructed the curators to keep fires burning in the hearths (*irori*) of the houses. While the fires may have benefited the houses' structural fabric through the curing properties of their smoke, and reinforced the visitors' sense that each house had been only recently vacated, they put the buildings at greater risk from fire and obscured the interiors of the structures, which would otherwise have been painstakingly cleaned during the restoration process. For a time, moreover, the buildings served explicitly as containers: in keeping with his training as a folklorist, Nagakura had all artifact display cases removed and allowed the buildings alone to serve as the backdrop for the museum's collections of implements and other furnishings.[13]

As was just noted, Nagakura's published work is dominated by studies of folklore and folk material culture, not architectural history. Even when his topic is the Takayama museum, however, Nagakura gives his attention more to the tools and farm implements that filled the houses than to the structures themselves. From as early as the *minzoku-kan*'s founding, Nagakura was intent on the creation of a living museum. As he wrote concerning the 1971 expansion:

> skillfully selecting this topography with our aim to arrange there folk houses … collected from throughout Hida, and also by building fields and paddies and conducting folk events and entertainments, both in name and in fact we were moving forward in the building of a folk village.
>
> (Nagakura 1971: 18)

While Nagakura's folkloristic sensibility was not uncommon in the culture at large in this era, we might look to the writings of one of his peers, Furue Ryônin, the founder and curator of the *Kawasaki Shiritsu Nihon Minka-en*, to see the extent to which appreciation of the buildings themselves might also have fueled the establishment of an open-air museum. The *Nihon Minka-en*, located in Kawasaki's Ikuda greenbelt park, less than one hour by train from

downtown Tokyo, is today one of Japan's leading open-air architectural muse-
ums devoted to folk houses. In its collection are twenty-five *minka* represent-
ing housing styles from throughout Japan.[14] Four are in *gasshô* style, including
the Yamashita house, the first structure obtained by the city for display, which
was moved from Shirakawa-mura, in northern Gifu prefecture, in 1958.

Furue's memoir of four decades of work in the cultural politics of Kawa-
saki offers striking contrasts to the excerpt from Nagakura's writings just
quoted. Writing of his discovery of one fine old house in a neighborhood
close to the Kawasaki museum, Furue (1996: 9) evokes his appreciation for
the house in its original setting, as well as his passionate involvement in the
threatened building's protection:

> The Itô house had been built tucked in halfway up a low hill, and its hip-
> gabled, thatched roof, offering hope for a vision of the far-away past, was
> covered in pure white snow. In front of this old house, almost connecting
> to it I thought, since it was so close, a new house had been built, and the
> Itô family had moved into this one. This was the house bought by the
> husband's prosperity. He told me later that "the old house has become
> unnecessary. But," he continued, "because Yokohama National University
> and the Kanagawa Prefectural Education Committee have come to make
> surveys, I want to save it by moving it, and so I am thinking of donating
> it. Yokohama's Sankei-en is supposed to be a place for preservation. … "
> I showed my great surprise by taking a step back.

Even granted that his intention in writing comes in part to demonstrate his
high sense of cultural appreciation, Furue's memoir displays a concern for
architecture as art and as place that is absent from Nagakura's writings.

Local autonomy and Japan's postwar cultural life

We can see from Nagakura's influence on the formation of the Takayama
museum the degree to which folklore studies was one of the foundations of
postwar protection of architecture at the local level. In various ways, the
emphasis in folklore studies in Japan has served to promote unifying and
homogenizing national agendas. The history of *Hida Minzoku-mura*, how-
ever, also reveals fundamental dynamics that have promoted, in contrast,
local over national interests.

The expression of locality in the establishment of heritage-preservation
facilities may be both structural and presentational, and the postwar political
climate in Japan favored the apparent localization of preservation in both
areas. The presentation of national heritage was the first to be affected by the
postwar political climate. Beginning as early as 1948, with the revision of lists
of protected cultural and historical sites to omit those included only to glorify
the imperial house, the Monbushô pursued the "democratization" of cultural
affairs, an effort that paralleled other reform programs of the Allied

occupation and early postwar governments. The *Asahi Shinbun* article announcing the ministry's plans for the first *minka* designations makes clear that the aim of that change in policy was the "democratization of cultural assets" (*bunkazai no minshu-ka*), addressing that goal through a new emphasis on the protection and display of "objects that present in material form the lifestyle of the people." Codified in the Cultural Properties Protection Act (*Bunkazai Hôgo-hô*) of 1950, the democratization of cultural protection meant, in relation to heritage preservation, the expansion of programs from a prewar and wartime emphasis on the protection of elite objects and structures, such as large temples, shrines, and nobles' villas, to the preservation and presentation of the houses, workplaces, and lifestyles of urban artisans, lower-ranking samurai, and farmers.

An emphasis on the local in museum displays is not in itself an antidote to nationalism, and the Takayama museum's strongest challenge to the nationalism of the war years was in its political and economic relationships and not in the content of its exhibits. Ben-Ari observes that the issue is not simply a charting of the production of national identity at the local level. Rather, "it is also a matter of how wider understandings [of the expression of national identity] are mobilized by local communities in their dialogue with … others about local identity" (Ben-Ari 1992: 216). Localities, he observes, are engaged simultaneously in the "national discourse" on shared identity and in serving "certain institutional interests and the needs of local residents."

At the time of its establishment, *Hida Minzoku-mura* benefited from recently instituted national policies that sought to give local actors (governmental and nongovernmental) greater autonomy in a wide variety of economic, political, and cultural matters. Postwar Japan's museums and heritage sites were particularly affected by changes in national policies and programs arising from the climate of liberalization promoted by the postwar Allied occupation, whose official rhetoric promoted the "democratization" of Japanese society and the "localization" of governmental functions as antidotes to the authoritarianism and centralization integral to the wartime Japanese state. Responsive to local political dynamics, the Takayama museum has placed its presentational emphasis on local over national concerns while, as with many heritage sites in postwar Japan, its administration suggests the extent to which a search for local political autonomy underpins cultural politics nationwide.[15]

For example, in its establishment in 1959 of *Hida Minzoku-kan* as a locally administered museum, the Takayama municipal government drew on lessons learned through a series of attempts, beginning early in that decade, to promote the city as a tourism destination. City leaders certainly had the raw materials for success as a tourist destination available to draw from. Recognized as a regional center, the city had been attracting sports enthusiasts since the Meiji period, primarily for skiing, hiking, and mountaineering in the surrounding countryside (Hida-Takayama Tenryô Sanbyaku-nen Kinen Jigyô Suishin Kyôgikai 1992: 173–80). During the first postwar decades, the national reputation of Takayama as a historic and attractive city was further

enhanced through its representation in the mass media (ibid.: 182). By the early 1960s, through the continuous efforts of the local government, Takayama's stock of cultural institutions was regularly projected onto the national stage: in September 1961, for example, the annual *Hachiman* festival was broadcast live to the nation via NHK television.

Takayama's tourism-promotion experiences mirror those of other Japanese cities and towns in these years and, like them, were closely linked to national policy changes intended to further the cause of cultural democratization. Passage in 1951 of the Museums Law (*Hakubutsukan-hô*) gave significant powers to municipalities in the establishment of local history centers, cultural museums, and craft displays nationwide. These policy changes came in part as a response to what has been called the postwar "museum-making" (*hakubutsukan-zukuri*) movement, often led by citizens and characterized by an emphasis on cultural inheritances connected to local customs and lifestyles, that was already in process (Kanayama 2001: 206–8).

The Museums Law itself built on the foundation of new legislation in the postwar period, particularly the 1947 Local Autonomy Law (*Chihô Jichi-hô*), placing the administration of many cultural matters, such as the establishment of museums, with local governments and allowing their officials to attempt to increase economic activity through the development of a local tourism industry. The efforts of local governments and civic leaders to gain increased autonomy, set in motion by democratization policies of the Occupation forces, comprise what one commentator in the 1980s referred to as Japan's "Thirty Years' War" (Samuels 1983: xx). In the first fifteen years of the postwar era, this assertion of local political power was focused on the pressing need to stabilize local tax receipts, as municipal governments were given only limited taxation powers of their own (Steiner 1965: 292). Establishment of a museum, particularly housed within a donated building, was seen as a low-investment means to promote the development of this potentially lucrative industry. With its quick rise to national prominence, *Hida Minzoku-kan* brought significant financial and political benefits to the city of Takayama as a whole.

Conclusion: the significance of the Takayama open-air museum

Heritage preservation in postwar Japan has been remarkably varied in its philosophies and its practices. From state-directed preservation programs favoring the restoration of individual buildings, to upstart citizens' movements that have drawn on state funding to support the protection of urban districts or entire towns, to the many unsung examples of heritage preservation undertaken by individual property owners without official direction or funding, preservation of historic structures and landscapes cuts across political boundaries and reveals varying degrees of commitment to principles of historical accuracy, architectural integrity, and community involvement. Heritage preservation has both been affected by and played a part in the philosophical

and political debates that have formed the Japanese cultural landscape since the 1945 defeat.

The story of *Hida Minzoku-mura* and its predecessor *Hida Minzoku-kan* may not seem at first glance to offer much to the study of postwar preservation in Japan. Most of the attention given to architectural protection in the postwar period has focused on a few high-profile citizens' movements for townscape preservation (*machinami hozon*), such as those in urban districts in Kyoto and in the towns of Tsumago, Nagano prefecture, and Shirakawa-mura, Gifu prefecture.[16] The city of Takayama itself has a notable example of the results of such a movement in the Takayama-shi Sanmachi preservation district, as well as a leading example of a successful private restoration in the Yoshijima house museum. Relying on relocation preservation and seeming to draw shamelessly on the postwar Japanese public's hunger for images of a romanticized national past, the creation of *Hida Minzoku-mura* pales in comparison with the ingenuity and perseverance shown in these more high-profile citizens' movements.

Hida Minzoku-mura, however, stands at the center of Japanese postwar preservation. Although now heavily discouraged by preservation experts, the relocation of buildings in order to save them from destruction was still common worldwide in the 1950s and 1960s and was among the preferred practices of Japanese preservation professionals in the first postwar decades. Moreover, the particular approach to dramatizing a national essence pursued by the organizers of *Hida Minzoku-mura* has increasingly come to characterize open-air museums and other heritage institutions across Japan. In the years during and immediately after the expansion of *Hida Minzoku-kan* to form *Hida Minzoku-mura*, open-air museums representing the island of Shikoku and the prefectures of Ibaraki, Miyazaki, and Ishikawa relied on the display of local building styles to suggest each region's place in the national whole (Sugimoto 1981).

The folklore movement itself remained one of the pillars of Japanese heritage preservation, even within progressive circles, where, presumably, Yanagita's compromises with the wartime militarists would have made him and his work anathema. Ishikawa Tadaomi (Ishikawa 1981: 23), for example, one of the leading voices for local people's involvement in townscape preservation in the 1970s and 1980s, refers to Yanagita as "the venerable old man" (*okina*) in relating the respect the scholar held among proponents of preservation in one town in Saitama prefecture, and references to Yanagita's works can be found throughout the documents describing preservation activities in the 1970s and beyond. The influence of *minzoku-gaku* might be seen to be offset by the efforts of the local history (*chihô-shi*) movement (Wigen 2000), but in practice it appears that the two persisted side by side in many preservation sites nationwide.

The paradoxical equation of uniqueness and typicality is central to folklore studies as they were practised by Nagakura and his peers, and the national concerns of that movement are reflected in the Takayama museum's presentation

of its artifacts. Contrasting with that national agenda, however, the museum's expression of local concern emphasized structural, rather than presentational, means. The museum's success derives directly from postwar policies that sought to realize the ideal of cultural democracy through a process of cultural decentralization. Locally administered and nationally respected, *Hida Minzoku-mura* provided the city of Takayama with significant resources to put toward locally generated projects and agendas. The museum's movement toward localization corresponds to a more general concern for the strengthening of cultural democracy in the first decades after 1945.

Ultimately, the development of *Hida Minzoku-mura* provides a view of some of the roles played by local actors in cultural affairs in the postwar period. Nagakura Saburô was an artist and craftsman in his own right, successful in promoting his own and others' work. He devoted a great deal of time to the establishment of the city's museums, including the *Takayama Kyôdo-kan*, *Hida Minzoku-kan*, and *Hida Minzoku-mura*, raising money for their facilities and helping to conceptualize the form each institution might take, but he was neither a wealthy benefactor nor a private collector. His role echoes that of other activists in historic preservation in 1960s Japan, but it reminds us as well that the advances made in cultural properties protection in the postwar era have come from a meeting in out-of-the-way places of a number of different, seemingly competing forces. Tourism promotion programs formulated in city offices, the passionate involvement of a few concerned citizens, a mutual agreement among residents that care for their own neighbourhood and their own houses was worthwhile: these are the forces we see in 1950s and 1960s Takayama, the dynamics that provided the setting for the realization of a localization of cultural protection in an era of the rebirth of national pride.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 This anecdote and other details that follow concerning the founding of the museum are taken from Section 2, "The Birth of the Hida Folklore Hall" (Hida no Sato 2002).
2 Visitor figures were nearly 15,000 in 1960, its first full year of operation, and more than 130,000 in its tenth year. City tourism statistics from these years indicate that

by 1970, shortly before its greatest period of expansion, one in five tourists to Takayama visited the folklore hall. (Hida-Takayama Tenryô Sanbyaku-nen Kinen Jigyô Suishin Kyôgikai 1992: 185).

3 Where no other source is cited, the following profile of Nagakura Saburô and his career is drawn from information provided by the Education Board in Takayama.

4 The nationally circulated obituary for Nagakura identified him in its headline simply as the Honorary Director of the Hida Folklore Village (Hida Minzoku-mura Meiyo Kanchô).

5 Hara Sankei (born Tomitarô) was a disciple of the scholar and collector Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913), and reflected his mentor's concerns with the preservation and perpetuation of Japan's elite artistic forms. (Sankei-en Hoshô-kai, n.d.). For more on Hara Sankei and his collecting, see Guth (1993), esp. Chap. 5, and Guth (1991).

6 One might argue that Yamagata prefecture's Chidô Hakubutsukan, with Hida Minzoku-mura, was the only other prominent exception to that rule.

7 *Gasshô* houses have been the subject of historical, ethnographic, architectural, and sociological study since early in the twentieth century. Most such studies have centred either on the houses as the setting for a social system based on extended families (the *daikazoku seido*) or on the structures' unique place within Japanese vernacular architecture. Common to nearly all discussions of *gasshô*'s importance is the high valuation put on it by the German Modernist architect Bruno Taut, who visited the region in May 1935. In *Houses and Peoples of Japan* (Taut [1936] 1958), Taut argued that *gasshô* structures were perfect models for Modernist form, standing apart from other Japanese folk housing for the "logic" and "rationality" of their design. (Hida Gasshô Bunka Kenkyû-kai 1996: 31–2; Saitô and Inaba 1996).

8 Ôta suggests that national cultural authorities were hindered in their recognition of *minka* as important cultural properties by their own uncertainty in determining which folk houses were of high enough quality to justify their designation. Having been recognized by Japanese and non-Japanese experts for their superior design characteristics, *gasshô* houses met the needs of bureaucrats operating from this perspective of "gem-ism" (*meihin-shugi*) (Ôta 1983: 166).

9 For a more detailed tracing of the loss of gasshô structures in one Gifu precture town, see Appendix 1-B in Carle (2002).

10 In the terms set by architectural historians, the Wakayama house is said to mark the meeting of Shirakawa's *gasshô-zukuri* and Shôkawa's *irimoya-zukuri*, two of the area's vernacular building styles (Hida Minzoku-mura n.d).

11 Quoted in Section 3, "Saving Culture and Ways of Living" (Hida no Sato 2002).

12 Three of Nagakura's most widely circulated book-length publications concern Hida tools, the festival floats, and an overview of the folk customs (*minzoku*) of Gifu prefecture (Nagakura 1974; 1981a; 1981b).

13 The phrase *ikita hakubutsukan* is cited on the museum's webpage, but I have not seen it in wide use in discussions of other open-air museums in Japan. Nagakura's charge to dispense with display cases was untenable as objects were lost to pilfering. Visitors to Hida no Sato today, however, do encounter the rare experience of smelling hearth fires on approach to the houses.

14 The collection includes eighteen structures designated Important Cultural Properties at either the prefectural or the national level. The museum was recognized nationally with a special award presented by the Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai in 1994 (Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 1994).

15 For further development of the relationship between heritage sites and local autonomy, see Siegenthaler (2004).

16 See, for example, the overview of townscape preservation offered in Hohn (1997). For a discussion of one such movement, and the ways in which it has been described, see Siegenthaler (2003).

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5 *Nô* masks on stage and in museums

Approaches to the contextualisation and conservation of the Pitt Rivers Museum *nô* mask collection

Rachel Payne

Introduction

Museum displays are composed of objects that are of interest on account of the temporal and/or cultural separation between the social system for which they were originally intended and the museum visitor's own social context. It is through processes such as buying and selling, collecting, hoarding and recycling that these historical and cultural heritage artefacts have been preserved over time, acquired by new owners, and relocated across national boundaries. During their spatial and temporal journeys it is common for their original functions to be overlaid with other attributes ascribed according to the new contexts in which they are used and viewed. It is therefore a rare museum exhibit that can tell only one story and represent only one point of interest to the visitor.

The professional judgement of museum curators is relied on not only for the selection, preservation and display of exhibits, but also, through the provision of relevant information, for guidance in the appreciation of their qualities and attributes. In fulfilling these responsibilities, curators face many dilemmas concerning the conservation and contextualisation of their collections. Should a museum aim only to guide visitors in developing a factually correct interpretation of an exhibit's original function, or should they also be encouraged to attribute new meanings within the context of today's society? How can these complexities be adequately explained within the confines of a museum's financial and spatial limitations? Furthermore, given that both unintended damage and intended alterations bear witness to the complexity of an object's history, should a museum display heritage artefacts in their present state or in a state closer to their original form?

This chapter examines the contextualisation and conservation of heritage items through the study of a collection of masks from the Japanese *nô* theatre in the University of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum. The set of fifty-two masks includes most major character types: men and women, young and old, innocent and insane, divine beings, demons, living people and tortured souls. Although most date from the late eighteenth century, the oldest one is believed to have been carved as early as the late fifteenth century, while the most recent ones date from around 1840 (Figure 5.1). The masks formed part

of the collection of 20,000 objects given to the University of Oxford by Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900), a Lieutenant-General in the British Army who devoted much time to the collection and classification of ethnological artefacts (Petch 1998). Pitt Rivers himself did not purchase the masks in Japan, but we know that they were in his possession by 1880, when he lent much of his private collection to London's South Kensington Museum, the forerunner of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Four years later they were transferred to Oxford following disagreements between the London curators and Pitt Rivers over his choice of display style.

A considerable amount is known about the provenance of these masks, which were some of the first to enter a Western collection. The museum owns a copy of the list dating from the time of the collection's sale and transfer to England which records the character types, estimated age and cultural background of the individual masks, and a reference to their display at an exhibition in Kyoto. On the basis of this information it was possible to locate the catalogue from the Kyoto Exposition of 1879 describing just such a mask set that was submitted for display by Kongô Kinnosuke, the *iemoto* (titular head) of the Kongô *nô* school. Kongô family memoirs record that it was around this time that Kinnosuke assembled a number of masks for display and sale in response to interest from a Western collector (Kongô 1983: 143–4). The identity of that original purchaser remains unclear. Whoever he was, we can

Figure 5.1 The *nô* mask display in 2003.

assume either that he was commissioned by Pitt Rivers to buy artefacts for his growing collection, or that he sold them to Pitt Rivers in late 1879 after the close of the Kyoto Exposition.

The Museum is justly proud of this mask collection, which, in addition to its great beauty and interesting history, is rare in the West on account of its large size and wide range of character types. However, fieldwork conducted in 2002–3 has revealed a strong feeling among *nô* experts that the display style at that time did not adequately portray the vital role that masks still play in their theatrical environment. Moreover, several professional actors considered that the closely packed and brightly lit masks were deprived of their visual power and mystical aura. One commented that the collection looked like the packed faces in a Tokyo commuter train! What explanation can we give for the difference in perception of an appropriate display style between those connected to the masks' original function and their present curators? Should the Pitt Rivers Museum try to rectify the situation? If so, how? These problems are best addressed through study of the social system for which the masks were originally created, and an appreciation of the enormity of the status change they have undergone in their spatial and temporal journey from their locus of production to their present location.

The sacred origins of *nô* drama

Nô traces its history back to ancient shamanistic rites performed in sacred spaces in order to communicate with the spirit world. Masks were worn to represent the *kami* divinities and *tama* ancestral spirits summoned, celebrated and entertained on these occasions (Ortolani 1997: 16–18). For the duration of the ritual, the masks were thought to serve as the vessels in which the spirits would reside, and as such they were considered to be sacred (Naka-mura 1984: 120–1). Over the centuries these masked rituals were combined with elements of both indigenous and continental performance arts including *sarugaku*, which served as an entertainment for both the 'visitors' from the other world and the assembled public. In the mid-fourteenth century, the father and son team of *sarugaku* actors Kan'ami and Zeami revolutionised their art through the introduction of concepts including mimetic techniques, poetic narrative structure and Buddhist aesthetics of spiritual profundity and transience. The patronage that they received from the ruling samurai elite brought further refinement of their style through the infusion of elegance and restraint into what had originally been somewhat wild performances.

The adoption of *sarugaku-nô*, or *nô* as it came to be called, as the official ceremonial entertainment of the samurai class brought the eventual replace-ment of some of its direct religious significance with secular professionalism. However, connections to the spirit world were retained in many elements from the semi-sacred nature of the performance venue to the austerities practised by actors before entering the stage. One play category developed by Zeami known as *mugen-nô* was clearly reminiscent of the earlier shamanistic

practices of appeasing unquiet spirits. In these plays the narrative takes the form of an interview between a priestly figure and a ghost in human form, which, once revealed in its true form, is exorcised and freed from the worldly attachments that have prevented it entering the next life (Zobel and Gotô 1997: 46–53). Even in today's predominantly secular society, *nô* maintains an aura of mysticism not only through its performance at Buddhist and Shintô religious events, but also through the profundity of these insights into the ongoing connections between man and the spirit world.

The function of masks in *nô* drama

Although their original function as the abode of the spirits has lessened over the centuries, *nô* masks have continued to be venerated as the soul of the play, and are accorded much respect both on and off stage. When worn in performance, they are still considered to assume, if not the true presence, then at least the attributes of their character, many of whom are gods or tortured souls. The high status of the mask within the *nô* world is also connected to the deep emotional significance that it holds for the actor, who bonds with it in a relationship of intimate mutual identification. All *nô* actors, even those playing female roles, are men. Before going on stage, the actor aims to create a sense of otherness and nothingness so he is no longer aware of his own self, and the contemplation of the mask and himself wearing it is vital to this transformation. The mask itself has no intrinsic expressive powers, but in this temporary heightened rapport with the actor, it works with the music, chanting, dance and visual elements of the performance to excite the imaginative powers of the audience. In this sense, the mask serves not merely as a visual manifestation of the character's facial features, but also as the physical and psychological medium through which the actor creates a new being. Man and mask merge to create this presence: neither is complete without the other (Kanze 1984: 70).

The protocols of care with which masks are handled reflect not only their quasi-sacred status, but also their delicate nature. For many centuries they have been mended to repair damage sustained in performance. Examination of the Pitt Rivers masks reveals that many bear the traces of repair work, while others including the *chûjô* ('nobleman') mask in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the remains of the *men-ate* cotton pads attached on the inside to prevent chafing and stop sweat seeping from the nose and mouth apertures. Masks used by acting schools still undergo repair work by highly skilled carvers. Cracks in the wooden base are filled in, and the water-soluble paints damaged by sweat are reapplied using pigments and techniques that have changed little over the centuries. From a historian's perspective, even such reparative measures are an unwelcome interference that can obscure valuable clues to the mask's original form and history. It is generally accepted, however, that masks still serving as practical performance tools do need ongoing repairs to prolong their stage life.

In the past, it was not uncommon for masks to be quite drastically altered to suit an individual actor's physical, aesthetic or artistic requirements. Indeed,

Figure 5.2 Back of *chûjô* mask.
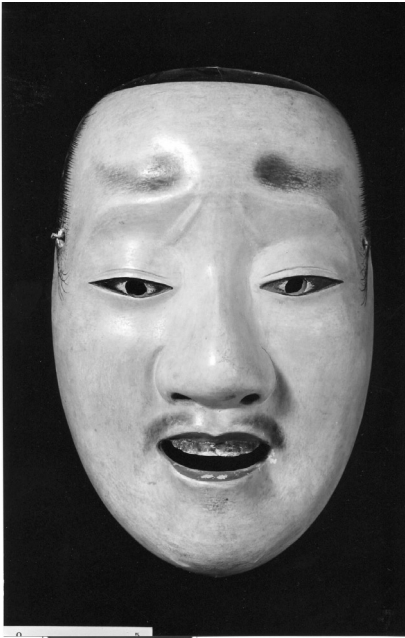
Figure 5.3 Front of *chûjô* mask.

Zeami himself advocated altering a mask's size and shape if it interfered with a wig and hat, or extended in an unseemly way above the actor's head (Nearman 1984: 34). The nasal indentation inside one *magojirô* ('young woman') mask at the Pitt Rivers (Figures 5.4, 5.5), has been deepened to accommodate an actor with a larger than average nose, and one mask of a *yamanba* ('female mountain spirit') appears to have been re-carved and re-painted into a character closer to a *ryû-onna* ('dragon woman'). Such invasive alterations to an old mask would be most unusual nowadays, for the concerns of today's actors have in many respects converged with those of historians regarding the preservation of a mask's biographical information. Actors generally now regard their masks not only as media of artistic creation and family heirlooms, but also as part of their country's cultural heritage. Now only moderate non-invasive repairs are allowed in the name of conservation, and greater efforts are taken to preserve original pigmentation, inscriptions and carving marks. Moreover, new adhesives have been developed which are less likely to damage the carved inner surfaces where *men-ate* are attached.

This increased awareness of their responsibilities as guardians of material heritage does not lessen an actor's aspiration to use prized old masks for their original purpose. Older masks are generally preferred by actors, not necessarily because they are better carved, but because the centuries of use have created a patina that augments their emotional profundity and visual beauty (Richie 1984: 19). For both actors and keen fans, the enjoyment of a play is much enhanced by the use of a fine old mask. Even use by experts still incurs the slight risk of structural and moisture damage, but the *nô* world would rather accept this danger than see the masks forfeit their stage presence for the sake of safety and conservation.

With his heightened sensitivity towards a mask's status and aura, it is no wonder that a *nô* actor is disturbed by the sight of a museum case of masks: it contradicts their prescribed treatment as both semi-sacred objects and performance tools. Masks were never intended to be seen away from the actor's costumed body, displayed *en masse* and examined at close quarters under bright lights. The distinguished actor Kanze Hisao regards it as 'highly detrimental' to treat masks like antiques (Kanze 1983: 99). He is referring here not only to the physical well-being of the mask, but also to the fact that it is spiritually unsuitable to divorce it from the theatrical context that maintains its vitality. In the majority of plays, only the *shite* ('main actor') wears a mask, and it is rare for more than two to be used in any performance. It is the *shite*'s skilled movements that bring life to the mask's expression, which, though fixed in its carved and painted form, becomes animated into a wide range of emotions through the choreographed movements that create shadow play over its static features. Actors do not rehearse wearing masks, and their public performances, which tend to be less regular than in other theatre genres, never run into long seasons of weeks or months. Most of a mask's life is therefore spent stored away, wrapped in silk and housed in specially constructed wooden boxes.

Figure 5.4 Back of *magojirô* mask.
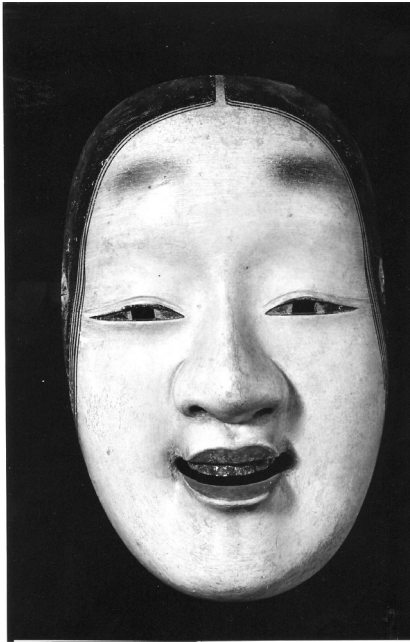
Figure 5.5 Front of *magojirô* mask.

Nô masks as commodities

To have ended up on display in an Oxford museum, the Pitt Rivers *nô* masks have experienced some processes absent from the typical history of a mask still employed within the *nô* world. Appadurai and Kopytoff have suggested a way to understand the dynamics of the process by which the 'typical career' of an object – i.e. its production and consumption within its intended environment – can be diverted into an 'atypical career' of an object circulating within different social, cultural and historical milieus. One major process through which such a diversion occurs is 'commoditisation', namely assigning an object with an economic value for the purpose of exchange, and the subsequent movement of that object into the commodity market (Appadurai 1986: 3–28). According to Kopytoff, in every society there are some objects like heirlooms, ritual objects or those controlled by sumptuary regulations that are usually precluded from becoming commodities (Kopytoff 1986: 73). The stimulus for these objects to move into the 'commodity state' can be personal crisis, social change, financial hardship, aesthetic or economic creativity, or encounters with strangers. The object's subsequent journeys across time, space or cultural boundaries tend to move it away from the standardised and culturally specific knowledge of the production locus, and into other environments where this knowledge becomes increasingly 'partial, contradictory or differentiated' (Appadurai 1986: 56). Here other attributes enhanced through distance and unfamiliarity are emphasised by new owners who ascribe their own meanings to the object.

This model fits well with what we know of *nô* masks in general and the particular history of the Pitt Rivers collection. Until the nineteenth century, the typical 'career' of a *nô* mask was exceptionally limited because, as an object closely connected to religious ceremonies and samurai social entertainment, the sumptuary laws of the Edo Era precluded it from circulating within society as a commodity. Although many in the middle classes enjoyed watching public *nô* performances and even practised aspects of the performance art themselves as amateurs, masks were not commercially available for their use. *Nô* masks were carved either by the actors themselves, or by professional carvers who worked closely with individual actors or acting schools to ensure that the products satisfied their artistic demands. Once completed, the masks remained within the *nô* community. Diversions outside this world were limited to possession and use by samurai patrons, some of whom were also amateur actors, and dedication to and use at religious institutions. Generally speaking, all those who came into contact with the masks shared a common cultural code, and so possessed the social and aesthetic knowledge for what Appadurai calls their 'appropriate consumption' (ibid.: 38).

The *nô* mask's tightly defined social milieu was shattered when the Meiji Restoration of 1868 brought sweeping social and psychological changes to virtually all elements of Japanese life. Many institutions redolent of the old order were reformed and those incapable of transformation were replaced by newly introduced modern Western counterparts. Because *nô* had evolved little

during the previous century, it struggled to adapt to the artistic crisis caused by the flood of Western cultural imports, and the financial crisis caused by the loss of patronage support when the samurai regime was disbanded. In desperation, *nô* families scaled down their operations and sold theatrical possessions to the growing market of collectors, who, at this time, were predominantly Westerners attracted to exotic objects of fine artistic quality. The same phenomenon was repeated after the Second World War, though by then the collectors were both Westerners and Japanese (Nishino 1997: 233–6).

Factors including widespread financial and social disorder, a bitter family succession dispute and reports of an interested buyer prompted the entrepreneurial Kongô Kinnosuke to realise the commercial value of his masks as commodities. It was he who made the first move to dissociate them from their theatrical context by displaying them as sale items. Kongô Iwao (Kongô 1983: 144) records that the price offered per mask was one to two Yen. At that time, one Yen would have bought approximately 19 kg of rice, 30 litres of *sake* or 10 eggs (see Shûkan Asahi 1988). It is clear that this price is wholly inconsistent with the masks' production costs in terms of materials, labour and skill. Appadurai highlights this incongruity of the assigned sales price as another feature of cross-cultural trade at times of economic or social upheaval, when the players are from different cultural systems and share only minimal consumption knowledge (Appadurai 1986: 13–15). The final stage of the masks' de-contextualisation occurred with their move to England, where they became museum exhibits viewed by people whose understanding of their original function was based almost entirely on a sales document detailing their history and character types, which was displayed alongside the masks. At the turn of the millenium, they were still housed in a display cabinet from the 1960s where even this information had been replaced by a shorter description of *nô* theatre in general.

Today the sale of genuine *nô* masks, both individually and as whole collections, has become quite common. Most major museums in Japan and the West can boast at least a few examples. In this way, a process that started out as a diversion from the normal career of a *nô* mask has itself over time become a new customary pathway. At auctions today these objects fetch prices hundreds of thousand of times higher than those paid at the Kyoto Exposition, which is evidence of a growing appreciation of their value in their new context as art objects. However, there are masks produced expressively for the tourist and less discerning collector that cannot be considered as authentic stage tools because they are of such low quality that they could never be used in performance and therefore by-pass the theatrical context completely.

Re-contextualising the nô masks

Cross-cultural commodity flows are often based on an unstable and uneven distribution of knowledge concerning the product. Each time the social, spatial and temporal distance between producer and consumer increases, the relevance of the knowledge ascribed into the commodity at production decreases,

and it becomes increasingly de-contextualised (Appadurai 1986: 41). This is particularly true for *nô* masks in Western collections, where cultural familiarity with Japan, let alone its classical theatre genres, is generally low. Western museum curators cannot rely at all on their visitors' pre-existing mental image of any part of a Japanese mask's original environment, either historical or contemporary, visual or literary. Unless considerable amounts of extra information are supplied, interpretation of the masks is left to the visitor's imagination. The positive side to this approach was observed during one visit to the Museum, when I noted a school teacher encouraging a class of children to look closely at the expressions on the mask faces and invent stories about their lives and personalities. This demonstrated that non-invasive museum discourse can encourage the imaginative encounters that could easily have been obscured by excess information supplied in the name of education.

In general, we can regard museum artefacts as having two different types of attributes: intrinsic attributes, where the focus is on the materials and decorative qualities, and relative attributes, where the original context or function of the artefact are the major focus (Crowther 1992: 35–46). The 1960s display style of the Pitt Rivers collection allowed visitors to appreciate the collection's intrinsic qualities as exotic finely crafted faces. In light of what we now know of *nô* masks, and taking into consideration the comments on the display from experts in the field, it was recognised that thought should be given to alternative display styles that also highlight the masks' relative attributes. This was particularly relevant to the Pitt Rivers collection, which is unique in West in the claim made in the sales document that several of the masks were made for the great sixteenth-century warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Although this connection has yet to be substantiated, it should nonetheless be regarded as another point of historical interest. An explanation of Hideyoshi's connections to *nô*, and the implications and improbabilities of his connection to these particular masks would make a memorable exhibit. Let us also imagine a display that emphasised the importance of the masks as the spiritual and physical manifestation of specific literary characters. Selected masks with easily understandable stage personalities could be contextualised with synopsis storylines, and photographs or videos of the character as it appears on stage. A mask positioned under a moving light source could demonstrate how its expression changes as shadows play over the facial features. Taken to its logical conclusion, the ultimate illustration of the masks' function on a *nô* stage would be their use in a staged performance. This matter has indeed been raised by members of today's Kongô *nô* school, who would relish the opportunity to act again with masks from their family's original collection.

For the reasons outlined below, none of these strategies are appropriate to the particular situation of the Pitt Rivers Museum. First, because of spatial limitations, a more thematic focus, accompanied by extra written information, would necessitate a reduction in the number of masks on display. However, the Museum is adverse to the reduction of the number on view because its current policy is to celebrate the mask collection as a whole, and the rare

opportunity it offers for visitors to see such a large number and range of mask types. Second, the use of the masks for performances, even by experts, is impracticable because of the perceived risk of damage and the related conservation implications. The cost of insurance for such a performance is another prohibitive factor. Third, the curators are custodians not only of the artefacts themselves, but also of the Museum's own heritage as a historic institution. Although its original display format following Pitt Rivers' prescribed layout has been greatly modified over the past 120 years, his intentions are still preserved in the typological and cross-cultural display style, the closely packed display cabinets and the hand-written labels still attached to many artefacts (Petch 1998). The main exhibit hall has been maintained as a fascinating example of one early episode in the history of museum science (Figure 5.6).

The options for reassessing the display are not as limited as they may appear, however, for the curators also have at their disposal media such as printed pamphlets and the museum's website on which to provide extra contextual information. These sources can provide visitors with access to a detailed account of a range of historic, artistic and theatrical aspects, while written panels adjacent to the display case could provide extracts of these accounts plus explanations of characteristics like hair style, skin colour and expression that can clearly identify individual character traits. Furthermore, assistance in this re-contextualisation process comes from the fact that,

Figure 5.6 Interior of Pitt Rivers Museum.

although culturally and spatially separated from their original environment, the masks have a direct link to those still worn in performances today. The plan is to emphasise this point through the positioning of several masks next to photographs of that mask type in action as part of a costumed performance.

Conserving the *nô* masks

Let us turn once more to the matter of conservation. In their present state, few of the Pitt Rivers masks are in sufficiently good repair to be used on stage. This is due less to their age than to the warm dry conditions in which they are stored, which, combined with the lack of moisture absorbed from the actor during performances, have dried out their wooden frames, causing cracking of both wood and pigments. Furthermore, the delicate sheen of the painted surfaces and patina known as *furubi* on many of the masks has been damaged, so that their features appear paler and more matt than usual. The most credible explanation for this is that someone unaware of the delicate nature of the pigments mistook the *furubi* for a layer of dirt and attempted to wipe the masks clean with a damp cloth. It is assumed that this occured many years ago, for the Museum has no records of the collection being inappropriately cleaned in recent history, and would certainly never consider any such invasive treatment nowadays.

   Here again, we see contrasting attitudes of the collection's past and present owners, between its original environment and present non-theatrical context. Were these masks in the possession of an actor, they would never have deteriorated to this degree, and even less serious damage would have been rectified to maintain their stage life. However, having been reclassified as heritage items, they can be displayed in a museum in a state that bears witness to the cumulative layers of their history. The Pitt Rivers Museum is under no obligation to repair them, for its policy is to preserve artefacts in the state in which they entered the collection rather than restore them to anything like their former glory. Intervention is kept to a minimum aside from repairs to halt deterioration caused by ageing. Although the Museum remains open to discussion on conservation treatments and ethical issues, a complete *nô* mask restoration project would be highly unlikely in today's economic climate.

Conclusion

Kopytoff defines an 'eventful biography' as one where the object is 'classified and reclassified into changing categories whose relative importance shifts with changes in society and different contexts' (Kopytoff 1986: 90). This study has shown how developments in Japan's cultural environment have generated new pathways leading away from the 'ideal biography' of one particular type of object, namely *nô* masks, bringing about the reassessment of their meaning and function within Japan and their spread into the wider public domain,

from where some have been traded overseas. Through diversions into new spatial and cultural spheres, *nô* masks are now viewed in different sectors as performance tools, decorative works of art and historical relics. The existence of these parallel identities demonstrates how Japanese heritage cannot be thought of as one singular concept, but instead communicates a range of different meanings depending on cultural, temporal and geographical context. We have seen how this has given rise to the contrasting interpretations of *nô* masks by actors, curators, conservators and historians. A discussion of the efforts of the Pitt Rivers Museum to incorporate an understanding of these contrasting identities within its display has provided the opportunity to rethink the wider criteria employed in the conservation, use and display of heritage items.

We have also discussed how a *nô* mask forfeits its function as a performance tool once it enters a museum or private collection. Not only does it lose its direct contact with the *nô* world, but its present owners now regard it as their responsibility to avoid all unnecessary and potentially harmful handling. However, it is also understandably distressful and frustrating for actors of later generations to see parts of their profession's heritage being made inaccessible for use on stage. There is perhaps a wider lesson to learn here regarding the assessment of heritage artefacts. When dealing with objects that still have a viable function within their original institution, recognition must be paid to the effects of the separation from that institution, if, by that process, the practitioners of the original function are thereby deprived of authentic tools of their trade. There is a clear tension here between the benefits of declaring objects as heritage items and assigning them conservation-orientated curatorship on the one hand, and on the other hand ensuring accessibility to those who are engaged in the preservation of the institution as a living tradition.

Acknowledgements

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6 Company culture or patinated past?

The display of corporate heritage in Sumitomo

Bart Gaens

Introduction

This chapter explores how Sumitomo, one of Japan's largest and oldest corporate groups, displays its heritage in a number of company-related facilities such as historical, technological and industrial museums and exhibition halls.[1] The aim is to examine the significance of the reconstruction and representation of Sumitomo's four-century history, industrial heritage, business tradition, corporate philosophy and collective memory. The House of Izumiya-Sumitomo, the forerunner of the present Sumitomo corporation, originated in the late sixteenth century, and its business has concentrated on copper smelting, mining, and ancillary industries ever since. The firm developed into one of the largest merchant houses during the Edo period, survived the Meiji Restoration, grew into a pre-war *zaibatsu*, and after the post-war dissolution re-organised as a *keiretsu*, a group of interlocking companies. The Sumitomo Group at present consists of forty companies engaged in mining, real estate and construction, finance and insurance, trade, warehousing and transportation, electronics and electric equipment, IT services and manufacturing of steel, non-ferrous metals, ceramics, machinery, chemicals and rubber products.[2]

Heritage-creation is often a national project which includes 'invented traditions' and aims to construct a communal self-image as well as define the nation's position in the international context. Similarly, corporate groups, especially those as extensive, diversified, and long-standing as Sumitomo, display their heritage and glorify their past in order to foster community consciousness, reconfirm their status, authority and authenticity, and emphasise their economic as well as social relevance. Corporate museums serve to tell the tale of the company's past, present and future, both to its own employee community and to society as a whole. Hoshiai Shigeo (1993) classified corporate museums and exhibition facilities as follows: (1) historical exhibition halls for the instruction of employees, dedicated to the founder of business; (2) historical museums extolling the company's contribution to and central position in the sector of industry or trade; (3) educational halls emphasising the company's social responsibility, environmental awareness and contributions to the local community; (4) technological museums promoting the company's

products and explaining the function of past and future machinery and manufacturing techniques; and (5) industrial exhibition halls in factories, aiming to bridge the gap between producer and consumer during study tours, often including tasting or do-it-yourself corners. Since many of the Sumitomo-related sites incorporate elements of more than one type, I will base my analysis on their function and target by expanding on the theory of Japanese company museums as outlined by Nakamaki Hirochika. Nakamaki (2003: 21–2) points out the similarity between company museums and sanctuaries (such as Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples) which add a sacred dimension to the company, its business philosophy and corporate culture, and compares the veneration of a founder and the reverence of successful products to the worship of Zeus and his daughters, the Muses, in the Temple of Olympus in Ancient Greece. The implicit objective of company museums is to earn the respect of society, not only through the display of the company's own history, technology and products, but also by appealing to the universal relevance of its field of business or industry (ibid.: 23–4).

This chapter is divided into three sections, each dealing with a different dimension of heritage display. The first part centres on corporate sites aimed at the internal employee community, and is concerned with the notions of lineage and continuity as focal points of integration and identity. The second part deals with the dimension of industry and its general relevance, and examines how Sumitomo's heritage display serves to elevate the status of the copper mining industry by placing it in a larger social, global and religious context. The third part will look at the social dimension and explore how 'the imposition of order and meaning on objects' (Sherman and Rogoff 1994: x) relates to corporate philosophy, environmental awareness, and social responsibility.

Lineage and continuity

A first feature of Sumitomo's heritage display is the prominence of what Urry (1994: 131–50; 1996: 60–1) has referred to as a 'glacial sense of time', an emphasis on lineage and inheritance, and a sense of continuity marked by an identity-conferring status. These can be seen as intrinsic characteristics of the concept of *ie* or household, the basic unit of society during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868). Defining *ie* as 'corporate groups that hold property (for example, land, a reputation, an art, or "cultural capital") in perpetuity', Dorinne Kondo (1990: 122) has shown that in small, family-owned businesses, the emphasis on continuity and the view of the *ie* as a circle of attachment and identity are aspects of the 'company-as-family' idiom that are far from defunct. I argue that Sumitomo's corporate heritage testifies to a re-definition of '*ie*-consciousness', which regards the company as a perpetual body transcending the present, rooted in the legacy of the past as well as linked to future prosperity.[3] Family, lineage, ritual kinship and continuity are important attributes of a narrative underlying the company's endeavours to cultivate a sense of unity in a highly heterogeneous employee community. In particular, the

emphasis on lineage and veneration of the founder feature prominently in the heritage display of the corporate group under examination.

The creation of lineage

Soga Riemon (1572–1636), the pioneer of the Sumitomo business, owned a copper refinery and hardware shop called Izumiya in Kyoto, and his business prospered when he acquired the *nambanbuki*, a new technique to extract silver from copper. Nevertheless, it is Masatomo (1585–1652) who is traditionally credited as the founding father of what later became the Izumiya-Sumitomo house. Born into a samurai family, he chose priesthood, but when the Nehan sect he belonged to was dissolved, he opened a book and medicine shop in Kyoto. The two households of Riemon and Masatomo merged when Soga Riemon's son Tomomochi was adopted by Masatomo but continued his father's Izumiya business. Masatomo played no great role in Sumitomo's later business development, but he is all the more important for Sumitomo's corporate heritage in three respects. First and most obviously, Masatomo put Sumitomo on the mercantile path after starting the Fujiya book and medicine shop in Kyoto. Second, he provided a link with authority, as his family roots included both nobility and samurai ancestry. The Sumitomo family history records, *Suiyû meikan* (1891), traced back Masatomo's family line to the noble Taira (Heike) family of the Heian period (794–1185) and ultimately the imperial family. In addition, Masatomo's immediate ancestors were warrior lords, which linked the family to the samurai class, the ruling elite of the Tokugawa period.[4] Third, as a Buddhist priest, he provided the spiritual/moral backbone to a corporate philosophy which is said to be observed to this day by all companies of the present Sumitomo Group. Although his activities were entirely unrelated to the firm's later development and its focus on mining and copper industry, his own trade of books and medicine symbolised spiritual and physical salvation of others (Miyamoto 1982: 268), an important aspect of Sumitomo's later philosophy of social awareness.

Masatomo's affiliation with authority, religion, and commerce can certainly be viewed as befitting the founding father of a business handed down for seventeen generations. In addition, his perseverance and faith in tumultuous times are seen as the basis for prosperity of the future business concern referred to as the 'Sumitomo Kingdom' (Shirayanagi 1931: 1). However, adulation of Masatomo as the official pioneer of the house is of relatively recent origin and should not be situated any earlier than the late Meiji period (1868–1912). In 1890, for example, the fifteenth household head Tomoito referred to himself as the 'twentieth descendant of the Family of Sumitomo' (Sumitomo Besshi kôzanshi henshû iinkai 1991: 25). Creation of the official genealogical table (*Kakei ryakki*) was completed in 1891 (Meiji 24) and appeared in the Sumitomo family history records (*Suiyû meikan*).

An increased emphasis on origins and family line ironically coincided with the family's decreased role in business, as salaried managers had taken control

of the modernisation of the firm and reduced the function of the household head to a ceremonial and symbolic one. According to the new Meiji legal code, the concept of household was now restricted to a kinship group based on blood relationships. However, managers who, according to the new line of thinking, were no longer members of the *ie*, held the power. The Sumitomo family was forced into the position of owners no longer actively involved in management. Lineage creation can be seen as an important aspect of that symbolic function, aiming to confer status and identity, and strengthen unity within the household-turned-company. Codification of House Constitutions served the same purpose, and at the same time ratified managerial control. Director-general Hirose Saihei (1828–1914) compiled two Constitutions in 1882 and 1891, in effect legitimising the 'reign but not rule' policy. The household head was only the public face of the company, he did not attend executive meetings and only on rare occasions set foot in Sumitomo's mines or factories (Kawata 1951: 134). Acting as kingmaker, Hirose Saihei consecutively hand-picked the twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth head of the family between 1865 and 1890.[5]

Veneration of the founder

No longer involved in business, the family came to play an all the more essential role at the ideological level during the Meiji era, as symbol of continuity and unity. The Yûhôen, the Sumitomo family's private estate in Kyoto, suggests that the same holds true at present. Located in Shishigatani in Eastern Kyoto near the Philosopher's Path (*Tetsugaku no michi*), the Yûhôen premises include a spacious mansion, a pond, a landscaped garden, two tea houses, the family temple and a historical exhibition hall. The site is not accessible to the public, but functions as a facility for the initiation of new recruits and the training of employees. Ever since 1630, the company's headquarters have been located in Osaka, but the Kyoto mansion has important symbolical meaning as the bedrock of the Sumitomo business. The main residence was completed in 1920 by the fifteenth head of the family but is no longer inhabited. The mansion looks out over a garden designed by Ogawa Jihei in the 'borrowed scenery' (*shakkei*) fashion, blending in a view on Kyoto's Eastern Mountains (Higashiyama) with the garden.

The Hôsendô, Sumitomo's main family temple, was constructed in 1940 at the request of the sixteenth household head and holds the relics of Masatomo. The temple functions as a Buddhist mausoleum and holds the mortuary tablets of the founder, the successive household heads and other family members. The Hôsendô is also dedicated to the souls of all deceased employees, managers, and honorary family members or *makke*, long-serving employees who received the permission and financial means to start an affiliated business and were considered ritual members of the family.[6] Every spring on 25 April, the family and top executives (chairman, president, and former senior executives) of the core companies of the Sumitomo Group visit this mausoleum and

conduct a memorial service for the past family heads and for those who have contributed to Sumitomo's development. According to the official pamphlet describing the company's history (Sumitomo Corporation 1990: 6), this practice 'reflects the deep-rooted tradition of respect for past leaders and for the enduring moral and ethical values they had advocated'.

The spirit of prudence and the avoidance of easy profits (*kakujitsu o mune to shi furi ni hashirazu*) in particular are the basis of Sumitomo's business philosophy and it is mentioned in virtually every pamphlet, material or site related to the corporation. A copper bridge constructed in the early Meiji period and located in the middle of the Yûhôen landscaped garden is a metaphor for that spirit. Though initially located at the original residential site in Unagidani, Osaka, the bridge was relocated to the Yûhôen in 1925 for its high symbolic value. It alludes to the proverb 'tapping on a stone bridge before crossing' (*ishibashi wo tataite wataru*) or 'act with utmost caution'. Sumitomo employees are instructed that safe and sound management is the secret of survival and success in business. These precepts appeared for the first time in the House Constitution of 1891, and were adopted as Sumitomo's Business Principles (*shasoku*) in 1928. The following English version dates back to 1977 (Sumitomo shôji kôhôshitsu 1989: 64):

> Sumitomo shall achieve strength and prosperity by placing prime importance on integrity and sound management in the conduct of its business.
> Sumitomo shall manage its activities with foresight and flexibility in order to cope effectively with the changing times. Under no circumstances, however, shall it pursue easy gains or act imprudently.

When the Business Principles were promulgated in 1928, their underlying philosophy was traced back to the seventeenth-century writings of Sumitomo's founder. In my opinion this search for moral and spiritual origins should be seen as part of the same process of heritage creation that officially designated Masatomo as founding father. Masatomo's Admonitions (*Monjuin shiigaki*) (c. 1650) comprise five quite specific regulations which should be seen in the context of the time: (1) do not purchase an article offered below the prevailing market price (as it is likely a stolen object); (2) do not offer lodging to anyone or accept another's property in custody; (3) do not act as a guarantor for anyone; (4) do not sell anything on credit; and (5) do not become angry or use harsh words (Sumitomo Corporation 1990: 8). Yet, Tokugawa period documents fail to mention the 'Sumitomo spirit' and way of doing business founded on these 'precepts of prudence, integrity and benevolence enunciated by the first head of the Sumitomo family nearly four centuries ago' (ibid.: 6). Only in the Meiji period, when the directors-general diversified business and necessarily took more risks, did this philosophy appear in the composition of guiding principles.

The same Yûhôen grounds also contain a historical museum. The Sumitomo Historical Exhibition Hall (*Rekishi Tenjikan*) is a unique corporate

museum solely in use for the initiation of new recruits of affiliated companies. Its outer design is neo-gothic, and the hall displays items representing Sumitomo's four hundred-year history and business spirit. Designed in 1981 and completely refurbished in 1990, the museum covers two floors and more than 785 sqm. Historical continuity is the theme of the entrance hall, where a detailed timeline displays the group's development from 1585 (the founder's year of birth) to the present and a wall-size diagram shows the links between all affiliated companies. Centrally located in the room is a copper representation of the Besshi mine, Sumitomo's core asset from which all companies derived, referred to as 'the Mother of Sumitomo' (Nishino 1937: 26). Especially noteworthy on the second floor are the picture galleries, with portrayals of most of the seventeen consecutive household heads (*Sumitomoke rekidai*), the seven directors-general (*Rekidai no sôriji*) who were at the helm of the enterprise from the Meiji era until 1953, and eight other illustrious men (*Sumitomo yukari no hitobito*) who dedicated themselves to Sumitomo's continuity and prosperity.

In summary, corporate heritage display at the Yûhôen testifies to a continued view of the company as an *ie*. It is marked, first, by ancestral worship, in particular veneration of the founding father as genealogical origin and spiritual foundation; second, an emphasis on perpetuity and uninterrupted prosperity; and third, glorification of employees and managers who accomplished that continuity and who were tied to the House of Sumitomo through ritual kinship. As a training facility the Yûhôen serves to forge stronger ties of loyalty and solidarity between the employees of all affiliated companies.

The copper mining industry and its contexts

Heritage display in Sumitomo is not only related to the consolidation of a communal spirit but also aims to underscore the relevance of its business. Three sites in particular serve to elevate the status of the copper mining industry by situating it in a larger social, global and religious context.

The social context: instructing the public

Minetopia Besshi (www.besshi.com) is an 'ecology' theme park in the vicinity of Hadeba, the site of the fourth and last mining shaft of the Besshi copper mine in Niihama city (Ehime Prefecture, Shikoku). The park opened in June 1991 and its prime purpose is to bridge the gap between the mining industry and the general public, combining a didactic purpose and entertainment. It unites previously dispersed, reconstructed buildings and bridges in one large 'heterotopic'[7] space, a site of illusion that offers a perfect, tidy, and well-arranged representation of mining industry. In Minetopia too, continuity and the interconnectedness of past, present and future are prominent features, as the park is designed as a journey through time. Visitors are intended to experience a 'time slip' when entering the park. They first cross a modern-age

bridge and then pass a red-brick building housing a large hydroelectric power generator designed by Siemens and dating back to 1912. Subsequently visitors board a replica of an early Meiji-period steam train, which takes them on a 410m-long journey through a tunnel and over a bridge to a reconstruction of the first excavated mining gallery, the 'Tunnel of Joy'. This 333m-long mining gallery features miniature figures with smiling faces wearing spotless white gear and offers a didactical representation of life and work in the mine. In the 'Try-it-yourself Corners', visitors can pump up water using a wooden hand pump, try to pan for gold, create a simple copper tray in the Akagane no Sato Workshop, or experience first-hand how heavy the loads of copper ore were in the days before 1893 (the import of the first steam locomotive) when carriers[8] had to span the 18 km distance from the mine to the harbour on foot. A 'warp-gate' finally returns the visitor to the post-modernisation age with a display of contemporary mining machinery and further leads to a room featuring a maquette of a future mining site on the moon.

Minetopia Besshi shares a number of features of general heritage display. The theme park interprets its past through 'an artefactual history which partly obscures the social relations and struggles which underlay that past', and is informed by 'the belief that history is turned into heritage and made safe, sterile and shorn of danger, subversion and seduction' (Urry 1996: 52). The historical role of Besshi as a site of labour struggle, uprisings against management and lockouts, in particular during the first half of the twentieth century, is ignored. The year 1907, for example, witnessed long-lasting strikes, sabotage attempts and violent attacks, after the management's abolishment of the subcontracting system of labour supply caused wages to drop considerably. Military forces were called in, sixty-five employees were indicted and thirty were imprisoned (Niihama shishi hensan iinkai 1980: 1219). Modernisation and the introduction of western machinery further led to the dismissal of several hundreds of miners (ibid.: 1220–1). The uprisings in 1925–26 concerned a more organised effort by the 1,600-strong Besshi labour union (*Besshi rôdô kumiai*), protesting against the dismissal of seventy-one workers, the lack of compensation for injury or death, and the lowering of wages. Partly owing to the organisation of a pro-management 'second union' (*dai ni kumiai*), the uprising was crushed. The former site of labour struggle has now been transformed into a mine-utopia, and the park and its exhibits include very few references to Sumitomo. Instead, Minetopia Besshi offers edu-tainment in a sanitised industrial space in order to polish the image of copper mining in general.

The global context: the Chinese bronze collection

The Sen'oku Hakukokan museum,[9] completed in 1970, houses the 'Sumitomo Collection', a series of about six hundred priceless Chinese bronze artefacts dating back to 1400 BC (Middle Shang dynasty) until 1600 AD (Ming dynasty), including musical instruments, wine and food vessels, utensils for

ritual use, weapons and mirrors.[10] The majority of these items were collected by the fifteenth household head Kichizaemon Tomoito between 1900 and 1926. Allegedly Tomoito was able to purchase the artefacts in China when local collectors were looking for a safe place abroad in order to ensure preservation during an era of political instability (the end of the Qing dynasty, the 1911 revolution, and the start of the Republic of China). In addition to bronze utensils, a collection of Chinese paintings was added in 1981. The main building of the museum consists of four exhibition rooms around a central circular space. The emphasis is on an evolutionary arrangement 'to aid visitor understanding of the historic development of bronze ware'.[11] Although the Sen'oku Hakukokan does not focus on the Sumitomo enterprise as such, the Chinese bronze collection places the company's core field of industry in a global framework. Moreover, it adds appeal and an aura of authority to the firm's manufacturing enterprises by linking it with artefacts dating back to thousands of years before its own entrepreneurial origins.

The religious context: the sacred nature of the Besshi copper mine

A third corporate site appeals to a sacred dimension in order to furnish copper mining with a brighter aura. After the start of exploitation in 1691, the Besshi mountain in the Iyo province (the present Ehime Prefecture, Shikoku) developed into the core asset for the Sumitomo business. As Bakufu-appointed (*goyô*) copper traders, Sumitomo handled one-third of the total of Japan's copper exports by the end of the seventeenth century. House Codes therefore emphasise the direct link between the public domain (the interest of the Bakufu government), the production of copper in the Besshi mine, and the honour and reputation of the family.[12] Mining activities continued for almost three hundred years until 1973, when, around one km below sea level, the rock pressure and temperature rose too high to allow further excavation. The Besshi copper mine yielded a total of more than three million tons of copper ore, producing over 720,000 tons of copper. Even though the family considered selling the mine after the Meiji restoration in 1868, general manager Hirose Saihei succeeded in convincing the owners that the mine held the capacity to remain profitable, provided modernisation was carried out. It is a fact that without Hirose's persistence Sumitomo would not have survived. In the introduction to Hirose's autobiography (Hirose [1895] 1982: xii), household head Tomoito lauded him not only as the master architect of Sumitomo's restored prosperity in the modern era, but also as a hero contributing to the welfare of society and nation. Hirose referred to the significance of the Besshi mine in the first House Constitutions of 1882 and 1891: 'The Besshi mining enterprise is the uninterrupted and everlasting asset' on which the family's fortune depended.

   At present, long after exploitation has ended, the mountain is still regarded as the root from which the various Sumitomo enterprises spun off, which is exemplified by the central place it occupies in several corporate museums.

Corporate initiation rites for new recruits, for example, include a 'back to the cradle' hiking tour on the Besshi mountain. Furthermore, the whole mountain is seen as a sacred site, not only because it harbours several shrines and memorial sites, such as the *rantôba*, a mausoleum for the 132 employees who died in fires in the mine shafts in 1694, but also because the mountain as a place with religious significance has now been returned to nature. According to Shinto thought, mountains are traditionally seen as places of transcendence where humans and gods meet. After being stripped of nearly all its greenery following centuries of intense exploitation and pollution, Sumitomo's 'treasure mountain' (*takara no yama*) and gift from the gods is now once again a living, natural environment.

A poem by Kichizaemon Tomonari (1909–93) which accompanies a copper model of the mine in the Sumitomo Historical Exhibition Hall illustrates well the perceived awe-inspiring quality of the mountain:

> Respecting this copper mine
> As a deity
> Filled with awe
> For the continual excavation
> During many generations.[13]

It is therefore no coincidence that the Besshi Copper Mine Commemorial Museum (Besshi dôzan kinenkan) in Niihama, Ehime prefecture, is located within the compound of Ôyamazumi jinja, a Shinto shrine. The twenty member companies of the Sumitomo Group jointly established the museum in 1975 to commemorate the closure of the mine. Nakamaki (2003: 28) points out that the museum therefore easily evokes feelings of nostalgia, and compares it to a repose of souls, a site symbolising closure by putting the ghosts of the past to rest. The Ôyamazumi shrine was originally located on the mountain and functioned as the place of veneration for the guardian deity of the mine but was rebuilt at the foot of the mountain in 1928 (Seoka 2003: 263). At present the shrine still functions as the guardian shrine of Sumitomo and all its employees. The building housing the Besshi Copper Mine Commemorial Museum is designed partly underground, shaped in the image of the original mine, with its roof covered with plants and greenery in order to blend in with the mountains in the background. Outside of the museum and near the shrine's archway (*torii*) the German steam locomotive used to transport the copper is displayed. The most impressive and at the same time most symbolic item in the collection is the *ôbaku* (Figure 6.1). The *ôbaku* was a solid, 300 kg block of copper ore, decorated with ropes and Shinto ornaments and placed on a portable shrine.[14] Every New Year's Day the executive presidents of Sumitomo presented the *ôbaku* to the Ôyamazumi guardian deity of the copper mine in order to pray for safety and prosperity. The entrance hall to the museum features the last *ôbaku* made in Besshi in 1973. A reproduction can be found at the entrance of the main building in Minetopia Besshi, and a

Figure 6.1 Ôbaku (block of copper ore) wrapped with Shinto ropes (*shimenawa*), Besshi Copper Mine Commemorial Museum, Niihama.

smaller-sized version (*kobaku*) in the Historical Exhibition Hall in Kyoto. In all these corporate facilities the *ôbaku* symbolises the Sumitomo dynasty but also reveals the sacred aura the company seeks to attach to its enterprise.

Corporate philosophy

Environmental awareness

As a further function, corporate sites and museums also externalise Sumitomo's philosophy and ideologies, in particular, environmental and social awareness, and function as its 'managers of consciousness' (Hans Haacke, quoted in Sherman and Rogoff 1994: xv). The emphasis on the ecological restitution of the Besshi mountain and the quasi-religious aura attached to the copper ore as symbolised by the *ôbaku* overshadow the problems associated with mining in general and modernisation of the industry in particular. The Besshi mine encountered more than its share of natural disasters and also produced heavy environmental pollution. From 1690 to 1868, the mining community was forced to cope with eighty-one cases of floodings, three major earthquakes, thirty outbreaks of fire and twenty-one occurrences of infectious diseases.[15] During the period 1893–1939, the Besshi mine was also the cause of heavy air pollution which resulted in a lasting series of court cases brought by the residents

of Niihama. In 1895, Sumitomo bought an uninhabited island off the coast of Niihama in order to relocate its copper-smelting plants and thus solve the pollution problems. Ironically the problem only worsened as the sea wind now spread the sulphur oxide fumes over a much larger area then before. Production shifted in 1913 to sulphuric acid and fertiliser, which cause much less pollution and at the same time offered new business opportunities, but it was not until 1939 that air pollution problems were completely solved.

As pointed out by Nakamaki (2003: 29), the Besshi Copper Mine Commemorial Museum does refer to history's lessons and includes pictures of how the Sumitomo management tackled the problems related to pollution. However, the collection ignores how the pollution affected inhabitants of Niihama during the Meiji era. Instead, emphasis is put on how the genius of the directors-general managed to overcome environmental problems. In particular, the display of Sumitomo's heritage extols Iba Teigo (1847–1926), the second director-general of the Sumitomo family enterprise as one of Japan's pioneers in environmental care. He is credited with solving pollution problems by relocating the company's smelting plants to Shisakajima and implementing re-forestation on the Besshi mountain. His former residence, the Kakkien in Seta, Ôtsu, includes an exhibition room and is part of Sumitomo's heritage.[16] The industrial city of Niihama with its 133,000 inhabitants continues to function as the capital of the 'Sumitomo Kingdom' and the corporation's chemical plants still line the coast. Environmental pollution, however, has made way for ecological awareness and an emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, represented by Healthy Land (Herushii Rando) Besshi, a large public bathing facility (also known as the Hadeba Spa) funded by Sumitomo.

Social awareness and national interest

On a square in front of the imperial palace in Tokyo stands the statue of Kusunoki Masashige (1294–1336), also known as Nankô, a military commander who in 1331 raised an army to come to the defence of emperor Godaigo (Figure 6.2). The monument was constructed on the occasion of the two-hundredth anniversary of the Besshi copper mine's exploitation. The fifteenth head of the Sumitomo dynasty donated the statue out of indebtedness to the nation in 1890, an era during which the Meiji government placed the imperial family at the apex of a pyramid structure incorporating all households in the nation. At the same time, Sumitomo's internal power structure reflected a similar configuration, as managerial control was in the hands of the directors-general and the Sumitomo family functioned only as symbols of authority.

The Nankô monument possesses a two-fold symbolic meaning for the Sumitomo Group. First and foremost, the statue stands for the company's business creed of 'social awareness', the spirit of gratitude for, and the desire to repay, the blessings of society. Often-quoted examples of Sumitomo's social awareness and consideration of public benefit include the dedication to the

Figure 6.2 Statue of Kusunoki Masashige (Nankô) (1294–1336), outside the Imperial Palace, Tokyo.

salvation of others shown by Sumitomo's aforementioned spiritual founder Masatomo; the willingness of Soga Riemon, the technological founding father, to share the new revolutionary copper smelting technique with other copper smelters in Osaka and to give precedence to national profit rather than holding on to the monopoly (Sumitomo shôji kôhôshitsu 1989: 65); the close co-operation of general managers with the government to develop national industries during the Meiji period; the construction of the Osaka Prefectural Library (Osaka Furitsu Nakanoshima Toshokan) and its offering to the city in 1904; the establishment of the Sumitomo Hospital in Osaka in 1921; the donation to Osaka city in the same year of a 60,000 sq m estate for use as a public park and museum (Sumitomo Corporation 1990: 34); and the construction of the eco-theme park Minetopia Besshi in Niihama.

Second, the statue well illustrates Sumitomo's self-conception of serving the nation and its connection to the state, a salient characteristic of the company's development and rise to fortune. Sumitomo's close ties with the Tokugawa government had been the source of extensive profits since the end of the seventeenth century when the family was appointed special procurement merchants. This was one reason why the new government after the Meiji Restoration threatened to confiscate Sumitomo's Besshi mine. The mine's general manager Hirose Saihei (1828–1914) almost single-handedly secured

survival of the Sumitomo house. Useful connections in the new Meiji govern-ment and skilful lobbying founded on the principle of 'national interest' safeguarded the firm's integrity. As mentioned before, Hirose thereafter convinced the family not to sell the copper mountain, leading to a new period of high growth and earning him promotion to the position of director-general in 1877. Hirose thus accomplished the remarkable feat of sustaining the triple link between Besshi's copper yield, the family enterprise, and the state, the age-old recipe to Sumitomo's prosperity.[17] The monument dedicated to Kusunoki Masashige can therefore be regarded both as a metaphor for the company's business creed of loyalty and dedication to the national and public interest, and as a symbol for its history of mutual coexistence and shared prosperity with the state.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the social and cultural context of the objects, ideas, practices and 'traditions' that belong to the corporate past of Sumi-tomo and are reproduced and displayed as meaningful in the present. My analysis was limited to the production and distribution of meanings: I looked only at the way the Sumitomo corporation perceives and re-creates its history and culture, and how a number of company-related facilities and sites, both public and private, disseminate that self-image. It goes without saying that numerous questions remain unanswered. For example, how do the Sumitomo employees interpret the meanings expressed in these sites? How do the visi-tors to Sumitomo's public corporate museums receive this heritage display? How do the people of Niihama, a typical 'corporate castle town', whose economy revolves almost entirely around Sumitomo-related firms, consider the company and its legacy which is so closely intertwined with the city's own history? These are related issues that require closer examination in the future.

Within the scope of this study it can be concluded that the display of heri-tage in a number of corporate sites directly or indirectly linked to the Sumitomo Group, including a temple, a historical exhibition hall, an ecology theme park, an art museum, a copper mine, an industrial museum and a monument serves a triple purpose. The first function is to forge stronger internal feelings of unity and solidarity within an extensive and heterogeneous community of employees. In this respect especially: (1) ancestral worship and the veneration of a char-ismatic founder; (2) the display of continuity through lineage creation; and (3) the ceremonial kinship of and contributions by managers and employees all fulfil important functions in the inculcation of collective memory.

The second aim of Sumitomo's display of heritage should be sought in the broader context of copper mining, the group's core industry. An appeal to the more universal significance of a firm's trade or industry in order to acquire the 'respect' of the general public is an essential feature of company museums (Nakamaki 2003: 24). The Minetopia ecology park seeks to bridge the gap between the copper mining industry and the public by offering didactic

entertainment in a sanitised mining 'heterotopia'; the Sen'oku Hakukokan Collection hints at the global dimension and highlights the timeless craftsmanship of Chinese bronze artefacts; and both the Besshi copper mine as well as its copper ore are situated in a transcendent and awe-inspiring religious context.

Finally, all corporate sites at least to some extent emphasise that profit is not only made for the company's own sake, but also in order to repay the debts to society and state, one of the pillars of the Sumitomo Group's business philosophy. The weight placed on environmental awareness thereby largely obscures problems associated with industrialisation, such as labour unrest and pollution.

It goes without saying that parallels can be drawn with the 'invented traditions' approach as developed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) in the context of the formation of nation-states. Similar to the Meiji government's need to instil national consciousness in the modern nation-state, the directors of companies faced the challenge to integrate and consolidate the corporate community after the inherent symbiosis of household and enterprise within the *ie* framework to exist. During the era of modernisation the Sumitomo company can be seen as a miniature state in which salaried managers controlled the firm and imposed a secondary function on the family owners, with the household head as symbolic leader. Also the importance attached to origins, obvious in the glorification of the founder and the construction of genealogy in this period, the collection of Chinese bronze artefacts to promote the company's own industrial heritage, and the connection of business with Shinto religion can at least partially be interpreted as examples of 'invented traditions'. Yet, rather than labelling the display of corporate heritage in Sumitomo as a set of new inventions, it might be better to speak of a modern re-contextualisation of *ie*-consciousness which evolved into a vital component of contemporary corporate culture. Ancestral worship and the emphasis on perpetuity, the view that business should not be guided by profit alone, the connection with state and society, and the nearly religious meaning imbued to copper mining, the company's core business from which all affiliated companies derived, are all features that can be traced back to the early modern era and cannot be labelled as inventions. The embodiment of these ideas in corporate heritage display testifies to a continuous creative process of remaking the past. At the same time, it provides the employee community with a shared identity and externalises Sumitomo's corporate culture vis-à-vis society through a 'patination' of the past.

Notes

1 Field research for this article was conducted in Kyoto, Niihama and Tokyo in 2003. My sincerest thanks go to Professor Wakita Haruko; Mrs Imai Noriko, Mr. Sueoka Teruaki and the staff of the Sumitomo Research Institute; Mr Ishikawa Akihiko of the Hirose Memorial Museum; and Mr Satô Yutaka of the Besshi Mine Commemorial Museum.

2 The website of the Sumitomo Group Public Affairs Committee provides a detailed overview of all affiliated subsidiaries. See www.sumitomo.gr.jp/english/organizn/index.html.

3 Early modern merchant households functioned as corporate groups *avant la lettre* and comprised a hierarchically structured cluster of families and businesses around one main household (*honke*). Fictive or ritual kinship integrated employees as full members of the household. It was the prime task of the head of the *ie* to honour the ancestors and the reputation (*kamei*) of the household, secure the prosperity of the business (*kagyô*) and guard the preservation of the patrimony (*kasan*), safely transferring it to the next generation. A single heir inherited the bulk of the estate and took on the hereditary title (*shûmei*) for the household head (Izumiya Kichizaemon in the case of Sumitomo). The dual responsibility towards past as well as future generations was therefore ingrained in the *ie*-consciousness, and continuity in business ensured social status and trust for the household.

4 The oldest extant genealogical table dates back to 1745 (Sumitomo shûshishitsu 1951: 4–6) and places the first appearance of the name Sumitomo in the early sixteenth century with Sumitomo Bicchû no kami Tadashige. The family line purportedly goes back to Taira no Takamochi, who was the first to receive the Taira surname and is seen as the founder of the Heike clan. Takamochi was a grandson of Prince Katsurahara, fifth son of Emperor Kanmu (737–806). Nakase Toshikazu (1984: 12–19), however, pointed out the lack of credentials for these claims to roots in nobility and samurai families and argued that these contentions should be seen as eighteenth-century fabrications accompanying the family's rise to fortune. In addition, he pointed out that appropriation of the name Sumitomo as well was part of the same process of lineage creation. Izumiya was the name currently used in business transactions throughout the Tokugawa period and this 'brand' functioned as a last name as well, until the Bakufu officially allowed usage of the family name Sumitomo in 1811.

5 In 1865, he recalled the brother of the deceased family head Tomonori from his adoptive family in order to become the twelfth head Tomochika. Tomochika died in 1890, and was succeeded by his 17-year-old son Tomotada. The latter, however, followed his father in death during the same month. Hirose solved the successional crisis by appointing Tomotada's mother as interim head. Subsequently he succeeded in greatly enhancing Sumitomo's social status and securing ties to the establishment by selecting Tokudaiji Takamaro, son of an aristocratic family and brother of Saionji Kinmochi, a Meiji Government member, as adopted heir and fifteenth head of the family.

6 The system remained in use until 1945 and can be seen as a forerunner of the *keiretsu* structure of interlocking companies.

7 The term 'heterotopia' derives from the study of anatomy, but Foucault applied the term to refer to 'spaces for the means of alternative orderings through difference and Otherness' (Hetherington 1996: 158–9).

8 *Nakamochi*. Female carriers transported loads of 30 kg, male labourers 45 kg.

9 See www.sumitomo.gr.jp/related/index02.html.

10 An annex to this museum, the Sen'oku Hakukokan Bunkan was inaugurated in 2002 in Tokyo. Cf. www.sumitomo.gr.jp/related/index.html#02

11 See the Sumitomo Group's website: www.sumitomo.gr.jp/english/history/related/index.html.

12 See, for example, *Yoshû Besshi dôzan e kahô no shinagaki (oboe)*, a set of regulations for the mine drafted in 1721 (Sumitomo shiryôkan 1997: 7).

13 *Kono yama wo kami to shi aogi horitsugite kishi koto no kashikosa.*

14 Also referred to as *yama* or 'mountain'. The carrying stage can therefore be seen as a physical representation of the mine. The *ôbaku* as a whole is a good example of the concept of *mitate* as described by Yamaguchi Masao (1991: 58): 'One of the techniques with which Japanese accentuate the hidden aspects of objects in both everyday life and artistic contexts.'

15 Figures are based on Sumitomo Besshi kôzanshi henshû iinkai (1991: 234).

16 See www.sumitomo.gr.jp/history/person/index15.html.
17 The Hirose Memorial Museum (Hirose Rekishi Kinenkan) in Niihama is dedicated to Hirose's life, career and achievements in the service of Sumitomo.

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Part III

Japanese local heritage and the wider world

7 A heady heritage

The shifting biography of *kashira* (puppet heads) as cultural heritage objects in the Awaji tradition

Jane Marie Law

In this chapter, I discuss the tradition of puppetry on the small island of Awaji, a stretch of land forming the gateway to the Inland Sea in Japan. In the late 1800s, there were over forty puppet troupes from Awaji performing throughout Japan, and although the tradition nearly died out in the postwar era, it has been successfully revived, and puppetry has again become a significant component of identity on the island. My discussion here is largely based on research I did on Awaji in 2003. My focus is a specific component of the puppetry tradition, namely the carved puppet heads known as *kashira*, with attention to their narrative histories (which I read as a kind of biography of *kashira* as cultural objects), their display and commoditization, and the challenge of finding inheritors of the demanding technical and aesthetic challenge of their creation.[1]

The grave of the puppets

In the early 1980s, when I was first doing research on Awaji on the religious significance of puppets, I often had elderly people tell me about a place called *dekozanma*, or "puppet cemetery." I was intrigued by the idea of a place where broken puppet heads could be properly buried. The very idea of such a practice pointed to a fascinating understanding of puppets: inert matter, wood and paint, which when made to come alive in the hands of a puppeteer, could achieve such a powerful significance that it would be treated as a human body, and given a proper burial. These objects appear to have life cycles.[2]

Stories about the *dekozanma* were fascinating. Several people told me that when a young man was repairing the dikes in his rice paddies, he dug into a mound, and a lot of half-rotten puppet heads came out. He soon became ill. He had accidentally disturbed a puppet grave. Another story was going around that a particular theater had buried its puppets in the yard of the house. People soon regarded the house as haunted. Later, a doctor from nearby bought it. Within a few weeks, he suddenly died. To this day, I was told, no one has lived in the house, and it has remained vacant for several decades. Puppets, it seemed, were capable of haunting people and causing mishaps. I spent a bit of time in the summer of 1988 looking for and asking about the *dekozanma*. Most

people I asked claimed to know where it was or had heard of it. No one ever showed me the vacant house once owned by the doctor.

In August of 2003, I was introduced to a woman living in a temple in Kyoto. She had sent a fax to the Awaji puppet theater in January of 2003, indicating that she had a puppet that was perhaps an Awaji puppet. The former director, Umazume Masaru, and the new director, Bando Chiaki, traveled to Kyoto to see the puppet, and found it, stored in an affluent temple, but in a very pitiful state. The woman who was keeping the puppet wanted to get it back to a place it belonged, because she said that it was haunting the house. Every night, when the family was asleep, they would hear footsteps, and they realized that the puppet was walking the halls of the temple, looking for something. What was she looking for?

The family of a deceased devotee of the temple had given the puppet to the temple. The puppet, it seems, was not the first item with a supernatural reputation donated to the temple. Umazume-san, who first saw the puppet, told me the following:

> I could readily tell it was a *Bunraku* puppet and not an Awaji puppet, but that it was in a pitiful state. The *kashira*, the costume, the hair, all falling apart and in disarray. Bando wanted to take it back to Awaji to repair it, but I had a strong feeling that if we took it back, something bad would happen to us, so I refused. My sense is that the puppet was lonely, with a longing for the stage. Stage puppets are not decorations. They need to be on stages, in performances. The puppet was walking the hall looking to get back to the stage.

This story came from a man who claims he is not at all superstitious. He reassured me he did not believe this puppet was actually walking around.

I myself went to see the puppet in Kyoto in August of 2003. She was standing in the corner of a new *tatami* room, near a *tokonoma*. She was indeed in a pitiful state. I asked the daughter-in-law of the temple if she had ever seen the puppet, and she told me she was scared of it and had no desire to see it.

Over the years of doing research on Awaji, I have heard a lot of stories about puppet heads that have met with bad ends: puppet heads buried in rice paddies; puppet heads in the district of Ama used as fuel to heat bath water; puppet heads sold to collectors in Osaka; puppet heads given to children as toys. These are cases where the puppeteers who owned the heads had become so poor and been burdened by obligations to the people who had helped them that they gave away their *kashira* as repayment of social obligations, resulting in puppet heads abandoned in the wrong places. I have come to realize that the stories themselves are a significant part of the heritage of the *kashira*, and indeed these stories of their abuse, demise, near demise or under-appreciated circumstances are often the gateway to the very active revitaliza-tion efforts underway at the theaters and on the island of Awaji. Telling the stories is not only a way of energizing deep feelings or activating the nostalgia

some people have for the puppet tradition. The stories themselves constitute a small but powerful chapter in the biography of *kashira* as a collective cultural object, and while individual *kashira* often have individual biographies, the entire cultural category of puppet theater relates its story through the very real faces of the *kashira* that it presents to the world. Telling these stories is a way of performing heritage. Just as how one tells the stories of one's ancestors tells us a great deal about how people understand themselves, so too do the ways people talk about the cultural objects they have imbued with status and value reveal the dynamics of their understanding of heritage. *Kashira* become iconic objects standing in for the entirety of the puppetry tradition. These narrations of the era of the demise of puppetry made evident by talking about what happened to puppet heads are a requisite moment in the biography of the collective *kashira*. In the late 1980s, whether or not the puppet cemetery ever existed, it was a powerful image of the state of the tradition: dead; buried; puppets in an unmarked grave. All discussions of puppet heritage in some way or another make a ritual visit to the puppet cemetery to pay their respects. Whether or not a puppet walks the halls of Chionji near Hyaku-manben in Kyoto looking to get back to the stage, the puppet is out of place as a decoration in a *tatami* room in the precincts of a Kyoto temple. Or so the ideal biography goes.

Igor Kopytoff, in his compelling essay "The Cultural Biography of Things" (Kopytoff 1986), suggests that if we are to use the metaphorical category of "biography" in talking about cultural objects, we must move beyond using the term in a simplistic, static fashion, for a biography is more than just *what happens* in a person's life. It is also the imagination that goes into how these events are remembered and understood by individuals and shaped by society. Further, he notes, we need to draw distinctions between biographies and life cycles as metaphorical categories. He suggests it is possible, just as in biographies of people, to ask:

> What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized "ages" or periods in the thing's "life," and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?
>
> (ibid.: 66–7)

I would like to suggest, following this insight, that *kashira* as cultural objects capable of conveying this ineffable quality called "heritage" show remarkable shifts in the possibilities of their own biographies, and the genesis of these shifts can be found in the imaginations of the people appropriating *kashira* (and by extension puppet theater) as objects of value in their own lives. In different

periods of time in the performance tradition of which they are a part, *kashira* have meant different things and have been in the hands of different people.

In this chapter, I highlight some of these shifts, as the tradition of puppetry undergoes a transformation from living tradition to near-dead tradition and back to a revitalized and reinvented tradition of late modernity. I explore the creation of these elaborate objects, the lineages of its greatest virtuosi, and discuss how the image of the *kashira* has been displayed, commodified and narrativized in contemporary Awaji society. Finally, I explore how puppet creation has become a popular amateur craft form. I will argue that in understanding the heritage of *kashira*, we also need to include these late modern aspects of commoditization and also their recasting at an amateur level in our understanding of what constitutes heritage.

The creation of *kashira*

If narrating the dramatic moment in the biography of the *kashira* when it nearly meets its demise becomes a pivotal moment in the modern imagining of puppetry— a moment when puppetry seems to rise from the grave, almost literally—it is necessary to shift our attention for a moment to a less stylized and imagined moment in the life cycle of the puppet head: its actual production. The process of creating a puppet head is very elaborate, and until recently was done only by master artists who made their living carving heads for the numerous puppet stages in the Awaji and Tokushima area, and the Bunraku stage in Osaka.

The first stage of creation starts with the raw materials. Pieces of Pauwlonia or Cryptomeria wood (the latter being desirable because it is not attractive to insects and does not easily rot) are cut, dried for several years, and carefully selected by a master carver (called a *ningyô-shi*) for an even grain, free of knots and holes. The *ningyô-shi* then carves the block into a puppet head, which is cut in half and hollowed out. The carver then cuts the holes for the eyes and mouth (in some cases, these are simply later painted on), and he (few *ningyô-shi* have been women) hooks up the intricate inner workings of the puppet head (*karakuri*) inside the cavity so that the eyes and mouth and, in the case of male puppet heads, eyebrows, can move.

Incidentally, up until the mid-twentieth century, whale baleen was used as a spring inside the puppet head, though today because whale baleen can no longer be obtained, carvers use piano strings. Puppeteers who manipulate both the old *kashira* and the new ones say that the new springs make the eyes and the mouths open and close too quickly, and they lack the slow, graceful movement possible with the old *kashira*, part of the art of puppetry. Many puppeteers believe using piano strings has led to a decline in the quality of puppetry. I found the frequency of this claim to be interesting, in light of the controversy surrounding whaling in Japan, and the sensitivity people feel about discussing whaling at all. I sense that this one overt innovation in the creation of a *kashira*, necessitated by a modern situation (the limitations

on whaling) has become the symbolic focus of a larger anxiety about the loss of the entire art form of *kashira* creation. Are the new puppet head mechanisms so much springier, or does this discussion reveal a larger concern about the fragility of *kashira* as stable heritage objects?

After the inner mechanisms are created and put in place, the two halves of the puppet head are put back together, attaching the head itself to the stick which will form its neck. The *karakuri* strings are threaded through the back of the head. This stage is critical in the process, because the slightest imbalance will render the puppet useless as anything more than a static object. The whole head is then painted with up to thirty layers of a lacquer made of seashell. Facial features are painted on, and finally real human hair and head decorations are attached. In the process of carving and painting the *kashira* the creator must be sensitive to heat and humidity. By and large, with the exception of subtle changes to paint formulas and wiring of inner mechanisms, *kashira* carving was a stable practice by the middle of nineteenth century, and the process described here has undergone little change. Currently, the materials alone to make a single puppet head can run to several hundred dollars.

An aesthetic language to discuss the quality of puppet heads developed in the early 1800s, indicating that the idea of an object having a life cycle was an indigenous concept. Puppet heads were and are still referred to as being *umare ga ii*, literally meaning, "well born." This term means that a puppet head not only looks good from the outside, but that the insides function well, so that the head is well balanced on the neck, and when combined with a puppet body and costume, it is clearly visible from the stage. Although the word for "puppet" and "doll" is the same in Japanese (*ningyô*), it is important to note that a *kashira* can look beautiful when static (thus being a proper *ningyô* in the decorative sense) and be a poor specimen of a *kashira*, an *ayatsuri ningyô* (puppet). A good *kashira* is one that can be gracefully manipulated. In other words, the real beauty of a *kashira* is dependent on a skilled puppeteer and the context of performance. Precisely because puppetry becomes an art, rather than a craft, when the puppeteer is able to transcend the technical limitations of his materials (static puppets) and make them come alive, a puppet head which is "well born" comes alive in the hands of a puppet artist.

The use of specially carved puppet heads as a widespread theatrical practice dates to as early at the 1600s in Japan. Most puppet heads from this early era, however, were very small, and not as elaborate as those just described. They were used by itinerant performers, or were manipulated in confined spaces in private quarters. They too were made of wood, and examples from this early era are rare indeed. Lacking the complex mechanisms and the value of art objects in and of themselves, it is possible that they did not have the status that *kashira* of later ages came to have. Those puppet heads from the early seventeenth century that do remain are of unknown origin.

Increasingly, throughout the Tokugawa period, puppet heads came to be objects of great social importance as puppetry gained in popularity with

merchant classes capable of providing patronage. Many of the puppet head carvers, such as Ningyô Sentarô (who also carved Buddhist sculptures under the name Chûsen) made their livings as carvers of Buddhist ritual objects, but in the Kyôho era (1716–35) *kashira* themselves became highly collectable, making it possible for a puppet head carver to make puppet heads as their sole occupation. It was at this time that we see the rise of puppet head carvers as a distinct profession, with identifiable names. Also, many puppeteers, who were in the best position to understand the nuances of balance in a puppet head could now sustain themselves carving puppet heads for their own performances. For example, the puppet head carver Umanose Kômazô, born on Awaji in 1716, was also a puppeteer, and ten of his *kashira* remain in museums. Another carver, Manyôshi, also carved in the same era, as did a carver named Toshisada. In the Tenmei era, a famous carver by then name of Meishû, born in 1781 in present-day Tokushima, traveled all over the country carving heads for various troupes and at least eight of his puppet heads remain.[3] With a considerable number of other *ningyô-shi* on this list, we arrive at the start of the great lineages. There are three significant lineages of puppet head carvers in the Awa-Awaji region. I discuss two, as they represent significant shifts in the biography of *kashira* as cultural objects: Tengu Hisa and Oe Minosuke.

The Tengu Hisa line

The name Tengu Hisa represents a lineage of three generations. The first generation Tengu Hisa was born in 1858 and at the age of 16 became the disciple of the famous carver Ningyô Tomi. Ten years later, as the adopted son of the Yoshioka family line, he achieved his independence and took the art name Tengu Hisa. This puppet head carver was given an honored place in Japanese literature as a very distinctive character when the famous Japanese novelist Uno Chiyo (1897–1995) published her experiences of meeting with the old man, ostensibly presented as a novella, but in fact more a series of interviews. Perhaps more than any other factor, her launching of the elderly Tengu Hisa into the realm of literature, complete with his regionally distinctive turns of phrase, helped to locate the process of *kashira* production in the popular imagination. She also succeeded in creating an aura for the Awa and Awaji area that made it at once exotic and homely (Uno 1977: 5–56).

Uno Chiyo's introduction into the biography of *kashira* is a significant moment, for while puppetry was well known in Japan, the role of the *ningyô-shi* had been appreciated only by connoisseurs of puppetry. From this time on, even high school students who read her works in their literature classes knew the name of Tengu Hisa, the occupation of *ningyô-shi*, and the distinct art form of the Awa-Awaji region.

The first-generation Tengu Hisa is credited with the innovation of enlarging the puppet head, difficult because of the negative effect it has on the balance of the puppet head but desirable because the puppets can be performed in

larger venues, as the heads will be visible from further away. This has become the standard for Awa and Awaji region puppet heads, while puppet heads used on the stages in Osaka at the Bunraku theaters remain smaller. Quite a number of his puppet heads remain carefully preserved in museums, theaters and archives. A large number are also in use in the Awaji theater in Fukura, as well as various theaters on Shikoku. Tengu Hisa puppet heads are considered the finest ones, and luckily he, and his son and grandson who carried on the lineage, were all quite prolific.

In the last ten years, the elderly Tengu Hisa's house and workshop have been turned into a museum.[4] On the occasion of my visit we entered a very narrow street in the neighborhood of Wada on Shikoku, where we encountered a small roadside placard identifying the elderly Tengu Hisa and narrating important information about his life. It is the worship site of his *ujigami* (tutelary deity). In an interview with the novelist Uno Chiyo, Tengu Hisa indicated that he always went to this shrine on the 1st, 15th and 28th day of each month. Before carving a puppet head, he told her, he absorbed himself in prayer. On a rock carved to commemorate the site are her words narrating how he would empty his mind before taking up his carving tools, so that the creative power of the gods might flow through his hands as he made the head. The selection of this quote at the gateway to the museum commemorating his work seems to suggest his role as a tutelary deity creating beings from wood and paint to occupy the world of the puppet stage.

Just around the corner from this site, one comes to the house where he lived, now the museum. It is preserved so that the first floor is a small museum showing his work space and the objects used to make *kashira*. In one area, there is a regular showing of a 20-minute video featuring the first-generation Tengu Hisa in his workshop as an 84-year-old man. Filmed in 1941, the quality of the black and white image is poor, though the filming techniques are quite beautiful. The objects of his workspace are all neatly arranged, and the *shoji* across the front of the house makes it possible to see the entire workspace in a soft light. In the back of the house, a special storeroom with humidity and temperature controls preserves a large number and variety of the *kashira* and masks that he made. The attic is full of household effects from the family. The house and its contents have been declared important cultural assets, and are thus protected. A large number of his work tools and heads are on display in museums around Japan, and locally at Tokushima Castle.

The Tengu Hisa line is considered by connoisseurs of puppet heads to be the epitome of the art form, but since he did most of his work for the puppet troupes of the Awa and Awaji region, he did not receive the kind of international acclaim that the last member of the following line enjoyed.

The Minosuke line

The great Minosuke line started in the early 1800s, in Naruto on the island of Shikoku. The first-generation carver was originally a creator of demon tiles,

but changed his profession to that of a *ningyô-shi*. His puppet heads were in great demand. The most famous of this line is its third generation member, Oe Minosuke (1907–97). Although he carved puppet heads primarily for the Bunraku stage, Oe Minosuke was considered to be the last of the great puppet head carvers. When I met him at his home in 1988, he was already very elderly. Many people in the world of Japanese performing arts lobbied for him to be made a Living National Treasure (*ningen kokuhô*), but he died before he was ever given the honor. Their arguments had always been rejected with the justification that while puppeteers and the *shamisen* players who accompanied them can be national treasures, the award is not properly due to a person who simply makes puppet heads. The fact that he was never given this recognition is a source of great agitation among *ningyô jôruri* (puppetry) enthusiasts. In fact, this public slighting of the art form has become a standard feature of the narrated biography of *kashira*. Even on my most recent trip in 2003 many people told me that it was an utter outrage that an artist of this stature, someone rightly regarded as the last of the great masters, was not honored with the award of *ningen kokuhô*.

Kashira displays in museums

The inclusion of a *kashira* head in a museum display represents a significant moment in its biography. On the one hand, it is an acknowledgement of its status as an object of cultural value. On the other hand, it often signals that the object itself (as an individual object or as representative of a collective category) has come to the end of its life cycle. In other words, museum displays displace the *kashira* into a space of the imagination, somewhere between a graveyard and a laboratory. It is a space which in the exhibits on Awaji and Shikoku produces cultural value through the absence of a self-awareness of the petrifying artifice of the museum's display mechanisms.

   An exhibit of a performing art will always be secondary to the actual performance itself. In a museum exhibit, therefore, it makes sense to highlight its material aspects and an interesting feature of these displays is the tendency to reveal the process of puppet-head making. While puppet head carvers of two hundred years ago went to great lengths to keep the inner workings of the puppet heads a mystery, the audiences of today's displays are treated to a precise exposition of its operation. The exhibits showing the inner working of a *kashira* have the quality of a post-mortem, for once intact puppet heads have been cut open and exposed to an anatomizing gaze. The design of other elements of the display also communicate qualities that are not part of the way that the objects were made to be appreciated in performance. These are displays which play on the fascination people have with the transforming puppet heads, known as *gabu*, in which the mechanism transforms a lovely maiden into a demon. Such displays can provide opportunities for people to joke about the women in their lives—wives, sisters, teachers and mothers— who sometimes appear to become terrible demons too.

Heads for sale

I first began doing research on Awaji puppetry in 1984, after originally seeing a performance while a university student in 1978. In 1984, there were no bridges connecting Awaji to the Mainland, and the puppet theater on the island was in a very sorry state and on more than one occasion I had elderly people offer to give me *kashira* (I always refused), objects which are now known to be extremely valuable.

In the last twenty years, the island of Awaji has undergone a significant transformation with the creation of two bridges: the Naruto Bridge between Awaji and Shikoku and the Akashi-Kaikyo bridge connecting Awaji to Honshû at Akashi (Kobe). With these two bridges, one can now make a complete loop from Honshû, across Awaji and through part of Shikoku, across the Setô Bridge and back onto Honshû. One could not have imagined how these three magnificent bridges would alter the vision of place on Awaji, or challenge the sense of regional "uniqueness" people on the island so carefully produced. Since the creation of the Akashi Kaikyo bridge, Awaji has become a desirable commuter base for Kobe and even Osaka, and many new residents have little connection to the most prominent heritage of the island, *ningyô jôruri*. Further, as Awaji developers have advertised the island as Japan's Mediterranean, a considerable number of wealthy foreigners with ocean-going yachts make seasonal homes on the picturesque island. As a result of these incomers and day trippers, we see an almost frantic presentation of puppetry, by local officials in Mihara, the ceremonial center of Awaji puppetry, as a central feature of Awaji's claim to regional fame. This was the most notable discovery of my most recent visit to Awaji, the extent to which the *kashira* has become an icon of Awaji's unique regionalism. All road signs in Mihara, have been refashioned to include a male and female puppet head. Puppet figurines adorn the local government office buildings. I was told that when the former mayor of Mihara, Mori Masaru, a great puppetry enthusiast, traveled to Charlerville, France, the center of European puppetry, he was so impressed by the signs there, that he chose to do the same for Awaji. One cannot pass through Mihara without noticing that one is in "Puppet City, Japan."

There is a process of commodification of *kashira*, evident in the marketing of Awaji sweets with *kashira* printed on them, *kashira* beer glasses, *kashira* handkerchiefs and *kashira* tea towels. Commodification of puppetry is not a recent phenomenon in Japan for in the mid-Tokugawa period, as puppet theater became popular with the merchant class, small "toy" *kashira* were common gifts for people who made the eighty-eight-site Shikoku pilgrimage. The commodification of *kashira* is not a particular expression of post-modern sensibilities or global processes. What we see on Awaji is a continuation of this tradition of commodifying regional performing arts as gifts. Their status as cultural icon, in which the *kashira* stands for the entire tradition, and the tradition stands for regional uniqueness, is, however, a definitive moment in the biography of the *kashira*.

Something to do with their hands: amateur *kashira* carvers

With the death of Oe Minosuke in 1997, there is a crisis in succession, for he had no real successor to his art, although one young man in Osaka studied with him for a number of years. A retired math teacher from Awaji, Fujinô Ryô, studied briefly with Oe Minosuke, and has taken up the role of being the leading carver on Awaji. While he is highly regarded by some of his students and a few collectors outside of Japan, most puppeteers I spoke with regard his *kashira* as merely decorative items, and are disappointed in his lack of technical skill in creating *ayatsuri ningyô*. Fujinô's greatest contribution, however, and one that cannot be underestimated, is his encouragement of the art of *kashira* creation on Awaji as an amateur pastime. Here we see a significant flourishing of a sense of regional heritage among elderly people who have taken up this art form late in life.

Ningyô Kyôshitsu

While on Awaji in 2003, I was able to go and see a puppet head carving classroom, operated as part of the Mihara Community College. On the third floor of the Mihara High School, on a Saturday afternoon, a group of about a dozen adults were gathered to make puppet heads. When I arrived, the class was well underway, and everyone in the room was quietly occupied with their own project, all at varying stages of completion. From the class's roster, I learned that the majority of the class members (not all of whom were present that day) were retired or nearing retirement. Their level of experience ranged from first-year students (four) to twenty years' experience (one). There are sixteen women and seventeen men. A large number of them were or still are farmers. Three teachers lead the classes, including Fujinô.

I asked the people in the classroom why they had decided to take up *kashira* making. As they intently worked on their puppet heads, I got some answers. One man, a first-year student aged 60, told me that as he neared retirement, he wanted to take up something that he could do on his own but that would also allow him to be a part of a group. He also thinks puppet head carving is very challenging and at the same time, rewarding. He thinks *kashira* are truly beautiful. Another woman, Kashiwagi-san, age 54, is a farmer. She and her family raise onions and rice, and also have three cows. Agriculture keeps her very busy, and she took up puppet head carving six years ago because she wanted something fun to do. She saw an exhibit of puppet head carving, and wanted to see if she could do it herself.

The personal significance and moral requirements of working with *kashira* reflected in these individual's narratives are also expressed in the story told to me by an elderly man I subsequently met—Kusunoki-san—who lives on his family farm at the end of a mountain road in Ama on Awaji. I met him at the puppet theater, at the junior high school where he volunteers to repair the club's *kashira* used in school performances, and again at his house. While there

is no representative amateur puppet head carver on Awaji, many people in the theater and elsewhere referred me to him, not only because he is regarded as one of the better puppet head carvers on the island, but also because he is so highly thought of as a fine moral person by those who know him. Umazume Masaru suggested that the main reason the art of puppet-head carving is dying out is that the kind of person who understands the nature of the characters in these classical plays of the puppet stage is dying out. In short, he suggested that a certain moral character is needed to create a proper *kashira.*

   Shortly after his wife died over a decade ago, Mr Kusunoki realized he needed something to do with his time. His father had been an avid lover of the puppet theater on Awaji, but he himself had little interest in the art form. He was introduced to the Community College class, joined, and quickly became one of the best carvers. Interestingly, his earliest *kashira* were all female heads, as if he was carving a memorial for his wife. He now volunteers extensively at the junior high school club, repairing puppet heads and costumes, and many of his *kashira* are used in performances by students on Awaji. I went to his house in Ama, and saw his workshop. After I left Japan, I was traveling to the Baltic States and Poland, where I was to lecture on Awaji puppetry, and Mr Kusunoki was kind enough to loan me a *kashira* to so that people outside Japan could see the real thing. On her trip, she was photographed at the National Puppet Theater in Estonia at Tallinn, where she was held and admired by a workshop of puppet artists from around Europe; at Sugihara House in Lithuania, standing at the very desk where the wartime Japanese consul to Lithuania, Sugihara Chiune wrote visas that saved the lives of over six thousand Jewish refugees in World War II; and in Poland at the international conference from which this book derived. Mr Kusunoki hoped this piece of art from Awaji would be an ambassador for a distinctive Awaji regional art form. He commented that this *kashira* would have an interesting life, a *kashira* with a biography of note.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on *kashira* as a particular kind of cultural object. Clearly objects of art, they are also highly context dependent. Outside Japan, they are beautiful curiosities as I discovered when I traveled with a *kashira* in a cardboard box across borders in the Baltic States, Europe and back to the United States. In Japan, away from the context of a theater, they are also out of place. They may be claimed by people such as those whom I met and listened to on Awaji, who "need something to do with their hands" and thus incorporate the objects into their life narratives, suggesting an assumption of ownership of this heritage. I have tried to show through the few stories I have been able to fit in here, that for many people *kashira* creation and preservation form an important part of Awaji regional identity, so that the collective biography of *kashira* becomes, in a sense, the biography of an imagined sense of regional identity.

It is easy and even fashionable as anthropologists to focus on cultural commodification, nostalgic discourse and the invention of tradition in the preservation of the arts in Japan. Such lines of analysis are useful and even necessary critical sensibilities. However, during my most recent trip to Awaji, I found myself deeply moved on many occasions to see the very uncomplicated devotion so many people had to learning and preserving the art of *kashira* carving and creation. It is difficult to find a place for such emotion within academic discourse, but the investigation of objects of heritage such as the puppets I have been describing should be able to recognize and accommodate the love of and devotion to art that motivates those who appreciate their living value. As the anthropologist Robert Smith once remarked, "People usually have very good reasons for doing the things they do." The dedication and energy I shared with others cannot be easily or simply reduced to categories of nostalgia, tourism or commodification.

A tattered puppet wandering the halls of a temple at night trying to find her way back to the stage is a powerful image of a tradition alienated from the context where it makes sense. That this interpretation of the story was given to me by the man who started the actual revival of puppetry on Awaji is no accident. The tradition of Awaji puppetry, like the robes of the puppet in Kyoto, was in tatters. This fact haunted those who knew it in its prime. It is finding its way home. The life cycles of individual *kashira* vary, but as an object of and for the collective imagination, the biography of *kashira* is ongoing and changing. Each year, amateurs on Awaji carve new *kashira*, and some of these even make it onto the stage in local performances which is the hope of every carver, and the ideal "biography" for an Awaji *kashira*.

The lovely puppet carved by Mr Kusunoki will also have both a life cycle and a biography. This now includes Helsinki, the Baltic States, Amsterdam and New York. Soon she too will be taken back to Awaji, to the farmhouse at the end of a mountainous dirt road.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 I discuss the Awaji tradition in a full-length study (Law 1997).

2 Such an idea is indeed not unique to puppetry. In the Jewish tradition, for example, Torah scrolls are treated with a similar manner when they can no longer be used. This apprehension in the face of sacralized matter is seen in a number of religious traditions.
3 Meishu's nephew Unosuke also was a noted carver, though he died young and only one of his *kashira* remains. Meishu's other nephew, a man named Kinzo, had a great influence on the great carver Tengu Hisa, whom I discuss later.
4 I visited the museum on August 9, 2003, accompanied by Umazume Masaru, Bando Chiaki, Matsuyama Mitsuyo and the New York puppeteer Basil Twist.

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8 Cloth and identity in Yaeyama

A search for context

Amanda Mayer Stinchecum

Introduction

Many peoples have appropriated textiles and clothing as identity markers. Items made of cloth thus come to transcend their primary protective and decorative functions. Investigation of an unassuming sash from what is now Japan's southernmost periphery shows why and how new ethnic and regional identities are created. This single object embodies newly invented traditions and the quest for authenticity.

According to local legend, for 300 years the women of Yaeyama have woven indigo-dyed, narrow cotton sashes, known as *minsaa*, incorporating in their warp-ikat design a combination of motifs read as a rebus, meaning "Yours forever more" (Figure 8.1). Each woman gave a sash to her prospective husband as a love token, either as a proposal of marriage or in response to such a proposal (Uesedo 1976: 122).
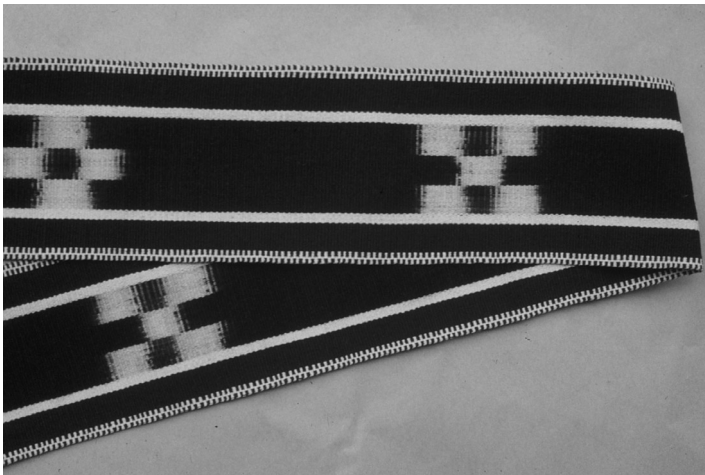
Figure 8.1 Minsaa sash made by Kuroshima Sumi, Taketomi Island, Okinawa, c. 1980.

Women continue to weave these sashes on five of Yaeyama's nine inhabited islands: Iriomote, Ishigaki, Kohama, Taketomi, and Yonaguni. Women and men wear *minsaa* sashes in ritual and secular performances of dance and drama, in which islanders portray themselves (Stinchecum 2002); and for congregant participation in religious ceremonial. The width of the sash has been standardized to nine centimeters. Wrapped around the waist three times and tied in a small bow, the sash functions as a belt and decorative accent on clothing associated with traditional island life. In particular, it is often worn with robes of golden-tan banana-fiber cloth on Ishigaki and Taketomi (Stinchecum 2007), and with the white, blue, and black checked garment formerly worn for manual labor on Yonaguni, called *dutatii*. Both of these garments are today associated with the idea of the "common people" of Yaeyama. *Minsaa* figures in accounts of Yaeyama society. Weavers, designers, architects and others have appropriated the *minsaa* motif for use on tourist goods and promotional materials, and in official and non-official spaces. Local textile cooperatives, district governments, and island officials promote the *minsaa* legend. Islanders have also appropriated it as an identity marker, asserting and enriching their own identities as "simple island people."

The islands of Yaeyama, the southernmost island group of Okinawa prefecture, consist of three administrative districts (Nanzansha, 2005, n.p.): Ishigaki city (Ishigaki-shi), which comprises the entire island of Ishigaki, 162.18 kilometers in circumference. As of June 2008, the population was 47,946, the overwhelming majority of whom live in the town itself (probably more than 40,000; I have found no figures for the town population). In comparison, the total population of Taketomi township (Taketomi-chô) was 4,169; the inhabited islands of which include Taketomi, Iriomote, Kohama, Hateruma, Hatoma, Kuroshima, Aragusuku (actually two small islands), and a number of small off-islands. Taketomi Island, central to this essay, is 9.2 kilometers in circumference; in June of 2008, its population was 329. The third district, Yonaguni township (Yonaguni-chô), is 127.4 kilometers south of Ishigaki. It consists only of Yonaguni Island, 27.5 kilometers in circumference; its population was 1,654.

My fieldwork and archival research, conducted primarily in Yaeyama over a period of 14 months from 1999 to 2007, examine multifaceted aspects of this single artifact to reveal the history and social relations of those who made and used it. I have focused on the transformation of this "simple sash" from an apparently insignificant utilitarian object made and used by the gentry class in the later nineteenth century to a symbol of regional identity, supported by "tradition" and claimed by ordinary islanders today. Analyzing one object by employing methodologies based in history, anthropology, archaeology, and art history, I show how shifts in use and meaning over time demonstrate the fluidity of the concepts of tradition, authenticity, and identity.

Handler describes authenticity in terms of "self" and "other" (Handler 1986: 3): "the idea of the part, unit, or individual asserting itself against the rest of the world as a locus of ultimate meaning and reality underlies modern notions of authenticity." It is precisely from this consciousness of "self" and

"other" that a sense of identity emerges. Thus, the concepts of authenticity and identity are closely tied. As a quality sought by anthropologists in the communities they study, authenticity encompasses meanings of the "unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched and traditional" (Handler 1986: 1). Groups constructing their own identities seek, and create, the same qualities in their own cultures, as Linnekin implies (Linnekin 1991: 447). Their search for the authentic is self-reflexive.

The invention of a tradition, or cultural invention, becomes necessary to form a new group identity vis-à-vis the "other." This new identity may form around a tradition or set of traditions that crystallize in a symbolic object (or a charismatic personage). Identity symbols, writes Lauri Honko, "create an illusion of unity" within the group they represent, while at the same time emphasizing the "boundaries against other, especially neighboring, groups" (Honko 1995: 135). This chapter will demonstrate the cohesion of Yaeyama inhabitants growing out of both the dissolution of bonds within smaller community groups (villages, islands) and a separation from Okinawa Island. In Hobsbawm and Ranger's seminal volume, *The Invention of Tradition*, Trevor-Roper's debunking of the Scottish kilt as Highland tradition takes as its subtext the creation of Scottish identity (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 15– 41). Many of the essays in Vlastos' *Mirror of Modernity* (Vlastos 1998), which both expands and critiques Hobsbawm's concept, deal with issues of identity under the label of "invented traditions."

In examining the sash from the viewpoint of identity, authenticity, and invented tradition, I hope to offer a more nuanced interpretation of Hobsbawm's concept. He defines tradition as unvarying (Hobsbawm 1983: 2) and creates an obfuscating dichotomy between "real" and "invented" traditions. Hanson (1991) and Linnekin (1991) defend the concept of "culture invention" and the importance of analyzing the process. At the same time, they admit that making such analysis public may have divisive political overtones. Hanson even recommends dropping the word "invention," to avoid offense, but offers no substitute (Hanson 1991: 450). In the case of the Taketomi legend, most of the people heavily invested in its historicity, the islanders of Taketomi, seem to have accepted my analysis.[1] Vlastos states (Vlastos 1998: 5) in his critique of Hobsbawm's concept that its value lies in problematizing assumptions about the formation of culture. The examination of particular "invented traditions," Vlastos affirms, illuminates the historical, political, and social circumstances of their creation and the societies that create them (ibid.). He seems to support Hanson's position (Hanson 1991: 449) that the importance of analyzing "culture invention" (a broader term that includes the invention of tradition) is to see how the process works, how and why particular forms are chosen and developed. In this chapter, I hope to show how and why the legend of the sash arose in the Yaeyama Islands, and the significance of this development for the people of Yaeyama and of Japan.

For Yaeyama islanders, *minsaa* embodies the authenticity of their existence as a group, distinct from, and opposed to, their marginal position in relation

to Okinawa prefecture and to Japan. My fieldwork suggests that inhabitants of Taketomi believe that presentations of the *minsaa* legend, for example, or the contents of the annual festival of first grain shoots, Tanedori-sai are "authentic" and represent something essential about their society. While freely acknowledging change and invention, at the same time they assert an unchanging core in an essentialized Taketomi identity.

Context

Yaeyama is the southernmost island-group of Okinawa, Japan's southernmost prefecture, and part of the Ryûkyû archipelago. On the farthest periphery of Ryûkyûan cultural influence, these subtropical islands lie closer to Taiwan and the Philippines than to Kyoto or Tokyo. From 1500 until Japan annexed them by force in 1879, the Ryûkyû Islands constituted an autonomous or semi-autonomous kingdom. A tributary relationship with Ming China offered legitimation to the Ryûkyû monarchy and an extensive network of maritime trade with East and Southeast Asia. Invaded by armed forces of the Japanese domain of Satsuma in 1609, Ryûkyû remained in a kind of dual subjugation to China and Japan until the 1879 annexation by Japan. The monarchy paid tribute exacted by Satsuma after 1609 in part by levying a poll tax on some outlying island groups, including Yaeyama, but not on the main island of Okinawa. The tax was paid in kind, mainly grain and cloth. The harsh administration of this poll tax, the concentration of the gentry class in the town of Ishigaki, and distance from the main island contributed to Yaeyama's marginal status. At the time of annexation in 1879, most of the Ryûkyû Islands were consolidated as Okinawa prefecture (the northernmost islands were incorporated into Kagoshima prefecture).

Yaeyama has remained distinct from the political center of the archipelago on Okinawa Island, some 400 kilometers to the north. Although Yaeyama is tied in many ways to central Ryûkyûan culture, its separateness has been insured by geographic, linguistic, religious, social, economic, political, and ethnic factors. On the other hand, in his ground-breaking new study Tokunô Toshimi has argued persuasively for the establishment of a maritime network among the islands of Yaeyama by the fifteenth century, the strengthening of this network after the Satsuma invasion of 1609, and its continuance to the present day, in effect ensuring the identity of the region as one compounded of sea and islands (Tokunô 2007).

The new prefecture, regional identity and tourism development.

Due to Ryûkyû's ambiguous relationships to China and Japan, Ryûkyûan identity was contested long before the Meiji government's annexation of the monarchy in 1879 (Smits 1999). Howell points out that before such policies were put in place, "Ethnic boundaries drawn in the seventeenth century between the Japanese and the peoples on their geographical and social

peripheries … bracketed the identity of the Japanese and held it in place" (Howell 1994: 92). Similar aggressive policies directed towards the Ryûkyûan people after annexation and the creation of Okinawa prefecture in 1879 provoked a crisis of identity there that affected even those on the lowest rungs of the social ladder. The islands' newly defined status as part of Japan challenged the very existence of Ryûkyû/Okinawa as a distinct entity. Not only did the Meiji government and other Japanese observers seek to incorporate Okinawa into the Japanese nation-state as rapidly as possible, but many citizens of the new prefecture also actively pursued this goal.

Beginning as early as the eighteenth century, the strategies employed by Japan toward the Ainu or Utari people of Hokkaidô were arguably more oppressive, and demonstrably more effective, than later policies in Okinawa, for they succeeded in the near-extinction of the Ainu (Howell 1994: 91–2; Morris-Suzuki 1998: 20–6). Japan's efforts to transform Okinawans into citizens of the nation-state more closely resembled the subsequent colonization of Taiwan in 1895 and Korea in 1910 (Christy 1993). Questions of Ryûkyûan/ Okinawan identity were reflected in claims of common origins of Ryûkyûan and Japanese peoples and languages (Ôta 1991: 90–3). Assimilation policies in Okinawa, based on these claims of common roots, culminated in the so-called "language dispute" of 1940 (Smits 2002; Brandt 2007: 211–22). Although Smits and Christy discuss Japanese efforts at assimilation, their analyses do not extend to Okinawan (or more local) assertions of identity. While Christy's article, in particular, would seem to raise the question of Okinawans' expressions of their own identity, he slides by this issue without comment.

After the defeat of Japan in 1945, Okinawa was held as a U.S. occupied territory, known as the Ryûkyû Islands. The occupation of Okinawa lasted 20 years longer than that of the Mainland,[2] ending only in 1972 with reversion to Japan. Fifty thousand U.S. troops and their dependents still occupy military bases on Okinawa Island, where helicopters crashing into schools and the rape of girls and women by members of the U.S. military forces (see below) exacerbate Okinawans' opposition to the existence of U.S. bases there. Some, perhaps many, Okinawans perceive the continuing presence of the U.S. military as a result of collaboration between Tokyo and Washington, and have sought to align themselves with peoples in other parts of Asia and the world: for example, with the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, Hokkaidô, and North and South America. Due to these circumstances, we cannot today discuss Yaeyama without reference to Okinawa, the rest of Asia, and the U.S.

Once Okinawa's position within Japan was reconfirmed by reversion to Japan, Okinawans began to assert identities defined not in terms of Japan but, increasingly, in terms of Ryûkyû's relation to other Asian nations and its history as an independent kingdom. This has been part of a wider trend to revise Japan's self-promoted reputation as a "homogenous" culture. During the past decade, scholars in Japan and in the West (Allen 2002; Christy 1993; Howell 1994; Morris-Suzuki 1998; 2001; Ôta 1994; Smits 2002; Wigen 1998) have begun to look at how people assert regional identity and multivalent

ethnicities within Japan, and, in particular, how they manifest this on the nation's peripheries. On the whole, these studies focus on the role of regional identities in the formation of the Meiji nation-state or Japanese national identity, but a few attempt to look at the issue from the regional point of view. In areas closer to Japan's center, whose inhabitants were considered indisputably Japanese, other, less coercive and discriminatory, incentives for regionalism developed in the late nineteenth century. Wigen (1998: 237) characterizes the Meiji government's creation of new "traditional" regions, divorced from earlier provincial and domainal boundaries, as a strategy to induce loyalty to the state, first of all by neutralizing domain-based regionalism and encouraging loyalty to local governments as part of the larger nation-state. In discussing Yaeyama, rather than Ryûkyû or Okinawa as a whole, I refer to regional identity as more than a stage in the process of building the Japanese nation-state (Wigen 1998). I define group identity as the shared consciousness of a common history, place, and culture, and the manifestations of that consciousness in the present.

The development of tourism in Okinawa, aimed primarily at Mainland travelers, has played conflicting roles in contemporary Okinawan identity politics during the past 20 years. On the one hand, it has created a non-Okinawan Okinawa, and on the other, it celebrates certain aspects of the islands' past. The construction of monolithic, deracinated resort hotels along Okinawa's west coast, and more recently on the smaller and more remote islands of Kumejima, Miyako, and Yaeyama, has been accompanied by promotions depicting Okinawa as an ahistorical, a-cultural, "tropical island paradise" (Figal 2008; Stinchecum 2007). Most of these resorts are built with Mainland Japanese capital; some, equally sterile, are locally owned. Both Mainland and local tourism promotions feature images of palm trees (not indigenous to the islands) and scantily clad girls in bikinis and leis (not indigenous to the islands). Opposition to these representations of a timeless, denatured Okinawa has fed new assertions of identity on the main island, such as the flourishing of popular music based on traditional rhythms and melodies with *sanshin* (the Okinawan version of the stringed instrument called the *shamisen* in Japan) accompaniment. Such indigenous expressions were reinforced by projects sponsored by the Japanese government and representatives of Mainland capital. These included the "Ryûkyû kingdom boom," exemplified by the reconstruction of Shuri Castle in 1992 and the 1994 screening on national television of the historical drama series, *Ryûkyû no kaze* ("Winds of Ryûkyû"). In tracing the development of tourism on the main island of Okinawa from the 1950s, Gerald Figal emphasizes that the images portraying Okinawa represent a "tropical island paradise" modeled on Hawaii and Taiwan by local government officials (Figal 2008). According to his account, it was not until the 1990s, with the reconstruction of the Seiden of Shuri Castle in 1992, that images used to promote tourism included markers of Ryûkyûan identity (ibid.: 15). Although the so-called "Ryûkyû kingdom boom" has had the support of many people on Okinawa Island, inhabitants

of the Outer Islands (Sakishima) of Miyako and Yaeyama, once oppressed and still not infrequently disparaged by Ryûkyûans closer to the Center in Shuri (Hara 2000). On the other hand, the construction of a hotel by the Unimat Corporation on an ecologically sensitive and sacred site on Iriomote Island has occasioned not only lawsuits but enhanced the fluorescence of local culture on the island. A different kind of impetus for asserting the value of Ryûkyûan/Okinawan history and culture has been the indifference, disregard, and hostility towards Okinawans manifested in violent crimes against local civilians committed by members of the U.S. military stationed on Okinawa Island. The gang-rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan girl by two U.S. Marines and a sailor in September of 1995 drew protests from tens of thousands of Okinawans (Johnson 2001: 375–6). This is only the most widely known of many such incidents of violence, another of which took place in May of 2003 (*New York Times* 2003).

Problems of identity and tourism, and their relation to each other, affect not only Okinawa as a whole, and the center of "Okinawan culture" on Okinawa Island. They are even more critical for the prefecture's smaller islands. New types of farming, notably tropical fruits and cut flowers, are slowly making an impact on island economies on a limited scale. But the decline of the sugar industry and, more recently, of large-scale pineapple production (Hara 2000: 183) has eliminated agriculture as a viable way of life for most inhabitants of these smaller islands. Tourism development is widely perceived as the only way to prevent complete depopulation, particularly of outlying island groups such as Yaeyama. Removed from the center of Okinawa and the former Ryûkyû kingdom, "Yaeyama culture" has experienced a small boom, parallel to the Ryûkyû kingdom boom of the main island. Several external factors have contributed to this. In April 1987**,** the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs designated Taketomi Island an "important preservation district of a group of traditional structures" (*Jûyô Dentôteki Kenzôbutsu-gun Hozon Chiku*), what in the English-speaking world might be called a "historical landmark preservation district." The recent production and broadcast on national television of a second Okinawa-based series, *Chûra-san*, beginning in 2001, a contemporary melodrama set on Kohama Island, served to acquaint a broader Japanese audience with the tropes of Yaeyama tourism. Yaeyama has been incorporated into an idealized world, of contemporary life and tourism on an outer island, geographically, temporally, and socially distant from that created in "Ryûkyû no kaze" (Hara 2000).

Sanitized versions of the past, and, in particular, visual images reflecting them, constitute sources of local pride around which sentiments of regional identity cluster. The link between expressions of regional identity and tourism development has been exploited by local and national governments from the Highlands of Scotland (Devine 2000) to Vietnam (Salemink 2003). These processes are manifest in Yaeyama. Ôta Yoshinobu analyzes tourism in terms of power, as a framework within which the superior (the tourist) observes the inferior (the objectified community), and also constructs an identity for the

object of its gaze (Ôta 1998: 89). On the other hand, tourism can also become a context that provides a positive opportunity for the community itself to construct and assert a new identity that can survive in the fragmented world of the twenty-first century (ibid.: 89).

The making of a tradition

The Yaeyama island of Taketomi (and, to a lesser extent, Iriomote) has had considerable success in constructing a new identity and an "authentic" setting for tourism development (Morita 1997). A key element in this new Yaeyama identity is the *minsaa* sash and the legend associated with it. Today, narrow, indigo-dyed ikat-patterned, warp-faced cotton sashes are woven and worn on five of the islands (Stinchecum 2009: 260–5). Ikat (Jap., *kasuri*) is a technique of yarn-resist dyeing, and the resulting cloth. Selected warp and/or weft yarns are tightly bound before dyeing according to a pre-determined pattern; the dye does not penetrate the bound segments. When warp and weft are woven together, these undyed segments form a blurry pattern. Weaving on a loom without a reed (a comb-like part that maintains the even spacing of the warp yarns) readily results in a warp-faced fabric, in which the density of warp yarns completely conceals the weft. Such fabrics, produced on body-tension looms, are characteristic of some parts of Southeast Asia as well as Central and South America. Yet sashes with the particular constellation of character-istics found in Yaeyama *minsaa* are unique to this area within Okinawa and Japan; I have yet to discover a prototype in Southeast Asia, technologically the most obvious source.[3] On the other hand, transposing a pattern from one decorative technique to another (for example, from a woven pattern to a printed pattern, or, in this case, from a woven structure to ikat) is a common phenomenon in the history of textiles. This transposition may account for the absence of a prototype among ikat textiles beyond the shores of Okinawa.

The traditions of *minsaa* today are associated most strongly with Taketomi, perhaps because "tradition" has been more carefully cultivated and marketed on this tiny island than on others with greater resources for agricultural and other development. The main features of the Taketomi *minsaa* tradition, attributed to an indefinite past (sometimes said to be "300 years ago"), are as follows: All Taketomi girls/women learned to make *minsaa* sashes. Each young woman wove a sash to present to the man she hoped would become her husband. The decoration of the sash consisted of two main elements—an ikat pattern made up of alternating units of four and five white rectangles, and a tooth-like border. The ikat pattern, read as a rebus, signifies, "*Itsu* [*itsu* = *itsutsu* = five] *no yo* [*yo* = *yon* = four] *made mo*" ("yours forever more"). The border pattern is interpreted as the innumerable legs of the cen-tipede, reflecting the woman's wish that her lover or husband visit her with enthusiastic frequency. (Islanders of Taketomi, Ishigaki, and Kohama explain this as a practice belonging to the days of *kayoi kekkon*, a form of uxorilocal marriage in which women remained in their parents' houses after the union of

the couple; their husbands visited them at night. On Taketomi, after the birth of two or three children the couple married and moved into their own home. This practice continued on Taketomi and Aragusuku, another Yaeyama island, into the 1960s.[4]) If the woman's beloved felt the same, he would wear the sash as a publicly visible emblem of their love and as a protective token. Lastly, the *minsaa* sash belongs to the people of the islands, the common people, as opposed to the gentry or aristocracy.

In my interviews with women and men on Taketomi, Ishigaki, and Kohama, as well as archival research and examination of over 100 *minsaa* sashes, I was not able to confirm the historicity of any aspect of this "tradition." It became clear that in the first half of the twentieth century only *some* women were able to weave *minsaa*. Women of especially low or high social status did not have the leisure or incentive to do so. The late Ôyama Sadao, born on Taketomi in 1902, stated that his unmarried mother had been barely able to support her eight children and had had no time to learn more than the most basic weaving skills to make clothes for them. At the other end of the social scale, educator and writer Miyagi Fumi was born into a family of Ishigaki gentry in 1891. (The Ryûkyû monarchy had established a system of social classes, distinctions the royal government attempted to maintain in an ever-elaborating system of rules and regulations governing daily life. In descending order, the classes were royalty, aristocracy, gentry, and commoner. In the Outer Islands, there was no aristocracy. Local government officials belonged primarily to the gentry class. Even after the abolition of the monarchy and the class system in 1879, these distinctions persisted among the people of the new prefecture. Today they remain an underlying influence in the lives of most Okinawans.)

Miyagi's account (Miyagi 1972: 100, 102, 276, 363, 400) of life in the town of Ishigaki in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries notes the use of *minsaa* sashes. Her second son, Miyagi Shinyû, stated that he never saw her weaving the sash. Moreover, not a single informant had personally engaged in the practice of gifting the sash as described above, or recalled hearing that her or his parents or any other particular person had done so.

As to the third element in the *minsaa* tradition, that the sash belongs to the common people of the islands, the earliest documentary evidence points to the association of *minsaa* with the gentry in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Two written documents, one dated 1873, and one 1876 (Dôji 12 nen jikensho 1873; Nosato Niya [1876] 1995),[5] a photograph dated 1904, and a garment collected in Yaeyama in 1906 offer evidence for *minsaa* in contexts associated with the gentry of Ishigaki We do not know if the word, "*minsaa*," refers to what we recognize today as "Yaeyama *minsaa*" (that is, an indigo-dyed, ikat-patterned, warp-faced narrow cotton sash), but anthropologist Torii Ryûzô's 1904 photograph (Figure 8.2) clearly shows a young girl of the gentry class wearing a narrow, ikat-patterned sash of the Yonaguni type (Stinchecum 2001, Figure 10).[6] This photograph is the earliest documentary evidence of what we call *minsaa* today: a narrow, ikat-patterned

Figure 8.2 Three young girls, Okinawa, by Torii Ryûzô, 1904.
Source: Photograph courtesy of The University Museum, The University of Tokyo.

sash. In addition to these documents on paper, an extant example of a *minsaa* sash is sewn to the waistband of an undergarment now in the Tokyo National Museum, collected in Yaeyama in 1906. Both the construction of the garment, and the context of another item collected with it, indicate its association with the Yaeyama gentry (Stinchecum 2004: 152).

   On the islands of Taketomi and Ishigaki, and to a lesser extent on Kohama and Iriomote, islanders define the tradition of the sash in terms of the "Yours forever more" legend. A number of primary sources and artefacts raise doubts, however, about the historical basis for the legend, and for production predating the introduction of machine-spun cotton yarn in the late nineteenth century. They indicate a history of some 130 years, rather than the legendary 300. The association of *minsaa* with machine-spun yarn, imported into the Ryûkyûs from Japan and China, suggests origins outside the islands. The earliest primary

documentary sources that include the word, "*minsaa*" (or variants) as well as objects including the underwear with sash in the Tokyo National Museum, and the Torii Ryûzô photograph, also indicate the intimate association of the sash with the gentry class in the later nineteenth century. These early sources contest the association of the ikat-patterned sash we call "*minsaa*" today with the common people of Yaeyama before the end of World War II. Meanwhile, three other, slightly later sources (Stinchecum 2002: 1–4, 43 n. 18; Yamada 1992: 21–2) provide evidence for the use by commoners of an unpatterned narrow cotton sash also called *minsaa*, indicating a range of meanings not widely acknowledged today. The restrictions on the wearing of ikat, and the low monetary value assigned to a sash associated with commoners, strongly suggest that they were undecorated, possibly even undyed narrow cotton sashes.

Transformations of consumption, class, and meaning have marked the changing context of this simple object. In the late nineteenth century, *minsaa* was an accessory of dress with auspicious connotations, used by members of the gentry (*Dôji 12 nen jikensho* 1873), by the early twentieth century the sash had undergone a transition to a utilitarian item of underclothing, to fasten or decorate women's underskirts and underpants. Since Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, Yaeyama islanders have adopted it as an emblematic identity marker. Today it is reserved for special occasions that demand an assertion of regional or community cohesion (Stinchecum 2008). Thus, the sash has transcended the class boundaries imposed by the Ryûkyû monarchy. During the past few decades, meanings attributed to the sash and patterns of its consumption have been transformed through the agency of Yaeyama islanders, as well as the efforts of Mainland Japanese patrons and members of the Folk Craft movement (*Mingei undô*). Tonomura Kichinosuke (1898–1993), founder of the Kurashiki Folk Craft Museum, first visited Taketomi in 1957 (Tonomura 1969). He played a major role in establishing commercial production of *minsaa* sashes on Taketomi in the 1960s.[7] In addition to providing cotton yarn and technical advice to weavers on the island, he helped create a market for their products by selling them at the museum and bringing groups of Mingei enthusiasts to Taketomi.

Clearly, the *minsaa* legend was an invented tradition, but not one made of whole cloth. Rather, it emerged through transformations of diverse historical elements and earlier traditions. Today, appropriation of the sash by the islanders and others as an emblem of Yaeyama identity embraces multivalent meanings. As for the islanders themselves, the ubiquity of *minsaa* shows that they use the sash to validate their own authenticity, that of their communities, and of Yaeyama as a regional and cultural entity. Production, use, and promotion of the *minsaa* sash, and the geometric motifs derived from it, also contribute to a sense of Yaeyama's authenticity among others as well, including (Mainland) tourists, researchers, and government representatives.

Two narratives told by Taketomi women suggest a constellation of associations different from that of the sash as token of passionate love. Taketomi *minsaa* weaver Uchimori Sumi relates that her father-in-law, Uchimori Kana

(born 1897), received a *minsaa* sash from a Taketomi woman named Kame Kantsu (1888–1992) sometime before Sumi's marriage into the Uchimori family in 1941. As a young girl, Kame Kantsu had been Kana's nanny, a very close relationship in which the older child is the protector, in a very practical sense, of the young child. The Taketomi word for nanny, *mûrufua*, means the child who protects. "Kana wore this sash both day and night, folding it in half, and then in half again as it wore out, until it fell apart," Sumi said. By 1941, she recounted, it was already worn out. Sumi's story hints at a protective function of the sash, when woven and gifted by a woman to a younger man for whom she was a protective figure. Veteran Taketomi weaver, the late Ôyama Kiku (1914–2005), told of her mother-in-law weaving a *minsaa* sash for her husband Shinsei when he went to war. When Kiku married into the family in 1937, there was a photo of her father-in-law in uniform with this *minsaa* sash fixed to his chest like a rosette. The implication of her story is that he wore it as a kind of protective token. These narratives point to a possible connection with beliefs in the spiritual power and protective role of the sister in Ryûkyûan and other Asian cultures, a power embodied in another object of cloth, a scarf. A bellyband (*haramaki*), given by a woman to a man to warm the core of his being (his belly) is one manifestation of this in Mainland Japan. In particular, the *senninbari* ("needles of a thousand people"), a bellyband quilted or embroidered by all the women of a community or a family and gifted to men going off to war, had a clear protective function. These were popular during World War II, not only on the Mainland but also in Yaeyama. The literature on the belief in the spiritual and protective power of the sister (*onari-gami shinkô*) is extensive, beginning with the work of Yanagida Kunio (1926). A limited examination of this concept in relation to cloth artifacts will be incorporated into my broader study of the sash.

Although the rebus reading of the four/five-element ikat pattern is peculiar to the sash, the sash's role as a protective token gifted from a woman to a man under her care may have been transferred from the scarf mentioned above. Narratives associated with a scarf (*tiisaaji*), sometimes said to have been given to a lover as a love token, and sometimes to a man by a woman as a protective token, are not confined to Yaeyama but are widespread in many areas of Okinawa (Ôshiro 1983: 839). Surviving scarves typically range in size from 60 to 170 centimeters in length. The longer ones were worn tied around the head, for example, by priestesses on Kume Island, while the shorter ones were used as a handkerchief, neck-scarf, or decorative accessory. Today they appear, to my knowledge, solely as part of costumes for traditional dance and drama.

Taketomi chronicler and founder of the island's only museum and Buddhist temple, Uesedo Tôru, noted that the scarf was a private gift and declaration of love (in response to which the man who received it would reply with a gift of a bead necklace); "long ago," he writes, "this scarf was said to have been dyed with the giver's menstrual blood" (Uesedo 1977: 122). Since dried blood would oxidize and turn brown and then black with age, red *tiisaaji* could not in fact have been dyed with blood, menstrual or otherwise. Uesedo's expression

indicates not only the emotional but the sexual depth of passion associated with the woman's gift of the scarf, which, he emphasizes, was a private avowal of her feelings. Presented after the exchange of scarf and beads, according to Uesedo, the *minsaa* sash was worn openly, as a public declaration.[8] Several local informants suggested that Uesedo's introduction of menstrual blood into his narrative was intended metaphorically.

A transfer of meaning from the scarf to the sash may have been due simply to practical, economic considerations. The revival of *minsaa* weaving on Take-tomi in the early 1960s led to the marketing in Mainland Japan of what had been a textile made by Yaeyama islanders solely for their own use. The overlapping of meanings associated with the scarf enhanced the marketability of *minsaa.* On the other hand, those men involved in the renewed production and promotion of the sash (Tonomura Kichinosuke, Uesedo Tôru, and Taketomi resident Yonakuni Seikai, who directed the early *minsaa* training workshops) may have felt that the female sexuality implicit in the scarf made it unsuitable for public exposure.

These two textiles, the sash and the scarf, had no connection to the Shuri monarchy. They played no official role as an item of court or official dress, were not objects of official trade, and, unlike some other Yaeyama textiles, were not used as a form of tax payment. The sash and the scarf are almost entirely undocumented. Only textiles that have demonstrable connections with the center of Ryûkyûan political power and culture have attracted the interest of scholars until now, reflecting a center/periphery tension in Okinawan studies as a whole (and among the people of Okinawa themselves). The historicity of the *tiisaaji*, its use as a love gift and protective token, its association with beliefs in the spiritual power and protective role of women, and its relation to the gifting of scarves in other parts of Asia, remain subjects for future research.

Constructing Yaeyama identity

Today, the sash itself, and the *minsaa* pattern of four/five ikat elements derived from it, have become a symbol of the "simple island people" of Yaeyama, at least those islands where this version of *minsaa* dominates: Taketomi, Ishigaki, Kohama, and Iriomote. Women and men wear the sash in dance and dra-matic performances dedicated to local deities at religious festivals (Figure 8.3). Most significantly, the use of *minsaa* in these performances is confined to roles in which men and women portray themselves, and their ancestors, as "simple" villagers: farmers, fishermen, artisans, and others doing menial labor. Women also wear the sash in other religious rituals (*gyôji*); in secular perfor-mances of dance or drama; and in cultural programs prepared for a national television audience. In this context, the women of the three villages on Take-tomi, for instance, represent themselves as "island villagers" by wearing clothing they associate with an imagined, shared past. In the case of an NHK filming (5 May 5 2000) of a number of women weaving and singing in the home of one of them, the imagined past, in which women wove communally, was

Figure 8.3 Women of Nakasuji village, Taketomi Island, wear *minsaa* sashes for the local festival, Yunkai, in 2000.

projected back onto local residents by the film-makers. This level of communal textile production did not, according to local informants, occur on the island until the construction of the cooperative weaving space known as the Taketomi Mingeikan in 1975. Vlastos asserts the power of the "performative aspect of invented tradition. … [which] provides a convincing sensory spectacle of continuity with an 'age-old' past," despite the absence, or at least the thinness, of any such connection (Vlastos 1998: 7–8).

In Yaeyama today, the struggle to survive economically and to assert regional identity has blurred the boundary between religious ritual and tourist attraction, common to other cultures in transition (see Salemink 2003). The performance itself helps to authenticate the tradition it portrays. Thus, it is no accident that the importance of the sash to the people of Taketomi, in particular, manifests itself in the context of performance.[9]

At the same time, in unambiguously commercial contexts, the *minsaa* motif appears in images used to promote Yaeyama tourism and goods manufactured for Mainland Japanese consumers. Commercial development of *minsaa* arguably began on Taketomi in 1962, when the first workshop in dyeing and weaving the sash was held on the island (Stinchecum 2009: 246–247). In Ishigaki, the only town of any size in Yaeyama, production started in 1971 (Azamiya/Minsa Kôgeikan 1992: 14). With their company, Azamiya, Taketomi-born entrepreneurs Ara Kinue and her husband, Ara Tetsuji, introduced the *minsaa* motif to other textile forms. They adopted techniques of mass-production, such as the use of chemical dyes and a floor-loom more efficient than

the traditional body-tension loom without a reed. Taketomi weavers had adapted *minsaa* weaving to a compact floor loom with a reed, in place of the old loom, at the time of the first *minsaa* training program. Three years later, the yours forever more interpretation of the five/four ikat motif first appeared in a local newspaper article that describes tourists drawn to the sash by the romantic legend associated with the pattern (*Yaeyama mainichi shinbun*, June 23, 1965 n.p.).[10] Some weavers on Taketomi may have used a floor-loom even before World War II. Weaving *minsaa* on a floor loom is faster, requires less skill, and takes up less floor space than the old body-tension loom. Today, all Yaeyama weavers use the floor-loom, from which some weavers choose to remove the reed to produce a more "traditional" warp-faced sash, more difficult than using a reed with the floor-loom.[11]

Although it is clear that Ara Kinue was not initially responsible for the use of the "Yours forever more" legend to promote *minsaa*, the Ara's innovations helped to promote the circulation of "*minsaa* style" textiles far beyond the shores of Taketomi, Ishigaki, and Kohama. This played a role in the association of *minsaa* with Yaeyama as a whole rather than any particular island. Today, the *minsaa* pattern appears on "*minsaa* wear" (accessories such as hats, bags, wallets, shirts, place mats, and wall hangings) manufactured in Ishigaki, and sold primarily (but not exclusively) to tourists. It is also used in commercial and private spaces, such as restaurants, souvenir shops, and the guestrooms at Ishigaki's Club Med. The pattern has been used by the local government in public places frequented primarily by local residents, including the Yaeyama post office (Figure 8.4) and the municipal library interiors. It also appears in areas central to tourism, including the paving on Ishigaki pier and the sidewalk in front of the Chisun Hotel (Figure 8.5). An official prefecture-wide campaign was launched in 2000 by Inamine Eiichi, currently governor of Okinawa, to encourage officials and citizens alike to wear distinctive Okinawan garb, including so-called *minsaa* wear, for official occasions and other functions (*Yaeyama nippô*, May 11, 2000). *Minsaa* sashes and other items are also sold as tourist or "craft" items at souvenir shops, hotel shops, craft stores, and museums in Mainland Japan as well as in Naha.

The sash and its pattern of four/five rectangles have come to represent the people of Yaeyama. They employ these symbols to represent themselves to themselves and to outsiders (primarily Mainland Japanese). Local businesses and governments use them in the same way. Ambiguity remains, however, regarding just *whose* identity is symbolized by the *minsaa* sash. Certainly, the people of Taketomi think of *minsaa* as a Taketomi Island tradition. On 4–6 June 1976, the dances and dramas of the island's festival of first grain shoots, Tanedori-sai, were performed at the National Theater in Tokyo (Taketomi-jima Minzoku Geinô Hozon-kai, Yamashiro Zenzô, Uesedo Tôru 1977: 47). On 19 May, the following year, the Japanese government's Agency for Cultural Affairs (*Bunkachô*) designated the Tanedori festival an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property (*Jûyô mukei minzoku bunkazai*). This formal recognition by the Japanese government of "traditional" Taketomi

Figure 8.4 The five/four *minsaa* pattern adorns the Yaeyama Post Office in Ishigaki, 2000.

emphasized the usefulness of an island "costume," which in turn reinforced the association of the *minsaa* sash with Taketomi. These events were followed in 1987 by Taketomi's selection as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings. The national attention thus focused on Taketomi has set it apart from the other islands of Yaeyama. Taketomi islanders have come to view their "traditions" as the basis for development, and striven to sustain and adapt them, to a far greater extent than the people of other Yaeyama islands. On Kohama, resort development effectively shuts out local participation, while the secrecy in which the most important religious festival, Hônen-sai, is conducted has, so far, precluded its exploitation as a tourist attraction. On the other hand, agriculture and fishing are still struggling to remain viable industries there. On Iriomote, eco-tourism is experiencing the

Figure 8.5 The sidewalk in front of Ishigaki's Chisun Hotel is paved with blue and white tiles arranged in the five/four *minsaa* pattern, 2001.

growing pains of a new idea. And on Ishigaki Island, craft production struggles to break the bounds of the past. In the earlier stages of my field-work, conducted in 1999–2001, the suspicion among Taketomi inhabitants that I was a spy, come to Taketomi to reveal its secrets (to whom?), attests to the importance of *minsaa* to Taketomi identity.

Insofar as *minsaa* has been exploited by local government and commercial development, and is worn for festivals and performances on other islands, its force as a symbol transcends a single island and extends to Yaeyama as a whole. Assertions of Yaeyama identity have been directed towards, and acknowledged by, people of Tokyo rather than Okinawa prefecture. Main-land Japanese cognoscenti had been receptive to an essentialized Yaeyama since before World War II. A number of events in the years immediately before and after the war whetted the appetites of Mingei followers in Tokyo and western Japan. These included the reports of Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889–1961), Tanaka Toshio (1914–53), and other luminaries of the Mingei Movement (*Mingei undô*), who visited Okinawa in 1939–40; two perfor-mances of Yaeyama dances and songs at Waseda University and two at the Nihon Seinenkan in Aoyama in October and November of 1956 (Miyanaga 1980–2005: 244–5); and the visit of Tonomura Kichinosuke (1898–1993), founder of the Kurashiki Folk Craft Museum, to Ishigaki and Taketomi in 1957.

Distinctions between Yaeyama (and other, similarly peripheral, island groups such as Miyako) and Okinawa Island may have meant little to Mainland Japanese, to whom all of the Ryûkyû Islands, under U.S. Occupation from 1945 to 1972, were in fact a foreign country until their reversion to Japan in 1972. Within Okinawa today, particularly to those on the main island, Yaeyama and the other Outer Islands remain marginalized as "uncivilized territories." While they are the object of study for specialists in universities on Okinawa, the general Okinawan public displays little interest. An appeal by Yaeyama islanders for legitimization to a Mainland audience, on the other hand, could be depended upon to be ardently received. These audiences had been well primed by Mainland performances of Yaeyama music and dance, and by a familiarity with Yaeyama culture among *mingei* adherents, ethnologists, and a general public attuned to cultural matters such as the *Bunkachô* designations. Having been negotiated first with the center of the Japanese state in Tokyo (in the persons of the *Bunkachô* and admirers at Tokyo performances of Yaeyama songs and dances) and thus authenticated, Yaeyama identity can now confront the center of Okinawa in Naha in its appeal for recognition. To a limited extent, this process is currently taking place in colleges and universities in Okinawa.

Why and when did the invention of Yaeyama tradition and a new identity become necessary? In Handler's analysis, the emergence of the individual (in the sense of the part versus the whole) accompanies dissolution of an established social order (Handler 1986: 3). Changes in Yaeyama that began even before the abolition of the Ryûkyû monarchy in 1879 led to the construction of a new Yaeyama identity.

During the post-war years, a diffusion of village and island ways led to the formation of a broader-based Yaeyama identity. Several factors contributed to a decline in the sense of community that had bound the inhabitants of individual villages, and, to a lesser extent, of each island. The increasing urbanization of Japan; the decline of the sugar industry in Okinawa; and the 1972 reversion to Japan after the Occupation, which made travel to Mainland Japan a simple matter, brought about the gradual depopulation of Okinawa's smaller islands (like small islands worldwide). Children were and still are sent to Naha, or to relatives in Osaka and Tokyo after elementary school, to attend high schools with higher academic standards. Sometimes they were and are accompanied by their mothers, decreasing the number not only of young people, but also of women, the guardians and facilitators of social and religious practices in island villages. In particular, *tsukasa*, local priestesses of the indigenous Ryûkyûan religion, play an important role in continuing island traditions and maintaining cohesion of these small communities.

As post-war children traveled beyond Yaeyama to attend high school and college, local languages were forgotten, avoided, or never learned, through disuse and fear of stigma. Although some people in Yaeyama still speak local languages and dialects in domestic situations, increasingly their more public or formal activities are conducted in Japanese. The loss of population,

particularly that of women and young people, and of the local languages and dialects, has resulted in fewer candidates for the religious duties of the *tsukasa*, one of which is offering prayers in the local language. On Yonaguni, where shrine ritual requires twelve priestesses, there is now only one.

Throughout Yaeyama, the ubiquity of television, faster and more frequent ferries (each with its TV), improved road systems, direct flights to the Mainland, and the proliferation of cell phones has accelerated communication among the islands, between Yaeyama and Mainland Japan, and with the rest of the world. In the past ten years, Mainlanders looking for a fresh start in this tropical paradise and the adult children of islanders making a "U-turn" to return to their roots have contributed to the weakening of local bonds. On Taketomi, for example, changes in village customs over the past 50 years include the end of uxorilocal marriages; the abandonment of Ryûkyû-style clothing for everyday wear; reduced usage of the local language; and the adoption of the reed for weaving *minsaa*. More recently, innovations such as the elimination of a number of regular rituals from the island's calendar; the substitution of robes made of imitation, in place of real, fiber-banana cloth for use at festivals and in ritual contexts; the establishment of restaurants and bars; the proliferation of buses and privately owned cars; and the construction of paved roads have altered the face of Taketomi. The onslaught of outside stimuli, combined with the loosening of community ties, have contested multiple identities that had been forged in Yaeyama villages since the seventeenth century. On Taketomi, this attenuation of the past has resulted in a need to reinforce perceived Taketomi "traditions." *Minsaa* is the material embodiment of these "traditions." At the same time, the fading of old, village-level identities has created room for a new, Yaeyama-wide, identity. This, too, has come to be symbolized by *minsaa*.

Conclusion

Since the end of World War II, changes in the social, economic, and political conditions of Okinawa, and within Okinawa, of the Yaeyama island group, have necessitated the formation of a new regional identity for those islands at the southern end of the Japan archipelago. Part of Japan and yet separate, Okinawa is hardly less homogenous than Japan as a whole. Yaeyama's history and pre-history, its geography and people, set it apart from the islands to the north. Where once village and island formed cohesive communities with their own discrete, though related, identities, a loosening of community bonds at the village and island level has begun to dissolve those old selves. I have shown how Yaeyama's post-war identity has come to be symbolized by a narrow, cotton, indigo-dyed sash. The people of these islands have created a new legend, which I have shown to be an "invented tradition," a narrative that relates the sash to an imagined past, providing authenticity for their new identity.

During the years of the Occupation and following Okinawa's reversion to Japan, the people of Yaeyama expanded the commercial potential of the sash, transforming it from a utilitarian object once associated with the gentry class to a symbolic identity marker of the islands' "common people" (*heimin*, *shomin*). At the same time, they transformed the sash from an object made entirely for personal consumption to a product for outside markets. In this role the sash has come to represent the region's "simple island people." These transformations may have been accompanied by the transfer to the sash of meanings formerly associated with a scarf, another item made of cloth and gifted by women to men: a declaration of sexual passion and a token of protective spiritual power. The minsaa legend, as recounted today, reflects the choice of the sash as a means of asserting the authenticity of Yaeyama identity, maintaining its hold on Japan's southernmost periphery, and resisting assimilation into a broader Okinawan or Japanese entity. The creation of this island "tradition" demonstrates the fluidity of traditions and identities constructed from them. This mutability engenders skepticism of Hobsbawm's formulation that some traditions are not invented but genuine and unchanging (Hobsbawm 1983: 8). The case of Taketomi and Yaeyama gives substance to Linnekin's argument, which broadens the concept of "invented tradition" to "cultural invention" and sees culture as an ongoing human construct (Linnekin 1991: 447).

Wearing the sash, the people of these islands proclaim their identity in religious festivals and rituals, secular drama and dance, community celebrations, and in other situations in which they publicly present themselves—to themselves and others—as hard-working, simple, and proud islanders, enacting their roles as people of Yaeyama. Since World War II, pushed by activists of the Mingei movement and the exigencies of tourism development, and authenticated by the Japanese government, they have reinvented this simple sash. With its array of identities and rich histories, it represents themselves to themselves and others, as a symbol of their separateness. In reworked versions of community rituals, in stage performances, and in the production and promotion of local products that exploit an "invented tradition," newly constructed cultural identities are without doubt being asserted throughout Japan. In Yaeyama, these multivalent aspects of proclaiming identity are tied together by a single indigo thread, called *minsaa*.

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Notes

1 The glaring exception is Ara Kinue, whose factory/workshop in Ishigaki mass produces *minsaa* sashes and items of clothing and souvenirs based on the *minsaa* pattern. Although I have not used the phrase "invented tradition" in my Japanese writings, Mrs. Ara is unable to accept my assertion that the legend is a post-war invention (Yasumoto 2009: 199–201).

2 In this chapter, "Mainland Japan" or simply "Mainland" refers to the main islands of Japan: Hokkaidô, Honshû, Shikoku, and Kyûshû.

3 Narrow cotton sashes, originally woven on body-tension looms without a reed, have been made on the islands of Okinawa (Okinawa Bijutsu Zenshû Kankô Iinkai 1989, Plates 114, 115) and Amami Ôshima (Osada 1978: 16–17; Ebara 1973: 267–8). This type of weaving is common throughout Southeast Asia and elsewhere. (Amami Ôshima was once part of the Ryûkyû kingdom but was incorporated into Kagoshima prefecture when Japan annexed the monarchy in 1879.) The element of warp-faced warp ikat, however, occurs only in the Yaeyama sashes. The Okinawa sashes made in Yomitan and Ishikawa on Okinawa Island feature a woven pattern that employs a different technology and derives from different sources than ikat (Yanagi 1999).

4 Interview with Kamei Hôbun and Kamei Natsu, at their home on Taketomi, January 22, 2001; and Akamatsu Akashi at her home in Sumônohara, May 17, 2000.

5 For a detailed discussion of these documents, see Stinchecum 2001: 13–19; 2002: 1–4, 42–3 n. 12–19.

6 A sharper image, in which the ikat pattern of the sash is clearly visible, can be viewed on the museum website at : www.um.u-tokyo.ac.jp/cgi-bin/umdb/pcdview. cgi?volume=pcd3522&img=131&size=4&flip=r90

7 For a discussion of Tonomura's connection with Taketomi and *minsaa*, see Stinchecum (2009 forthcoming).

8 Although there are *tîsâji* in many museum and private collections, the only red ones I have seen are recent recreations.

9 For an account of the sash in relation to performance, see Stinchecum 2008 (172–195).

10 A more coherent, extended account of the legend appears in Taketomi-jima Minzoku Geinô Hozon-kai (1977: 85).

11 In the community weaving center (Iriomote Seibu Teshigoto Sentâ) near Uehara, Iriomote, which is the Western Iriomote division of the Taketomi Township Weaving Cooperative (Taketomi-chô Orimono Jigyô Kyôdô Kumiai), director Tsujiguchi Yukiko has begun to weave sashes on a new body-tension loom without reed. Some of the trainees at the center have also taken up weaving on this loom.

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9   Houses in motion

The revitalisation of Kyoto's architectural heritage

Christoph Brumann

One of the most salient social phenomena in contemporary Kyoto is the renaissance of the historical town houses, the so-called *kyô-machiya*. Despite being located in what is widely regarded as the stronghold of traditional Japan, as late as two decades ago these structures were widely regarded as little more than an economic liability, best torn down without much ado. Now, however, probably more than one thousand of them have been revitalised, both for a great variety of commercial purposes and for their continued use as domiciles. As such they have become the focus of a remarkable amount of social activities and media attention. This unexpected turn of events invites closer inspection. Does the *kyô-machiya bûmu* ('*kyô-machiya* boom') follow received wisdom about the social uses of tradition and heritage, in particular the 'invention of tradition' approach, or is there a different way of understanding how Kyotoites are rediscovering their built heritage? Before attempting an answer, I will give a description of the special features of the houses and their rediscovery, building on 19 months of ethnographic fieldwork in 1998/99 and 2001.

The *kyô-machiya* and the boom

Machiya translates as 'town house' and applies to any urban commoner dwelling in traditional style. Prefixing *kyô* for Kyoto, however, recognizes the special features of the former capital's domiciles (Figure 9.1). One of these is a certain refined frailty: while the wooden posts and beams are less massive than those of many rural houses, the materials used – mainly timber, mud, straw, and paper, that is the natural, perishable resources characteristic of traditional Japanese architecture – are processed and finished with much subtlety and elaboration, consistent with the imperial city's timeless quest for elegance. The typical layout of the plots of land in central Kyoto has dictated the most well-known feature of the houses: while the street front of usually two floors is rarely wider than three *ken* (5.4m), the plot can be four or five times as deep. In what is known as an *unagi no nedoko* ('bedchamber of eels'), such a narrow strip of land is filled with a whole series of interconnected buildings, usually a shop (*mise* or *omoteya*) facing the street, a larger residential building (*omoya*) further back and one or more warehouses (*kura* or *dozô*) in

Figure 9.1 Street front of classical *kyô-machiya.*

the rear (Figure 9.2). The spaces in between are filled with gardens of often minuscule size that nonetheless contribute light, ventilation, and sometimes striking aesthetic appeal (Figure 9.3). Standardisation of measures according to the *kyôma* ('Kyôto space/interval', that is a *tatami*-mat size of 197 by 98.5 cm) made sliding partitions, decorative features, and even structural parts interchangeable. It also simplified the building process, as a rough sketch and the prefabrication of structural members to exacting standards of carpentry would allow for the erection of the basic framework in only a day or two.

As many as two dozen people would live in the larger houses, typically combining residence and workplace in a family enterprise. Their mutual relations were governed by the social template of the *ie* ('house' in both the physical sense and the social senses of 'household' and 'line of descent'). While succession to headship (*tôshu*) was ideally based on male gender, patrilinearity and primogeniture, the continuity of the household was the paramount goal, even when this required nominating younger sons or adoptees (sons-in-law, other relatives, or entirely unrelated employees) instead. Internally, *ie* life followed a strict social hierarchy that was spatially expressed in a fine grading of access to rooms and entrances. In Kyoto, for instance, there were 'maids for above' (*ue no jochû*) who worked in the rooms with raised, *tatami*-covered floors and 'maids for below' (*shita no jochû*) who had to keep to the street-level *doma* ('earth floor'). Yet much as the position of non-inheriting sons and daughters, live-in employees, servants, and maids was subservient and their sojourn temporary, they all were *ie* members and

KURA	OKUNIWA		OMOYA	NAKANIWA	OMOTEYA	
						STREET FRONT
	FURO	DAIDOKORO	GENKAN		MISE	
		TORINIWA				
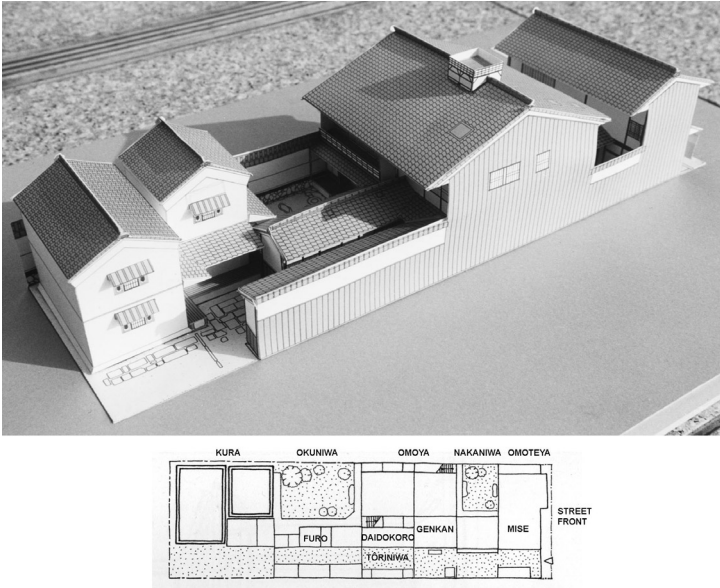
Figure 9.2 Paper model and ground floor plan of classical *kyô-machiya.*

Figure 9.3 *Kyô-machiya* interior and garden.

equally responsible for upholding the house's public reputation. If anything, *ie* ideology was more strictly observed in Kyoto than elsewhere in Japan. It also governed the business dealings concerning the construction and maintenance of the *kyô-machiya*: the fairly limited circle of house owners each had their regular master carpenter (*tôryô*) – himself the head of an ongoing *ie* – who designed their domiciles and regularly inspected them, calling in specialised craftsmen if need be. The majority of Kyotoites only rented their living space, and this would often be cramped quarters, such as the tiny apartments in *machiya* longhouses called *nagaya* that lined the back alleys. Rather than defining a residential counterculture, however, their inhabitants followed the standards set by the larger houses by whatever means their more constrained circumstances permitted.

While the Pacific War spared the city and its houses, the new era that followed capitulation brought them close to extinction. Contributing factors included new building laws unsympathetic to flammable structures; the demise of *ie* organisation and the rise of the small, often nuclear family household that had little use for large spaces; technical advances and life-style changes that made the *machiya* appear outdated in terms of lighting, heating, air conditioning, acoustic privacy, and the potential to install modern kitchen and sanitary facilities; and the perceived scarcity and costliness of experienced craftsmanship for the maintenance work. As a consequence, the old *machiya* were often hidden behind mock facades with Western stylistic pretensions in the 1960s and 1970s but increasingly demolished in the 1980s when the 'Bubble Period' (*baburu jidai*) of skyrocketing land prices encouraged the pursuit of more lucrative alternatives. The office buildings and *manshon* (high-rise condominiums), *purehabu* (prefabricated single-family homes), and parking lots built in their place led to the jagged, irregular townscape that characterises the central quarters of Kyoto today. *Kyô-machiya* appeared to be doomed, and current estimates lie at 25,000 which is only a fraction of former numbers.

Since the end of the 'Bubble Period' in 1991, however, a renaissance has occured which continues to grow stronger even now, in its second decade. Many hundreds of houses have been remodelled for commercial usage. Cafés, restaurants, and shops mainly for luxury and lifestyle goods are most common, but an IT office, a day-care centre for senior citizens, a wedding parlour, a supermarket, or a guitar shop have also been opened. *Kyô-machiya* renovated for continued use as residences are less salient but very likely even more numerous, and mediation services for *machiya* sale and rental receive hundreds of search inquiries. Open days, exhibitions, concerts, or cooking classes in *machiya* draw crowds, as do public symposiums and workshops about the houses. The mass media and the internet pay generous attention, and specialised publications – ranging from coffee-table books and accounts by residents to academic treatises – inhabit special corners in Kyoto bookstores. The tourist industry also has come to rely very much on the houses which begin to rival the famous temples, shrines, and palaces, and there is no shortage of specialised guide books, walking maps, and *machiya* restaurant guides.

Salient too are the many derivatives, starting with the hundreds of modern, non-wooden buildings – including high-rises – that incorporate *machiya* design elements in more or less obvious ways. Even a '*machiya*-style' garbage incinerator has been constructed in the suburbs, in a largely futile attempt by the municipal government to stifle local resistance against the plant. *Machiya* papercrafts are on sale or ready for internet download, and a virtual three-dimensional *machiya* can also be visited online. Even major real estate and construction companies have become interested, opening *machiya* renovation homepages or advertising their high-rise condominiums – the most likely reason for *machiya* demolition – with the allure of the *remaining* town houses nearby. Perhaps the surest sign for a trend is that the *kyô-machiya* craze has started to spread, reaching even the all-important Tokyo. Not only do feature articles appear in national magazines, but there is now a restaurant chain by the name of '*Kyô-machiya*' that has been opened in Tokyo (www.otooto.jp/kyoumachiya), and an entire street in Tokyo's Setagaya ward has been refashioned in the image of Kyoto's *machiya* (*Kyoto Shinbun News*, 26 January 2005).

In actual fact, Kyoto's ancient town houses continue to disappear at a rate of several hundred per year. Some have deteriorated beyond repair, others are too small or out of the way for modern use, still others are owned by the unconverted who want to get rid of an unloved house but not of its prime location. Besides, high-rises can still be vastly more profitable. Nevertheless, it would require a long search to find anything in contemporary Kyoto with a more positive public image than *kyô-machiya*. Affection for them unites young and old, male and female, native and newcomer. Virtually everyone wants them preserved, and sworn enemies are nowhere in sight.

The 'invention of tradition' paradigm

Only few social scientists today will read the above without thinking of the 'invention of tradition' thesis. Hobsbawm and Ranger's famous collection (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) gave the name to a paradigm that has been dominating social scientific research on the social appropriations of the past. Across the disciplines but particularly in anthropology, there is remarkable unity about the social consequences of 'invention' and of heritage in general: 'exclusionary practices … form the backbone of heritage politics', as Olwig maintains for the Caribbean case (Olwig 1999: 370), and scores of other anthropological analyses likewise find nationalist, ethnic, and localist motives behind it (e.g. Deltsou 2000: 131–2; Gable and Handler 1996: 574; Gewertz and Errington 1996: 121–3; Haley and Wilcoxon 1997: 776–7; Handler 1988; Herzfeld 1991: 257; Owens 2002: 297; Sant Cassia 1999: 257; Scher 2002: 477–8; Sutton 1996: 76). So also do leftist critiques of heritage politics in modern capitalist society (such as Hewison 1989: 21; Lowenthal 1996: 12; Walsh 1992: 149) that see it as the last pillar propping up the crumbling status of former elites and as a commercialised whitewashing of the past. As pointed out in the introduction, this critical perspective has also been widely applied

in Japanese studies, not only to national symbols and high-cultural accomplishments but also in the analysis of seemingly innocent folk heritage (particularly strongly so in Ehrentraut 1989; 1993; 1995; Ivy 1995; Robertson 1991; 1995; 1997; 1998).

What if the *kyô-machiya* revival were just another example of 'invention'? In that case, we should expect the enthusiasm for the old houses to be closely connected with local or nationalist self-assertion. The houses would form a counterpoint to the countrywide or even global standardisation/modernisation/westernisation, buttressed by reverent yet characteristically vague claims about their great age, timelessness, and authenticity. Their real history and its less appealing sides (such as *ie* hierarchies), in contrast, would be buried underneath superficial, nostalgic and essentially uncritical narratives. In social terms, these narratives would be told to guard privileges and prestige, excluding such outsiders as non-owners and non-residents of *machiya*, non-Kyotoites, and non-Japanese.

As already indicated, this sketch does not do justice to the developments in Kyoto. In the following, I will show that a particular attitude to tradition, the social composition of the preservation movement, the tangible qualities of the houses, and the urban setting contribute to what is a more complex and nuanced phenomenon than might be expected.

A living tradition

For a social movement intent on conserving a particular piece of cultural heritage, there is surprisingly little talk of *hozon* ('preservation') in the *kyô-machiya* movement; instead, the goal is commonly defined as *saisei* ('revival' or 'revitalisation'). There are in fact a handful of *machiya* that are partially or wholly preserved in their prewar condition, often serving as exhibition or event spaces now. These include some of the most splendid houses, and almost everyone readily acknowledges their superior quality and the importance of their preservation, supported sometimes by their registration as *bunkazai* (cultural properties). At the same time, there is widespread consensus that for the vast majority of *machiya*, it does not suffice just to keep the house as it is. Instead, something original has to be done with them in the present to make their continued existence meaningful. This may either refer to the physical structure or to its uses.

Particularly in renovations for commercial purposes, *machiya* are often significantly altered. When a restaurant or a shop is to be opened in a *machiya*, common changes are the substitution of the *kôshi* lattices covering the front with large window panes, the replacement of former elevated, *tatami*-covered floors with street-level tiled floors, and the removal of walls and sliding partitions (*shôji* and *fusuma*) to create larger spaces (Figure 9.4). In some cases, nothing more than the exterior walls, the wooden framework and the roof remain, and kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing, utility wires, and lighting are also often modernised. The modern modifications are sometimes

Figure 9.4 Renovated *kyô-machiya* pastry shop with glass front.

justified by sheer necessity. When, for example, a pastry shop in a *machiya* is to attract customers and thereby sustain the economic viability of the house, the inside must be visible and entrance must be possible without visitors removing their shoes. In quite a number of current renovations, however, owners, architects and visitors see not only the compromise but also the creative challenge in the adaptations, and it is not uncommon for the inventiveness of the adaptation to become the very point of interest (Figure 9.5).

Such renovations may reflect aesthetic principles that are younger than the *machiya*. In a number of cases, for example, the removal of room partitions and ceiling boards exposes previously hidden structural components such as the horizontal beams of the second floor or the rafters of the roof, thus creating large overhead spaces. Such measures owe more to Modernist ideas of exposing the architectural functions than to traditional *machiya* aesthetics. Windows may also become more than just a necessity: in the case of a *machiya* turned pastry shop and restaurant, the architect told me that, by replacing the *kôshi* lattices and *mushiko mado* (the second-floor barred window) with large glass fronts, she had intended to engage passers-by, the people sitting and working inside, and the small park across the street and its trees into a 'dialogue'. This idea certainly makes sense at that *machiya*'s busy

Figure 9.5 Renovated *kyô-machiya* integrating features of European-style street café.

location, yet it does depart from the old, thoroughly 'monological' approach of protecting the interior from the prying eyes of passers-by.

Another new aesthetic value is that of conspicuousness. Façades are sometimes enhanced with stained-glass windows, little turrets, or colourful paints to make the house stand out and look 'cute' (*kawaii*); these are either complete innovations or imitations out of context (e.g. customs of the geisha quarters transplanted to other areas). Such additions violate the received ideal of the houses' blending gracefully and inconspicuously into whole rows of similar structures, thus inviting the condescension of some purists, but many other people, and non-Kyotoites in particular, will not notice the stylistic deviations.

There are also those renovations where the contrasts and anachronisms caused by modern modifications are deliberately highlighted. In one well-publicised case, the architect used a stainless-steel plate as a partition for a modern kitchen space, juxtaposing the smooth and shiny material to the wooden posts and mud walls and the curved shape to the *machiya*'s straight lines and right angles. Contrasting the purposely preserved dents and scars of the old wooden pillars with modern halogen lighting; combining Western wallpaper with traditional-style mud walls; or using a metal frame for a large window going on the garden, in order not to make an otherwise unaltered *machiya* appear 'too beautiful/clean' (*kirei-sugiru*), are similar examples I came across. Several different time frames may be combined, as in a *machiya* housing an antiques shop. The nostalgic handwriting of the neon shop sign –

the only one I saw on a *machiya* – and the vinyl records, accessories, and trinkets on sale from the 1950s and 1960s clearly hinted to the past, but to one postdating the heyday of *machiya* construction and also the nineteenth-century house itself. Bringing in still another time period, newspapers from the 1930s and 1940s had been used as wallpaper (itself an innovative technique in a *machiya*). Various historical moments thus were combined into a generalised yesterday, 'not a historical period but a free-floating past' (Ivy 1995: :55). In sharp contrast, however, the café in the former back garden was covered by a modern steel-and-glass roof. The owner was a second-hand *manga* dealer in his forties, a declared fan of the Beatles and Bob Marley who wore a reggae-style peaked cap when I interviewed him and emphasized his allegiance to 'the good things' (*ii mono*) of all countries and periods. The eclecticism inherent in this example and the preceding ones has a postmodernist quality, and rather than trying to escape the eyes of the undiscerning, it does not mind being noticed and appreciated.

Alongside these different approaches to architectural preservation, there are those who question the very idea of *preserving* the old town houses. Instead, they say that for the tradition to live on, new *machiya* are also required. When ordinary prefabricated houses with a few vernacular decorative façade elements are advertised as 'twenty-first century *kyô-machiya*', this is hardly more than a marketing ploy. But there are also the ambitious structures designed by a kimono merchant and self-taught architect who combines a traditional wooden framework with such modern amenities as floor heating and sliding sash windows. His most extravagant structure is a drive-through to a parking tower, an ordinary concrete structure topped by a second floor built with all the traditional *machiya* materials and techniques (Figure 9.6).

All these approaches concern the material side of the houses, yet one of the most common complaints in the *machiya* movement is that too much emphasis is being placed upon the *hâdo* (the 'hardware', i.e. the architecture) while the *sofuto* (the 'software') is being neglected. For this argument, it is the activities taking place in the house that count although on closer inspection, there is disagreement about what exactly the *sofuto* is supposed to consist of. In its simplest form, it means that a *machiya* be used as a dwelling, as many *machiya* activists see a purely commercial use as unsatisfactory. For some – especially the owners of the large and well-preserved houses – *sofuto* means the traditional customs (*shikitari* or *kimarigoto*) that used to be generally observed in the past. These include particular expressions of hospitality and politeness – such as e.g. sprinkling the *genkan* entrance area with water before the arrival of guests in summer – and a large number of specific rituals, decorations, meals, and clothing habits that go with the cycle of annual festivals (*nenjû gyôji*) and religious observances, many of them specific to Kyoto or to the particular *ie*. Such customs are now increasingly discarded, falling prey to busy work and social schedules, the decline of local ties, secularisation, and the sheer absence of the physical preconditions – such as e.g. *kamidana* (Shintoist god shelves) – in modern homes. In the more tradition-minded

Figure 9.6 Kyô-machiya-style second floor over parking-tower drive-through.

machiya, however, the elaboration of some of these customs is still considerable; they may amount to no less than 'a [separate] world, in one's own house' (*hitotsu no sekai, ie no naka*), as one informant phrased it. To link their perpetuation with *machiya* preservation therefore makes sense, and there are even those who say that without them, the houses will become empty shells, pointless to preserve. Increasingly exotic to ordinary Japanese, these set customs are often highlighted in organised visits and mass media coverage.

More common and the most visible part of the *machiya* boom, however, is the use of renovated *machiya* for the modern purposes of cafés, restaurants, and shops, often with little of the old ways being preserved. As already outlined, households used to live and work in the *machiya*, so there is nothing novel to commercial activity, but the fact that the residential function is gone in most cases deviates from historical precedent. Gone too is the careful grading of access: instead, most or even all of the house is thrown open to every customer, meaning that this is the most common way ordinary Japanese come to experience Kyoto's traditional town houses.

In still another variant of emphasizing the *sofuto*, several dozen young artists and craftspeople have moved into vacant, often fairly run-down *machiya* in the old weavers' quarter of Nishijin. Somewhat reminiscent of the artists who revived the SoHo warehouses of Lower Manhattan in the 1960s and 1970s, they both live and work in the houses, taking advantage of the comparatively large and affordable space they offer. Many of them have little experience of traditional architecture and little inclination to revive the

traditional customs. Instead, the *tokonoma* – the alcove that usually displays a traditional picture scroll or calligraphic work – will be adorned with Indian god posters, or the façade will be graced with a discarded electric guitar exposed to the elements. More tradition-minded *machiya* residents occasionally complain about such stylistic laxity and about the general 'untidiness' they see here. The Buddhist priest and leader of this movement emphasized, however, that the young artists are completely in line with historical precedent: what once were the homes of silk weavers producing the most refined textiles of the nation now are the sites for creativity once again, nurturing the hope also for a general revival of Nishijin.

Significantly, these distinct approaches of dealing with the *hâdo* and the *sofuto* coexist in a relatively peaceful way. Tensions between their adherents are perceptible, and there certainly is a subtle play of distinctions and no reluctance to compare and judge. Outright enmity is rare, however, and there are few efforts made to entirely deny the legitimacy of rival approaches. Also, a point on which almost everyone agrees is that *machiya* require *saisei* and this is a divergence from conventional architectural preservation and its emphasis on 'freezing preservation' (*tôketsu hozon*), i.e. retaining the physical structure as unaltered as possible. Preserving a *machiya* in museum style will certainly raise no objections in Kyoto but opening an Italian restaurant or a computer lab in a traditional town house will get one into the papers more easily.

A grassroots movement

The diversity and mutual tolerance of approaches also reflect the social composition of the *kyô-machiya* movement. Here, a very large number of people, groups, and institutions act independently, being aware of but not involved in one another's activities. More than a decade after its inception, the *machiya* movement remains a grassroots affair.

This is not to say that there are no efforts to join forces. These come, for example, from a number of citizens' groups concentrating on *machiya*. One coordinates the aforementioned SoHo-style revitalisation of derelict *machiya* in Nishijin. Another prominent group has in the course of time founded a whole number of branches, including a specialist study group, an architects' and craftsmen's association, a '*machiya* friends' group catering to non-specialists, and a mediation service for *machiya* sale and rental, with altogether about two hundred members being involved. The activities of both these groups are duly acknowledged, and their leaders are sought as experts in public symposiums, advisory councils, and the mass media. As they themselves are the first to concede, however, their efforts are connected with only a small part of the total *machiya* renovations and rededications.

The same must be said of local government activities. Apart from the aforementioned registration of a restricted number of houses as *bunkazai*, Kyoto City and Kyoto Prefecture have long been reluctant to get involved, not least because of a widespread sentiment that *kyô-machiya*, or rather, the

valuable plots of land on which they stand are first and foremost private capital assets to which the public should not grant selective favours (Brumann 2005). So initially, city officials praised the houses in their non-compulsory master plans and public symposiums but did little beyond this. An exception has been a nominally independent 'third sector' (*daisan sekutâ* or *sanseku*) foundation started in 1997 that is nevertheless fully staffed and budgeted by Kyoto City. Modelled on other, similar centres for urban revitalisation in Japan, this institution organises symposiums, lectures, seminars, and workshops of all kinds; cooperates with citizens' groups and neighbourhood associations; offers a number of information and mediation services; and holds ideas competitions. From the outset, the *kyô-machiya* were a major concern, and two large-scale surveys of the condition of the remaining *machiya* were conducted under the leadership of the centre and with the help of the aforementioned citizens' groups. The public meetings organised by the centre often focus on the *machiya* too, and there is also a counselling service for those willing to renovate, let, or sell their house.

More substantial support that goes beyond the provision of information and moral backing has, however, only materialised in the past five years or so. Encouraged in part by recent legal reforms that have given local governments greater authority over zoning and building regulations, Kyoto City has enlarged protected areas where the maintenance of historical façades can be subsidised; tightened the zoning regulations for some of the central areas, thereby discouraging the high-rise development that is most threatening to the *machiya*; and introduced subsidies for the renovation of *machiya* as public housing. The new national 'Landscape Law' (*Keikan-hô*) of 2005 provides further powers for regulatory and support measures although how exactly these will be used in Kyoto remains to be seen. Overall, it would be an exaggeration to say that public authorities are entirely idle, especially against the background of the constraints imposed by a serious fiscal crisis. A concerted public initiative to save the remaining *machiya*, however, would still look different from what is actually happening. This is not least because of the extraordinary influence of the construction industry in Japan and because new, high-rise buildings yield the highest local tax return.

This means that the private individuals, families, and small companies that own or rent the houses and the small-scale architectural and handicraft firms that repair and renovate them are the true carriers of the *kyô-machiya* movement. They are clearly aware of and partly in touch with one another but only weakly organised. Overall, *machiya* fans and activists tend to be somewhat wealthier and better educated and to have more flexible schedules than the average Kyotoite, and include many professionals, creative people, and retirees but few ordinary workers and office employees. The variation is considerable nonetheless, however, and there is little awareness of shared social characteristics or of forming a distinct group.

There is what one could call a '*machiya* nobility' of families with long Kyoto pedigrees, looking back on fifteen generations in some cases and owning the

most splendid *machiya*. Several of them are indeed steadfast adherents of the aforementioned traditional customs, and some clearly enjoy the social recognition they can now draw from their houses. Yet their strategies are varied, and they do not form a coherent and exclusive group. Also, beyond very mild criticism and the occasional snobbish remark, they do not challenge but often willingly cooperate with the considerable number of movement leaders who come from outside central Kyoto or who neither live in or own a *machiya*. The boundaries this potential elite draws around itself are fairly loose.

In the many interviews I conducted with people who have renovated and/or moved into a *machiya*, the personal motives stood out. If anything, my informants were more intent on being true to themselves and their individual callings than on becoming like others. In some cases, this included countercultural tendencies. This holds true for many of the above-mentioned young *machiya* artists in Nishijin who deliberately pursue non-standard life courses but also, for example, for the middle-aged architect who, besides moving into a rented *machiya*, gave up his unloved job in an ordinary renovation firm and now combines self-employed work and activism in a *machiya* citizens' group. Such personal projects need not be asocial; on the contrary, the idea of reaching out and providing a meeting place through one's renovated *machiya* is often important. This is an expansive style of sociality, not one based on exclusion.

The one collective and bounded social unit that does play a significant role in quite a number of *machiya* renovations is not very large: identification with one's family and line of descent is a strong motive for some of my informants. They want to hand down to their offspring what their parents and ancestors have bequeathed to them; motivated by whole-hearted conviction, a vague urge not to fall behind the standards set by one's forebears, or just a feeling of obligation to siblings who have moved out but still see the house of their youth as an emotional haven (*kokoro no yoridokoro*). Even the owners of top-class *machiya* with long family lines I asked, however, say that while family concerns are certainly strong, they still preserve the house essentially for their personal benefit.

In sum, the *kyô-machiya* movement is characterised by highly individualised motivations and by the absence of dominant social actors. If powerful groups and organisations were more actively involved, there would certainly be stronger pressure to follow set models and interpretations and less diversity in the approaches to preservation. Yet while one hears *machiya* preservation groups speaking of the *kyô-machiya* belonging to everyone (*machiya wa minna no mono*) or defining collective ownership (*kyôyû*) of the houses as a goal, this is to be understood as programmatic pronouncements and not as a realistic description of the actual situation in Kyoto.

The natural, harmonic, 'living' house

Further evidence for the limited applicability of the 'invention' approach comes from the motives that participants in the movement give for their

machiya activism. Table 9.1 shows the results of a questionnaire I distributed to the more than one hundred members of the multi-branch citizens' group mentioned above. These include owners and residents, architects, craftsmen, researchers, public officials, and other interested people. Probably a majority of members have a professional stake in the houses, but there are also pure enthusiasts, meaning that this sample is a good representation of the preservation movement and its diversity.

The results show that are a number of indirect reasons for the preservation of *machiya*, seeing them as instrumental for achieving some other end, are less dominant than might be expected from their prominence in town-planning directives and expert commissions. The value of *kyô-machiya* for such projects as town revitalisation (*machizukuri*), tourism, art and economic recovery (all marked with the letter 'I' in the second column of Table 9.1) is only a secondary concern for most respondents. Infrequent as well are those reasons that imply a fashionable character of the houses (marked with an 'F'): few people are active in *machiya* preservation because they see them as chic, elegant, or currently in fashion, and the latter reason is explicitly rejected by a majority.

Those preservation motives that mention or strongly imply the past (marked with a 'P') are chosen rather variedly, with one particularly revealing contrast: less than one-fifth of the respondents give the fact that *machiya* are old (*furui*) as a preservation motive whereas more than three-quarters were motivated by the houses being traditional (*dentôteki*). Often chosen as well is the above-mentioned observance of old customs. In my interpretation, this confirms that what matters is not age as such. The petrified emblems that often stand in the foreground of typical cases of 'invention' are not sought here; rather, it is an ongoing connection of things past to the present, with the perspective of further evolution in the future, that is the motivational focus.

The *machiya*'s assumed role in representing Kyoto, Japan, or Japanese architecture ('C') are each chosen by a majority of respondents and these aspects did also come up in public meetings and in interviews, particularly when the mass media, tourism, or politics were involved. Yet contrary again to typical cases of 'invention', I never heard anyone claim that they are preserving their *machiya* for Kyoto's or the nation's sake. And in a number of cases, *machiya* owners, despite strong appeals to preserve a top-level house, preferred demolition, both in order to safeguard their family fortune by selling the plot and to avoid ceding their family space to strangers. This means that if an 'imagined community' in Benedict Anderson's (1983) sense motivates preservation, it is the diachronic community with one's distant ancestors and descendants, not the synchronic one with one's fellow Kyotoites or Japanese.

The most important reasons for preservation, however, are separate from these and can be grouped into two sets, one containing those that stress the *machiya*'s closeness to nature ('N') and the other those that focus on the visual and emotional harmony that the houses are perceived to produce ('H'). The reasons in the first set – *machiya* being of wood (and other natural

Table 9.1 Personal reasons for *machiya* preservation given by members of citizens' group

Because (they)…		strong reason	reason	(neither)	no reason
are beautiful (*utsukushii*)	H	7	40	11	1
let one feel the changing seasons	N	12	34	12	1
fit well into Kyoto's townscape	H	8	38	13	0
have a soothing effect (*ochitsukeru*)	H	9	36	14	0
are traditional (*dentôteki*)	P	6	37	15	1
are made of wood	N	5	37	14	3
are gentle to the environment	N	10	29	20	0
have gardens inside	N	6	30	23	0
have a good atmosphere	H	5	31	22	1
are in danger of disappearing		7	28	19	5
are connected to old festivals and customs	P	6	29	21	3
represent Kyoto	C	6	28	19	6
are better than *manshon* or *purehabu*		6	27	22	4
represent Japan	C	5	28	22	4
are Japanese-style (*wafû*) architecture	C	1	32	22	4
are a resource for *machizukuri*	I	3	22	29	5
have been handed down over generations of ancestors	P	2	22	22	13
are refined/elegant (*jôhin*)	F	2	19	31	7
remind me of my childhood days	P	0	20	26	13
I own a *machiya* or other traditional wooden house		1	18	20	20
I live in a *machiya* or other traditional wooden house		1	15	23	20
are connected to the old-style family system	P	1	13	27	18
are chic/cool (*oshare*)	F	2	11	35	11
have low heights		0	13	35	11
are old	P	0	11	40	8
are comfortable to live in		0	11	39	9
are a resource for tourism	I	2	8	30	19
are suited to the creation and exhibition of art	I	1	7	40	11
I do business in a *machiya* or other traditional wooden house		0	9	24	26
are economically promising	I	0	7	35	17
represent my neighbourhood		0	8	32	19
are one step removed from current mainstream culture		0	7	28	24
have become fashionable of late	F	0	1	23	35

Note: The question was "Why are *kyô-machiya* important for you and should be preserved and revitalised? (*Kyô-machiya wa anata ni totte naze daiji de, hozon/saisei subeki desu ka?*)". Informants were asked to mark items that are reasons for them (*jibun ni atehamaru riyû*) and those that are no reasons, leaving all other items blank. If there were particularly strong reasons, informants were asked to mark the corresponding items too.

materials), having gardens, making the changing seasons tangible, and being gentle to the environment – are perhaps no big surprise. They also came up regularly in interviews, discussions, and written materials, often as part of sophisticated arguments. That *machiya* consist of renewable and recyclable materials and require few resources and fossil fuels to be built or renovated is praised by all kinds of people with great regularity. Younger people and architects in particular emphasized this aspect.

The second set of reasons addresses the aesthetic appeal of the houses. The fact that they are considered as beautiful, both as single houses and in their contribution to Kyoto's townscape, is a prominent preservation motive, as are the *machiya*'s good atmosphere and quietening effect. With amazing regularity, people with otherwise very different preservation philosophies used the word *ochitsukeru* ('quieten', 'calm', 'soothe') or its grammatical variants (*ochitsuku, ochitsuita, ochitsuki ga aru*) for their own experience of these houses. I had the impression that this arose less from stereotypical repetition of the overheard but rather from a genuinely felt perception that stimulated identical verbal expressions. Statements that, for example, the flow of time seems to slow down when being in a *machiya*; that even the most unruly children start to behave in them; or that in a *machiya* turned cram school (*juku*), students put away their *manga* on their own initiative and return to their studies reflect similar ideas.

Informants rarely elaborated on *ochitsukeru*, neither in interviews nor in public discussions; they rather seemed to assume the desirability of this emotion as immediately obvious to everyone. However, certain aspects connected with *ochitsukeru* in interviews, often in a casual way, allow one to probe a bit deeper. Among them are features such as age, the presence of natural materials, or stylistic unity. More tellingly perhaps are those qualities of buildings that I heard informants mention as endangering or destroying *ochitsukeru*: these included large window panes, shiny white walls, brilliant light, garish colours, and helter-skelter combinations of building styles. *Kyô-machiya* eschew extremes and cultivate the subdued in terms of colour, form, light, and space, and this appears to be suited to producing a sense of spiritual balance and harmony.

A common trope in *machiya* discourse pushes naturalness to extremes, as it plays with their being 'alive'. In a public lecture, a university professor specialising in earthquake research said that *machiya* are 'natural bodies' (*shizentai*) and display an instinctive behaviour during quakes, just like living beings. A large number of people at a large number of occasions likened the relatively unimpeded air circulation in *machiya* to the house's 'breathing' (thus giving a positive reinterpretation to draught). An architect specialising in *machiya* renovations who now has acquired a *machiya* for herself described her experience as follows: 'You come home, and even when nobody's there, you feel like saying "Hello, I'm back!" to the house (*Ie ni haitte, dare ga inakute mo, ie ni 'tadaima!' tte*).' The most sustained use of the metaphor came from a successful entrepreneur who, as an enthusiast rather than for business reasons, had bought a large *machiya* threatened by demolition and

thrown it open to all kinds of social activities. When describing these and their effect on the house, he said that a *machiya* is a living being (*ikimono*). Pushed to the brink of destruction, this special house had been very ill, but now, it had recovered with the help of the breath, smell, and sweat of the people going in and out. Visitors moving through the *tôriniwa* are the blood in the structure's arteries, and a fish stew prepared there feeds not only a group of seminar participants staying overnight but, by the smell that lingers for days, also nurtures the house, making it recover.

In these remarks, the *machiya* becomes an entire ecological system in which complex exchanges unfold between the building and its users. Similar comments came from a diversity of people. A number of mostly female informants dwelt on the cleaning habits, aesthetic sensibilities, or even body comportment a *machiya* enforces, saying, or quoting their mothers and mothers-in-law, that the houses 'teach', even 'shape', their inhabitants. A female informant with a long family history of *machiya* residence spoke of the house as 'wrapping' herself; with the feelings of the people who lived in it formerly having seeped into the physical structure. People and house start to merge here, so much so that one of the Nishijin *machiya* artists remarked: 'In such a house, the person too is just a part (*kô iu yô na ie wa ningen mo ichibu desu*).' No informant insisted that *machiya* are really alive, and all these instances are best seen as metaphoric speech. Still, *machiya* invite such architectural animism, however playfully deployed, and people invoking it can expect to be understood.

The 'living house' acquires its appeal, I believe, in no small part because of the contrast to modern Japanese homes: those features most praised in the *kyô-machiya* are also most absent from the *manshon* and *purehabu* that form the mainstay of the contemporary housing industry. *Machiya* are built from natural resources; modern houses use industrially produced materials, hiding their last natural remnants – such as the wooden framework of a *purehabu* – behind plastified wall panels. When nature does appear, then only as simulacrum: plastic wallpaper is meant to look like real one, and plastic flooring (*furôringu*) imitates wooden planks. Many of these artificial materials are suspected of causing allergies and other health problems, a problem for which the term 'sick house' (*shikku hausu*) has been coined, whereas the natural materials of *machiya* have no adverse health effects. *Machiya* let the air circulate and make one feel the changing seasons whereas *manshon* and *purehabu* rooms are closely sealed, in order to make heating and air condition more effective. *Machiya* are considered beautiful; *manshon* and *purehabu* strive first and foremost to be cost-effective which places narrow constraints on any design effort. *Machiya* follow a locally specific style; *manshon* and *purehabu*, when referring to any particular models at all, aim at being modern and cosmopolitan (sporting names such as 'Kawaramachi Garden Heights') and look alike all over Japan. Finally, *machiya* evoke profound emotional reactions and even bring people to describe them as alive whereas I never heard anyone attribute such qualities to *manshon* or *purehabu*.

In my interpretation, the *machiya* movement's rise in the current historical moment is no accident. In the material forms of Japanese everyday life, the replacement of traditional things with equivalents imported from Western countries is approaching completion. Most of the Western-style furniture I saw sold in the late 1980s was still a more or less inferior imitation of what I knew from Europe, clumsier designed and less robust. The merchandise such furnishing houses as Muji offer today, however, is identical to that of Western equivalents in the same market segment of modern, affordable design, such as Habitat or Ikea; and in fact, as Ikea has opened its first stores in Japan, so Muji has expanded into Europe and North America. At the same time, few of the condominium apartments advertised in Kyoto still have the *tatami*-floored room that used to be standard ten or twenty years ago, and model rooms are furnished in ways that look no more like Kyoto than Cologne or Seattle. Clearly, Japanese and Western tastes are converging, being equally absorbed by the global ecumene (Hannerz 1992: 217–68) of advanced capitalism's life-style options. Parallel developments are occurring across the realm of *ishokujû* ('clothing, eating, living'): kimono have largely disappeared from Tokyo's department stores, and although Japanese cuisine is certainly alive, within 50 m from our Kyoto apartment I could choose from no less than three Italian restaurants whose kitchens fully satisfied my European standards of authenticity.

That this development provokes the occasional counter-movement – as one strand in an overall polyphony of life-styles – should be no surprise. Given that buildings cannot be cast aside and then taken up again as simply as clothing, furniture, or food, houses are perhaps a particularly likely candidate for a safeguarding movement since once they are gone, there will be no easy way to get them back. Recent scholarly and lay perception of Japan in the West has centred very much on the extremes of popular culture, often representing this society as particularly given to the novel and bizarre and to turning out extravagant fads at break-neck speed. Yet while this aspect is certainly present, the qualities exemplified by the *machiya* continue to be sought after, mostly by a slightly older, better educated, and more prosperous clientele, but also by those who, by their age and social position, should be expected to prefer *sugoi* ('great', 'cool', 'terrific'), *kawaii* ('cute'), or *kakkoii* ('smart', 'good-looking') things to *ochitsukeru*-style serenity.

Conclusion

Contrary to what an 'invention of tradition' perspective might lead us to expect, participants in the *kyô-machiya* movement do not long so much for community, real or imagined, and for shallow narratives about a better past. Rather, they are after their own personal satisfaction, and in pursuing it, they perceive substantive qualities in the houses that modern buildings patently lack. Being traditional is one of these qualities but certainly not the only one, and what remains of the past must not be simply kept as it is but be

revitalised in creative ways, to satisfy practical and financial concerns but also to be interesting and meaningful. A conventional 'invention of tradition' approach fails to fully account for this situation.

This is not to say that this approach is generally misleading in Japan since there are a number of differences here to other cases. First of all, the *machiya* have a demonstrably long history, with the present-day houses clearly resembling those in eleventh-century picture scrolls. They were also never as close to extinction as other aspects of Japanese heritage that literally had to be resurrected from the dead (e.g. Law 1997; Moon 1989: 166, 175; Ivy 1995: 136–9; Robertson 1991: 38–9). The large number of human carriers and the weight of written, graphic, and acoustic documentation about the *machiya* will inevitably work against radical reinterpretations, and as the documented history is impressive enough, there is less need for beautification and less leeway for 'invention' here.

Second, the *kyô-machiya* rediscovery is largely carried by Kyotoites and primarily caters to a local audience. This differs from the many cases of Japanese heritage in whose (re-)discovery outsiders and foreigners were instrumental, be it the *mingei* folk-art movement (Moeran 1984: 14–16); woodblock prints (Tobin 1992: 29–30); the discovery of the Tôno region as a pristine *ur*-Japan (Ivy 1995: 72–140); the folk *nô* theatre of Kurokawa (Kelly 1986: 610); or the revival of puppetry on Awaji island (Law 1997: 204–6). Bruno Taut, the Bauhaus architect whose lavish praise (Taut [1937] 1997) greatly helped to bring traditional Japanese architecture to international attention, even appears to have been consciously deployed by interested Japanese intent on capitalising on his foreign prestige (Inoue [1986] 1997). Not so in Kyoto, however, for if it were for the tourists alone, the *machiya* boom would shrink considerably. Also, the 'postmodernist' play with styles and historical periods is lost on casual observers, yet it does find appreciation among the population of a large and diverse city that in addition is an acclaimed academic and artistic centre.

Third, the *machiya* defy categorical boundaries: due to their very specific urban environment in the historical capital, they are not quite folk culture, but they are not quite high culture either. They thus evade the typical modes of nationalist and localist appropriation of these two categories. The *machiya* case is clearly distinct from the rural traditions that have formed the focus of much anthropological work on Japanese heritage (see the introduction) and those traditions and uses of history that, while based in cities, nevertheless emphasize village-like human relations (Bestor 1990: 46–9), idealise a long-gone period of land reclamation (Robertson 1991: 73–109, 181–93), shed sentimental tears of longing for the lost home in the provinces (Yano 2002: 7, 17–21), or simply exploit clichés of nostalgic rusticity (Moeran 1995: 120–3). In marked contrast to this intellectual colonisation of the countryside, Kyoto's *machiya* are an urban heritage, and they could hardly be more so. They are situated in the historically most prestigious and most continuous parts of the nation's historically most prominent metropolis, the single place

most distinct from the countryside and most conscientious in maintaining this distinction. Town houses and parade stood at the apex of commoner culture, not at its obscure margins, and the pursuit of elegance and refinement, often encouraged by what trickled down from the elite lifestyles that could be glimpsed at close quarters, would eschew any tinges of rusticity.

Yet, the town houses belonged to the *machishû*, the ordinary townsfolk, and much as these merchants and craftsmen were the envy of their fellow commoners in other places, they stood below even the most humble peasant in the official rank order of Tokugawa society and were dominated by the aristocratic, military, and clerical elites of the imperial city. Therefore, there is a distinctly democratic note to the *machiya*'s newfound recognition: commoner dwellings are being acknowledged as an interesting piece of heritage and fashionable resource, and in the process, the internal class differences between the houses of the rich and the poor are being levelled too. Everyone's old house is a *machiya* now, and even those structures that would have insisted on their specialness in the past – such as *ryokan* (traditional inns) or *chaya* (geisha party houses) – are increasingly marketed under this category.

This means that *machiya* heritage is not just 'Thatcherism in period dress' (Samuel 1994: 290), an elite affair shoring up established privileges, and that it bears out Samuel's conviction that heritage has no inherent political colours (ibid.: 288, 303). It also supports the findings of others that the wider appreciation and tourist consumption of Japanese traditions, even when not shying away from simplification and sentimentalisation, must not deprive its carriers of their agency and can help them ward off community disintegration (Kelly 1986: 609–10; Martinez 1990: 98; Moon 1989: 175–7) or overcome racism (Law 1997).

Yet heritage is also more than a social vehicle, even in those cases where 'invention' is more central than with the *kyô-machiya*. The genuine concern of people for continuity and for tangible connections with what they believe went on in former times should not be entirely discounted, nor should the fact that this can be a thoroughly personal desire, socially influenced but not completely socially determined. Hearing what informants have to say about this will provide a useful alternative to many a counter-hegemonic unmasking of heritage that simply leaves its carriers out of the picture, thus privileging a single reading where in fact there is often a multiplicity of interpretations.

I think it is more fruitful to think of traditions not only as invented but also to take 'invention *by* tradition' (Ranger 1993: 76, original emphasis) into account. Marshall Sahlins, in particular, has accused invention-of-tradition analyses of unwittingly sustaining the functionalism of older approaches to traditions and culture. Interestingly, he resorts to a brief case study of modern *sumô*. Much as this has been the subject of invention since the Meiji period, the cultural resources drawn upon are much older, and their re-use attests to their cultural significance. 'This is a living tradition, precisely one that has been able to traverse history. That it might be suitably reinvented to fit the occasion might better be understood as a sign of vitality rather than of

decadence', he argues (Sahlins 1999: 409). Loyalty to traditions can be more than invention, 'fakelore' (Richard Darson, quoted in Briggs 1996: 460), or collective symbolism, and we are well advised to probe deeper, remaining attentive to the creativeness that past things provoke in present people.

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10 Automated alterities

Movement and identity in the history of the Japanese *Kôbe ningyô*

Rupert Cox

> The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics.
>
> <div align="right">(Haraway 1991: 150)</div>

Objects that are ascribed heritage value bear the weight of many interpretative pressures and strategic aspirations. They may be required to substantiate ideas about the past as tradition and the significance of the locality of their creation. These ideas fashion identities that may extend the significance of and even come to stand in for the individual situation and skill of their makers. At the same time these objects are recognised as having an 'agency' and a 'biography' that is based on their particular, even unique, material attributes (Gosden and Marshall 1999). This recognition is derived at least in part, from the notions of intentionality, aim and force implied by the term 'object' itself. The acknowledgement of the existence of these forces that act upon and arise from objects, has gone some considerable way in redressing a conservative and sometime conservationist view of heritage objects as historical entities, whose meaning is as rigid and prescribed as the processes available for preventing their material deterioration or their placement in repositories of knowledge.

The description and analysis of these forces show how heritage value may be construed as a determinant of the literal and intellectual position of objects in the display spaces, storage facilities and inventories of museums. These institutional arrangements condense and make visible the object's movement across different networks of meaning and status, between categories such as artefact and art; craft and curio. The trajectories of objects through these networks reveal movement in terms of an effect or 'trace' of objects and locate the dynamic for these shifts and changes in overarching relations of power and authority. The heavy hand of discourse and the explanatory power of theories of modernity and globalisation (Appadurai 1997; 2001) and of property relations and copyright legislation (Strathern 1999) in these kinds of interpretations make the relations between object, context and human actor(s) the fundamental point of issue in the creation of value.

In the Japanese context and in the UNESCO criteria for universal cultural recognition, the tying together of object and actor is the basis of 'intangible

cultural knowledge' (Condominas 2004), whereby value is the expressive outcome of the artisan's body in skilled motion. This is at once a romantic notion, of the artist genius whose skill is ever present and transferred directly to the materials, reminiscent of what Michael Taussig (1992) calls, following James Frazer's thesis about 'sympathetic magic', 'the magic of contact'. It is also a notion which draws attention away from a recognition that now is belatedly being made of the particular and sometimes peculiar force of the object. This force is not derived from a position within a network or system of social relations, nor is it the effect of materiality. It is a capacity for affect which emerges from the object's ontological position in the order of relations between persons and things. Approaching object relations in terms of ontology is different from the anthropological emphasis on social relationships, by which and through which the ownership of objects and the skill that goes into their making are normally understood. It is also different from the Western attitude to objects as things that have ownership, tied inextricably to the location and creativity of their makers and protected by the laws of copyright (Strathern and Hirsch 2004). It is the anthropological influence which has been most instrumental in the construction of the idea of heritage, through various UNESCO declarations, in opposition to the idea of cultural knowledge being a 'thing' created and authored uniquely by a single individual (Bouchenaki 2004). What has emerged is a shift from 'cultural property' to 'cultural heritage' that has been based on a three-fold approach: first, on interpreting tangible heritage within a context of social relations and ties to place; second, on translating intangible heritage as 'materiality'; and, finally, on supporting efforts to sustain practitioners and the passing on of knowledge and skill (ibid.: 9).

In the Japanese context, when these social relationships are systematised as a 'family system' *iemoto*, articulated through the bodily actions of a craftsperson and qualified through the application of aesthetic terms to an object, then they achieve an identifiable expression that can be appreciated as part of a value system, that is as 'cultural heritage'. However, there are objects which create and are sustained by human relationships which are not systematic. They also lack a vocabulary for public or official recognition. These are strange and sometimes unsettling objects defying easy categorisation, transgressing boundaries and in their hybrid, ephemeral nature, separate from the world of the ordinary.

The objects I refer to and shall investigate here are mechanical dolls (*karakuri ningyô*) which were made not as children's playthings, but as devices for the adult imagination and for playful diversion in the 'shows' (*misemono*) of curiosities and wonders that were a regular sight in the urban world of the Edo period. They are often sophisticated in design and the clockwork technologies from which they were developed were instrumental in introducing ideas and practices from western science, (*rangaku*) during the Edo period (Screech 2002). Probably the most famous example of a *karakuri* is the 'tea-carrying doll' (*chakumi ningyô*) originally made in the seventeenth century as an element in a form of popular theatre and recreated in the 1960s (Schodt

1988: 60–2). This mechanical human achieved national recognition because of the age and complexity of its wind-up, clockwork mechanism, but is one of many types of automata, that include relatively simple hand-operated devices. It is also one of many styles and themes, the majority of which are only acknowledged for their local associations as 'famous products' (*meibutsu*) and as 'folk products' (*minzoku geinô*).

As inanimate objects that may be artificially animated so as to imitate the action and behaviour of a variety of figures from the human, animal and spirit worlds, these *karakuri* are part of dispersed networks of human and non-human agents with the power of intention. They are similar in this respect to the 'good-luck' amulets (*engimono*) described by Daniels (2003), which are bought at shrines and have a domestic and everyday usage. These amulets challenge the divide between artistic value and technological utility and through their material properties are attributed an agency and an intentionality to act upon the world (ibid.: 623). The important and interesting difference between *engimono* and *karakuri*, is that while acquisition and operation of the former have a causal outcome, resulting in good fortune, there is no determined causal outcome of the latter. It is a device that repeats and signifies itself, producing affect rather than effect. It is this distinction and what I shall argue is the intrinsic strangeness of automata as well as the peculiar situation of the *karakuri* I am interested in here that can help us to understand an object on the margins of what is understood by heritage, never quite achieving this valuation.

The *karakuri* I shall describe are particular to the city of Kobe and as such known as the '*Kôbe ningyô*'. The analysis that follows is based on interviews with collectors and restorers, visits to museums and research carried out in Kobe's city library archives. Here there was a particular unpublished thesis that I have come to rely on, for it contains a number of detailed interviews with significant individuals in the history of the making and collecting of the *Kobe ningyô*, who are now unfortunately deceased (Ushiro and Endo 1998).

The *Kôbe ningyô* are hand-operated and approximately hand-sized wooden devices, depicting a hybrid figure that variously combines the features of a Buddhist priest, a ghost (*ôbake*) and a black man (Figure 10.1). The first two recorded makers of the dolls were both connected to the makers of the *jôruri* puppets from Awaji island (Ushiro and Endo 1998). The first, a person named 'Haru' from Nagata (*Nagata no Haru*) is said to have been born in the early Meiji period and lived until some time in the 1940s. He sold *sanshô kombu* (seaweed flavoured with Japanese pepper) on the approach to Nagata shrine, and had experience as a craftsman making stage props for the Awaji puppet theatre. He was well known as an eccentric, who would regularly hide inside a coffin, displayed in the front window of his shop, so as to surprise passers-by. This grotesque sense of humour led locals to refer to him as 'coffin Haru', a title which tied in with the 'ghost dolls' (*ôbake ningyo*) that he made. These were popular items, from the late Edo to the Meiji period and included ghost figures like the long-necked monster (*rokuro-kubi*) and dolls with three eyes (*mitsume*).

神戸人形のいろいろ

兵庫県神戸／木
明治の中頃、神戸で作られ始めた
からくり人形。台横のつまみを前後
に動かすと人形が様々な動きをする。

Figure 10.1 Kôbe ningyô.

Most of Haru's dolls are of plain undecorated, brown and reddish coloured wood, but their imaginative features which reference a connection between human and non-human agents suggests that the origins of these dolls from within the world of the puppet theatre of Awaji island are significant. The religious practices of the puppet tradition on Awaji which include a ritual process (*dokumbô mawashi*) of taking a puppet from house to house so that it might absorb within it the malign spirits inhabiting these homes are connected to the idea that a lifeless puppet can be a vessel for embodying the soul of spirits and deities as well as of persons (Law 1997). It is the quality and direction of mechanical movement in and the movement through space of these puppets that activate their shamanistic power and which would appear to inform the design of the *Kôbe ningyô*, although in their case employed to achieve comic effect. The reference point for this humour is to be found in the 'exhibits' (*misemono*) of the Edo period which featured simultaneously crude and scholarly public performances of various oddities and curiosities (Markus 1985: 501). Among these were shows of 'comic mimicry' (*monomane*) and exhibitions of 'freaks', presented as an object lesson to the audience, in terms of the Buddhist doctrine of karmic causation (ibid.: 529).

There are other associations, of a human kind, at work in these dolls. For some are coloured black and connected thematically to the other early Kobe *niyngô* originator, a doll-maker in Awaji known only as 'Nakamura'. Nakamura

is said to have begun to make black dolls after seeing a lonely black sailor, on shore leave in the port of Kobe, who was either drinking sake or eating a watermelon (accounts differ). It was rare to see black people in the early days of Meiji, as the port had only just opened up to US ships, so the sight left an impression which Nakamura tried to imitate using the mechanism of the Awaji dolls. The types of dolls which Nakamura and Haru modelled on black people are part of the generic series, from which the *Kôbe ningyô* derives its public image and reputation.

The 'watermelon eater' and 'sake drinker' are the most typical and well-known types. They recreate that first impression of the black sailors, in forms that we would now, properly consider demeaning stereotypes. At the time they were first made they were part of a well-established trade in black ethnic collectibles, popular in Europe and the USA so that by the 1930s, manufacturers like Louis Marx, famous for the wind-up 'Popeye' and racist 'Alabama Coon Jiggers' had even outsourced production to Japan (Allison 2006: xv).

The watermelon eater and the sake drinker exaggerate for comic effect, conveying a grotesque impression by a wide, red mouth and bulging eyes, offset somewhat by the poignancy of the lonely pose and sad facial features of the figure. The watermelon eater mechanism works so that twisting the knob at its base raises the watermelon to its mouth or cuts the melon with a knife. The sake drinker works by pouring the sake into a cup and bringing it up to the mouth to drink, just as it opens. There are small variations in the actions of these generic types of dolls as they were reproduced by different makers over time. Early examples of the sake drinker, for example, have a distinctive tilt to the sake bottle, timed to coincide with a drop in the doll's head to suggest drunkenness.

Other popular types were the *samisen* player and drummer. The *samisen* doll in particular is very similar in pose and action to the 'black minstrel' figure that was produced in the USA in the late nineteenth century. The stereotypical imagery upon which such figures are based were known in Japan, through famously reported incidents, such as the 'Ethiopian' minstrel show performed by 'blacked-up' white crew members, after the conclusion of a treaty by Commander Perry in 1854 (Russell 1991: 10). There had been existing paradigms and visual schema for representing cultural difference in Japan since the sixteenth century, when the grid-like 'charts of barbarian nations' (*bankoku-zu*) and the scenes of Portuguese traders and missionaries being met off ships in Japanese ports (*namban byôbu*), were being produced (Toby 1998). These painted screens sometimes featured Africans relegated to the lower realms of classificatory schemes or hanging in acrobatically simian poses from the rigging of ships and were based on the conventions and iconography of European originals. These images were part of the visual inventory which appears to have been a background to the racial stylisation of the *Kôbe ningyô*, although other more modern ideas also have resonances here.

These are ideas about 'blood purity' that were part of what Jennifer Robertson has referred to as 'eugenic modernity', meaning 'the application of

scientific concepts and methods as a means to constitute both the nation and its constituent subjects (New Japanese)' which were explored through 'the application of eugenic principles to make connections between biology, kinship, and the plasticity of the human body' (Robertson 2002: 191). The ideas that motivated these activities were not confined to the 'scientific' and the laboratory, but also prevalent on the street as part of the world of the 'popular' (ibid.: 192). The *Kôbe ningyô* were part of this world which played with the fear and fascination of hybridity, expressed here as miscegenation, but also evoking the shamanistic power of mixing humans and spirits and anticipating, as we shall see, the mixing of humans and machines with the prescient figure of the cyborg. The playful combinations of these themes in the origins and design of the dolls, make it difficult to identify such consistencies in form and meaning that would constitute a 'tradition' and categorise these dolls within the rubric and conventions of 'folk-art' (*minzoku geinô*). If these objects can be said to have a 'biography', then their trajectory is characterised by happenstance and opportunism.

Consider the relationship of the two craftsmen who most successfully brought the *Kôbe ningyô* to public attention. Dezaki Fusamatsu (1883–1967) was born in Wakayama prefecture. After a brief apprenticeship in Osaka he came to live in Hanakuma, Kobe, sometime between 1898 to 1903. He was a novelty hunter with many interests, including, it is recorded, foreigners and left-handedness. A photograph, from 1928 (in Ushiro and Endo 1998) shows Dezaki, dressed up and performing on stage as a black man. This proclivity was expressed again when soon after arriving in Kobe, he began to make dolls modelled on a left-handed black person, and through trial and error invented simplified movements using a system of reels. The mechanism to make the movements became the standard for the later doll makers and was believed by the Dezaki family to be an original invention. Dezaki took a lot of trouble in making the dolls but had difficulty selling them, because they were so expensive. Significantly, he passed on his knowledge of doll-making to only one man, his brother-in-law, Oda Tashiro (1883–1950). Oda had experience as a cabinet maker (*sashimono daiku*) and after being injured in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) moved to live in Kamimisawa in Hyôgô prefecture in 1921 and began making the dolls himself.

The knowledge that passed from Dezaki to Oda, through the linear and familial nature of their master–student relationship appears to substantiate the origins of a 'tradition', because it is based at some essential level on a bodily transmission of 'intangible knowledge'. However, the dolls made by Dezaki and Oda were not entirely constructed by each craftsman working alone from raw materials. Orders were placed with outside suppliers for parts of the dolls for mass production. The Jôtô woodworking workshop in Akashi supplied bodies and heads. A man named Gensui Nishizawa in Himeji supplied sake bottles and cups, and an abacus factory in Ono supplied the abacus pieces. These methods dispersed the knowledge and sense of propriety of the things created, but also helped to create a large stock of the dolls and Oda

was forced to employ apprentices to help him manage the orders and ensure distribution, albeit to a select group of rich customers. A standard Kobe doll was sold for between one yen and fifty sen to two yen, and a quality doll with ivory eyes would cost three yen. This was extremely expensive at a time when a 14 kilogram bag of rice cost 80 sen. The customers for these expensive luxuries were mostly foreign travellers, who often bought them from an outlet at the popular Nunobiki waterfalls on the hillside overlooking the city. Their comic movement and facial expression made them unusual and desirable oddities and their size, small enough to be held in the palm of the hand, made them easily transportable.

There were a number of other outlets for foreign sales. The company Yamamoto shôkai, based at the waterfalls, and a spectacle shop, Kiyoshi-yama and souvenir shop Miyazakiya, both in the downtown Motomachi area of Kobe. So popular were these dolls as souvenir items that some regular customers from abroad placed an order for one or two dozen dolls when they arrived at the port and picked them up when they returned on their next visit. It is known that the Portuguese consul general Wenceslau de Moraes (1854–1929) in Kobe, was one of those with a particular fondness for the dolls. The inventiveness and enterprise of Dezaki and Oda in making and distributing these dolls, combined with the fascination of visitors from abroad for exotic souvenirs, to create an image that persists today of Kobe's exotic foreign heritage, particularly evident in the presentation and popularity of the area in Chûô ward of original and reconstructed buildings in the styles of their foreign owners.

Among the *Kôbekko* (native to Kobe), these dolls began to gain widespread recognition after the Russo-Japanese War. Few Japanese in Kobe actually bought the dolls, so their interest seems to have been based on the visible qualities of the dolls on display. As the dolls are made to move, they reveal what many Japanese at that time perceived as the primitive, childlike nature of the black race. In the absence of much direct contact with real black people, the image of the *Kobe ningyô* was part of a fantasy world of the foreigner; a world that was domesticated and controlled through the form of a mechanical doll.

When the Emperor Shôwa visited Kobe in June 1929, Oda formally offered five dolls to him as a present. The Emperor is recorded as having handled the dolls and been the first person to officially refer to them as the '*Kôbe ningyô*'. This moment when, it might be said that the dolls received divine approval, confirmed the potential status of the dolls as symbols of Kobe's heritage. A descriptive catalogue was written by Oda for the occasion and presented to the Emperor. Inside, it reads prosaically, as a properly modest and restrained acknowledgement of the dolls' new reputation:

> The history of Kobe dolls began in 1891 or 1892 and their production developed strongly after the Russo-Japanese war, but now only one shop sells them in Kobe. The dolls are toys for children in this country and

abroad, and comfort students fatigued by study. The number of varieties totals some 100, but the main motifs are some 50. All dolls are mechanical, black, and funny. They are distributed in this country and abroad mainly as souvenirs. I employ three artisans to produce them.

(Ushiro and Endo 1998: 38)

The claim made here for the warm, affective qualities of the dolls, as children's playthings and comforters is not borne out by what is known of their relative expense and from the list of sales which were made mostly by foreign visitors. The claims are important because it connects them to contemporary ideas about dolls as envoys of internationalism and peace. A few years previously in 1924, dolls had featured in a well publicised international exchange between schoolchildren, part of an attempt to try and rebuild diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan, following the passage of the Immigration Act in 1924 (Kohiyama 2005). It was initiated by the USA who sent 12,000 dolls, explicitly excluding black dolls, and the Japanese who reciprocated with 58 very expensive 'return dolls' (*tôrei ningyô*) selected from famous types associated with the 'doll festival' (*hina matsuri*) (ibid.: 57; 55). In general terms, dolls and toys from the West had enjoyed a positive reputation in Japan during the Meiji period when they were understood to be instrumental in a child's cultural development and educators recommended the use of western toys to enable a rational approach to life and to encourage the nation's education in Western cultural values (Saitô 1969).

The hybrid nature of the *Kôbe ningyô*, part Japanese ghost, part primitive and altogether comic, make Oda's claims significant not only because of these wider associations, but also because the dolls could not otherwise accord with an image of Kobe that its official representatives could contain. The uncanny qualities of the dolls meant that although they were at that moment, perhaps the most distinctive folk-art associated with the city they were always too slippery in the mixture of their associations, to be a symbol the city could openly be proud of. The volatile nature of these associations came to light in the aftermath of the war.

The war brought *Kôbe ningyô* production almost to a halt, as Oda moved back to Okayama for personal safety and made only a few dolls and it was only afterwards that Oda, with the backing of a shop, Kirishiyama, attempted to revive them fully. This revival was part of a wider attempt within Kobe (mirrored in nearby cities with the revivalism of *ningyô fude* in Arima and the straw crafts around Kinosaki), to rediscover and protect traditional folk crafts. The revival of the *Kôbe ningyô* stalled however, for Oda died in 1950 and a year later the shop was banned from production or sales by an order of the Public Welfare Office of the General Headquarters of the American Occupation Army and a charge of racial discrimination was levelled against them.. At the time, the owner of the shop was a member of the Hyôgo prefectural assembly and he complained to the office of the GHQ that: 'Kobe *ningyo* has been regarded as a folkcraft (*meibutsu*) in Kobe since the Meiji

period and it has also been exported to the USA where it was well received. It is not meant to discriminate against any races.'

The response from the office was:

> We understand your standpoint, however, we regret to inform you that we would like to ask you to refrain from the production and sales of Kobe ningyô, since we are still anxious that it may lead to misunderstandings among black people towards second generation Japanese Americans who had fought together in the war and thus might cause problems.
>
> (Kiyoshimaya 1955 pamphlet)

This exchange and the legal threat that accompanied it brought existing tensions inherent in the hybrid nature of the *Kôbe ningyô* into the public realm and established its ambiguous status in the urban consciousness of the city. As an object of negative memory in the city's imaginary, it is an example of what has been called 'negative heritage' occupying 'a dual role: it can be mobilised for positive didactic purposes … or alternatively be erased' (Meskell 2002: 558).

Negative heritage is a term normally discussed in relation to monuments and remains of war and conflict that are an 'undesirable heritage' because of the perception that they objectify a past that people want to forget; examples would include sites such as at Nuremberg in Germany which played host to Nazi rallies (Macdonald 2006: 9). Sharon MacDonald's anthropological study of Nuremberg has focused on the post-war problems associated with the 'perceived agency of architecture' which works against the national mood of reflection on a past that is not to be cherished (ibid.: 9, 10). This agency is located in the materiality of objects and spaces which cannot easily be contained within the exhibitive strategies of a museum or heritage classifications because of their performative excess. It is just such an unruly dissipation of meaning and feeling, the affect of the literal and metaphorical movement of the doll between states of object-hood and personhood that has made the *Kôbe ningyô* so undesirable in the public presentation of Kobe city.

After the death of Oda Tashiro, the dolls would have disappeared from the public consciousness altogether had it not been for the efforts of a group of enthusiasts to remake the *Kôbe ningyô* all over again and to attempt to bring them to the attention of contemporary Kobeites as a positive part of their heritage. Kazuoka Masatsu (1928–89) had worked in an employment office in Kakogawa until his retirement when he developed a hobby and then a passion for making *kokeshi* dolls. These dolls all had their own, existing associations, however, and it was in looking for something different to literally stamp his mark upon that he came across Arao Chikanari, a local historian at the *Kôbe Namban* museum who had collected a number of disassembled dolls and was looking for craftsmen to revive the tradition of making *Kôbe ningyô*. There were a number of interested craftsmen besides Kazuoka and over a period of about ten years they all attempted to reproduce a copy of the *Kôbe ningyô* that would be considered authentic by Arao and those who knew the dolls

well from the early period of their production. It took four years alone for any of the dolls to be accepted by them as authentic *Kôbe ningyô*. Eventually, so the story goes, it was only Kazuoka who had the patience, skill and stamina to continue to produce authentic *Kôbe ningyô*, working alone and by hand in his workshop.

The language that is used by interviewees to describe Kazuoka's perseverance and artisanship is interesting because it adds weight to the idea of a legitimate local tradition in the making. He refused for example to compromise the quality of his dolls by trying to produce more than the 'one-a-day' rate he was satisfied with. This was an idea and through the presence of the dolls also an image of Kobe with growing appeal, for although the dolls were not usually considered items worth owning – one observer whom I interviewed described them as 'expensive, grotesque and not pretty' – they were increasingly associated with Kobe's self-identity. The Sake Fukuju brewery company for example, featured the *Kôbe ningyô* as one of a series of stories about the city, printed on their bottle labels. Two enthusiasts, Mr Morio Kato and Mr Nobuo Suzuki were even led to compose an elegy, and a limited edition pamphlet, especially for enthusiasts of the *Kôbe ninygô*. Here is one excerpt:

> Oh, Kobe Ningyô,
> Negro Ningyô
> You have gone like all the others,
> You were so much fun for boys,
> Attracted my curiosity,
> Storms in the war have washed you away
> With young lives.
> Oh Kobe Ningyô,
> Negro Ningyô,
> I see you in a vision.
>
> (Kato and Suzuki, in Ushiro and Endo 1998)

Besides the obvious racial elements present here, there is also a strong sense of nostalgia in the invocation of childhood and loss. As the advertising pamphlet from the Kiyoshiyama store which sold the dolls at the time makes clear: 'Souvenirs from Kobe, they will remain with you forever. The *Kôbe ningyô* are a local folk-craft since the beginning of the Meiji period and they will help create cheerful moments whether you are happy or depressed' (exact date unknown).

There are many stories about how dolls have been objects of nostalgia, both for Japanese who admire *kokeshi* dolls and the tradition of the 'doll festival' (*hina matsuri*), as well as for early European visitors who have imagined Japan in an Orientalist vein as fragile, quaint and doll-like (Gerbert 2001). The exoticising and eroticising qualities attributed to dolls by western authors such as Pierre Loti with his story of 'Madame Chrysanthemum'

(1893) are very different from Japanese authors who have embellished the ambiguous attractions evinced by their apparent perfection of form and motion. In Tanizaki's work 'Some Prefer Nettles' (1928–29), it is a doll and the doll-like features of certain characters that seduce the protagonist away from the superficiality of the modern world, back, via the puppets of Awaji island into the stage world of old Japan (Gerbert 2001: 73). On a darker note, the collection 'Memories' (*Omoide*) (1911) and the poem 'The Dollmakers' (*Ningyô zukuri*) of the poet of nostalgia, Kitahara Hakushû feature images of dismembered, fragmented body parts as well as cruelly operated puppets and marionettes that express a sense of displacement, helplessness and horror (Gerbert 2001: 73). However, the sense of ambivalent strangeness that emerges from this literature did not prevent the re-emergence of the *Kobe ningyô* once again in the 1980s, a time of resurgent national and nationalist agendas.

News that the 'phantom' or 'ghostly' *Kôbe ningyô* were still being made could be expected to attract the attention of collectors of local folk toys, but local television stations and newspapers all over the country also promoted Kazuoka and his dolls. At the Portopia exhibition in Kobe in 1981, Kazuoka's dolls were once again re-established as part of Kobe's official heritage as they were offered to the crown prince and princess and presented to the Emperor Shôwa, who handled them as before. As in the previous occasion in 1929, it was the physical contact with them that was emphasised in contemporary accounts and seems to have established a kind of legitimacy for the dolls as Kobe *meibutsu*.

It is interesting and significant then that the fame and publicity surrounding the dolls at the Portopia display in 1981 are not part of Kobe city's self-presentation today. There is a video about the dolls made at the time of the Emperor's visit and held by the Kobe municipal museum, but no-one is allowed access to view it. The visitor centre, Kôbe Sentâ, no longer stocks or sells the dolls and the city council's plans to erect a large mechanical model of the doll with moving arms, in the middle of the Sannomiya shopping district have long since been abandoned. The racial associations of the dolls are too sensitive an issue today and the *Kôbe ningyô* have become an anachronism that in the words of one interviewee, 'just don't fit in with Kobe's chic foreign image'. This is not surprising in considering the story that was repeated to me by more than one interviewee about a *Daily Yomiuri n*ewspaper article on the Kobe dolls which claims they inspired the Takara company's notorious *Dakko-chan* (essentially this means 'gollywog') children's doll in the 1960's and the obvious visual links of the Kobe dolls with the old *kuronbo* 'black minstrel' logo mark of the Calpis soft drink. The evocation in the *Dakko-chan* and Calpis corporate images, of blacks with children, resonates with the presentation and descriptions of the *Kôbe ningyô* as objects of nostalgia for a time when the world could be viewed as a source of exotic amusement.

There is only one site in the city where the dolls may still be found on public exhibition today, at a small private museum that was once part of a Kobe High School's 'Dolls of the world' display. In this display all the dolls,

collected from different parts of the world, are mixed together in a fashion which simultaneously reveals an old-fashioned exoticism and contemporary anxieties about the place of these dolls in Kobe's modern heritage. Locating the dolls in a toy museum, as politically innocent playthings for children, is a way of deflecting criticisms of their racist significances, but also obscures their complex history as marginal *meibutsu*; that is, as undesirable heritage. As items of positive heritage value these dolls might be expected to express a fixed, coherent identity, in keeping with Kobe city's sense of history and place. Instead, as objects whose material qualities are deeply ambiguous and inherently uncanny, they reveal the shifting relations of the city with its foreign residents and traders since the beginning of the modern period.

Ernst Jensch's study of the uncanny describes a fearful and yet fascinating quality of being ambiguously alive, that is the effect of any realistic doll (Bolton 2002: 745). But this effect is a consequence of movement and the uncanny qualities are latent and unrealised on a museum shelf. They have to be performed into being, made to move in order to be moving and to unsettle the ontological securities of separation between person and thing. This is the thesis or 'Manifesto' that Donna Haraway (1985) has argued for the cyborg, which as a mixture of the human and the inhuman confronts the distinction between the natural and the artificial. This distinction is figured differently in Japan where the tranformative potential of devices like the *Kôbe ningyô* is 'part of a larger pattern in which vitality can be found in animate and inanimate, constructed and found objects' and has to be performed into being (Ashkenazi 1997: 210).

Bolton (2002) has drawn attention to the importance of the performative action of the cyborg/hybrid figure in Japan, as they exist in tangible forms, like *bunraku* puppet theatre as well as in *anime*. He makes a comparison between the two to argue that they both share and express the same fascination with the questions of duality and ambiguity 'between the real and the unreal, the unified and the dispersed subject, the violent de(con)struction of the body and a tender regard for it' (ibid.: 730–1). One explanation for the source of this ambiguity of the mechanical body and why it is viewed with both 'detachment and concern' is given by the Japanese playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724) who argued that 'drama featuring artificial bodies succeeds by filling up those bodies with the humanity that they lack, until they become both more and less real than the flesh' (ibid.: 739).

The *Kôbe ningyô*, however, are performed into being by the simplest of hand-operating movements and not by the skilled dexterity of *bunraku* or *anime* artisans. They lack any narrative drama to act out other than the story of their own becoming which involves a strange, moving co-existence of the foreign and other-worldly elements. The notion of performance in the context of mechanical dolls involves the simultaneity and sometimes the collision of different kinds of movement: mechanical movement, movement of the imagination and movement of the object itself from place to place. It is this last quality of movement that I will address in the final section of this chapter.

In the late nineteenth century, curios and quaint relics of 'traditional Japan' such as the *Kobe ningyô* were avidly collected by foreign visitors and soon exported in large numbers to Japanese 'fancy goods' shops in London and Paris. They became a part of the fascination for what has been called 'spectacular realities', referring to the international exhibitions and popular entertainments, magic shows and displays of new technologies at venues such as the *Musée Grivée* in Paris and the Egyptian Hall in London (Schwartz 1998). Treated as commodities, they were incorporated into the shop displays of 'oriental' goods and sold on the streets as 'penny toys'. As souvenirs of exotic Japan, they became, in time, valuable collectables and antiques.

Jack Donovan's antique automata shop on London's Portobello Road and Pollocks Toy museum in Convent Garden and now behind Tottenham Court Road Tube station were two of the major importers of the *Kôbe ningyô* (now called 'Kobi dolls'). Dealers and enthusiasts from around the world visited these shops to 'buy Kobis', and collections were formed that established a new regime of value for the dolls, based largely on their mechanical sophistication and material condition and dismissing or ignoring their complex associations in Japan.

The foreign collectors of Kobi dolls I have met and interviewed in London, Switzerland and especially New York, have developed a close physical relationship with the objects and are especially fascinated by their internal mechanisms – that which the eye cannot see from the outside, but which when exposed become playgrounds for a tactile imagination. The material qualities of the dolls has held such an attraction for one enthusiast, Steven Leonard, on Long Island, New York, that he has spent 50 years creating a collection of over 150 Kobi dolls without ever investigating their history in Japan. In his home they are part of a rambling assemblage of old phonographs, lantern slides and microscopes, all expressions of his passion for tinkering with machines. He sees himself and his collection as part of an American tradition in making and repairing machines. It is a tradition that he, like others, traces to the inventor Thomas Edison. Interestingly, and perhaps ironically, this collector recently sold some of his Kobi dolls to a museum in Himeji city, where the owner and curator, Inoue Shigeyoshi, who has been active since the mid-1960s in researching, collecting and generally promoting *Kôbe ningyô* incorporated them into his display of the history of Japanese toys (Shigeyoshi 1981).

The spatio-temporal movements of the *Kôbe ningyô* described here are tied to their collectability and to the activities of collectors, for these are objects that create 'longing' (Stewart 1993). It is in the use that collectors make of the object that experience is embodied, and directed through certain material attributes of the object (Washburn 1997). This tangible, affective connection with the object is different from the application of skilled bodily knowledge by craftsmen in Japan. For these collectors it is a private obsession or 'longing' for intimate contact with a world in miniature, and for the ability to own and operate this mechanised world inside a box, that may move their imagination, connecting them to worlds of their own making. This is an

individualised relationship with the object, based on use and different from that typified by the Japanese craftsmen for whom the object is made by its position within an expanded network of relations between the animate and inanimate, the domestic and the foreign. These hybrid ontologies of use and composition reflect a deep ambivalence about the value of these objects as heritage. This ambivalence is partly the consequence of the simultaneous revelation of 'affect' and 'ideology' (Ashish 2006), meaning the touching, fascinating sensation of the duality of the object being revealed in its movement along with a troubling hybrid representation of racialised and non-human others. Like the monuments that arise out of conflict and contradiction, the *Kôbe ningyô* are examples of 'negative' or 'dissonant' heritage, and involve a 'discordance or lack of agreement and consistency' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, in Ashish 2006: 348).

As objects of powerful affect and conflicting and indeterminate meanings, the *Kôbe ningyô* are similar to the surrealist automata and mannequin, described as 'exquisite corpses' (Foster 1991). These devices both mock and embrace the order of relations between the organic and the artificial and between self and other, making them unclassifiable; neither person nor thing. Just as Foster describes in the case of surrealist mannequin and automata, the *Kôbe ningyô* evoke this ambivalence through the estrangement of the body of figures such as the Buddhist priest/ghost and the black sailor, as machine and as commodity (ibid.: 51). These 'psycho-physical effects' are deployed 'against the very social order that produced them', not out of 'reactive nostalgia' but with 'dialectical wit', making it very difficult for them to ever enter the institutional and ideological regimes of heritage value (ibid.: 55). The hybrid identity of the *Kôbe ningyô* is not merely, voluntarily performed into being by their makers or users. My argument here, is that as person and thing, self and other, they are anticipated and drawn to each other by underlying social and cultural trends and by the affect of their movements.

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Part IV

Perpetuating Japanese heritage

11 Maintaining a Zen tradition in Japan

The concrete problem of priest succession

Masaki Matsubara

Introduction

My story begins in 1945, on March 10th, in a hand-dug air raid shelter in the precincts of a Zen temple in Tokyo during a firebombing. Inside, a 31-year-old woman and her 4-year-old daughter are huddled together, surrounding a treasure of the temple, the statue of the Bodhisattva Kannon. The historical records and Buddhist memorial tablets of the temple's parishioners are also hidden in the shelter. The temple priest, conscripted against his will to military service, is gone. The family's one young son, 5 years old, the heir to the family's three hundred-year heritage of the Zen priesthood, has been evacuated to the countryside in Mie prefecture for safekeeping.

What was being protected in that air raid shelter? What was being preserved by sending that 5-year-old to the countryside? How has the history of the past sixty years shaped what those people considered worth protecting, underground and in the countryside?

I talked to that woman from the shelter, now 89, in August of 2003. My story starts there and traces the issue of the succession of Zen priests from that time to the present. At the start, I would like to note that the current issue of succession in Zen in Japan represents nothing short of a crisis, different from the time of the fire bombings, but a crisis nonetheless. Simply stated, the crisis is this: A growing number of Rinzai temples in Japan are boarded up and empty, inhabited by rats, spiders, cockroaches, and even perhaps a few ghosts, while other currently active temples fear the same fate awaits them. Also, even many significant cultural temples in Kyoto, Tokyo, and elsewhere have inadequately trained priests running them. This situation shows no sign of changing soon.

My discussion in this chapter is a study of this problem with a particular focus on the Myôshinji temple denomination, the largest religious body in contemporary Japanese Rinzai Zen. By the term 'succession problem', I focus on two related issues: first, the lack of potential successors to priest positions, and, second, the shifting criteria necessary to become a successor to a temple. These two issues address intricate conditions and situations regarding the cultural maintenance of a significant religious office. I suggest that the office

of Zen priest can be regarded as a cultural 'object' and that for many people, the succession crisis is perceived as a significant threat to a cherished heritage. Furthermore, I suggest that a study of the causes for and responses to this crisis reveals a great deal about how people in Japan, both inside and outside the Rinzai tradition, regard the category of cultural heritage.

The Myôshinji community has had no easy answers to the crisis of succession. While there have always been versions of this crisis, I argue that the Myôshinji community has repeatedly recreated itself to respond to the ongoing succession problem manifested at every generation, and the current response to the crisis can be read in part as a contemporary valuation of heritage. In other words, the religious body has invented and reinvented itself to raise successors and to preserve temple property in any number of particular social and cultural contexts. Far from being a fixed form, the tradition of Zen is creative and this can be seen in how it responds to the issue of succession. Insofar as Zen can be regarded as a cultural property of Japan, the priest in part is a tangible transmitter of that culture. I argue that at the level of the branch temples, or family temples, the succession problem is an issue accompanied by the transfer of authority, heritage, and reputation of the temple. The method of succession has changed from *hômyaku-sôzoku* or literally 'Dharma lineage transmission', to *ketsumyaku-sôzoku*, or 'blood lineage transmission', which includes hereditary succession in a system predicated on male succession. These examinations of the succession problem have been overlooked by scholars and I hope to illuminate how the office of Zen priest as a cultural 'object' has been constructed amid rapidly changing scenarios of tradition.

My discussion proceeds as follows; first, I discuss reasons for the succession problem in the Myôshinji community; second, I discuss the responses of the religious body to the problem and, finally, I discuss the influences of the introduction of hereditary succession with a focus on concrete examples from today. Focusing on actual human experience and people I have met in my research, I suggest that it is people who preserve, create, invent, develop, and maintain their traditions to adapt to changing times. I would add, drawing on a hermeneutic approach, that I am concerned about the succession problem both as a student of religion interested in the theoretical and political implications of ideas of 'heritage' and also as a Zen priest who belongs to a family of Zen priests in which all males in the family have been priests for over a century. The issue of succession is not just a problem for my grandfather's and father's generations. Rather, it is a strong concern for me, a possible successor of my family temple or any temple I may enter in the future.

The possible factors for the issue of succession

The simple lack of successors has been among the most serious problems in the Zen tradition, even prior to the twentieth century. What are the reasons for a lack of successors? The reasons for this crisis are complex: monastic training is exhausting and demanding, as it subjects monks to ascetic practices

for years on end which many simply cannot bear. The daily schedule of monastic life is completely different from that of one's daily life. Monastic life is highly regimented, divided into manual labor and meditation. In my four-year experience at Heirinji monastery in Saitama prefecture, I sometimes survived on only three or four hours of sleep. While in training, breakfast consisted of *o-kayu* (rice gruel), one *umeboshi* (pickled plum), and a piece of *takuan* (pickled radish). At lunch, we ate rice, *miso* soup, and some vegetables. At supper, we usually had the leftovers. I did not take more than ten minutes for each meal. Moreover, we also had the strictly limited time to take a bath. Furthermore, I have learned that in some monasteries, those monks who cannot cross their legs have them tied into the full lotus position by ropes. Many of us got very sick. Actually I had meningitis in the second year of my practice. I was taken to the hospital for treatment and rest for almost two months and moreover, I was ordered to lead an inactive life for an additional three months in my home. This was in large part due to the austerities to which I subjected myself. Such examples of sick, exhausted acolytes abound.

Who on earth would want to do this? It is a clear fact that, beyond the fantasy of monastic life is a proposition that is not attractive to modern teenagers or the general population.[1] For example, Zuiganji monastery in Sendai, Miyagi prefecture, has a total of five practitioners today. Shôfukuji monastery in Hakata, Fukuoka prefecture, has no practitioners. Even the famous Daitokuji monastery in Kyoto has only ten.[2]

A related issue is that since few are willing to practice austerities at a monastery long enough to attain a level of practice, their training is frequently inadequate. Incidentally, the qualification of becoming a priest is dependent on the particular temple's historical and cultural status and, therefore, is determined by different criteria from temple to temple.[3] In general, monks need to practice in monasteries for one year to get the qualification of a 'sub-chief', or *fuku-jûshoku* of temples. Also, to receive the qualification of a 'chief priest', *jûshoku* one needs to practice for at least three years in a monastery.[4] It is therefore extremely rare today to find multiple numbers of practitioners who have spent more than twenty years practicing in a monastery until they receive the Dharma transmission from their master. For example, in 1999, the last year of my practice in Heirinji monastery, while there were a total of sixteen practitioners, only four of us had been there more than three years. The reality is that since it is possible to receive the qualification to become a sub-chief of particular temples with one year of practice, many practitioners go back to their home temples after only one year. In a sense, this type of practitioner enters the monasteries only to satisfy the minimum requirement for becoming a priest. This situation eventually is regarded by many as having given rise to the deterioration of the moral and religious qualities of Zen priests.

The third reason many people cannot stay at the monastery even for a short time is that many experience health problems or economic difficulties at their home temples. In order to become priests, these people usually attempt to join a special program the Myôshinji headquarters provides. This program

is called in Japanese *angoe*, which I will explore in the next section of this chapter. Otherwise, in the worst case, they have to renounce their claims to the successors and will not become priests. Actually, according to Hosokawa Keiichi, the present head priest of the Myôshinji denomination, less than 20 percent of the temples in Myôshinji denomination can survive on their own economic means. Priests often need part-time jobs to survive. This is the only way to maintain the temple property, but, because of the burden on the double task, those temples have encountered a lack of successors. Who wants two jobs?

The last reason for a lack of successors is due to the situation in which the temples have only daughters in a system predicated on male succession. According to a priest in Tokyo, this situation consists of two scenarios. In one scenario, the daughter has the intention to become a wife of the successor who will enter the temple as an 'outsider'. In another scenario, the daughter does not want to get married to a priest or no one wants to marry her. Namely, she has no interest in advancing the heritage of the temple. Particularly in the latter case, after the master dies, the temple is taken over by an unfamiliar priest who is dispatched by the Myôshinji community, and, as a result, the deceased master's family is literally and unceremoniously removed. They cannot keep anything which they purchased under the name of the temple.[5] In the Rinzai tradition, a temple is not one's private property, but that of the religious body. Therefore, while this situation becomes a matter of daily survival, the master must obtain a successor to secure his family's future and to maintain the temple's property. This case has brought the issue of authority, gender roles, heritage, and reputation of the temples in the process of the succession. I will explore this aspect with a focus on the hereditary succession in the latter part of this chapter.

Angoe

My discussion now turns to the various attempted solutions over the past sixty years to the succession problem. I suggest that these solutions represent not just reinventions of tradition, but a genuine concern for preserving something regarded as deeply meaningful. Here, I look at a special program called in Japanese *angoe*, officially established in 1952 by a priest named Matsubara Taidô. In this special program, potential priests stay at Myôshinji and practice for ten days every year for five years. Today, *angoe* has been primarily provided only for those who cannot spend a fixed term practicing in the monasteries because of particular health or economic problems. According to a priest, now 75, this program, especially from the late 1930s to 1960s, comprised people who had worked as school teachers, businessmen, or local officials to maintain their small temples. In 2003, fifty-two people took advantage of the *angoe* option which on the surface appears to be an easy option, requiring only ten days a year instead of full-time monastic practice. However, Matsubara Taidô, the system's creator, notes that dramatic post-war social conditions made it a harsh necessity: I quote Matsubara Taidô:

Since priests were conscripted to military services, many temples fell into ruin for almost ten years, and of course during that time the priests could not give any Buddhist services for their parishioners. Many temples were either partly or completely burned. The masters of the temples needed to come back from military services as soon as possible, to restore their temples and to maintain the property. Out of the damaged temples, there were many whose masters were killed in the wars. In most of the cases, the master's younger brother or son had to succeed to the priest position. Particularly, in the latter case, those sons were still boys who graduated from junior high school at best. Thus they needed to spend five years practicing in a monastery to receive the qualification for becoming a priest. Of course, these individuals had no time to devote themselves to monastic life for five years. People had almost no money and food. Temples were no exception. In my family temple Ryûgenji, my wife and I sold most of our kimonos and furniture in exchange for rice or money. I sometimes even rented out the temple's estates.[6]

Matsubara Taidô's wife, now 89, also looks back upon those days, saying 'some temples kept hens in the main halls of their temples to exchange for rice'.[7] She continues: 'Priests in those days spent hardly any time in their robes. Often times, they worked as taxi drivers or truck drivers to earn money. Only when they had Buddhist services, did they wear their priest's robes.' These stories clearly illustrate how difficult it was to maintain temples in the immediate post war era and thus to preserve their heritage.

A contemporary problem of *angoe* is that many young people who simply do not want to enter the monasteries use this special system to avoid monastic training. Reflecting on my own experiences, is this a surprise? It has been pointed out repeatedly that this situation has led to the degradation of the quality of priests, and many priests who insist that Rinzai tradition must be primarily based on hard practice in the monasteries have condemned the system of *angoe*. However, Matsubara Taidô responds, 'While there is a tendency to treat *angoe* priests as insufficient today, *angoe* was the appropriate program at that time, otherwise the possible successors would not be raised at all in the economically depressed circumstances after the war'.[8] Hosokawa Keiichi, the present head priest of the Myôshinji denomination, defends the *angoe* as appropriate to contemporary society as well. He says, 'From this point forward, *angoe* will be a necessary program to save people who want to become priests but cannot for some personal reasons spend a long time practicing in the monasteries'.[9] Furthermore, Hosokawa states 'People today cannot take ten-day vacations from their companies to participate in *angoe*. Otherwise, they will be fired. Therefore, under the name of *angoe*, the Myôshinji community must have another project which requires a shorter period of practice'.[10] In the views of both Matsubara and Hosokawa, we see a pragmatic approach to the succession problem which allows the continuity of small temples. More specifically, we see a system developed to confront the

post-war crisis perpetuated with meanings that shift to suit the current social and economic context.

The establishment of Hanazono University

A second solution to the succession crisis was attempted by establishing Hanazono University in 1949. In this regard, contemporary university education becomes a kind of replacement for Zen practice. According to Hosokawa, this university was originally founded to provide a wider range of Zen educational experience ranging from temple life to scholarly work on Zen, and thus to raise many young successors.[11] Today, however, the focus of this educational system on temple life has not functioned as well as predicted and it has essentially provided only the opportunity for seated Zen meditation. Nevertheless, each year an average of forty out of about one hundred twenty graduates enter monasteries after graduation.[12] In this respect, the establishment of this university can be said to be successful.

Certification of graduation from the Department of Buddhism at Hanazono University is deemed to be the equivalent of one year of practice in the monasteries.[13] As a result, the practitioners who come from this university do not undergo extensive monastic training. They usually spend one year in the monastery to get the qualification of a sub-chief. More specifically, entering Hanazono University has been the escape route for the current generation, those who want to avoid the austerities of monastic training. Hence, many who insist on the absolute importance of monastic practice have criticized this system and have insisted that the decline of the quality of successors is due to this system. The establishment of Hanazono University, as well as of the *angoe* system were responses to the succession crisis, but both systems have raised questions about the quality of the successors.

The debate concerning the quality of new priests

The debate about the quality of Zen priests inside the Myôshinji denomination tends to be focused on a lack of their basic education, or attitude, general abilities and knowledge as priests. In an issue (2002) of the periodical *Shôbôrin*, published by the Myôshinji denomination a priest stated:

> Young generations in recent years have thought that they can become *jûshoku* without monastic training. However, these people have no individual reasons at all, which are appropriate to avoiding entering monasteries. We need to emphasize the necessity of education (moral and mental preparations) for becoming Zen priests before they start.[14]

Other priests note that *angoe* practitioners are unable to carry out necessary tasks such as reading the Heart Sutra or beating the *hokkû* (drum).

These complaints about the quality of priests who received their priest-certification only through the *angoe* program are mostly focused on the lack of attitude, ability, and ritual knowledge as priests. Because these *angoe* priests know almost nothing about Buddhist rituals, particularly funerals of priests, large-scale anniversaries for patriarchs, and seasonal rites (New Year's Day, the Vernal Equinox Day, the Autumn Equinox Day, the Bon Festival, and so on), they ask other priests who have studied in monasteries, the details of these events every time they need to perform them.[15] Another complaint against *angoe* priests focuses on the lack of their religious (and moral) qualities as priests. The point is this: the primary purpose of the Rinzai tradition, *koji-kyûmei*, or literally 'investigating one's self', with single-minded meditation (*zazen*) and the study of paradoxical sayings (*kôan*) in monastic training, has been undervalued by the establishments of *angoe* and Hanazono University. Consequently, taking advantages of these 'short-cut' options to become priests has been associated with an absence in the benefits of this type of self-cultivation. This movement, particularly attractive among young generations, has been never acceptable to priests who think that Zen experience is necessarily identified with monastic experience in the first place. Simply speaking, the shared outcome of the education offered by *angoe* and Hanazono University is opportunities for evading monastic training for a fixed term, even if they raise and maintain young successors of temples. In general, it has been thought that these two options have produced a crisis concerning the 'traditional' in Rinzai Zen's maintenance and development.

It is important to have a clear understanding of how these complaints express changing attitudes towards tradition in each generation. It must be noted that *angoe* and Hanazono University were religiously, culturally, and historically significant products of the tradition itself, created for its very survival. The concept of 'tradition' can be regarded not only as a pervasive and enduring motif in the chain of history, but, more importantly, as a living force influencing real human experiences. While there is a tendency to regard these two optional systems for becoming priests as inappropriate in the religious institution's 'traditional' thinking, *angoe* and Hanazono University have been undoubtedly important processes in the tradition's maintenance and also its formative development. We must therefore understand what actually happened in these processes and the debate about the legitimacy of innovation as a part of the maintenance of tradition.

The establishment of nunneries

The third innovation the Myôshinji community has made in recent years is in the revival of nunneries. The history of independent nunneries dates back to a female Zen school *Mino-nishû Gakurin* founded in the early Meiji period. In 1946, the *Tene* nunnery was established in Gifu prefecture while in Aichi prefecture the *Owari-nishû Gakurin* opened around the same time (Hosokawa 2001: 26). From the conversations I have had with the master of Reiunin-temple in

Kyoto, as well as Matsubara and Hosokawa, it is apparent that at that time there were a lot of female practitioners studying Zen in these monasteries. However, their numbers have since declined forcing monasteries to shut down and in recent years, the last nunnery, *Enkô* Monastery of the Nanzenji denomination of the Rinzai tradition finally closed its doors. Responding to this situation, the Myôshinji community revived the *Tene* nunnery in 2003. According to Hosokawa, the purpose was to help women who were interested in becoming priests and to open up a system of training nuns in a system predicated on male succession. Today, this nunnery has eleven practitioners, and we may soon see the dissolution of gender as a criterion for succession.

According to the Myôshinji community, this nunnery was opened with the ambitious slogan, 'Open a broader gate of Zen practice for women'. While this project to revive nunneries has only recently become successful in its stated aim, in the process of its operation it has enabled the maintenance of temple properties. Indeed, it is not entirely clear that the insistence on an 'open-door policy' for female practitioners is actually motivated by a concern for gender equality. The Myôshinji community has attempted to dispatch woman successors to many empty temples, and temples where women are the chief priests. The role of nuns in re-populating these empty temples focuses attention on the government's attempts to take away the management of empty temples by religious institutions. For the Myôshinji community, even empty temples are part of an important heritage.[16] Therefore while the Myôshinji community insists on a wider range of possibilities for women to become priests, the project has also been directed to maintain the tradition and the heritage of the Myôshinji community.[17]

Ketsumyaku-sôzoku: the influence of hereditary succession

My discussion now turns to *Ketsumyaku-sôzoku*, or 'hereditary succession', seen in the branch family temples which maintain the 'traditionally' constructed method of succession through blood relations. The history of the hereditary succession in the Myôshinji denomination probably dates back to the declaration established by the Meiji government in 1872: the *Nikujiki Saitai*. Contained in Article Number 133 of the Grand Council of State (Dajôkan) (Takenuki 2002: 12), the Nikujiki Saitai Law reads:

> From now on Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are permitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities.
>
> (Jaffe 2001: 72)

This law caused a drastic shift in religious attitudes among priests and in the methods of their temple management, relocating the authenticity of their practice from the transmission of dharma to the reproduction of family ties.[18] According to the scholar Takenuki Genshô, in the following year (1873),

restrictions were also lifted for nuns. Before 1872, the priests could not legally get married in the Zen tradition, although of course many priests actually had 'wives' secretly. The biggest change brought about by allowing priests to marry was the introduction of hereditary succession. Suddenly, after 1872, family life was added to the lists of things to be considered by a priest, a list which previously had been concerned only with Zen practice: Buddhist services and ceremonies, funerals, and teachings. Furthermore, by virtue of hereditary succession, the master of the temple took responsibility for the continuity of his temple through religious faith and in so doing he also secured the base of his family life and status. The unforeseen consequence of hereditary succession was the problem of the transfer of authority, heritage, and the reputation of temples across generations. In particular, as we have seen, this problem has created difficulties for family temples that have only daughters and no sons. Hereditary succession, then, can be seen as a creative adaptation in the Zen tradition to the issue of imposed celibacy. However, it created a whole set of new challenges to tradition.

An example of this is a case of a well-known Zen temple in Tokyo (that I shall not name here) whose head priest had two sons, both eligible for succession. After a long dispute they ended up managing the temple together. Neither son wanted to hand over the authority, heritage, and reputation of the temple to the other. In this case, the temple management was very stable in terms of its public duties, but the temple's internal affairs were much less harmonious.[19]

At another famous Zen temple, one of the most famous and largest in Shizuoka prefecture the priest had two daughters. The master of this temple wanted one of his daughters to succeed to the property of the temple and looked for a priest who would be willing to marry his daughter.[20] This family was not interested in retiring and delivering their temple property to an unfamiliar priest. It is a case that clearly shows the master's strong wish, to maintain in the same family line, the significant heritage he has made.[21]

Another unique case, perhaps the most extreme example, is a temple in Kanagawa prefecture. This temple had no son but one daughter. Because the daughter had no intention of succeeding to responsibility of the temple, the master evicted his wife and daughter from the temple and welcomed a priest from outside as his successor. Subsequently the master learned that the temple's precincts had a water source suitable for creating a hot spring (*onsen*), and from this amassed a sizeable fortune. Finally, the master evicted the priest he had invited in and brought his wife and daughter back to the temple. According to the priest who was once welcomed as the successor:

> All things considered, the reason why I was kicked out was money. Once I entered this temple as the successor, I was nothing but an 'outsider' for the master … Nothing becomes more powerful, stronger, and even scarier than 'blood relationship' … I do not think that I will be able to meet any opportunities to enter another temple as the successor, because no temples will welcome me since I was kicked out. Those temples will just

evaluate me as an unsuccessful and unsatisfactory man with a 'bad' reputation, because they do not know my true story … Not that (things would change) even if I leave this temple and retreat to my home temple located in the countryside. I would have nothing particular to do and never get any good offers. However, since the 'monastery' is also literally a market of successors, then if I am there, I may catch someone's eye. So, I decided to go back again to the monastery in which I was before.[22]

These examples show what an extremely serious problem is raised by hereditary succession which focuses on the maintenance of the temple's heritage through family continuity. It is a situation which brings into question the moral judgment of the priests in making choices between family members and 'outsiders' and creating crises in the continuity of succession. There is also a crisis caused by the discontinuity of hereditary tradition, evident, for example, in a case in which the 'blood lineage transmission' was severed after a temple-master's sudden death.[23] On July 23 2003, a priest told me the following story:

> The master of a temple in Tokyo, his wife, son, and daughter, almost fifty, twenty, and fifteen years old at that time, were evicted from the temple in favor of a successor, who literally 'took over' the temple's property giving approximately two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to get rid of the previous family and promising to take care of the daughter until she reached twenty years of age. The problem in this case was that the temple headquarters hardly even tried to protect the rest of the family and simply dispatched a successor to the temple.

This is a powerful moral and political story about the consequence of being a widow whose son did not become the successor of the temple. Losing her husband who was the master of the temple and having no successors to the temple in the same blood lineage, she was evicted, and as she was in her fifties with no job experience except being a temple-wife, there were few opportunities open to her.

Conclusion

We have seen how the possibilities and pitfalls of succession are innately tied to the maintenance of Zen tradition and the preservation of temple's heritage. To accommodate the social changes of modern life, the Zen tradition has had to adapt the demands it makes on individuals and families through the ideals of succession. In this sense one can regard the maintenance of succession as a critical performance of identity and heritage in Japan. While the Zen religious body has repeatedly recreated itself in response to successive and ongoing succession problems, it is important to acknowledge that it is real people who preserve, create, invent, develop and maintain tradition.

This chapter began with a story of people in mortal danger trying to preserve life and family. Their story is also the story of the 'heritage' of a temple and the protection of a tradition. That woman who had her son relocated to the countryside and huddled with her daughter in the shelter, protecting the Kannon statue, was my grandmother. The man who was conscripted to military service during that time was my grandfather, Matsubara Taidô. The son was my father. He has three sons. I stand as one of three brothers, all priests in a lineage now over a hundred years old. While discussions of heritage can become cold, distant, and analytical, I assure you that the sentiments from the bomb shelter resonate today and must also be acknowledged in our understandings of what makes Japanese heritage.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 In recent generations, becoming a priest is not a popular job or life prospect among young people. The many regulations monitoring everyday life seem to be the main reasons for this lack of interest. Also, taking the position as a temple-wife (in Japanese *jitei*, literally 'temple garden'), is thought to be an extremely hard and responsible task in which the women must be physically and mentally dedicated to the temple, their family, and many parishioners.

2 This data was kindly shared by Matsutake Kanzan, a head practitioner of Heirinji monastery.

3 The Myôshinji denomination ranks temples into eleven groups; (from the top) '*tokureichi*', '*bekkakuchi*', '*junbekkaichi*', '*ittôchi*', '*nitôchi*', '*santôchi*', '*yontôchi*', '*gotôchi*', '*rokutôchi*', '*nanatôchi*', and '*hattôchi*', The top three groups are further graded by five ranks. The rest of the groups are also graded by three ranks. Hence, the Myôshinji denomination holds together a strictly divided hierarchy consisting of a total of thirty-nine rankings. It is very political. Depending on this ranking, the payment each temple must pay to the headquarter as an institutional duty is completely different; the higher the status of a temple, the more the temple must pay. The problems accompanied by this condition are twofold: (1) because this ranking is not determined by income but by the historical and cultural status of temples, even highly ranked temples, often times, meet financial difficulties. Today,

it is not difficult to find that lower-ranking temples are much wealthier in their economical situation than higher-ranking temples. (2) Due to this reason, the lower-ranking temples do not in most cases try to raise their status, while the higher-ranking temples cannot lower their status by the rules of the headquarters. It is therefore obvious that the economical difference grows steadily among temples, in a manner contrary to their historical and cultural status.

4 The so-called *jûshoku-shikaku*, the qualification to become '*jûshoku*', is also strictly determined by the practitioner's educational career. For example, while the practitioner who held a bachelors degree needs at least three years monastic practice, the priest who graduated only from high-school is required to have seven years. Further, the practitioner who graduated only from junior-high school is required to have ten years. In the Myôshinji denomination, priests are categorized into a total of fourteen status ranks; (from the top) *tokujû, rekijû, saijû, zenjûu, jûji, junjû, tôdo, seidô, tôshu, zendô, shuzo, zôsu, shika*, and *shami*. The certification issued by a monastery can be authorized up to the rank of *jûji*. However, each rank requires different criteria depending on the practitioner's educational and monastic careers. For further information, see Anonymous (1998: 474–7).

5 Later I will provide an example of this situation in which 'blood lineage transmission' was severed.

6 I interviewed Matsubara Taidô during my fieldwork from July 13 to August 15 2003. At that time, he was a director of the doctrinal department of the Myôshinji denomination. According to Matsubara, he had received many petitions describing the extreme difficulties of temple maintenance in the immediate post-war era. He also describes the monastic system necessary to acquire *jûshoku-shikaku* that generally required at least a three- year period of monastic training. This would impel him to eventually establish the *angoe* program.

7 My mother, Masako, born in the temple of Engakuji in Kamakura and now 58, also reviewed her childhood, saying 'My father kept a total of fifty hens in the precincts of the temple, and I often delivered the eggs to neighbors to get some allowance.'

8 Whenever Matsubara talked about the *angoe* system in his interviews with me, this repeated comment became his decisive remark about the basic concept of *angoe*. Matsubara also mentioned that many priests who complained about *angoe* described it as one of the main reasons for the degradation of the moral and religious qualities of priests.

9 According to the periodical *Shôbôrin*, published in 2001, a priest called Fujiwara Tôen, director of the doctrinal department of the Myôshinji denomination at that time, noted that people's age also had to be taken into consideration of the physical difficulties in monastic training.

10 This interview was held on July 27. Hosokawa also gave his unique future perspective of temple management acceptable inside the Myôshinji community. That is, a wife would be the chief priest and the husband would be in Japanese the so-called 'salary man'.

11 According to a periodical published by the Myôshinji denomination, in the last sixty years, the name of Hanazono University has changed; (chronologically) *Hanazonodai-kyôkô, Futsû-kyôkô, Hanazono-gakuin*, and *Rinzaishû-daigaku*.

12 This number is particular to the year 2002.

13 The *Myôshinjiha Shûsei*, 'regulations of the Myôshinji denomination', reads 'it is possible to receive the title of *jûji* (*jûshoku*) from a two-year monastic practice for the practitioners who graduated from the Department of Buddhism at Hanazono University'. Consequently, these practitioners, in most cases, actually spend only two years in monasteries.

14 This information is from a conversation with a 67-year-old priest living in Tokyo.

15 This situation can be seen among the young priests who were in monasteries only for a short time.

16 According to Hosokawa, today (June 30, 2003), the Myôshinji denomination holds a total of 3,386 temples only in Japan. Of all the temples, 2,415 temples are run by the chief priests in some way. Besides this number, there are 922 temples which hold no priests and are held by substitute priests concurrently. Further, 49 temples have completely no chief priests as well as the substitute priests. That is to say, almost one-third of the temples belonging to the Myôshinji denomination do not have the appropriate priests. However, according to the periodical *Shôbôrin*, published on May 2002, the respective number of the temples is 3,400, 2,444, 904, and 52. It is clear that while the total number of the temples in the Myôshinji denomination has increased, the number of empty temples has also gradually increased. Incidentally, according to the Myôshinji denomination, today temples where women are the chief priests account for a total of 124. Moreover, *jûshoku* numbers 2,415 and *kansei* (retired priests) numbers 436. Furthermore, *fuku-jûshoku* numbers 545.

17 The discussion of this fascinating debate about gender equality inside the Myôshinji community has been one of my further concerns. What is the status of nuns? How have nuns been categorized and positioned in the dominant male succession of temples? What is the extent of the interaction between nuns and male priests? How are the nuns regarded by their parishioners? What is the effect of this project on gender equality inside the Rinzai Zen, as well as Japanese Buddhism? The central point is that gender equality must be negotiable, even within a society dominated by patriarchy. I propose to attempt to answer these discussions in further work in the near future.

18 The theoretical implications of this fascinating debate were presented at the panel 'Revisiting Authenticity Discourses in Japanese Religious Renewal Movements: Theory and a Descent to Cases', at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2003, in Atlanta, Georgia.

19 I have heard this type of story often in the past decade. For example, 'my son entered a better elementary school than that family's son', 'That family's son always wears nicer clothes than my son,' 'which family earns more income?' and so forth.

20 This is the so-called *muko-yôshi* or adoption. In general, in the relationship of adoption, there is a tendency in which the power relation inclines to the wife's side.

21 I heard this story in the summer of 2002, when I went back to my family temple.

22 I met this priest a few times in the summer of 2003, and discussed other possible ways to re-enter this temple or another temple, because I knew how much harder monastic life is for those who are in their thirties and also because I could understand how much he did not want to go back to the monastery.

23 I will explore theoretical implications and understanding of this case of succession problem through the lens of the academic study of religion, in my other, forthcoming work.

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12 Debating the past to determine the future in Shinkyô, a Japanese commune

Michael Shackleton

Introduction

Shinkyô is a commune, founded in the mid-1930s in Kasama, a village outside Haibara, Nara Prefecture. David Plath (1966) and Christoph Brumann (1996) have already elegantly discussed Shinkyô against the general background of other utopian communities within Japan, and Plath especially focused on its key founder, Ozaki Masutarô sensei, to illustrate traditional images of leadership. I have been friends with Shinkyô members and visited it regularly over the past 20 years, but have spoken about it very little and written about it even less; although I have often taken friends and students there, to learn for themselves.[1]

I very soon found that it was not easy to discuss the history of Shinkyô or the relationships between the members. It was a long time before I could even be sure about which members were in the same family, and especially, who was married to whom. What my initial limited linguistic competence and social skills could not overcome was not so much suspicion, as a sense that the information I was seeking was not particularly relevant. Finally, after much pestering, I was directed to an elderly member who might answer my questions. He knew to expect me, but even then it was not easy, and it was only after he had uttered an exasperated 'Oh, very well then' that we sat down and he mapped out for me the family and social connections within Shinkyô.

Shinkyô was already quite famous in Japan by the time of my very first visit in 1985. This was only two weeks after Shinkyô had been graced by a visit from the crown prince (the present Emperor). To satisfy the curiosity of outsiders, and newer members of Shinkyô, Sugihara Yoshie sensei, wife of Ozaki sensei, had written a book about its early history. This had been translated by David Plath and brought Shinkyô to the attention of the world of Japanese Studies. Shinkyô members were uncomfortable when I tried to discuss the book with them, and several said words to the effect that Sugihara sensei should not have written it, or that it was 'just her opinion', or that they 'had not read it'. I began to realise that Shinkyô was an organisation being

lived out essentially in the present. Over the phone I would always ask 'Is everybody well?' and was invariably told 'Yes', but would then find that somebody I knew had either died, been in hospital, or left. Likewise, I would ask Ozaki sensei about his concern for Shinkyô's future, and he would always smile and say 'whatever will be, will be'.

I sensed that to do any meaningful research, I would need to be around for the long term. Shinkyô became a kind of oasis to me and 'oasis' does convey the linguistically appropriate sense of 'Shinkyô'. The community's members were very friendly, and also very open and direct in ways that were a welcome change from my life in the city of Kyoto. I had already gained some experience of new religions or groups oriented to social reform and by contrast with them I found Shinkyô members refreshingly open and easy to be with. Members never asked me for any money when I came to stay or went on trips with them – even with students or my family – and resented it when I tried to pay for anything. Instead, I would work alongside them and generally tried to make myself useful. Shinkyô members provided a valuable commentary and sounding-board to discuss events in Japan, or Japanese society in general. If it was difficult to ask personal questions, I felt that simply by observation and being together with them, I would pick up what I didn't know. I would become an insider.

Shinkyô is a residential and clearly bounded community and, as in a traditional Japanese village or company, members are very conscious about its social structure and the social skills necessary to maintain it. In their case, however, most have joined Shinkyô to escape the rigid, domineering nature of other communities and I discovered among their number several divorcees and disenchanted 'salary men'. The 'wisdom' of Shinkyô has therefore developed to provide both a caring and an economically sustainable community for a wide variety of Japanese people over the past 70 years. This wisdom includes doing things together and for each other, as against probing members with questions: therapy in terms of focusing on the present and the good things you can do for people now. Only leaders, and primarily Ozaki sensei, would privately challenge people to be open about their problems. Such a public focus away from history, towards a more collective identity in the here-and-now ensured that new members need not feel of less importance than older members and the future of Shinkyô need not be constrained by its past. But it was important that Ozaki Sensei knew what was going on, and members felt that he understood them. Shinkyô does not try to keep members and it does not evangelise. It accepts people when they come and is unfazed when they go. To the surprise of many Japanese, Shinkyô is steadfastly secular. Deceased members ordinarily have no graves, for they donate their bodies to Nara Medical College. There is therefore no place to visit or mourn them. Shinkyô is not a religious organisation and offers no teachings about any after-life, or the soul. Ozaki sensei would instead speak about 'leaving the bath-water clean for the next person'.

In these and other ways, Shinkyô can be imaginatively translated into a narrative of nostalgia; as a bastion of ancient wisdom: the wisdom that enabled

villages and farming methods to develop by cooperation, rather than competition. History would be collective and anonymous. Any hierarchy or authority structures characteristic of the organisation are explained in terms of their utility for the whole. Everybody is referred to in familial terms and the predominant is that of the traditional family: *dai kazoku*. The founder, Ozaki sensei began by simply asking, 'What are social structures for?', and observed that, not only ideally but also logically and naturally, they were for the benefit of the public whole, not for the private gain of rich individuals. Through this statement of purpose Shinkyô simply makes explicit what has always been a utopian possibility within traditional agrarian Japanese society: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. However, Shinkyô does not claim to be anything except conservatively 'Japanese' and always aims to maintain politeness in its public dealings. Ozaki sensei thus happily maintained very close relations with the local LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) politicians. He was much in demand as a consultant and counselor for all sorts of public and private dilemmas. But neither Ozaki sensei nor Shinkyô generally could relate comfortably with more radical, socialist utopias or action-groups that appealed to foreign ideas and teachers.

Nevertheless, insofar as Shinkyô's egalitarian philosophy arises from an agricultural village tradition, it does not fit easily into modern commercial/capitalist structures. Shinkyô's origins were antithetical, or in Bateson's terms (1958) had become 'anti-symmetric' to shifts in pre-war Japan that demanded deference to money and private property. Japan's individual and consumer-oriented present is challenging traditional Shinkyô assumptions. Shinkyô members have been forced to urgently decide what they can use from the past to guide them into the future, and what they must leave behind. The 'debated heritage' upon which this chapter focuses is therefore about history (known and unknown) and identity (seen and unseen) that can be utilised to provide authoritative guidance among conflicting visions of the future. It is an historical legacy that includes buildings and institutional structures but is essentially made up by the quality and value of relationships. The meaning and constitution of heritage are challenging for Shinkyô members because their lives are dedicated to maintaining the mores of a community, and especially the inspiration of past leaders, at a time when these traditions are beginning to conflict with institutional needs.

At one level, there is a straightforward familiar story here of the social changes wrought by modernisation. Indeed, this is the approach adopted by Plath and Brumann. They both note how, although unique in their own ways, each utopian movement and its leader(s), in those key post-Meiji Restoration and pre-war generations, shared much in common. The radicalism of these generations makes sense in terms of the fear of a disappearing 'old Japan'. Just as the movement Shinkyô and this nativist idea arose together, they thus seem destined to disappear together. I largely agree with Plath's and Brumann's conclusions, but wish to add here aspects

of the 'how and why' of this process of change, drawing on long-term experiences from fieldwork. It is a story that is ongoing and I have had to negotiate my role as interpreter in analysing change, but also as a member who may be called upon to offer practical advice.

Shinkyô history: sources and resources

The main source for the early history of Shinkyô is a book by Ozaki's second wife, Sugihara sensei, whose account covers the story until about 1960. David Plath (1969) translated this work and added further comments, that updated the account to about 1965.[2] Since then there have been a variety of articles, mainly by Japanese journalists, that focus more upon Shinkyô in one of its particular aspects – as a commune, or a home for handicapped people. Sugihara sensei also wrote a second book (1978), rather more personal than the first, that brings the story up to the end of the 1970s.[3] My own acquaintance with Shinkyô goes back to 1985, since when I have kept in fairly regular contact. I was fortunate therefore to know most of the key characters from Shinkyô's early period. They have since died, and this is the problem for Shinkyô members now: what knowledge do they retain of the past, and how can they use it to guide them into the future? The shortage of documentary resources until now has only been a problem for the scholar, curious to know 'what really happened'. Members themselves need guidance of a different nature – models and inspiration – and look for them in people rather than texts. These are people who by the evidence of their character in the present rather than the acuity of their memories of the past, represent the best 'tradition' of Shinkyô.

The key founder, Ozaki Masutaro sensei, was born in the village of Kasama, between Haibara and Sakurai, in 1900. Tenri-kyô was then very powerful in the region and almost all fellow-villagers were members. In his early twenties, as the second son (with no prospect therefore of inheriting the farm) he became a Tenri-kyô missionary in Osaka. Shinkyô was founded in 1935 a short while after he returned to Kasama, disenchanted not so much with Tenri teachings but with the selfishness and petty-mindedness of Tenri priests. However, he had also developed powerful abilities as a leader – an independent sensei in his own right. He persuaded the villagers to use the altar in the Tenri church as firewood to heat a communal bath and mark their disdain for how it had to become only a money-making vehicle for the resident priests.

Although this kind of behaviour obviously upset members of Tenrikyo, Ozaki never wished to make enemies. He believed in straight talking, and was never afraid to speak his mind. It wasn't long before the 'head-man' (*oyabun*) of the village, who was Christian, also felt his position threatened, and reacted by imposing *mura hachibu*, a form of ostracism, on Ozaki and those who supported him – subsequently referred to as 'the four families'. Their response was to combine together as a common household.

Sugihara sensei's first book details how those early years of Shinkyô were a period when Shinkyô's identity as a commune and the way members lived

and inter-acted, can all be explained in terms of what was necessary if the four families were not going to give in to this ostracism and the general bullying by the head-man, who dominated the other 70 or so households in the village. Sugihara sensei recounts how Shinkyô members learned how to share everything and rely absolutely upon each other, how to work together as a team and not just as single families. Meanwhile, Ozaki sensei also learned how to gain the respect of the police and local government.

In 1943, most of the members joined a government-sponsored cooperative for Japanese pioneers in Manchuria. Although they spent less than two years there, this was another foundational experience requiring a similar sense of sacrifice and single-mindedness among the other members, to make the enterprise work. It also shocked them, for while they had reportedly gone out honestly expecting to help the Manchurians, they found themselves complicit in a brutal colonial, land-grabbing scenario. One of the more commonly cited stories I heard concerned their arrival at Harbin, and being surrounded by starving Korean children. The Shinkyô members gave the children the contents of their lunch boxes while other Japanese shouted at them or drove them away. Finally, there was the arduous, gruesome experience of returning to Japan, arriving at Shinkyô with no possessions or proper means. Difficulties in Kasama persisted thereafter. The head man and others continued to harass the community, although the practice of social ostracism (*mura-hachibu*) was now illegal. Shinkyô offered itself as a refuge for evacuees from Osaka, or university students who needed accommodation (a major problem in the immediate post-war period) but this also generated further misunderstandings and trouble with the police. Both Ozaki and Sugihara were arrested, and almost died in jail. The community lost most of their land following the post-war land reforms, and survived by eating only pumpkins and performing menial jobs. Then they began to effectively manufacture *tatami* mats and by 1960 had (briefly) become the country's largest *tatami* manufacturer. Economically speaking they were beginning to dominate Kasama.

This is the point at which David Plath's narrative comes to an end. But soon afterwards, Shinkyô established a school for mentally handicapped children. This fulfilled a long interest of Ozaki sensei, whose only daughter had been badly handicapped and died young. Rather than offer help, his Tenri-kyo associates had seen her afflictions as a kind of divine punishment. When it became clear that there was nowhere for these children to go after graduation, Shinkyô established itself as a home for mentally handicapped adults, cutting back on *tatami* production and creating other jobs which included *shiitake* mushroom farming and the manufacture of *fusuma* sliding doors, that enabled mentally handicapped people nevertheless to do a full day's work and lead a fairly full 'normal' life.

I first came to Shinkyô in September 1985, just after the present emperor, and his wife had visited them. This was a major event and transformation in the fortunes of the organisation, social ostracism to imperial recognition. At

the time Shinkyô had about 80 able-bodied members, including several families and about 150 mentally handicapped members. The accommodation buildings plus the working areas covered a whole hillside. Visitors invariably commented that it looked more like a hotel complex. This was perhaps, in terms of economic well-being and public recognition the 'highpoint' of Shinkyô's history.

Life in Shinkyô was visibly distinctive because personal possessions and indeed personal accommodation were limited and simple, whereas shared facilities were spacious and well-furnished. The dining room could easily seat 500, food was both generous and nourishing, and everybody went on expensive holidays together twice a year. For transport, Shinkyô bought minibuses rather than family cars, and members joked about doing things 'Shinkyô style' which is to say doing them together rather than individually. In addition, Shinkyô was able to contribute lavishly to local projects, such as rebuilding local schools and constructing a new village hall. In the early 1990s, something like 200 million yen was spent to drill 2 km down through the bedrock to bring water to the surface and provide for a 'hot spring' (*onsen*) and facilitate hydroponica farming – growing tomatoes and other vegetables above tanks of pure water, in large greenhouses.

The constant in these changes were the four families and Shinkyô property and its factories were still registered in their names, so legally it was not a 'commune' (*kyôdôtai*) at all. New members joined for a variety of reasons. Women frequently came to Shinkyô because of family problems – divorce or separation. Men came usually because of employment problems. Only occasionally did new members join primarily for the sake of the communal lifestyle. Almost invariably, they cited instead the qualities of Ozaki sensei as counsellor and leader. It is unusual for any to stay more than a few years before moving on, unless they marry into the four families. In these ways Shinkyô has been made into a space and time set apart from contemporary Japanese social life and many are unprepared for the difference. Those who come with a vocation for utopian life are often those who leave soonest. Of those members I knew who had left, the most frequently cited reasons were frustration with 'authority' in Shinkyô, meaning difficulties with one or more of the members of the four families. Such a patten reinforces a feeling among members that Shinkyô's form of communal living has developed 'naturally' and doesn't fit easily into a paradigm that can be philosophised or proselytised.

Behind the history

Shinkyô members may talk about how Shinkyô has grown 'naturally', in terms of local needs rather than philosophical dogma, but this does not mean that its progress has not been planned deliberately and strategically. Major decisions could only be made by the members but memories of these decisions are always that Ozaki sensei assumed the initiative. It was in order to

understand the authority of the sensei role in Japanese culture that David Plath chose to translate Sugihara's book. He raised the question about what would happen to Shinkyô when its leader, Ozaki Sensei, died. Not only in Japan but worldwide, institutions founded by charismatic and highly capable leaders face this common problem: how to keep going after these leaders have gone. David Plath clearly thought Shinkyô would rapidly fade and disappear. Certainly when I spoke to priests from Tenri-kyo, for whom Shinkyô is still a problematic issue, there was general, satisfied agreement that Shinkyô would disappear without Ozaki sensei.

Ozaki's solution was to initiate yet another systemic change. In the late 1960s, when both he and the leading figures of the other three families were coming to the end of their active lives, he transformed Shinkyô from being a primarily commercial co-operative, manufacturing *tatami*, and made it a home for the mentally handicapped. In one sense, he was fulfilling a life-long obligation to his daughter, who had died young but who also had been very handicapped. At the same time, he was establishing a web of dependency that would create the conditions for Shinkyô's continuity. Nara Prefecture, like the rest of Japan, had very little in the way of schools or homes for handicapped people, and Shinkyô became a pioneering role model in the history of social work in Japan. It was because of this history that the crown prince chose to visit. Local governments and of course the mentally handicapped members themselves and their families have come to depend enormously on Shinkyô. The vastly expensive drilling enterprise mentioned earlier, that gave Shinkyô its own hot spring has also become a major economic asset alongside other facilities to develop Shinkyô as a short-term home for the elderly.

These initiatives have had to contend and respond to other national and global, political and economic processes as well as natural forces. As founder members passed away – Ozaki sensei himself died in 1993 – and younger members have moved, the work of Shinkyô has come to depend more and more on workers who come in from Kasama or nearby Haibara town. The fifty or so able-bodied workers who lived full-time in Shinkyô constituting a fundamental element of its social life have been reduced to effectively only five persons, all close to or over sixty years in age. Younger members of the four families live outside Shinkyô with their families, even if they still travel to work there. The only increase in resident members of Shinkyô comes from the numbers of mentally handicapped (nick-named *shin-chan*) (now about 170). Therefore while financially, Shinkyô has become strong as an institution, vital to the needs of the wider community and members now talk openly and with a sense of crisis about the loss of their original ethos as a commune.

Text and context

David Plath (1969) draws an analogy between Sugihara sensei's story and that of the film *Rashômon*, arguing that it excises the (Rashômon) voices and

versions of members of Shinkyô other and all those others within the village of Kasama who so conspicuously disagreed with Shinkyô. Many members of Shinkyô that I spoke with quietly counselled me not to accept everything that Sugihara said as ' it was just her opinion'. There was no dispute about her facts, but her choice of facts, and her interpretation of them were at issue. However, no other members – including Ozaki sensei himself – wrote anything about Shinkyô and I have not even been able to come across a diary of Shinkyô events. Sugihara's text therefore is fast becoming authoritative history, since other written sources are so lacking. In spite of its vagaries and disagreement over its interpretation of foundational events, Sugihara's text has become an authoritative history because of the absence of other sources such as diaries.

The interpretative openness and narrative ambivalence at the centre of Shinkyô's historical identity have meant that it is essentially pressures from the outside which have determined its definitional presence. The name Shinkyô itself, spelt with the characters for 'heart' (*shin*) and 'boundary' (*kyô*) and signifying basically an oasis for like-minded people, was a term of description coined in an article by the newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun*. It was adopted by the organisation on a pragmatic basis for they needed a name as a common address. Likewise the Shinkyô musical jingle which plays on an organic theme of the organisation blooming as a single hydrangea (*ajisai*) was also a suggestion from outside. In legal terms the organisation is defined as a 'large family' (*dai-kazoku*). They play no part in the politics of communes and similar movements within Japan. This political ambivalence is reproduced in the academic sphere where there are no attempts to explain the organisation as an ideology.

Besides the lack of graves, there are no conspicuous photographs of past members, or even past activities within the facilities of the organisation. Such photographs as there are on the walls reflect recent holidays with the handicapped members. They are not talked about or referred to as an historical resource. When Ozaki Sensei died, almost 10 years ago, there was no funeral and no religious ceremony. Thousands of mourners and numerous local dignitaries lined up at Shinkyô and escorted the hearse to the top of the hill and bowed their heads as Ozaki was taken on his final journey to Nara Medical College., where his body would be given to be cut up, etc. as an aid to medical teaching. There is no plaque or photograph on the wall no visible or tangible reminder of Ozaki sensei's presence and significance to Shinkyô.

However Shinkyô has carefully preserved the two reception rooms, gorgeously re-decorated for the visit by the crown prince and his enormous entourage, including special chairs and indeed a specially designed washroom. Here at least there are photographs of Ozaki sensei and Sugihara sensei shown greeting their august visitors. But these rooms are used for visitors to Shinkyô and not by the organisation itself. Hence they primarily meet an outside need.

In my conversations with Ozaki sensei, he told me that he didn't want to 'tie the future down' and reiterated the phrase 'whatever will be, will be', an attitude reflected in his unwillingness to write down anything that might become orthodoxy. In this way he also avoided the kind of criticism levelled privately at Sugihara. Ozaki sensei's charisma, and authority have rested in large measure on his ability to handle person-to-person relations and in keeping many matters confidential.

The key point at issue in Sugihara's narrative is that it implies that the life of Ozaki sensei and the life of Shinkyô, are basically the same story, which is to say that they are *the* story. To members of Shinkyô, Sugihara's writing revealed what she didn't know, or fully appreciate, that is inconsistency rather than coherence. Each member has a significant story of their own, Sugihara's perspective reflected her position as an incomer. For her Shinkyô was always primarily a project, but for the four families, including Ozaki sensei, it was tied to their sense of being their home village. This difference of perception of the past and relationship to place has inevitably provided a point of tension within Shinkyô around the competing personal discourses about the identification and significance of home and the egalitarian project.

Changes

In 1935, the members built a common house, large enough to accommodate them. This is still standing. It is the nearest thing to a 'shrine' for Shinkyô, for within it the first forty or so members forged personal bonds based on sharing. Until recently this was where the monthly meetings were held and where people most readily shared stories about the past. After one group meeting that I attended in 1990 I could hear horrified whispers because graffiti had been scribbled inside one of the doors. The problem wasn't about who, but rather how and why this could have happened. The 'who' presently appeared in the form of suitably mortified Shinkyô children. But the consensual feeling that emerged from this incident was that maybe the children had unwittingly expressed a greater truth and that Shinkyô should move with the times. Meetings from that time took place in the main building and the old home has become shut up and almost unused – though it has not been knocked down.

The children have also been influential in other ways. When I was first visiting Shinkyô in the 1980s, there were several families with children. Almost all, including members of the four founding families have since moved out although in most cases they still live locally and either work at Shinkyô or stay in regular contact. The primary reason for this move was the demands on children of school work that didn't fit easily with the expectations of communal life. Living in Shinkyô meant working in Shinkyô – and the career opportunities were limited, especially for those with a college education. The two families with children that remained in Shinkyô in the year

2000 were not original Shinkyô families. One lady came, with her children, following divorce. Another family had come from another commune in Nara Prefecture. As the number of able-bodied Shinkyô members declined, these families became more and more important and the three parents became vital to the day-to-day running of almost everything. Women have become increasingly important in Shinkyô, attracted at least in part by this opportunity to have power in their own right.

From the early 1990s as Japan entered the depression, A-san, the father who had come with his family from another, very different Nara commune, was now the day-to-day leader in Shinkyô. It was the first time the *enchou-sensei* was not a survivor from the early days. In 2003, A-san not only proposed but insisted that Shinkyô needed radical change and it must therefore develop itself as a chicken-farming on the scale A-san demanded would have been dirty and smelly, and would, once again, have alienated the other villagers. Sudden, big changes in direction had been initiated by Ozaki, but always as a systemic way to build on new challenges by finding new ways to make the surrounding community dependent upon Shinkyô. But A-san's plan would have had the opposite effect. There was a vote in which A-san suddenly became an outsider, despite living a life devoted to communal living in Shinkyô for almost 20 years. In a number of ways, the vote against G-san was an expression of Shinkyô identy. It was not only bonds of family and village relations that triumphed, it was also a deep concern that G-san had located Shinkyô's problem as an issue of leadership and commercial enterprise. This had been the role of Ozaki sensei, but he had encouraged Shinkyô members to develop an ethos of cooperation and the need now was to develop new forms of leadership focusing more on guidance and representation rather than generalship. Indeed it is such skills that mark out shinkyo as a caring community. The outcome of this episode was significant. A-san had a nervous breakdown, and presently left the commune with his wife and family. Shinkyô survives now as a community only because of staff who commute from outside and therefore do not live in Shinkyô. The episode had forced members to choose between seeing Shinkyô as an independent 'commune' or as an institution tied to the wider community.

Back to the future

One of the ways in which Shinkyô always distinguished itself from Japanese communes in general, was that it was concerned about its neighbours and its roots within the local community of Kasama. At the same time, Shinkyô as a commune radiates a strong sense of 'inside-ness' (*uchi*), that is a strong boundary against the outside world. It is not easy to harmonize these two standpoints. Each member balances them differently. This ambiguity was demonstrated to me by the response of several Shinkyô members to a book I found accidentally in 2006. I was helping clear out one of the older buildings,

prior to demolition, when I noticed a little pamphlet on the floor. I picked it up, and showed it to several people. Nobody was particularly interested. 'Nobody wants it, keep it,' they said. It was a history of the local primary school, published 20 years earlier. Inside were dates and the names of graduating students, dating right back to the Meiji period, and graduation photos from the Taisho period. In one photograph of the class of 1914, I found eight young faces, not only the young Ozaki sensei, but the future leaders from the other three families, plus the face of the head man. The booklet was almost certainly inspired by Ozaki sensei himself for he was a key member of the school-board throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. However, there is no mention of Shinkyô in the pamphlet. It contains a lot of reminiscences by past teachers and students, but none is evidently by Shinkyô members, past or present. There are surprising nostalgic references to 'the feeling of Kasama' (*Kasama no kimochi*) which given their antagonistic relations with Shinkyô members raises questions about the purpose of a document that is designed as a record of Ozaki sensei's legacy to present and future children in Kasama. Similar phrases – *Shinkyô no kimochi* ('the feeling of Shinkyô') flourished within Shinkyô itself and the common link was to Ozaki Sensei himself.

Needless to say, the Shinkyô members who showed no interest were all relative newcomers. But although they thought the pamphlet had nothing to do with Shinkyô, i.e. with them, it was all about how Ozaki took his village identity and responsibilities very seriously. In his later life Ozaki invested immense time and energy in activity outside Shinkyô, notably as trouble-shooter and consultant. But most members referred to this as if it were a kind of hobby. In fact they now look like a prescient strategy.

As Shinkyô comes to rely more and more upon support from village residents and others, and as Shinkyô family members also increasingly move out into the local community, one can see this outward-looking vision becoming predominant. Shinkyô has piloted a way forward for Kasama and the nearby town of Haibara to join it in developing as a caring community. The public nature of Shinkyô now is as a home for 170 mentally handicapped adults and offering a 'short-break' home for the elderly population in the vicinity, when their family needs a break from the demands of home care. It is increasingly noticeable that for many of the long-term handicapped residents, it is they who are the authentic heart of the Shinkyô community and keep alive the precepts of sharing, togetherness and mutual support.

The deployment of these communalities as heritage is therefore an ongoing issue in Shinkyô and builds upon the decisions that Ozaki sensei himself engineered a generation ago that link Kasama and Haibara and the voices of the handicapped and infirm to the future of Shinkyô. He was in this respect a realist, knowing that new social movements may fade and dissipate without the presence of their leaders, but that these structural weaknesses in Shinkyô could provide opportunities for the local community to

become an inclusive partner in the organisation. In planning his personal legacy as heritage, Ozaki sensei seems to have directed his energies towards Kasama in what he had called *Kasama no kimochi* ('the feeling of Kasuma'). This is a message he had articulated locally, but not within Shinkyô itself. Kasama and Shinkyô stood as thesis and antithesis and Ozaki Sensei seems to have been hoping for a synthesis that would build something rather new: a caring community which would come 'naturally' from organic, structural changes within Shinkyô and Kasama, that he more than anybody else had set in motion.

In 2006, the value and significance of the communal ideals that constitute Shinkyô as heritage have become even more challenging and complex as the dependency between Shinkyô and Kasama/Haibara has been strengthened by economic ties. The national government, although encouraging the development of social care, especially for the elderly, is also insisting that institutions become more commercial. There is less funding from the government for new building, and Shinkyô is being told to organise itself so as to 'get more money from your clients'. As a home for the handicapped, it has had to meet more and more government regulations which regulate and must approve the hierarchy and salary structure. The difficulty in meeting the simultaneous demands to absorb cuts in government funding and to become a more commercial operation have brought to the fore the communal ideals that remain a powerful emotional memory. The fundamental problem that Ozaki had framed so many years before: 'What is society for?', and his answer, 'for the sake of the members' has thus returned again. But in developing an answer, Shinkyô cannot remain the same.

Notes

1 I have, by the way, introduced several foreign students, to get experience as volunteers. Shinkyô, in fact, has proved to be a wonderful place to learn Japanese, because everybody has been so open and friendly – and so much time is spent together. Students barely proficient in speaking Japanese invariably come back confident and happy to chat away, after only a few weeks. So if you have any students who seem to be lagging behind – lacking skills and motivation – maybe Shinkyô can help.
2 Sugihara and Plath (1969).
3 Sugihara (1978).

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