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Imaginary lands: Politics, identity and Japanese images of Asia in the twentieth century

Herman, Vivian, Ph.D.
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IMAGINARY LANDS: POLITICS, IDENTITY AND JAPANESE IMAGES OF ASIA IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY

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by

Vivian Herman

Dissertation Committee:

Michael J. Shapiro, Chairperson
Kathy E. Ferguson
Manfred Henningsen
Paul Clark
Lucy Lower
Patricia G. Steinhoff
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ABSTRACT

Twentieth-century Japanese discourses about identity have looked to Asia as a way of constituting what it is to be both Japanese and not Japanese. These constitutive practices are especially cogent in imaginary texts: visual images, poetry, novels, and travel writings. They tell us much about the politics of Japanese relations with Asia, as well as about politics within Japan itself. Using both semiotic and hermeneutic modes of analysis, the these images of the Asian other can be located in wider discursive economies about Japan, Asia and Western theories of language and meaning.

Ambivalence is fundamental in the encounter with difference. Using signs of nature especially, Japanese images of Asia both assimilate and differentiate it. Ambivalent memory is a central mode for imagining the Asian other in Japan. Amongst these memories are simultaneously recollecting and amnesiac images of Japanese war atrocities in Asia. These ugly images are devoid of critique. Thus, they serve to head of the production of a collective shame response in Japan, as well as the social disruptions that shame portends. Other images constitute the other as lacking. There is a feminization of the other here. Images of Asian insufficiency enable its rectification by Japanese colonialism and international investment in the postwar era. Desire is complicit with lack, and it makes Asia its object through images of Asian women, the rhetoric of necessity, and through images of Asia as a tourist commodity. But all discourses have their resistances and disruptions. In Japan's imaginations of Asia, these resistances can be excavated using Western theories of symbolic resistance.
Frontispiece: Figure 1.1

"Orientalism" by Fujishima Takeji, 1924.

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CHAPTER 1
MAKING AN ENTRANCE & WRITING THE OTHER

Foreigner: a choked up rage down in my throat, a black angel clouding transparency, opaque, unfathomable spur. The image of hatred and of the other, a foreigner is neither the romantic victim of our clanish indolence nor the intruder responsible for the ills of the polis. Neither the apocalypse on the move nor the instant adversary to be eliminated for the sake of the group. Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. A symptom that precisely turns "we" into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible. The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities.

Julia Kristeva, Strangers to Ourselves

I fly to an imaginary land. After seven or eight hours in the air, the Pacific Ocean gives away to the islands of Japan. At first, we pass over a few sharp outcrops of rock, weathered into points by waves, and studded with trees twisted by the wind. Then, still at cruising altitude, the aircraft crosses the coast somewhere near Shio-no-misaki, the southern point of Wakayama Prefecture. Forest and rice fields are so far below that they yield up no signs of how to know them. Descending gradually, then more rapidly, we seek Japan through shredded clouds. On my left, I see some beginnings of the Osaka-Kobe conurbation. Kishiwada, Izumi, and Sakai: these are names of places I recall from histories read but, protected from the ocean by miles of concrete revetments and punctuated by the signs of an industrial culture as these cities are, from the sky they look nothing like the literary representations that I know.

On base leg, the airliner angles in and down over Osaka proper. From my seat forward I study the city. It looks like a maze, an impenetrable compound of spaces and forms. In comparison to the
Figure 1.2

cities of Australia and the United States, Osaka is a vision of urban disorder. Then comes the thought: How am I to know this place? I have come here for field research, that rite of passage for many doctoral candidates in the academy but can I enter into and know this place? Light refracts off the river, repellent and obtuse like the foreign language issuing from the in-flight public address system. I ask myself, how am I to enter this place? We land, taxi briefly to the terminal, disembark, pass through immigration and customs, and exit onto the humid street. Osaka, Japan. I have entered. I am there in the imaginary land.

1.

Of course, neither the safe landing of a Boeing 747 at an airfield in Japan nor my successful passage through bureaucratic formalities at Itami signified my entrance into Japan. I had not entered, I had arrived. And what I learned during the subsequent twelve months living in Kyoto was that I had reason after reason to repeat my airborne questions: How am I to know? How am I to enter? How am I to apprehend the practices of Japanese imaginations of other lands when I cannot comprehend in any interior way the imaginary land that is Japan? These are fundamental problems for students of other cultures but they are also problems for which I must claim a rapid resolution if my work is to enjoy much credence in the contemporary academy. There are at least two ways to claim that interior status and both do much to resolve, however temporarily, the problems of how to know and how to privilege the claim that the other is known. In much of the field of Japanese studies at least, interior status within the identity of the other adheres naturally to a doctoral degree in an area of Japanese
I study the city. It looks like a maze, an impenetrable compound of spaces and forms.

Figure 1.3
specialization. In this case, the claim to understand the Japanese other, to be inside the culture, is continually repeated and re-glued to the doctorate through containment of the problem of exteriority and difference in ever-longer vernacular bibliographies which repeatedly demonstrate the credentials of the "complete" Japanologist. The possibilities of a politics of identity that should arise when Western scholars study non-Western others rarely emerges here, for it is effectively concealed within both the exhaustive bibliographic attentions mentioned above and in the almost obsessive concern of the majority of Western Japan specialists with empirical description or emplotted narration rather than theoretical interpretation.\footnote{I am thinking here of American and British scholarly practices in particular. Aside from the non-theoretical modernization theory mobilized by postwar Japan specialists to explain Japan's modernity, and apart from some very minor, often suppressed attempts to mount a Marxist critique of Japanese modernity, my own experience in the academy has taught me that theory is almost a nasty word among Japan specialists. This is especially true when poststructural theory is mentioned in tandem with writing about Japan. A characteristic response of some American Japan specialist, at least, is to dismiss the linguistic turn out of hand. For example, Thomas Rimer recently fired a rather empty shot across the bows of deconstruction. In Pilgrimages: Aspects of Japanese Literature and Culture, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), p. xi., Rimer writes that we cannot deconstruct Japanese literature because it has not yet been sufficiently constructed in the Western academy! Fortunately, the stylistic and intellectual parameters of Japanese studies are changing, and we shall encounter some of the more recent, and more theoretically informed Western writings on Japan throughout this and subsequent chapters here.}

A second mode for dissolving the inside/outside, self/other problem in studies of other cultures comes to us from anthropology. Clifford Geertz is perhaps the most famous practitioner of this mode, which could be called "the entry experience," and which claims resolutions of the inside/outside problem for scholars writing about other cultures than their own. In his brilliant and well-known essay on Balinese cockfighting, Geertz describes himself and his wife as invisible and like ghosts during their first weeks residing in a Balinese
Figure 1.4

Imperial Japan imagines Southeast Asia: A map of strategy.

community. However, when Geertz is involved with the Balinese in a police raid on an illegal cockfight, he is forced to flee the law with the other spectators. In his haste to evade the arm of the law, which in itself is the opening of the door into the inner Balinese community, Geertz runs through a gate into a compound where he is permitted to stay for a time. At this point, Geertz suddenly becomes visible to the Balinese. Of course, it is not that Geertz was not visible to the Balinese prior to the police raid on the cockfight. He was visible all along, and his invisibility was symptomatic of his obtrusiveness, as well as his need to textually construct a history of his privileged account of Bali. Geertz wants what follows in his essay to be privileged as an "inside" interpretation of the other's culture, and to that end, he uses his flight and new perceptibility to the Balinese to encode a privileged entrance into the culture and community of the other. This then enables him to claim an interior status that acts to contain and elide both the problematics of his irreducible difference in this context and the consequent significance of that difference in his interpretation of another culture.

What Geertz does with his problem of being other and outside the culture of Bali, another anthropologist, Dorinne Kondo, attempts in the case of Japan. Although her own entry experience is far less dramatic and far more indistinctly framed than Geertz's flight from the authorities, it serves the same purpose: to legitimate her

---

3 See Dorinne K. Kondo, Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.) Kondo's complex and self-reflexive study is a very fine example of "new" Japan studies writing, theoretically alert and critical of both its own practices and those of the American Japanologist establishment. We shall come back to it in later chapters.
knowledge claims about the other. Kondo begins her entrance into a Japanese milieu with a textual strategy owing much to a Japanese literary convention, movement from the general to the particular. Her writing conducts her and thus, the reader, from the strange to the familiar, from the exterior to the interior:

A jumble of unfamiliar buildings when I first moved in, the Tokyo neighborhood where I lived began to take on increasing familiarity and significance as impersonal facades gave way to homes populated by friends and acquaintances.⁴

Kondo writes, opening her entry experience with the mundane experience of coming to terms with a new address.

Although Kondo's chronology of her familiarization with the strange is hardly unique among literary and scientific constructions of knowledge of the other, she does find herself in a special situation vis-a-vis Japanese others. She is an American citizen of Japanese descent. The history and symbolism of her ethnoculture enables Kondo's entry experience. By this I mean that Kondo makes it clear that her Japanese looks are her first passport into the world of the Japanese other. When she combines her Japanese appearance with her education in the formalities and politenesses of Japanese etiquette, Kondo provides her text with an opportunity to demonstrate entry and to privilege the veracity of the accounts that follow. Through an account of her ability to show the other her proper place, Kondo establishes an interior place for her scholarship in Japanese culture. This takes the early form of an emplotted narrative of an encounter that serves as some sort of equivalent to Geertz's police raid. On her

⁴ Ibid. p. 7.
first meeting with the male head of the Asakusa household in which she resides, Kondo uses all the body movements, sitting posture and o-jigi obeisance, phrases and honorifics that are situationally correct. Her appropriate conduct permits her to show us the response of her host, which is couched in praise for her proper Japanese behavior. Praise of this sort, extended and reiterated later in the text through transcriptions of other statements made to her about her "Japaneseness," allows Kondo an assumption into the inner field of things Japanese. Similarly, but in another discipline, the sociologist Matthews Hamabata claims an entry and an insider status that is facilitated by his Japanese appearance. He constructs a tatemae mask to ease the marginality and discomfort created by the paradoxical relationship between his Japanese looks and his American social skills. For Hamabata, a tatemae mask is at once a social persona that elides personal matters that may be socially disenabling and a public identity supplied by both his Japanese friends and by the situations in which he finds himself. Through this social identity Hamabata is able to leave his "ghost" status in Japan behind him and, thus, to make the knowledge claims about Japan that he does.

If Clifford Geertz enters Bali through flight from the arms of the law, and if Kondo enters Japan through ancestry and proper behavior, how then am I to conduct myself and my own writing into the culture of Japanese others? Well, unless one is writing about the Japanese penal system, encounters with the law arising from illicit activities in  

Figure 1.5

Japan are hardly likely to facilitate "insider knowledge" claims, and since my white face, my height, and my place in white culture mitigate strongly against my ability to appear Japanese, or to unobtrusively behave in many of the formalized ways expected of Japanese women, it seems that an entry experience, together with the legitimacy it introduces to scholarly writings about the other, is denied to me. If that is so, there must be other ways of writing about Japan in an engaged way. The sheer impossibility for me of both taking a self-reflexive position in relation to my own writing practices and of making an entry claim that ameliorates my own extreme otherness in relation to Japanese culture makes it tempting to adopt Roland Barthes' mode of apprehending Japan:

What can be addressed, in the consideration of the Orient, are not other symbols, another metaphysics, another wisdom (though the latter might appear thoroughly desirable); it is the possibility of a difference, of a mutation, of a revolution in the propriety of symbolic systems.7

Barthes never struggled with the otherness of the Japanese language but, what is apropos here is the implication I draw from this statement that the problem of interior or privileged status can be made redundant if we acknowledge its impossibility and, more importantly if we intersect what we know about our own history as it relates to representation and the constitution of realities with the possibilities of difference and similitude in Japanese symbolic systems. Perhaps it is at the site of such an intersection that we can begin to figure our own others, ourselves, Japan's others and Japan's selfhood,

as well as the complicities and resistances operating between them. If so, then that intersection and that sort of figuration is, as Barthes indicates, a matter of symbolism, of language. The philosopher, Nishida Kitarō, writes that

those who are ignorant of foreign languages know nothing about their own language and, indeed, only through comparison with other things can we achieve a true understanding of a given thing.\(^8\)

Although I might balk at the possibility of any "true understanding," Nishida's emphasis on the importance of comparison and language in knowledge or interpretation makes a point that I consider intrinsic to any act of writing about the other. It is at language and in the practices of language that we can find sites for engagements with otherness that, if not innocent of the sorts of elisions of difference contained in entry experiences, are at the least more conscious than not of the complicity of cross-cultural scholarship in the economies of power and domination. Thus, language is the subject, the object, and the practice of *Imaginary Lands*.

Indeed, the history of *Imaginary Lands* itself begins with language. Some years ago an Australian colleague made a comment to the effect that it would be interesting to see the results of a research project designed to answer the question of how Japanese military in occupied Asia perceived their environment. At that time, I was very taken with *Annales* historiography. It seemed to me then that perception was simply a transparent reflection of both the perceived object and of the social and psychological milieu in which the

Figure 1.6

"Pekin Autumn Sky" by Umehara Ryūsaburō, 1942.

perceiving subject operated. This approach is, of course, partly responsible for the slippage of *Annales mentalité* historiography into mere recordings of the trivia of material life in times gone by. On the other hand, the linguistic turn which instigated *Imaginary Lands* brings us forward to a place where the notion of perception as a transparent reflection of its circumstances can be discarded. When we write with the understanding that language is a practice which makes meaning material our focus tends to turn away from the object itself towards the processes, economies and practices of perceiving that are productive of the look, constitutive of the object, and of the way that object is for us.

I did not, however, become cognizant of this particular operation of language until I encountered language learning. I was initially struck by the force of language as constitutive of subjectivity and realities when I had advanced a little in the study of Japanese. In conversation classes I was impressed with how my usually direct and firm style of speaking in my native language became vague, passive, hesitant and circumlocutious when I spoke Japanese. This change of style was not only a result of my highly inadequate conversational skills in Japanese, it also announced the difference of the Japanese symbolic system and the power of language in constituting one area of reality, the style of social relations and the subject's place within them. At about the same time, although not coincidentally, I began to read a variety of theorists concerned with language, symbolism, representation and meaning. As I shall later show, very many of these writers and their ideas inform, contest and appear in *Imaginary Lands*. Indeed, it is my readings in these areas that are responsible for a shift in the focus of my research
and interpretation. That shift takes me away from Japanese perceptions in occupied Southeast Asia toward both Japanese signifying practices that are productive of other places, people and cultures as imaginary lands, and to the politics of identity in Japanese language and representations about other Asians.

2.

It should be clear by now that when I use the terms "language" and "symbolism" I am not thinking of them in the same way as many Japan specialists do: as a problem of how best to produce and make stick the most precise and undisputable translations for Japanese words. Neither does this idea of language have much to do with the bibliographic lists of vernacular sources used by some Japan specialists to buttress their claims for privileged, interior knowledge of Japan. The idea of language that I am advancing here is one that holds that all symbolic/linguistic representation has a fundamental role as constitutive of knowledge, truth and reality. Language is human expression and "human expression is always a presentation and representation of the real and the unreal." More than that, language "calls things into their thinging," as Heidegger so charmingly puts it. Language makes not the world itself perhaps, but the "world's being of a certain kind, filled with entities of this sort and this and this." Thus, in language we can find the traces of struggles to make meaning, to make history, and in the particular context here, traces of the

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10 Ibid. p. 200.
Figure 1.7

Imaginary Lands.

"Southern Ocean Evening" by Yokoyama Taikan, 1944.

struggle to make both Japanese self-identities and the identities of the Asian other.

It is my purpose in *Imaginary Lands* to take examples of Japan's twentieth-century language about the rest of Asia and to offer interpretations of those exemplary texts that attempt to open up some of the ways in which discourse about the Asian other exist, circulate, and operate within Japan itself. Of course, this is not to suggest that I am seeking to dig out some deeper truths that may be operating in Japanese constitutions of Asia. I am not really engaged in a hermeneutics of suspicion. Rather it is to say that I am using Japan's imaginations of its nearest neighbors to identify, in both particularly Japanese and more general ways, some of the grammar and signifying practices which create truths and true identities. This will entail a symptomatic reading that uses a complex hermeneutic and a somewhat under-articulated semiotic approach. To delineate the schemata regulating Japanese images of Asia necessitates a sort of violence upon the images that will force them to yield up their investments and silences. And in this act of reading, translating, writing and thinking about Japanese imaginations of Asia, several problems and concerns arise. For example, how do Japanese representations of other Asians operate? Can we apprehend those operations through location of a grammar or stylistics in the Japanese production of the Asian other? Have these images of other Asians changed in association with the momentous transformations in material conditions during the Showa period? How has signifying the Asian other changed and is there an association between those changes and material circumstances such as empire, defeat,
Figure 1.8

occupation, reconstruction, dissent, and the development of a "postindustrial" consumer culture?

None of the foregoing is to suggest that Imaginary Lands is a history in any of the accepted senses. It is not. Imaginary Lands explicitly and implicitly rejects causation and diachrony as an explanatory strategy. History is important in what follows only in so far as it serves to provide contexts for disparate Japanese representations of themselves and other Asians. Questions that excite historians of Japan, such as, can Showa periodize Japanese history? was Japanese colonialism in Asia benevolent or barbaric? or when did modernity begin in Japan? hold little or no sway here, except perhaps as a model of how not to write about Japanese images of Asia in the last sixty years. Neither is Imaginary Lands a comprehensive study of Japanese discourses about itself and Asia.

Imaginary Lands is incomplete, eclectic and syncretic. In it I seek to consider, but not answer, the problems raised through engagements with multiple texts. Perhaps the most visible of these are Japanese texts beyond the academy. Japanese discussions of Asia have a very long history indeed and, even within the arbitrary parameters of the years known as the Showa period, there is a vast array of sources constitutive of the Asian other available to the student. From the viewpoint of cultural politics, the most interesting texts among this array are those that I call imaginary texts. These are very often representative of the type of languages used in making mass communications in twentieth-century Japan and they are of distinct political significance for their ability to hold in thrall public identifications, discriminations and relations. They are newspapers,
travel memoirs and accounts, photographs, *manga* (comic books), mass market magazines, advertisements, and travel guides. In their imaginations of the Asian other, these texts have in common their mobilizations of the visual image as their main means of signification.

But how is *Imaginary Lands* to read these visual signs? W.J.T. Mitchell, characterizes the history of culture as "in part the story of a protracted struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs"\(^{12}\) This struggle arises out of the idea that texts are made up of discrete words, while images are dense sign systems. Mieke Bal points out, however, that while this opposition may be a fine theoretical assertion, linguistic texts and visual texts do not function in oppositional ways.\(^{13}\) That is to say, we do not interpret linguistic texts by discerning words individually. Rather, we put them together with other words and signs to make a reading. "The same can be said of visual works."\(^{14}\) Thus, the contest and compliance between word and image is not only in how they signify but in how they compose and/or dis-compose the meaning strategies of each other.

Images and words speak in various but similar ways. Indeed, it has become what Mitchell calls "a commonplace" to constitute the image as a kind of language, or composition of "words". Like words, images function semantically, syntactically, and communicatively to "encode messages, tell stories, express ideas and emotions, raise questions, and "speak to us."\(^{15}\) Visual texts articulate abstract ideas by

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.

means of allegorical imagery and metaphor, procedures which are coincident with writing practices. The difference between word and image arises from Mitchell's construal of the differing nature of the signs that linguistic texts and visual texts use, the former being arbitrary and conventional signs (words) and the latter being natural, universal signs (visual representations). Moreover, linguistic language has intimate relations with time, unfolding in temporal succession, while "images reside in a realm of timeless spatiality and simultaneity."\(^{16}\)

Differences of time and space aside, it does seem that, in view of their similarity of functions in signification, both the word and the image can be understood, interpreted, and critically mobilized as texts. That is, both image and word are texts in the sense that I am able to identify texts as "combination[s] of elements leading to semiotic events,...combination[s] structured enough to be perceived as a whole and materially presented as complete."\(^{17}\) Not only do images act semiotically like words, they function discursively, too. Like words together, images act separately and together to produce utterances that operate in discourse to refer to their object and express their subject. Like words, images enter into dialogical relations with past, contemporaneous, and future visual utterances and, as we have already seen in Mitchell's argument above, images are always addressed to someone. This discursive equivalency of the word and the image is especially apparent in narrativity and realism. In the visual image, narrativity is produced through use of the codes of perspective:

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
\(^{17}\) Mieke Bal, "De-disciplining the Eye," *ff*, p. 11.
The perception of objects diminishing in size within a visual field of variable distance is a structuring event analogous to the organizations of experience in narrative.[in linguistic texts]18

In linguistic texts, write Bersani and Dutoit, narrative is established through priorities: drama, climax, and denouement, which are foregrounded against general characters, secondary characters, details and events. It is this common narrative function, produced in part by the prioritizing practices of perspective in the image, and by prioritizing practices in the linguistic text, that places both the word and the image at the pivotal center of discourse.

At the risk of being apodictic, it is essential to remember the following points about visual signs. Like semantic activities images occur within, and must be understood as being informed by, discursive operations at both "the level of [their] conception, production and reception".19 Images are not identical to words, but neither are they prior to, nor derived from them. Images are coincident with words. This coincidence of words and images means that the latter can be analyzed for the codes which they distribute and circulate. In most images, drawings, paintings, cartoons, sculpture, and the cinematic, the codes which signify the representational practices that have gone to produce the image are exterior and apprehensible, at least to the literate critic. Barthes has called this visible code in images, style. The visibility of imaging practices, or style, in the visual is equivalent to the

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No matter where the Japanese Imperial Forces go in the East Indies, they are always greeted with open arms by the Indonesians. After being oppressed and exploited by the white men for so long, these people were only too happy to extend their best southern hospitality to Japanese troops. Pictured above is part of the large crowd that came out to welcome the Japanese Forces when they victoriously entered Medan on the island of Sumatra. (Censored by War Ministry).

Figure 1.9

The Asian other welcomes the Japanese occupation: words can mean that images become a site for disintegration of meaning strategies.

Source: *Nippon Times*, March 30, 1942.
visibility of linguistic encodings, or style, in novels and poetry, for example, and it provides another incidental demonstration of the coincidence of the image with the word.

Words and images in *Imaginary Lands* play upon one another to make meaning. Words as captions or as scholarly interpretations, may direct a particular reading of a visual image. Conversely, images lend extra meanings to the word. Barthes points out the weight of images in signification, remarking that "pictures...are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it."20 This interplay of relations between word and image makes for complex possibilities in signification. Figure 1.9, a photograph from a wartime *Nippon Times* newspaper, both plays with its accompanying text and is played upon by it.21 Words gamely attempt to suture our gaze into acceptance of the claim that ordinary Indonesians warmly welcomed the Japanese occupation as a liberation of the archipelago: a constantly circulating and refigured claim of the Japanese imperial doxa and propaganda. The image, nevertheless, disputes the claims of the text. These woman have no open arms, they

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21 The *Nippon* or *Japan Times* was and still is a daily English language newspaper published in Tokyo and distributed in other major cities. It's intended audience is English speaking foreign nationals resident in Japan, as well as Japanese who have substantial competency in English. The question arises here as to how representative of Japan's discourse about the Asian other the images and other signs drawn from this newspaper are? In the case of Figure 1.9, rather than using it to make a point about Japan, I use it as an illustration of a wider point about significance and its operations in visual images. Figure 2.19 makes no point that is central to my argument. Another photograph (3.1) taken from the *Nippon Times* is discussed only in terms of the faint trace it may hold of a suppressed series of statements referring to Japanese violence in Asia, while yet another (2.26) was also published in the Japanese language newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*. It is also important to remember that all three photographs were taken by Japanese photographers and approved for publication by Domei, the wartime government press agency. It is their production by Japanese that enables their appearance in my text.
look not at all "too happy," nor hospitable and welcoming. Thus, words constrain meaning in the image, but because words can and do lie about the images they accompany, "the play between image and word remains a site for disintegration as well as integration, [for] non-cooperation as well as incorporation."\textsuperscript{22}

Not all the vernacular texts in \textit{Imaginary Lands} are comprised of non-linguistic, visual symbols. Japanese language poetry, travel memoirs and descriptions, passages of imagery taken from novels and other prose about or set in Asia provide me with very important points of engagement. Like purely visual texts, however, these types of sources also operate in visual ways. Although it has become almost a doxa of poststructural writings on the image to assimilate the image to the text, and thus to assimilate the signs of the image to the word, it is also possible to make a perhaps trivial inversion of this sort of activity: to attempt to assimilate the word, linguistic works, to the image. This is particularly possible in the case of Japanese images and words, where the written signs of the language are in part images of a sort in themselves, where language itself is suggestive rather than discursive, and where "the empire of signifiers is so immense, so in excess of speech, that the exchange of signs remains of a fascinating richness, mobility, and subtlety, despite the opacity of the language."\textsuperscript{23}

To invert the commonplace textualization of the visual signifier, or to visualize the linguistic sign, we need to conjure up a generic rubric that may be used to denote both those visual and linguistic signs


\textsuperscript{23} Roland Barthes, \textit{Empire of Signs}, p. 9.
that may be constituted and interpreted as images. This is why I use the terms, imaginary and imaginations, to describe both the primary sources for *Imaginary Lands* and the practices constituting the Asian other in Japan. There is nothing arcane or complex about my use of imaginary. Indeed, perhaps the best way to describe the meaning of the term as it is used in *Imaginary Lands*, is to quote Bill Nichols. He writes,

_Imaginary_ here does not mean unreal, existing only in the imagination, but rather pertains to views, images, fictions, or representations that contribute to our everyday engagement with the world around us.24

Imaginary recognizes that the world is always mediated for us by the sign, by the word and the gaze. Now, Nichols' definition may seem to include any and all images and any and all linguistic texts that are available to us but I take him to mean that the imaginary excludes explicitly analytic and academic texts where they are devoid of the sort of imagery that we more usually associate with descriptive writing, poetry and the like. This, of course, is not to say that analytical or, indeed, scientific texts are free of representation. Rather, it is to say that analytical and scientific representation tends, although not always, to be free of the image. If that is so, then I want to use the idea of imaginary to genericize both the grammar of Japanese visual images (paintings, drawings, cartoons, photographs) and the grammar of Japanese poetry, types of short prose, imaginative portions of other prose and language. Much of this material is of an aesthetic nature, and I have chosen them deliberately in a small gesture toward the Formalist idea that the aesthetic functions to

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Figure 1.10

Imaginary Lands.

"The Tower of Heaven" by Umehara Ryūsaburō, 1942.

defamiliarize discourse. Because the imaginary does not offer the explicit rules for behavior and interpretation that we find in other discursive modes, it can raise significant issues of thought, feeling and action.\textsuperscript{25} Neoformalist film theorists like David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson argue that film and other imagining modes of representation act in just this way but, in conjunction with their defamiliarizing effect upon the scholarly discourse about Japan's relations with Asia, the images of the Japanese imaginary can be used as exemplary symbols and narratives of Japan's discourse about the Asian other.

What is most interesting about Japanese imaginary word texts, and what permits their assimilation to visual imagery in \textit{Imaginary Lands}, is the extraordinarily visual economies operating within them to constitute and represent other Asians. For example, the following poem about the Sino-Japanese War and its effects in China in the late 1930s displays the sort of imagery we have come to associate with the poetic genre.

\begin{quote}
Cluster amaryllis  
Red blooming  

A bird takes darkly to the wing  
Farmers trimming rice fields  
Slowly running steam train

The rain passes  
A severed snake lies in the road  
The water of a creek where rice is polished  
Shoves aside the floating corpse of a Chinese soldier
\end{quote}

For a moment, in the depths of his memory
He recalls the tranquil fields and mountains of his birthplace

Cluster Amaryllis

The exceptionally visual economies of this poem should be immediately apparent, but it will serve to underscore those economies, and to further support my own desire to assimilate the word to the visual if I indicate how this poem can operate in cinematic terms:

Cluster amaryllis
Red blooming

A bird takes darkly to the wing
Farmers trimming rice fields
Slowly running steam train
The rain passes

A severed snake lies in the road
The water of a creek where rice is polished
Shoves aside the floating corpse of a Chinese soldier
For a moment in the depths of his memory
He recalls the tranquil fields and mountains of his birthplace

Highly visual economies in modern poetry are not unique to Japan but they are as pronounced there as they are in, say, some French poetry, such as that of Baudelaire, Mallarmé or Lautréamont. At any rate, the facility with which I am able to locate the visual (in this case

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Figure 1.11

Imaginary Lands.

"Landscape, Tainan" by Fujishima Takeji, 1935.

cinematic) in the economies of Japanese texts of this sort supports my use of the term imaginary for both linguistic and non-linguistic texts, as well as for the objects which these same texts constitute as imaginary lands.

As if to stress the significance of the visual sign in the practices of imagining the other and its space, Imaginary Lands is, of course, an act of imagination itself, for it begins with an imaginary land, Japan. I seek to make my own imaginative practices into a thread that is visible to the reader running in and out from beginning to end. There are several ways of making my own imaginations apparent and one of the most important in Imaginary Lands is a repetitive foregrounding of the visual sign itself. This takes place not only in my writing, which concentrates almost obsessively on aspects of the Japanese visual imagination of the Asian other, but in the more than one hundred images circulating as a vital part of the text itself. Both the verbal text and the visual text of Imaginary Lands are readings of Japanese constitutions of the other Asia. At the same time, however, these interpretations, selections and organizations can and should be read as productions of my own imagination of Japan. Perhaps it is not too vain to hope that my own imagination of Japan is always present in the verbal text through a certain play that tries, however unsuccessfully, to elude monovalent constitutions of Japan, and through a writing strategy that tries hard to recall to my and your attention the presence of "I." In the visual text, my own imagination of Japan is present in the arrangement of the images and in the number of Japanese images of Asia for which there are no attendant analyses in the linguistic text. These "extra" images may resist my own interpretations or assist the
reader in her resistance to my readings. I have also included and identified among the illustrations some of my own photographs of Japan. These are meant to further record my own imaginations of Japan, as well as to emphasize the imaginary practices that go on when we come to think, write, talk about the other.

*Imaginary Lands* engages Western theoretical texts with Japanese constitutions of Asia in ways that illuminate similitudes and differences in both the theory and its hermeneutic anchor. Further, these same theoretical insights both guide and contest my own writing practices. These theoretical writings are as much a part of *Imaginary Lands* as Japanese imaginary texts about Asia. Poststructural theory in many of its manifestations informs the overall understanding of language, representation, and semiotic conduct here. But more than that, immanent to the theoretical economies of *Imaginary Lands* are the twin problems of how to decipher Japanese texts using mostly twentieth-century Western ideas of politics and language, and of what that same usage permits or forbids, silences or allows to be articulated in the history and rhetoric of the Japanese other. Apropos, *Imaginary Lands*, is also an attempt to engage the difference of my own identity and cultural context with narratives about Asian identities in Japan, which are also tales constitutive of Japanese self-identities. Paradoxically, the dangers of making a violent appropriation of Japan's particular and unique qualities that are inherent in my writings on Japan are both made more likely and made less by the advance of Western theoretical literature toward Japanese narratives about themselves and others. At times, *Imaginary Lands* mobilizes theory to constitute similitudes between Western and Japanese ways of
imaging colonial and post-colonial otherness but, at other times that
same similarity is deregulated into particularity and difference by my
juxtapositioning of Western political and linguistic theory with
Japanese representations of other Asians.

My eclectic and syncretic selection of Japanese images of Asia
carries over into the theoretical economies of Imaginary Lands. This
eclecticism is a consequence of both the influence of a part of the
historian's methodology and of the emphasis of postcolonial theory on
plurality and multivocality. Historians like to argue that they collect
and read all of their material before they determine their mode of
interpretation for it. That is almost precisely what happened in
Imaginary Lands: I first researched and read most of the material and
then decided to consider what could be written and theorized about it.
Thus, and as a gesture to plurality, Imaginary Lands is arranged into
six parts, the first of which is an introductory consideration of my own
place in relation to Japan and of how the remainder of the text is to
proceed. I begin an Hegelian effort to find a compromise between
myself and the Japanese other, but it is an effort that is bound to fail in
the writing that follows, for there can be no comfortable middle line
between us and them. The second chapter deals with images tending
to constitute the Asian other in simultaneously assimilating and
differentiating ways. In so doing, they deploy major narratives about
Japanese identity. Here, using both Roland Barthes' idea of mythology
and central terms of Shinto, I discuss the use of the view, of scenery,
and of images of nature. Japanese images of Asian landscape, flora and
fauna comply with a tendency to mythologize Japanese intimacy with
nature. These images assimilate difference by distributing signs of
Figure 1.12

Imaginary Lands.

Japanese selfhood throughout constitutions of Asia. Images of nature are also used to constitute an Asia that has a plenitude of natural oppositions, including the dangerous and the safe. Moreover, during the years of empire especially, symbols of a unique and mythically natural Japanese self-identity, such as the cone volcano, exemplified in the image of Mount Fuji or the hierarchical family, are used to assimilate the difference of the Asian other.

Next, the discussion turns to visual Japanese memories of war crimes and atrocities in Asia. These arise directly from the conditions of Japan’s defeat. They are produced after a gradual discursive loss of the Asian other as the Pacific War ends. The Asian other is recovered in discourse by 1947, and among the many ways of representing Asia in postwar Japan we find images of wartime atrocities. While these may appear to be signs of a critical remembering of Japanese imperialism in Asia, I advance semiotic and hermeneutic insights along with the intellectual discussion about the nature of haji (shame) in both English and Japanese literature to locate a socially pertinent amnesia within these breast-beating, sack-cloth and ashes images rather than any critique to do with responsibility. Particularly important in agony is the possibility of redemption and Japan’s attempts to redeem itself from its agony over its past conduct in Asia are considered in relation to the exemplary screenplays, Biruma no Tategoto (The Harp of Burma) and Ningen no Jōken (The Human Condition).

In the fourth chapter, which is both theoretically and stylistically inspired by the parler-femme of Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, I read both imperial and post-war Japanese images of the Asia in ways
that explicate their gendering of the other. Making an analogical rather than a logical argument, I suggest that the metaphors and adjectives used by males to describe women associate in a textual terrain with metaphors used to imagine native others. Lack and its rectification are the primary tropes here. The Asian other's insufficiencies feminize it, rendering it spreadeagled and open to Japanese rectification. Insufficiencies are produced in constitutions of Asia as lacking the signs of Japanese identity: reason, stability, language, light, and will. These signs of lack in the other move almost unchanged through prewar and postwar history. They imagine the gender of the other as feminine, and in so doing, construct an other and a self that made Asia a rightful Japanese colony before 1945 and a target for the exploitations of Japanese international capital in the contemporary period.

Next, in a Lacanian mode I consider Japanese representations of Asia as acts of desire. Woman and her body as exemplary of otherness, as well as the mediations between desire and necessity, are discussed as they pertain to Japanese imperialism and international investment in Asia. Finally, in this chapter my focus turns to images of Asia that represent it as a Japanese commodity, considering them in terms of Freud's concept of the fetish, problematizing them against recent arguments about the history of the turning of desire out towards the commodity, and discussing them against visions of the department store and mall as a space for enactment of contemporary desire.

Lastly, I mobilize ideas of symbolic resistance drawn from Michel Foucault, Richard Terdiman, and Julia Kristeva, seeking a way to open up alternative readings of Japanese representations of Asia, and trying
Figure 1.13

Imagining Darjeeling, India.

to locate alternative modes for imagining Asia in Japan. In an attempt
to emphasize the imaginary quality of all interpretive writings, I offer
rereadings of texts already considered in earlier chapters. Then I
search for and read Japanese representations of Asia that, in their
failure to conform to the fields outlined above, show traces of a
struggle against authorized constitutions of Asia in Japan.

3.

Although *Imaginary Lands* spends some time elaborating the
theories it brings into contact with Japanese imaginations of Asia, it is
not an exegesis upon such matters as what Roland Barthes really
means in his essay, *Mythology Today*, nor is it a commentary on
Lacan's *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. To me at least,
there is something unhappily restricted about theory for theory's sake;
something smacking of academic narcissism about yet another essay
on the true meaning of Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition*. I take the
view that theory retains its novelty, its ability to effect the "shock of
the new," when it is brought to play in and about material examples. In
its relationship with an hermeneutic anchor the moves that theory can
make or that can be made with theory are often more clearly
articulated. This I hope offers a better chance for me and for you, the
reader, to learn about it theory and the material it encounters.
Poststructural theories of language and meaning, of self and other, are
a response to the materiality of language itself, and to the materiality
of the conditions in which the subject is made and resides. Thus, and
Foucault makes this very apparent in all but one of his major writings,
The Archaeology of Knowledge, theories of the kind advanced in Imaginary Lands blossom in their ties to hermeneutic anchors.

It is, however, at this very site of the engagement of theory and material matters (Japan), where theory is best displayed, that a major problem for Imaginary Lands occurs. I refer here to a particular type of interaction between some Japan specialists in the United States, Great Britain and Australia and an emerging plurality in modes of writing about Japan, some points of which advance critical theory. When it comes to writings on Japan that are informed by contemporary critical theory, the former tend to forget their intellectual commitments to acceptance and promotion of multiple scholarly practices. H. D. Harootunian describes the reaction of the Japan studies establishment to the more poststructural critiques of Japan very well. An article announcing his theoretical concerns elicited widespread commentary that denounced the informing impulse and, by extension, all such exercises as theoretically top-heavy, materially insubstantial, jargonistic, and generally insensitive to the conventions of "lucid" historical writing...When critics turned to my conclusions regarding the nativist program, they appealed to received canons of historical narrativity and charged my interpretation with a lack of clarity and insufficient evidence.28

The denunciations (for they are not criticisms) of a lack of substance, an excess of jargon, stylistic opacity, insufficient evidence, and contravention of the "established" ways of doing history hurled at Harootunian's theoretical attachments are particularly pertinent to Imaginary Lands. Beginning as a history of Japanese representations of

Asia, *Imaginary Lands* eventually came to oppose the pious practices and empiricist or positivistic investments of much Japan-focused historiography. In contrast to those forms of intellectual practice which see only one fixed Japan, which are less than suspicious of the discourses they examine, and which prefer to leave their own interpretive practices unscrutinized, *Imaginary Lands* chooses to see history and Japan as a multiple number of mobile narratives. That is, in *Imaginary Lands*, Japan and history are mediated by the word and the image so that they become constitutive stories for us. These stories about Japan and the past change and shift according to the nature of the interpretive modes employed to construct them, and depending on the moments in time in which the stories are always repeated, reformulated, and changed. To paraphrase Joan Cocks, I focus on the less rather than the more solidified form, the formation rather than the institution, the thought of the act rather than the act, on the part of the thought that is mobile rather than fixed, on the fanciful, the metaphorical and the stylistic rather than the substantive. 

This is not to say, however, that I reject out of hand the history of empiricist and positivistic scholarship in Japan studies, for as both the bibliography and my own writing demonstrate, *Imaginary Lands* cannot help but be informed by all that precedes it.

The empirical and positivistic style of writing about Japan developed by the Western Japanologist establishment is Orientalist. Difficult complexities, pluralities, lacuna, and slippages that reside within the nominative field imagined as Japan tend in these sort of

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29 Cocks, *Oppositional Imagination*, p. 36.
Figure 1.14

Imagining Korea.

"Landscape, Korea" by Fujishima Takeji, 1913

texts to be reduced to a single and finite kind of Japan for us to know. Until recent times, the Japan constituted in the academies of America and Europe by Japan specialists existed unproblematically. Attempts to oppose the lineaments of this Japan, which in themselves comply with American foreign policy objectives and political discourse, such as E.H. Norman's Marxist influenced *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State* (1940), John Dower's attempted recovery of Norman's work in *Origins of the Modern Japanese State* (1975), and, more recently, Dorinne Kondo's *Crafting Selves*, meet with sometimes fierce attempts to reimpose the standard version of Japan. Norman's work was silenced, sometimes removed from library shelves, rarely included in post-war American syllabi, and the author himself faced accusations and insinuations from Wittfogel in the McCarran committee prior to his suicide in Cairo. John Dower's attempt to recover Norman in 1975 produced a torrent of criticism, and Dorinne Kondo's more poststructural alternative to the standard constitution of Japan, while publicly acknowledged as the superb and innovative ethnology it is, has been privately deplored for sections that are criticized as impertinent towards her academic seniors.

Dismissive or violent reactions to writings on Japan informed by poststructural theory are symptomatic of the enormous investment empiricists and positivists have made in constructing a particular idea of Japan. In its constant return to reflexivity, poststructural theory threatens to erode the value of that authorized Japan. That established Japan is circumscribed by sets of oppositional rubrics that may include such binaries as a Japan that is both modernizing and feudal, democratic and undemocratic, consensual and conflictual, and so on.
So too, the problems occupying canonical places in the Japanologist epistemology revolve around oppositional questions. For example, students of Japanese history at the graduate level in the United States are often obliged to reconsider and re-answer formulaic commonensical questions which, according to the pedagogues, cannot be decentered. Questions of this sort may include: Was Japanese colonialism benevolent or barbaric? Was the Meiji Restoration a revolution or not? Was Japanese militarism during the 1930s and 1940s an aberration from a normal progress towards industrialized democracy or was it par for the course? Questions like these have been forcefully installed in the institutional practices of American Japan specialists. In its preoccupation with the act rather than the thought or practice of the act, established Japan studies contrives an authorized discourse which constitutes a Japan in which the constitutive act and the political agendas deployed in that act, are concealed behind a fixed lexicon of institutionalized, descriptive rubrics and scholarly problems. Only rarely is there an acknowledgement that academic writing about Japan is as much an imaginative act as the novel. Only in very recent times can we find expression of that imaginative practice and its complicity in a broader discursive economy. The study of Japan is, as Brian Moeran puts it,

a way of coming to terms with Japan that is based on Japan's place in Western European and American experience. Japanism is a mode of discourse, a body of knowledge, a political vision of reality that represents an integral part of Western material civilization both culturally and ideologically...

Only too occasionally is an alternative constitution of Japan permitted into the privileged arena of Japanologist authority.

*Imaginary Lands* imagines itself, the Japan it constitutes, and the Asias imagined by Japanese as a loose pastiche of the productions and imaginations of other Western writers on Japan, including those most invested in positivism, of a variety of Japanese artists, photographers, poets, writers, cartoonists, film-makers, and scholars. What I do not do in *Imaginary Lands* is to make any claim that the Japans imagined here, nor the Asias I read in Japanese texts, are complete, true or real. But that does not exclude me from constituting a Japan despite myself. While language itself is unstable, it has in this case tied me down to repeated use of the words, "Japan" and "Japanese", both terms bringing with them a history of significance that is not my own.

At the least, the terms "Japan" and "Japanese" tend to enable us to unify a plurality of selves into a whole subject. Both Donna Haraway31 and Dorinne Kondo, among others, critique the concern of poststructural interpretation with the coherent, bounded whole subject. Kondo, in particular, wonders whether the concept of the whole self, and thus the poststructural mode for critique of it, is so applicable in a culture such as that of Japan, where identity is often multiple and situationally constituted, and where culture has a very different relation with the word.32 But, of course the subject is never whole in any modern culture. It is the mission of authorized discourse to construct subjects that seem to be whole and it is that unifying

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32 Ibid.
Figure 1.15

Imagining Korea.

"Market" by Yamaguchi Hōshun, 1932

practice of language that postmodern modes of writing seek to disrupt. While the relation of Japanese subjects to the word, to language, may indeed be different, in as much as the contours of Japanese subjectivities produced by language bear the signs of the peculiarities of the Japanese symbolic system, the relation of the Japanese subject to the word is also a relationship of the constituted to the constitutive. That is the force of all language: power to produce the world as it is known. Kondo's misreading of the relation of language to the whole subject is symptomatic of the urgent need to mount an opposition to the single or binary conception of permitted Japans imagined by Japan specialists in the Western academy. Imaginary Lands too, needs to destabilize the Japans that precede it. However, because it is largely a reading of imaginations of the Asian other constituted in authorized Japanese texts, which constituting the other, act at the same time to inscribe a whole Japanese self-identity, Imaginary Lands always nominates that unified subject as Japan and the Japanese. Pressed to respond to an interrogation as to what I mean when I use "Japan" and "the Japanese", I could offer the following responses: First, a reiteration of preceding statements concerning the imaginative constitutive practices of all writing and interpretation, not least those in Imaginary Lands, which enable my own constitutions of Japan for a non-Japanese readership. Second, I would like to refer the reader to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the habitus as a way of recoding my earlier arguments about the virtual coincidence of discourse with the whole subject. According to Bourdieu, the habitus is a community of dispositions, "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences,
functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations*, and *actions.*"33 It seems to me, that Bourdieu's habitus is subjectivity, the whole self. Created out of history, which is itself the symbolic system, the habitus in *Imaginary Lands* is the collective of Japanese imaginations of the Asian other and of Japanese selfhood.

4.

*Imaginary Lands* begins with the problem of the other and how I am to enter into it in sufficient depth to satisfy the academy's demands for veracity, while at the same time maintaining a space in which the difference of the other remains untainted by the identities I may supply to it. I suggested that the common powers of language to make the world as it is known points us towards the symbolic field where a site for engagement with constitutions of otherness and productions of identity may be found. But that is perhaps only a part of the story that *Imaginary Lands* is trying to tell about identity and relations between self and other. In writing about the other there is a need to find a political stance that enables engagements with otherness rather than appropriations of it. While, that necessity is a central problem for theorists ranging from Gilles Deleuze to Judith Butler, it is to a Japanese writer, and a French feminist that *Imaginary Lands* turns in order to suggest the attitude of that stance. The lineaments of this attitude can be traced in a very long quote from the introduction to a study of relations between Japan and Asia by the scholar, Tsurumi Yoshiyuki:

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On the afternoon of that day I was the happiest in many days. It is fine to say that my dreams of travel had been fulfilled. In the northern extremities of the east coast of the Malayan peninsula, travelling south from the Thai border, I willfully abandoned the shared taxi and spent half a day in a fishing village set around a small inlet. The men do such things as go out fishing or work at certain several small fish cake factories or lumber mills. Though the women no doubt had childcare and housework, the women and children gathered in the cottages dotting the spreading sand dunes and passed time at ease amongst the waves and sea breezes. Goats, chickens, dogs, cats, and children played at the water's edge.

People bathed near fishermen casting nets. Their gentle looks scrutinized me. A Muslim cemetery, nearly in the center rather than the outskirts of town, seemed to tell of the religious faith of a simple-hearted, transcendent people.

Here was the "Village of Dreams". The harmonious ordering of human being and human being, of human being and nature, captivates me. But this does not mean that I am insensitive to myself as a foreigner. The traveller is isolated insofar as he finds such a village picturesque.

For example, how much of a relationship would develop between me and those children after that? Even granted that one was provided with food to eat and a place to live, this is their kingdom and I am merely an uninvited intruder.

A farm-owning Australian couple, with whom I happened to share a car in Singapore, said that they came from Tasmania for a sight-seeing trip but that recently it had come about that young Japanese were appearing in the YMCA of the town where they live too, and they reported, without holding a bad impression, that one such person had come and offered them a days manual labor in exchange for a meal and lodging. On reflection, it is a fact that Japanese people, too, have come to haunt every nook and cranny of the world.

But, on hearing that story, I instantly recalled Japanese television commercials. How nature inundates one in today's commercials. The more there are modern products such as cars and electrical goods, the more "White sand and green pines" or "Green tablelands", which have become fictitious things in contemporary Japan, appear in the background. The presentations of "nature" on television seem to be evidence of its own artificiality.

Both the Tasmanian farm and my dream village, too, really exist, but the powerful mechanism that appeals to
me or the young man resembles the "nature" in television commercials.

What is more, even though I wrote that this place is their kingdom, that was also probably only an exterior observation, really a tourist sentiment. Though it could be said that in comparison to the west coast, which has such cities as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Melaka, the east coast is poor, I am not concerned about that poverty. One cannot help but feel that the very same force that rendered nature artificial in Japan is even now pressing in upon even this sort of Malayan fishing village.

Though this is an ocean providing daily sustenance to the fisherfolk, off-shore oil rigs are being widely established and, day and night, big capital competes fiercely. Off the coast at Kuantan, not far from here, oil was recently discovered.

In a town larger than the village where I had abandoned the shared taxi the government had only recently built a cottage-style hotel. It was of a kind called a guest-house in Malaysia. I went out there to drink beer and the waiter reported to me a little triumphantly that in two months a sightseeing group of eighteen people from England would show up and stay. Since there is no airport in this town, in all likelihood they will turn up in a bus sent from Singapore and doubtless, the next day they will go on north to Kota Baharu, changing to a steam train from there, passing through to Bangkok. In comparison to Japan, English conservation of nature is far and away the stronger but it seems that the Southeast Asian fishing village has the same force of appeal to these Britons too, as does "nature" on Japanese television. What is more, viewed as an old British possession, perhaps for them this is a place called "the stranger's home in which one knows the kitchen" (katte shittaru tanin no ie). No-it cannot be said we Japanese are strangers here either. Kota Baharu was one of the points of disembarkation for Yamashita Tomoyuki's invading forces in 1941.

My attachment to Asia has two contradictory components. The more Asia captivates me the more I desire to be prudent. Perhaps I can at least have courtesy toward the "village of dreams."

There is much here that is exemplary of the kinds of Japanese imaginary strategies I shall be considering in the chapters that follow but, for now, I want to deal with Tsurumi's view of his proper place in

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Figure 1.16

Imaginary Lands: A Chinese scene.

relation to the Asian other, and to consider the traces of a romantic heuristic running through this text. There is no doubt that in contrast to most American Japan specialists, Tsurumi finds the possibility of entering the other's milieu problematic and that he is willing to externalize rather than conceal, allow rather than resolve that problem. Indeed, in a later section of the text he takes up as a problem of his own work a question often asked by students in his seminars on Asia: *Ittai wareware wa Nihonjin de nakunaru koto ga dekiru darō ka* ("How on earth can we become not Japanese?")

When it comes to identifying and describing the other too, Tsurumi knows the imaginative practices of the subject, as well as the inscriptive powers of the image. Like *Imaginary Lands*, Tsurumi accepts the endlessly exterior place of the self, accepts not knowing the other. He adopts a desire restrained by prudence and courtesy to fill the vacancy created by that failure of knowledge. *Imaginary Lands*, on the other hand, values the rash act over the prudent deed, impertinence over courtesy. For me, the space of non-knowledge is a place where the possibility of a suspension of language is held out. A place where, as Trinh Minh-ha puts it, we are constantly subverting codes with non-knowledge, where we are constantly realizing our ignorance, and where we always writing in a critically self-reflexive fashion.35

Nevertheless, just as Tsurumi's image of Malay fishermen recirculates the Rousseauian romance of the nobility of the natural, so too, this conception of the non-knowing space circulates the

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postmodern romance with the unassimilating, non-dominating possibilities for writing about the other. And this romance is perhaps the best that I can do in my relations with the Japanese other in *Imaginary Lands*:

The work we do is a work of love, comparable to the work of love that can take place between two human beings. To understand the other, it is necessary to go in their language, to make the journey through the other's imaginary. For you are strange to me. In the effort to understand, I bring you back to me, compare you to me. I translate you in me. And what I note is your difference, your strangeness. At that moment, perhaps, through recognition of my own differences, I might perceive something of you.36

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Figure 2.1

The trees of Ginkakuji, forced into the shape of the natural, 1990.
CHAPTER 2
ASSIMILATING AND DIFFERENTIATING THE IMAGINARY LANDS

The natives believe themselves to have been made of earth. Unwarranted humility. Once, I too, had humility towards wealth or good looks above my own but did I miserably display my state in any way? Spiritual pain, given by human differences. That is the unseen prison.

Kaneko Mitsuharu, "Mare Ranin Kiko" 1940

In the grounds of the Ginkaku temple in northeastern Kyoto there is a very famous, well-visited garden. Like gardens everywhere, these temple grounds represent the relationship between human beings and nature; between the self and the other. The great popularity of Ginkakuji's representations of the relationship between the subject and nature is said to attest to a special Japanese love of and accord with nature. To my Australian eye, however, which always associates the otherness of nature with the wild, love and accord are among the last things that come to mind. The first thing that strikes me about the gardens of Ginkakuji is the forceful ministration of nature as other practiced by man. Here, there are ancient trees supported by bamboo crutches. Through decades of applications of wire, their limbs become twisted into artful representations of wind-blown conifers. There is the representation of nature, the other, in a miniature Mount Fuji, three feet high, made from grey sand, with flanks smoothed to the finish of pavement concrete.

Both tortured trees and artificial mountain represent one Japanese construction of nature, but they also represent a practice in relations between selves and others that can be usefully taken out of the gardens of Kyoto and engaged with Japanese images of other
Figure 2.2
Asians and the politics of identity that operates there. In their stern control of nature at Ginkakuji Japanese gardeners signify a desire to assimilate the otherness of the natural into the terms of the self's control through representation. But, almost paradoxically, their espaliers and crutches always aim at a representation of nature as it can be seen when left to grow without human interference. This reinforces the dangerous otherness of the natural, always recovering that very difference that brought the natural under control. A very similar practice goes on in relations between powerful selves and less powerful others. In *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov makes the point that Columbus, and later the Spanish conquistadors, had an ambivalent relationship with the Caribbean and Meso-American others they encountered and then subjugated. In their representations of the other they both differentiated it from and assimilated it to themselves. Todorov goes on to make the further point that this simultaneous differentiating and assimilating dyad is a constant practice in imperial politics of identity especially, and that it has continued into the practices of twentieth-century imperialism. Because Western theories of imperialism and Western imperial ideologies underpinned much of Japan's own imperial discourse, *Imaginary Lands* takes up this differentiating and assimilating practice in Japanese images of other Asians as exemplary of one node of imagination in Japanese images of Asia.

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In one sense, images always assimilate the other. That is to say, representations of other Asians in Japanese images assimilate the other to a Japanese gaze. There, the looked-at is made into a part of the imaginative strategies of self. Any actual difference or similitude that the other may have in its own view is assimilated to Japanese productions, determinations and controls of the image of the other. And because images are of inordinate importance in furthering the effects of the discourses of truth and power, representation of the Asian other in a Japanese symbolic order both makes it real and uses it to construct and fix elements of Japanese identities.

Photographs are especially important in this sort of assimilation of the other to Japanese ways of knowing. Indeed, photographs of Asia are one of the most common modes for imagining Asia in twentieth-century Japan. In view its economical reproducibility, the proliferation of photographs as a means for representation of the other should be unsurprising. But more than that, since the photograph's capacity to construct unusually effective reproductions of reality makes it especially efficient in furthering the discourses of truth and power within which the constructions of identity lie, it also possesses a great ability to further the assimilation of the other into the imagination of the self. Of course, all visual texts seek to advance their meaning through heightened claims to the reality of what they represent, but amongst the various visual media in *Imaginary Lands*, photography wields the most substantial claims on the real. A great deal has been written about the especially naturalized status of the photographed object, and I am not going to offer a novel critique or extension of
No one can deny that the Sanzen Temple gardens have actually been there in this photograph.
those in *Imaginary Lands*. What it is important to note here, however, is the idea of the exceptional relationship existing between photography and the real. Photographs maintain a very superior claim to verisimilitude. Using pictorial standards of realism, particularly the rules of perspective, and claiming to witness the actuality of whatever they seek to represent, their style, which like any style is a sign of the unnatural, of the made, is almost impossible to detect. Roland Barthes describes the photograph as "a message without a code."\(^2\) and W.J.T. Mitchell characterizes the photographic image as "absolutely analogical." But both men are suggesting that the photograph involves a signifying ethic rather different from the ethics of other images and very different from linguistic images. With photographs, there is really no way of denying that the object in the photograph has actually been there. Thus, representations of Asia in photographic images, such as Figures 2.1 to 2.3 have the impact of the real. The context or social frame containing the image's priorities is unnamed. The act of representation, which is a political act with interests and investments to service, is elided. What is represented appears as the non-represented, as the real, true and guilelessly produced. In contrast to painting or writing, the representational practices of photography are so invisible that the image's claims to reality and truth brook scant contest. For this reason, the photograph's service to the discourses of power and authority, and to assimilations of the idea of the Asian other into Japanese imagination is substantial.

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Figure 2.4

Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

Photography's power to make invisible its style and thus, to assimilate the other into the discourse of self-identity, is far superior to any similar powers possessed by painting. Figure 2.4, a recent photograph of Tiananmen Square, is exemplary of the extreme claims for reality that photographs make. There can be little doubt that the entrance to the Forbidden City has actually been there, and that the photographic apparatus has been there too, to witness its actuality. Perspective, that central device in the successful visual representation of the object, is extreme here. The position of the viewing gaze is carefully situated at eye level, where it successfully naturalizes subject/object relations by replicating the way we see, making it easier for the other to undergo its incorporation into Japanese signification. Through representation that uses codes drawn from the physical experience of seeing, the image produces a powerful sense of "almost being there." This evocation and reconstruction of presence in Tiananmen Square makes an other that is actually there in the authorized constructions of Japanese identity, rather than in another place which may be unassimilable. The grammar of this photograph—the place of the gaze, focal length and hyperreal colours—conceals its style. The actuality of this part of Beijing, conducted into the image, mystifies the act of representation that has produced the image, and in this mystified act of representing the other, the other's assimilation into Japan's discourse about itself is eased and simplified.

While photography is undoubtedly the most effective visual genre for assimilation of the other into Japanese imaginations, it is not the only genre that uses claims on reality to assimilate the other. Despite their constant betrayals of their own productive strategies, paintings
Figure 2.5

"Overlooking the Kōho River" by Fujishima Takeji, 1938

Figure 2.6

Looking out and over the other from within: A view of China.

too, act to assimilate other Asians into Japanese discourse. Figure 2.5, a Fujishima Takeji watercolor of China from the late 1930s, is pertinent here. Using a summons to established ways of actually seeing the object, this painting attempts to incorporate the other into a way of knowing that is not the other's own. In both paintings, our gaze is located within and goes out from an interior space. This looking out from within reproduces a way of seeing that is familiar to us all. In modernity, looking from inside to outside is perhaps the most common position for the subject in its visual relations with the object. Most of us live within doors. We look out at the other through doors and windows. Visual representation too, evokes this experience through the use of the frame. Because we so often experience the "real" object from this interior place, seeing it caught within the sort of rectangular frame so effectively reproduced here, Fujishima Takeji's painting represents a simulacra of the self's actual gaze upon others. Creating an inside/outside relation that, by virtue of its historical entrenchment in both everyday life and in its formalization as perspective in the practices of visual representation, these paintings make our viewing of China seem right and natural, easing the other into the self's imaginary in much the same way as photographs do.

But even in the absence of any strong claim upon the reality of the represented object, images still work to assimilate the other into the self's discourses. In a 1940 painting of Beijing by Umehara Ryūsaburō (Figure 2.7) style and the signs of style seem to betray the act of representing the other and thus, to make difficult any simple incorporation of the other. Umehara's paint is painterly: thick and worked. The signs of brush and oil betray the translation of reality that
Figure 2.7

"Tzu-Chin-Cheng (Pekin)" by Umehara Ryūsaburō, 1940.

has taken place in production of the image. Perspective provides depth and a trace of the real but its power to make the represented object real is paradoxically resisted by brush, paint, impressionistic articulation of form and space, as well as a certain play with the laws of perspective.

Umehara's representation of Beijing seeks assimilation of the Asian other into Japanese discourse nonetheless. Umehara's colors signify that assimilation, for they represent China in terms of Japanese self-identity. Green and vermilion paint comply with the discursive economies of imperial Japanese mythologies concerning the immanent and imminent Japaneseness of the subjugated Chinese. The colors represent the otherness of China in a language of similitude, as a subjective reflection of the Japanese self. During the imperial period, writes Harada Hikaru, green and vermilion were regarded as symbolic colors of Japanese selfhood, with powers to signify Japanese identity. Green symbolizes nature, for which discourse in Japan constructs a special relationship with the subject. Vermilion, the favorite color of the jinja, the Shinto shrine, evokes Shinto, the other-mystifying, animistic and ancestral cult which, as we shall see shortly, mediates the special relationship between Japanese subjectivity and nature (green). This is not to say that Umehara fictionalized the colors of wartime Beijing, for in parts of the city at that time the overwhelming impression was of vermilion rooftops, red walls and green trees. But Umehara's style is impressionistic and has the freedom to make

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choices about color that may not coincide with the colors of the object chosen for representation. Impressionist painting is a deliberately interpretive genre and, whether he knew it or not, Umehara made a choice to represent the other in colors possessing a capacity to summon part of the officially sanctioned imperial Japanese identity. Despite the conspicuous painterly style in this painting then, the use of colors, that in other discursive places operate as signs of the Japanese identity, within representations of the Asian other assimilates difference into a part of Japanese selfhood. Chinese otherness, together with the brutal and sanguine subjugation of China by Japan brought about by that otherness, is assimilated to Japan in this painting. This is a China that, because of its representation by Umehara in colors that have a traditional and thus, natural place in signifying Japanese selfhood, is no longer the China of the other and is already a Japanese China. This vermilion and green Beijing is both produced by and productive of, the imperial assumption that the Chinese and China are part of, or are becoming part of an expanded Japanese self materializing in the fact of empire.

2.

Constructed as other through these basic assimilations into the self's discursive fields, the image of Asia then undergoes a variety of imaginative productions. Many of these represent attempts to both assimilate and differentiate the other in Japanese imaginations of it. Nature, natural signs and their places in Japanese ways of representing Japanese identity are important here, as are Roland Barthes' comments on views. In the landscape images represented by Figures 2.8 to 2.11 the Asian other is represented in terms of nature.
Figure 2.8
Nature and the other: A view of the Dutch East Indies.
Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
Figure 2.9

Overlooking China and nature.

Figure 2.10

The deserts of Western Asia

Figure 2.11

Overlooking Lake Batur in Bali.

In Figures 2.12 and 2.13 nature and the other becomes a panorama, represented from a place that Roland Barthes identifies as the belvedere. Barthes writes that belvederes "are outlooks upon nature, whose elements - waters, valleys, forests - they assemble beneath them, so that the tourism of the 'fine view' infallibly implies a naturist mythology."\(^4\) According to Barthes, the belvedere yields nature up for "aesthetic appreciation."\(^5\) But more than that, in Japan's politics of identity, where the Asian other comes to be represented in or with images of nature, belvederes are the preliminary part of a practice that utilizes nature in assimilations of otherness to selfhood. Within a Japanese context, Barthes' naturist mythology must be seen as inextricably complicitous with Shinto mythology, and with the substantial representations of Japanese subjectivity that are located within or delivered from that mythology. When this naturist mythology, which is productive of elements of Japanese identity, is circulated as it is throughout Showa period Japanese representations of the Asian other, it is also productive of an other that is signified and known through signs of Japanese self-identity. In this productive process, nature in Japanese images of Asia regulates and assimilates the difference of the other.

There is a discursive economy in which Japanese naturist myth, together with its power in self-identification and its assimilating functions on Asian difference, is constructed. Among both Western and Japanese Japan specialists it has become almost humdrum to imagine


Figure 2.12

"The Final Attack on Hong Kong Island" by Yamaguchi Hōshun, 1942.

Figure 2.13

"Sunrise, Mongolia" by Fujishima Takeji, 1937.

Figure 2.14

I find and use my own belvederes in Japan.
a special relationship with nature for the Japanese. Implicit in these claims is the idea that, in contrast to Western workings of the subject/nature relationship, for the Japanese nature is well integrated within the human and cosmic milieu. Nature for the Japanese is not passive and thus, not prone to the sorts of rapacious exploitations conducted in the West. In Western studies at least, the unique nature of human/nature relations in Japan is often drawn from reading Japanese founding chronicles as transparent templates that determine practices in contemporary Japanese society. For example, despite his claims to the contrary, John Pelzel's interpretation of the Kojiki and Nihongi promotes the idea that the continued popularity of these two major Japanese founding tales in modern Japan produces a special contemporary Japanese relationship with nature derived from the type of human/nature relationship described there.  

According to Pelzel, in the founding tales

human culture much as it persisted well down into historical times is taken as already given, its origins of no interest, its celebration of no utility. The natural world has life and will that are all but identical with those of man,... The myths are filled with an appreciation of the flora and topographic features of the islands of Japan, and the message of the hero tale is that this world is a harmonious union of the life of man with the life of nature. One sees here, in other words, the first literary expression of that acute and comradely sensitivity to physical nature that has been a hallmark of the customs of Japanese life down to our own day.

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6 The Kojiki is a founding myth and a genealogical chronology first put together from 711 onwards. The Nihongi is a collection of chronicles from the origin of Japan to the end of the reign of the emperor Jito (696), written from about 720. Both are significant texts and ideological instruments of Shinto, stressing as they do imperial and divine genealogy.

For Japanese Japan specialists too, the Japanese subject's unique relationship with the natural is a consequence of history. It lies, 

in the ancient Japanese sensibility that values a close intimacy with nature and places a deep trust in it...The Japanese believe that man does not stand opposed to nature, but is an integral part of it.8

No doubt, the productions of nature and its relationship with the subject circulating in Japan, owing much to history and to the particularity that I call here Japan, do differ from an exploitative and objectifying Western idea of nature. At the very least, there are clear traces of that difference in examples as diverse as the annual sarukuyo, a memorial service for monkeys killed in the course of scientific research conducted in Kyoto,9 and in the continued private and institutional ritual veneration of flora, fauna and topography for their spiritual qualities.

It is in representation that this unique Japanese relationship with nature is most articulate, and so it follows from this that the "emotional proximity to nature"10 is frequently reproduced in representations of the other Asia throughout the twentieth-century. For example, during his visit to Indonesia at the time of its occupation by Japan, Koide Shōgo cannot resist an almost excessive recording of the abundance of the natural that accompanies the otherness of Asia. Fruit and fecundity are especially important here. "There are various kinds of pisang (banana)," he writes in 1944, demonstrating an

The uniquely harmonious Japanese relations with nature are exemplified in the ability to craft gardens that evoke both the control of humanity on the natural, as well as nature at its untrammeled best. The gardens at Sanzenin near Kyoto, 1990.
obsession with tropical fruit that is characteristic of Japanese imaginations of the tropics,

and if those that cannot be eaten are counted, they amount to more than two hundred varieties. In botany, the Japanese banana plant is the same variety of banana as the Manila hemp tree. Even though in Java I was taught only the name "pisang", there were diverse types, for example, pisang masu, pisang raja, pisang gaden, pisang monie, pisang susu, pisang bato, pisang roto, pisang bedegu.11

The sheer variety of nature in the Southern Region (Nanpō) is joined by images of its tropical fecundity:

When one goes and looks in the gardens of the farmhouses, the planted roots of pisang, with leaves of green growing luxuriantly, and with great purple colored flowers, which have base roots that are the tufts of bananas, hanging down, spring up in countless piles.12

Long after the war, nature remains a central introduction to memories of the other. Pacific War veteran, Okada Fumihide, records his recollection of Southeast Asia during the Japanese occupation, summoning the special place of nature in Japanese mythology:

We would stand on the seashore in the cool evening air, and stare at the beautiful setting sun...The air was really very clear, and you could often smell the indescribably beautiful fragrance of flowers wafting through the air. The South was abundant in nature.13

And in 1975, Ikeda Daisaku writes to his friend, poet and novelist and Asianist, Inoue Yasushi, demonstrating the central place of nature in Japanese writing and discourse about the Asian other:

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Figure 2.16

Nature and otherness: Fruit of the Southern Region.

Figure 2.17

A Freight of Bananas: Koide Shōgo's fascination with the fruit of the Asian other continues to absorb and feed Japan in the postwar years.

The white sunlight of Beijing in April is dazzling. At the time of my last visit to the city, the leafless willow branches were silhouetted against a cold winter sky. Now waves of brilliant light bathed the new green-gold buds, and yellow plum, pink peach, and white pear blossoms filled the city streets.

At the pinnacle of this vernal splendor, I was given the unexpected opportunity to meet Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia...I am told that Sihanouk means lion. And indeed, the prince made an impression of a lion who has suffered and survived long obscurity.¹⁴

Nature's special intimacy with Japanese subjectivity is indicated in several ways here. Ikeda marks the chronology of his experience of the Asian other with the natural evidence of seasonal change. It is something of a truism to point out that, in Japanese culture, the seasons still possess enormous significance in social, economic and cultural orders and affairs. Modernity has done nothing to dilute the force of the seasons as constitutive of a unique selfhood, for Japanese consumerism commodifies the seasons in the form of control of the supply of goods--matsutake, persimmon, sabazushi, strawberries, clothing--associated with them and with proper behavior in Japan. During my times in Japan I found the economic and bureaucratic regulation of subject and season both reassuring and frustrating. Appearance of seasonal foods on market shelves at certain times, and only certain times, of the year, served to remind me of the life beyond the affairs of the polis, but closure of municipal swimming pools on September 1 each year or the ignition of office heating on a certain date every year, heat and humidity notwithstanding, had an opposite effect. The seasons in Japan have become so tied up with the chronological reinforcement of Japanese identity that, as recently as

1989, my Japanese students expressed some surprise on being told that Americans and Australians had and enjoyed the seasons, too. Thus, in its juxtapositioning with the seasons, Ikeda's history of his encounter with Asian otherness written in terms of nature, which is itself a sign of Japanese identity, assimilates the other to a particular set of constitutions of Japanese selfhood. So too, in his encounter with one of the great and mythical symbols of postcolonial Asia, Norodom Sihanouk, Ikeda cannot resist conflating this other with the natural in the simile of the lion. Ikeda's writing recovers the special Japanese relationship with nature. That relationship is a sign of Japanese identity, and so Ikeda's representation of Asia in the images of the natural sets an assimilation of difference in train.

The mythological character of this unique horizontal relationship between Japan and nature makes it especially powerful in its capacity as an assimilator of otherness. But both Pamela Asquith and Donna Haraway argue that the horizontal structure of Japanese subject/nature relations are also accompanied by vertical or hierarchical relations.15 Haraway, in particular, contextualizes this dual horizontal and vertical relationship with the natural within ancient Japanese philosophical discourses, according a Buddhist genealogy to horizontality and a Confucian genealogy to verticality. In this sort of reading, Japanese relations with nature that may appear to the Western eye as organizing, taming, callous or abusive, are read as practices exemplifying both the unified field within which the human subject

and nature reside in Japanese signification and, at the same time, the lower location of nature in the hierarchical organization of space within that field. But both Asquith and Haraway are somewhat too quick to exclude the force of Japan's inscription by Western epistemologies over the last five hundred years in their accounts. Tetsuo Najita recently made the point that Japanese history since the middle of the nineteenth-century at least, has been marked by an encounter with an internal other.  

16 This is the other of Western science, industry and technology. Together with its attendant discourses of rationality and utility, the other of Western science and technology enforced profound transformations in the place of culture and self-identity in Japan, as well as in those practices constituting them. Perhaps then, the internal other of Western science and industry in Japan brings with it implementations of the nature/human relationship in its Western construal, as "a set of laws susceptible to human knowledge, a deposit of resources for potential use."  

17 Certainly, when I recall the Minamata mercury poisoning, when I am confronted in Japan with the sight of a series of rural Okayama Prefecture hills half wrapped in reinforced concrete, or when I discover that whale meat is still a gourmet item on sale in the sakana-ya of Kyoto's Nishikikōji Street, Pelzel's "acute and comradely sensitivity to physical nature" is not a phrase that seems to be an apt description of nature and subject relations in contemporary Japan.

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17 William Connolly, Political Theory and Modernity, p. 2.
Indeed, it is the very diversity and proliferation of exploitation and abuse of the environment in Japan, of which the preceding are just a very minor index, that suggests to me that the "special" Japanese relationship with nature is mythological in its character. That is, through mobilization of "a sum of signs, a global sign, the final term of a first semiological chain"\(^ {18} \) nature provides a discursive way toward constituting parts of the dominant Japanese selfhood. In this case, the first semiological chain is Shinto. The final term of that chain was reached when complex, rigid construction and codification of Shinto ritual, language and practice was completed in the latter nineteenth-century. State appropriation of the cult in service to order in the flux of industrialization and to Japanese identity accompanied Shinto's structuration. As Japanese subjectivity in the Meiji state was faced with the threat to identity posed by the insertion of otherness into Japan in the form of Western technology, economics and science, Shinto symbols and observances, including signs of Japan's unique relationship with nature, as well as other cultural forms, were recovered or newly created and came to serve as a repository for signs of an untainted and unique Japanese self. In their delivery to the subject, the signs of a special nature/subject relationship became myth: the final term. Thus, it is from within Shinto that we find both linguistic assertions of a unique Japanese nature/subject relationship and signs of that relationship.

In the material structures of Shinto itself this mythological relationship between the Japanese subject and nature is constantly

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reinforced. Deities are often anthropomorphized rocks, trees, streams, rivers, wind, thunder and the sun. Shrine location symbolizes the human/nature concord, paying meticulous attention to natural surroundings, serving to emphasize the significance of nature in Japanese self-identification through creating "a beauty which will instil in the minds of the worshippers a mystic sense of closeness to the unseen divine world and nature." Shinto's constitution of the subject/nature relationship in Japan is a major part of its force as a sign of self. Even in contemporary Japan, Shinto remains "inextricably interwoven with the fabric of Japanese customs and ways of thinking. It is impossible to separate it from the communal and national life of the people." Along with western discourses, Shinto discourse produces some of the signs of Japanese self and nature. In imaginations of the Asian other then, nature is not only a way of assimilating the other, but of doing so in a way that is representative of the tensions between the horizontal and the vertical working of man and nature in Japan. This tension allows assimilations of the Asian other that also differentiate it through placing it in a lower place on the hierarchical scale of Japanese relations with difference.

In the images of Imaginary Lands the significance of Shinto and thus nature, as a factor in the mythologies of Japanese self-identification cannot be over-stressed. "Shinto is a racial religion" writes Ono Sokyo, "Among the kami of Shrine Shinto many have a special claim to worship from the Japanese people alone and are not

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19 Ono Sokyo, Shinto: The Kami Way, p. 28.
20 Ibid., p. 111., Similar sentiments are expressed in, Anzu Motohiko, Shintō to Nihonjin, (Tokyo: Jinja Shimpōsha, 1986.)
such as can be venerated by the peoples of the world in the sense that the Japanese do."\textsuperscript{21} Amongst those kami that are so irrevocably linked to the Japanese self are mountains. Mountains are constituted in Japanese mythology as both links between heaven and earth, and as places beyond which resides the other world. "Japan has a highly complicated mountain worship which has developed along diverse lines and become widespread...Mountain worship is intricately involved with Japanese history."\textsuperscript{22} As an integral part of the Shinto mediated human/nature intimacy, mountains must be seen as signs of Japanese self-identity. In the imagination of the Asian other, mountains enact assimilations of difference, but they do so in ways that simultaneously perpetuate the other's exterior and inferior place in relation to Japanese selfhood.

Most venerable among mountains are dormant, cone-shaped volcanoes, and Mount Fuji is the most important of these. Along with the cherry blossom and the kimono, Fujisan is perhaps the single and most significant final sign of Japanese self to both non-Japanese and to the Japanese themselves. During Japan's imperial endeavors Fuji's power, derived from the mountain's assumption of a political divinity that emerged from the association of Shinto's animistic elements with notions of the State, and supported and circulated by a long history of iconic representation in such images as Hokusai's one hundred views of Fujisan, functions as a metaphor for many ideas of Japanese identity. So strong is the iconic power of Fuji in self-identification, it was

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
Figure 2.18

"Fukuchan in Java."

The other's resemblance to self: Fuji assimilates the other.

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, July 12, 1942.
mobilized to organize a natural similitude between Japanese self and the Asian others. In this sort of imaginative strategy, the other landscapes of the Philippines, Java, Thailand, Malaya and Indochina, are transformed into Japan's Mount Fuji. This cartoon (Figure 2.18) is exemplary. I have been told that Fukuchan, the central character in this long-running comic strip, is a metaphor for some characteristics felt to be naturally Japanese. If that is so, this representation of Fukuchan in Java not long after the Japanese army occupied the Dutch colony, already has something do with the assimilation of Java to wartime Japan. But it is the force supplied to Fuji from other images and from the general economies of imperial, family state discourse that produces a Javanese/Japanese, other/self similitude. The mountain is multiplied as one of "many Fujisans in Java." This initial assimilation of the differences of Java is compounded by a subsequent incorporation of the colony into the Japanese family: "wherever you go on this island, there are many of Fuji's younger brothers." Then, this early assimilating figure develops into another: "Just as though it is Japan's Fuji, a hump, that is an exact copy (sokkuri) of Hoeizan, is attached too."\(^{23}\) Hoeizan is a vent, or parasitic cone, a detail on the southeastern flank of the original Fuji on the main Japanese island of Honshu. Through representations of the other in terms of an extraordinarily potent symbol of nature and Japanese selfhood, Figure 2.18 assimilates Java's difference.

From a Barthian perspective, "meaning is already complete"\(^{24}\) in this visual mobilization of Fujisan. That is, the knowledge of self and

\(^{23}\) All quotes translated from Asahi Shimbun, July 12, 1942.
Figure 2.19

Assimilating the other: A Fuji in the Philippines.

Source: *Nippon Times*, April 15, 1943.
Figure 2.20

Assimilating the other: Another Fuji in Java.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
Figure 2.21

Cone volcanoes in Eastern Java bring Japan to mind: Assimilating difference.

Source: Shimazaki Shintarō, Nanpo et, Tokyo: Shinjidaisha, 1931.
the other claimed by Fuji here already resides in the image which comes equipped with its significance beforehand. The pre-existent meanings of the mountain comes from its symbolic histories, which follow from or are produced within the historical discourses of Japanese identity that have imagined the importance of Fuji's symbolism, but despite its historical nature, Fuji's previous meanings are always present and ready to assimilate difference or to act in the service of discourses. Thus, the significance of Fuji in bridging the space between the Japanese subject and the divine, for example, is still present in the Fukuchan cartoon. It has, however, as Barthes would say, lost its abundant value or been "relieved of its fat" in these sorts of symbolic caricatures and simulations. Nevertheless, that same value retains its life in a sufficiency that enables Fuji to take on the form of an assimilating myth when it is used in imaginations of the Asian other. 25

The power of Fuji for Japanese in imperial Japan must be understood as an index of the mountain's power to assimilate the Asian other. Fuji possesses extraordinary symbolic force. Kusano Shimpei wrote of the mountain during the war,

\begin{quote}
In the lava flow beyond the Five Lakes shrubbery grows
bellflowers blossom.
A rough sea of leaves.
Upper torso, the smoothness and strength of a lion's breast.

Fuji exists.
As if it were the actual experience of existence
It exists against the background of heaven.
Quietly, broadly sinking.
Setting hard the mass raised up high.
\end{quote}

\footnote{Ibid, p. 118.}
Vertical.

Fuji.
At the heart of the Japanese archipelago.
The full moon evening.
Faintly gleaming.
Solid, grave, profound existence.
Keeping the time of multitudes inside.
Guarding the potential of a new pillar of fire.
Silently exists.
Like morality.
Like sluggishness.
And then again
Like a luscious witch.
Transforming.
Like a king of enriched uranium.

Oshō no yō ni (1943)\textsuperscript{26}

The hitherto hallowed force of Fuji, so well articulated and produced in texts, such as Kusano Shimpei's poem, is not entirely lost in the passing of the image into imaginations of self-identity and otherness. Fujisan's mythological status retains the power to assimilate the other because the sign brings with it an "instantaneous reserve of history, a tamed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation."\textsuperscript{27} Thus, the mythical form of Fuji in texts like the Fukuchan cartoons draws its meaning from the history of signification that precedes it. But, in so doing, it empties out history, or, as Barthes remarks,

it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Kusano Shimpei, \textit{Kusano Shimpei Shi Zenket}, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbō, 1973.)
\textsuperscript{27} Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 118.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p. 143.
In its recovery of a discourse about Japan and nature, and in its immediate access to a complex history of what it is to be Japanese, Fuji is a central, mythological symbol of what it is to be Japanese. Like other images of Asia constructed out of nature's signs, the clarity of Fuji as a sign of Japanese self in representations of other Asians can only serve to assimilate difference. Because that clarity does not seek to make an explanation of its assimilating practices but simply states the fact, it makes Japanese imperialism and its attendant elision of difference so much more effective and natural.

3.

The use of the word, *otōto*, to describe the cone volcanoes of Java in the text accompanying Figure 2.18, introduces us to the simultaneous imagination of Asia as both the same and different to Japan. In Japanese, *otōto* means "younger brother." In Japan's imagination of Asia during the years of empire figures of the family and the family hierarchy are frequently employed to elide the difference of the other and to further the image of a cohesive imperial community. These figures replicate the basic orders of the Japanese family at that time: assimilating and outsider sensitive, as well as pervaded by a strong sense of hierarchy among siblings based on gender and birth order. As result of this stress on family metaphors, *otōto* possesses substantial assimilating powers. Family metaphors are just one figure in the imagination of other lands during the imperial years, but they are especially interesting for what they say about official Japanese constitutions of self, and for what they say about both colonialism in general, and Japanese colonialism in particular.
Of course, from an historical perspective we should not be too surprised to find family metaphors and hierarchical images in popular representations of Japan's Asian empire. The over-worked imperial rubric, *hakko ichū*, which roughly translates as the eight corners of the world under one roof, enacted the imperial Japanese figure of a family of nations under Japanese hegemony. Ideologically at least, Japan's conception of its Asian empire, variously identified by labels such as Greater East Asia, the Greater East Asia People's Cooperative Body, and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, was often advanced through the language of family and family hierarchies. In imperial discussions of the place of Asia the different people and places of Asia are often assimilated into a fraternal relationship with Japanese. Here otherness is nullified, but at the same time recovered. The Javanese volcano is a family member, but one with a different and inferior status within the family. Other Asians are brothers to Japan, said Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki during his address to the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo in 1943,²⁹ but in this family Asia has a different and inferior place in a Japanese-determined hierarchy:

> It is imperative that all measures necessary for Japan's own existence should be carried out resolutely. Too much consideration shown for the inhabitants might engender in their minds the tendency to presume on Japan's kindness with pernicious effects on Japanese rule. *Japan is, so to speak, their elder brother and they are Japan's younger brothers.* The fact must not be lost sight of that Japan is the leader, and this fact must also be brought home to the inhabitants of the occupied territories. The native inhabitants must be made to bear their share of burdens inasmuch as the construction of a new East Asia is not for

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the benefit of Japan alone, but is in the general interest of all Asiatic peoples. The inhabitants of the occupied regions must be ready to suffer in the same way as the Japanese in the process of cooperation for the accomplishment of the work of building up a new East Asia. 30

The other's assimilation into a Japanese family undoubtedly serves the establishment of empire in the minds of the Japanese population, but the other's difference, recovered in its place as a younger brother, accounts for its inferior status in that family. There is no happenstance in the close association between the other as younger brother and the subjugation of Asia that follows in Tōjō's speech. It is because of the difference that is recovered in the other by its place in the Japanese imperial family that Asia must be made aware of Japan's leadership, must be made to "bear their share of burdens," and must be made to "suffer."

Although images of family or familial associations are not uncommon in Western colonial discourses, perhaps nowhere but in Japan's imagination of its Asian empire are those images of family so determinedly assimilating of otherness, and so richly suggestive of the ways in which signs of Japanese identity came to be used to make an empire. The historical progress and economies of this practice are too extensive and complex for a just elaboration in Imaginary Lands here but, by confining myself to some few exemplary aspects of the post-1868 history of family in Japanese discourse, we can gain some idea of the ideological place of family and hierarchy in the dominant production of Japanese subjectivity and thus, in imperial imaginations

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of the Asian other.\textsuperscript{31} The hierarchical order of alliance and, indeed, of other social orderings, and the subordination of younger to elder (chō-yō-nō-jo) is an investment of Sino/Korean discourse on ethics.\textsuperscript{32} In the context of Japanese modernity, the investment of the elder/younger hierarchy paid remarkable dividends, not only in production of the internal authority of kinship alliance, but in the form of widespread injunctions for social control and identification. Social and political profit of this sort was enabled by production of a syncretic discourse constitutive of the Meiji state. As Carol Gluck points out, around 1891 some Japanese intellectuals, in the service of the state and its determination to revise Japanese identity in ways facilitating the demands of modernity, conflated the identity of the state with the image of the family and its structure. Principal among these was Inoue Tetsujiro. In a commentary on the Imperial Rescript on Education, Inoue "fabricated the rudiments of the family-state ideology from Confucian analogies of ruler to father and Western organic theories of the state."\textsuperscript{33}

Subsequently, through certain re-locations into an economy of statements concerning the inherent morality of the state as family, the sovereignty of the tennō (emperor) became patriarchalized. Any play in discursive constitutions of the tennō as father of a national family was closed off when serious social disturbances following the Japanese military's victory over the Russian Empire in 1905 threatened the

\textsuperscript{31} Carol Gluck's \textit{Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period}, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985,) is perhaps the most interesting work addressing Japanese ideologies of alliance in an historical way.

\textsuperscript{32} See the "classic" work on Japanese society by Nakane Chie, \textit{Japanese Society}, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.)

\textsuperscript{33} Carol Gluck, \textit{Japan's Modern Myths}, p. 129.
stability of the state. These disruptions met with increasingly effective circulation and inscription of the nation as family, family as the site of accord, and the tennō as father. Beneath the rubric of family harmony, both consensus and similitude were enforced through resort to invocations of a patriarchal image of the tennō as a symbol of familial accord. With the divine and fatherly significance of the tennō securely attached to the welfare of the state, ideological enshrinement of family as state and the state as family (kazoku kokka) followed behind.

The figure of the family state both sanctified the family and "domesticated the state" as Gluck puts it. What is perhaps more important in constructions of Imaginary Lands, however, is the force of the family/state conflation in regulating both difference and social disparity. Within Japan the complicity of the idea of alliance with harmony and with proper place (hierarchy) successfully regulated multiplicity, difference and the forms of disagreement. In view of the great success of the image of family in assimilating the differences of the industrializing Japanese state, it is not surprising that similar strategies found new applications as the Japanese empire expanded. When Japan came to constitute the multiple, differing and disagreeing non-Japanese world to itself during the imperial venture then, alliance played an important part in those constitutions:

in the prehistoric age, mankind formed a single worldwide family system with the Japanese emperor as its head, Japan was highly respected as the land of parents, while all other lands were called the lands of children, or the branch lands.35

34 Ibid. p. 265.
35 Fujisawa Chikao, quoted in Otto Tolischus, Through Japanese Eyes, p. 17.
wrote one man in 1942, and although he is referring to a wider and less recent other than the empire presented, his statement is addressed to Japanese modes for imagining the Asian other as well. Imperial constitutions of the Asian other as a junior member of a Japanese-lead alliance arise out of Japanese identifications of themselves as family. Indeed, the family metaphor serves to accommodate the other within Japanese ways of knowing and assimilating difference. But because the construction of family within Japan's discourse about itself could best serve the state and industry by creating rigidly hierarchical family orders, that same hierarchy also operates in images of the Asian other as family. At this point it recovers the other's differences, and enables its subjugation.

Japan's defeat and occupation by the Allies after 1945 brought about the destruction of the family state, and began a radical decentering of those discourses that had been productive of it. At the same time, the empire in Asia was irrevocably lost to Japan, and along with it went imaginations of the Asian other couched in familial symbols. This is not to say that representations of the hierarchical fashioning of relations between Japan, the economic superpower, and an Asia that is deeply engaged in the expansion of Japanese capital and aid, does not contain an implicit recovery of earlier imperial structures of Japan/Asia relations. But in another more imaginative mode of Japanese discourse about the Asian other in the postwar years, familial hierarchy and its assimilating or differentiating power has been replaced by a rather different concept of family. This concept has more to do with wider postwar discussions of families of nations, commonwealths, and the human family. "I do hope we can meet,"
Figure 2.22

Pacifying the other: "A small horse-drawn carriage running on a street in Java."

Source: Koide Shōgo, *Higashi Indo Shotō Monogatari*, Tokyo, Toyamabō, 1944.
Figure 2.23

Making difference safe: The Boitenzorg Botanical Gardens.

Source: Shimazaki Shintarō, Nanpō e!, Tokyo: Shinjidaisha, 1931.
"Children of Borneo playing in an abalone pen"

Safety assimilates the inherently dangerous other.

Source: Koide Shōgo, *Higashi Indo Shotō Monogatari*, Tokyo, Toyamabō, 1944.
Figure 2.25

Making the dangerous other safe for the self: A quiet street in Kyoto, 1990.
Ikeda Daisaku writes in the mid-1970s, before meeting Norodom Sihanouk in China, "And that we can discuss life and friendship as members of the human family, not only as citizens of Cambodia and Japan." This mobilization of family in representation of the Asian other is certainly assimilating difference, but it is the difference between Japanese identity and Khmer identity, rather than an assimilation of the difference of other Asians into the Japanese identity.

While family is a central mode for imperial assimilations of the other, familial images are not alone in their capacity to draw difference into similitude. Other sorts of images function in a similar way. Like family metaphors, the assimilations of these images are attempts to make sites of otherness and difference into safe places. These practices can take the form of representing Asia in mundane or domestic images: tranquil photographs of botanical gardens in the Dutch West Indies, peaceful street scenes, or sketches of young boys swimming and fishing (Figures 2.22, 2.23 and 2.24.) Or they can make claims of similarity, familiarity and co-identity, which contain, make mundane, and pacify the dangers posed to the self by the strange differences and divergences of the other. In one example of this assimilating practice, the dangerous appearance of the other's political leadership is transformed so that it resembles the safety of self. Figure 2.26, is a photograph of the Burman nationalist leader, Ba Maw, and his family. Assimilation is enacted, and safety achieved through transformation of one of the most visible signs of difference, dress.

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Figure 2.26
Assimilating the fractious politics of the Asian other: Burmese nationalism in Japanese dress.

Source: Nippon Times, August 2, 1943.
Initial claims for similarity and safety are advanced via a representation of Burmese nationalism, itself symbolized by Ba Maw, located in the figure of the family, a figure we already know to be an effective instrument for domesticating the other during the years prior to 1945. Then the other has identification with the Japanese self foisted upon it through its wrapping within Japanese accoutrements. Stripped its linguistic caption, which tells us of the other-identity of Ba Maw, the image of people in traditional Japanese dress and established in a visual field that, with the exception of some rather strange looking animals in the foreground, looks very much like a hastily organized Japanese garden, declines to subvert the primary codes of this representation, assimilates difference.

In a further example of this mode for assimilation of Asian difference, the other can be made safe and assimilable if it's culture recalls one's own:

Shortly, a very slow melody, similar to the *charamela* began, quiet and beautiful...The tone of the music reminded me somewhat of the Japanese *Okagurabayashi* [ceremonial music offered to spirits and gods.]\(^{37}\)\footnote{Quoted in Reid and Oki, *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia*, p. 98. Parenthesis mine.}

one former Japanese soldier says, still making familiar and safe in his memory the otherness of occupied Indonesia. The signs of similarity and, thus of safety, are found in many places:

The Indonesian children...approached the Japanese soldiers, with whom they felt a kinship because of the similarity of our skin colour to theirs.\(^ {38}\)\footnote{Ibid, p. 67.}

General Yamashita remarked on commemorating the birthday of the *tennō* by watching the children of occupied Singapore sing "Aikoku
Kōshin Kyoku," a patriotic march. He went on to complete the assimilation, commenting, "Just like Japanese children aren't they?"

What is unspoken in these assimilations, and what is implicit in family hierarchy language, is the possibility that other Asians may not be at all like the Japanese. Alongside Japan's attempts to assimilate and make safe the differences of Asia there are a whole range of imaginative practices that speak of differentiation and danger. Here again, nature plays a very important role. Inoue Tetsuro recalled tropical Asia in this way:

It was a beautiful landscape which we never wearied of seeing. Sometimes tigers which had killed pigs were trapped, rock snakes which had swallowed goats and become incapable of moving were easily caught, or big lizards which had been trying to catch the chickens found themselves chased by the dogs instead.

Inoue's memory of Indonesia is rich in signs of what makes the other different from Japan, and it is not without interest that these signs are drawn from nature and the epistemologies of natural science: tigers, pigs and the survival of the fittest. So too, in the images of Asia written by Koide Shōgo, difference is associated with nature. Koide's image of Asia is a dangerous one. Pineapples, he writes are delicious and tempting but, eaten too raw and haphazardly peeled, Japanese "develop a real fever and become sick." This dangerous difference of the other is compounded by the fearsome aspect of its fruit (see Figure 2.27.) Tropical fruit are like apparitions, Koide writes. They remind him of Japanese demonology:

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40 Quoted in Reid and Oki, The Japanese Experience in Indonesia, p. 198.
41 Koide Shōgo, Higashi Indo Shōtō Monogatari, p. 28.
Figure 2.27

Differentiating the other: The demonic appearance of the fruit of the Southern Region.

Source: Koide Shōgo, *Higashi Indo Shōtō Monogatari*, Tokyo, Toyamabō, 1944.
Among the fruit that are like monsters are the fruit of the pan, the sonko, and the durian. The durian is a fruit about as large as a football ball but it has triangular spines growing over its entire surface, and its appearance is really that of a demon's head.\textsuperscript{42}

Not only does this image differentiate the Asian other by making it dangerous, it also serves a distinction between Japan as modern and powerful and Asia as primitive and weak. Prior to reorganization of state and culture after the Meiji Restoration, belief in akuma (demons) and kaibutsu (monsters or apparitions) possessed a legitimate place in Japanese culture. During the modernizing and industrializing of culture and economy, however, these sorts of beliefs suffered an encounter with the sorts of rationalism and empiricism derived from Western discourses about knowledge and science. Thus, belief in monsters and demons lost much of its public credibility and became associated with heresy (mei shin), social evils and an absence of modernity.\textsuperscript{43} Koide's constitution of Indonesian fruit as demons and monsters places the other firmly within an identity discursively abandoned by Japanese modernity. Dangerous and different, the Asian other is also inferior and different, located firmly in a place that makes it ripe for imperial picking and improvement.

In the postwar years, Japan continued to imagine Asia in terms of its danger and difference. A repeated figure is one of the other's excess. This too, is often couched in terms of Asia's natural features, which are imagined to exceed those of Japan. The excessive size of the Asian mainland is always a way of differentiating Japanese self and

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Hori Ichiro, \textit{Folk Religion in Japan}, pp. 44-45.
Asian other. Visiting Wuhan, Daisaku Ikeda writes to his friend Inoue Yasushi,

The seventeen hours by train that it takes to get there freshly impressed me with the vastness of the country. From Beijing to Wuhan the scenery hardly changes: red plains stretching far away into the horizon.\textsuperscript{44}

And as if an excess of size is not a sufficient index of Asia's otherness in Japan, Ikeda goes on to say, "I have heard Wuhan is hot enough in the summer to have earned the description, 'the city where sparrows fall from the sky of heat exhaustion.'"\textsuperscript{45} Ikeda's concern with the size and heat of Asia has something to do with the surprise all islanders feel when visiting continents, but it has more to do with making a difference between that other and the self that serves the politics of identity in Japan, shoring up existing constitutions of the Japanese through differentiation.

If there is an implicit danger in the excessive size and climatic conditions of the Asian other, that danger becomes explicit when the image of the other moves from nature to the human environment in Asia. With the exception of Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore, there is no place in Asia that I have visited without steeling myself to certain imagined dangers beforehand. The water is unsafe, doctors unskilled, fruit contaminated, meat decomposed: these are some of the ritual imaginations of the other in an age of international tourism. In their dangerous possibilities, they assure us of the difference of the other, which is, after all, what we are paying for and travelling to see. It is perhaps something of testament to the homogenization of global

\textsuperscript{44} In Ikeda Daisaku and Inoue Yasushi, \textit{Letters of Four Seasons}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
cultures then, to find the warnings of dangerous Bangkok traffic and dangerous Bangkok construction delivered to me by friends and travel agents alike before I first visited Thailand repeated and experienced in a 1988 Japanese imagination of that city.

In *Bankoku no Kōkishin*, Maekawa Ken'ichi imagines the dangers of the other's traffic and buildings. Of the Bangkok traffic, Maekawa writes,

> It is not rare to meet with an accident riding in a vehicle but, for those who walk the streets every day as I do, crossing the street is the most terrifying. It often happens that people meet with an accident and even die.

Now, this is not significant stuff in Japanese differentiations of other Asians, but the experience then related by Maekawa really makes the other dangerous. He writes,

> I do not like pedestrian bridges, but since one can cross the street on them with one's mind at rest, I use them as necessary evils. After all, my physical safety is number one. Only, something happened to me. One day, walking on Pronchit Street, I was considering how to try and cross to the other side. Though it is tiresome to climb the stairs, I could have used the pedestrian overpass. One step, two steps, I mounted the stairs but that was all I did. Abandoning the pedestrian crossing, I went on straight ahead. I strolled for a while, and when I returned to that same street again, the wall of a building had fallen down flat on that pedestrian bridge. One person who had been climbing the stairs was dead, and one badly injured. Both the pedestrian bridge and my own body tottered.

The politics of identity here seeks not to make the other dangerous and different in ways that justify empire. This imagination comes from a different time and a different economy of statements about the Asian other. Maekawa's experience in Bangkok differentiates the other, but

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47 Ibid, p. 34.
his sophisticated and "devil may care" style ensures that that dangerous difference instigates an excitement and desire for the other that serves the economies of tourism.

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If assimilation and differentiation of the imaginary lands was a way of talking about Japan's empire in Asia before the defeat, the simultaneous activity was a way of not talking about empire after Japan's defeat. The other's excessive geography and life threatening traffic and buildings comprise dangers that conceal dangers of a different sort, for the discourses of tourism work to silence Japan's memory of the violence wrought upon the very difference it sought to both assimilate and differentiate. That hidden memory is the next area of discussion for Imaginary Lands.
CHAPTER 3
IMAGINARY LANDS, WAR CRIMES, AND MEMORY

Only people's screams
tell me how awful
is my love
for them.

Ooka Makoto, from "Song of the Flame"

While living in Kyoto during 1988 and 1989 I was introduced to Suzuki Yōko and subsequently employed her as a research and language assistant. At least once or twice a week we met, either in my office at Kyoto University or at coffee shops in the Gion and Sanjōbashi districts of the city. At these times, Ms Suzuki and I would stroll from one book shop to another looking for publications that might be of use in Imaginary Lands. I recall one or two occasions when I was searching for images representative of the imperial Japanese mission in Asia prior to 1945. Now and again, we turned up shashinshū (photograph collections) which remembered the lost empire and Japan's war to expand, maintain and defend it through images of Japanese atrocities against indigenous people in Asia and images of rituals and celebrations in wartime Japan. I was always afraid that these signs of Japanese militarism, these images which appeared to me to be traces of guilt, would cause embarrassment to my friend. I would quickly put them back on the shelves before we should have to discuss them and, thus, before discussions could expose the possibilities of her participation in some collective Japanese guilt of my own imagining. To my surprise, she seemed unconcerned. She almost always took the books back off the shelf, sought out the most interesting images, asked
me if I wanted to purchase them, and upon my response, went off looking for more of the same kind.

No doubt my friend's composure was due to the nature of our relationship and the etiquette required of her within it. But these violent images of tortured, executed, and raped Asians are a way of remembering and forgetting part of Japan's past in Asia that permits composure in the face of the evidence. The differences of this Japanese mode for remembering war crimes only became clear at a later time, however, when I introduced the matter of war atrocities into a conversation with a German acquaintance made when we both were staying at a losmen in Sanur, Bali. Although in much the same age, class, educational, and political circumstances as Ms Suzuki, this woman responded to the crimes of war and the atrocities of empire with much less composure. She became simultaneously defensive and self-accusatory. She wanted to change the subject but seemed to feel compelled to remain with it despite the anguish it was so clearly causing her. She remembered, redeemed and relieved the guilt and agony through a trenchant critique of war and of the historical forces enabling National Socialism in interwar Germany.

I was struck by the implications of this difference in response for what it suggested about the discursive uses of atrocity in Japan. Throughout the reading that follows it is essential to always keep it in mind that the difference between these two responses to very similar matters tells us nothing about differences in the German and Japanese psyche. Not only is suppression of the possibility of complicity in the genocides of the past far from unique to Japan, my interpretation of images of the sort collected by my assistant and myself has nothing to
do with human morality. Nor is this difference to be accounted for through resort to racist theories about Japanese who are so flawed in their character that they have little or no sense of guilt for crimes committed. Rather, the difference between the response of my German acquaintance and that of my Japanese friend signifies a different enforcement of two social practices. The first, is the obligation in Japan to retain an appropriately social demeanor, whatever the circumstances. The second and more important reading of those responses has to do with the social uses of atrocity images in Japan. For me, my friend's composure symbolizes the functions of these images: regulation and pacification of criticism, shame arising from criticism, and the dangers both represent to the stability of the orders of identity in late twentieth-century Japan.

Images of atrocities are exemplary of one Japanese mode for both recalling and forgetting imperial violence and war crimes in Asia. It is this particular mode of memory that primarily concerns me here, rather than a general comprehensive exposition upon the wider historical field of Japanese discourse about the war in Asia and the Pacific, war crimes and responsibility for them. This then is a reading fairly much limited to a particular genre: atrocity images and their redemption. If, however, the reader does look for a comprehensive reading of Japanese memories of the war, the problem of history, at least in its diachronic form, emerges, for a wider textual grasp suggests that there have been historical stages in the memory of the war in Asia in Japan's postwar politics. But atrocity images, which first appeared in the latter 1940s, have been used in ways that leave the
Figure 3.1

A trace of Japanese violence in the imaginary lands as it was happening.

Source: *Nippon Times*, July 14, 1942.
image unchanged by time. Any shifts occur within a synchronic field demarcated by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and by changes in the textual places of these images, rather than in what they do: remember war crimes in Asia without accounting for them.

This reference to the narrowness of the textual spread is a way of framing the discussion but, rather paradoxically, that framing is incomplete without the addition of some reference to history in its diachronic form. The mode of recalling the Japanese past in Asia through atrocity images entered discourse about the Asian other after 1947 when trials of Japanese military and politicians for war crimes and crimes against peace commenced, both in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and at other venues. At that time, the daily newspapers began to publish bloody images and gory details of Japanese crimes against Koreans, Chinese, Malays, Filipinos, and Indonesians. Prior to Japan's defeat, strict censorship of the Japanese press meant that images of military violence against other Asians were suppressed. It is only in images, such as Figure 3.1, that we can locate a trace of Japanese violence in the imaginary lands at the time it was actually happening. A soldier stands over a bundle of sticks arranged much like a human body. His sword is raised above his head in a threat to the form on the table, but that threat is also directed to his Indonesian audience. Here is a sign of the possibility of actual Japanese violence against the other: the Indonesian spectators are quite right to watch in awe.

But with the complete collapse of the imperial imagination of the Asian other, a space opened up for new ways of representing Asia. The collapse of discourse about Asia was brought about by crises of
Figure 3.2

Losing the capacity to define and describe the other.

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, December 29, 1944.
event. Repeated defeats in the Pacific and Asia, tattered supply lines from the imperial periphery to the archipelagic center, and savagely effective American bombing of major Japanese cities and industrial establishments produced a loss of the symbolic capital funding imaginations of both Japanese self and the Asian other. Symbolic capital represented Japan's standing in the eyes of others, but it also provided the power to imagine Asia in certain ways (some of which have been set out in the previous chapter.) Depletion of symbolic capital associated with depletion of imperial economic capital as the war turned against Japan, however, brought with it an extraordinary crisis in the effectiveness of signification of both self and other identity. For Japanese selfhood, the crisis of the state's abilities to represent identity opened a gap of pain, uncertainty, and anxiety about the stability of identity. This crisis of Japanese identity is enacted in expressions of an existential despair that are everywhere apparent in the overall symbolic system from the time. For example, one schoolgirl wrote in her 1945 diary,

I wish I had been killed in that bombing. If there wasn't any war we wouldn't have to go through this hell.
Everything is hateful. I'm tired of living.¹

At first, the reduced Japanese capacity to imagine the Asian other is signified in a dissolution of the capacity to describe and delineate the it. As the fighting in the colonies and occupied territories becomes more desperate, and as the need of discourse at home turns toward a singular focus on shoring up the idea of the nation as an hermetic fortress so too, the closely reasoned and tightly detailed images of the

Figure 3.3

Searching for the other that is lost along with the war.

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, August 1, 1945.
Asian empire begin to wither away, but before they vanish completely, they become indistinct. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 provide two examples of this disintegrating image of the Asian other. The gaze has lost its focus on the other here. In Figure 3.2 Asia is nothing more than a generic jungle background beyond a foreground of specified Japanese military. In Figure 3.3 a Japanese soldier peers through a sighting device at a Burma that is lost in the photograph's shallow focal length. Of course, perspective, that primary device for the representation of reality, is very powerful here, constructed through short focus, and the lines of the bending soldier but it leads us into insubstantialities. I like to read the soldier's gaze as a synecdoche for the eyes of an almost defeated Japan on Asia. The soldier's gaze is directed along the line of perspective but like our viewing eye, it sees and travels toward a lack of clarity, and towards an absence of the kinds of knowledge that were claimed about Asia in earlier imperial images.

Of course this sense of loss, or of the other escaping its fixation in the gaze, transits all historical moments in the politics of identity. In war or peace, in relations with difference and otherness, the disappearance of the other is always a possibility articulated in texts. For example, in the postwar years loss of the Asian other and imaginations of that loss still operate in Japan's representations of Asia. But with reaccumulation of economic and symbolic capital since 1945, they have taken on a very different form: departures which know the certainty of return.

Sayonara sayonara
Sayonara sayonara
Sayonara sayonara
Sayonara sayonara

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What mass is that sent out to veil the heavens? A large flock of nameless migrating birds, a last small flock, and after that a final single bird entrusted with a message.

----- next year too, in October, if there is a chance, here again!

Sayonara sayonara
Sayonara sayonara

Behind, the white waves of the Soroku River stretch, joining together heaven and earth. Now, nowhere the forms of living creatures. Maybe parting should be always be something like this.

Wakare (Farewell)²

Like the war's end photographs of an Asia indistinct and thus, vanishing from discourse, this 1990 poem about western China is losing the other too. Placed among choruses of a Japanese farewell courtesy, sayonara sayonara, Asia is concealed in the veiled heavens and depopulated by the flight of migratory birds, precursors of the Japanese writer's coming separation from the other. A river, that image of instability and shifting, unifies earth (the other) with the divine (the indistinct.) But, in a contrast with the war's end images mentioned above, this vanishing of the other always contains and presupposes its rediscovery and recovery: here, the possibility of Inoue Yasushi's return in the following year is permitted. Japan's fabulously successful reaccumulation of economic and symbolic capital brought with it renewed powers to imagine the other and that is why there is a possibility of return in Inoue's poem. In contrast, Japan's defeat produced a loss of the Asian other in the Japanese imagination that held out little possibility of recovery. In the space created by the collapse of the imperial image of Asia, new images eventually emerged. I want to turn to these now.

Figure 3.4

The head of a Chinese hanging on barbed wire entanglements outside the fortifications after the capture of Nanjing by the Japanese military.

Figure 3.5

The piled up corpses of Shanghai city folk killed by the Japanese military.

"Remains of Chinese that the Japanese military had killed and buried. A great pile of bones are being unearthed."

"After Japan's defeat the remains of Chinese that had been killed due to the Nanjing Massacre of the Japanese military were discovered in great quantities."

Figure 3.8

"Chinese children that were killed at the Nanjing massacre."

Figure 3.9

A latter day rendition of the Nanjing Massacre.

Figure 3.10

The bodies of Chinese killed by Japanese soldiers at Nanjing. Note the intertextual relations this photograph has with Figure 3.9.

If surrender in the late summer of 1945 finalized a seemingly complete discursive disappearance of Asia in the Japanese imaginary, the beginnings of a rapid recovery of economic capital later facilitated a recovery of symbolic capital together with its grants to effective signification. Indeed, recovery of imaginations of Asia begins less than two years after the defeat. As we have already seen in earlier discussions about assimilating images, and will see again in the following chapters, some tropes and figures in the imperial imaginary of Asia continue into the postwar years, while still other ways of constituting it that figured large during the years of empire are not to be seen again. This latter case is especially true of assimilating images of Asia involving some of the symbols of Japanese self-identity, such as Mount Fuji. However, into the discursive space left by the departure of imperial imagination came an especially striking, if very much less than canonical, stream of images and statements: images of Japanese atrocities in Asia (Figures 3.4 to 3.10.) These images make repetitive recoveries of the crimes of imperial Japan against Asians. Imagination here is both visual and linguistic but both types of text remember and forget a portion of Japan's history with the other, advancing the details of Japanese atrocities against the Asian other as principal practices in a regulatory administration of criticism and its links to shame.

In this particular way of remembering war crimes in Asia, discourse about the other has produced a way of remembering which is also a way of forgetting. That forgetting is in the recollection itself; it is a tightly focused concentration on the violence itself rather than the historical and political processes enabling that violence. The
Figure 3.11

The moment when a suspected Chinese guerilla is beheaded by a Japanese soldier.

Figure 3.12

Burying the citizens of Nanjing alive.


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Figure 3.13

A Chinese woman and her Japanese rapist.

This is the same image as Figure 3.13. Here, an official Japanese sense of modesty is preserved by a white oblong covering her pubis. That modesty refers us to the amnesiac way of remembering the past through atrocity images.

simultaneously anamnesic and amnesiac memory represented by atrocity images sets up a textual tension, which I will rather ungrammatically call an "agonistic." Now, in *Imaginary Lands* an agonistic is a way of imagining or constituting the Asian other that remembers the other's suffering at the hands of the subject through a tightly focused concentration on the violence itself rather than the historical and political processes enabling that violence. In this agonistic there is an abundance of mutilations, skeletons, and indecently displayed corpses, that is almost a pornography of violence. An agonistic of this sort is analytically empty. Criticism is repressed in a superfluous representation of atrocity that empties politics and anything more than a gesture to history out of the memory of these crimes. Of course, as Roland Barthes reminds us, horror photographs, such as Figures 3.4 to 3.10, cannot represent the horror in a way that permits us to experience it and thus, I surmise, to account for it.\(^3\) But more than that, there is no analysis of responsibility in these images of violence against the other.

Among the many photographs of this type that I have seen, only two or three (Figures, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, for example) gesture towards any visual permission to a figure of responsibility, representing Japanese as complicit or active in the killing, torturing, or raping of other Asians. But, in many of these images there is a semiotic that distances Japanese from the atrocity being represented. Figure 3.11 shows no identifiable face on the soldier wielding the sword. There is an aesthetic of action here too, which places analysis far from the

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Figure 3.15

The passive tense of the verb abounds: "Nihongun ni gyakusatsusareta Chūgokujin."

crime. In Figure 3.12 there are no faces nor names to link the Japanese subject with the act of burying Chinese alive. Figure 3.13 shows a Chinese women with her rapist but the act is past, or yet to be commenced. Moreover, in most publications of this particular photograph, the woman has her pudenda covered by the censor, a sign not only of official Japanese delicacy about display of female pubic hair, but also a sign of Japanese delicacy about the violent past (See Figure 3.14.)

Beyond the semiotics of the image alone, the accompanying captions tend to advance a simple, almost mythological responsibility. Although they attribute deaths and horrors to the actions of the Japanese military, it is an attribution with little risk of finding a place for responsibility or for criticism. The copula proliferates. For example, the sentence, Nihongun ni gyakusatsu sareta Chūgokujin (Chinese that were slaughtered by Japanese military), is both a typical caption attached to agonizing images, as well as a fine example of a mode of attribution that seeks to position onus at a considerable distance from the Japanese readers it addresses. History is used to elide history here, for there is an unbridgeable gap between the word, Nihongun, which means Japanese military, and the question of responsibility for crimes of the past in contemporary Japan. In postwar Japan Nihongun almost always refers to the imperial military. It is a name that has been replaced more commonly today by Nihon Jieitai (Japanese Self-Defense Force). Its lavish use in conjunction with war crimes photographs breaks any connections between the reader and the possibility of complicity in the actions represented in the photographs. The verb is passive. In this form it reduces the action
Figure 3.16

Victorious Japanese troops enter Nanjing.

of the imperial military and thus, reduces the power to attribute responsibility for violence against the other.

Images of atrocities are complicit in one of the general Japanese ronso, or debates, about the problem of responsibility for the Pacific War. This ronso is structured into a discussion concentrated around two poles: Japan as a victim in the preface to and development of hostilities, or Japan as a perpetrator of the war in East Asia and the Pacific. Obviously, the complicity of the war crimes agonistic lies with perpetrator interpretation of history, but it does so in a facile and unchanging way. At the times and places of their appearances from 1947 to 1989, these sorts of images are not critical of history and politics in any substantive fashion. Not only is there an absence of any attribution of responsibility within individual images (which, in view of the repressively productive imperial context from where they come, is to be expected perhaps) when atrocity images are also read for their engagement within an economy that includes the other images that accompany them in popular histories and shashinshū, any attempt to define responsibility or to criticize the violent forces enabling actions of the kind represented, is lost in an ambivalent narrative, itself produced by the arrangements of the images into a visual album. Atrocity images are succeeded and preceded by photographs of the victorious imperial forces entering Nanjing. Over the page from a photograph of the severed heads of Chinese is an image of Japanese settlers in Manchuria marching off to work and school: a still potent representation of Japanese industry and perseverance. On the page before an image of massed skeletal remains there is a picture of smiling Japanese soldiers caught in farewell embraces with family
Figure 3.17

Training to be a dutiful colonist in Manchuria.

Figure 3.18

A soldier father says farewell to his loved ones before going off to Asia.

before leaving from Tokyo Station for the fronts in China and the Southern Regions. After pictures of the bodies of Chinese slaughtered by Japanese troops at Nanjing there is an image of a famous kabuki troupe singing a patriotic anthem in celebration of another Japanese victory. Of course, it may be that there is an attempt to account for war crimes and imperial atrocities in this montage of blood, torture, bodies, imperial glory and virtue, Japanese society, and culture. If that is so, because it is conducted through the symbolic system, which always delivers meanings as unstable, and more so when it is a visual language, the attempt both succeeds and fails.

Further, there is a semiotic in the very arrangement of the differing images. In the texts from which many of these images are drawn images of atrocities almost never occur on the same or facing page as images of the military, colonists, fathers, and actors. They are always separated by the act of turning a page. Thus, a visual attempt at analysis and a rhetoric of responsibility slips into a rhetoric that is more concerned with justifications, not so much of the atrocious acts themselves but of a particular way of being Japanese then and now. Service, encoded in the image of a triumphant Kwangtung Army, duty or obligation to authority, encoded in the image of organized colonists, alliance with its importance to the state and the economy, encoded in farewell scenes, and Japanese culture, within which a plenitude of selfhood is located, encoded in pictures like that of kabuki troupes making patriotic celebrations, recover legitimated virtues from the past for use today within the very images that should enable a political and historical critique of crimes against the other.
Figure 3.19

A kabuki troupe celebrating the rape of Nanjing.

This absence of history, politics, and the critique of the responsibility for them is not confined to visual imaginations of past Japanese violence in Asia. Many purely linguistic imaginations of Japanese atrocities against the Asian other are also remarkable because of an absence of critical analysis. The following long quotation is a translation of the Japanese text from a section of a volume that is one in the same recent series on the Second World War from which some of the preceding photographs were drawn:

Slaughter of the residents of Singapore

When the battle for the capture of Singapore ended on February 15, 1942, the Japanese military commenced "anti-Japanese Chinese merchant hunting" from the 18th. The kempeitai [thought police], which was at the center of it, came into those preparations from the middle of the Malayan military operations. On February 19, the Japanese military put out a proclamation regarding the Chinese merchants as follows:

"Overseas merchant Chinese males between the ages of 18 and 50 and resident in the island Shonan [the occupation name for Singapore] will gather as ordered below on the coming 21st of the month at noon...Those violating this order will be severely punished. Further, each individual will come carrying food and drinking water with them. Dai Nihongun Shireikan [Commanding Officer of the Great Japanese Army]."

Examinations of the gathered Chinese merchants were carried out by assistant kempei, who were chosen from the military, and the army. No more than about 200 kempei examined more than 20,000 people.

One of the kempei people responsible in the affair tells, "Even though it was said that anti-Japanese elements would be singled out, that is not at all what happened. I thought it was utterly impossible to single them out in only one week.

What a time it was for the flourishing of anti-Japanese consciousness among the Chinese educated class!

Because the continual resistance of Chiang Kai-shek up to that time had financial support in the Southern Regions, a rumor that there was a connection with the Chinese merchants here got into their [the Japanese] heads and, regrettably, about half of those Chinese had to
be purged and, at any rate, based on looks and dress alone, the educated ones were picked out."

Additionally, we have put together as follows the actions observed by a Japanese diplomat who was a Japanese consular official before the war.

"A few kempei and inexperienced young soldiers, unskilled interpreters, were not at all able to conduct such a thing as a complete interrogation. Young people, standing sullenly, unable to lower their heads, people who could no more than write their names in English, and people with tattoos on their arms were separated out of the ranks into one line...those left till last were carried away by truck and never ever came back."

They were taken to various areas on the island and in those places they were slaughtered. Those scattered on the coast were blindfolded and sat in front of holes dug in the sand of the beach and shot by machine guns from behind. Their bodies were dumped into the holes and buried. At that time, there were a few people, fortunately only wounded and still living, who, after they were buried escaped when night fell. At the postwar war crimes trials they testified as follows.

---- Where were you taken to?
"The coast off Changi."

---- How many of you were there?
"To my recollection, there were 20 trucks. From 20 to 25 in each truck. Accordingly, I think there were about 400 to 500 people."

"We were pulled down off the trucks and the Japanese soldiers whipped out telephone wires and tied us up into groups of from 8 to 12 people. We were directed to walk toward the ocean. The Japanese began shooting from behind with machine guns. I think in my group one or two were shot. They fell down and we too, were dragged down by the weight."

---- After the machine guns were fired, what happened?
"Some soldiers approached us and stabbed those not fatally wounded with bayonets."

---- Were you stabbed, too?
"No. Blood was covering my face, so they probably thought I had died."

---- Please talk about what you saw on the beach.
"Bodies were scattered here and there, altogether like fish on a market stall. Some people moaned and screamed. Some people cursed. Really, it was hell."

Additionally, other groups were placed in sampans with both their hands tied together and put to death at sea. An island Indian who was a lighthouse keeper and a
soldier in an artillery corps who observed these actions testified at trial as follows.

"When I looked at the ocean from the lighthouse, there were sampan towed by a number of ships and heavily loaded with people who had their hands tied behind them. When they arrived in the open sea southwest of the island, the Japanese soldiers riding on the tugboats fired machine guns at the people on the sampans. The bodies were thrown into the sea and, in a twinkling, the surface of the sea was dyed red. In it there were people still living but, as their hands were tied behind their backs, they could not swim and they disappeared beneath the waves. It was a brutal, wretched spectacle.

This continued for a time from 2 to 3 days. About 10 sampans of people were killed. Bodies were washed up on Bulakamati Island and buried.

The corpses were all Chinese and Malays. All told there were 68 bodies. Except for one women, they were men. Two babies were tied to the body of that woman."

How many victims met their slaughter like this? There are no precise statistics so far. In the war crimes trials, the Japanese side asserted that it was a total of 6,000. On the other hand, the overseas Chinese merchant community asserted that it was at least 40,000 people.4

Admittedly, in contrast to the preceding photographs, analysis of responsibility for violence against the Asian other gains more of a presence here. Onus is pinned to more than the Nihongun in this passage. But placement of responsibility on the kempeitai and young soldiers does nothing to fill the empty spaces left in this mode of representing Asia by the departure of historical and political criticism and analysis. Employment of this account of the mass executions of the men and boys of the Chinese community in occupied Singapore is so dedicated to a narration of the agony of the acts themselves that it cannot permit inclusion of a gesture towards even a conservative type of causal analysis. The account of kempeitai involvement in the

decisions to proceed with the round-up and killings of Chinese has a happenstance effect on history: the kempei just came into the process after fighting in Malaya. Any political notions of similitude, difference, and the imagination of them, that could offer a criticism of the forces enacting war crimes of this sort is silenced and emptied out by codes of contingency. For example, a rumor about the support of the Singapore Chinese for the Kuomintang resistance to the Japanese military effort in China happened to get into the consciousness of the Japanese military. Then the "wrong" Chinese happen to be selected for execution because their examiners are too few or too raw to recognize the anti-Japanese, educated Chinese among the assembled masses. In this text, Japanese atrocities in occupied Asia, as well as the quantitative discounts of the number of dead offered by the Japanese defense in the war crimes trials, are administered as fortuities, situated neither in a complicit nor in an enabling economy that could account for these acts.

But what do these agonizing images and descriptions of atrocity in Asia enact and who or what do they serve? Ultimately the agonizing memory pacifies criticism, shame and its social force, but it delivers other resources and protects other interests as well. First, images of tortured and dead Asians testify to the lengths that imperial discourses will go in the service of selfhood. Japan's violence against other Asians represents an extreme mode for self-identification. It speaks to what Leo Bersani has described as "the sacrosanct value of selfhood, a value that may account for human beings' extraordinary willingness to kill in order to protect the seriousness of their
Statements." Furthermore, agonizing images of the sort exemplified by Figures 3.4 through 3.14 can be read for their complicity in a wider discursive economy in Japan about the possibilities for making amends for the occupation of Asia, about the payment of reparations, and about the re-establishment of trust between Japan and its Asian neighbors. In this context, repeated publications in Japan of atrocity photographs are a sign to the Japanese about the Japanese. They say that in the photograph of a raped Chinese women, in the images of the gathered bones of Asians, Japanese selfhood is satisfactorily representing its own culpability to the Asian other. In this context, atrocity photographs and reports are an empty, ritual gesture towards an award of responsibility addressed to Japan and designed to regulate a source of potential difficulty in the representation of Japanese self-identity to itself and others.

But more than this, the agonizing style of these images, reports and anecdotes is constitutive of a certain sort of past in and for the present. History itself, as well as the significance of its meanings and practices, is produced and determined by contemporary orders in society, culture and representation, which reach back into the past to redefine and reconstruct it in ways that invest in the orders of the present. Thus, the way that colonial atrocities and imperial war crimes are recollected and forgotten in Japan today is a practice of contemporary politics and culture, delivered through a variety of apparatus and invested in maintenance of current orders of power and control. Images are especially significant here, and Japanese scholar,

Sakuta Ke'iichi, picks out the visual sign as one of the most important modes in productions of Japanese memory and responsibility for crimes against the Asian other. Twenty years after the end of the Pacific War and the Japanese Empire, Sakuta writes that representations of war crimes and war criminals on television and in the cinema has made them into the superficial subject matter of fiction, images marked "unreal" by their place in the visual media. The lack of any forceful reality constructs a site for memorialization of war crimes in the Japanese subject that is notable for what Sakuta calls, "forgetfulness" (bokyaku). Of course, we know that amnesia about war crimes is a practice in a postwar German or post-Vietnam American politics of memory too, but what is most interesting about Japanese "forgetfulness" is both that which may differ from other amnesias in its practices, as well as that which is not discussed in Sakuta's text. What Sakuta omits is the complicity between forgetfulness, imperial atrocities, representation, and the hegemonic order. Japanese forgetfulness is produced by strategies in representation of both the criminal and the crime. Because of their very superior and natural claim on reality images are vital tools in discursive service to the state and the economy, both of which have enormous investments in the stability of social practices. Effective claim to and control over specific imaginations of realities serve that stability. As a result, visual representations of war atrocities in mass-market vehicles, such as photograph collections, memorial albums,

popular histories of the war and comic books, seek to maintain and protect certain sorts of investments. Forgetfulness is a principle mode of ensuring those investments. Nietzsche understands the general nature of forgetfulness and its social and political investments very well. Forgetfulness is,

a little quietude, a little tabula rasa of the consciousness, so as to make room again for the new, and above all for the more noble functions and functionaries, room for government, foresight, predetermination...this is the utility, as I have said, of the active forgetfulness, which is a very sentinel and nurse of psychic order, repose, etiquette; and this shows at once why it is that there can exist no happiness, no gladness, no hope, no pride, no real present, without forgetfulness.  

For his part, Sakuta imagines forgetting as an investment in actions concerning the future, a future in which either Japan is a great Asian power or there is a Utopian future in which there is peace throughout Asia. It is more likely, however, that the forgetful subject is invested first of all in a production of the agonistic described above. This is a forgetful state in itself, for in its unreflexive obsession with facticity, with blood, bones and practical cruelty, it forgets both the processes facilitating the fact and the image of the fact.

It may well be that the atrocity images provide an account of moral responsibility and the administration of moral responsibility in Japan. There is certainly a trace of Shinto administrations of moral responsibility that can be read in these horrible photographs and anecdotes. Shinto discourse has difficulty finding a place for a substantive and entrenched notion of moral evil and sin that cannot be

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9 Sakuta Kei'ichi, Haji no Bunka Saiko, p. 76.

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quickly overcome or redressed. In symbolic orders of Shinto, crimes of the sort represented in atrocity images are polluting. Pollution is a real crime, but it can be countered through formal and ritual acts of purification. Thus, the formal and ritual representation of atrocities in wartime Asia and ritual awards of responsibility may be read as significations of ritual purifications of the defilement of murder. Forgetfulness, as well as the longtime refusal until the beginnings of the last decade of the twentieth-century of successive Japanese governments to apologize to former colonies and occupied territories, may signify a recognition that public acknowledgement of the defilement could necessitate purification rites involving major transformations in Japanese arrangements of power and prestige.10 Shinto then, leaves us with the impression that transgression and punishment are very different things in Japan than they are in the West.

There is, however, a problem in this account. I indicated earlier that the equanimity of my Japanese friend in the face of atrocity photographs, along with the lack of critique in atrocity memorials, speaks more to an administration of responsibility and shame for the authorized social good in Japan than it does to any specious idea of a Japanese national psychology that can be differentiated from its counterpart in the West by its inability to conceive of and account for moral responsibility. The investments of forgetfulness and fiction in Japan's agonistics about colonial and war crimes elide responsibility

and suppress criticism and in so doing, reinvest in pacifications of the possibilities of social and political threats that are entailed in criticism and criticism's capacity to produce shame. I say this in the face of the knowledge that in their revisions of Ruth Benedict's characterization of Japan as a shame culture, Japanese studies specialists have learnt that when we read Japan in terms of shame, and against a Western conception of guilt, there is always a risk of slippage toward the sorts of psycho-social imaginations of the Japanese that constitute them as residents of a shame culture, relying on external sanctions for good behavior rather than on internalized conviction of sin. A slippage of this nature would not be so loaded with cultural freight were it not that the distinction between shame and guilt cultures brings along with it the idea that, as long as they remain undetected, the Japanese find nothing wrong with all sorts of acts that the Western subject would believe to be heinous.11 Neither would the distinction between shame and guilt cultures be so easy to make were those who made it more given to reflexion about the imaginative or constitutive character of their own scholarly practices. Nor could we come so easily to the sorts of culturally biased value judgements that the distinction enables if we were to admit the contingent, culturally constituted specifications of sin, crime, responsibility, and guilt.

11 See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967,) pp. 153-159. This canonical study of Japanese culture and psychology was first published shortly after the end of the Pacific War. Benedict had no training in the Japanese language at all, and she was also writing within a wider discourse seeking to explain Japanese aggression in the preceding 15 years. Her use of the idea of the importance of shame in Japanese social control has been of incalculable influence, not only in Western Japanology but also in Japanese writings about their own culture.
But while I follow my colleagues in their rejection of the idea of Japan as a shame culture, I also want to recover shame as an interpretive tool. Shame and guilt are social practices produced, maintained and enforced by the symbolic order. Shame in both the West and Japan has been historically delivered in the public realm but in Japan, shame has come to possess an agency in social control that is considerably greater than it owns in the West. So, in the face of the risk of slippage into an imperial sort of Japanology, it does seem to me still that the idea of shame may be a rather useful way for Imaginary Lands to approach the practices of images of and writings on Japanese atrocities in imperial and wartime Asia. Interestingly enough, even scholars writing to oppose the organization of Japan into the shame side of the guilt/shame culture dyad admit to the force of shame in Japanese society and shutaisei (subjectivity). In Japanese language texts the character, chi, is used to write the word haji which is usually translated into English as shame. Disgrace, humiliation, insult, disgraceful, unbecoming, feel shy, be coy, be bashful, blush are among some further English translations of other Japanese nouns, verbs and adjectives using the character, chi. They make the public economies and the social situation of shame in Japanese culture very clear. Sakuta Kei'ichi writes that in Japan shame occurs when a person is publicly insulted, made the butt of a joke, publicly rejected. Shame is a reaction to the scrutiny of others. Shame "is a response to the criticism of other people."12 asserts Sakuta. It is this relationship of criticism to responsibility and shame, together with ideas of criticism

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12 Sakuta Kei'ichi, Haji no Bunka Saikō, p. 9.
as being uniquely disturbing to the regulations of Japanese selves\textsuperscript{13} and thus, to the fixed fabric of identity and social stability, that the forgetfulness (the absence of criticism) of images of Japanese atrocities in Asia seeks to contain.

The force of criticism in Japan is extraordinary. Examples of the shamed response to criticism as a social practice in modern Japan are part of the Western imagination of Japan and a part of Japanese constitutions of a Japanese selfhood. For example, the chief executive officer of an airline corporation kills himself after accepting the responsibility awarded to the company after a fatal crash of a DC8. A father goes from door to door in his neighborhood offering his personal apologies for the criminal behavior of a family member. To circumvent criticism and shame, a family keeps its mentally ill relative permanently institutionalized. A university professor murders his student lover who is pregnant. He is found out, compelled to resign his position and, a few days after, he commits suicide with his wife after killing their children, but his crime is more the disgrace

\textsuperscript{13} See Anzu Motohiko for one constitution of the singular Japanese sensitivity to criticism, \textit{Shintō to Nihonjin}, (Tokyo: Jinja Shimpōsha, 1986) p. 61. During a time when I was employed as an English teacher at the Kyoto branch of a national chain of English language schools in Japan, I was invited, along with the other teachers and the office staff, to a meeting with the gentleman whose professional responsibilities included liaison between the Japanese management and the foreign teachers. There had been some changes in the organization of classes, schedules and other matters recently and, because these had produced some resignations and complaints from the teachers at other branches of the school, we were informed that this meeting was to be a venue for an open airing of teachers’ concerns. I offered what for me and for my non-Japanese colleagues seemed a rather innocuous question and comment. Although I could see no sign of it at the time, the liaison manager was deeply offended by my remarks. So much so, that only two days later he gave me my notice, explaining that my dismissal had been caused by my comments in the meeting. Though my notice was later withdrawn by more senior management on the grounds that the liaison manager had been too affected by my remarks, the incident has left me convinced of the great force of criticism in Japan, and that I should have known better.
associated with his exposure as a murderer than the murder itself.¹⁴
These are the empty end signs, the urban mythology of a social administration of shame. In Japanese culture, that administration of shame has the power to transform the subject's capacity in its social relations in ways that serve the social order. In the case of representations of war crimes in Asia, however, inclusion of an historical and political critique of the forces enabling the atrocities holds out the distinct possibility of awarding responsibility and thus, shame, to the entire Japanese group. Perhaps the dangers posed by criticism and shame would not be so great were that group some empirical entity but, as it is, it is important to remember that Japan and the Japanese are more of a grid of ideas produced and maintained within the symbolic system. Control of symbolism - language - is always vested in authority, which itself invests in production of things, such as selfhood, in ways suited to its interests. Thus, if analysis produces criticism, and shame is a product of criticism, and if the process gives rise to transformations in the individual subject that may range from death to social ostracism, then the possibilities of transformations in the authorized order of collective selfhood that are immanent in any thick criticism of Japanese atrocities present a danger that must be headed off if things are to remain the way they are. Like the repetitive avoidances of public, formal apology to Korea, China and the nation states of Southeast Asia by successive postwar Japanese governments until recent years, omission of critique in atrocity images and anecdotes constrains shame and, in so doing, pacifies the dangers that

threaten the established conceptions of self and order that arise when shame becomes part of identity.

Central to the orders of identity is the figure of the Showa reiwa, known in the West as Hirohito. Silencing and massive regulation of discourse about war crimes is constructed around the logic that to accept or delineate responsibility for atrocities and other crimes criticizes and thus, shames the emperor, whose name was used to legitimate and empower Japanese imperialism, as well as the actions of its agents. As the symbolic culmination of authorized Japanese identities and orders, the emperor's shame represents the shame of the nation, at least to authority in Japan. It was not until the Showa emperor died in early 1989, that a possibility for apology that did not contain the stakes for sanctioned Japanese orders of identity arose. That possibility was quickly closed off, but not before Prime Minister Kaifu and the new reiwa, Akihito, had offered apologies to Korea and Singapore. But these apologies are like images of atrocity in Asia. Both are little more than gestures to the past rather than a critique that could account for the violence of Japanese imperialism and its consequences today.

3.

Of course, these atrocious images are never completely successful in their attempts to remember in a forgetting way. Their gesture to responsibility is very weak but it is still dangerous. Within the wider economies of discourse about war crimes, that danger is heightened by the style of other historical writings about the past in Asia. These other writings are analytical and critical. They construct links between current Japanese subjectivities and crimes against the
Asian other. Whereas in more popular modes of representation, such as atrocity images, the connection with the past seems almost completely lost in the pornography of violence, in some intellectual and Marxist modes of writing, shame produced by criticism about the atrocities of the past is especially acute. Ienaga Saburo's history of the Pacific War is exemplary of the association between critical writing about the past and shame. Ienaga remarks,

To write about these depraved acts by Japanese fills me with shame and remorse. That anguish is slightly mitigated by the fact that some individuals, even in the military, refused to perform such crimes.\textsuperscript{15}

and his shame runs like a twisting stream throughout all of his historical account. There is, however, something more than an articulation of shame in this passage. Ienaga offers a sort of redemption in the final sentence, "That anguish is slightly mitigated by the fact that some individuals, even in the military, refused to perform such crimes." It is this sort of attempt to redeem the atrocious past that \textit{Imaginary Lands} turns to now, seeing it as another mode for withholding responsibility, as well as a mode for pacification of the socially troublesome enactments of shame.

Cinema is one of the principle imaginative genres for redemptive narratives about the Japanese past in Asia of the past. I have chosen two screenplays as examples of the practice of using mitigating individuals as redeemers for the past in postwar Japanese imaginations of Asia, and my choice is based on the different narrations of redemption advanced in each film, as well as on their distribution in time. The first of the two is Ichikawa Kon’s screenplay

\textsuperscript{15} Saburo Ienaga, \textit{The Pacific War}, p. 190.
of the postwar Japanese novel, *Biruma no Tategoto.* (Harp of Burma). *Biruma no Tategoto* is set in Burma immediately prior to and after the cessation of hostilities between the Japanese army and the Allied armies. It is an account of a young Japanese corporal who becomes separated from his comrades in arms when he is forced by the British to attempt to persuade some Japanese soldiers holding out in the mountains to surrender. Garbed in the safety of the robes of a member of the Burmese Buddhist sangha, he journeys to rejoin his corps in another part of the country. As he travels across Burma's rivers, plains and dry jungles he comes across the bodies of other Japanese soldiers left where they have fallen in combat to the vultures and the elements. He is a sensitive and decent young man, who has previously been of great comfort to the other members of his corps and so, he begins to administer the dead in a fashion more closely according with notions of Japanese respect for the spirits of the dead, with a peace-time disposition of bodies, and with a sense of the obligations of fraternity. Over and over again, he buries the rotting carcasses of his fellow Japanese. By the time he reaches the town of Mudon, where his corps is detained by the victorious British, his experiences have deeply affected him. Happening upon a British funeral ceremony for unnamed soldiers, he is struck with the responsibility to provide a respectful and interment for all Japanese left dead in Burma. Without rejoining his comrades, and at considerable emotional sacrifice for himself, he renews his monk's robes and heads off back into the countryside to perform his newly conceived duties.

An entire series of codes in Japanese subjectivity is redeemed from its agony about crimes against peace and crimes against humanity
by the representation of this young soldier's sacrifice of his chance to return to Japan with his comrades. Obviously, in this narrative there is no depiction of war crimes of the sort we have considered above. But *Biruma no Tategoto* redeems those crimes nonetheless. That redemption is advanced in the symbolism of the Japanese man of war who becomes a man of peace, cognizant of his duty to the dead (and, in view of the historical importance awarded to proper care of the dead in Japan, this is a duty that especially signifies an unashamed Japanese selfhood). The sense of responsibility and shame that held out such a potential for transformation of what it was to be Japanese in the immediate postwar years finds a mitigation or relief in the soldier's assumption into priest. More importantly, his redeeming transformation into a peace-loving monk is achieved at the very site of otherness and difference (Burma). It is achieved too, through his severance of relations with his comrades, who represent Japanese self, and through his adoption of the saffron apparel of a Burman monk, which must be read as symbolic of a redeeming abandonment of the imperial Japanese identity and an assumption of the other.

The mitigating role of the central character of *Biruma no Tategoto* anticipates a later and more precise redemption and pacification of shame concerning Japanese crimes and atrocities against other Asians. *Ningen no Jōken* (The Human Condition) is a three part film, set in Manchukuo, the Japanese puppet state in Manchuria. In the first part redemption comes in the form of a political hero. Kaji is a young man working for the Japanese-owned and run Manchuria Steel Company. Though he does not begin as resistant critic of Japanese imperialism, Kaji is a reformer of sorts. He
writes a policy paper for the company management arguing that more humane treatment of indigenous laborers would improve output in the ore mines. Because the demand for metal to supply the war effort is always unsatisfied, Kaji is sent to work and to try to apply his ideas as a supervisor of labor at a mine located at the outer reaches of Manchukuo.

Almost as soon as he arrives at the Loh Hu Liong iron ore mines, Kaji is confronted by the brutality of other Japanese foremen and supervisors towards the Chinese and Manchu miners. Countering corruption, exploitation of the workers, and criticizing brutality, he attempts reform in a way that does not directly or dangerously confront imperialism or violent Japanese subjugations of difference. Then several thousand Chinese prisoners arrive from the south. When Kaji is ordered by a kempeitai commander to manage the new prisoners, the form of the redemption offered by Ningen no Jōken to all Japanese for war crimes in Asia begins to take shape. Kaji opposes liberal humanism to Japanese imperialism. Against the enforced modes of self/other relations in the empire, he struggles to find human dignity in and for the Chinese prisoners. But, for the most part, they are deeply suspicious of the depth of his humanistic commitment.

After several of the Chinese prisoners are arrested, wrongfully charged with attempting to escape, and summarily sentenced to death by the kempeitai, Kaji gets the opportunity to prove his commitment, and to redeem Japanese selfhood of responsibility for war crimes in Asia. He is ordered to act as witness for the executions. In agony, he tries unsuccessfully to have the sentence revoked. He attempts to surreptitiously release the condemned prisoners from their cells but
is stopped by his wife's plea for recognition of his responsibilities to her. At the outdoor execution site, Kaji tries to look away toward the hills and valleys of Manchuria, but the presiding kempei orders him to watch. One Chinese prisoner is brought forward. He is pushed to his knees, head bowed and neck exposed. The sword is anointed with water. We hear it swoop down through the morning air, chop into bone and flesh. Kaji watches in a daze, in horror. He looks way briefly to gather himself. A second prisoner is beheaded, trembling and pleading for his life. Kaji cannot act. But the third prisoner brought forward for execution resists. He shouts angrily at Kaji, telling him that even though he had tried to portray himself as a humanist to the Chinese prisoners, he is nothing more than a Japanese animal of empire. This prisoner dies fighting, shouting praise for China and spewing invective at the Japanese. Ashamed by this public criticism coming from the other, Kaji makes a stand against any further executions. He is successful, for his defense of humanity incites a corresponding fervor in the assembled Chinese prisoners. In the face of their fury, and unexpectedly finding themselves the object of condemnation and critique, the kempei halt the executions and take Kaji off for weeks of interrogation and torture which end when he is conscripted into the army and sent to the front in China.

In one reading, *Ningen no Jōken* excuses the Japanese left for not having been able to prevent imperial Japanese atrocities in Asia. But this is a reading that, like a cul-de-sac, fails to open up access to interpretations pertaining to the memory of war crimes and the maintenance of social order in contemporary Japan. In another reading mode the importance of relations between criticism, shame,
and Japanese memories of crimes against the Asian other become very marked here. There is little doubt that the halt to the executions is brought about by the social force of public criticism. More importantly, it is criticism that enables Kaji to act in a fashion that redeems Japanese selfhood from the crimes of war and empire. In so doing, he pacifies the instabilities and disturbances of shame produced by criticism both within himself and in a Japanese memory of the past that makes the present.

Moreover, the semiotic distance between Biruma no Tategoto and Ningen no Jōken tells us something about the history of subjectivity in postwar Japan. I have already pointed out that Japan's postwar political circumstances included a short term discursive loss of the Asian other. The inability to talk constitutively about the other points to difficulties in the production and maintenance of subjectivity or selfhood, and such was the case in postwar Japan. Renewed debate among artists and intellectuals in the five to ten years after the war's end about the nature of Japanese shutaisei, or subjectivity, supplied moves towards recovery of a stable idea of the nature of Japaneseeness and the relationship of that nature to the past, especially militarism and the war.16 Running through this debate was a concern that, as a result of the hardships suffered during the Pacific War, postwar Japanese were too concerned with an individualistic notion of the self:

The great Japanese empire collapsed...morally, politically, and economically...the state was obviously completely helpless in the face of popular demands for such essentials as food, clothing, and shelter...As a result, the people were

coerced to become "individualists" in fact before they were exposed to the concept of individualism.\textsuperscript{17}

To both coopt and resist this "postwar privatization of values", a subjectivity emphasizing "inner commitment, motivation, and political action" was conjured up by postwar intellectuals.

In \textit{Biruma no Tategoto}'s narrative of redemption, made before individualism obtained its currency in discourse, this sense of a new Japanese subjectivity is signified in codes to do with older configurations of Japanese selfhood: obligation, fraternity, spiritual practice and resolution. But since these codes are drawn from a rejected recent history, they run the risk of failure in their mission to produce a new subject redeemed of responsibility in the crimes of the past. As a result, through their adornment with the visual signs of the other, Burmese monks' robes, and through their placement in a site of otherness (Burma,) the codes drawn from a rejected past are protected from the risk of failure, and empowered to redeem. In contrast, \textit{Ningen no Jōken} is situated in a moment when discursive mobilization of the concept of individualism was well advanced, if still antithetical, in postwar Japan. Here, I think, in this redemptive Japanese imagination of the past in Asia, are the signs of the new and individualistic Japanese subject, which is separated from the past in ways that enable redemptions of history. The capacity of Kaji's inner commitment and motivation to produce political action, is a cinematic representation of a new constitution of Japanese subjectivity. For progressives and the Japanese left during the 1960s and early 1970s, this same constitution of identity accounted for the widespread

\textsuperscript{17} Hidaka Rokurō, quoted in Koschmann, "The Debate on Subjectivity," p. 613.
Figure 3.20

Redeeming crimes against the other: A Japanese child killed in the American attack on Okinawa.

protests against the Diet ratification of the new version of the United States-Japan Security Treaty and for the emergence of shimin undō (citizens' movements). The difference is that in Ningen no Jōken, Kaji's progressive inner commitment and action functions to suppress criticism. In a reactionary rather than a revolutionary move, the new subjectivity redeems Japan from responsibility and guilt for violence against the Asian other, pacifying history and the social force of shame emerging from it.

Redemption of Japan's violent past in Asia through mitigating individuals remains a practice of memory in Japan today. Sometimes these redemptions appear in more obtuse and more heavily encoded forms than they had previously done. For example, David Bowie playing Jack Celliers, draws the Japanese back into the circle of human feelings through his kiss with the prisoner of war camp commander in Oshima Nagisa's cinematic interpretation of Laurens van der Post's short novel, The Seed and the Sower, retitled as Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence. But these somewhat elusive redemptive exercises are joined in the field of discourse about Japan's history in Asia by an entirely different redeeming mode. Here, mitigating individuals are replaced by some general redistributions of responsibility. Spaced among photographs of Japanese atrocities in Asia are images of Allied war crimes. Through displacement of responsibility and thus, of shame and its social consequences, onto the American military, Figure 3.20, a photograph of a small Japanese boy killed in the American attack on Okinawa, and Figure 3.21, an image of civilian Japanese horribly burned in the American fire bombing of Tokyo, redeem the images of mutilated and dead Asians preceding them.
Redeeming crimes against the Asian other by pointing to crimes by the American other: A victim of the fire bombing of Tokyo.

Redemption for the past in Asia through redistribution of responsibility is perhaps most articulate in recollections of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the several occasions that I have visited the peace memorials and atom bomb museum in Hiroshima, I am always struck by the complete absence of the signs of Japan's own crimes against Asians during the empire and the Pacific War. In the almost excessive collection of singed, fused, melted, flayed, and incinerated relics of the American attack on Hiroshima, in the plaster of Paris models of the city lit with various colored lights to indicate the concentric circles of damage, in the crayon drawings and poems written in childish hands, and most certainly in the numerous photographs of the people of Hiroshima with sheets of skin hanging from their backs, there is a remembering that silences any other. It is as though there has been a deliberate intent to forget here the history of Japanese aggression and violence in Asia.  

Even in criticisms of Japanese colonialism, Hiroshima and Nagasaki slip in to balance Japan's culpability. When Tsurumi Yoshiyuki visited Sumatra in the late 1970s he stayed in a hotel at Lake Toba which offered a Batak singing group as an entertainment for its guests. At first, Tsurumi found northern Sumatra a beautiful place, innocent of any history that may involve him. But, when he takes an evening sightseeing cruise on the lake, the Batak singers sing an old Japanese imperial anthem, "Aikoku Kōshin Kyoku":

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18 During a late 1990 visit to Tokyo and Kyoto, I came across an article by Endō Shūsaku in one of the English language daily newspapers, Mainichi Daily News. The article concerned the proposed establishment of a Holocaust museum and memorial in a northern Japanese town. In the absence of any memorial to the millions of Asians dead at the hands of Japan, a Japanese memorial to the Jews, homosexuals, Gypsies, etc. who died in Hitler's Europe seems to me to be a telling comment on Japan's way of forgetting its imperial conduct in Asia.

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Seel the rising sun shining on high
Brightening the skies above the Eastern Sea
The Eight Great Islands of Japan, whence springs
The fervent hopes of all the world.
And oh! as the morning clouds begin to clear
The form of Fuji towering,
Unwavering and fearless.
Be proud of our Japan!

Let us all, subjects high and low,
An unbroken imperial line,
Like an eternal light,
Set out on our imperial mission.
Neglecting nowhere in all the wide world,
Let us lead the peoples of the four seas
And build a righteous peace.
Our ideals will bloom as fragrant flowers.

sing the Batak as the boat bearing Tsurumi circles Lake Toba. More than thirty years have passed since the Japanese lost their short tenure in Indonesia but out of courtesy, the Batak singers, knowing Tsurumi to be Japanese, and the only one in the group at that, sing the old imperial march to him in Japanese. "It was," he writes, "an unspeakably oppressive experience." His shame is so great that he is unable to decide on a proper response, not knowing whether to sing along with them or to insist that they stop singing this song that implicates him in the Japanese invasion of Asia. He opts for doing nothing other than allowing feelings of responsibility, shame at Asian criticisms of Japanese imperialism, and thoughts about the persistence of Japanese colonial attitudes towards Asia precipitated by the song to wash over him. But the dangers represented by this unintentional musical criticism, and by this sense of shame for the past, force Tsurumi to recover his innocence. The section immediately following his account of his shame for the past in Asia begins with a reminder to the reader of the American atom bomb attack on
Figure 3.22

Nagasaki.

Redeeming crimes against the Asian other by pointing to crimes by the American other: A victim of the fire bombing of Tokyo.

Hiroshima and its importance in Japanese notions of self and the past.19

My reading of Japanese recoveries of Hiroshima as redemptions of war crimes in Asia is in no way intended to discount the horrors visited on Japan by American attacks. Neither do I expect the Japanese to account for their war crimes while at the same time I allow America to forget its own. Nor do I want to forget that representation of Japanese war crimes in Asia alongside representations of Allied atrocities also offers us a narrative about the mobile distributions of violence in wartime. There are contesting narratives between the West and Japan about the force of remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The tendency in American literature to accept Japan’s redistribution of guilt and shame in the memory of the atom bomb attacks is under popular revision in the wake of the United State’s victory in the recent war in the Persian Gulf, and in an atmosphere of increasing hostility towards Japan for its successful application of economic lessons learnt from the West. While these western critiques of Japan’s uses of Hiroshima and Nagasaki focus on the same practice as I do here, their criticism of the supreme place of Hiroshima in Japanese remembrances of the Pacific War, these anti-Japanese texts recover an ancient white man’s epistemology about cultures of color, reconstituting the Japanese as morally flawed because of their ways of memorializing empire and war.20

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20 One of the most recent of these critiques is to be found in a syndicated column by Scripps Howard News service journalist, Leonard E. Larsen, captioned "Hiroshima mourners have faulty memories" in, The Honolulu Star Bulletin, April 16, 1991, p. A-18.
becomes a Japanese subterfuge for a refusal of responsibility and guilt. That refusal is in itself a sign of Japanese immoralities that then account for America’s failure to compete with an unscrupulous Japan in the international economy. Like most "Japan bashing," these imaginations are bonded in therapeutic service to the damages inflicted on American imaginations of the American identity by the evidence of the superiority of an other formerly inferior. In contrast, for me Japanese redemptions of war crimes have a place in my work because of what they suggest about the politics of identity in Japan itself. At the risk of repeating myself, obsessive and uncritical remembering and forgetting of war crimes in Asia and redistributions of responsibility in major foregrounding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki tell us nothing about any inferior Japanese set of scruples or moral codes. They do not say that Japan is a "shame culture" rather than a "guilt culture." Instead, the war crimes agonistic and its redemptions point to a social practice of administering shame in a way that makes it crucial to the stability of authorized subjectivity. Because criticism and public admission of responsibility for atrocities in Asia entail productions of a sort of shame that affects the nature of the collective subject, to the established constitutions of "we Japanese" (wareware Nihonjin), it presents a threat to stability and authority that must be suppressed. Uncritical images of Asian blood and guts, as well as repeated summons to the equal violence of the Allies, enables that suppression.

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Japanese war crime agonistics and redemptions concerned with Asia are a mode of historical management that serves contemporary
practices in the construction and maintenance of Japanese self-identity. But the agonistic also imagines the Asian other as a victim, as something without. It is that without, that lack to which *Imaginary Lands* turns next.
Figure 4.1

Our way and their way: An Australian wartime poster.

Source: Unknown.
CHAPTER 4
LACK: GENDERING & RECTIFYING THE IMAGINARY LANDS

A woman is a foreign land,
Of which though there he settle young,
A man will ne'er quite understand
The customs, politics, and tongue.
Coventry Patmore, The Angel in the House, II.

Japan was an important part of my childhood. When I was born, Australia’s memory of the war with the Japanese in the Pacific was still very fresh. My parents, my aunts and uncles, friends of the family, and my teachers, all had fought or helped out on the home front as the Japanese military swooped down through the Indonesian archipelago to occupy more than half of Australia’s League of Nations mandate in Papua New Guinea, to bomb Darwin and Derby in Australia’s far north, and to send midget submarines on a mission into Sydney Harbour. In the dusty country town where I grew up, scented with eucalyptus, peppercorn, wheat, and sheep, we were still angry, still distrustful of the Japanese for what we imagined them to be. In our anger we perpetuated images of the Japanese which owed their history to white fears of color, and to practices in official representations of the Japanese that had been perfected by government rhetoric during the war itself. Figure 4.1 speaks the language we spoke back then. The Japanese are led by those whose sly ugliness symbolizes the untrustworthy ugliness of Japanese politics and society. The Japanese have no sense of an individualism that can compete with the political system that led to war. The Japanese are passive before authority, having not the voice or will to resist the evils of being Japanese.
Our anger was enacted in an imaginary constitutive of a Japanese without many of those characteristics comprising the white Australian subject. In our minds, the Japanese had lacks; they possessed insufficiencies constituted out of the ways that the Australian gaze constructed Japan. While the nature of the lacks we supplied to Japan in the years shortly after the Pacific War may have been peculiar to the historical and cultural milieu from which they came, the practice of looking at the other in a way that constructs insufficiency within and around it is a practice in a wider politics of identity. By guaranteeing the lack of the other, selfhood defends itself against the dangers of recognizing its own lacks and, in certain situations, uses that the notion of the other's insufficiency to propel the logic of subjugation and exploitation. Just as the Japan we Australians looked at came to have lacks provided by our gaze so too, Japan's gaze at its Asian neighbors contrives an insufficient other. These lacks signify what Japanese selfhood is afraid to discover in itself. These lacks use absences to gender the Asian other in a way that serves the interests of empire and the expansion of Japanese international capital into the Asian region.

1.

In Japan's gaze the Asian other's gender is female. It is made so by associations between Japanese significations of what Asia does not have that Japan has, and what men have that women lack. These associations can only be articulated in a particular mode of writing, one that abandons the strict rules of logic in favor of textual analogy, incompleteness, irrationality, disorder, and an unmastered object.
There is a utopian and feminist politics that follows from this style of writing about gender in Japanese images of Asia. As discourse, language creates identities and produces those inscriptions that mark and make subjectivity. But, because discourse is always masculinist, it leaves no place for women's subjectivity that is not produced out of male identity for the purposes of defining what it is to be a man. Thus, as Luce Irigaray argues explicitly and implicitly in all her later works, women can only produce a utopian society free of gender oppression after we have constituted our own subjectivity beyond the constitutive activities of male discourse. This is to be done through the symbolic order, through the sexualization of discourse, through a discursive method that, in its differences, subverts male discourse. Here is the possibility of speaking (writing) as a woman: *parler femme*. Where masculinist discourse is logical and complete, *parler femme* is metaphorical and provisional. Where men's discourse masters the subject and the object, writing as a woman adopts a position of non-mastery. So, in however liminal a fashion, my strategy in reading gender, lack and rectification in Japanese images of Asia tries to further feminist politics through beginning to speak as a woman. It may be that this style is unsatisfying, unconvincing and trying to the reader fashioned by logic, reason and mastery, but that is what it is supposed to be in the effort to construct a more feminine place for writing. It is this mode of writing that forces certain Japanese images to give up the lacks that mark their association in both imperial and gender politics.

That association of women's lack and natives' lack depends upon the capacity to describe the self/the male as active and the other/the
Figure 4.2
Looking at Western China.
Figure 4.3

Looking is active and being looked at is passive: Sumatra.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
female as passive. This dichotomizing practice occurs in a variety of
textual places and through a number of figures and images, but it could
be said to begin with the very act of looking. That is, representation of
the object initiates an opposition between activity and passivity.
Images such as Figures 4.2 and 4.3 provide fundamental examples of
the activity/passivity opposition that emerges in both the practices of
imperial and international looking, and in the practices of gender
differentiation. Earlier in *Imaginary Lands* I discussed the practices of
images such as these, noting the importance of the belvedere in
assimilating the differences of other Asians into Japanese realms of
discourse and knowledge about identity. But, in its powerful, high
position, the overlooking place of this gaze also signifies an arrogation
to the Japanese self of a right to look upon the other in a way that
determines it as lacking agency. The belvedere devises an implicit
hierarchy. By virtue of its active gaze Japan is at the top, the place of a
plenitude of action, in these hierarchical relations. In contrast, the
Asian other, which is being looked at, finds itself placed by the
imaginary at the bottom of the order, where a lack of action lies.
Further, these representations of the Asian other are in the hands of
selfhood and its vested interests (at this time, colonial expansion and
resource extraction), both of which are masculine constructions of
identity and its interests; both of which involve desire. Japan’s gaze
on the other is male, eyes standing for the penis. Asia’s passivity in
these images signifies that the Japanese eye/penis has the capacity to
penetrate the other but, to summon the desire necessary for coitus, it
must show itself the other in ways that signify a delicate nexus of
distance and availability. Distance is contained in the inaccessibility of
the image itself, which can never quite be the real, and the other's availability is signified by its lack of the seeing eye. In this simple way Japanese images of other Asians and of the other Asia attach them to a looked-at site that is the place of lack itself. So too, if looked-at or exhibited sites in Asia are passive so too, in masculinist gazes, is woman. As Jacques Lacan would say, the passive, "be-looked-at-ness" of images of the other, of showings, of which Japanese images of Asia are exemplary, already connotes the other's femininity. The difference of feminine gender is constructed in the oppositional nature of the gaze, which is itself always male.¹ Historically, that opposition between activity and passivity is coupled with the matter of sexual difference, and so, Japanese images of an other Asia that lacks agency also serve to attach the other to a site of where masculinist constructions of feminine gender identity occur.²

This gendering of Asia serves uncomplicated political purposes: subjugation and colonization. In Orientalism, Edward Said explains the language of the active/passive opposition compactly. Of Arthur Balfour's 1910 lecture to the House of Commons on England's relations with Egypt, Said writes,

Balfour's logic here is interesting...England knows Egypt; Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians, Egypt is what England has occupied and now governs;³

²This idea of the image operating to attach the other to certain sites I owe to Malek Alloula, The Colonial Harem, trans. Myrna Godzich & Wlad Godzich, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.) p. 64.
³Edward Said, Orientalism, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.) p. 34.
For all his critical perspicacity, however, Said refuses the opportunity here to gender Balfour's rhetoric and thus to gender imperialism itself. When Balfour and England are replaced with men, and Egypt with women, Said's statement loses none of its original demystifying force and may, as a matter of fact, gain a little more:

Men's logic here is interesting...Men know women; women are what men know; men know that women cannot have self-government; men confirm that by occupying women; for the women, women are what men have occupied and now govern.

I could also substitute Japan and Asia for England and Egypt, but the central points would remain unchanged: the opposition between active and passive that is used by colonizers to describe its relations with those it colonizes is the same opposition that has long dominated gender relations. The lack of activity ascribed to natives and women constitutes a venue for subjugation and oppression by imperial centers and men, both of which are obliged to each other for their existences.

In the symbolic terrain supporting unequal relations between men and women, and in the symbolic orders supporting imperialism, lying close to the practice of making activity/passivity oppositions that sustain inequities in imperial, international and gender relations, there are also metaphors and adjectives further supporting domination of both women and natives. Initially, these metaphors and adjectives are striking in their interchangeability. They transit gender politics, identity politics, history and geography with an ease that is nicely implied by Hélène Cixous in this passage:

To have seen "Frenchmen" at the "height" of imperialist blindness, behaving in a country that was inhabited by humans as if it were peopled by non-beings, born-slaves. I learned everything from this first spectacle: I saw how the
white (French) superior, plutocratic, civilized world founded its power on the repression of populations who had suddenly become "invisible," like proletarians, immigrant workers, minorities who are "not the right color." Women. ⁴

The invisibility of natives and women in French representations is a sign of their commonalities in masculine imaginations. Their invisibility means that they are without, and it is this notion of an interchangeable insufficiency that also transits cultural specifics so that it marks Japanese signs of other Asians too. Both Japan's imperial and postwar gaze on the Asian other is feminizing, gendering the other as woman because of what it can imagine and articulate as not existing. Within the assimilations of empire, imperial subjects are always of inferior status to their overlords, and in masculinist culture, woman is always the lesser man. Natives are less because of their lack of the identity of the colonizer. Woman is first of all less because of her lack of a penis. As Luce Irigaray writes, in masculinist representation,

women's erogenous zones never amount to anything but a clitoris-sex that is not comparable to the noble phallic organ, or a hole-envelope that serves to sheath and massage the penis in intercourse: a non-sex, or a masculine organ turned back upon itself, self-embracing. ⁵

Next, woman is less because she does not have the phallus, which always refers to the active, civilizing principles, and which is signified by the penis.

Construction of woman as lesser man is not unique to Western discourses. Insufficiency is a condition of Japanese women too, and their lack is transported into Japanese representations of other

⁵ Luce Irigaray, This Sex Which is not One, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985,) p. 23.
The Co-Prosperity Sphere was constructed out of unequal relations between Japan and the other Asia. In this newspaper photograph of Japanese military and Vietnamese peasants, the other is feminized because it lacks action, control, and size. Both women and natives are lesser men.

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, November 2, 1940.
Asians. Japanese women have no phallus. Their identities are less than the Japanese male identity, and their inferior status is signified in homilies such as, *danson jōhi* (males respected, women despised), or *fushō fuzui* (husband calls, wife follows). Though the terms may change, in Japan's imperial gaze on Asia the other's lesser status genders it as female. That feminine gender is signified throughout the formulations of the hierarchical structures of successive plans for organized relations between Japan and Asia. In *Dai Nihon* (Greater Japan) and in *Dai Tōa* (Greater East Asia) rhetoric Asia is imagined as a lesser Japan, as amounting to nothing that bears comparison to the noble metropolis. Despite their rhetoric about Pan-Asian unity, fraternity, liberation from the white man, and co-prosperity, in practice and in discourse, Japan clearly promoted hierarchical relations in the empire, with Japan at the pinnacle in the Asian region. That style of relations: superior to inferior, master to servant, colonizer to the colonized, are also relations between men and women in male-dominated culture.

Women's vaginas signify their lack in several ways. In masculinist imaginations vaginas lack agency, recovering the opposition between activity and passivity already constructed through the practices of representation and looking. In men's Japanese, the vagina is metaphorized in passive nouns as a container (*utsuwa*), a vase (*meikī*), a hollow place (*hoto*), or a slit (*wareme*). These container euphemisms signify the passivity of women in Japanese discourse. But their lack of a penis, which always refers to the active, civilizing principles of the phallus, is also a sign of women's primitive state in the patriarchal orders of things. It is no credit to Lacan that he writes that the vagina
is, "the primitive object par excellence, the abyss of the female
organ." but his description is symptomatic of male readings of
women's sexual organs as a sign of otherness. If difference can be
represented by vaginas, then difference can also signify women's
genitals. In Japan's gendered imagination of the Asian other, women's
sex organs and the otherness of Asia are made to play against one
another through complex practices and codes for associating vaginas
and thus, woman with Asia. In some Japanese representations of
women's sexual organs, Asia has a significant part to play.

"Do you know a Chinese expression, kai men hong?"
I asked.
"No, I don't."
"The characters mean Open, Gate, Red. A Chinese
immigrant in Saigon taught me. Its used to describe New
Year's fêtes and other festivities. It's a word showing the
gate open, and as you pass by and peep into it, you can see
a glimpse of something red, and 'verily, the view is
magnificent.' They are indeed a literate people. You can
just see it, can't you?"
"Its a clever expression."
"Let's do it and see."
"Turn off the light."
"It'll be Open Gate Black."
"Sorry, can't help it."
A splendid vision opens up right at the tip of my
nose. Without lifting my face, I can take in the entire view.
I am surprised that this territory bears no trace of the
passage of time, and I feel a surge of affection. The sad,
clownish, intimate, and yet tauntingly peculiar face of the
anus, the wet vagina, its light brown lips parted to the
fullest extent, the burst-open appearance of its red
protrusion, and the rippling group of small folds, the
rustling of warm forests, were all in their characteristic
positions. As I lie down in the colossal canyon and lift my
face slightly, tickling the wall with my tongue or pecking
at it with my lips, I am really gazing into a scene from long
ago.7

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7 Kaiko Takeshi, Darkness in Summer, trans. Cecilia Segawa Seigle, (Tokyo: Tuttle,
The nameless narrator in Kaiko Takeshi's novel is gazing back into his marriage to the unnamed woman whose genitals are first evoked by a Chinese four character phrase, learnt in Vietnam. But, in *Imaginary Lands*, juxtapositions of this sort, which to another mode of criticism may seem innocent of complicity in Japan's politics of identity, signify more than the narrative wants to allow: a gendering of the Asian other. In the Chinese phrase, and in the site of its instruction to the male protagonist, Asia permits a textual exhibition of women's genitals and a hint at the intimate relations between Asia and the vagina in the Japanese gaze.

In men's eyes, the vagina obtains its primitive status in part because of its proximity and resemblance to a site for even more elemental functions than sex: urination and defecation. Vaginas are close to the anus and they have in their internality an association with the rectum. Indeed, some figures of Asia's otherness produce a Japanese response to it that reminds me of men's first ambivalence about cunnilingus, which arises from the site of the vagina and its doubtful hygiene. Confronted in occupied Indonesia with the durian fruit, Koide Shōgo writes,

> Cut it and inside the flesh of the fruit that one eats is like cream. But the strong odor it gives off is just like shit and the person unaccustomed to it feels like he will be revolted. It is, however, an extraordinary thing that the Javanese and such love the durian fruit and, it is said that, in the durian season, there are even people who squander their fortunes on it.⁸

Koide's administration of his response to a fruit that signifies the otherness of Asia in a singular way is also man's first response to the

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otherness of women's sexual organs. Inside is where man wants to be, but bringing his face close to that delicious interior puts him uncomfortably close to the anus and to the idea of the vagina's inherent dirtiness. He knows, however, that other men actually savor the taste and texture of that strange organ; that it is a taste to be acquired and to be seduced by. In both the desire for empire and the desire for women, men conquer their hesitations and they do so not only through making a summons to the pre-existing legitimacy of the acts they propose, but also through awarding lacks to the other that make it less threatening and in need of a corrective that only the man/metropolis can supply.

Koide Shōgo's reluctance to place his face near the odor of human excreta is part of an imaginative economy that has both women and natives as dirty and wicked. Women's dirtiness is perhaps a male response to the interior conformation of women's genitals, but it also has much to do with menstruation, sign of women's sin and dirt in most patriarchal cultures. In Japanese patriarchy, menstruation is considered kegarawashii, filthy, disgusting, or obscene, and a sign of the unclean state of women generally.9 Vaginas, their location near the anus, and vaginal exudates, make women dirty. Both Shinto and Buddhism closely connect pollution to sin and so, women's dirtiness is a sign in patriarchal discourse of women's inherent sin. If dirt and sin are a sign to men and male-dominated women of women's otherness and need for subjugation, then sin and dirt are also a sign to Japan of Asia and Japan's superiority to it and thus, a sign of the other's

The fecundity of Asia signifies its feminine gender: Avocados mistakenly identified as papaya in the original text.

feminine gender. For many Japanese Asia is "corrupted, dirty" writes Yano Toru in 1975\(^{10}\) and, although Yano sees that dirtiness as a justification for domestic arguments in Japan proposing Japanese withdrawal from involvement in Asia, during the years of empire transforming Asia's sin and dirt were inversely imagined as the justifying object of Japanese occupation and colonization. Saitō Fumi wrote a *tanka* in 1942 celebrating Japan's capture of Singapore:

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The flames that burn
Purging away more than
One hundred twenty
Years of wickedness,
Do not cease, night or day.\(^{11}\)
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Inhabiting the same textual terrain as signs of women, sin and dirt as signs of the otherness of Asia in Japanese imaginations, also signify the feminine gender of Asia. Just as patriarchal constructions of femininity hold out signs to men of their right to dominate and rape women, so too, Japanese genderings of Asia assured and assures permissions to act on the other, to colonize it or rape its hardwood forests.

But, dirt points to the primitive status of the other. Koide Shōgo's ambivalent approach to the durian fruit is just one of many images he makes of fruit in the Southern Regions and, furthermore, Koide's repetitive concern with fruit is really exemplary of one prevailing trope in Japanese imperial representations of the imaginary lands. Time and again Asia is represented as overwhelmingly productive and procreative. Figure 4.6 is instructive here, for it shows

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Figure 4.6

Fertility, vaginas, and primitive state: An association of metaphors used for both women and natives within a textual terrain.

Japanese imaginations of an Asian other that has excessive capacities to reproduce and grow fantastic flora. Now, not only are these images of a powerfully fecund other signs of Asia's femininity in Japan's imaginary, they are also signs to Japanese constructions of its own identity that the Asian other is the "primitive object par excellence." Asia is without phallic capacities, but does possess powers of a different sort than those represented by the civilizing and active penis. These powers only serve however to reaffirm the existing gendering of the other because they are those powers to do with fertility. Fertility is women's responsibility and a sign to men of our gender. But reproduction always summons the image of the vagina, that "primitive" object. In this way fertility and procreation are constructed in patriarchal discourses as metonyms for the primitive state of women. So too, in Japan's colonial discourse about Asia, the tropical fertility of the other constructs it as feminine and primitive.

The primitive state in which women exist in male discourse is also a state circumscribing the identity of native others in colonial imaginations. Because the identity of the colonizer is represented to him in images of his own superior civilization, the other's primal situation permits its exploitation and subjugation by that civilized self. The others' primitive state can be constructed in various ways. As I have already indicated, in the male gaze on women's identities, primitive status is constructed out of the lack of the penis, that sign of the phallus which is itself emblematic of social agency, civilization, and power. For Asian others produced by practices in Japan's imagination, its fertility points us to the vagina, and the vagina points us to a primitive status that is often signified by the exposure of the body to
Figure 4.7

Only women and primitive natives have their nakedness exposed to public view.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
Figure 4.8

An insufficiency of clothing shows a lack of civilization: Balinese women.

Gendering the other through images of its body: Women marketing in Bali.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
Figure 4.10

Gendering Asia: Bathing at a Javanese hot spring.

Figure 4.11

Signifying the primitive and feminine state of the other: Bare breasted Balinese dancers.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
Figure 4.12

Primitive women, primitive natives, primitive others: A family in what is now known as West Irian.

Source: Gainanyō no Gensei, Tokyo: Nanyōchō, 1941.
the colonizing eye. It is hardly surprising that that body is very often imagined as the body of a woman who, being the site of elemental lacks attached to her anatomy and physiology, serves representations of the primal state of Asia very well indeed. Conflation of lacks of sophistication or civilization with woman crops up time and time again in Japanese images of Asia prior to 1945. Figure 4.7 is exemplary. Public nudity attaches this man and woman to lack. That lack is feminizing because of its without-ness, the absence of something. But it is also feminizing of the other because, in patriarchal cultures such as Japan, public display of the unclothed body is confined to women's bodies and reserved for the male gaze. The implicit threat of a woman's body is ameliorated by its representation within the controlled formation of an image produced and owned by Japan. Threats implied by the male and vitiated by his nudity, his proximity to a woman, and by his passive and helpless place in the act of representation. The naked bodies of the Asian other, further represented in Figures 4.8 to 4.12, attaches it to a lack, to a site characterized by an image of the other's insufficient civilization. In its signification of the vulnerability and availability of the Asian other, these images of primitive, partly naked Asians, also signify the other's feminization.

Gendering the other through imagining it as primitive also occurs beyond the other's exposed body. Figure 4.13 combines both the naked body and other signs to ensure that Asia is feminized by its insufficient civilization. Behind this unhappy Chamorro woman, is an exemplary sign of the other's primitive state: a poorly constructed hut, made from materials long superseded in Japan. Furthermore,
Figure 4.13

"An exemplary primitive Chamorro woman."

Source: Shimazaki Shintarō, Nanpō et, Tokyo: Shinjidaisha, 1931.
Figure 4.14

"An exemplary primitive Chamorro man."

Source: Shimazaki Shintarō, Nanpō et, Tokyo: Shinjidaisha, 1931.
Monkeys with men narrate a feminization of Asia in Japan’s imperial imagination.

Figure 4.15 compounds Japanese feminizations of Asia during the years of empire through its mobilization of an image also used to great effect in European constructions of the identity of colonized natives. Monkeys often represent primitive men and women. The close visual association of Southeast Asian tribesman and simian places the other firmly on the side of insufficiency. Just as American images of the Japanese as little monkeys during the Pacific War served to make primitive and thus, to feminize the Japanese other as a strategy for empowerment of the American identity, so too, the image of an Asian other existing in intimate relations with monkeys contrives a primitive and feminized identity for Asia that was integral in the service of constructing an empowered identity for Japanese selfhood.

2

"Onna wa shikyū de kangaeru" says one commonplace wisdom about women in Japan. "Women think with the uterus." goes the English translation, implicating the lacks signified by women's sex organs in another sort of lack altogether. That lack is women's insufficiency of rational and logical thought. Women's irrationality is one of a number of adjectives for the feminine that are also used by the Japanese imaginary in its constitutions of Asia. Both women and natives lack logic and its power to identify culture. They are constructed, identified, and made subjugatable in the male gaze by the idea of their access to nature. Women and natives speak subjectively, whereas man's voice is objective. Men are logical while women and natives are intuitive and sympathetic. Men's knowledge is intelligible,
but the knowledge of natives and women is sensible. Thus, in Japanese imperial representations of the Asia, the other is feminized by imaginations of its lack of reason and logic:

...our people [the Japanese] are realistic. They put more faith in proof than in argument. The Asiatic mentality is generally idealistic. That is why it has produced great religions and philosophies. But the Japanese race is in this respect a poor representative of Asia. The Japanese stick to earth and do not build castles in the air.

The intuitive, sympathetic, and sensible nature of female thought in male discourse circumscribes the identity of Asia in this passage. Signs of the other's gender arise out of its lacks of rationality, and are advanced through the use of terms to describe the other, such as, "idealistic" and "build castles in the air." Asia's feminine lack is also produced by what is said about Japan and not said about the other: "our people are realistic. They put more faith in proof than in argument." Nitobe Inazō writes, and what is present but unspoken here is Asia's feminizing lack of realism and "womanly" lack of belief in scientific provings of reality.

Nitobe's reference to an Asian preference for argument, for orality, brings to mind men's complaint that women talk too much. In signifying their sensibility and their intuition, the chatter of women also signifies their insufficiency of reason and logic. For Nitobe Inazō, the Chinese also have a surfeit of language and sense that is involved and lacking practicality:

Our neighbours are too acute to be practical...Realities do not bother them much. Their reasoning strikes us as

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ingenious, clever, plausible—but not always convincing. They talk over our heads. We are bewildered by the intricacies of their ratiocination. In a schoolroom or debating club they will win applause. When they try to apply in practice their nice arguments, they will find that the realities of life contain more than their logic dreamt of.¹⁴

Vocality genders China as female. The other's lack of practicality is at the same time men's description of women's traditional ineptness at construction, calculation, and organization. China's detachment from reality is woman's separation from the phallus, as well as a metaphor for female whimsy and caprice. China's language is women's language. Nitobe's representation of Chinese linguistic style as "ingenious, clever...but not always convincing," as over the heads of Japanese, and as bewildering, is men's imagination of women's language, "in which 'she' sets off in all directions leaving 'him' unable to discern the coherence of any meaning."¹⁵

Voluble women are gossipy women. "Onna sannin yoreba kashimashii." ("When you put three women together you get noise.") says one Japanese homily of women's language. For patriarchy, that noise is the sound of rumor-mongering which follows from women's lack of concern with truth, stability and rationality. The image of women as noisy and rumor-mongering is also an image that serves some postwar Japanese images of Asia. In his 1968 novel based on his experiences as a journalist in Vietnam during 1964 and 1965, Kaiko Takeshi captures the productions of Asia as feminine melee of rumor and counter-rumor, of scandalous gossip, very nicely. Kaiko writes,

¹⁴ Ibid. Vol. 5. p. 228.
¹⁵ Luce Irigaray. This Sex Which is not One. p. 28.
I'd bustled around all afternoon and got no other information than that the prime minister had been ousted and a provisional military government was being formed; no one knew exactly what was up. Tran had run off somewhere, and so had Yamada, so I ran around with students, children, and old women in a demonstration, and we all ran into a heavy dose of tear gas. It was reported that, at the moment, the young generals were in conference at the resort of Vung Tau. Not true, others said, it was in the cool highlands of Dalat. Scuttlebutt had it that the American ambassador had fled to Bangkok; and someone swore that the Cholon Chinese were betting seven to one that there would be peace talks before Tet. There was even an eccentric but convincingly whispered rumor that the VC were going to launch an attack on Saigon in red Triumph sports cars. And if I had forecast a nuclear war for tomorrow and a holocaust for the day after, all Saigon would soon have been swearing by it.\(^\text{16}\)

There is of course, nothing terribly and uniquely Japanese in the style of this example. Kaiko's amusing emphasis on the gossip and wild rumor of politics in wartime South Vietnam is also a tactic in Western representations of politics in other cultures as far flung as Panama, Papua Niu Gini, and Burkino Fasso. Nevertheless, Kaiko's imaginary is important here because of the way it genders the other through mobilizations of linguistic metaphors and textual images that also serve to describe women in the male gaze.

From the femininity produced in the image of the Asian other by women's noise, gossip, and rumor, another feminization of the other is set in train. If I read the chaos of news and gossip in Kaiko's image of Saigon as a metaphor for imagining the other as existing in a characteristically unstable state of politics in Vietnam, Japanese genderings of Asia take on new possibilities. The idea that the feminine is unstable and disordered is a common trope for

identification and subjugation of women. So too, instability is a way of identifying the otherness of natives. Instability was a common encoding of Japanese justifications for expansion into the rest of Asia. It served serving to feminize the Asian other and thus, to make it liable to ordering and rectification through Japanese subjugation. For example, Nitobe Inazō writes of China in 1931:

*We, the Japanese, have no right to laugh at our neighbours, the Chinese, for the unstable and chaotic state of their country. We must not forget that it took our small country of 35,000,000 souls a whole decade to establish itself on a firm basis. Think of the constant local disturbances—rebellions and insurrections—that took place in the interval between the Restoration (1868) and the Satsuma Rebellion (1877)! The disturbing elements among us were proportionate to the size of the country, and did not attain the scale on which the Chinese war-lords are managing their business.*

Nitobe's feminizing comparison of Japanese stability with Chinese instability neatly exemplifies my arguments about Japanese genderings of the self as male and the Asian other as female, but Nitobe's textual conduct here also seeks to shore up any slippage in the successful effects on authorized discursive constructions of Japanese selfhood as stable now (1931) and thus, fit for conquest of the feminine unstable Chinese other. Further, politics are at their most laughable when conducted by women and people of color. Men account for the poor political performance of women and people of color by pointing to their innate unsuitability for order and stability. Nitobe's gaze upon the Chinese, while not without the justifications of event, operates like the understandings men have of women's politics. It feminizes the China of the 1930s. What is more, the end of the Pacific war and Japan's

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defeat has not meant that the Asian other's feminine gender has been successfully reassigned in parts of the Japanese imaginary. For example, a more contemporary Japanese gaze on Asia mobilizes the feminizing idea of instability and disorder:

> Japanese people see that in present-day Southeast Asia there is a serious legitimacy crisis, from which no government is immune. In other words, there is political instability.¹⁸

but now, Japan's orderings of the unstable other are advanced in the economies of international exchange and development assistance.

3.

What natives do not have is also what women lack. Just as the masculine symbolic order tells itself about women's lacks as a sign of the appropriateness of women's subjugation by men so too, Japan's representations of other Asians as being without signifies to Japanese selfhood the rightness of imperial conquest of, and post-imperial development discourse about, Asia. But more than that, the insufficiencies of the other, as well as the femininity symbolized by those lacks, produce rectifying practices. Whether represented as the civilizing mission, hakkō ichiū, spreading of kōdō (imperial way), or development assistance, rectifications of the native other's insufficiencies are a practice of colonial language that crosses the claim to cultural and political particularities. Cortez in Meso-America, the French in Indochina, the British in Africa, and the Japanese in Asia, all represented their imperialism to themselves as rectifications of what the other did not have. Gendering the imaginary lands and their natives as female because of what they lack is integral to the

¹⁸ Yano Toru, "Japan-Southeast Asia Relations: From Optimism to Pessimism," p. 51.
course of colonization and subjugation, for it not only provides the other with a status that facilitates subjugation, it also provides the colonizing self with a narrative about what his imperialism or his aid does. Lack needs rectification. Rectification offers to replace the insufficiencies of the natives with amplitudes that promise falsely to make it possible for them to have their feminine gender reassigned and their subjugation relieved.

Japanese imaginations of the mission of the military in China and Southeast Asia during the 1930s and 1940s especially were often imaginations of rectifications of the many feminizing lacks that had in discourse made other Asians into suitable candidates for Japanese imperialism. I have already noted above a tanka celebrating the Japanese capture of the Singapore from the British in terms of Japan's rectification of the pollutions brought to the Asian other through its colonization by the white, European powers. Before 1945, the dirt of Asia, which is also the dirt of women in men's language, signifies the feminine, disempowered state of the Asian other. In part, the source of that feminizing dirt was white colonialism. Thus, in Japan's imaginations of the other, Asians can only become clean and thus, righteous, free and thus, men again, through Japanese rectification. Miyazaki Masayoshi, one of the ideologues of Tōa Renmei (East Asian Federation) made it clear to Japanese in 1936 that the righteousness of the Asian other could only be restored by Japanese rectifications of European and American dominance in the region.19 Rectification of

Japanese light rectifies the darkness brought to Asia by the European imperial powers.

the other's insufficiency of power was to be begun by the military, which would throw the west out of Asia:

These oppressed races [other Asians] are so firmly oppressed by England, France and other colonial powers that they have no strength to liberate themselves. They must have outside help without fail, and outside of Japan, governed by the Imperial Way, which gives life to all peoples, what country is there that can give them aid?20

Added to the pollution and lack of agency brought to the Asian other by Japanese conceptions of Western imperialism in the region, there is a third way for the other to be without that is a result of its domination by the western powers. In the Japanese imaginary lands, European colonialism put Asia into darkness. In view of the darkness of the vagina, and in view of patriarchy's association of women with the shadows, wallowing in night, representation of Asia's colonial condition as a state without light seems to be a very feminizing lack indeed. Figure 4.16 shows a Japanese representation of its capacity to rectify Asian insufficiencies brought about by western imperialism. Published in 1942, this cartoon depicts the sun, a most major symbol of Japan, dispelling the darkness of Dutch colonialism from the Indonesian archipelago. Light drives out the Dutch, who are themselves feminized by their representation as a Dutch girl, and encompasses the native. This rectifying light emanates from the sun, which is in Japanese mythology a feminine identity, representing Ameratsu Omikami, the mother deity of the Japanese race. The sun's feminine identity is administered by man, however, represented by the strong hand and masculine tailoring of the sleeve. Further, the

complicity of rectification in maintaining the other's insufficiencies and subjugation to Japan, rather than permitting realization of its promise of amplitude and admission to the ranks of power, is well exemplified here. Despite the rectification of European domination, the Asian other's feminine lacks persist. This Indonesian is still primitive. He still has his body exposed. He is still the shorter and thus, the lesser man to Japan. His darkness has not been entirely lifted, for he is still darker than the Japanese hand he shakes.21

Japan's pan-Asian, "Asia for the Asiatics" rhetoric throughout the war with China and the Great East Asian War prior 1945 then, served to rectify the lacks of the Asian other. As rectification itself serves the progress of imperialism by offering modes of action upon the other for Japan, it also sets up a continual recovery of the other's lack. Both Inazo Nitobe's and Yano Toru's representations of Asia as lacking the stability that figures into Japanese identity are accompanied by a rectifying vision. In the early part of the twentieth century, Nitobe's rectification of Asian instability takes the form of stabilities brought about and enforced by Japanese occupation of the region:

The so-called patriots proclaimed a republic...The republic of Formosa lasted three weeks, during which mobocracy and deviltry in all its forms reigned supreme...Peaceful citizens suffered more from the hands of their own countrymen...than they did from us [the Japanese]. Evidence of this lies in the fact that, as our army approached the different towns, it was everywhere received with open arms as a deliverer from robbery and slaughter.22

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22 Nitobe Inazo in about 1912, he expresses very similar ideas of Japan's capacity to rectify Asian disorder in later writings, Works, Vol. 2, p. 214.
Fifty or so years later, Yano's 1970s rectifying vision is one of the stabilizing effects of Japanese investment and development aid in the Asian region. But because rectifications of this sort are never to be finally achieved—after all, how can they be if the other is never allowed too near perfect assimilation?—the lacks of natives are always recovered or reaffirmed by the practice of rectifying rhetoric in the discourses of identity. Asia remains unstable for the Japanese imaginary throughout the Showa era both because it is said to be so, and because modes for rectifying that instability that can never be delivered are set up over and over again. In this way, there is always more material for rectification campaigns.

Among the modes for correction of the other's insufficiency, three rectifying visions serve to illustrate arrangements between Japanese selfhood and its ideas of the Asian other in the years of the twentieth-century. Principle among those things that Japan has, but that Asia is without, is language. When Columbus encountered the Caribes he imagined them to be mute: in the comparison with the intelligibility of Spanish for Columbus, Caribbean languages became non-languages. So too, in the imaginary encounter of Japan with the Asian other during the imperial moment, language provided both the basis for feminization and its rectification. The insufficiency of Asia when it came to the Japanese language was a sign of what the other did not have. That lack is both a lack of the capacity to make meaning, as well as a lack of education. It would be redundant of me here to make much of the point that to be without education and the capacity to control meaning is a condition of both natives and women. It is important, however, to make the point that the "unfeminization" or
"Filipino Salesgirls Now Speak Japanese": Rectifying the other’s insufficiencies.

rectification of an insufficiency of language takes place in the Japanese imagination of the Asian other within the promises of assimilation offered by language learning. From the take-over and Japanese administration of Taiwan in 1895, through the annexation of Korea in 1905 and the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, to the occupation of the Philippines and Indonesia in 1941 and 1942, "Japanization" of the subjugated other through education in the Japanese signifying system was of paramount importance in both representation of Japanese imperialism and in administration of it. Figure 4.17 displays this particular rectification of the other's lack nicely, and it is not without significance for the other that those without language are symbolized by the image of women.

But, like all rectifications of the other's insufficiencies, this one is bound to fail and thus to succeed in giving itself more inferior, uncorrected material to work on. It is bound to leave the other still entrenched in its lack. If we read the state of the other's lack in the eye's of the self from the standpoint of the tensions that arise in the other as a result of learning the language of the self, the recovery of the other's lack in rectifying practices is very clear. Julia Kristeva has recently described the condition of others who have been educated in the signifying system of the self. She makes it clear that those who have had to learn another language display a crucial separation from the implications and subtleties of the learned language. There is something strange about their way of using the new language, and that oddity cannot go unnoticed by the language's pedagogues and native speakers: "Your awkwardness has its charm, they say...One nevertheless lets you know that it is irritating just the same.
Occasionally, raising the eyebrows or saying 'I beg your pardon?' in quick succession lead you to understand that you will 'never be a part of it,' that there, at least, one is 'not taken in.'"²³ In *Imaginary Lands* the acuity of the self in its encounter with an other speaking the language of the self is Japan's recovery of the Asian other's lack. No matter how the other applies itself to the rectifying tasks prescribed by Japan, correcting the insufficiency only serves to remind both parties in the contract of what the other does not and can never completely have. In this way, rectification always recovers lack. That recovery and reaffirmation of insufficiency ensures the dominance of the colonizer and the domination of the colonized; it ensures difference and the relations of power that reside within it.

In postwar Japan, rather than an insistence on the lesser status of the Asian other based in part on its lack of Japanese language, many Japanese seem to feel that speaking Japanese is something of a sign of their own lack in global distributions and prioritizations of identity. Instead of confirming the other's lack through the practice of a rectifying logic concentrating on getting the other to speak Japanese, Japanese flock in phenomenal numbers to learn the languages of the other (though it must be admitted that the desirability of English and German far outweighs that of say, Mandarin or Bahasa Indonesian.) Imaginations of insufficiency and rectification are, nonetheless, still significant ways of figuring Asia in postwar Japan. This is especially so of the growing discourse about the underdevelopment of Asia, and Japan's capacity and responsibility to rectify that insufficiency of

development through aid, assistance and example. Since the middle of the 1970s, Japanese development aid has increased from US$4,003 million\textsuperscript{24} to many billions of dollars, making Japan the second largest aid contributor to Asia after the United States. With each increasingly large rectification of Asian underdevelopment comes a correspondingly confirmed reaffirmation of Asian lacks in the area of development. In its services to constitutions of Japanese identity, and to the expansions of Japanese capital, representation of the Asian other as less developed than Japan is not that much different to some of the lacks supplied to the region by prewar Japanese representations. Prewar and postwar lacks in images of Asia support amplitude and superiority in Japanese images of itself. The primitive, feminine, disordered, mute state of Asia in prewar imaginations were integral to Japanese expansion and occupation of the Asian other. Postwar development discourse about Asia supplies the other with an identity that enables Japanese economic domination of the region.

But whether prewar or postwar, Asia in Japan's imaginative practices is always without things that can be supplied by Japan. Among these rectifying practices is one that that we should all recognize as part of our own productions of the lesser other. This rectification brings us back to the feminization of Asia, but it also prepares the way for another field of practice in Japanese imaginations of Asia. Here, the other's insufficiencies are corrected but resupplied in a practice that consists of replacing lacks with beauty. Having feminized Asia through the representation of it as being without,

Japanese writers, photographers, and painters often rectify that lack in the way that men always rectify women's insufficiencies: man supplies woman with a bounty of visual aesthetics, with beauty. Woman's lack of logic is filled by men with tits, boobs, and jugs. Asia's insufficient stability is corrected by beauty. In Japan's gaze on Asia, the look of the places, their natural, human and cultural beauty come to make up for Asia's "womanly" lacks. From that masculine vantage point created out of the expertise of phallic technology and encompassed in a form symbolic of the penis, Nitobe Inazo looked down from an aircraft and wrote of Korea:

Of all the objects that one looks down upon from an airplane, the least beautiful are human habitations. Mountains retain the same grandeur when surveyed from above as when viewed from below. Rivers wind their sinuous course in graceful curves. Lakes reflect the blue sky and look up with a placid smile. Cultivated fields lie, like a mosaic, some in symmetrical rectangles and others with rounded edges.

The verdure that covers the plains for miles around varies in shades, here glistening like emerald, there brightening the forest in a lighter tint as of early spring foliage. Flowers add gaiety to the general landscape.

What a pity that the hovels where poor peasants live mar the beauty of the landscape!  

For Nitobe, the lesser status of Korea is always articulated in the Koreans themselves. They so annoyed him with their chaos, their lack of Japaneseess, their untrustworthiness, their dark dirt and squalor, that only a beauty beyond them rectifies their insufficiencies. But Nitobe's correction of what Koreans lack here, is also a tactic for men when they attempt to rectify women's insufficiencies. Nitobe's description of the Korean landscape is advanced in much the same

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language as that used by men to describe beautiful women: sinuous, graceful curves, placid smile, rounded, and gay. Of course, the promise of rectification is never fulfilled here either. Finally the rectifying image only serves to recover that image of a lesser other that is integral to imperial adventure and subjugation. Not only can the Korean people, who function as signs of the other's difference, not be rectified by beauty, their ugly presence only serves to always establish the insufficiency of Korea in Japanese imagination of it as other.

Rectification advanced through aestheticization in Japanese representations of the Asian other to itself is quite the same thing as an American traveller saying of Brazil, "Well, it's really a dangerous place, but it is so beautiful," or an Australian in similar circumstances making a combination of contemporary Indonesia's dirt and instability with its undeniable natural and cultural aesthetics. And the crosscultural nature of this practice is also transchronological, for although Nitobe Inazo's attempt to use beauty to rectify Asian lacks is drawn from 1933, the practice of overcoming Asia's lacks in aesthetic description continues in Japanese images produced after the defeat and collapse of empire. For example, after Kaiko Takeshi feminizes Vietnam, imagining the other as gossiping and rumor-mongering, he immediately proceeds to rectify this sign of insufficiency with images of beauty:

At Bach Dang Quay, the "Tour d'Argent" began to set out its tubular chairs and an MM Line passenger boat lit up its white-rimmed portholes. The evening sun canted on the yellow Saigon River and the water, trees, and hotels were shrouded in a saffron haze. Foodstalls opened on the riverbank and the smells of fried banana and toasted squid mingled in the air. On the ferry pier, a few children were fishing and a young couple sat holding hands looking up at
the sky. Two cyclo drivers, smiling broadly, crouched under a flamboyant tree pitching coins with children. Somewhere in the grove of date palms across the river, artillery fire hammered occasionally, as annoying as a stubborn toothache that one has learned to live with.\(^{26}\)

Vietnam's lacks, produced by the image of feminizing gossip of the earlier paragraph, describing the political atmosphere in Saigon is rectified by imagery here. In contrast to Nitobe, Kaiko finds rectifying aesthetics in both nature, constructed material and the Vietnamese themselves. But like all rectifications of insufficiency, the other's lack is constantly resupplied. In Nitobe's text, signs of the other's subjectivity produce this failure of the corrective, but it is not the Vietnamese themselves who are responsible for the failure of Kaiko's rectifying images. Rather, it is the sounds of the war with the Viet Cong that begin recovery of the other's lack in the form of an insufficiency of both stability and safety.

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Imperial gazes are very often feminizing gazes too, and Japan's gendering gaze upon Asia is perhaps rather unexceptional among colonial ways of seeing the colonized other. Just as women have been kept in place and regulated by feminizing practices within the gaze, so too natives, native women, and empires have been regulated, subjugated and kept in place. Neither is the failure of the promise of rectification any sign of a peculiarly Japanese mendacity. Promises of stability and development brought by the dominations of the metropolis only serve to recover more effective and regulated images of the other's lesser status and feminine gender. That enables the conduct of colonialism and expansion of capital. But by perpetuating

\(^{26}\) Kaiko Takeshi, *Into a Black Sun*, pp. 50-51.
the feminine gender of the other, lack and its unreliable rectifications also create a space for desire.
Figure 5.1

Jizō, the guardian deity of children and aborted foetuses, products of desire, in the garden at the Sanzen Temple near Kyoto.
CHAPTER 5
DESIRE

_Being your slave, what should I do but tend_
_Upon the hours and times of your desire?_
_William Shakespeare, Sonnets, 57_

Travelling between Kobe and Hiroshima some years ago, I talked to a woman who worked as a hostess at an Osaka cocktail lounge. She was a Filipina and claimed to be very successful at her work. When I asked, she told me that her difference accounted for her success. Her darker beauty and her different mode of relating to men instigated a desire in her Japanese male clients that kept them in the bar buying outrageously expensive drinks. She had a regular clientele. "They keep on coming back," she said, "Because each time they never quite get what they want."

The not quite satisfied desire of this woman's male clients is not confined in its location to the bars, and nightclubs of contemporary Japan. Desire is also a central trope in Japan's imaginations of other Asians. Want and the objects that inflame it are integral in Japan's imperial discourses and in the understandings of Asia put forward in postwar Japanese consumer culture. Desire is always productive in relations between selves and others and Japanese desire for the Asian other provides a fine example of this node in the politics of identity.

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Desire is lack itself, writes French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. Desire and lack do not precede or succeed the other, instead "Desire...is a lack engendered from the previous time that serves to
reply to the lack raised by the following time." In Lacan's especially masculine construal of desire, desire and lack are co-identical and their co-identity derives not from any collapse of two seemingly different conditions together but from Lacan's insight that desire always runs up against its limits, that it is never fully satisfied. Desire's boundaries and its frustrations identify it as lack because, under the conditions of its limitations, desire remains "an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued." Desire is always something that one does not have, always lack.

But how does this understanding of desire operate in Japan's representations of both Asia and itself? How does it serve our own political understanding of Japanese imaginations of the Asian other? Lacan situates desire in relation to Freud's concept of the Oedipal complex, and in the context of the Freudian concept of oral, anal and genital drives in the structures of the human mind. Furthermore, Lacan places desire, Oedipal want, and infant development within the symbolic order. Desire holds intimate and important associations with the establishment of subjectivity, with gender relations, which are also relations of domination and subordination, and with language, which is the law. The relationship of desire to these three central processes in identity relations accentuates the significance of desire in imaginary practices and in the relations between the identity of the self and the identity of the other. It follows then that the Lacanian idea of desire holds a significant interpretive force when we come to consider

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2 Ibid. p. 154.
Japan's imaginations of its Asian neighbors but, since Lacan's theory is a complex one, at the risk of losing sight of those imaginations for the moment, I must spend some time setting out its basic tenets.

The previous time towards which Lacan gestures in the initial quote above is that period in the infant's life when the problem of relations between self and other first begins to impose itself in subjectivity and in consciousness. At a very early stage, these relations are imposed on the babe's subjectivity in two ways. According to Lacan, the infant subject experiences both internal and external separations between self and other:

The birth of the subject involves a traumatic separation from the maternal matrix. The gap between mother and child deepens when the name of the Father intervenes. By barring a return to the mother, the Father makes the infant's loss irrecoverable. The incest taboo promulgated in the name of the Father effectively castrates the son. As a result of the internalization of the Father's "No", the subject itself is "barred"...Never identical with itself, the faulty subject is haunted by an unknowable Other.3

That haunting by an unknowable other is the place where lack and desire fuse. Seeking always to reduce the distance established by birth between self and other, and constantly striving to "unbar" or to replace the original lack with substance, the subject desires a return to the other, to assimilate the other to self, and difference to similitude: "man's desire is the desire of the Other." says Lacan.4 The other that desire ceaselessly seeks is double. Other is both within and of the unconscious, as well as and outside it beginning with the figure of the mother. This outside and inside dyad hollows out a place for desire.

And desire is itself a dyad: desire for the inside other, the unconscious that is barred and unknowable, and desire for the outside other, the mother or woman. Recognition, production and management of otherness is inextricably bound up with language, becoming an effect or group of effects produced in and by signification.⁵

There are two problems in Lacan's theory of desire that emerge at this point. First, there is no apparent place for women's desire, beyond the male figuration of it here. Lacan's articulation of desire is male, modern, nostalgic and Western, for it is predicated on the Freudian theory of male Oedipal desire for return to the mother. This elision of women's desire is a massive lacuna. Lacanian desire is one that forces women to practice desire in masculine contexts according to male structures, while at the same time makes it possible for men to construct the other as woman. There are, however, ways of engaging Lacanian desire with Japanese imaginings of other Asians that somewhat pacify this problematic elision of women's desire. First, Japanese empire-building in Asia and Japanese postwar investment is constructed out of male discourses and in part out of Western notions of manifest destiny, the civilizing mission, imperial hierarchies and the orders of international capital. In this masculinist context then, where women are already excluded, Lacan's work on what is male desire possesses the capacity to excavate at least a part of the politics of desire. Second, Lacan is not talking here about substantive men and women. Lacanian desire and the Lacanian masculine subject are


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fictions produced by masculinist prohibitions of incest. It follows then, that woman is also a fictive construct emerging from the same prohibitive laws, in a different position certainly, but one that perforce partakes of male desire too.\(^6\)

A second problem with Lacan's theory of desire as it operates in the matters of identity and difference concerns the applicability of Freudian theory to Japanese politics and culture. This of course raises the work of Japanese Freudians, such as Doi Takeo. Now, Doi is a psychiatrist and not a psychoanalyst, and so his work is concerned with explaining human behavior in Japan. In contrast, Lacan is a psychoanalyst and his version of Freudian theory is a theoretical device symbolizing the structures of the human mind, rather than the effect of those structures on human development. But Doi's work, which argues that fathers are absent in Japan and unable to prohibit the Oedipal urge, also raises a question important in feminist critiques of Lacan. That is, what happens to the desire to reunite with the other if the paternal prohibition on Oedipal desire is absent or less powerful than Lacan would have us believe? Well, I am not able to offer a strong feminist answer to that question yet, but on reading Doi, I do think we can infer that the end in Japanese male desire is very similar to the end in Lacan's Western male desire: desire to reunite with the other, to seek coherence through a reconciliation of difference. The father's absence does not prevent prohibition of the boy's Oedipal desire, for in phallic society the father's power is articulated and enforced through wider operations of the symbolic order and the authority that order

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bears. Increased intimacy and dependency in the unconscious construction of the boy/mother relationship that does arise from the father's absence only serve to make desire for the other more poignant, albeit in a different language.

This desire for the other is can be inferred from the Japanese terms, torikomu and amae. Torikomu, Doi writes, can mean "to take over the other side," while amae implies the desire to reconstruct the intimate dependency of infant relations with the mother. Thus, self and other relations in Japan too, can be read as symbolic of the structures of an unconscious desiring reunification with the external other, with Asia, which represents the struggle to overcome the sense of disunity and difference within the subject. Indeed, in modern Japan the desire to elide difference is remarkably well articulated in social practices. Not only has authority worked to suppress difference in the service of industrialization since the Meiji Restoration, for intellectuals and artists at least, Hegelian thought in Japan is almost as entrenched in its significance as it is in Europe. Hegel's middle line, where self and other successfully come together in reconciliation, underpins both Lacanian readings of desire and twentieth-century understandings of identity in Japan. For example, the thinking on Japanese identity put forward by Kyoto philosopher, Nishida Kitarō, depends upon a synthesis of Hegelian and Zen Buddhist philosophy. But, because the impossibility of compromise is always inferred, that synthesis places it closer to the Lacanian theory of desire and identity than to Hegel's

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comfortable solutions to the space between self and other. Nishida articulates the desire of Japanese selves to unite with the other:

Oneness must...be oneness-of-manyness and manyness-of-oneness. That is why I say that the actual world should be thought of as the contradictory self-identity of manyness and oneness...As for the characteristic feature of Japanese culture, it seems to me to lie in moving in the direction from subject to object...ever thoroughly negating the self and becoming the thing itself; becoming the thing itself to see; becoming the thing itself to act. To empty the self and see things, for the self to be immersed in things, "nomindedness"...or effortless acceptance of the grace of Amida...these, I believe, are the state we Japanese strongly yearn for...It is to become one at that primal point in which there is neither self nor others.8

I am not suggesting here that Hegel's speculation on identity and difference, as well as Lacan's more irreconcilable vision of the same problem, serve the same purposes as Nishida's philosophy of identity. The three discourses do, however, associate. At first Hegel's reconciliation of the self/other distinction announces itself in Nishida's plea to the figure of diversity in unity, but then Lacan's aching desire of the self to merge with the other, to elide difference, becomes the loudest voice here, albeit in a Japanese key.

This "Japanese key" has to do with the especially relational nature of identity in Japan. In her study of self-identity in small Tokyo factories, Dorinne Kondo offers us a personal anecdote to illuminate the other-directed propensities of Japanese selves, and I will quote lengthily from this anecdote because it does so much to flush out my own points about the ceaseless yearning of self for other in both European and Japanese subjectivities:

My great-aunt's first name was written with characters that are ordinarily read "Kazuko," though she adopted a highly unusual reading of "Noriko" for the same characters. When my grandmother read the characters for my parents, who would send cards, packages, or letters to my Tokyo relatives and caretakers, she naturally assumed the reading was "Kazuko," and "Kazuko" was the name my parents dutifully printed on the outside. My great-uncle and his son not so subtly tooled me aside a few times to tell me that the reading was really "Noriko." Yet, to this day, my great aunt signs her name "Kazuko" when she writes in romanized letters to my parents. She is deferring to their writing of her identity as "Kazuko," though "Noriko" she may be to those who know her better. They, as much as she, define her identity, her "proper name," in the context of that relationship.9

Kondo's great-aunt and her business about names speaks to me and to the theoretical literature on self and other in several ways. First, Noriko's other-directedness brings to mind Martin Heidegger's view that in the Hegelian concept of self/other relations, the self sees its own subjectivity in the other: Noriko accepts the identity supplied to her by her Japanese-American relatives. Second, that Noriko would accept an other-supplied identity suggests a will that is close to the Lacanian idea of a subject which desires closure of the fissure between self and other. Third, in the complicity of Noriko's other-directedness with male construals of desire there is a support for my earlier claim that in masculinist societies, women (unwittingly?) partake of a masculine notion of desire. Then Noriko's surrender to the language of the other supplies the Lacanian yearning for that point of unity which Nishida calls "primal," where he claims the Japanese subject seeks to find complete annihilation of self/other distinctions. Indeed, Nishida's "contradictory self-identity" seems like an analogue for Lacan's "barred

subject" to me. I can read Lacanian desire, the "want-to-be" or the "manque-à-être," in Nishida's "We Japanese," which speaks of his own desire to unite with the other, as well as in his claim that the Japanese group wants to merge its collective self into the otherness of the object, by which Nishida means the environment.

But I can also read this desire to reunite with the other and to assimilate the other's difference in Japanese images of Asia. Desire is productive of particular sort of Asia in imperial Japanese literature. These practices operate especially articulately in the following poem about China written by Takahashi Shinkichi and titled Sōten ("Blue Sky"):  

A tall tree stands nearby 
Growing thickly rooted in the earth beneath my feet 
But such a thing has nothing to do with me 
Blue sky 
Aircraft drop bombs from the perfectly clear autumn sky 
The sounds of machine guns reach my ears 
Trees, plants and country Mountains Body 
Consciousness Love City, rent into a million pieces 
I, myself have no connection at all to such a thing as this 
The goal attained is not the goal 
Entirely created from a fallacy 
So too I rush forward Towards 
The emptiness 

Sōten, c. 1936

Here is the dilemma of identity. Here is the problematic space between self and other, and here is the desire that wants to eliminate that space. Part of the problem between identity and difference is that they can never be joined and so, through a repeated figuring of the distance between self and other, this Japanese self bars itself from co-identity with the other which is both China and the Chinese

experience of Japanese aggression: "But such a thing has nothing to do with me, and I, myself have no connection at all to such a thing as this."

There is, however, a solution to difference and distance. Representation of the Asian other (China) opens in Sōten with the image of a large tree. In Shinto, the tree is of great significance. Trees symbolize the approach to the kami (divinities). They are an "expression of the divine consciousness." which is itself at the very center of Shinto discourse and practice. At the time that Soten was written, Shinto was the racially specific state cult of Imperial Japan, providing many of the rhetorical devices of imperial language and performing very important tasks in the constructions of authorized Japanese identities. In a Lacanian reading based in this understanding of the symbolic force of trees in Japanese identity, the tree's leading place in the order of this poem about the other evokes in a synecdochal fashion the orders of imperial Japanese identity that are worked out in the symbolism of Shinto, and perhaps this represents an assimilating attempt to bridge the space between the Chinese and the Japanese. Furthermore, at the end, Sōten resolves the problem and pain of difference in a way that articulates the influence of Zen Buddhism in twentieth-century artistic and intellectual thinking about identity. The poetic voice heads hastily towards a complete dissolution of difference: "So too I rush forward/ Towards The emptiness."

But prior to this solution, Sōten closes the gap between Chinese difference and Japanese identity in another way. The space is closed

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as the Japanese voice of this poem narrates a Chinese experience of Japanese bombing, and it is here that the role of desire in difference and identity takes on a political cast productive of an unequal power relation in imperial textuality. Takahashi Shinkichi was no votary of the militaristic right-wing in pre-war Japan. Indeed, Sōten was written at the apogee of Japanese criticism of Japan's policies and activities in China and Manchuria. Let there be no doubt that Takahashi's intention in this text is to deplore the bloody and destructive adventures of the Japanese military in China. But the meaning has escaped Takahashi's intentions to linguistically colonize China. When I point out that in the attempt to understand the experience of Chinese who are at the mercy of Japanese bombs, and in the attempt to critique the military, meaning in Takahashi's language escapes his intentions, I do not intend to belittle Takahashi's critique of the imperial adventure. Despite his best intentions, however, the desire to elide difference between self and other does a disservice to the Chinese. By making a very vivid claim upon the sights, sounds and emotions of being bombed, Takahashi's language ends up appropriating the identity and experience of the colonized other (guns, shooting, explosion) as an experience of the colonizing self. Like Kuchuk Hanem, Gustav Flaubert's Egyptian courtesan, the other never gets to define itself and its own experiences in Sōten. Takahashi's writing speaks for the Chinese.

So too, in making a critique of Takahashi and of Japanese representations of the Asian other, my own writing speaks for the Japanese, represents Japan and takes possession of the otherness of the Japanese texts. This is a fundamental and intractable problem of
writing and imagining the other. And it is one that can only become apparent in critical texts if I displace the author. Certainly, reading Sōten with its author as an interpretive aid, desire's appropriation of the other is silenced. With the author in place, it is too easy to think, "Oh, but you are doing violence to this text! You can't make that interpretation because Takahashi Shinkichi was a critic of Japanese imperialism and Sōten is a fine example of his critique." But, in fact, this type of response nicely encapsulates the effect of the author on the text:

The author explains the presence of certain events within a text, as well as their transformations, distortions, and their various modifications...The author also constitutes a principle of unity in writing where any unevenness of production is ascribed to changes caused by evolution, maturation or outside influence. In addition, the author serves to neutralize the contradictions that are found in a series of texts.\(^\text{12}\)

If contradiction between several texts can be smoothed over using author-centered criticism, then lacuna and contradictions within a single text too, can be pacified by our knowledge of the author, her life, political beliefs and personality. Further, in this sort of critical practice the author "nourishes" the text, as Roland Barthes puts it, existing before the text, thinking for it and suffering for it. On the other hand, the theory of criticism that is integral to my work here holds that the author is born with the text, that the author has no existence or force on the text beyond the text, and that every text is "eternally written here and now."\(^\text{13}\) As soon as we summon the name of


the author, we also summon her or his intentions, character, biography, and place within the history of the genre. Takahashi's anti-militarism and his well-known Buddhist convictions are transported into this poem by his name. Once inserted into the text they condition our readings of it, sublating the autonomous functions of language and meaning, eliding contradictions and slippage. The slip of language toward appropriation of the Asian other in Sōten cannot be apprehended hidden in the skirts of the author but it happens nevertheless.

What Sōten does is to articulate a Japanese desire to overcome the difference between self and other, but what it says in that desire is, "I know you." The will to knowledge is a form of desire. Knowledge of the other is a principal instrument in the pursuit and perfection of empire. Thus, the claim to know about the colonized other advanced in imperial discourses desires it, and desires it to be as the self defines the other. In imperial Japan the nature of the Chinese, the Koreans and other Asians was a constant source of knowledge and desire. Like Sōten's claim to know the feelings of Chinese as they are bombed by Japanese, other imperial Japanese claims to know the Asian other robbed it of power over construction of its own identity. "I know you" very strongly signifies desire to unite with the other but, in its theft of the other's experience, which is difference itself and integral to the other's identity, "I know you" also signifies how desire produces a relationship in which the other finds itself excluded from power in the imaginary of the self.
Figure 5.2

"Portrait of Chin-Jung" by Yasui Sōtarō, 1934.

Figure 5.3

Balinese dancers

Figure 5.4

Chinese woman

Figure 5.5

Woman bathing in a hot spring in Java

Figure 5.6

"Women of the Southern Region."

Source: *Asahi Shimbun*, June 11, 1942.
Figure 5.7

"Portrait of a Young Girl, Taiwan" by Fujishima Takeji, 1933.

Figure 5.8

Photograph of a woman of Western Asia

Figure 5.9

A young Chinese woman

Figure 5.10

Korean musicians

Figure 5.11

A Chinese cinema star

Figure 5.12

"Xun Yeh's Sisters" by Umehara Ryūsaburō, 1942.

For male desire women are otherness itself. Masculine desire not only elides women's desire, it does so before coopting women into its operations as an (the) object of desire. This is a fantastic realm, peopled with "Woman" the imagined and produced object, rather than with women. Because Japan's discourse about Asia is masculine, women are integral to the Japanese representations of Asia during the imperial period especially. Their faces and figures function in Japanese texts to produce an Asia and Asians that are both desirable and liable for subjugation. According to Lacan, the first experience of otherness comes in the infant's dealings with the Mother. At this time the relation of male desire to woman as other first appears:

It is in so far as his desire is beyond or falls short of what she says, of what she hints at, of what she brings out as meaning, it is in so far as his desire is unknown, it is in this point of lack, that the desire of the subject is constituted. 14

But as we already know from Mark Taylor's reading of Lacan, the subject is prevented from re-unification with the Mother by the symbolic order, which is metonymically signified in the Father's "No" prohibiting Oedipal relations. Injunctions against Oedipal relations notwithstanding, the patriarchally constructed subject continues to long for the unity that it had with the Mother both prior to birth and prior to the early realization that the Mother is an other being. Out of this longing to return to the maternal figure, the feminine is constituted in the male imaginary as the object of desire and the place for both sexual satisfaction and coherent identity. In Japan, this desire

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describes an unconscious affected by the distance of fathers, but one that is still constructed as both male and heterosexual by the social order's laws against incest. Thus, it is woman who "unchains the desire to be One again, the desire to embrace the other." 15

The importance of woman in representing the Asian other in Japan is indicated by Figures 5.2 to 5.12. These paintings, drawings and photographs are drawn from many sources spanning the late Meiji period (early nineteen hundreds) to the present day. They attest, I think, to the vital place of woman in the general relations between selves and others, and in Japan's politics of identity in regard to its Asian neighbors. Interpreted as the epitome of otherness, figures of women function within imaginations of the other as an insignia of difference. They are the emblems, they are the code that points the way to a whole masculine economy of otherness and desire. Women's historical inscription with male productions of her feminine weakness, instability and interiority acts upon and with these images of women to produce a certain kind of difference. It throws a strategic chain of signs, linked from image of woman to image of woman, but encircling and crossing the entire field of discourse about the other and distributing women's weakness, instability and darkness throughout the other as it goes.

More than that, strategic distributions of the image of woman (the image of desire) throughout the Japanese imaginary lands in Asia "unchains the desire" of the self for the Asian other. This unchaining of desire cannot be discounted in the material appropriations and

dominations Japan made of Asia during the 1930s and 1940s, as well as in the dominations and appropriations of consumption practiced in more contemporary times. The desire set in motion by woman exists in a reflexive relationship with demand and necessity. Desire "enacts the paradox of need and demand" writes Judith Butler, but it is concealed by consciousness within the metaphors of demand and especially need. In the attempt to cloak desire, consciousness mobilizes a circle of mediations. In imperial imaginations desire mediates necessity, necessity mediates desire, and the circular compact desire and need make together comprises the demand. Desire instigated by images of the other (in this case, woman) is concealed in and conducted through a language of necessity (consciousness.) But desire also mediates necessity, always returning the male subject to its link with the difference of the other.

In imperial imaginations, the association of desire and need, and the pivotal place of woman in that association, is especially cogent. Great Britain, France and the other Western imperialists justified their colonizations of others in rhetorics of economic, cultural and strategic imperatives, all of which speak of need. In view of Japan's rigorous adoption and adaptation of the European philosophies of empire during the latter nineteenth-century and earlier-twentieth century, it is hardly surprising to find a very similar rhetoric of woman, desire, and need in pre-1945 Showa period representations of the other that is Asia. Like the figures of women, the word or idea of hitsuyo (necessity) occurs and re-occurs in Japan's justifications for its

expansion and plans for expansion into Taiwan (Formosa), Korea, Manchuria, China, Indochina, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, Indonesia and New Guinea. Ishiwara Kanji, a prominent polemicist and ideologue instrumental in the deceits of the so-called Manchurian Incident (1931) imagines the Asian other in terms of the necessities ("survival" and the imperative, "must") of Japanese imperial desire. "Japan's survival depends upon a favorable resolution of the problem of Manchuria and Mongolia." or "Japan must expand overseas to achieve political stability at home." he wrote.17

Ishiwara is not alone in this. The cloak of necessity that the imperial consciousness draws over desire shows itself again and again in the language of Showa period intellectuals. No great militarist himself, Nitobe Inazō's representations of Japan and Asian relations distributes all the metaphors for necessity used by Ishiwara and more. "I have said, over and over again, that unless Japan can develop industries, she cannot exist." Nitobe wrote in 1932, "In the country itself there are not sufficient materials for industry, little coal, less iron, and a very small amount of oil. All these are found in abundance in Manchuria...This is why that region is called the life-line of Japan."18 Here necessity appears in the material insufficiency of the Japanese self that needs to be overcome. It is to be found too, in the the survival metaphor of the Manchurian "life-line." But where in this passage is the object and cause of desire for the other? Where is the woman? She is present in that most womanly of adjectives, "abundant," nomialized

Figure 5.13

"A Countryman's Hemp Spinning Factory."

Source: Gainanyō no Gensetsu, Tokyo: Nanyōchō 1941.
as abundance but signifying women's bodies in its evocation of the abundance of reproduction and breasts. This call upon the body of woman is desire. The body entrenches the difference that sparks desire and because of that it is complicit in the subordination of the other. As Trinh Minh-ha has it, mobilizing "The Body, the most visible difference between men and women, the only one to offer a secure ground for those who seek the permanent, the feminine 'nature' and 'essence,' remains thereby the safest basis for racist and sexist ideologies."¹⁹ which are also the ideologies supporting the discursive edifice of imperialism.

The relations between desire, difference, need and empire persist in Japanese texts of more "popular" genres than the writings of Ishiwara Kanji and Nitobe Inazō. Figures 5.13 to 5.18, a sequence of images from a 1941 collection of photographs of island Southeast Asia, and presented here in the original order and with their original captions, allow us to pour "ourselves, as it were, along the veins through which the domain of vision has been integrated into the field of desire."²⁰ Here we find the image of woman as both the object and cause of desire. Here we discover women's pivotal place in the mediations of desire and necessity. The language of economic necessity, so common in Japanese justifications for imperial expansion obtains its intimacy with desire in this text. Figure 5.13 is captioned, "A Countryman's Hemp Spinning Factory." It introduces an idea of necessity that is explained in the accompanying text: "When one sees

"Miss Philippines"

Except for the omission of a further figure of half naked men and women, and a figure of a woman with an ape, Figures 5.13 through 5.18 are presented here in the original order they have in Gainanyō no Genset.
the figures of our countrymen active in the front line of development of the Southern Area (Nanpō), how one is moved to tears."²¹ Object and cause of desire, the figure of woman follows on the subsequent page: Miss Philippines! In a Lacanian reading, her desirability symbolizes the desirability of the other, of the Philippines. It refers us back to Japan's desire for that other. Her femininity is a man's image of the feminine and, as such, it signifies the availability and weakness of the Asian other. She is undeniably beautiful and desirable. Not only is her turned, downward-looking glance the sign of her virtuous passivity, a desirable trait constituted as such and enforced by the male gaze on women across time and space, it is a sign too, of the desired virtue and passivity of the Asian other that the eye of a colonizing Japanese self seeks. Her look away is also a further summons to the desire of the watcher. The other's refusal to return the gaze in which it has been made brings to the watcher's lips the cry of one of Freud's clients, "Father, can't you see I'm burning?"²² for it is not only the look on the other that is the stuff of desire, the gaze of the other upon the self is also integral in the matter of desire. But rather than enervating desire, by removing the presence and desire of the other to some degree, the look away only serves to invigorate desire for the other. Miss Philippines likes, the text tells us, many of the literary and cinematic metaphors for sexual intercourse and acts: music, dancing, and eating melons. Even so, the signs of her place in the arrangements of desire and necessity are concealed by an absence of the sort of emotion that is aroused in the Japanese breast by the

Figure 5.15

"The Safe Harbor of Sandakan in British North Borneo."
Figure 5.16

"Passion Blazes"
preceding hemp mill, where the image moves one to textually induced tears.

In the text Miss Philippines, whose image is the cause of desire, is supplanted by the language of necessity: an image of a natural and good harbor in Northern Borneo. But the mediating circle of desire and need quickly brings us back to woman and her place in male imperial desire. These women are the bodies that signify a difference that summons desire. Their breasts, transcendent symbols of desire, of motherhood and femininity, and of the utter difference of woman, represent a massive call on Japanese desire for the Asian other. Captioned "Passion Blazes," the passion that is imputed to blaze displays not a trace in the eyes of these women. Because their breasts are bared, and perhaps because as natives devoid of the sorts of sophistications credited to Miss Philippines, the gaze of these three has no need to be placed at a chaste tangent and so, their availability to the acquisitive eye of Japanese selves is firmly and unambiguously determined. Though their posture seems to resist the desirous gaze, the nudity is an invincible sign of their status in the relations of identity and empire. The availability of these women summons desire for women, for the other, and for Asia.

After two more images of bare-breasted women or naked natives we come to two images which bear witness to the intimacy of desire and need. Figures 5.17 and 5.18 bring us to that point. The importance of Figure 5.17, captioned "The Tarakan Oil Storage Facility", is especially evident in the comparative size of this photograph: two pages versus the one of the images of desire. For Japan's rulers in the years prior to the outbreak of hostilities with the
Figure 5.17

"The Tarakan Oil Storage Facility"
Figure 5.18

"Oil Wells"
United States of America and the European powers, oil was the captain of an army of tropes and figures signifying Japan's need. Ienaga Saburo points out that oil, or the prospect of oil, was vital in Japan’s decisions to expand into Southeast Asia especially. The wide angle and two page format of this image of an oil storage facility complies with the privileged place of oil in the wider discourse about Japan’s need to colonize the Asian other. Male desire and women’s place in it is also semiotically constructed in other ways here. The two page format of Figure 5.17, serves to remind us of the open legs of a woman who is to be penetrated by a man, and the oil derricks of Figure 5.18 bring to mind other erections. At any rate, oil’s proximity to images of women and women’s bodies in this wartime photographic text (shashinshū) signifies the close relations between desire and need in representations of others.

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I like to think that in imperial Japan’s imaginations of Asia as a resource for raw materials we have the historical beginnings of a later mode for imagining the other in Japan. This is a discourse of desire too, but it works to constitute the Asian other as a commodity. Traces of the other as a commodity, or more precisely as a site for commodities and consumption other than strategic materials, appear within the languages of desire and necessity as early as 1944:

The mangosteen rots easily since it will not keep for more than about a week. In order to eat this fruit one must, by any means, leave and go to the Southern Region. The season is from about May until about July.

23 Ienaga Saburo, *The Pacific War*, pp. 132-134.
Koide Shōgo's image of the Indonesian other conjures desire ("eat") and necessity ("must, by any means") in an early relation to both the commodity (that sublime fruit, the mangosteen) and its consumption, but the general commodification of other cultures that we shall find in certain Japanese texts of the latter twentieth-century, is only an inferior partner to strategic and economic metaphors for necessity and desire in Japan's rhetoric of imperial expansion. After the occupation, however, a vice-minister for foreign affairs says in 1955,

> It goes without saying that Japan should place emphasis on machinery and chemical products in its future export drive. It is also evident that Japan cannot hope to sell these items to the United States and other advanced nations. Outlets for these exports are located in Asia in the broad sense...This means Japan must seek its own prosperity through that of Asia as a whole.\(^{25}\)

And in 1961 the Keizai Dōyukai (Japan Committee for Economic Development) reports that the development of Southeast Asia "is also an essential condition for the maturing of Japan's own economy."\(^{26}\)

Then, Kyoto University professor, Yano Toru, remarks at a conference in 1975 that Japan's "national interest in this part of the world [Southeast Asia] is freedom of action. We are a maritime nation with limited national resources, so we need fairly free markets."\(^{27}\) These three statements signify an historical shift in the linguistic construction of Japan's relationship with Asia. The needy imperial cry for resources has been shifted into the domain of an impulse to

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\(^{26}\) Ibid, p. 64.

Figure 5.19

"Odalisque" by Furusawa Iwami, 1988.

exchange. While the words "must," "essential," and "need," located as they are at a textual site of Japan's lack (markets, prosperity, maturation, freedom of action), are permeated by desire, want and will, which owes its genealogy to the imperial years, Japan's postwar need for Asia is couched very much in a language of exchange. That in itself speaks of commodification. The three quotes above shine with a patina of exchange. They gloss a developing discourse about consumption and consumer items. "Products," "outlets," "economy" and "markets": these are the postwar needs of Japan but they are also the signs of a changed imagination of the other--one that constitutes Asia as a commodity.

Masculine images of women as the objects of fantasized desire, as exemplary others, retain their integral force in postwar desire for the Asian other. The image of women still functions as an emblem of Asia's otherness, but now the masculinist notion of women and women's bodies as commodities implies the desire to consume difference. Woman's place as a commodity is explicitly manufactured and distributed in contemporary Japanese representations of Asia. A few years ago the public scandal about Japanese sex tours to the fleshpots of Bangkok and Angeles City drove the texts produced by the industry into a private and hushed orality, but I can read the traces of this still flourishing exchange in the image of the odalisque. Furusawa Iwami's 1989 painting of an Indian woman, titled Odalisque, (Figure 5.19) provokes a desire for Asia that is exemplary here. It is not going too far I hope, to suggest that just as Japanese sex tours to Southeast Asia stand in a synecdochal relation to the uses made of Asia by international Japanese capital so too, the image of the odalisque
Figure 5.20

"The Thunder Goddess (Beijing Autumn)" by Tasaki Shōsaku, 1989.

signifies the wider commodified enticements and availabilities of the Asian other. Originally a Western image of the lewd but servicing Orient best represented by Flaubert, for contemporary Japan the odalisque is Asia synecdochally represented as a Japanese commodity. The odalisque is Japan's Orient. She is a courtesan and a hooker. For men, prostitutes are a collection of commodities to be exchanged for cash. For the phallic order, women are a collection of attributes to be exchanged for desire. It is her body that is the sum total of the odalisque's commodities and this image of an Indian odalisque displaying her desirable Oriental commodities almost shamelessly is a synecdoche for shameless showings of the Asian other as a commodity in Japan.

It is hardly surprising then that pneumatic simulacrums of real women are placed in juxtaposition with images of other sorts of commodities offered on the altars of Japan's desire for the other Asia. The "items" offered by the odalisque--breasts, eyes, thighs and pudenda--are also offered in this second painting (Figure 5.20) too, but now they inhabit the same space as commodities of a different sort offered to Japanese tourists in Asia. Like high-heeled patent leather pumps, bedroom mules, and panties, commodities such as views, ancient sites, quaint markets, and souvenirs are fetishes representing something else. If lace panties are fetishes representing women, then images of Asian women and views of Beijing's Forbidden City and the Tower of Heaven are tourist fetishes representing a "real" Asian other. Both fetishes instigate desire. In Figure 5.20, there is an admixing of the two types of fetish--woman and the items that can be consumed by tourists--that is symptomatic of a general commodification of culture,
both self and other in contemporary Japanese texts. This tendency to fetishize the Asian other as commodity in Japanese representations coincides with the success of the Japanese economy in transiting from industrial production alone to production and consumption in the early seventies. Certainly, by 1972 when Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei reestablished formal relations with China, Japanese images of China had moved far away from the familial contempt of the imperial years to become obsessed with a China signified mainly by pandas, acupuncture, the Great Wall, and cuisine. If the possibility of devoted consumption suffered some blows of confidence during the oil crisis, by 1989 the love of consumption and a corresponding tendency to figure other Asians and Asia as commodities becomes a determined practice in texts concerned with the imagination of Asia in Japan. For example, tourist-oriented texts about Asia, such as Chūgoku no Hon ("China Book,"\textsuperscript{28} show an Asia almost entirely comprised of things that can be acquired: views, antiquities, food, omiyage (souvenirs), and encounters with the strange. Figure 5.21 shows the cover of Chūgoku no Hon. In what it chooses to represent as China, Chūgoku no Hon is notable for the historical shift it symbolizes. Women are still emblematic of difference here, but the desire for Asia they excite is no longer mediated in the metaphors of strategic and economic necessity. Oil wells and natural harbors have been replaced by cultural commodities. Chinese sights, Chinese food, rugs, vases, drama, and history, all signify China's place as a Japanese commodity.

\textsuperscript{28} Chūgoku no Hon, Travel Guide Book No. 15, (Tokyo: Kinki Nihon Tsūrisuto, 1988.)
Figure 5.21

The cover of *Chūgoku no Hon*.

Other people and other cultures for sale.
But these images of the other as a desirable commodity for consumption by the self have a place in a wider discursive economy and history. I must ask myself here what social or political transformations brought about this shift to the commodity in some Japanese representations of the Asian other? In his argument for the fetish as a substitute for the real, as the cause of desires directed at the fetish, Freud points to men's fear of women's genitals which, due to the absence of a penis, forebode the possibility of male castration.29 In the context of the politics of desire where woman is the exemplary other, Japanese productions of Asia as a conglomeration of commodities can be viewed as desire for the other that has been redirected out towards the commodity, which is itself a fetish substitute for the "real" other. This commodity is symptomatic of the self's fear of a real other, or of a real difference. Underwear is often fetishized, according to Freud, because it may have been the last thing seen by the male before he realized that woman does not have a penis. How interesting then to find a recent Japanese image of the Asian other as a commodity that also exemplifies the fetishization of the other and Japan's desire for it.

Though I'm not even concerned about panties in particular, I well remember what panties mean in the Thai language.30 writes Maekawa Ken'ichi, paradoxically denying his fetish and introducing it as a fetish within the language of the other at the same time. And, as if to support my claims about otherness, desire, the

Figure 5.22

"Underwear"

fetish and consumption in Japanese images of Asia, Maekawa conjures up the site where consumption of the fetishized difference occurs:

I know nothing concerning Thai women’s panties. If you go to the underwear department in department stores, underwear the same as that sold in Japan is lined up. Is there a Thainess in underwear too? In spite of the fact that the underwear sold in a Japanese ladies underwear department is generally of a whitish color, in Thailand primary colors stand out. Red or black things are especially striking. I know nothing more than just this.31

Whatever may not be known here, this Japanese male self knows what it likes and it likes the colors of Thai panties. It likes the purposeful erotic codes of red and black lingerie.

Commodities as fetishes for the real object of desire are a production of transformations in the practices of capitalist economies. Japan is deeply implicated in these shifts from an emphasis on production to consumption but, as is sometimes the case, Japan’s consumeristic political economy and desire operates in ways apparently impossible in the West. At this point, it is useful to take a comparative stance, turning to the critique of Michel Foucault’s work on sexuality offered by the American feminist theorist, Joan Cocks. While Lacan’s figuration of desire is marked by a negativity arising from the concept of desire as lack, Foucault emphasizes the productive nature of desire. According to Cocks, desire and sexuality are deeply implicated in the production of power relations. Cocks writes that in the contemporary age, Foucault sees the productive association of desire with marriage, family, names and possessions as giving away to a power enlarging itself on pleasure, "the enjoyments of the flesh," and

31 Ibid.

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the "quality of pleasure." But Cocks carries her own arguments about the transformations in the processes of desire somewhat beyond Foucault into the practices of consumption. Alliance (by which Cocks means marriage, family), which was once the central place for desire, has lost desire because organization of production outside of the domestic sphere brought about "alliance's loss of economic force." The "moral-prohibitive force" of alliance has been eroded. In the face of the loss of its economic potency, alliance can no longer maintain its internal authority structure, which was necessary to police desire. Consequently, Cocks argues, the members of alliance, who are the sites and subjects of desire after all, have been released "out into the great public spaces opened up in the industrial age." I take this to mean that desire has been turned out into the spaces occupied by the fetishes of desire. That is, desire is not only released into the factories and offices of industrial society, it is also "harnessed to consumption." and released into the department stores, shopping malls, televisual spaces and catalogues where the commodity resides.

This is a valuable way of construing Western relations between consumption and desire, but because I am writing about Japan, it is essential to question whether Cocks's interpretation of the place of desire and consumption in contemporary Western society has any utility in the attempts here to apprehend the development of representations of the Asian other as a commodity in late twentieth-

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid, p. 59.
35 Ibid.
century Japanese images. First, it is essential to remember that in both Western and Japanese postindustrialism it is women as the objects of desire who have threatened to escape the strictures of alliance through education, birth control and employment. That is a very serious problem for the masculine order, for it brings forward the possibility that in her freedom from the law of the family woman may develop a desire of her own. The danger is overcome, however, when women shop. That is, the desire for the commodity is indeed a metaphor for man's desire for the woman/other, but it is women who do most of the shopping, and who list "shopping" as their favorite hobby. Their numerical weight in consumption signifies the effective displacement of women's desire and its conversion into a masculine practice desirous of the other's difference, which is metonymically represented in the commodity, whether that is a pocket television or a package tour to the beaches of Bali.

Secondly, there must be a central question for Japan specialists here to do with the status of alliance in contemporary Japan. There can be no doubt that if we take a look at hegemonic interpretations of Japanese economics, it appears that production has been moved out of the hands of the Japanese family unit into the hands of corporate entities like Fujitsu, Matsushita, Mitsui, and the like. Nevertheless, as Dorinne Kondo for one makes clear, a very great deal of production in Japan remains in the hands of groups outside of the corporate giants. In fact, material conditions demonstrate that 99% of all production and business in Japan is in the hands of chū-shō kigyō (small and medium sized firms) employing less than 300 workers in the case of
manufacture and less than 50 in the case of sales. Of course, the chu-shō kigyō are not necessarily sites for domestic production a la Cocks but, in my own experience during a year of living in the Teranouchi area of the Kamigyō ward of Kyoto, it seems that the workers in the larger chu-shō kigyō tend to be drawn from the closer neighborhood, or from social units related to the enterprise, while in the smaller ones at least, workers may be from the same domestic alliance.

This suggests that alliance in Japan is very different from alliance in the West. The idea of uchi and soto (in-group and out-group) is a familiar one to Japan specialists. In this case, however, familiarity does not breed contempt, for the concept of uchi and soto retains its utility as a semantic field that can be mobilized to suggest one way of apprehending the Japanese difference in alliance. While Japan is not at all the only society to maintain distinctions between in-group and out-group, it is peculiar in the flexibility that the lines between in-group and out-group display: the "scope of the in-group depends on the situation; [and] thus the area considered to be an in-group on different occasions tends to form concentric circles." Among other things, uchi is perhaps a feeling or sense of alliance. It is joined in the practices of self-identification in Japan by the ie. Ie are not kinship groups based on descent, although kinship plays a role in their structure and internal relations of power. The ie are alliances (families) of a corporate nature. They are based on perpetual property

36 Kondo, Crafting Selves, p. 50.
38 Ishida, Conflict, p. 18.
ownership, production, consumption, religion and social welfare. Historically, the *ie*, like *uchi*, has tended to have its parameters defined according to context, at least until it became a constitution of juridical discourse, regulated in a form prescribed by the Meiji Civil Code from the end of the nineteenth century until the American occupation after 1945.

The workings and nature of *uchi* and *ie* are too complex to invite a just elaboration here. However, it is their situational parameters, together with their place as signs of a particular sort of Japanese alliance that should interest us in the matter of Japanese commodifications of the Asian other. The codified place of the *ie*, as well as the familial association represented by the *ie* itself was reproduced and distributed at all social, political and economic levels and places in imperial Japan. From the nineteenth-century, images of the Japanese state as a family state (*kokka*) or a household (*kokutai*) were mobilized within a discourse of consensus and similitude as central symbols of Japanese identity. Together with its myriad meanings and attendant ideologies, this metaphor of state as family or alliance served to assist in obtaining the compliance of the citizens (*kokumin*) in the authorized construing of the relationship between state and subject. With the *tennō* (emperor) positioned as head of the national family, *kokka* and *kokutai* ideology worked to subvert resistance to Japan's industrialization, and to choke off rebellion against the militarists' domination of state and policy during the fifteen years prior to 1945. It also worked to re-entrench a unique location for alliance within Japanese society.
It is the suspicion of many Western critics of contemporary Japan that the dislodging of the *ie* from its official location and authorization at the time of the promulgation of the American authored Japanese constitution in 1947 began a process that will culminate in a Western-like breakdown of alliance. But, although there may be symptoms of a problematic future for the *ie*, alliance in Japan is still alive and well. *Kokka* and *kokutai* may be dead to their familial powers but alliance in the figure of the *ie* persists in its historical power to constitute the communities of *chū-shō kigyō* (small industry and sales) as familial alliances. Dorinne Kondo remarks:

> Precisely because of a constitutive history that defines households as a highly organized, task-performance units based on work, and as sites of identity formation which enjoin their members' loyalty and love, "company as family" becomes a readily available idiom for people...to deploy within their family enterprise.\(^{39}\)

Successful semiotic inscription and placement of alliance in small enterprise communities (and thus, in about 87% of Japanese workers) in the form of *ie* is managed in a variety of ways that may include always recruiting employees through familial associations, from the local community or from the owner's *furusato* (native place, traditional if not actual birthplace). Kondo points out that the bosses in *chū-shō kigyō* cast the nets of alliance over their workers by acting *in loco parentis* (*oya gawari*). For example, they will be responsible for the safety of their workers, especially women, both during working hours and beyond. Bosses acting as parents are responsible for the recognition and appropriate celebration of their employees' anniversaries. They often engage in marriage brokering (a parental

\(^{39}\) Kondo, *Crafting Selves*, p. 121.
practice) for their workers. In turn, the employees (children) expect proper parental behavior from the bosses. Thus, in postwar Japan alliance is far from dislodged and broken down. In the ie, alliance retains its power and vitality through creation of uchi feelings of "belonging and emotional warmth." As ie, alliance "links this belonging to task performance - that is, to work, and to merit, rather than to mere passive belonging; it is a zero-point of discourse, constitutive of identity."40

The fluid boundaries of Japanese alliance have permitted it in its corporate form to retain a very substantial hold on production. The corporate alliance retains its moral authority precisely because it retains its hold on production. However, that desire is indeed harnessed to consumption in contemporary Japan is clear to any visitor in Japan when confronted with an abundance of the signs of consumption in Japanese newspapers, magazines, television, or when caught in the great spaces designed and built for the commodity's capture of the consumer in Shinjuku, Ginza, Umeda, Shinsaibashi, Kawaramachi-Shijo and the like, and when, in surprising numbers, students being interviewed prior to registration in English conversation classes place shopping at the head of the list of their hobbies. Thus, desire is never lost to alliance and never beyond its control. Desire is harnessed to consumption in Japan and that is precisely its power for alliance. Desire and commodities combine to construct a form of subjectivity. Desire and the commodity are instrumental in the continued maintenance of a central figure in

Japanese discourse of self: the family structure and the subject within it. Viewed as commodities then, images of Asia serve Japanese desires and in so doing, are placed in service to the production and maintenance of Japanese subjectivity.

There is a space wherein desire for the commodity is both summoned and sometimes satisfied. This space has a history of its own. In Europe and the United States of America the shift from stable supply and demand to consumer capitalism was attended by a variety of new phenomena, including showings of the commodity, and the design and construction of a space for enactment of desire and consumption. These phenomena came together with the introduction of the department store. Construction of department stores in Europe and America began in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. In Japan the department store came somewhat later but by the end of the Great War they took on the form in which we now know them. Design and construction of Japanese department stores is almost identical to that of their counterparts in the West, and although the names, Daimaru, Sogo, Takashimaya and Isetan, may be unfamiliar to the Western ear, in Japan they summon the same frisson of desire called forth by Neiman-Marcus, Harrods, Marshall Field, Bon Marche and David Jones in Western culture. What is important about both Western and Japanese department stores in the context of my discussions here, lies in the transformations store design and display innovations wrought upon the commodity itself and upon the relationship of the consumer to it. The department stores' ostentatious styles of architecture and display produced a novel and special place for the practice of sale and consumption. They
contributed "a blurring of both functional and financial considerations"\textsuperscript{41} that enabled desire and its realization in the act of consumption. Desire for the commodity in the department store is particularly poignant, for the mode of display, behind glass and/or beyond the capacity of the pocket book, makes the commodity both real and unreal, consumable and inaccessible at the same time. Thus, desire leaps forward to the commodity but is restrained at the very point of it instigation. Restraint in turn reproduces desire again, only in a more urgent form, and so the cycle goes.

Japanese tourist guides and armchair travel books concerned with Asia, such as \textit{Chūgoku no Hon}, are textual equivalents of the department store, mobilizing image, spatial organization, color and form to represent the commodity in ways that instigate desire, restraint and access. Japanese representations of the Asian other in texts aimed at that area of commodification and consumption known as travel and tourism are metaphorical department stores selling the other, their geography and culture. First appearing in the late 1960s this genre of imagination is epiphenomenal to the establishment of the idea of Japan as a completed economy and the successful constitution of the Japanese subject as middle class. In its representation of the other through attractive images revolving around the views, cuisine and souvenirs, it signals a shift not only in the conception of the Asian other but in the scope of consumerism generally. This shift and its effects is perhaps best understood as an expansion of the consumer/commodity relations begun by the department store, now

Figure 5.23

The Spaces of Desire: Textual Department Stores

Figure 5.24
The Spaces of Desire
Figure 5.25

The Spaces of Desire
conveyed into the entire field of visual or imaginary representation via the seductive nature of photographic, cinematic, and graphic apparatus.

Of course, as any visit to the travel section of your local bookstore will show, emergence of this tourist genre of representation is not unique to Japan. Textual department stores assimilate difference and they do so as a practice of consumer capitalism, rather than as a particular practice of Japanese culture. What is particularly Japanese about these images of the Asian other, however, resides in the obsessively visual mode of representation and in the debt image/image and image/linguistic arrangements owe to the organization of space in the original venue for consumption: the department store. Visual representation of the other commodifies it. The arrangements of these images duplicates the spectacle de la marchandise of department store windows and floors, displacing need from consumption, and expanding desire through "visual fascination and remarkable sights of things not found at home." Rachel Bowlby reminds us that in the department store desire for the commodity is instigated by an organized disorganization of space and of the merchandise displayed within that space. This "organized disorder" was the result of a "rigorously rational entrepreneurial scheme." first implemented by a manager of the Bon Marché store in Paris. Its objective was both economic and political, for it aimed at creating an environment in which the subject would be helpless to either avoid the objects of desire or to resist the desirous impulse to consume.

42 Ibid. p. 2.
43 Ibid. p. 3.
Figure 5.26

Conflating the other and the commodity in textual department stores.
Figures 5.23 to 5.26 are exemplary of the contributions the organized disorder of department stores has made to Japanese representations of the Asian other. Their irregular and confused design, drawn from the designs of department stores and malls, reaches out for desire. The colors of the photographs and drawings are rather bright. Color and monochrome are interspersed throughout the text in irregular sequences. Maps, which bring to mind the floor plan guides in Nordstrom's or Daimaru, are unevenly distributed amongst photographs of China. The impression of disorganization is emphasized by alternations in cartographic perspective and style. Primary colors vie with the more natural tones of the photographs. The linguistic text is presented in several different colors and in several different fonts. There is a wild concentration on an Asian other that can be consumed: images of experiences of the ancient, exotic or curious; images of the edible; images of those items that can be purchased and taken back to Wakayama City in more conventional ways. Space, broken up into a melee of color, image, kanji and kana, refigures the entrepreneurial spatial organizations of department stores. All this signifies an effort to represent other Asians as the objects of desire harnessed to consumption. There is no place here for an other that is not implicated and subject to Japanese desire. Nor is there much space for the Japanese subject to imagine the other beyond the compulsion of desire.

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My readings of desire in some of Japan's images of other Asians paints a bleak picture of a politics that leaves the other with few of the rewards of difference. But desire is a complex practice, operating at
many points in relations between self and other. My Filipina travelling acquaintance had a view of Japanese desire for Asians that resisted my own. Just before she stepped down from the train at Okayama, she told me how her Japanese clients' desire enabled her to provide for her family's urgent wants in the barrios of metropolitan Manila.
Figure 5.27

Booty: A Site for my own fetishized desire for the Japanese other, near Kiyomizu Temple, Kyoto, 1990.
CHAPTER 6
DISRUPTING THE DOMINANT: THE IMAGINARY LANDS RESISTED

_We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy._

Michel Foucault

In popular representations of Japan in the West there is often a pervasive image of the Japanese as a consensual and slavish collective. If I were to point to a possible genealogy for this image of Japan, I would return us to Figure 4.1, the wartime Australian poster with which I introduced my earlier discussions of gender and the Japanese imaginary lands in Asia. I pointed out then that this poster produces a Japan that lacks certain signs of identity, which self arrogates to itselfs in its imaginations of difference. But more than that, the Australian representation of the Japanese identity here suppresses certain political possibilities in Japanese culture. Beneath Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki's fearsome gaze the Australian image of the Japanese subject bows in compliant submission to authority. Faceless and regimented, this image of the Japanese suits that part of the Allied argument about the causes of their war with Japan, which said that Japanese consensus and excessive submissiveness made them soft targets for the authority of their evil leaders. A special Japanese submission to authority, as well as a lack of individuality suppressing the possibility of rebellion and resistance in wartime Japan is implied in this imagination. Similarly, in the postwar academies of the West, terms such as, "insular groupism" and "consensual," popularly used to imagine Japan, have limited the possibilities of conceiving an alternate
Japan, one where culture, society, and political activity is conflicting, resistive to authority and rebellious about power and order.

However, in more recent years the attention of Western Japan specialists in particular turned toward revisions of the consensual image of Japan. It is apparent in the work of these Japan specialists that discarding Japanese insular groupism and consensus as central tropes in writing about Japan allows a very different image of Japan and Japanese identities to emerge. Central to this novel textual construction of Japan is the possibility of disagreeing, resisting Japanese subjects, practicing representation that struggles through symbols to subvert or elude the dominant discourse and the orders it plays a part in producing. This possibility is (or should be) integral to any Western writing of the Japanese other. Thus it is, that after classification and critique of dominant modes of imagining the Asian other in Japan, Imaginary Lands turns to the possibility of textual practices that resist or encourage resistance to authorized Japanese identities and authorized Japanese identifications of the Asian other.

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But what do I mean when I use the term resistance? Since I do not want to turn the hitherto theoretical focus of Imaginary Lands from textuality to another form of activity, my notion of resistance here comes short of rebellion and revolution, while at the same time it exceeds the index composed by James C. Scott: "footdragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned

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ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on." That, of course, is not to suggest that everyday resistances of the sort discussed by Scott have no place in Japanese history, politics and production of identity. At the time of the heaviest authority during the Greater East Asia War, Japanese persisted in activities of defiance and subversion. Factory workers went on strike. Family gold was hidden from the authorities and so, saved from going to help the imperial war effort. Puns were made on the names of political and military leaders. Women stuck pillows beneath their clothes because pregnancy brought an extra ration of food. Young men induced fevers to avoid conscription. Their parents paid graft to authorities to save their sons from the front. Moreover, in the decades since Japan's surrender active and aggressive resistance to the state, and the emperor flourished. For example, in 1960 there were huge and violent demonstrations against renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. During the 1970s, farmers, environmentalists and the Left mounted major attacks on the construction of New Tokyo International Airport at rural Narita, and during the enthronement of Akihito, the Heisei emperor, in 1990, groups ranging from Christians to the radical "sects," such as the Chukaku-ha and Aki no Arashi, mounted a series of vigorous protests, which included bombing of a police station.

Be that as it may, because of the focus on textuality, and the sign that has preceded this, my task here must be to locate symbolic resistance. This immediately means that resistance in Imaginary Lands

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is not obliged to be directed at the particular dominant practices it seeks to subvert. In this conception of resistance, while strikes by Japanese workers during the war were ostensibly directed at factory management, like all strikes they have the effect of disrupting wider systems of domination. But symbolic resistance can be even more indirect than that, sometimes seeming to be not much more than a production of the political critic with an agenda to serve that is unrelated to any actual circumstances of the other. In my own defense for what is to follow, it is important to retain the understanding that for *Imaginary Lands*, action is also imagination, representation and language. Thus, resistance can and does take place within the imaginary, articulated in the symbolic system. As a corollary of this view, it is to symbolic resistances that I shall look for subversions of the authorized imaginations of Asia that I have discussed in previous chapters.

Indirect and signifying, textual resistance occurs in writing, in symbolizing, in forms implying other sites and places for action that are outside or beyond the orders of authority and dominance that allow and legitimate ways of seeing and knowing harnessed to power. For example:

Like nested boxes  
this Japan, cramped and narrow.

From corner to corner, meanly  
we are being counted up.

And, exceedingly rudely,  
we are drafted.

Family registers! They ought to be quickly burned.  
No one. Nobody should remember my son.
My son!
Put your trust in the palm of this hand.
Disappear for an hour underneath a hat.

In the house at the foot of the mountain
Your father and mother have talked about it through the night.

It rained all night,
Drenching the bare winter woods at the foot of the mountain,
making sounds like twigs breaking, pin, pin.

My son! soaked wet to the skin
you carry a heavy gun, gasping for breath,
walking along as though unconscious. What place is it?

That place is not known. But
your father and mother go outside to search aimlessly for you.
The night hateful with just such dreams,
the long anxious night, ends at last.

The rain stops.
Something is in the sky that is vacant without my son.
Shit, so utterly disgusting,
like a shabby bathrobe,
Fuji!

Fuji, c.1944.4

Though it was written in secrecy, Kaneko Mitsuharu's poem is exemplary of indirect semiotic resistance of the sort that interests me in Imaginary Lands. In the second chapter I made the point that Mount Fuji acts as a powerful figure of Japanese identity within the productions of institutional discourses of selfhood. Despite the defeat and loss of semiotic capital in 1945, Fuji retains its power in the postwar years to semiotically mark what it is to be Japanese. Prior to the defeat, however, Mount Fuji's force in the identification of Japanese self also came to assist assimilations of the colonized and

occupied Asian other. The sacred cone volcano figures prominently in the politics of the Japanese empire. Now, Kaneko's poem is not directly aimed at either imperial imaginations of the Asian other, nor at the place of Fuji in those imaginations. Nevertheless, his critical subversion of the mountain here, signified by its ultimate position in the text where all of Kaneko's anger at militarism and power relations in wartime Japan come to rest, also resists Fuji's signifying and pacifying power in other discursive places. Fuji's mystical power to represent the serenity of the empire,

See! the rising sun shining on high
Brightening the skies above the Eastern Sea
The Eight Great Islands of Japan, whence springs
The fervent hopes of all the world.
And oh! as the morning clouds begin to clear
The form of Fuji towering,
Unwavering and fearless.
Be proud of our Japan!

is completely inverted by the trouble it causes in Kaneko's poem. The towering, unwavering and fearless form of Fuji endures a recoding into something rather different: Kuso omoshiroku mo nai/ araizarashita yukata no yō na/ Fuji. (Shit, so utterly disgusting/ like a shabby bathrobe/ Fuji.) Aimed at military conscription of young and loved men, Kaneko's resistance to Fuji moves beyond this single site to act in all places where Fuji can be found in the dominant order. In so doing, the poem resists wartime authorized imaginations of Asia.

Symbolic resistance is thus, indirect but not ephemeral. The substance of symbolic resistance follows from the materiality of the sign and of language. Even James Scott's examinations of everyday resistance include the possibility of a resistance in language. Scott calls this sort of resistance rejections of imposed categories, "a
struggle over appropriation of symbols, a struggle to identify causes and assess blame, a contentious effort to give partisan meaning to local history.⁵ But, at the same time, Scott tends to fix domination and resistance in opposition to each other. From a more semiotic viewpoint than his, the apparently oppositional arrangement of resistance and dominance gives resistance a substantiality beyond dominance that Michel Foucault, for one, will not permit resistance to have. As the old song has it, "Love and marriage/ Love and Marriage/ Go together like a horse and carriage./Ask the local gentry/You can't have one/ You can't have one without the other" so too, are the relations between dominant imaginations and resistive imaginations relations of interdependency, coextension, and mutuality. For Foucault, resistance is a possibility of power relations rather than an adversarial substance.⁶ Resistance and power are not here and there respectively, they are coextensive with each other, discernible at multiple and scattered points in discourse.

From a Foucaultian perspective, Scott has it right when he points to the rejection of imposed categories as the task of resistance in signification, but language is not either dominating or resistive. The sign's instability, its capacity to mean only in relation to other signs, defies conceptions of dominant discourse as monological. That is to say, signs have an "inherent multiaccentuality," as Richard Terdiman so neatly puts it.⁷ Like Foucault, Terdiman acknowledges the

coextensiveness of power to resistance, but where Foucault would distribute that coextension throughout a grid of social and cultural practices that include symbolic acts, Terdiman is more concerned with the dominant sign's eternal horizon of resistance. Here, social practices, cultural formations, class and labor relations are ushered from without into the sign, investing it "with the competing meanings of social groups" so that the sign "refuses to remain static as an immediate consequence of such conflict inscribed in its use. Conflict is thus as characteristic of the semiotic realm as of the social."8

In view of the insubstantiality of resistance, and in view of the conflict inherent in every sign, it would seem to follow that the language of authority always contains the seeds of its own undoing. Certainly, I have argued for this multiaccentuality of signs in the preceding chapter, pointing out that, although Takahashi Shinkichi's 1930s poem about China intends a critique of Japanese imperialism, the instability of the sign allows an entirely different sort of politics to escape. I could, I suppose, equally effectively take an image from each of the previous chapters and reread them in terms of their signs' abilities to resist both the dominant discourse from which they come and my own classifying strategies in *Imaginary Lands*. For example, in Chapter Two I read Figure 2.26 as a compliance with the dominant orders of discourse about Asia during the Japanese occupation of Burma. The otherness of the nationalist leader Ba Maw, and thus of all Burmans, is assimilated and regulated in a natural looking way by dressing them in an undisputable sign of Japanese selfhood, traditional

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8 Ibid.
dress, and by placing them together in a figure of the Japanese family group ready for photography. But there is something contentious here. The text accompanying the image recovers this family’s other identity and exposes the practices that produce assimilation of Burman to Japanese: "The picture here shows him and his family, clad in Japanese costumes." In its acknowledgement of the "dressed" quality of the Baw Maw family's Japanese identity, the theatrical tenor of the word, "costume," could be read for its tendency to disrupt the dominant discourse's attempt to domesticate the other. Even without the caption, the multiaccentuality of the visual signs alone tends to resist authorized meanings: a pair of very strange, not Japanese-looking animals graze in the powerful lower third of the photograph. Are they eccentric Burman dogs or exotic cattle? Their obtuse refusal of Japanese identity is only more remarkable because of their association in perspective with a Japanese-style stone lantern in the background.

Not only does all of this suggest that perhaps my own classifications of Japanese imaginations of Asia are arbitrary and imaginative in their own right, the sign's multiaccentuality also seems to suggest that symbolic resistance acts within everything and acts everywhere. That, however, would be a misreading of semiotic resistance. A better reading takes up resistance as a practice inscribed in the structures of the entire discursive formation or symbolic system of a culture. A reading of this sort notices that the extraordinary success of dominant discourses in making meaning, and making meaning stick, is evidence of their need to continually shore up control over the orders of society and culture against the potentials for
Figure 6.1

The Japan-China war begins: using the styles of dominant representation to resist it.

resistance that are written into language and interpretation. The need of the dominant to insure, ensure and re-ensure its investments in control points to its prior and ceaseless interruptions by resistance. Symbolic resistance is not so much an action of the ambivalent sign as it is an acting upon the ambivalence of signs by resistive modes of writing and symbolizing, such as the postmodern.

One of the central modes for teasing out the resistive possibilities of signs and groups of signs is to be found in identifying an interpretive location for a dominant text that tends to force it to decompose. For example, part of my own strategy in this section of Imaginary Lands is to draw out the resistances in dominant ways of imagining Asia by situating them in a critical economy based upon certain theories of language, meaning and politics. Some Japanese writers and artists operate upon dominant signs in this way too, placing them in juxtapositions with their own critical practices where they may serve criticism rather than support the dominant. Figure 6.1 functions in this way. One large frame from a recently published manga (comic book) history of the Showa period, this picture struggles against both a previous dominant style for representing the conquest of empire, as well as repeated recoveries of that mode of representation in other postwar comic books especially. For the want of a better term, this style could be called an heroic historical style. Figure 6.2 gives us some idea of this heroic historical style as it was practised at the historical moment in imperial imaginations of the Japanese military's expansion into Asia and the Pacific. A 1942 Fukuda Toyoshirō painting of the military landing in Borneo, in its muscularity this image is exemplary of imperial documentations. Typical too, is an
Figure 6.2

"Attacking the British Possession of Borneo" by Fukuda Toyoshirō, 1942.

arrangement of line and form to suggest an upward movement (obtained when we read the painting in the Japanese fashion, from the right to the left.) Needless to say, both muscularity and the passage from below to above are complicit with other modes for representing the manifest nature of Japan’s war and colonization in Asia. Furthermore, in the last ten or fifteen years or so, manga aimed at the mass male market in Japan have adopted this same heroic historical style of imperial representations of the conquest of Asia as their own mode for remembering and rewriting the Pacific War. These comic books serve to recover an historically derived but contemporarily dominant way of seeing. They invest in a fund of representations that work to elide more difficult and dangerous memories of the Japanese Empire. But manga are not always so compliant. Mizuki Shigeru’s comic book history of the Showa period offers resistance to many authorized conceptions of the past in Japan and it tries to do so by playing upon the ambivalence of signs. Figure 6.1 recovers the muscular, upward moving style of Fukuda’s paean to military expansion in Asia, but the location of this style next to a subsequent image of the National Socialist’s swastika, and within an overall practice of criticizing Japanese imperialism in Asia, disturbs the dominant’s pacification of the imperial past. Thus, it is from the ambivalence of signs in their relations with other signs that resistive discourse can be made to emerge.

But isn’t this too easy? Signs that, like shy young people, only need the other side of their nature drawn out by the knowing critic for them to act in more assertive and disruptive ways? Certainly, this sort of access to symbolic resistance is especially seductive when we come
Figure 6.3

"Kota Baharu (Military Landing)" by Nakamura Kenichi, 1942.

to consider the politics of Japanese imagining. As the critic of Japanese literature, Alan Wolfe, points out, there are such great difficulties in locating resistance in Japanese literature precisely because, for more than 1,300 years there has been an implicit pact between writers and critics to produce texts of apparent stylistic and generic conformity and uniformity. This highly effective control of the imagination in Japan certainly makes the multiaccented sign a very attractive tool in the search for resistance in Japanese representations of Asia. Nevertheless, it is important to remember here that the resistances that can be drawn out of a sign's ambivalence must be dependent on a more substantial critical economy for their force in resisting the dominant. Multiaccentuality serves our own imagination of resistance in Japan rather more than it does any apprehension of a material body of resistive practices in representation of Asia. The critic looking for symbolic resistances in Japan must go beyond both critical traditions and the possibilities of resistance implied by the sign's instability to seek out the discourses of resistance in Japan's imaginary that do most certainly exist.

For *Imaginary Lands*, concerned as it is with imaginations of Asia during the more than sixty years of the reign of the Showa *tenno*, counter-discourse could begin with silence. Though there was a flurry of open symbolic resistance to imperialism in Asia in the latter years of the 1930s, by 1940 the stakes involved in criticizing Japanese ways of seeing the other rose too high. Many formerly critical writers and painters recanted their former representations at this time, but others

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took refuge in silence and secret writing. Because silence is as
ambivalent and open to interpretation as the sign, it is possible to
argue that writers like Nagai Kafu and Kaneko Mitsuharu, who
retreated to the countryside or into other forms of privacy, somehow
refused the challenge of opposing Japanese militarism and imperial
expansion. Coming from American and European scholars as they
primarily do, these statements about the retreat of some Japanese
writers into what one calls, the prison of silence,\textsuperscript{10} always seem to me
to be suggesting that their authors would have acted differently to
Japanese writers if they had found themselves in the same situation.
More importantly, these Western accounts of the silent Japanese
writers miss an important point: refusing to participate in discourse
also refuses to support the dominant's narrative practices which
ensure its control of oppressive orders. The absences inserted in
dominant discourse by willful silence can have the effect of disrupting
its seamless quality which accounts for the hold of authorized
discourse. This is especially so in imperial Japan where writers had an
extraordinarily powerful place in mediating the passage of imperial
policy and progress to the Japanese subject. In Japanese social
interaction silence is a way of indicating disapproval. The absence and
silence of these writers implies disapproval but it also represents a
refusal of \textit{tatemae}, public place and social identity, and a withdrawal
into \textit{honne}, the private and personal self. \textit{Tatemae} is a central social
contract in Japan. The practice of \textit{tatemae} serves the social order, but
declining \textit{tatemae} disrupts the order. But since silence is an ambiguity

\textsuperscript{10} Havens, \textit{Valley of Darkness}, p. 70.
there is no final resistance to the imperial orders to be found in it, for it can be read as either defiance or tacit approval.

Other forms of symbolic resistance in imperial Japan work in general ways to disrupt the entire edifice of control and knowledge that supports specific fields of dominant discourse, such as representations of Japanese selfhood and Asian otherness. The same can be said of postwar resistance in literature and art. Central to any politics of resistance in both wartime and postwar Japan are the works of Japanese Christian writers. It is well known that Christianity in the shape of Catholicism was brought to Japan during the sixteenth-century by Portuguese missions initiated by the Jesuit, Francis Xavier. By the early seventeenth-century Catholicism enjoyed substantial adherence in both the southern island of Kyushu and in the Kyoto area. But Toyotomi Hideyoshi's fear that Christianity would serve subversion and rebellion amongst the provincial *daimyō* (lords) he had only recently forced to acknowledge his suzerainty, positioned Christian philosophy on the side of resistance to authority. In 1640 the shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, issued an edict banning Catholicism in Japan, and the often fierce suppression of the faithful that ensued remained in effect until some years after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. After several decades during which Christianity again spread, though in fairly small numbers, persecution and repression started up again under the aegis of the imperial governments of the 1930s and 1940s. Even in the Japan of the last decade of the twentieth-century, Christianity is far from widespread and is still regarded with some suspicion by authority. It is this suspicious constitution of Christianity in Japan that empowers it as symbolic resistance.
Japanese suppression, persecution and suspicion of Christianity is hardly surprising. In the Tokugawa period, order was maintained in part by a pervasive discourse about, and social enforcement of, loyalty to the *daimyō*. Christianity opposes a transcendental loyalty to the loyalty owed to one's liege lord in Tokugawa Japan, and that possessed an enormous potential for disruption of Tokugawa power and order. After the Meiji Restoration, Christian emphasis on God the Father threatened emerging orders of control and identity that were being focused on the idea of family authority and on the Meiji state as a family headed by the emperor the father. Christian pacifism threatened to disrupt Japan's military-led imperial mission in the years prior to 1945. In short, just as early Christian philosophy helped to subvert the order of the Roman empire, in modern Japan Christian philosophy and its articulation in literature comprises a discourse that counters the dominant orders. And since those dominant orders include the authorized ways of imagining the Asian other that I have discussed in previous chapters, the oppositional Christian imagination also opposes the imaginary lands.

Let us briefly take as examples of this form of symbolic resistance two texts informed by Christian thought and written by two Japanese writers, Dazai Osamu and the Christian writer, Endō Shūsaku. Dazai's short story, *Kakekomi Uttae* (Heed My Plea.11), was written in 1940. Iconoclastic and self-destructive, Dazai was a fellow traveller of the Japanese left until the end of the 1930s when,

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according to his critics, his writing entered its "bourgeois period." It is usual to view Dazai's wartime production of "a steady stream of historical pieces, retold fairy tales, and reinterpreted Western stories and legends."12 as a sort of tacit compliance with militarism and imperialism. But that does not have to be the case, for if we make a pact between the counter-discursive possibilities of Christianity and national allegory, we can interpret Kakekomi Uttae as an allegory of resistance. Frederic Jameson makes the point that in third world literature, "The story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."13 Jameson calls this genre of literature, national allegory. It arises from the struggle of less powerful and often colonized cultures to affirm and identify themselves in relation to the political and cultural hegemony of dominant others, such as imperial powers. Now, although the Japan of 1940, in which Dazai Osamu wrote Kakekomi Uttae, possessed an industrial base and an empire of its own, as well as an extraordinary domestic literary tradition, opening to the West in the mid-nineteenth-century, along with the subsequent industrialization and "westernization" of the country, meant that Japanese identity and culture were, and perhaps still are, in a constant state of comparison and contest with the Western other.

It seems then that Dazai's fiction can be read as national allegory, but as a national allegory that mobilizes Christianity to critically resist the orders of the Japanese imperial state. Kakekomi Uttae is "virtually

12 Wolfe, Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan, p. 11.
a tissue of quotations from the New Testament.\textsuperscript{14} that part of the Bible with the potential to be most dangerous to established authority. Using a major event in Christian history, and advancing the language of Christianity, Dazai's story of Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus Christ to the Pharisees and Sanhedrin must be read as a resistive national allegory. Dazai's narrator is Judas Iscariot himself. He is angry and ambivalent about Jesus and his claims for divine descent. Judas's ambivalence about his master, Jesus, disrupts the secured acquiescence of the wartime Japanese subject within an hierarchical order devised by discourse since the previous century:

And I took care of the daily shopping and the lodging as well. Everything, and without complaint. But not a word of gratitude, either from him or those silly disciples. Day after day I slaved on my own. Instead of thanking me, he would pretend not to know. And always those extravagant commands. "Feed the multitude!" he insisted, when all we had was five loaves and two fishes. I had to struggle secretly to fill that order. Oh yes. I assisted him time and again in his miracles and devious parlor tricks.

I might seem stingy, but I'm not. Actually I'm a man of taste, and I think he's lovely. An innocent devoid of greed, that's him. Though I scrimp and save to buy the daily bread, I don't hate him for squandering every penny. He's a beautiful being, and I've always been a poor merchant. But I appreciate a man of spirit. So I don't mind even when he wastes every pittance I've scraped together. If only he had a kind word now and then. But he's always nasty to me.\textsuperscript{15}

says Judas of Jesus to the Pharisees. Here, Judas Iscariot is an allegory of the Japanese people, while Jesus Christ is at once an allegory of Tōjō Hideki, then war minister, and roundly detested by Dazai, and an allegory of the emperor.\textsuperscript{16} More than that, Jesus Christ stands for the

\textsuperscript{14} O'Brien, Akutagawa and Dazai, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p 106.
\textsuperscript{16} Wolfe, Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan, p. 179.
dominant order constructed around the imperial figure in 1940, which Dazai could not entirely support. Read as counter-discursive allegory in these terms, Judas's churlish feelings for Jesus Christ radically oppose the claims made by dominant discourse that the Japanese people have a natural, respectfully filial, and stable relationship with the authority that rules them and with the emperor. Wartime newspapers, magazines, newsreels and cinema in Japan unrelentingly assert that the service of Japanese subjects in imperial expansion and war is unhesitating and ceaselessly enthusiastic. Judas's complaint and questioning of his master's orders and wonders, his bitterness about Jesus Christ's management of resources questions and resists those assertions. In so doing, Dazai's story counters the the image of the emperor, and counters the power which supports imperial imaginations of Asia.

Symbolic resistance in Endō Shūsaku's 1958 novel, The Sea and Poison,17 comes closer to a direct resistance of dominant Japanese representations of Asia than does Dazai's more general allegorical critique of the orders of power in wartime Japan. Japanese recollections of war crimes and atrocities in Asia are either silenced (as in the case of school textbooks) or they are managed in ways that forget as they remember, focusing upon the images of violence rather than upon any critique that could historicize and politicize the line of Japanese responsibility for violence against Asians. This practice of eliding Japanese agency, and of making discontinuities in historical responsibility in the context of Japanese atrocities in Asia, also serves

the memory of similar violences against Allied prisoners of war. Endō's *The Sea and Poison*, concerned with a Dr Sugurō's memory of his participation in vivisections performed in a hospital upon young, captured Allied airmen, aims Christian morality straight at Japanese amnesia about war crimes. Since the style and purpose of remembering the violence of the Japanese empire is identical with the memories of other sorts of war crimes, Endō's attempt to lift up the veil of Japanese forgetting also serves to resist recollections of atrocities in Asia, such as the rape of Nanjing. The vivisection of a young blonde airman is as vividly imagined in *The Sea and Poison* as is the massacre of Singapore Chinese in recent popular Japanese histories of the war in Asia (See Chapter 3,) but where a critical analysis of war violence is missing from the images in the latter, in the former it is compact but potent. As the narrative begins in contemporary postwar Japan before travelling back into the time before defeat, the dominant's productions of discontinuous lines of responsibility are countered and reconnected to the past.

More importantly for my discussion here, Endō uses a Christian encoding of the subject's guilt and punishment to counter dominant and analytically empty modes of remembering war crimes in postwar Japan. After the vivisection young Dr Sugurō talks with a colleague:

Suguro put out his cigarette and turned towards Toda. Then he sat down on the concrete roof and, his arms wrapped around his knees, looked up. "What is there to do?" He spoke in a weak voice. "What are we going to do?" "Nothing. Just do as we always do. Nothing has changed." "But today! Toda, doesn't it bother you at all?"
"Bother me? What do you mean, Bother me?" Toda's tone was dry. "Was it the sort of thing that should bother somebody?"

Suguro was silent. Finally as though to himself, he spoke in a still feeble voice. "Toda, you're strong. As for me... I shut my eyes today in there. I don't know what to think, even now. I just don't know."

"What is it that gets you?" Toda felt a painful constriction forming in his throat as he spoke. "Killing that prisoner? Thanks to him, we'll now be better at curing thousands of TB patients—because we killed him. Should we have let him live, you think? The conscience of man, is that it? It seems to vary a good deal from man to man."

(....)

"Still... some day, we're going to have to answer for it," said Suguro, leaning close suddenly and whispering. "That's for sure. It's certain that we're going to have to answer for it."

"Answer for it? To society? If it's only to society, its nothing much to get worked up about." Toda gave another obvious yawn. "You and I happened to be here in this particular hospital in this particular era, and so we took part in a vivisection performed on a prisoner. If those people who are going to judge us had been put in the same situation, would they have done anything different? So much for the punishments of society."

I quote this passage at length because it is exemplary of the counter-discourse that Christian thought enables in Japan. Suguro's acute sense of guilt and responsibility about war crimes, as well as his attempt to situate the atrocity with a socio-political economy here, opposes dominant modes for remembering the past in ways that recall the horror but not the reason. Although Suguro is acknowledging his responsibility for crimes against prisoners of war, his acknowledgement refers its resistance to figures of Japanese atrocities in Asia which are emptied of political or social critique, and which I discussed in an earlier chapter. Further, Suguro's internal administration of his and Toda's guilt is more of a Christian than a

18 Ibid, pp. 165-167.
Japanese idea of how guilt is discovered and worked out. It flies in the face of the external, social administration of guilt that plays such an important part in Japan's politics and social orders. That resistance is enforced through Toda's complete dismissal of the social as a force for censure and punishment: 'Answer for it? To society? If it's only to society, it's nothing much to get worked up about.'

Although it may seem that I have abandoned the concept of the multiaccented sign as a very useful mode for finding and reading symbolic resistance to dominant ways of representing Asia in Japan, the fact is that the preceding attempt to come up with some more discrete counter-discursive practices only leads us back to the ambivalent sign. Eīdō Shūsaku's subversion of the paramount style of managing the problem of Japanese war crimes is but one text among many that seek to recover a Japanese critique and social place for the sins of the past. The obsessive concern with, and detailing of, Japanese war crimes in Asia that commenced at the same time as the trials of Class A Japanese war criminals began in Tokyo was perhaps an attempt to resist the orders of dominant discourse after the fact. But these representations were soon harnessed to the determination of post-occupation authority to elide questions of continuing responsibility for Japanese actions in Asia. More recently, Ienaga Saburo's vehement critique of Japanese imperialism and militarism, *The Pacific War, 1939-1945: A Critical Perspective on Japan's Role in World War II*. (1978), is especially disruptive of the dominant ways of recording war crimes and administering responsibility. However, although the threat to the dominant posed by Ienaga's work is evident
in his almost complete professional and social ostracism in Japan, because his work is academic and thus, not imaginary as I have defined it, I will not use it now to articulate resistance. What is useful to *Imaginary Lands* about Ienaga's criticism is its capacity to direct our attention to the re-envelopment of counter discourse by the dominant, for Ienaga's critique of Japanese imperialism is aimed squarely at those pacifications of the memory of empire in the postwar years.

Resistances of both the symbolic and other kinds face entrapment and pacification by the very orders they seek to undo. Herbert Marcuse marks out the problem clearly:

> advanced industrial society confronts the critique with a situation which seems to deprive it of its very basis. Technical progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system and to defeat or refute all protest in the name of the historical prospects of freedom from toil and domination. Contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change - qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence.\(^\text{19}\)

Although Marcuse is speaking here of a critique of industrial society arising from the opposition of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and although we know from Richard Terdiman's study of symbolic resistance in nineteenth-century France that even in industrializing societies the dominant is almost always able to vitiate opposition, Marcuse's observation hits the nail right on the head. Technology in the form of the mechanical reproducibility of the message has delivered to the owners of the means of production, to the dominant,

an extraordinary ability to control meanings and their production. This super-effective capacity to make the world the way it is, and to make those meanings stable, unites with the multiaccentuality of signs (which also means that if a sign used in the service of power contains the possibility of its own resistance, then counter-discursive signs must also contain the possibility of opposition) to constantly re-envelope counter-discourses. Vincente Descombes puts it well: "A dominant discourse is the imposition, not so much of certain truths... as of a certain language... which the opposition itself is obliged to employ to make its objections known."20 Mobilization of the language and symbols of dominance in counter-discourse vitiates resistance and reinforces that which it seeks to oppose. In this view then, Dr Sugurō's sense of responsibility in Endō's *The Sea and Poison* reaffirms the importance and power of the dominant because its counter-discursive strategy is to oppose a subjective location for guilt to a social location for guilt. This strategy addresses the dominant in its own terms, further assuring its controls over language and meaning.

Using the Kaneko Mitsuharu poem, *Fuji*, I have already discussed resistance that is not aimed directly at the power it counters. Kaneko aims to subvert the prestigious place of Mount Fuji in imperial representation of Japanese identity, and in so doing, he resists the dominant's use of Fuji in assimilating images of the Asian other. In an earlier poem, *Rakkasan* (Parachute), Kaneko again takes aim at Fuji, at the Japanese flag, cherry blossoms, and war monuments:

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What is this underneath my feet?
...My native land.
How lucky. I was born there.
Land of triumph.
A femininely chaste land
from long past.

Rice chaff and fish bones.
Smiles, even in times of hunger.
Discipline.
Melancholy mien.
A sad landscape.

There are the dear factions,
Narrow brows, sharp glint in the eyes, hunched shoulder blades.
They above all understand my words.
Comprehend even the expression on my face.

"Ah, it is nought but the trust
of warriors
at a drinking party."

Electricity poles in a deluge.
Rising sun flags fluttering
Above roofs of thatch.

Shower of cherry blossoms.
Raw, new monuments
to the glorious war dead.
Rows of girininjo houses.
Bonsai.
Fuji ornaments.

from Rakkasan, 1937.21

This stanza is notable for its cynical and ironic representation of imperial Japan. When Kaneko writes, "How Lucky. I was born there" he is being ironic, and all that follows pursues a similar style. The meanness, poverty, clique-dominated, superficially trustworthy Japan of this passage does have some fundamental attractions for Kaneko--it is after all, his homeland. But Kaneko is vigorously countering the

dominant order here. Like the later poem, *Fuji*, Kaneko constructs a close association between the orders he seeks to resist and authorized symbols of Japanese identity: cherry blossoms, monuments to the war dead, enforced ideals of obligation and human feelings, bonsai and Fuji. Through association of these signs of selfhood with what is wrong with Japan, Kaneko hopes to subvert the power of these signs to advance dominant discourses. But while those hopes are realized, by addressing the dominant in its own terms, Kaneko's resistance only serves to reaffirm the dominant's place and force. Fuji's power is acknowledged in Kaneko's diminution of it.

So, just as resistance is implicit in all dominant signs, the dominant is immanent in all resistive texts. Since both dominant language and resistive language are dependent on the other for their terms of reference, their metaphors, and their symbols, neither symbolic practice seems to ever fully subvert the other. Moreover, just as resistances in the dominant come into being because of the contextualizing practices of critics, so too, slippage towards authorized language in counter-discourse can only be discovered as a result of critical practices and knowledge. For example, there are few who would doubt that Nakae Ushikichi fought hard to oppose Japan's imperial doxology about China. In a 1941 letter Nakae wrote about Chinese nationalism to Suzue Gen'ichi,

> the currents that began flowing ten years ago have meandered back and forth, but now form a raging stream. Though still hidden, the torrent is fast approaching the ocean. That stream has started an undercurrent, as yet not in view, but unmistakably wavelike in its surge. Darkness
Nakae's highly metaphorical representation of a direct and forceful nationalist politics in China completely counters those dominant images of China's politics as unstable and flaccid, which I discussed in my earlier considerations of Japanese genderings of the Asian other. Nakae's raging river, characterizing the nationalist sentiments of Chinese, is the very opposite of Nitobe Inazo's earlier image of Korean rivers, winding "their sinuous course in graceful curves. Lakes reflect the blue sky and look up with a placid smile." Nitobe's aesthetic imagination of the Asian other prohibits it force and replaces action with passivity. The critical power of Nakae's resistive text is owed to his representation of the other in natural imagery, but it is also this same use of metaphors drawn from nature that allows me to find a slippage towards dominant ways of representing Asia in imperial discourse in Nakae's counter moves. Rivers, trees, rocks, and animals have a special place in the orders of Japanese selfhood. Nature is a sign closely associated with Japanese identity and, as I have argued elsewhere, images of nature in imperial representations of the Asian other comprise a central practice for domesticating and assimilating the differences of the other. Nakae's use of nature to oppose imperial discourse about China therefore permits a re-envelopment of his counter-discourse by dominant discourse.

3.

The ambivalence of signs and their meanings makes an absolute counter-discourse in Japan, or anywhere else for that matter, difficult to locate and define. Forced by the power of dominant ways of seeing and meaning to mount opposition couchèd in the language of the dominant itself, the resistive texts of Endo Shusaku, Kaneko Mitsuharu and Nakae Ushikichi cannot elude that which they seek to defy. What is needed it seems is a language that is beyond the dominant discourse. Richard Terdiman and Julia Kristeva argue for the resistive and elusive possibilities of poetic language. For Terdiman, absolute counter-discourse is to be found in the nineteenth-century French prose poem, especially that of Lautréamont and Mallarmé. For Kristeva, it is the logic of the poetic word that resists the dominant, but both writers find that certain ways of writing, tending to defy all the laws of grammar and logic, can exceed and escape the reinfections of the dominant that vitiate other sorts of symbolic resistance.

Kristeva's work, upon which Terdiman draws, has most force here. Poetic language, by which Kristeva intends rather more than poetry, has a logic that goes well beyond the codes and strictures of dominant discourse. This is a dream logic. Dream logic disrupts the rules and orders of language through which power and authority enforce social morality and political orders. The challenge to authorized ways of representing is, according to Kristeva, identical to challenging "official law." In modern Japan, resistance of the sort

25 Ibid, p. 36.
described by Kristeva has come about in the development of the prose poem in the nineteenth-century, which defied the dominance of the lyrical tradition and emphasized the visual and ideological. A similar process has occurred in the development of the modern Japanese novel, but it is in the poem itself that *Imaginary Lands* searches for symbolic resistances that escape reinfection by dominant ways of representing the Asian other in Japan.

At this point the poetry of Shiraishi Kazuko is exemplary. The following portion of a very long work on India and on Ms Shiraishi's imagination of it advances a language that counters dominant language.

that town that whole town is made of dream strands
from where you may enter
from the entrance that is already being woven
a temple rises at the tips of the strands of dream
there, voices in prayer move in all directions
spiralling sinuously among the strands
following waves of music

though those that pray remain immobile
the praying voices
and the praying hands and feet get tangled in the strands
of dream and begin to dance
from the dream inundated by a violent squall
Jayanta appears
when wet to the skin Jayanta's madness stands erect
poetry's spirit sprouts mad hands and feet they begin to dance
in the midst of the storm
coconut palms mangos the tree of poesie shake violently
salmon pink earth water frogs leaping
all jump up and down to the thumping soles of Jayanta's feet
in the distance
I can see
hear Runu the beloved wife and Runu's sari

---

bathed by the storm voice rising in ecstasy
and dancing
from Katakku

Kattaku is extremely difficult to render from Japanese into English. Not only are my own translation skills rather limited, Shiraishi's language constantly undoes the rules of Japanese grammar and poetic convention. The historical context of this poem is one of wider discursive rebellions and resistances. Shiraishi draws her counter-discursive style from jazz, the counter-culture of the 1960s, and from the protest movements against existing orders in Japanese education, international relations, and political authority of the time. There is nothing logical in Kattaku. For Shiraishi, India is made of dreams and is the site for dreams expressed in dream logic. In this section at least, that dream logic, and the resistance to the order it offers, comes from a powerful synaesthesia. By placing together in sequences images that are impertinent towards the rules of more classical modes of Japanese writing, logic, reason and any claim to a faithful representation of a real Asia, are vigorously attacked. "from the dream inundated by a violent squall/ Jayanta appears/ when wet to the skin Jayanta's madness/ stands erect" puts dream, natural events, the appearance of a man, water, madness (which here is a metaphor for the penis) together to explode both poetic and narrative traditions. Then in the passage, "poetry's spirit sprouts mad hands and feet they begin to dance/ in the midst of the storm/ coconut palms mangos the tree of poesie shake violently/ salmon pink earth water frogs leaping/ all jump up and down to the thumping soles of

Figure 6.4
"Motorway in the Morning" by Sugai Kumi, 1964.

Jayanta's feet" India becomes a montage of images undoing reality. Poetry shakes like palms and mangos in the storm. The bottoms of Jayanta's feet appear in the middle of the trees. The earth is the color of a fish. All of this defies, and I think is intended to defy, both authorized conceptions of what poetry is, and productions of the real. Because dream logic in *Kattaku* takes aim directly at Asia, it also undoes the Asia's constituted in official imaginations.

The dream logic of the poetic has a counter-discursive counterpart in the visual image. Visual images possessing the capacity to elude the reinfections of the dominant are the abstract (non-representational) and a way of painting or drawing that uses a combination of the representational and the abstract to advance political critiques. Figure 6.4 is exemplary of the abstract in art. It resists the laws of perspective and natural-looking representations of the real. In view of the indirect nature of symbolic resistance, it could be said that, in its disruption of the laws of representation in painting, which serve to order images of reality into forms servicing authority, this painting also disrupts established ways of imagining Asia and its otherness. And while that is so, it does not serve my effort to find an absolute Japanese symbolic resistance in the imaginations of Asia very well. Figure 6.5 is perhaps somewhat more effective here. The combination of abstraction and representation in Itazono's *Yellow Water* produces an image of Asia that is balanced between dominant modes of representation and resistive modes. *Yellow Water* is a critique of the Vietnam War, and of Japan's complicity with the United States in the war. Using dominant modes of imagination, *Yellow Water* tells us what it is talking about: the map of South Vietnam and the two
Figure 6.5

"Yellow Water" by Itozono Wasaburō, 1968.

realistically portrayed dead soldiers clearly locate the object. *Yellow Water* also tells us how it is talking about the Vietnam War: the abstract background and division of space, and the red of South Vietnam signify critical style. Play between the two modes of seeing the other establishes a permanent instability in this painting. Although that instability means that the resistive mode is always threatened with re-envelopment by the dominant mode, resistance also always threatens to disrupt the dominant. Neither ever wins. In this way the criticisms *Yellow Water* enact continue to counter and disrupt dominant imaginations of Asia.

There is, however, something in what has gone on above that is still unsatisfactory. The problem is that while language constructs reality and the way that reality is in all cultures, how it does that, and how those semiotically produced realities are, will differ from site of symbolic practice to site of symbolic practice. This must mean then, that symbolic resistance is practiced in differing ways and through different signs from culture to culture. Clearly, symbolic resistance to Japanese constructions of the Asian other in the twentieth-century can be read in all of the ways and texts that I have discussed above. But there is a specifically Japanese mode in the practice of symbolic resistance to the imaginary lands as well. In this mode we can locate another understanding of the relations between dominant discourses in Japan, and the possibility of symbolic disruptions there. I am referring to a discursive practice in Japan which is remarkable for its especially refined and effective capacity to integrate and adapt opposition and to vitiate and re-envelop counter-discourse. In *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, Karel van Wolferen makes a strong case for
Figure 6.6

Trying to oppose the reality producing conventions of representation is especially hard with a camera: Kiyomizudera, Kyoto, 1990.
this very practice. He argues that political and social opposition of the sort that the West is familiar with in its own experiences, such as, environmental groups, anti-corruption lobbies, women's rights organizations, and critics of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party's management of the relations between the monarch and the state, are simply incorporated into the milieus of institutional or corporate authority in Japan. Here they continue to speak the language of resistance and transformation, but within the constraints of the dominant where they exist something like the dominant's creation of its own opposition.28

The fabled Japanese capacity to adapt the new and other, most famously exemplified in the history of Japan's adoption and adaptation of Western technology and culture while still maintaining a powerful range of constitutions of a unique Japanese identity, is also pertinent to this mode of relations between the disruptive and the dominant. The capacity to successfully adopt and vitiate the novel and the disruptive has important implications for resistance to the dominant ways of imagining Asia in Japan. Dazai Osamu's Christian encoded texts are only incorporated into the discursive possibilities for dominant productions of Japanese identity, and Dazai's illustrious place in the literary canon illustrates the successful re-envelopment of his opposition. More than this, the counter-discursive, jazz beat, counter-cultural, dream logical force of Shiraishi Kazuko's image of the Asian other cannot maintain its place against the dominant. College age

28 Karel van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, (New York: Knopf, 1989,) pp. 50-72. Van Wolferen also points out that more aggressively resistive groups and their discourses are not choked off so much as encapsulated. This, I think, is an adaption and incorporation of a sort too.
males read Shiraishi as a risqué voice in a multi-vocal dominant discourse, for Kattaku’s challenge to authority has been very quickly incorporated into the canons of contemporary urban culture in Japan.

So, if the styles of symbolic resistance that I have considered above fail to maintain their disruptive integrity in the face of an extraordinary capacity of the dominant to accept them, is there any possibility of an imaginative mode that retains its resistive force by staying beyond the enticements of authority in Japan? I believe there is that possibility, and that it has to do with constructing images and asking questions that are recalcitrant in their shock to the dominant orders of identity in Japan. For example, Inoue Yasushi imagines a relationship between himself and the Asian other that shocks the canons of proper place and ritual for people of his generation in Japan. For Inoue, in places of remarkable otherness the thought comes unbidden but not frightening: What if I were to die here?

---- If I were to die here,
I thought, when at last we had slogged into the twilight village,
when finally the wind had abated and the Gobi Desert drive, a ten hour crossing, ended.
---- If I were to die here,
I thought once more in bed that evening. If I die, afterwards it would be simple, I would have them lay me out in a grove of desert palms and become a mummy. If there is no hell, neither is there heaven. A world of nothing but sand. My relatives would not come. No one would come. I would merely be a mummy.
---- If I were to die here,
the slumber of that night was peaceful. I slept within the unprecedentedly relieving thought.

If here, 1990

29 Inoue Yasushi, Inoue Yasushi Shiruku Rōdo Shishū, (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1990,) p. 120.
While Inoue's first thought, "If I were to die here," is unbidden and, thus surprising, it is his final response to the possibility of death in the heterotopia of far western China that always shocks some of the orders of authorized identity in Japan: "If I were to die here,/ the slumber of the night was peaceful. I slept within the unprecedentedly relieving thought." Shock and its disruptions of the established places of Asia in discourse about Japanese identity are contained in the possibility of Inoue's separation from those orders of identity which accompany Japanese beyond death. Inoue's death in Asia would discompose ritual and tradition. There would nothing of Japan around him in China, "A world of nothing but sand." His family would not be able to come to him to perform their prescribed tasks, which are part of the productions of being Japanese. Inoue's death and burial in Asia would be an improper death. And, as if that impropriety were not shocking enough, Inoue finds the possibility of dying and being improperly interred "unprecedently relieving." This amounts to a shocking repudiation of established imaginations of Asia as an other different enough to always reinforce and reestablish the dominant orders and practices of Japanese selfhood. Inoue's relief at the prospect of dying improperly uses shock to resist the dominant in Japan.

Shocking images are disruptive images, and shocking questions are also disruptive questions in Japanese representations of itself and the other Asia. *Ittai wareware wa Nihonjin de nakunaru koto ga dekiru darō ka* ("How on earth can we become not Japanese?")30 asks Tsurumi Yoshiyuki. And, as if the question itself were not disruptive

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enough, Tsurumi later gives examples of the undoing of Japanese identity. There are more than 8,000 native-born Japanese, he writes, who have happily and successfully adopted Thai identity. He describes a woman in wartime Saigon who had been born and educated in Japan only to abandon that identity and to assume a Vietnamese identity.31 His question and examples defy the constraints on what is possible for authorized Japanese identity. What is shocking here is not the possibility of the other, after all selfhood in Japan is constructed in great part from the possibility and fact of identities other than Japanese. What is truly shocking and counter-discursive about Tsurumi's question is that it is constitutive of the unthinkable: that Japanese identity may be a production rather than natural; that Japanese identity can be demolished and replaced with another and different construction. The implication of this is that all of the Asian identities represented in the imaginary lands are also unnatural productions, and that in turn points to the constituted nature of reality and the subject's relationship with it. There can be no greater symbolic resistance than this.

31 Ibid. pp. 16-17.
Figure 6.7

Leaving by the steps of the Kuramajinja. Kurama, 1990.
AFTERWORD

But what am I talking of? Enough! Enough? At this juncture I have only one proper course, silence: otherwise I trespass on a domain open alone to one who is younger than I, one stronger, more "future" than I - open alone to Zarathustra, Zarathustra the godless.

At this juncture, Imaginary Lands should be turning to conclusions derived from my interpretations of Japanese images of other Asians in the twentieth-century. But are there any conclusions to be arrived at here, or is Nietzsche right in his view that silence is the better course after discourse? I take the latter stance, for to offer a conclusive discussion on what has gone before would be to complete an impossible trajectory begun in the first chapter. There, my discussions of the problem of how to know the Japanese other in an intimacy sufficient to privilege my knowledge claims in Imaginary Lands, set in train the possibility that in the subsequent chapters I would exhibit my solution to that problem; that I would find a way to write and know Japan comfortably situated between similitude and difference. But the Hegelian compromise between self and other is, as Lacan knows, impossible to realize. There can be no way to write and know the other that is free of appropriations of difference and of substitutions of my voice for theirs. To write in a conclusive fashion about what I know about Japan in Imaginary Lands then would be to attempt a closure on the matter of the other and my interpretations of it, and that is not a political stance I wish to take.

Nevertheless, lessons have emerged from Imaginary Lands and my writing of it. First is the demonstration of the pertinence of the
problem of identity in Japan's representations of Asia, and the utilities
I proposed for apprehension of that problem at the beginning of
*Imaginary Lands*, or drew out in the body of the text. That is, the
understanding that language in all its forms makes the world the way
it is, and enables interpretive practices and strategies on my own part.
In turn, engagement of these modes of thought, theory and critical
interpretation with Japan's historical relations with both Asia and
itself has permitted the significance of those relations to emerge. This
has involved both a breaking down and a building up of the doxological
problem of whether or not Japan is like the West in the ways
identity are constructed. It has also meant implying the possibility of
writing Japan in other ways. What critical theory has done for our
understandings of Japanese relations with Asia is to show that the
symbolic system operates in the same basic way as it does elsewhere:
in the constitutive service of realities, and as capital for investment in
the maintenance or contestation of the orders of power, which
produced realities support. Moreover, the postmodern understanding
of language enables apprehension of the different histories,
economies, figures and tropes, that are sometimes a part of the
practices of making reality how it is in the Japanese symbolic system.

But I am sometimes told by my students that because it is not
scientific, interpretation can never arrive at conclusive truth. By
extension, this view means that because I have not practiced a
scientific method in writing *Imaginary Lands*, my hermeneutic and
semiotic conduct has not brought us to anything we can know, and be
sure of knowing as true, about Japan. I have no quibble with that. The
scientific method, empiricism and positivism, invest in the facticity of
essential truths, which are to be arrived at through bringing the methods of science to bear on data. The semiotic and critically interpretive approaches to scholarship are uncomfortably, sometimes scandalously, exterior, incomplete, shifting and elusive in their engagements with Japan. That incompleteness, that exteriority and situational practice of postmodern interpretation is what condemns it in the eyes of the practitioners of scientific method, empiricism and positivism. But, the unfinished, exterior and situational are also a Japanese style, *tatemae*, and because of this they are precisely the better modes for engagement with the Japanese other. This involves a critical reversal of the status of *tatemae* in Western evaluations of it. *Tatemae* is a practice for ensuring propriety and social cohesion. Because it involves making distinctions between behaviors, expressions, language, and presentation of subjectivity that are proper in exterior social relations and those that are proper in private circumstances (*honne*) and since the division between *tatemae* and *honne* shifts is highly contingent according to the situation, in the Western moral terrain *tatemae* is often construed as the opposite of truth, sincerity and honesty. But, together with the fact that proper social language in *tatemae* situations is incomplete, *tatemae*’s features possess a different worth for me. The exteriority, mobility and incompleteness of *tatemae* are also important features of postmodern textual practices, and this congruence alone suggests to me that inconclusive, postmodern modes of writing about Japan allow more of the other in than do textual practices seduced by empiricism and the scientific method.
There is, however, an important difference between *tatemaes* and my writing in *Imaginary Lands*. *Tatemaes* serves to retain and bolster established orders of knowledge and social organization in Japan. On the other hand, poststructural critique aims to disrupt those orders. This critical practice is hard on the other, but it is aimed at the discourses of power and authority that constrain and produce our identities and lives wherever discourse operates. It is important to remember that my critical practice is not uni-directional. For every thing I may claim to know about Japan as a result of engaging Japanese texts with poststructural theory, there is a corresponding lesson that Japan teaches me about Western theory and my own intellectual practices. Nevertheless, there is not much way of domesticating and making palatable the complicity of images of Asia with Japanese colonialism, atrocities, and exploitation of an other that is always poorer, disempowered but yet available in its relations with Japan. I have tried to make it clear that there is nothing uniquely Japanese about this. It should be clear from *Imaginary Lands* that Western images of Japan and other others have more in common than in difference with Japanese representations of Asia. One only has to review the recent racist slanders of French Prime Minister, Edith Cresson, to see that Japan's imagination of the Asian other is more representative of the ways wealth and authority speak about identity and difference than it is of a particularly Japanese practice. *Imaginary Lands* criticizes Japan's images of Asia as a way of criticizing the power loaded orders of identity generally. For a criticism of Edith Cresson and her like, however, we may leave the terrain open for the future.
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